



Second Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Seventh Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
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ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
ASPER, Linda	Riel	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky, Hon.	Inkster	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew, Hon.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
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ENNS, Harry	Lakeside	P.C.
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GILLESHAMMER, Harold	Minnedosa	P.C.
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LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
LOEWEN, John	Fort Whyte	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
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McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
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MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
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PENNER, Jim	Steinbach	P.C.
PITURA, Frank	Morris	P.C.
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SALE, Tim, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Wellington	N.D.P.
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SMITH, Scott, Hon.	Brandon West	N.D.P.
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STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
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WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, June 6, 2001

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Kenaston Underpass

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of I. Steele, C. Steele, R. Huggan and others, praying that the Premier (Mr. Doer) of Manitoba consider reversing his decision to not support construction of an underpass at Kenaston and Wilkes.

Manitoba Hydro Lines Routes

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of M. Wasylin, C. Wasylin, D. Cox and others, praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro (Mr. Selinger) consider alternative routes for the additional 230kV and 500kV lines proposed for the R.M. of East St. Paul.

Kenaston Underpass

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Jeff Maxwell, Michelle Wiebe, Yolande Joutlet and others, praying that the Premier of Manitoba (Mr. Doer) consider reversing his decision to not support construction of an underpass at Kenaston and Wilkes.

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Debbie Wilson, Dana Thiessen, Ken Cowie and others, praying that the Premier of Manitoba (Mr. Doer) consider reversing his decision to not support construction of an underpass at Kenaston and Wilkes.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Manitoba Hydro Lines Routes

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler), I have reviewed the petition, and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Clerk, please read.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT the R.M. of East St. Paul has the highest concentration of high voltage power lines in a residential area in Manitoba; and

THAT the R.M. of East St. Paul is the only jurisdiction in Manitoba that has both a 500kV and a 230kV line directly behind residences; and

THAT numerous studies have linked cancer, in particular childhood leukemia, to the proximity of power lines.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY THAT the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro consider alternative routes for the additional 230kV and 500kV lines proposed for the R.M. of East St. Paul.

Kenaston Underpass

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen), I have reviewed the petition, and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Clerk, please read.

* (13:35)

Madam Clerk: The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT the intersection at Wilkes and Kenaston has grown to become the largest unseparated crossing in Canada; and

THAT the volume of traffic for this railroad crossing is twelve times the acceptable limit as set out by Transport Canada; and

THAT vehicles which have to wait for trains at this intersection burn up approximately \$1.4 million in fuel, pollute the environment with over 8 tons of emissions and cause approximately \$7.3 million in motorist delays every year.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY THAT the Premier of Manitoba consider reversing his decision to not support construction of an underpass at Kenaston and Wilkes.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), I have reviewed the petition, and it complies with the rules and practices of this House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Clerk, please read.

Madam Clerk: The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT the intersection at Wilkes and Kenaston has grown to become the largest unseparated crossing in Canada; and

THAT the volume of traffic for this railroad crossing is twelve times the acceptable limit as set out by Transport Canada; and

THAT vehicles which have to wait for trains at this intersection burn up approximately \$1.4 million in fuel, pollute the environment with over 8 tons of emissions and cause

approximately \$7.3 million in motorist delays every year.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY THAT the Premier of Manitoba consider reversing his decision to not support construction of an underpass at Kenaston and Wilkes.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Morris (Mr. Pitura), I have reviewed the petition, and 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.

Mr. Speaker: Clerk, please read.

Madam Clerk: The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT the intersection at Wilkes and Kenaston has grown to become the largest unseparated crossing in Canada; and

THAT the volume of traffic for this railroad crossing is twelve times the acceptable limit as set out by Transport Canada; and

THAT vehicles which have to wait for trains at this intersection burn up approximately \$1.4 million in fuel, pollute the environment with over 8 tons of emissions and cause approximately \$7.3 million in motorist delays every year.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY THAT the Premier of Manitoba consider reversing his decision to not support construction of an underpass at Kenaston and Wilkes.

* (13:40)

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson), I have reviewed the petition, and 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.

Mr. Speaker: Clerk, please read.

Madam Clerk: The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT the intersection at Wilkes and Kenaston has grown to become the largest unseparated crossing in Canada; and

THAT the volume of traffic for this railroad crossing is twelve times the acceptable limit as set out by Transport Canada; and

THAT vehicles which have to wait for trains at this intersection burn up approximately \$1.4 million in fuel, pollute the environment with over 8 tons of emissions and cause approximately \$7.3 million in motorist delays every year.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY THAT the Premier of Manitoba consider reversing his decision to not support construction of an underpass at Kenaston and Wilkes.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Minnedosa Area Chemical Fire

Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister of Conservation): Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement to the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, shortly after the start of the fire near Minnedosa, local authorities contacted officials at the Dangerous Goods Directorate at Transport Canada, who advised that the fire would be best addressed by letting it burn out. The Rural Municipality of Minto and the Town of Minnedosa took responsibility for the local management of the situation and continue to manage the situation today.

Support from the Province of Manitoba was provided by staff from the Department of Conservation Environmental office, the Fire Commissioner's office under the Department of Labour, the regional medical office of Health and the Manitoba Emergency Management Organization.

Yesterday, local authorities made a decision to evacuate eight families from nearby homes while also cautioning residents to stay indoors and keep windows closed. The Medical Officer of Health has advised that the potential health effects of the fire include eye and nose irritation, itchy and scratchy throats and coughing, especially for people with respiratory conditions.

The volume of chemical fumes is not considered life threatening. There is always a concern with contamination of soil and water. I am told that these elements are retained with a containment area at the facility. As soon as clean-ups can commence, the Department of Conservation will provide assistance for disposal of this and any other remaining chemicals. Discussions have started with the manufacturer of the chemicals to help determine what contamination might result from the fire.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the local authorities in Minnedosa for their work in managing this situation. People from the R.M. of Minto, the town of Minnedosa, and the Yellowhead Fire Department have provided a joint response to this situation, and their planning and training has provided a very effective response.

Even though evacuations are still in effect, my understanding is that this fire is under control. Provincial staff will continue to be available for assistance if needed, and I will report back to the House as the situation warrants. Thank you.

Mr. Harold Gilleshammer (Minnedosa): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his timely response to this situation.

I would report that the fire is now out and that the local emergency preparedness plan proved very, very effective. I would point out that these are municipal officials and volunteers that had put together this plan. It serves as, I think, an example for many communities that you never know when these emergencies are going to take place, and it is very, very important that a plan be put in place, that it is tested from time to time, and when the plan is really needed, the people are trained and they know their responsibilities.

I, too, would commend the staff with the R.M. of Minto, the Town of Minnedosa and in particular, the emergency fire department in Minnedosa, who I know train and practise from time to time at facilities that we have built at the Brandon Fire College at the airport in Brandon. When situations like this do occur, they are prepared and trained and were a very effective response to what could have been a disastrous situation yesterday. Thank you.

* (13:45)

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to speak on the member's statement.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave? [*Agreed*]

Mr. Gerrard: I thank the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) for his statement done in a timely fashion. The quick response both of the minister and of the local people in the community is really to be complimented.

It really stands in stark contrast to the recent situation in East St. Paul, where there are still some questions about how quickly people were notified and when. So, I think that today we should congratulate the minister for his timely action and congratulate the local people in Minnedosa and area for acting so promptly.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the year 2000.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 24—The Liquor Control Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Scott Smith (Minister charged with the administration of The Liquor Control Act): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, Training and Youth (Mr. Caldwell) that leave be given to introduce Bill 24, The Liquor Control Amendment and

Consequential Amendments Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la réglementation des alcools et modifications corrélatives), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Smith: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to put forward at this time amendments which create additional opportunities for operators of licensed establishments, while balancing the public's concern for responsible sale of these licensed premises. The most significant amendment in Bill 24 allows for Sunday opening of beverage rooms, private clubs, including veterans' associations and off-sale of liquor on Sunday on retail premises such as hotel beer vendors, liquor vendors and liquor stores.

Mr. Speaker, we have kept the wants and needs of the community in mind when making these amendments and added a provision to allow municipalities to pass a by-law to prohibit this newly provided service of liquor on Sunday in licensed areas, liquor vendors and liquor stores if they so desire.

In addition and in consideration of the declining numbers of veterans able to support their legion activities, the local membership requirements for veterans' associations to hold a liquor licence has been reduced from 100 to 50 adult members.

Mr. Speaker, this act also allows the interests of the public to be taken into account at hearings when an existing licensed operation is being reviewed and adds new offence sections regarding the use of false or altered identification, as well as the consumption or possession of liquor by intoxicated persons inside licensed premises.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 35—The Improved Enforcement of Support Payments (Various Acts Amended) Act

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister responsible for the

Status of Women (Ms. McGifford), that leave be given to introduce Bill 35, The Improved Enforcement of Support Payments (Various Acts Amended) Act (Loi visant à faciliter la perception des paiements alimentaires (modification de diverses dispositions législatives), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, primarily this bill amends The Family Maintenance Act to provide for the more effective enforcement of maintenance orders in several respects.

Motion agreed to.

* (13:50)

Bill 37—The Inter-jurisdictional Support Orders Act

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Sale), that leave be given to introduce Bill 37, The Inter-jurisdictional Support Orders Act (Loi sur l'établissement et l'exécution réciproque des ordonnances alimentaires), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, this bill repeals and replaces The Reciprocal Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Act to streamline the process by which support orders are obtained, varied and recognized in inter-jurisdictional cases between Manitoba and designated reciprocating jurisdictions in Canada and elsewhere.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 301—The Bank of Nova Scotia Trust Company and National Trust Company Act

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), that leave be given to introduce Bill 301, The Bank of Nova Scotia Trust Company and National Trust Company Act (Loi

concernant la Société de Fiducie Banque de Nouvelle-Écosse et la Compagnie Trust National), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us today Mrs. Allison Molgat, Mrs. Joan Malcom, Mrs. Jean Saul and Mrs. Pat McLaughlin.

Also, we have with us in the public gallery, from Keewatin Public School from Kenora, Ontario, 27 Grades 7 and 8 students under the direction of Mr. Dave Stepanik.

Also in the public gallery we have, from Nellie McClung Collegiate, 24 Grade 11 students under the direction of Mr. Grant Caldwell. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck).

Also in the gallery we have, from Deerwood School, 31 Grade 5 students under the direction of Mrs. Margaret Monias. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Transportation and Government Services (Mr. Ashton).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

**Essential Services Act
Amendments—Health Care Workers**

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we heard in the House that the Premier said there was no proposed health essential services legislation, yet he then went on to talk about this alleged non-existent legislation. This is typical of that party. They want to have it both ways.

I would like to table if I could, Mr. Speaker, two letters. The two letters I tabled, I would like to make reference to the May 14 letter from WRHA VP of Human Resources, Wayne Byron

to the Deputy Minister of Health, Mr. Milton Sussman, and I quote: May 14. Further to your announcement regarding the proposed health essential services act, and the letter goes on.

I would also like to quote from the letter I tabled, which is May 22. That letter is a memo that Mr. Byron sent to all personal care homes, and I quote: This is to advise you that Manitoba Health has asked urban facilities to provide feedback on the proposed essential services legislation.

Mr. Speaker, this comes down to the fact that this Premier has broken his promises on health care. He has broken his promises, and it is all about a hidden agenda. So my question very simply to the Premier is: Why is the Premier trying to mislead Manitobans by saying there is no proposed draft legislation?

* (13:55)

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, proposed draft legislation. There is nothing on the Order Paper. There is literally—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, literally dozens and dozens of proposals are being referred to various bodies and citizens and groups all the time. The reason for that is, unlike members opposite that brought in the profit home care proposal and then got their proverbial—I should be careful here. They got in trouble with the public.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, we seek advice and consult with people, and there is considerable advice. There are also a number of letters from nurses, by the way, lots of letters from nurses talking about the unfairness of the existing legislation, so this is not an issue to assume anything on.

I would point out to the member opposite, though, the only misrepresentation of this process has actually taken place in this House by

him. Last week he said on page 2496 of Hansard: Why are you allowing the Labour Board to make the final decisions on your proposed essential services legislation?

Mr. Speaker, I want to table the bill for the member opposite, because, under the existing legislation which he probably has not read, the Labour Board is the final decision-making body.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am sure we all want to hear the question.

Mr. Murray: It is very clear that there is draft legislation that is out there. The Premier may want to hide from the questions. He may want to run and hide from it, but it is his legislation. There is reference to the proposed legislation in the memos, Mr. Speaker, and he should be accountable and start providing some answers.

Did Cabinet give direction to the Deputy Minister of Health to go out with this Government's proposed health essential services act legislation to elicit feedback or did that come from the minister or the Premier? Who directed the deputy minister to go out and consult, Mr. Premier?

Mr. Doer: I hope the member opposite reads sections 8(7) and 8(8) of the existing Essential Services Act and goes back to page 2496 where he says he is totally opposed to the Labour Board making decisions on the intensive care units or ERs in Manitoba health care facilities. When he reads, Mr. Speaker, he is arguing for us to change the bill, because when he reads the existing act, the board order, the Labour Board order is binding on the employer, the union and employees. He does not know what he is talking about.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. May I remind all honourable members when the Speaker rises, all members should be seated and the Speaker should be heard in silence. I would ask the cooperation of all honourable members, please.

Mr. Murray: The biggest issue around this is that the Premier will not answer the question.

Yesterday, the Premier informed the media that the draft legislation that we made public last week was outdated and that it has progressed since the May 14 letter that was tabled in this House.

My question is very simple to the Premier: Who directed the deputy minister to go out and talk about this proposed legislation?

Mr. Doer: I would be shocked if people who are involved in the responsibility of looking at various proposals are not asking their staff to go out and listen to health care management, health care employees and health care staff. I know this is a cultural change for members opposite. I know a cultural change is they used to sit in the back rooms and have Jules Benson design all the health care policies for Manitoba, or Connie Curran down in Chicago, Mr. Speaker.

We go to Manitoba people. We listen to their advice. We give them draft proposals. Ultimately, if there is a bill—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

* (14:00)

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it is appropriate to listen to nurses, health care management, health care professionals, a number of other people who are in the front lines of health care. I can assure the member opposite we are taking his advice. Last week he said, and I quote: The Labour Board should not have the final word on who would be responsible in the intensive care units or the emergency wards of Manitoba.

Under the existing 1996 law, the Labour Board of Manitoba has the final binding authority. He is asking us to change a law.

Essential Services Act Amendments—Health Care Workers

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, last week the Premier and the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) tried to convince Manitobans that when there is a conflict between patient safety and union bosses they were on the

side of patients, but in 1996 they loudly supported union bosses who jeopardized the life and limb of 99 percent of home care patients in this province.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Driedger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister of Health if he could explain why his party supported the union bosses who ignored some of Manitoba's most vulnerable citizens in their irresponsible refusal to provide essential services.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): For those members opposite who were not part of this debate, let me refresh some memories. This was a hidden proposal submitted by one Jules Benson, that well-known individual who led the health care policy of members opposite, regrettably for too many years. You might know him from a different movie, Mr. Speaker, but we know him from the home care movie.

No. 2, this—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, this proposal to privatize home care, contrary to the advice of their own home care advisory committee, contrary to the advice of experts that were working for the Department of Health, including Dr. Evelyn Shapiro, contrary even to the advice they had received from high-priced consultants, contrary to the advice they had from the disabled community, contrary to the advice they had from the Manitoba seniors, Dr. Mary Pankiw. I recall the people who led the fight against the privatization and profiteering of home care was an individual named Evan Burns, who gave one of the most wonderful speeches I have ever heard in front of this Legislature, and Mrs. Duval, another individual whose husband was receiving home care services, and Mr. Burns who was receiving home care services.

I really regret the insults the member opposite just levelled at Dr. Mary Pankiw, the

Manitoba Society of Seniors, Evelyn Shapiro, Evan Burns and Mrs. Duval. That is why they failed and that is why they retreated, because they were not with the people. I do not apologize for us being with the people on that issue.

Mrs. Driedger: I would like to ask the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) if he could explain, if the Premier will trust him to answer the question, why Manitobans should believe them when they and their party voted against measures to protect patient safety in both 1996 and 1997, and instead supported the labour bosses, the union bosses, instead of patient safety.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, obviously the member opposite who poses the question is not talking with her leader, who last week said, and I would quote this because it shows the inconsistency of their position: How can you have the Labour Board deal with matters of ever-changing needs in our hospitals, the ICUs and ERs?

He goes on for two or three questions, claiming that we were going to change the law dealing with the Labour Board. The Labour Board now has the final, binding say. On the one hand, the members opposite say they are not experienced enough on health care matters to deal with the ERs, and on the other hand it is in the existing law. That is—*[interjection]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite talks about being nailed. He still has not asked questions on the follow-up of his question on the illegal Crocus Fund. We are waiting for that question. Maybe some—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So here we have a total inconsistency on the status quo versus criticisms of the status quo made by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray). I dare say he is not—no, I will not go there.

Secondly, last year when we came into office—*[interjection]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Health to guarantee to Manitobans that he will not change The Essential Services Act, a good one in Manitoba right now which protects patients first, patient safety, in an attempt to win applause at the next MFL convention.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, first of all, again last year in Estimates the Labour critic asked the Labour Minister whether the Labour Minister was responsible for The Essential Services Act. She said: In my capacity as Minister of the Civil Service Commission I am responsible for the act, not in my capacity as Minister of Labour.

That speaks to a broader issue which members opposite have also been misrepresenting this week that any issues such as this go way beyond just the Ministry of Health. There is some consultation going on in the Ministry of Health.

Let me continue, Mr. Speaker, because—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: You know, the noise from across the way, Mr. Speaker. If I can continue—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last summer, when we were confronted with wages for the technical, lab and X-ray staff that was equal to or lower than P.E.I. for last place in Canada, a fact that was contributing considerably to both labour relations and patient care tension, and, on the other hand, a situation where we were not able to recruit and retain enough of our professional staff, we were given management advice of how many people would be essential on the basis of a potential strike, and 95

percent of the employees were declared by management under the legislation to be essential.

Having said that, there was no remedy. There was no remedy. For example, when 100 percent of the police officers in Winnipeg—or I dare say less than 100 percent because management would be excluded from it—when they are declared essential in Winnipeg, they have the right of arbitration. When firefighters are declared essential in Manitoba, they have the right of arbitration.

Here we have a group of people certified under The Labour Act who are deemed to be essential in 95 percent of the cases with no remedy. Mr. Speaker, we raised the same issue with members opposite about patient care when it came to ambulances, because the ambulance attendants wanted arbitration not this kind of proposal. They felt they could provide much better care to people.

So the legislation has weaknesses, as pointed out by members opposite, on the Labour Board. It has weaknesses in terms of having a 95% application without a remedy. It has weaknesses for purposes of employees in health care, but there is nothing on the Order Paper right now. We are not—

An Honourable Member: Right now.

* (14:10)

Mr. Doer: Right now there is nothing on the Order Paper, and we know there are weaknesses. There are deficiencies in existing legislation, but we are spending our time, and we are going to continue to spend our time to continue to consult with patients, with employees. Life-and-limb situations, bottom line, will not be in jeopardy with anything we will do in government.

Essential Services Act Amendments—Health Care Workers

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, what we have heard from the Premier is an absolute insult to the patients of this province with regard to essential services. The Premier has stood in his place as though he is the new Minister of Labour. We have asked questions of

the Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett), the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak), and on each and every question the Premier has gotten up to answer the question.

My question is directed specifically to the Minister of Health, because it is Manitoba patients who depend on the direction of this Minister of Health with regard to essential services for them. I want to ask the Minister of Health, because the letter here from Mr. Byron was directed to his deputy minister, and I want to quote from this letter. I quote: Further to the announcement regarding the proposed health essential services act—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite knows full well that a question must be brief. A preamble need not exceed one carefully drawn sentence. The member is going on and on and on. Surely he has come up with a question by now.

Mr. Speaker: On the same point of order, the honourable Member for Russell.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, with the greatest of respect for the House Leader, on the same point of order, I was simply ending my preamble with a quotation from a letter when the House Leader stood up. I would ask that he would at least give the dignity to Manitobans to hear what it is the representative of RHAs is saying to Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Government House Leader, I would like to take this opportunity to remind all honourable members that according to *Beauchesne's* Citation 409(2) a preamble should not exceed one carefully drawn sentence.

* * *

Mr. Derkach: I thank you for your ruling, but I would like to ask the Minister of Health whether he can indicate to this House whether it was under his direction that his deputy minister made

the announcement on May 9, 2001, regarding the proposed health essential services act to the RHAs of this province.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, just to respond to the member's specific question, I basically have a two-part answer to that response. Firstly, we do not want to do what happened during the home care debacle when members opposite secretly tried to privatize home care and secretly, behind closed doors, put in place a plan to privatize home care, which the Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), I am shocked and surprised, clearly obviously is supporting.

The second part of the answer—[interjection]

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable Member for Turtle Mountain, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the Minister of Health, the Premier (Mr. Doer) would not let him answer the question for the Member for Charleswood. Now when he gets his chance to stand on his haunches he does decide to answer her question. Call him to order.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Health, on the same point of order.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting we hear about proposed draft legislation. We hear about rules that are being invoked when there is even no reference to *Beauchesne's*, but what we do hear is members opposite going back to the home care debate and trying to make their position on the home care debate. I am happy to debate that any time.

Mr. Speaker: Order. On the point of order raised by the honourable Member for Turtle Mountain, I would like to remind all honourable members when rising on a point of order it should be a breach of the rules or unparliamentary language. I would have to say under this point of order it is a debate over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, the second part to my answer, I can indicate to members opposite,

again, because of that experience during the '90s, we canvass and we seek consultation and advice on a whole variety of issues across the province. We go out, we talk to people, and we seek consultation and advice on a whole variety of areas in the health care field.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Health indicate to this House and to Manitobans, whom he has met with, who have asked for this legislation, when in fact the professionals, the experts in the field, the people who run the RHAs, have expressed significant concern about who is going to make the decisions as they relate to Emergency Services? I want to quote from the letter. I quote: The determination as to which services constitute essential services in the health context requires expertise which, with all due respect, is beyond the usual experiences of the board.

Mr. Chomiak: I think it is very interesting that the member opposite quoted a particular criticism of the present act that we have in essential services, and he has quoted the difficulties with using the Labour Board to determine essential services, and I receive his advice.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable Member for River East, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): That kind of an answer from the Minister of Health is a slap in the face to the professionals that were quoted by my colleague in his question.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Health, on the same point of order.

Mr. Chomiak: It is quite clear the member opposite does not have a point of order. It is quite clear that the members opposite do not even have an argument.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Member for River East, she does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, can I now ask the Minister of Health if he would finally come clean with Manitobans and people in the professional field of health and tell Manitobans whether or not he is going to be bringing forth this proposed legislation that is referred to in Mr. Byron's letter?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I think that members opposite have indicated they have concerns with the present Essential Services Act insofar as they have concern about utilizing the Labour Relations Board with respect to this act. So we will take the advice from members opposite, but there is no bill on the Order Paper concerning that matter the member is referring to.

Essential Services Act Amendments—Health Care Workers

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): Well, Mr. Speaker, the Premier (Mr. Doer) and the minister both know that for a deputy minister to begin an intensive consultation process, they would require the political direction of that minister and that Premier.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of Health or the Premier if the reason why they will not be forthcoming with the people of Manitoba is because their plan is, and I quote from the letter of Mr. Byron, to dilute the provisions of the current Essential Services Act. Is this about diluting the current bill?

* (14:20)

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my previous response, the Department of Health consults on a variety of issues. There is no bill on the Order Paper.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask this minister how he can expect Manitobans to believe him. I know, as a former minister, that deputies do not consult unless they are directed by their minister. I want to ask him again: Is the reason he is denying his Government's initiative because their intention was not to fix essential services or make it better, but to dilute it to serve the union interests in this province? And I would ask the Minister of Health why then is it the proposal that he instructed his deputy to take for

consultation does nothing but dilute the current bill at the expense of patients? Why is that the proposal that he authorized to go forward?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, what I do note is the members opposite are focussing on the utilization or non-utilization of the Labour Board in matters dealing with essential services. I note that members opposite brought in a bill that in fact utilizes the Labour Board for determination with respect to—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, *Beauchesne's* 417 indicates that members should not provoke debate. At no time in my question did I reference the Labour Board. I simply wanted to know why their proposed bill, as their own Health officials indicate, was designed to do nothing but dilute the current bill at the expense of patients in our province.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Health, on the same point of order?

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Members are talking about a proposed draft bill, they have been doing it for a week, and a proposed draft bill that—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I think part of the difficulty they are having is their conflicting views on the bill between the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray) and the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik). They do not even have their own act together on this which is causing difficulty in terms of asking questions.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, I would like to take this opportunity to remind all honourable ministers Citation 417: Answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and not promote debate.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Health, to conclude his answer.

Mr. Chomiak: As I indicated, there is a whole variety of issues that the Department of Health discusses and seeks information on. Mr. Speaker, that is called consultation, something that was sorely lacking when we saw Connie Curran come in, when we saw frozen food come in, and we saw the SmartHealth experiment.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, on a new question.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, is the minister now telling the people of Manitoba that he accepts no responsibility for what his deputy is doing, that he never saw this, that he does not know what his deputy is doing, that he does not know that his deputy minister is going out meeting with health officials about diluting, in the words of those health officials, legislation that is essential to patient care in Manitoba?

Is he telling the people of Manitoba he does not know what is happening in his own shop?

Mr. Chomiak: No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of Health now that he has sort of, kind of, maybe accepted responsibility: Was it his plan to dilute essential service agreements that protect the life and limb of patients because that was demanded of health care unions in this province? Be honest, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Chomiak: The members opposite have raised a variety of issues, a whole plethora of issues concerning proposed draft legislation. In the member's question he talked about maybe, perhaps, et cetera. He is dealing in a hypothetical universe. At this point, there is no legislation on the Order Paper.

Mr. Praznik: I would like to ask this Minister of Health: Does he believe it is hypothetical that his deputy minister has gone out and announced to all health care leaders in this province that their Government would be bringing in legislation which those health officials upon examination have said dilutes the current bill to the detriment of patients?

Is he telling us this is just being imagined, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Chomiak: There is a variety of issues, a variety of initiatives, a variety of plans and other matters that we consult with on a regular basis with the community and throughout the province. Some of these come to fruition; some of them do not.

Mr. Speaker, the only useful and accurate information that I have received from members opposite is the fact that they do not like the Labour Relations Board being involved in the essential services matter, whose advice we will take.

Black Bears—Riding Mountain Area Report Release

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, on a day when we will be honouring Gil Molgat, my question to the Minister of Conservation deals with issues that Gil Molgat would have been concerned with: openness in government, wildlife and the region not far from Ste. Rose.

I ask the Minister of Conservation whether he will publicly release a report, which was apparently squelched by the previous government, done by Paul Paquet which was entitled "Black Bear Ecology in the Riding Mountain." Will the minister provide us today with an update on the status of the black bear in the Riding Mountain and what the status of the implementation of the recommendations of the Paquet report is?

Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister of Conservation): In fact, Mr. Speaker, just this morning, in my morning meeting with staff, that was one of the subject items that I inquired about, not just that report though but other reports that apparently had been done previously. The governments of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba apparently had done a report at one time. I am currently trying to get all those reports together with a view to maybe revisiting that area, particularly the Riding Mountain park area.

Tuberculosis Outbreak—Wildlife Status Report

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): My supplementary to the minister. I asked for more details on the status of the black bear, and in particular, given the concern with tuberculosis expressed yesterday and the finding of tuberculosis in black bears in Michigan, has the minister's department been involved in testing of black bears for tuberculosis? Can the minister give us an update?

* (14:30)

Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister of Conservation): Mr. Speaker, I can indicate to the member that we in the Department of Conservation, of course, are very concerned about the health of wildlife in the Riding Mountain area.

It was for that reason that our Government approved a \$200,000 program over a five-year period that would enhance the management program. As an example of what is contained in the program, we have instituted, enhanced a surveillance program. We are monitoring, for example, the elk population, the bear population, the deer population. We are also putting in fencing to reduce the contact between the wild animals from the domestic animals.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, we are doing research on the movement of elk, deer and bear, particularly on the edges of the mountain area.

Black Bears—Riding Mountain Area Impact on Tourism

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): My supplementary to the Minister of Tourism: Given the importance of black bear in a number of different ways to tourism in Manitoba, I would ask the Minister responsible for Tourism if he can tell us about his plans in relationship to black bear and tourism.

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism): I thank the member for the question. I do appreciate the fact that tourism is really important and certainly the largest

growing area that we will see in the next decade and further on.

I often have had a chance to hike and bike in Riding Mountain National Park and certainly the wildlife is plentiful and the black bears as well. We respect that. I know a lot of our friends south of the border, as well, come up to Riding Mountain National Park and the Russell area to fish trout and so on. I just want to thank that member for the question because tourism is really important to the province, and we respect all the wildlife in the province. We know that this is really important to people coming to Manitoba to spend their dollars from the U.S. They really appreciate the wildlife we have here. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Marion Clemens

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in this Chamber today to welcome Marion Clemens from Oakbank. Marion has been a pillar of the Springfield area for over four decades. Today, she has joined us for the first time in the press gallery. For the past 10 years, Marion has worked for the *Clipper*, *The Beaver Magazine* and *The Carillon* newspapers, covering happenings and events for all of Springfield.

Whenever something happens in Oakbank, Dugald, Anola or Hazelridge, people can count on Marion to be there to cover it. Every week she keeps residents of Springfield up to date on the accomplishments and sorrows of their neighbours. Marion's Coffee Corner column keeps people up to date on the local gossip and upcoming events. Springfield has been blessed to have someone with Marion's hard work and dedication play such an important role in our community.

Marion began her career working for the *Kanada Kurier*, the national German language newspaper. She has taught generations of children in Springfield how to play musical instruments at Marlow's Music and has operated

rabbit and goat farms on her property near Birds Hill Park. Before Birds Hill Park came along, Marion even operated a restaurant and go-cart track for Springfield families to come and relax at.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on behalf of all the residents of Springfield, both past and present, I would like to extend thanks to Marion Clemens for her years of service to our community. I, for one, do not know what Springfield would be like without her. Thank you, Marion.

John Taylor Collegiate Teachers

Mr. Jim Rondeau (Assiniboia): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise today to bring all members' attention to the efforts of two remarkable teachers who have taught for a combined total of 62 years and have worked at John Taylor Collegiate for a combined total of 43 years. Mr. Jim Stewart and Ross Shaver have been the band, choir, drama, jazz and theatre instructors at John Taylor for many years and have worked with literally thousands of students in classes and in producing musicals and performances during their tenure at JT.

I had the pleasure of attending the finale and farewell for these dedicated individuals at their final performance at the Lyric Theatre in Assiniboine Park this last Sunday. There was a total of nine groups of performers at this event, including five different jazz bands, four choirs in concert and symphonic bands. Their performance was excellent, with hundreds of people in attendance to hear their students and bid a fond farewell to these dedicated teachers.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt once stated that the most important legacy we can leave is not a monetary one, but instead, a human one. I can assure all my honourable colleagues that the legacy Mr. Jim Stewart and Mr. Ross Shaver leave to Assiniboia and this province is truly very rich, indeed. The wonderful memories for the high school plays and performances, the increased confidence and self-assurance of their students, and the lifelong friendships that were created by the efforts of these two men will

indeed be a rich legacy that will last in the minds for thousands of John Taylor students and graduates.

I would like to publicly thank both Ross and Jim for caring and giving their students 100 percent. Teachers can and do make a difference every day, and as a government and as an individual MLA, I do appreciate the special efforts that are made on behalf of students in this province. We, indeed, have a very bright future if we can continue to have teachers such as Ross Shaver and Jim Stewart in Manitoba. Thank you very much for your efforts.

Fort Garry Legion Poppy Trust Fund

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is my great pleasure to, once again, attend the Fort Garry Legion Poppy Trust Committee's presentation of five generous donations from the Poppy Fund last evening, on June 5. These recipients received a financial contribution in recognition of their valiant efforts to improve the quality of life for patients receiving care in our health care facilities.

The recipients of this year's donations include the Victoria Hospital Chronic Care Support, the Riverview HC Chronic Care Support, Misericordia Chronic Care, specifically Eye Care, the Manitoba Nursing Research Institute at the University of Manitoba, specifically for research in care enhancement for cancer patients and quality of life in long-term care and the Joint Hospital Sick Visiting. I would like to point out to all members that the Joint Hospital Sick Visiting program involves legionnaires visiting patients in Winnipeg hospitals. This program, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is very actively supported by the Fort Garry Legion and is most appreciated by the patients who are visited in the hospital.

* (14:40)

I would like to congratulate all of these programs for their invaluable effort to enhance the care the citizens of Manitoba receive in our health care facilities. I would encourage all members to join with me in extending our gratitude to the men and women of the Fort Garry Legion Poppy Trust Committee for their

significant contribution to health services in their community through both their fundraising and volunteer efforts.

Mr. Brian Cutts, the chairman of the Poppy Trust Fund and all the Fort Garry Legionnaires, should be commended for their great work on behalf of all Manitobans. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

High School Credit Requirements

Mr. Cris Aglugub (The Maples): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was pleased to be present recently at Maples Collegiate with the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) to announce new flexibility and choice for Manitoba's high school students. The changes will allow high school students to obtain credits for more locally developed courses, distance education courses, post-secondary courses and community service.

These changes are necessary to better recognize the new environment of high school education. These changes were made following province-wide consultation on proposed changes to course credit requirements, including input from local school boards, the Manitoba Teachers' Society and parent councils.

Through consensus, changes have been made in order to increase choices and offer opportunities for Manitoba high school students. Maples Collegiate already offers flexibility of this kind to its students, and I am glad to see this being expanded across the system.

The key changes to course requirements include a simplification of categories for compulsory and optional credits, greater recognition for distance learning and post-secondary courses, along with course credit being given for community service to begin in 2002-2003. Providing course credit for community service fulfils an election commitment, while giving credit for post-secondary courses will strengthen linkages between high schools, universities and colleges. The added flexibility in this system will allow individual schools to develop speciality areas in courses representing local interests and address areas of high demand.

Our Government is renewing hope for the young people of Manitoba by providing the best

possible educational opportunities. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Pharmaceutical Products for Children with Cancer

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise today to talk briefly about concerns in relation to access to pharmaceutical products for children with cancer. This is an issue that I have raised on a number of occasions over the last several weeks and has been a result of the institution of a form of service at Misericordia and various other institutions which has been sort of a shuffle service, shall we say.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

I understand there have been some quite positive movements in the last few days and positive meetings. I would like to compliment the minister on what appears to be an emerging resolution to the concerns which have been raised. Mr. Speaker, I, and the families of children with cancer, will await the final announcement and the final resolution of this issue.

There is one matter, however, where I would caution the minister. Children with cancer have for many years had their chemotherapy and other critical medications covered by the provincial government. There is a wide variety of reasons for this which I will not go into here. Indeed, at one point the former Conservative government made a move to change this and there was such a broad protest and recognition as a result that the policy was appropriate and a good one. So I would indicate to the minister the importance of continuing in this respect the existing policy.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

House Business

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, before proceeding to the condolence of the late Senator Molgat, I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Law Amendments will meet on Monday, June 11, at 10 a.m. to deal with bills referred.

Mr. Speaker, I neglected to list the bills that are being referred: Bill 8, The Mines and

Minerals Amendment Act; Bill 9, The Vital Statistics Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Bill 12, The Real Property Amendment Act; Bill 13, The Social Services Appeal Board and Consequential Amendments Act; Bill 14, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act; Bill 15, The Mortgage Amendment Act; Bill 29, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act; Bill 30, The Securities Amendment Act.

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Law Amendments will meet on Monday, June 11, 2001, at 10 a.m., to deal with the following bills: Bill 8, The Mines and Minerals Amendment Act; Bill 9, The Vital Statistics Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Bill 12, The Real Property Amendment Act; Bill 13, The Social Services Appeal Board and Consequential Amendments Act; Bill 14, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act; Bill 15, The Mortgage Amendment Act; Bill 29, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act; Bill 30, The Securities Amendment Act.

Motion of Condolence

Gildas Molgat

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): I move, seconded by the Deputy Leader of the Conservative Party, the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer), that the House convey to the family of the late Gildas Molgat, who served as a member of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, its sincere sympathy in their bereavement and its appreciation of his devotion to duty in a useful life of active community and public service, and that Mr. Speaker be requested to forward a copy of this resolution to the family.

Motion presented.

Mr. Doer: I rise to reflect on the life of Senator Molgat, and I would like to express my sympathy to his wife Allison and the family members who are here today. I think it is safe to say, Mr. Speaker, that this condolence discussion today is a deeply moving one for all of us with the absolute sincerity and dedication in which Senator Molgat pursued his public life, his public contributions and his public profile. This is an individual that many of us knew and all of

us respected, and I, too, respected the life of Senator Molgat and held him in very high esteem for the contributions that he provided to his province, to his community and to Canada.

I actually had the pleasure of going to a political science class at the University of Manitoba and listening to Senator Molgat present his views as Leader of the then Liberal Party of Manitoba. I was quite impressed with his passion, with his articulation of the issues, with his ability to take a dry course, if you will, take it from its antiseptic analysis to make it real-life issues of importance not only to the students who were at the university class at the time but also to all of us in terms of what it really meant to him and therefore to many others to be involved in public life.

We were all very, very impressed with his presentation, and, as I recall it, the questions and answers continued to flow for well beyond the ordinary period of the class and well beyond the structured time at the university. There were not very many people or students rushing to leave that opportunity and that ability to be informed so directly on the issues that face us as politicians of the day and policy for the future.

Mr. Speaker, I also recall Senator Molgat often talking about the Laurier community and the need for adequate and decent and sustainable funding for Francophone education services. He talked to us directly about the trailer and the school and what it meant to have, what he believed to be, a second-class facility, which he believed should be first class because of the people in that community and the language needs he had.

* (14:50)

He never tired of having this vision for a bilingual Canada and having bilingual services available where numbers warrant and where tradition and cultural and heritage warrant here in the province of Manitoba. He always presented these views in such, again, informed ways, in passionate ways for his belief, and in ways that allowed us to move ahead as opposed to stalling.

I remember, Mr. Speaker, and I am speaking from personal experience, when I learned from

the federal Defence Minister the issue of reserves. There was a number of reserves that were at risk here in Winnipeg and across Manitoba. I recall being a member of the all-party committee, with the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer), the Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen) and the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), talking about the whole issue of the reserves in Canada and their role in our province of Manitoba, and who better to advise the federal Defence Minister and to advise all Canadians on the historic and community strengths of our reserves, on the military essence of why we have them and the need to find ways to keep them relevant into the future. In other words, this was not a report just to protect the status quo, but it was a report to celebrate the history of our reserves, to celebrate the traditions and the battles that the reserves had won or the forces had won over the decades that Canada was engaged in war, but make those reserves relevant for our future.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, in February, I was with the Prime Minister in Team Canada, and we made a point of departing from the official tour to visit the cemetery of the slain Canadian War Veterans in Hong Kong. It was very, very moving for me. Doug Nairn, from the Fort Garry Horse, who is known to members in this Chamber, was the Commanding Officer in charge of this remembrance. We participated with members of the Hong Kong Veterans Association, but it was very clear to me, listening in late February to the veterans, to the regiments that still maintain a presence in Hong Kong, to the school children and others, that they recall the anniversary of that war and of those deaths. They recall that Senator Molgat led the Canadian presence to honour the dead and honour the brave at Hong Kong on behalf of all of us.

So I just mentioned three or four examples over a number of years where I had the absolute privilege to meet a charming, warm, passionate, dedicated individual. I think all of us know that any time we met with Senator Molgat and any time we had the opportunity to listen to him, we came away from it wiser, perhaps a little more reflective, and always with a strong sense of Canada and a strong sense of Manitoba with our

multicultural and Francophone makeup in our country.

It is certainly important to mention that Senator Molgat served in this Legislature for five terms—five terms. Very few people are granted that privilege. He served from 1953 to 1969. From 1961 to 1969, he was the Leader of the Liberal Party of Manitoba, and he served as Leader of the Official Opposition. He was appointed to the Senate in 1970. I think it is safe to say that his terms in the Senate were not terms that disallowed him from participating in Canadian decision making and Canadian life. I am not a fan of the Senate, but there are some senators that I am big fans of. Senator Molgat was one of those individuals that carried on his public duties after he was appointed to the Senate and carried them on again with dignity and with class.

He served in the Senate for two terms as Speaker, and he served, I believe, with distinction.

He touched many lives of people in Manitoba. I mentioned the military community where he was very involved as the Honorary Colonel of the Winnipeg Rifles, and I know the Royal Winnipeg Rifles and I know the Fort Garry Horse considered him also very, very important for their history as well.

His former colleagues in the Legislature will remember his contributions. There is one individual who was in the Legislature when Senator Molgat served, and I am sure the Liberal Party will remember his dedication to public life and to improving the working lives of all Manitobans.

It has been said that Senator Molgat never forgot his roots, and I can attest to that. Ste. Rose, Laurier, that community was always very much part of his inquiries, of his interests, of his advice whenever we had an opportunity to meet. I knew that he and Allison lived in the city of Winnipeg and often travelled to Ottawa for his duties and internationally on behalf of the Government of Canada or the people of Canada, but he always maintained a keen interest in his roots and his community.

I know prior to being appointed Speaker in the Senate, he would give tours in the Senate to visiting Manitoba delegations, and he would point to his desk in the Senate Chamber which read the Senator from Ste. Rose, again very consistent with his roots and his values from that community.

I know he kept in touch with a lot of friends and relatives and people in Winnipeg and Manitoba. I know he kept in touch with the local issues because, again, he raised them all the time.

Senator Molgat contributed much to our country and our province. I was saddened I was out of town when his tragic death took place, his unexpected death took place. I know he was looking forward to retiring with Allison, but I want to say to Allison and the family that Senator Molgat will always be remembered by me and by this Legislature and by his home town, and we are proud of his public service to Manitoba and to Canada.

He is a model of leadership and dignity for all of us to follow. We celebrate his life, and we offer our condolences to his family.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to follow the Premier (Mr. Doer) in providing and extending my sympathy to Gildas Molgat's wife, Allison, who is here, the members of the family, Joan Malcom and Jean Saul, and to friend Pat McLaughlin.

It is fitting that today we pay tribute to Senator Gil Molgat for a life during which he made from day to day, from week to week, from month to month, from year to year a major contribution to Manitoba and to Canada.

I would like to, in paying this tribute, review briefly Senator Molgat's life, his birth in 1927, attending Ste. Rose School, St. Paul's College, the University of Manitoba. He graduated in 1947 with a Bachelor of Commerce, Honours, and a Gold Medallist, clearly an outstanding student and an achiever at a young age.

Senator Molgat served with the Royal Winnipeg Rifles starting in 1946, the year before he graduated and continuing till 1966. He

became an Honorary Lieutenant Colonel in 1966 and an Honorary Colonel in 1985, and he continued his interest in the Armed Forces and the reserves day to day throughout his career, and I think in some respects perhaps even particularly when he was in the Senate. It is noteworthy that he was founding president of the Manitoba Army Cadet League in 1971. Senator Molgat was the president of the Army Cadet League of Canada from 1977 to 1979, a time that he was in fact in the Senate. To go back and look at his political career, go back to his first election in 1953 in Ste. Rose and his election as an MLA, it is interesting that, as a newly elected MLA, he was immediately recognized for having a promising future because he was the one who was asked to move the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

* (15:00)

He did this, of course, as a backbencher, but as a particularly promising backbencher. Early on in his first year he spoke in the Legislature on causes which he felt strongly about and which were important to his constituency. He spoke up on behalf of young farmers and the need for support for young farmers. He spoke of the need for better drainage during the session of 1955, the problems of the spring flooding in 1956.

Again and again, his concerns for farmers spoke through. In 1956, he supported a resolution calling for the introduction of crop insurance on a federal and provincial basis. In 1956, he had a good sense of humour; he was reported as commenting in the press that politicians should find out what they are talking about before they open their mouths. That was a maxim that Senator Molgat followed in his career. When he spoke up, he usually knew what he was talking about, he had done the research, and he knew his subject very, very well.

In 1958, Senator Molgat was married to Allison. He was re-elected that same year, and then again, of course, in 1959. In 1961, Senator Molgat was elected Leader of the Liberal Party. In a convention in April, there were four who sought the leadership. Senator Molgat emerged triumphant and spoke of the very promising future before a gathering of some 1200 Liberals

at the Marlborough Hotel, heading off his leadership and winding up the convention of that year.

Senator Molgat, in his acceptance speech, started off in his traditional, in a sense, quick, short, concise and humble fashion. We have held a contest, and I quote: You have spoken. He was talking to the delegates. I humbly thank you. Shortly after Senator Molgat had spoken, D.L. Campbell, who had just stepped down from the leadership, came to the stage, and he noticed that one of the other candidates, the mayor of Portage la Prairie, Lloyd Henderson, had jumped forward, in providing a unified view of what was happening with the Liberal Party, had given a generous kiss on the new leader's wife, Allison Molgat. So D.L. Campbell said, and I quote: You know, said D.L. Campbell, as he leaned—this is how it was reported in the press the next day—confidingly toward the delegates, the wife of a leader meets many penalties. That becomes obvious to all of you when it involves kissing such characters as Lloyd Henderson. If she had known that this would happen, she probably would have persuaded Gildas not to run.

Anyway, I think it is quite clear that Allison has been a very important figure all the way along in Senator Molgat's career, a tremendous support and a lot of ups and downs. I think the partnership was a tremendous political partnership for all of Manitoba.

I think Senator Molgat was the first fully bilingual Leader of the Liberal Party. I think it is worthwhile going back to his first address in the Legislature as Leader of the Opposition, and I quote from his address: I accept this post of great responsibility in all humbleness. It is my hope that I can follow in the tradition of past leaders of the opposition and contribute to the welfare of the province of Manitoba. I will endeavour to do my work in a conscientious way above personal recrimination on the basis of policies.

I think it is a tribute to Senator Molgat that throughout his career he managed to rise above the personal recriminations. He rose above the petty things that can happen in politics. He rose above those kinds of situations. He achieved a tremendous respect from people of all political

stripes, and he managed in his speeches to sprinkle them well with humour.

In his first speech to castigate the Roblin government for their Throne Speech of 1962, he commented on the fact that there was little overall vision but rather it was kind of a motley mix of initiatives. Senator Molgat, leader at that point, said: The most persistent image is one of ministers running about hurriedly sticking their fingers in the dike. He was referring to the fact that they were trying to cover up for the problems here, there and everywhere which were emerging, but that sort of image and that sort of picture were typical of Senator Molgat.

The senator then fought, as Leader of the Opposition, the elections of 1962 and of 1966, and continued as leader until he resigned in early 1969, then moving on to become a senator in 1970. As has already been mentioned, his career in the Senate was not one of standing idly by but one of getting very much involved. Senator Molgat served on the Special Joint Committee of the Senate in the House of Commons on the Constitution of Canada, a committee which produced the MacGuigan-Molgat report.

He was on the committee looking at the reform of the Senate in Canada in 1982, the Molgat-Cosgrove Report. He was Deputy Speaker of the Senate in 1983 to 1984 and then re-elected Deputy Speaker 1989 to 1991. In 1987 to '88, he served as chairman of the Senate Committee of the Whole on the Meech Lake Constitutional Accord, and in 1991 he was appointed Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, becoming Deputy Leader of the Government in 1993 and then later the Speaker of the Senate.

Throughout his career in the Senate, Senator Molgat made day-to-day, week-by-week enormous contributions. I can speak from personal experience. When I was elected and appointed initially to the federal Cabinet, Senator Gil Molgat was extraordinarily helpful to me on a personal level and to my family at the time of my appointment, helping to guide me through some difficult situations, to provide wise counsel. He did this periodically during my tenure as a member of Parliament, and more recently, during my leadership of the Liberal Party in Manitoba.

I think it is particularly noteworthy that, even though he had not been MLA for Ste. Rose since 1969, he had kept right up until his death in very close contact with constituents in the area who spoke fondly of him, and who, when they had a problem, knew that they had somebody who would pay attention in the federal government.

Senator Molgat played a number of roles, not all political. He was the founding chairman of the St. Boniface Hospital Research Foundation, an institution which has grown in importance and in stature and in contributions to the community over the years since it began in 1971. There was Senator Molgat helping to get it started and to begin an institution, a research foundation which has made an extraordinary contribution to our province.

* (15:10)

Senator Molgat was a contributor to the Francophone community in Manitoba in many different ways. He was a member, of course, of the Société franco-manitobaine.

Il a fait des contributions énormes à notre province au point de vue des Francophones du Manitoba. C'est extraordinaire ce qu'il a fait depuis longtemps pour les gens de la communauté francophone de notre province.

Translation

Hè made enormous contributions to our province from the point of view of Manitoba's Francophones. It is extraordinary what he did over a long time for the people of the Francophone community of our province.

English

Senator Molgat played, from time to time, an important political role—president of the Liberal Party in 1973. He was chairman of the Manitoba federal Liberal campaign in 1972 and played an important role in many, many other election campaigns, not only those in which he himself was running for office. He was a man of tremendous wisdom and experience. Senator Molgat's passing is an extraordinary loss for me personally, for us who are legislators, for people in Manitoba.

I would like to close with just an extension of my very best wishes to Allison Molgat and the family and a recognition of the extraordinary role that Allison herself has played in Manitoba, along with Gil, for many years.

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleagues, I would like to extend our sincere condolences to Allison Molgat and the family that accompany her here on the special day that we talk about a wonderful Manitoban and a wonderful Canadian. Senator Gildas Molgat.

Mr. Molgat was born and raised in Ste. Rose du Lac, the child of French immigrants who ran a general store in that community. He went on to attend the University of Manitoba, where he won the gold medal in commerce at the age of 20 years. After serving with the Royal Winnipeg Rifles Militia unit, he went into small business. Shortly thereafter he entered the political arena.

Senator Molgat's record of service to Manitobans is clearly well documented by the Premier and by the Liberal Leader today. He served as the Liberal MLA for Ste. Rose from 1953 to 1969, and he also served as Leader of the Liberal Party of Manitoba from 1961 to 1969. As well, he served as the national Liberal Party president.

I think, as the Premier made comments, there was a member of our party, the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), who had the honour to sit in this Chamber with Senator Molgat. The Member for Lakeside unfortunately could not be here, but he asked if we would personally extend our condolences to Mrs. Molgat on his behalf. He regrets not being here, but he said he enjoyed very much the opportunity to sit in this Chamber with Senator Molgat.

I should also say to Mrs. Molgat that I, too, have a relationship with Senator Molgat. That, of course, is through my father-in-law, Senator Douglas Everett, who himself was a senator. Through many times, I can tell you that he would share stories with me. I think he might even take credit for some of the successes that Senator Molgat had, whether it was running for the Liberal Party president. He certainly speaks

very fondly about his personal relation with Senator Molgat.

In 1970, Senator Molgat was appointed by Prime Minister Trudeau. He was the Senate's second-longest serving member and had just completed a rare two terms as Speaker, a role for which he was very well respected.

As someone once said, the world is divided into people who do things and people who get the credit. Senator Molgat was a member of the former camp. He knew how to get things done, and he did not seek recognition for his selfless efforts.

Upon Senator Molgat's untimely passing, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien noted: He was a man of great warmth, good humour and a raconteur par excellence. I was impressed by his deep commitments to public service and to making Canada a better place to live.

This, Mr. Speaker, is a sentiment that has been echoed today in this Chamber as well as by many other Manitobans. Senator Molgat was known as a gentleman politician who rose above partisan issues. He also had a reputation as a man of great calm and great admiration. Given the thrust and parry of politics, this is clearly a quality to be admired.

Senator Molgat was held in particularly high regard in his hometown of Ste. Rose, to which he remained connected throughout his political life. He was praised for being able to maintain his roots while serving Manitobans in Ottawa. He never let an opportunity go by to brag about the benefits of being a Manitoban.

Political friends and foes remember Senator Molgat was a hardworking patriot who loved his job and loved his country. He was a gentleman and a diplomat. He was known to treat everyone with an equal degree of respect, whether they were a head of state or a young person involved in a favourite charity or organization such as the Cadets.

Senator Molgat was respected by his peers and had friends of all ages in all political parties world-wide. He was proud to be a Franco-Manitoban and a westerner. He will be

remembered as a true Canadian who served his country well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Monsieur le président, je prends la parole aujourd'hui pour reconnaître le grand dévouement du Sénateur Gildas Molgat qui est décédé le 28 février dernier. Il était respecté de tous ceux et celles qui l'ont connu comme collègue et comme ami.

L'honorable Gildas Molgat, qui venait juste de quitter ses fonctions comme président du Sénat, avait servi les Manitobains et les Canadiens depuis près de 50 ans. Son entrée sur la scène politique s'est faite quand il a été élu comme député libéral de Sainte-Rose à la Législature du Manitoba en 1953. Suite à sa première élection, il a été réélu cinq fois, ce qui prouve qu'il était un député à l'écoute des citoyens et qui s'est dévoué à les représenter.

Entre 1961 et 1969 il a servi sa province en tant que chef du parti Libéral du Manitoba et chef de l'opposition. Ses qualités de leadership lui ont valu l'admiration des Manitobains et Manitobaines.

En 1970, Gildas Molgat est nommé au Sénat par le premier ministre de l'époque, Pierre Elliott Trudeau. Il est nommé président du Sénat en 1994.

Au cours de sa longue carrière politique, il a fait preuve d'un engagement profond envers l'intérêt public. En septembre je suis allé visiter le Sénateur Thériault à Sainte-Anne au Nouveau-Brunswick. La première personne qu'il a mentionnée du Manitoba était le Sénateur Molgat. Reconnu pour son intégrité et sa sincérité, il était vu comme un grand défenseur des droits des minorités francophones, tant au niveau national que dans sa province natale.

Cette automne je suis allé à Laurier et à Sainte-Rose faire des consultations sur le Budget avec mon fils Pascal et j'ai visité les familles de Laurier, où on a mis en place une nouvelle école pour les Francophones. Je sais qu'il en a parlé avec le premier ministre du Manitoba et qu'il a apprécié les choses qu'on a fait pour les Franco-Manitobains.

* (15:20)

Justement, j'ai eu l'honneur le 16 février dernier, de signer conjointement avec le Sénateur Molgat une nouvelle entente Canada-Manitoba sur la promotion des langues officielles. Il a représenté la ministre du Patrimoine, Mme. Sheila Copps lors de cette occasion, et j'étais là en ma capacité de ministre responsable des services en langue française. Je l'ai trouvé très abordable. Je voyais qu'il était heureux de participer à un événement qui marquait l'engagement de nos gouvernements à bien servir les Francophones du Manitoba.

Le Sénateur Molgat était aussi un expert reconnu en procédure parlementaire, ce qui lui a mérité le respect de ses collègues au niveau national et même international. Quand j'ai assisté aux funérailles du Sénateur Molgat, j'ai pu voir et entendre jusqu'à quel point il avait touché la vie de bien des gens. On est venu en grand nombre pour lui dire un dernier adieu.

J'ai été particulièrement touché par les témoignages de ses deux enfants, Anne et Mathurin, qui nous ont raconté de façon simple et personnelle des anecdotes de leur vie de famille. En écoutant leurs témoignages j'ai ressenti que le Sénateur Molgat était un homme pour qui la famille avait une grande importance.

Son décès laisse un vide dans le coeur des Manitobains et des Manitobaines, car l'honorable Gildas Molgat était un de nos meilleurs ambassadeurs. Nous voulons dire combien nous apprécions sa contribution à notre province.

Pour conclure, je veux dire que mes collègues se joignent à moi pour offrir nos plus sincères condoléances à sa famille, à son épouse Allison et à leurs deux enfants, Anne et Mathurin.

Translation

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize the great devotion of Senator Gildas Molgat, who died on February 28 of this year. He was respected by all who knew him as a colleague and as a friend.

The Honourable Gildas Molgat, who had just left his position as Speaker of the Senate, had served Manitobans and Canadians for nearly 50 years. His first entry into the political scene was in 1953 when he was elected to the Manitoba

Legislature as the Liberal Member for Ste. Rose. After that first election, he was re-elected five more times, which shows that he was an MLA who listened to citizens and who was devoted to representing them. Between 1961 and 1969, he served his province as Leader of the Liberal Party of Manitoba and as Leader of the Opposition. His qualities of leadership earned him the admiration of all Manitobans.

In 1970, Gildas Molgat was called to the Senate by the Prime Minister of the day, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, and named Speaker of the Senate in 1994.

Throughout his career, he showed a profound commitment to the public interest. In September, I went to visit Senator Thériault in Ste. Anne, New Brunswick, and the first person from Manitoba that he mentioned was Senator Molgat. He was recognized for his integrity and his sincerity, and was seen as a great champion of Francophone minorities, both at the national level and in the province of his birth.

Last fall I went to Laurier and Ste. Rose with my son, Pascal, to conduct budget consultations and I visited several families from Laurier, where there had been a new Franco-phone school put into place. I know he had spoken with the Premier of Manitoba (Mr. Doer) and that he appreciated the things that had been done for Franco-Manitobans.

On February 16, I had the honour of signing a new Canada-Manitoba agreement on the promotion of official languages jointly with Senator Molgat. He was representing Canadian Heritage Minister Sheila Copps, and I was there as Minister responsible for French Language Services. I found him very approachable. I saw that he was pleased to participate at an event underlining the commitment of our governments to serve the Francophones of Manitoba well.

Senator Molgat was also a recognized expert in parliamentary procedure, which won him the respect of his colleagues across the country and even internationally. When I attended Senator Molgat's funeral, I was able to see and hear to what degree he had touched the lives of many people. They came out in great numbers to say one last adieu to him.

I was particularly touched by the eulogies given by his two children, who recounted, in a simple and personal manner, anecdotes about their family life. When I listened to their tributes, I felt that Senator Molgat was a man who placed a great deal of importance on the family.

His death leaves a void in the hearts of Manitobans because the Honourable Gildas Molgat was one of our best ambassadors. We want to say how much we appreciate his contribution to our province.

To conclude, I would like to say that my colleagues join with me in offering our sincerest condolences to his family, his wife Allison and their two children, Anne and Mathurin.

English

Recently, I also had the chance to go to the closing ceremonies of the Royal Winnipeg Rifle Army Cadets where my son Eric is a member, and I noted that Allison was continuing in her role as being one of the official people presiding at the ceremony. I hope to see the Molgat family continue to make a contribution to Manitoba, whether it is with the cadets or the Catholic Health Association or in many other events that contribute to the well-being of this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Seine River): Mr. Speaker, I want to put a few brief remarks on the record regarding my personal association with Gil. Although he was a long-standing St. Boniface resident and well known in the community and in particular by my husband's parents and family, I did not have, obviously because of my political persuasion, a real intimate relationship with Gil, but he was certainly well respected.

However, when I became Speaker, Gil became a true friend. I remember shortly after I became Speaker I went to Ottawa for an orientation session, and Gil hosted a luncheon in honour of my being a Manitoban and a Manitoba Speaker and ensured that all of the Manitoba Senators were invited and were at the luncheon. I was extremely impressed.

His door was always open, and he provided excellent advice for any Speaker who wished to speak to him on any issue. He had a wealth of knowledge and expertise in terms of the procedures of the House, and he was very willing to share his views on any of the procedure issues. Gil was a very community-minded individual and a strong proponent of the uniqueness and the historic value of St. Boniface, but in particular he was one of Manitoba's strongest and best ambassadors. He displayed a joie de vivre that was unequalled, and we had many serious business sessions together through the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, but we also had many, many fun evenings and social events that we attended, at which Allison, generally, was always present, as well, and I will vividly recall Gil's real true love of wine.

Gil was a true gentleman; he was a friend. He was a friend to all Manitobans, and he will be truly missed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (15:30)

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin-Roblin): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure today to rise and put a few words on the record concerning the life and the career of Senator Gildas Molgat. As the person who represents the constituency neighbouring the riding of Ste. Rose, you learn a lot about the people who have served time here in the Manitoba Legislature. Much of the information that I have obtained concerning Senator Molgat is obtained from the people whom he represented. From that information, it is my hope that all of us here in the Legislature enjoy as good a reputation as what Senator Molgat did with his constituents.

Much of the information that I got, as well, comes from my in-laws. My wife's family operated Scott's hardware across the road from Molgat's store on Main Street in Ste. Rose. The families knew each other well, and I have to say that if I did not tell you that Yvonne Scott sends her condolences and her best wishes to Allison, if my mother-in-law did not know that I had said that, I would be in trouble, so I have passed that along now.

Through my in-laws, I have developed very much of an admiration for Senator Molgat, as well. The Premier (Mr. Doer) mentioned earlier that the senator had a sign on his desk saying that he was the senator from Ste. Rose. That is common knowledge around Ste. Rose and Laurier, and people really admired the fact that Gildas never really forgot about the community in which he was born and raised and which he represented, not just here in the Legislature but in the Senate itself.

I want to say, too, that despite the fact that Senator Molgat had not been the MLA for about 28 years, when Michelle's dad died in a car crash, we got a letter, my mother-in-law got a letter from Senator Molgat expressing his condolences. The letter began by saying that he was going through his *Dauphin Herald* and had come across Sandy Scott's obituary. That told me a number of things about Senator Molgat; number one, he was still keeping in touch with what was going on back home, and he still thought enough of his former constituent that he would take the time to write a beautiful letter, which my mother-in-law still refers to even today.

I want to say that Senator Molgat's example should serve as a role model for all us who enter elected political public life and that the things that he has done have made a positive influence on his communities of Ste. Rose and Laurier and the province of Manitoba and the country that we all love.

So on behalf of my constituents and my in-laws and myself, I want to express my condolences to Allison and to Senator Molgat's family. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join members of this House in expressing sincere condolence to the family of Gildas Molgat. Having the unique position of now representing most of the area that he represented so well for so many years, I would like to comment on the fact that not only was he a good senator and remembered everywhere in his most recent work as a senator, he was also and continues to be remembered by the people of Ste. Rose as someone who took the time to be a good MLA, took the time to be interested in people.

But I think the real secret was that he was interested in the people themselves, not just the community, not just the ambience of the community which he sincerely relished but the fact that it was the kind of people, the nature of the people that he represented that he was so much a part of, and the fact that he was so proud of them and the fact that he was so proud that he came from Ste. Rose. He never forgot those rural roots, Mr. Speaker.

He was known for his honesty, his integrity and his honest interest in people. I say that in a repetitive sense because to me that was the Gildas Molgat that I knew and that I came to respect as I began to make an attempt and ultimately had the opportunity to represent the area that he formerly represented.

He never forgot Ste. Rose or the people and he never forgot the province of Manitoba when he was acting in a national capacity. When you think about it, he rose to be not only one of the senior statesmen, one of the senior unelected officials, if you will, but one of the senior officials in the government of this country from his roots right here in Manitoba and from his beginnings in this Chamber.

Anytime I had an association with Gildas or an opportunity to have a discussion, I think there was little doubt that his wife, Allison, was not only his partner, his adviser and his confidante but one who provided a lot of excellent advice and support to Gildas.

Although I did not know their children well, their son did tell me a story, and there were other places where he told it as well, but I think it bears repeating in this Chamber, even though it was some 30 years since Gildas represented the Ste. Rose area. There was a filing cabinet and it probably had about three generations of families represented in it, keeping the records of the work that he did for the people in the area, the communication that he had with them. He was a consummate politician in that respect, and regardless of the fact that he was a formidable political force, and, unfortunately, he and I were not aligned on the same political lines, but I can tell you that while I saw him as a formidable political adversary, he was always a gentleman.

He was always on topic, if you will. He talked about policies. He talked about principles. He talked about action. He used to take a little bit of fun in poking fun perhaps at the country bumpkin who was now the local MLA for the area. In fact, it was almost a badge of distinction at gatherings in the community when Gildas and I happened to end up at the same place and an approach and repartee which I respected and appreciated frankly, because it meant that both he and I had the best interests of the people in the community at heart, and those political sparrings, if you will, had to be set aside for the betterment of the community.

I think if you look around in a community that you represent, every once in a while there is something that happens, and you say, hmm, I wonder where that came from; I wonder what was behind that activity or what was behind that achievement that occurred in the community. It did not take long, though, for the light to come on, for me to realize that very often when I asked myself that question, I did not need to look too far. It was probably Gildas who was behind it or involved somewhere in support and helping with whatever project the communities were involved in. For that he was always respected and appreciated in the community.

Something else on a personal note, Gildas' son mentioned to me as we were saying our condolences at Ste. Rose, he said, you know, in our family not having an opinion on a topic was unacceptable. I am paraphrasing a little bit, but that was the context of his statement. I think that is truly the mark of a man who respected honest debate. If you disagreed, fine, but here are the facts and you may have your facts, but not having an opinion and letting the world go by was not an acceptable position for those of us who have a responsible position in a democracy.

As I said, I believe that Gildas' support ongoing respect in the community that he represented. I am talking about the local community as well as the larger community, but it was based on his respect for people, his respect for their desires, their wishes, their goals. Just as the people of the community had loyalty to him, he had loyalty to that community about, not only his choice of names as in the community that he represented, the Senator from Ste. Rose certainly

had a unique approach, one probably not taken often enough by many of our senators as they toil in Ottawa. The fact is that he demonstrated right from the start that that was where his roots were and that is where his loyalty lay, even though he was serving the larger community.

*(15:40)

I also should add that one thing that was of significance in Gildas' respect in the community was his close relationship with the Ste. Rose Hospital with the St. Boniface connection, and that was always appreciated. He was always there when community events occurred to support the organization. That, I think, speaks more about the nature of the man than most other comments we could make here today.

So I want to add my condolences on behalf of Heather and myself. As was said at Gildas' funeral, he made us proud.

Mr. Harold Gilleshammer (Minnedosa): Mr. Speaker, I would like to also have an opportunity to associate myself with the comments that have been made by the Premier (Mr. Doer), my Leader (Mr. Murray) and the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Gerrard).

I had the opportunity to meet Mr. Molgat in 1988, when I attended a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association meeting in Charlottetown, and I reflect on the comments just made by my colleague from Ste. Rose. I recall his son making that comment at the time of Mr. Molgat's funeral that, in their household, they were always challenged to have an opinion. The conference I attended was one with some social time built in, and I can recall that one afternoon we were taken out on a boat onto the ocean and given an opportunity to fish for a couple of hours.

I found myself standing beside Mr. and Mrs. Molgat at that time. Sooner or later, the conversation turned to the Meech Lake Accord that he was very involved in. I had just been through my first election a few months before that and really, I guess, was trying to form my own opinions on that issue, but I soon found out, in my discussions with Mr. Molgat, that he had very strong opinions of that particular piece of legislation and was quite prepared to challenge

me to do some deep thinking about it and to understand what this country was all about and to be able to back up my opinions with some facts and some feeling and some understanding. It was, I guess, the first time I had been challenged that way to think about our country and to think about that legislation in that particular way. It was one of those memorable occasions to me where you meet people who are in another Chamber in this country, representing another political party, but, at the end of the day, it probably was a better venue for honest debate than we sometimes see in our own Legislature, where discussions like that break down along party lines. I will always remember that challenge.

Since that time, I have had the opportunity on a number of other occasions to be at the same functions as Mr. Molgat. As has been said earlier, he was a very, very personable man. I felt a warmth there when we discussed other issues that I will always remember. He was a very principled man. Truly, as politicians, we are often criticized for what we do and what we do not do, what we think, what we say. Mr. Molgat was one of those people in politics who gave politicians a good name. I was very proud to make his acquaintance and, on a number of occasions, had the opportunity to discuss provincial and national events with him.

We, as a province and a country, are certainly poorer off now that he is no longer with us. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski (St. James): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak and pay tribute to this great man. Thank you also, Mr. Speaker, for providing the opportunity for meeting him at the Presiding Officers' Conference here in Winnipeg in the year 2000, which you hosted.

Although it was a short time spent getting to know him, it was long enough to recognize what a gentleman and stately person he was and what a contribution he made to our country.

The last time I met him briefly was at the tattoo where he cut a very dashing figure in his full Royal Winnipeg Rifles regalia, a dignified and gracious last image I will remember him by.

I offer my respect and condolences to his wife and his family.

Mr. Denis Rocan (Carman): Monsieur le président, à travers vous à nos visiteurs très distingués qui sont parmi nous cet après-midi dans la tribune du président, Mme. Allison Molgat et la famille de M. Gildas Molgat.

Le 28 février dernier, la communauté francophone du Manitoba a perdu un de ses plus grands défenseurs de la langue française. Le Sénateur Gildas Molgat est décédé à l'Hôpital général d'Ottawa, emporté à la suite d'une embolie cérébro-vasculaire à l'âge de 74 ans.

Gil était le fils d'Adèle Abraham et de Louis Molgat, époux d'Allison depuis 1958, et le père d'Anne et de Mathurin. Nous offrons tous nos condoléances sincères à sa famille.

Il est né à Ste-Rose-du-Lac le 25 janvier 1927. Monsieur Molgat a étudié au Collège Saint-Paul et à l'Université du Manitoba, où il a reçu la médaille d'or de la licence en commerce en 1947.

La triste nouvelle du décès a frappé la province entière, mais surtout la communauté francophone qui a bénéficié depuis longtemps de son ambition pour son travail et de son amour de la culture franco-manitobaine. La Société franco-manitobaine a bien exprimé la perte que ressentait cette communauté quand elle a dit : "Son intégrité, son authenticité et son dévouement exemplaires envers notre communauté ont fait en sorte que le Sénateur Molgat participe activement au développement de notre communauté au cours de ses nombreuses années en politique Nous étions et serons toujours fiers de lui, de sa personnalité chaleureuse et de sa bonne humeur Son départ subit laisse un grand vide chez nous au Manitoba et également dans toute la francophonie canadienne, où il comptait de nombreux amis."

Monsieur Molgat appréciait les plaisirs simples. Il aimait la nature et les gens. Il comptait de nombreux amis dans tout le pays à cause de sa générosité et de sa personnalité bienveillante. Il avait aussi un grand amour des jeunes et il a contribué ses connaissances et son

expertise à améliorer l'avenir des jeunes Canadiens et Canadiennes. Il était fier de son régiment, les Royal Winnipeg Rifles, "The Little Black Devils", avec lequel il a fait son service militaire, de 1946 à 1966. Il était nommé Lieutenant-Colonel honoraire de 1965 à 1985, et était Colonel honoraire depuis 1985. En 1971, Monsieur Molgat a fondé la Ligue des cadets de l'armée, Manitoba, et il est devenu président de cette ligue en 1977.

Son amour de son pays, de sa province et de sa communauté se montrait à travers de nombreux services bénévoles qu'il a accomplis. Monsieur Molgat était fondateur de la Fondation pour la recherche de l'Hôpital Saint-Boniface en 1977. Il était directeur de Canards Illimités Canada, du Corps des Commissionnaires de Canada et du Conseil Canadien des Chrétiens et des Juifs. Il était membre de la Légion royale canadienne, du Canadian Club, du Manitoba Club, de la Société franco-manitobaine, de la Fondation canadienne des droits humains et de la St. Andrews Society.

Ses accomplissements extraordinaires montrent la passion que le Sénateur Molgat ressentait pour la société manitobaine. Nous sentirons tous une grande perte, non seulement pour les profondes contributions qu'il nous a faites, mais aussi pour la personne unique qui donnait volontairement et librement d'elle.

Dans une déclaration qui a suivi l'annonce du décès de Gildas Molgat, le premier ministre du Canada lui-même, M. Jean Chrétien, a dit de lui : "Gil était un bon ami qui me manquera beaucoup. Pendant près d'un demi-siècle, il a servi la population du Manitoba et du Canada avec une compétence et un dévouement exemplaires. J'ai toujours admiré son profond engagement envers l'intérêt public. C'était un homme attachant et enjoué, doué d'une personnalité chaleureuse et reconnu pour sa bonne humeur et ses dons de raconteur."

En entendant la sombre nouvelle, le député fédéral de Saint-Boniface, Monsieur Duhamel, lui aussi a dit : "C'était un homme très honnête, très intègre, très authentique. Il cherchait toujours à aider ses collègues, sa communauté et son pays . . . J'ai perdu un grand ami aujourd'hui."

Monsieur Molgat a commencé sa carrière politique en 1953 quand il a été élu pour la première fois ici à l'Assemblée législative du Manitoba. Par la suite, il a été réélu cinq fois. Monsieur le président, entre 1961 et 1968, Monsieur Molgat a été chef du Parti Libéral du Manitoba et a servi comme chef de l'opposition officielle.

En 1970, le premier ministre de l'époque, M. Pierre Elliott Trudeau, l'a appelé au Sénat canadien, où il s'est intéressé à la Constitution et aux droits des minorités. En 1971, il a co-présidé le Comité spécial mixte sur la Constitution et il a aussi présidé le Comité plénier sur l'Entente constitutionnelle du lac Meech.

Durant sa carrière, le Sénateur Molgat a également servi comme vice-président du Sénat, whip du gouvernement, président du parti Libéral du Canada et leader adjoint du gouvernement au Sénat. En 1994, Monsieur Molgat a été nommé président du Sénat par M. Jean Chrétien, et renommé à cette fonction en 1997.

Avant son décès, le sénateur était content de ne plus avoir les responsabilités du président du Sénat, et il attendait avec impatience sa retraite en 2001. Il a dit : "Je ressens une énorme satisfaction de ce que j'ai pu faire, surtout depuis que je suis sénateur. Je pourrai dorénavant répondre plus rapidement à mon courrier et passer plus de temps au Manitoba."

Au nom de tous les Manitobains et Manitobaines, et surtout au nom de la communauté franco-manitobaine, j'aimerais dire merci et adieu à un homme très honorable, M. Gildas Molgat. Votre sagesse et gentillesse resteront avec nous toujours.

Merci.

* (15:50)

Translation

Mr. Speaker, through you to the very distinguished visitors who are among us this afternoon, Mrs. Allison Molgat and the family of Gildas Molgat.

On February 28 of this year, the Francophone community of Manitoba lost one of its greatest

champions of the French language. Senator Gildas Molgat passed away at the Ottawa General Hospital following a stroke at the age of 74. Gil was the son of Adèle Abraham and Louis Molgat, the husband of Allison since 1958, and the father of Anne and Mathurin. We all offer our sincere condolences to his family.

He was born at Ste. Rose du Lac on January 25, 1927. Mr. Molgat studied at St. Paul's College and at the University of Manitoba where he received the gold medal in Commerce in 1947.

The sad news of his death was a blow to the entire province but particularly to the Francophone community which had benefited for a long time from his ambition for his work and his love for Franco-Manitoban culture. The Société franco-manitobaine clearly expressed the loss that this community felt when it stated: "His integrity, his authenticity and his exemplary devotion to our community led Senator Molgat to participate actively in the development of our community throughout his many years in politics We were and will always be proud of him, his warm personality and his good humour His sudden departure leaves a great void for us in Manitoba and throughout all of Francophone Canada where he had many friends."

Mr. Molgat appreciated simple pleasures. He liked nature and people. He had many friends throughout the country because of his generosity and his kind personality. He also had a great love of young people, and he contributed his knowledge and his expertise to improving the future of young Canadians. He was proud of his regiment, the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, the "Little Black Devils", with which he did his military service from 1946 to 1966. He was named Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel from 1965 to 1985, and had been Honorary Colonel since 1985. In 1971 Mr. Molgat founded the Army Cadet League of Manitoba and he became president of that league in 1977.

His love for his country, his province and his community showed through the many volunteer services that he undertook. Mr. Molgat was a founder of the St. Boniface Hospital Research Foundation in 1977. He was a member of the Board of Directors of Ducks Unlimited Canada and of the Commissionaires of Canada and the

Canadian Council of Christians and Jews. He was a member of the Royal Canadian Legion, the Canadian Club, the Manitoba Club, the Société franco-manitobaine, the Canadian Human Rights Foundation and the St. Andrews Society.

His extraordinary accomplishments show the passion that Senator Molgat felt for Manitoban society. We will all feel a great loss not only for the great contributions that he made to us, but also for the unique person who gave of himself voluntarily and freely.

In a statement that followed the announcement of the passing of Gildas Molgat the Prime Minister of Canada, Jean Chrétien himself, said of him: Gil was a good friend, and I will miss him greatly. For almost half a century he served the population of Manitoba and of Canada with exemplary competence and devotion. I have always admired his profound commitment to the public good. He was a like-able and a playful man who was a gifted storyteller, and who always had a good sense of humour.

On hearing the sad news, the federal Liberal member for St. Boniface, Ron Duhamel, also said: "He was an honest man, a man of integrity and of authenticity. He was always looking to help out his colleagues, his community and his country. I lost a great friend today".

Mr. Molgat started his political career in 1953, when he was elected for the first time to the Manitoba Legislature. Following that, he was re-elected five times. Mr. Speaker, between 1961 and 1968, Mr. Molgat was Leader of the Liberal Party of Manitoba and served as Leader of the Official Opposition.

In 1970, the Prime Minister of the day, Pierre Elliot Trudeau, appointed him to the Canadian Senate, where he took an interest in the Constitution and in the rights of minorities. In 1971, he co-chaired the Special Joint Committee on the Constitution and he also chaired the Committee of the Whole on the Meech Lake Accord.

During his career, Senator Molgat also served as Deputy Speaker of the Senate, as Government Whip, as President of the Liberal Party of Canada and as Deputy Leader of the government in the Senate. In 1994, Mr. Molgat

was appointed Speaker of the Senate by Jean Chrétien and was re-appointed to that position in 1997. Before his death, the senator was happy to take a break from his Senate responsibilities, and he was anxiously awaiting his retirement in 2001. He said: "I feel a great sense of satisfaction about what I have been able to do, especially in the time since I became a senator. Now I will be able to reply to my mail more quickly and spend more time in Manitoba."

On behalf of all Manitobans, and especially on behalf of the Franco-Manitoban community, I would like to say thank you and farewell to a very honourable gentleman, Mr. Gildas Molgat. Your wisdom and your kindness will always remain with us. Thank you.

Ms. Linda Asper (Riel): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my family and my constituents in Riel, I would like to offer condolences to Allison Molgat, present here today, and to her family. Our family was deeply shocked when Senator Gil Molgat passed away, in particular Aubrey, my husband, and Babs and Israel Asper. I hope I can get through this.

I know that Gil and Israel shared many a moment over the years and I do not think, Allison, that we should share them with the House here today. It is more for a fireside chat. Izzy was very honoured to be a honorary pallbearer at Gil's funeral. Our family had a great respect and love for Gil Molgat, as a friend, a person, a politician and a Canadian.

In Riel constituency, there is a widespread admiration for Senator Molgat, a Manitoban who made friends of all ages, in all political parties and throughout the world. I want to express sympathy to Allison and her family on behalf of the Francophone community in Riel who so admired Senator Molgat as a Franco-Manitoban who played such an important role in our province and our country.

Les Franco-Manitobains et Franco-Manitobaines de Riel sont très fiers du Sénateur Molgat et célèbrent sa vie et sa carrière. Ils offrent leurs prières à sa famille et ils sont particulièrement fiers de sa contribution à la communauté francophone.

Translation

The Franco-Manitobans of Riel constituency are very proud of Senator Molgat and celebrate his life and his career. They offer their prayers to his family, and they are particularly proud of his contribution to the Francophone community.

English

My colleagues in this House have referred to many of Senator Molgat's accomplishments. One aspect of his life that I would like to highlight was his involvement as a veteran. He was proud of his regiment, as some of my colleagues have mentioned, the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, for which he was Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel from 1966 to 1985, and Honorary Colonel from 1985 on.

Even at a young age, Gil Molgat was introduced to war. He was a survivor of the *Athenia*, the first vessel torpedoed in the Second World War. It was sunk off the coast of Ireland on day one of the hostilities. Gil was on his way home from visiting his grandmother in Brittany.

Because my father, Harold Barker, was wounded at Vimy Ridge in World War I, his brother buried in the Sanscoeur Military Cemetery and another brother commemorated on Menin Gate in Yprès, I have spent some time in military cemeteries. In 1995, Aubrey and I were on the Normandy Coast a year after the 50th anniversary of the D-Day invasion. On the beach at Courcelles-sur-mer, where Canadians came ashore in World War II, is a historic marker commemorating the Canadians who fought, many of whom lost their lives. We were very proud to read Gil Molgat's name, recognized on the plaque, as he represented the Canadian government at the ceremony. This is but one example of Senator Molgat's involvement with veterans over the years and how he represented us around the world.

Let me conclude by offering condolences again to Allison and her family on behalf of my family and my constituents in Riel. Senator Molgat was a Manitoban who rose above partisan politics in his earnest quest to serve his province and his country. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, I wish to offer my condolences to Mrs. Molgat and her family and friends that are with us today.

I had the good fortune of meeting Gil Molgat in the mid-'60s, when my parents first got involved in a serious way in political activities in Manitoba. It was with the Liberal Party, under the leadership of Gil Molgat, that my parents first became involved in politics. I think a particular indication of the respect that Gil held within my family was the decision my father made, in 1966, to run for the Liberals. He was part of the ginger group, which I am sure Allison will remember, that consisted of my father and people like Scott Wright and Frank Muldoon [*phonetic*] that ran in 1966 under the leadership of Gil Molgat. It was a very interesting time and one that my parents still talk about. It was a time when we learned, and I learned a lot about politics and a lot about Mr. Molgat just at conversations around the kitchen table.

Many of my colleagues today have spoken at length about the great contribution that Senator Molgat has made to life, not only in Canada, but particularly to the province of Manitoba. I want to just pass on some personal comments on the life of Mr. Molgat that have been passed on to me and I learned at the kitchen table.

Certainly, his interest in ensuring that women took their rightful role in terms of the political action in Manitoba was one that was felt very strongly by my mother. In 1967 he asked her to co-chair a committee on behalf of the Liberal Party to help to identify the role that women could play, not only in the political realm of the Liberal Party, but in terms of the role that women could play in politics in Manitoba and throughout Canada. It was a role that she took on with a lot of dedication and one that she was supported with over the years, and it extended over a number of years, the support that Gil provided to her.

* (16:00)

I know, from talking to her, she was very grateful for the opportunity. She also was grateful for the support that Gil provided her as

she sought to become the first female president of a recognized political party in the province of Manitoba. She was successful in 1972 of becoming the president of the Liberal Party of Manitoba and shared the same time that Gil was the president of the Liberal Party of Canada. I know that they worked quite closely throughout those times on issues that they were both involved in.

That interest in women in politics continued throughout Gil's life. In fact, my mother indicated that just a year ago, or a little over a year ago, I guess, on the last Persons' Day, the unveiling of the statue of the "Famous Five," the five women who took to the Supreme Court of England the case to ensure that women were recognized as persons. Gil played a big part in ensuring that the "Famous Five", the legacy that they developed in the 1920s and '30s was preserved and carried on. He took the time to write my mother, to send her literature and to keep her apprised of what was going on, and for that she is extremely grateful. He was also very supportive to her when she was appointed as the western vice-president for the Committee on the Status of Women, and I know she also appreciates throughout that support.

More than that, to my family, Gil was a good friend and a man that was very well respected and always talked of fondly in our family. He was a very dedicated politician. I know my father, even though he was unsuccessful in his attempt to be elected, he carried on as a volunteer with the party and did a lot of research with Mr. Molgat. It certainly struck him how Gil wanted to make absolutely sure that, when he spoke to an issue in the House, he was well versed and the research was well done, and he knew his facts before he spoke. I think that was recorded earlier by the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Gerrard).

He was a dear friend to the family. He was an individual who always showed great concern for the people in his life. I know that he always took time to keep in touch, that whenever he ran into my mother, whether it was at the Safeway at Kylemore and Osborne as he was picking something up to go home or whether it was the St. Vital Shopping Centre, he always took the time to stop and chat and ask her about her life

and about her family. He carried a very genuine interest for the people and the friends that he had made throughout the process.

It has been mentioned before, he had the ability to transcend politics. It did not really matter what your political stripe was, Gil felt everybody had the right to their opinion. He was the kind of gentleman and the kind of well-rounded individual that could, I guess, rise above petty politics and have open and frank discussions on his belief and at the same time convey his respect for the positions that other people took.

I also had the opportunity to—and Winnipeg is a very small community, as this province is—keep in touch with Gil through some very good friends of mine who later became neighbours of the Molgats on Kingston Row. The Harvey family, people who are very close to me, would often talk about their neighbours, the Molgats, and in very warm and friendly terms. I think one of the earliest stories that Clint recounted to me was, I think, his first meeting of Senator Molgat. It was on a Sunday when Senator Molgat came over and knocked on his door and apologized for the fact that the noise at his house was maybe a little loud until two o'clock the previous Saturday and went on to explain that it was the Molgats' tradition to host a birthday party for Mr. Campbell and that he apologized because the barbershop quartet might have been a little loud at two o'clock in morning.

That is just the type of individual and the type of neighbour that Gil was, that Gil and Allison, the warmth that they showed to their family. He was a man who was equally at ease whether he was dining with the Prime Minister or the former Prime Minister on a Thursday night or whether he was having a drink on his deck in Winnipeg with his neighbours on Friday night. He was a man who was at ease in either one of those situations.

He was also a very highly respected legislator, legislative member. I know that he also, I think, had a good deal to do with encouraging not only my father's political activity but what has become kind of his honeymoon with China and visits to China. I know that Gil spent a good deal of time working

with legislators in China, helping them to deal with some of the issues as their political system is evolving. I also know that he is very highly respected in that community for the advice that he has given them over the years.

I also want to relate one story that I think speaks a lot about the man, two stories actually. One happened just a couple of weeks before his unfortunate passing, but as he met Clint and Kathy Harvey in the driveway, they were dressed up on a Saturday, off to a wedding of a friend, and they recounted to Gil how they were going to a wedding of a friend of theirs who was in his mid-forties and being married for the first time. Those of you who have had the opportunity to meet Senator Molgat know that he always had a bit of a glint in his eye, and he kind of had that wry smile on his face, and he looked at Clint and said, you would think at that age, he would know better.

I was very, very moved at the service celebrating Gil's life, particularly on the recounting of their family life that was given by their children. I think it said a lot. I am sure Gil would have been extremely proud of that service.

But I do think it is also important to note that Gil was always a man of the people, and I think that is demonstrated by the fact that as his position warranted, as Leader of the Senate, he did have a driver in Ottawa. I do not think it was something that Gil was necessarily comfortable with all the time in terms of having a driver. I do know that he did joke a lot with his driver about those positions, but I think what is of particular note is, as everybody knows, there were a number of services in Ottawa regarding Mr. Molgat and celebrating his life, but his driver went to the trouble at his own expense, on his own time, of coming to Winnipeg for the funeral service, and I know that speaks a great deal to the man that Gil Molgat was.

So I do offer my condolences to Allison, to you and your family, on behalf of myself, in particular, and on behalf of my parents who wanted me to share with you that certainly Senator Molgat was a man that we carry a very deep respect for in our family. We wanted to offer our condolences at this time.

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): I would like to add a few words, as well, on the passing of Senator Molgat and extend the condolences of my family, particularly my mom and dad, to the Molgat family.

I must say I did not want my colleague the Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen) to have to stand alone in this Chamber and talk about his family's involvement with the Liberal Party. I thought he should have some company, because as we go in these confession times, Mrs. Molgat will probably remember from those days in the '60s, the Praznik family in St. Andrews were very strong supporters of the then-Liberal MLA, Thomas Hillhouse, who was our member during that period, and very strong supporters of Gil Molgat as Leader of the Liberal Party.

I remember growing up during that period having an interest in politics and some vague recollections as a very young child about the 1966 election and that particular period. I was very young at the time, but I remember my dad talking quite a lot about Gil Molgat and his support for Gil and for Thomas Hillhouse, and my grandfather, of course, was very active campaigning in those particular elections. I can recall, as well, in the period leading up to the '69 general election, as a very, very young fellow, my father and grandfather being involved in an important issue around vegetable marketing boards in this province. My father was president of the vegetable growers association, and they were very, very active in a campaign in which Gil Molgat and the Liberal caucus were involved. The then-MLA for the riding of Brokenhead, one Sam Uskiw as well, and they were taking on the then-Minister of Agriculture, one Harry Enns on that particular issue. But I know my dad spoke very fondly of Gil Molgat's involvement on behalf of vegetable producers at that particular time.

The Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen) spoke about his father being recruited in 1966. My father was approached to run in 1969, on the retirement of Tommy Hillhouse, and there were a number of reasons why he chose not to do that. One of them he shared with me was the retirement of Gil Molgat. He was a very strong believer in what Gil had to offer this province and that was one of the factors, in addition to

having small children and changing political fortunes.

So I say to the Molgat family if they are here today that Gil's contribution to this province is remembered and will be remembered for a long time by many, many who came in contact with him in those political days as Leader of the Liberal Party in Manitoba, many who knew him afterwards in his role as a senator. I first got to meet him as a very young teen in my days in the Liberal Youth, meeting him at some convention, and he always remembered my dad, he always remembered my grandfather, and every time after that he always asked how they were, and that was something about Gil Molgat that I always respected and was very much touched by.

So to his family today, from my little corner of Manitoba and my family, we would just like to let them know that Gil's personality, his contribution, his political work and his efforts are remembered by many and far afield. I think, as they well know, they have just so much to be proud of in Gil Molgat and his contributions to this province, so I offer them my condolences. Again, I did not want the Member for Fort Whyte, my colleague, to be the only one with those confessions here today among our Conservative colleagues.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer my condolences to Allison and her family and I guess today is a day of confessions. I guess we were all young Liberals at one time, and I still remember that back in my household, you could not talk about any party but the Liberals. I think that was part of Senator Molgat's dream because the Franco-Manitobans, you were either a Liberal, a Liberal or a Liberal. I do not think we had any choice back in St. Norbert. That is just the way things were.

Quand tu étais français, tu étais libéral, puis c'était tout.

Translation

If you were French, you were a Liberal, and that was that.

English

As a young Liberal, I remember knocking on doors and one of the first events that I went to with Lloyd Axworthy, Gil Molgat was there. I still remember some of the words that he put across, and I know that he had a very big love for our country even back when I was young and growing up.

* (16:10)

Some of the memories I remember of Gil is when I was in Québec City with my wife, Winni, and he showed us around the city and the Plains of Abraham and through the Legislature and other areas and just the friendship that he showed us. We went to an event one night, and Winni had tagging along with us a few South Americans. We did not realize that the event we were attending was just being put on for the Canadian delegation. So, as we approached the doors, Gibs, at the time the Speaker of the House, had told my wife, well, Winni, this is just for the Canadian delegation, and Gil leaned over and said, if they are friends of Winni's, they can come in and have a glass of wine. So we had the South Americans coming in from Cuba and Guatemala and Nicaragua, and they all came to the event with us, which was very interesting, as we had some very good conversations about their countries and the openness that was available to us. I appreciate the opportunities that Gil gave me at those meetings to meet legislators from different parts of the world and catch their views on what they thought democracy was and what they thought it should be.

There are so many things that have been said today, and I do not want to try and go over them all. There is just one last thing I wanted to say.

C'était en français que je voulais le dire et c'est pour son amour de notre pays: Vive le Canada uni.

Translation

I wanted to say it in French, and it is for his love of our country: Long live a united Canada.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt this motion? Agreed? [*Agreed*]

Would honourable members please rise and remain standing to indicate their support for the motion.

A moment of silence was observed.

House Business

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, as a result of discussions with the Opposition, it is our intention to move toward concurrence and into concurrence today.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh), that the said message, together with the Estimates accompanying the same, be referred to the Committee of Supply for consideration and report; Monsieur le président, je propose que ce message, ainsi que le budget correspondant, soit renvoyé au Comité des subsides aux fins d'examen et de rapport.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that the House resolve into a Committee of Supply.

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

* (16:20)

Capital Supply

Mr. Chairperson (Conrad Santos): The Committee of Supply will come to order, please. We have before us for our consideration the resolution respecting Capital Supply. The resolution reads as follows:

RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$342,950,000 for Capital Supply for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2002.

Resolution agreed to.

Concurrence Motion

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): I move that the Committee of Supply concur in all Supply resolutions relating to the

Estimates of Expenditure for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2002, which have been adopted at this session by the three sections of the Committee of Supply sitting separately and by the full committee.

Motion presented.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Chair, my questions are going to be directed, first of all, to the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak). I want to pursue this line of questioning as it relates to the health services essential legislation, because during Question Period today I think it was evident that the Minister of Health was not all that comfortable in defending this particular piece of legislation in that I do not think it was his idea in the beginning. Although it was his staff who had to pursue the issue with the regional health authorities and actually make the announcement that is indicated in the letter from Mr. Byron that this legislation was going to be brought forward, that indeed perhaps it was forces beyond this minister's office that initiated the process of the legislation.

My question centres around the patients in Manitoba who are going to be impacted by this legislation. This is not legislation that can be taken lightly, because all we need is a strike anywhere in this province in the health services sector and we would have perhaps an immense issue in front of us. You couple that with an incident anywhere in the province where an extreme emergency could arise and if you dilute this legislation, the current legislation that is before us in Manitoba as the letter suggests, then we could find ourselves in a situation where life could be lost because insufficient personnel and human resources are not brought to the hospitals or to the health service area to provide the care that is required.

The Labour Board, Mr. Chairperson, is not in a position to be able to make those decisions in a very time-effective way, and I think that is what is being raised by Mr. Byron in his letter to the deputy minister with respect to having the Labour Board determine, rather than the experts in the field determine, what requirements are necessary for emergency services. If it is left to the experts in the field, I think it is safe to say that those are the people who understand what they are dealing with and can make those decisions effectively and very quickly, because

they are foot soldiers on the ground. If you leave that decision to a Labour Board, then we have another issue before us. It is the timeliness of a decision that has to be taken into account, and there is worry. Yes, there is worry on this side of the House, but, more importantly, there is worry in the professional field that indeed this is not an effective way of managing a situation if there is a crisis.

Now the minister and the Premier (Mr. Doer) today said in the House that in the current legislation it is ultimately the board that makes that decision. What they did not tell us was the complete story, because indeed the board has that decision if in fact the voluntary process of assigning staff as emergency personnel is not achieved, and therefore, the final decision or the appeal, if you like, is left to the board. We can understand that.

I do not think that we are arguing that case. What we are arguing is that the dilution of this bill can cause harm to patients in Manitoba. It can cause a situation where not only is there fear for Manitobans in terms of having their health needs met, but indeed we could actually have a crisis where life could be lost because we have not addressed this issue effectively through the best mechanism that we have available to us. That mechanism has to be left with the experts and the professionals who work on a day-to-day basis in the field.

I think the minister understands this. I think that has been his reluctance in getting up in the House and answering these questions. So we have a Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) here who has some compassion and some understanding of what the health care needs are. However, we have an agenda of a government that is serving not the patients of Manitoba but is serving perhaps the labour aspect, the union bosses in this province, and that is why this legislation has been brought forward. I think that is why we have the RHAs who have identified for the minister's sake that this is a dilution of The Essential Services Act concerning Health that we have present in the province today, that this proposal is a dilution to that act.

Now, the Premier in his answers yesterday, along with the Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett)

tried to deflect this issue by indicating that this is not any different than what we have today. Well, it is different; it is vastly different. Indeed, the proposals that were put forth on May 9, 2001 to the RHAs indicate that there is a change and there is a dilution. Now no one here on this side of the House is suggesting that we should not perhaps make amendments to the legislation to strengthen it, but what we are concerned about is diluting the legislation so it does jeopardize the safety of patients. It does jeopardize the need in this province to be able to address those essential services in a time of service withdrawal.

So I would like to begin today by asking the Minister of Health whether, in fact, this was a policy issue that he as Minister of Health saw important to address, and whether it was his direction to his deputy minister to begin the process of drafting the legislation and then announcing it to the regional health authorities on May 9, 2001.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): The member follows the reasoning and a line of questioning that commenced last week and commenced today in the House regarding proposed draft policies with respect to issues of essential services. Members have reached a number of conclusions and have stipulated a number of these conclusions, I think inaccurately, with respect to proposed draft pieces of legislation. It does not further the debate and simply amounts to generally, I think, speculation.

The only concrete matter that had, in my view, some validity was the suggestion by members opposite that their legislation, the present legislation, essential services that we exist under, which has the Labour Board make determinations the member suggests is not appropriate, which is similar to some of the advice that has been canvassed and has been received.

* (16:30)

The members attempt to make a distinction between various levels. The fact is, the determination is made by the Labour Board in the present, existing legislation. It is clear members opposite do not approve of that. They certainly

do not agree with that. It is interesting. Members opposite, to my mind, are suggesting changes to essential services legislation.

This is how debate should be in the Chamber. We deal with issues, we make suggestions, we talk about issues, we talk about policy, Mr. Chairperson. We do that every day. What I find not helpful are assertions made by members opposite that certain things are carved in stone. We hear that over and over again.

What do we have on the Order Paper? We have what—30, 49 bills or something? 48 bills? 50 bills? There are 50 bills that can be debated in this Chamber. The member can choose to debate 50 bills. The member can choose to debate 50 bills that are not on the Order Paper as well and that is what the member is doing. The member is debating things that are not on the Order Paper. We can debate and talk about issues that are before us on the Order Paper, but the member can raise all kinds of phantom issues if he chooses, as members opposite, to debate all kinds of things that are not on the Order Paper. They can talk about anything they want and say: There is a bill; there is talk about a bill, Mr. Chairperson.

During the last few months in Health we have gone through a number of proposals with respect to proposed legislation in the Department of Health. I have been through a number of exercises. I can assure you that some of those will never see the light of day in this Chamber, and will not come to legislation. If we were to go down the path the member chooses—if we were to follow the member's path—we would have to debate every phantom issue or every issue that they come up with over and over and over again, when there is nothing. There is no basis. There is enough to talk about in this Chamber without the members inventing issues. That is a whole other issue that I could talk about during the course of my discussion, without the members inventing issues to deal with.

There are any number of issues the members could talk about, and I guess we could talk about it from a policy standpoint. If members want to talk about a policy standpoint, I think that is important and we should talk about it. But to insist that there is legislation here when in fact

the Order Paper is otherwise, and when the members have 50 bills they could talk about, and maybe 100 bills that are not on the Order Paper that they can talk about, then it makes debate very, very difficult.

What I find most interesting is during the course of this discussion, the members opposite have raised defects in the bill they passed when they were government. The defect they have raised is the fact that the Labour Board makes adjudication in this matter. Members opposite have raised that as an issue. Members opposite are telling us change essential services legislation because they do not like the way it is set up. Clearly, that is what they want to do.

So, Mr. Chairperson, we are being asked by the Opposition to change legislation. But then if we talk about proposals, if we talk about policy, if we talk about consulting on this issue, members say: Oh, no, no, no. You cannot do that.

Mr. Chairperson, I do not understand. I just do not understand. I also find it very curious that members like to carve out territory. They use words like "dilute" and they use words like "patient safety." There is no member of this Chamber, I daresay, who would do anything to put anyone's life or limb or their health care at risk, and to even remotely suggest that is not appropriate.

So I tell you, Mr. Chairperson, members opposite I not only think it is not appropriate; I do not think it is correct. In fact, I do not think the member is actually saying that. I think the member is going along with some of the rhetorical flourish that has occurred in this particular debate.

The use of the word "dilute," I think, is interesting. One's view of dilution is another's view of enhancement. One's view of dilution is another's view of making things work better. I do not know, if members want us to change the act, perhaps they should bring a private bill before us in the Chamber to change the act to remove the Labour Board, if that is what they want to do. Then we would have something to debate. Then we would have a bill to debate in this Chamber. Right now, Mr. Chairperson, what

we are debating are policy issues. We are debating policy issues, but the assertion of members opposite I think is incorrect. To state one side of an argument and to assert that that, in fact, is what the Government is doing sort of goes against the process that is called consultation.

If we wanted to act like the former government, we would not consult on anything, Mr. Chairperson. We would bring in a bill on all kinds of subjects. We saw that over and over and over again, not necessarily under the minister's auspices, because I will give the member opposite credit because he was generally a consultative minister. I will give him credit for that. That did not happen in health care, I can honestly say.

But there were a number of issues that were kind of slipped in, Mr. Chairperson. Some we caught; some we did not catch, but there was a lack of consultation, particularly after Mr. Jules Benson sort of wrenched control of health care, moved in, moved into Cabinet and made all the health care decisions. Members opposite know of what I speak because, shall I say very good sources have told me that? Very good sources have indicated that, Mr. Chairperson. Decisions were made.

I have done tracking in the Health Department about some decisions that were made and there is no trail. There is simply a sort of look amongst officials, and it is pretty clear where that particular policy initiative came from. So there may not be a pattern of consultation. I would like to see what umbrage the members opposite are taking. Are they taking umbrage with the fact that we as a government are consulting? Are they taking umbrage with the fact that they do not like the present Essential Services Act and find difficulty with the Labour Relations Board, and they want us to change that? Do they take umbrage with the fact that there is no bill on the Order Paper? I do not know.

I do know that the Labour Relations Board has jurisdiction under the present act. I do know that members opposite have made it very clear they do not like the Labour Relations Board to have jurisdiction and make determinations. That

is useful from a policy standpoint. We as a government in examining all kinds of policy will take the recommendations of members opposite. We will review the recommendations of members opposite. That is what consultation is all about, Mr. Chairperson. That is what consultation is all about.

I do not mean to be facetious, Mr. Chairperson, but maybe we should introduce a bill called the labour relations amendment act—pardon me, the essential services act—and follow the complete advice of members opposite.

Mr. Chairperson, members opposite are indicating they do not like the Labour Relations Board involvement. We take it at face value. It is useful to discuss. It is useful to look at. It is useful to look at almost every aspect of legislation and see where it can be improved or where matters can be made better. I do not think anyone, regardless of political stripe, ever wants to make legislation or the health care system in this regard less effective, less efficient and less caring. I do not think anyone wants to do that.

I admit that on occasion legislation in various areas has been brought forward that may have amounted to that, but I do not think the intention on anyone's part regardless of who was government has ever been to do anything but improve the system. Even decisions I vehemently disagreed with, the members' opposite decision to privatize home care, even that decision which I vehemently disagreed with and 90 percent of Manitobans disagreed with—I am glad the Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) brought it up in the House today, because it gives us a chance to reflect—even that difference that members attempted to put in place, the privatization, I do not think the members brought it in with any ill intention or an intention to make the health care system less effective. I do not think they did it. I think they thought, by bringing in the privatization of home care, it was their belief they could make the system more effective. I think it showed, by the way, consultation and democracy at work.

If the members had gone out before they tried to privatize home care and had public discussion, I do not think, Mr. Chairperson, that issue would have seen the light of day in this

Chamber. Instead, they passed it in Treasury Board. Fortunately, the Treasury Board minute ended up in my hands. I remember well. I am sure the member for Roblin-Russell remembers very well. I stood up and said you are going to privatize home care; I have a Treasury Board minute. The minister stood up and denied it: no, no, no. I said I have a Treasury Board minute; they denied it.

* (16:40)

Mr. Chairperson, after the document became public, there was an admission that in fact, yes, they were deciding to do that. The point that I am making, if you had consulted on those endeavours to privatize home care, you could have spared the government of the day a lot of grief and a lot of anguish. You would have known at the time, and you would have not brought in—*[interjection]* Okay, well, I guess the question is the members opposite could have saved themselves a lot of time and a lot of energy and could have preserved a lot of good will by consulting before they tried to privatize home care, not going through what members opposite went through with the privatization of home care. What I find really curious is an attempt today to raise the issue of the home care privatization as somehow something that members opposite appear to have still not learned their lesson from. The public did not like the privatization of home care. That is why the government backed down, and I gave the government credit for backing down at that time. That is what democracy is all about.

The issue on that front is that the public rose up in tremendous fashion, unlike anything I had ever seen in this province, to oppose the privatization of home care, and the government stopped its experiment and after having lost considerable dollars.

But, nonetheless, it is better, Mr. Chairperson, if the member has MPI questions, I may not be the best person to ask on MPI. The member may want to address questions to the minister responsible during the concurrence debate. I could pass on any questions the member has to the minister responsible, if the member would like, but I am trying to address the issue that the member raised in his question.

So I would like to say that, as we continue, the members have spent a lot of time in Question Period dealing with proposed draft legislation. If there is a bill before this Legislature, there will be ample opportunity for members opposite to ask questions. There will be ample opportunity for public hearings.

What I do hear from members opposite though is a suggestion that we change the present act, and we will take that advice. We will accept advice from any quarter, Mr. Chairperson. The idea that the Labour Board should not make these decisions is an interesting one. I wonder why it remained in the existing legislation, but, having said that, we will accept the advice from members opposite. I think I have made pretty clear what our position is in this regard, so I look forward to further questions from the member.

Mr. Derkach: The member doth protest too much, and he did not answer the question. My question was with regard to his direction to his deputy minister regarding the proposal that was announced on May 9 to the regional health authorities with respect to the Health essential services act. Now, the minister did not answer that question, and I want to put on the record that the minister refuses, as does his Premier, to answer that very basic question as to who gave the instructions. My questions to him were whether or not he gave the instructions to his deputy minister to go out and make the announcement, as is referenced in the letter, regarding the Health essential services act.

This is not only my question, but it is also a question that is on the minds of many patients and people in this province.

Mr. Chair, the minister then infers that we are now in favour of changing legislation which takes away the appeal authority of the Labour Board. The minister keeps referencing the current act and the authority of the Labour Board. Yes, if you read the present act, the Labour Board does have the authority on an appeal issue to act after 14 days. We understand the legislation quite well, and I am not suggesting that the minister does not understand the legislation.

I am not going to go out on a tangent and accuse him of having somebody else manipulate

his department and his authority, as he did with us and with the former government in his assertion on who brought in changes to the home care act, and he identified Mr. Jules Benson, I believe. I am not doing that with him. I am not implying that maybe Mr. Eugene Kostyra, who has a vested interest with the labour movement in this province, the labour unions in this province, has any influence over the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak). I did not imply that it was the minister's friend, Brian Lukie, who has a vested interest in the Pan Am Clinic, who might have had some influence on this minister. I have not made those assertions.

Now, there are people who are making those. I am not doing that, and I would never do that. So I ask the minister to be careful in his comments about who he says has some influence on the Opposition and on the previous government.

Now, Mr. Chair, I am asking straightforward questions, and I am not asking them on some elusive issue. I am asking him a question on a particular issue that has been raised, not by us alone. The minister knows that this is not an issue that we have sort of plucked out of the air. This is an issue, as he says he got the Treasury Board minute that identified that the government was going to move on the home care issue. I remember the time when he waved the Treasury Board submission in front of government and said I have evidence, but he did not table it at that time, and that is neither here nor there. But, in the same way, we have been given information. *[interjection]* Now the minister says Treasury Board minute versus draft proposal. That is the past. What we have here in front of us, we have tabled it, is a letter that is written to his deputy minister. The letter is signed by Mr. Wayne Byron, Vice-President, Human Resources, who says that: further to your announcement regarding the proposed essential services act concerning Health, at the meeting of chief executive officers of the regional health authorities on May 9, 2001.

Now this is not just a casual conversation that his deputy minister was having with the chief executive officers of the regional health authorities. This is a specific action that is being proposed by the Government, that is going to culminate in an act. The health authorities are

pointing out very accurately here that this is a dilution of the current legislation. Diluting the current legislation means to them, and they are identifying it here in their first point, that a body known as the Labour Board will be making the decisions with regard to what essential services are rather than medical experts who work in the field.

Those are legitimate concerns, and I think that those are legitimate issues to bring forward in a debate in this House. I think that is a legitimate issue for us as Opposition to be asking this minister about. I do not want to hear about necessarily what we did as a previous government. Those actions are in the past. What I want to hear is the minister's response to a legitimate question that I am putting forward because I am not asking this minister anything out of the ordinary. I am not saying that he should not consult. I congratulate him for consulting—I think that is essential, but you do not consult by putting a specific act in front of people and saying this is what we are going to be bringing into the Legislature.

Now the minister and his Premier (Mr. Doer) are cute with words in this Chamber. They are saying—

An Honourable Member: Slick.

* (16:50)

Mr. Derkach: Well, my colleague says it is a bit of a slick move, and it is, because the minister and the Premier say: There is nothing on the Order Paper. Why are you attacking us? There is nothing on the Order Paper. Well, there is nothing on the Order Paper, but let us be adults about this. Let us take a look at the letter. Are you telling me then that the people who represent the RHAs in this province are being mischievous? The member from Selkirk is nodding his head. They are being mischievous. Is that what you are accusing the chief executive officers of this province of? I do not think so. I do not think the minister would want to do that either. These are serious people, and they are raising serious issues.

All we want—*[interjection]* The minister says I do not think there is anybody in this

Chamber who would want to harm the safety of patients, and I agree with him. I do not think the minister wants to do that. I think this is a bit of sloppy work. I think that there has been a commitment made by somebody to the labour unions of this province, especially those who have a vested interest here, without regard to what the repercussions would be to patients in Manitoba. Now, unfortunately, this Minister of Health has been put in the spotlight to try to make the best of a bad situation.

I am not blaming this minister for this particular piece of legislation, because I think it is beyond him. I think this comes from elsewhere not from his office and not from his staff. This is a political move from somebody else within that Government. It is an ideological move, and someone who has moved on this has not given careful enough consideration to the impact that it will have on patients in this province. That is why I ask that very straightforward question to the Minister of Health. Was it this minister, who I have some respect for, Mr. Chair? I think this minister works hard, and I think he has a genuine concern for people and patients in Manitoba. But I want to ask him whether it was under his direction that his deputy minister made the announcement on May 9 about the new Health essential services act. I repeat that question because that is the question I asked before, and I repeat it again. Was it his direction to his deputy minister with regard to this announcement?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, as I indicated both in Question Period and previously, we consult on a variety of issues. I am not going to make an apology for consulting on issues. I think it makes for better government and better response.

The reference to members opposite's regime was simply an acknowledgement that when one does not consult, generally, more often than not one is going to get into trouble. That was the point. The point about Jules Benson was a fact that had been told to me by highly placed sources. We all know that Jules Benson had a significant impact—*[interjection]*—and the member says Eugene Kostyra has on this side of the House. I would certainly dispute that. The record shows otherwise, but we will get off that.

The issue of consultation is something that has happened. I can tell the member that there are a variety of issues that I have had departmental staff and personnel consult on, a whole variety of issues, some of which will come before this Legislature in the form of legislation and some of which will not. Let me repeat that for the member. I have asked the staff to consult on a variety of issues, some of which will come before this Legislature in bill form and some of which will not.

Mr. Chairperson, you know, members opposite—and there is a bit of a track record for members opposite of making assertions. They are wrong, wrong, wrong, on many, many occasions. The Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) stood up and said the diploma program was going down the tubes. That was wrong. The member from Charleswood stood up and said we were paying the former Deputy Minister of Health \$250,000 reported in the paper. The member was wrong.

So for members to make assertions as statements of fact, there is a track record, Mr. Chairperson, where they have been wrong, firstly.

Now, Mr. Chairperson, with respect to this issue and all of the other issues raised by members opposite, I repeat there is a variety of issues that we have consulted on and we continue to consult on, and we do not apologize for that. There is all kinds of advice we have taken. But what we have done, there is legislation that we have consulted with that will not see the light of day in this Chamber and some will.

You know, Mr. Chairperson, I can recall a number of issues in this Chamber where members made assertions that were inaccurate and wrong on so many occasions, and they rallied up the flagpole. Last year at this time, members opposite were accusing us of having a deficit at the WRHA. *[interjection]* The member opposite says remember Bill 44. We had a debate on Bill 44. There was a bill on the Order Paper, and we debated it.

There is not a bill on this Order Paper, and members opposite are continuing to look for issues and look for conspiracies.

Members opposite can go on, and I am sure they will go on, Mr. Chairperson. As I have indicated, there are a variety of issues. Now, the member was a minister. The member knows full well that there are a number of policy initiatives that one consults on. There are a number of policy initiatives that end up becoming legislation and a number that do not end up becoming legislation. There are a number of policy initiatives that get changed between the time of consultation and the time of legislation. There are a number of policy issues that get deep-sixed effectively as a result of consultations.

Mr. Chairperson, we debate in this Chamber policy, and we debate legislation. Somehow the members opposite are trying to twine the two up and look for an issue. They are talking about policy, and then they are talking about proposed draft, maybe sometime in the future, where-is-it-going-to-be kind of legislation. It makes it very, very hard to have a debate and a discussion of the issues.

On one thing we are clear from members opposite. They do not want the Manitoba Labour Board to be involved. Clearly, that is contrary to their own legislation. The members admitted it is in their legislation. We know it is in their legislation. They do not want the Labour Board to make a determination. So, if anything from this speculative debate from members opposite, we have learned their position on utilizing the Labour Relations Board.

So, Mr. Chairperson, members opposite, it is very clear, they have said they do not want the Labour Relations Board to make determinations, and it already makes determinations with respect to their legislation.

So I suggest that members opposite get on and debate bills that are on the Order Paper. We could have a good discussion about policy issues, Mr. Chairperson, but this continuing speculation, possibility, maybe, this continuing discussion I think has been useful to the extent that I have gleaned a position from members opposite. I have been able to interpret from members opposite a position in this regard, and I think any position and advice is useful. It enhances debate. It makes all of us better legislators.

What I do not understand also is this—well, I suppose I understand this line of questioning because I think members opposite are trying to find an issue. They are trying desperately to find an issue. They are searching around to find an issue, and if it means speculation, so be it.

I think there are issues to debate on legislation. There are issue to debate in health care. There are policy issues to debate. The issue of speculative, proposed, draft legislation—you know, Mr. Chairperson, even it if was not an issue that members opposite get pretty cranked up about. Any issue, any policy issue that we are discussing in a policy sense, any policy issue dealing with proposed policy, proposed legislation—the member was a member of Executive Council for a long period of time, and the member knows how those processes work. If there is a bill that comes before this Chamber, if there is a bill that is brought forward in this Chamber on whatever issues, there will be ample opportunity to debate the merits and the demerits for that particular bill. This is one of the jobs, one of the things we do in this Chamber. There are any number of policy issues that we can debate in a policy sense. We can debate the issue of policy. We know, for example, the members brought in The Essential Services Act. We know for a fact that we were not in support of that Essential Services Act. We know that members now do not—[*interjection*] I said we were not supportive of it.

* (17:00)

An Honourable Member: You were not.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, we were not. Nay, no, ni, non, Mr. Chairperson.

An Honourable Member: Nada.

Mr. Chomiak: Nada, tak. [*interjection*] So, Mr. Chairperson, I was just referring to myself, I should talk more. No, the point is that I have made it very clear that there are a variety of issues that we are discussing and we continue to discuss. There are a variety of issues that we are discussing as we speak, on a whole range of policy issues. Some very controversial, some not so controversial. There were meetings this afternoon at the Department of Health regarding particular pieces, particular aspects of

legislation, but I am not going to account for every step and every move and every policy development that we do as a government. We would not be able to make a move because every time we do something, members opposite would run out and chicken little, chicken little, the sky is falling. We would not be able to do any policy. Even when we do policy, they get it wrong. [*interjection*] Never mind. Does the member want me to list the times they have it wrong again? So it is hard enough having a proper debate with legislation and issues that are clearly before us on the Order Paper. Never mind speculative, possible, maybe, draft legislation. So I think I very openly and very directly answered the member's query.

The members keep looking, they keep looking for something, some kind of an issue that they can raise. They cannot find it, so they keep running different angles up the flagpole in an attempt to attract an issue or try to find an issue. If there was essential services legislation before this Chamber, we would be debating it. There is not essential services legislation before this Chamber. There are 50 bills before this Chamber, if memory serves me correctly. Close to 50 bills, and those are bills that are being brought forward as policy initiatives, as law-making by the Government of Manitoba.

There are a whole number of areas and issues that we are addressing across the spectrum of health care, some of which we are in a better position to discuss publicly, some of which for a variety of reasons we cannot necessarily discuss publicly. In some cases, it has to be limited to particular groups, some very sensitive legislation on occasion. What we have tried to do is bring in members opposite and bring in the public with respect to major initiatives that we are undertaking, and we have done that far more than the six or seven years for which I was critic. We have tried to be more open, provide more information. We will continue. The members opposite have asked the same question over and over again. We have provided them with a response over and over again. Because the response does not satisfy their particular take on the issue, they keep going back on it.

I have said on many occasions and I have said it over and over again during the course of

this particular debate, there are a variety of policy issues for which Health has, is and will consult on. Some of those issues will become bills that will appear before this Legislature on the Order Paper, some of them will not, and some of them will change significantly between the time we commence consultation and the time we conclude consultation, which is the way it should be.

I think the member opposite confirmed the fact that no one in this Chamber wants to see the system deteriorate. Rather, we are all working to see the system improve. I think the member acknowledged that all members in this Chamber, regardless of what bills are before this Chamber, are intent and have the intention of trying to improve the situation. We will differ on occasion on the methods we choose. Sometimes we are wrong, sometimes they are wrong, sometimes we are all wrong, but that is the nature of democracy and that frankly is the nature of life.

An Honourable Member: Fallibility of being human.

Mr. Chomiak: As the Member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger) indicates, it is the fallibility of being human, but we all try to do the best we can, I believe, with the best of intentions. I believe that fundamentally, and I think that has been exhibited very often in this Chamber.

The member is aware of the fact that we consult on a variety of issues. The member is aware of the fact that some of those result in legislation, some of those do not result in legislation, some of those result in changes. I would be happy to debate specifics of legislation that are before this House, but I am not going to debate speculative issues raised by members opposite on any variety of issues that come into their minds for that particular day or that particular week or that particular moment of time.

I do not know if members are going to persist in this line of questioning in attempting to find some nugget or some point in some speculative, possible, maybe draft legislation that the members are talking about or whether we will move to more substantive matters or even a policy debate in this regard, which I think

is valid during the course of the concurrence debate. I suggest to members opposite that government's duty, one of government's roles, is to try to consult, and we continue to consult. We do not apologize for going out and consulting, and we will continue to consult.

An Honourable Member: It is a virtue.

Mr. Chomiak: The Member for St. Boniface, who has been observing this particular discourse, has indicated that it is a virtue to consult. I think it is a positive certainly in the public's mind, certainly it is important in a democracy to do that to try to gather as much opinion, as much advice as you can. We have done that in the past, and we continue to do that, Mr. Chairperson, and we will do it in the future.

I think I have pretty well canvassed and responded to the member's particular query, and I look forward to additional questions from the member.

Mr. Derkach: Well, the reality is that twice now I have asked a very specific question of the minister, and I want the record to show that twice the minister has refused to answer the specific question. Now he has gone on at length about the fact that he is prepared to debate legislation that has been put forward in the House. However, unlike many issues, sometimes we get little brown envelopes. He got them when he was in Opposition. It is a part of the democratic process. Things are revealed about government action that sometimes put government in an awkward position. I believe that this is one of those issues.

This is not just a question about a simple action that is not going to perhaps have an impact on very vulnerable people in our province. This is an issue where people could lose their lives. That is why we bring it forward, because I believe that there has been an action taken here, has been embarked on, which has an ideology attached to it, but the impact of the action has not been thoroughly analyzed and assessed by people within the minister's office. It was a political direction that was given to staff to go out and make the announcement on May 9, and now we have had a bit of a retraction and a bit of a backstepping, if you like, by the Government.

Mr. Chair, I want to turn my question now to the Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett), because the Minister of Labour is involved in this process as well, because the Minister of Labour, the Premier, has indicated that in fact the Minister of Labour—

* (17:10)

Point of Order

Mr. Chomiak: I would just, in terms of the advice of the Chair, I am wondering, insofar as I thought there was an agreement between the parties that the discussion would be between the Opposition and the Minister of Health on this item of concurrence. I am not entirely certain. I thought that the convention, the general protocol was that questions be directed because, if the member is going to other ministers on different subjects, if the member is not here or if different advice is required, it makes it difficult.

So I am just looking for your advice in terms of the rules and/or the conventions in this particular area.

Mr. Chairperson: On the same point of order?

Mr. Derkach: On the same point of order, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: The Member for Russell, on the same point of order.

Mr. Derkach: On the same point of order, Mr. Chair, I do believe that the Minister of Labour is present. This matter that we have raised has been clearly identified by the Premier, and he did so to the media yesterday, indicating that he was not sure who would be bringing this legislation forward yet, that in fact there is some confusion on the Government's side as to who the minister sponsoring this bill would be. I think, because the Premier himself said that this spans several departments, it is more than appropriate for us to be able to get the information from those ministers who might have some responsibility, and clearly the Minister of Labour is one who is involved in this kind of legislation.

Mr. Chairperson: Is it on the same point of order, the honourable Minister of Transportation and Government Services?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Transportation and Government Services): We are probably into territory that is, on the point of order here, somewhat out of order to begin with, asking questions about bills that are not on the Order Paper, but, in regard to specific members, we are in concurrence, obviously. The members of the Opposition can ask questions to the ministers they wish to ask questions, but the general rule in concurrence would be very similar, I think, to the situation we have in the House with Question Period, and that is obviously the questions would relate directly to their specific responsibilities.

I can also indicate too that the normal protocol in concurrence is that the Opposition asks for various ministers to be present, and we try and make sure that that happens. We were advised to have the Minister of Health here; we did deal with that. There are some other questions about us having some notice so we can have the ministers the Opposition wants. So I would suggest, while it is certainly in order for them to ask questions to various ministers, it should once again be within the area of their jurisdiction, not something that relates to other areas.

Once again, the decision of the minister to answer or not answer a question based on that or any other matter, is very similar in concurrence as it would be to our Question Period in the sense that ministers are not forced to a question, particularly if it does not deal with their specific responsibilities.

Mr. Chairperson: The Member for Russell, the same point of order?

Mr. Derkach: On the same point of order, Mr. Chair. I do believe I made an error when I referred to the legislation here. There is no legislation; it is an issue. So I would correct the record with regard to that.

Mr. Chair, the member says that it is appropriate for us to ask questions if the minister is here. I have indicated that the minister is here. The minister of highways said it is okay for us to ask questions if the matter relates to the minister's jurisdiction. It does relate to the minister's jurisdiction, so I am just simply

following the same rules that were in place when we were in government. I recall very vividly that when the Opposition held us in concurrence, there were several of us who were called to the Chamber to be present because questions could go from one minister to another. As a matter of fact, when a question was asked when I was not present in the House, I was summoned to the House because a question had been asked of me, and I was summoned to respond.

I am simply indicating that both ministers are here. They have already conferred. I would simply ask that we proceed with our questions.

Mr. Chairperson: On the same point of order, the Minister of Health.

Are we using the point of order to debate?

Mr. Chomiak: No, Mr. Chairperson, this is simply clarification.

Mr. Chairperson, I am not disputing the member's knowledge of this, and I am not disputing the ability of the member to ask a question. I just do not like, as a precedent, setting different kinds of policy here without us talking to our respective House leaders in this regard. So I am not objecting to this, and I will accede to the Chair's advice and, of course, to more senior members of the Chamber.

I just do not think it is necessarily good precedent for members to set different policy that has not been followed in the past—that is my reason for raising this issue—because it then makes it more complicated to work out matters in the future. That is all, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairperson: This is what the situation is. Outside this committee, there will be agreements between House leaders as to what minister, one, or another minister, two or three or however many would be present, because that is agreed upon, and the Chair has no knowledge of that.

If a minister happens to be in the Chamber without being subject of that extra-committee agreement, if she or he happens to be here and the question happens to be within her jurisdiction and she is not one of those designated to be here, of course it is her prerogative to

answer or not to answer, of she may defer to another minister who had been here as agreed upon between the House leaders.

So this is the complication here. It may lead to some embarrassment. It may lead to something we do not decide, but the practice is there is an agreement between the House leaders as to what ministers and what area will be dealt with in the concurrence motion, and this has been set without the knowledge of this Chair.

So what am I saying? I am saying if a minister is negotiated to be here, that minister has to answer the question, or he may refuse to answer the question, depending on his discretion. If a minister happens to be here and not the subject matter of that agreement between the House leaders and the questions happen to be within her jurisdictional competence and she is agreeable to answer, of course she can answer, or like the other minister, she cannot. This is the practice in this House.

So do you want to go into that kind of trouble where some people are not—*[interjection]* In brief, the member can ask a question. If the question is within the jurisdiction of any particular minister, it is entirely within her jurisdiction and her discretion to answer or not to answer. That is the practice.

* * *

Mr. Derkach: Well, thank you for that ruling, Mr. Chair, and I was not trying to be disrespectful to any minister in this House. I know the schedule of ministers, and I know that they are busy people who have other duties besides being in this Chamber. It is for that reason that the House leaders do have an agreement to bring as few people into this Chamber, or few ministers into this Chamber, for concurrence as is necessary, because we want to give the flexibility to ministers to be able to conduct the affairs of the province.

* (17:20)

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Chairperson: The Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) has the floor.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, there is an alternative to this, and we could exercise the alternative, but I do not think it would be to the advantage of the Government. So, therefore, I only proceeded to ask my question of the Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett) because I recognized the fact that she was in the House. Now if she chooses not to answer the question, I respect that because it was not in the agreement between House leaders to have her present. But I would like to proceed with my question to her and then let her decide whether or not she wants to answer. So I will proceed.

In the last few days, we have been bringing this issue forward because it is an important public policy issue for Manitobans. Not because it is an agenda of ours, but because it is also on the minds of people who work in the health care field and people who are patients of the system across this province. I believe I heard correctly when I heard that the Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett) indicated that this was an election commitment that was made to change The Essential Services Act concerning Health. So, therefore, as Minister of Labour, she would be proceeding on that commitment.

I do not fault her for that, because I understand that election commitments that are made by a government should be pursued; that is why you make them. If you want to hold the faith with the people who elect you, you fulfill your commitments. So I do not fault her for that. However, it appears to us, from the information that we have received, that this was proceeded with without proper identification of the impact that this particular action is going to have on people in the health care system.

So I am asking very straightforward questions. I am not trying to get either minister into a situation where they have to lash out at us for past actions. This is not the Opposition that I am asking questions of. This is the Government now, who has responsibility, who has undertaken certain actions. As an opposition, it is my duty and responsibility to be able to get some answers to these questions. That is what concurrence is all about. When we have not fulfilled the responses in the process of Estimates, and we have decreased the Estimates process from 240 hours to 140, we have the

ability to ask those questions and receive answers to those questions in concurrence. So, therefore, I am not trying to pin anybody against the wall who perhaps has not agreed to be here through the process of the negotiations between leaders.

But I want to ask the Minister of Labour whether or not it was through her department, and whether it was her instructions as Minister of Labour that action be taken on an election commitment specifically in changes to The Essential Services Act concerning Health that have been proceeded to; in terms of allowing that proposal to be seen by the chief executive officers of the health authorities?

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour and Immigration): Mr. Chair, I would like to respond first to the member's comments about what I think he was saying, which was this would not be considered precedent setting in following what the Chair has ruled that we need to follow the ministers being asked to come in et cetera. But I am in the House and I am prepared to take on this question.

I would like to state that the questions that have been before us in the House, both in Question Period and here in concurrence, still remain completely and totally hypothetical. There is no piece of legislation before the House. When the member says, and I am quoting what I have written down: This was proceeded without—and I then believe he talked about the impact on patients, et cetera, the "this was" is still hypothetical. There is no "this" here. There is hardly even a "here" here anymore. We are dealing with hypotheticals.

The other thing that we are dealing with here is the fact that this Government—and I take recognition that the member would prefer not to discuss the actions of the former government. I can understand that completely. There are many of those actions that were brought to the light of day that probably were very uncomfortable for the former government and helped to make them the former government.

One of the things that we have tried to do in our time as government is to talk to people, to consult, to ask questions. It is imperative that

when you are dealing with a number of issues, as we all do in government—and I do not think there are probably any more issues that are dealt with than by the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) and issues that have a huge bearing on people's lives, both those who work in the system, those who are patients and clients of the system and those families and friends of those who both work in the system and are clients and patients of the system. Everything that we do in health care has an immense impact on people's lives and usually at times when they are very vulnerable.

So we must, as a government, talk with as many people as we can about what we are about, what we are thinking about, and, as the Minister of Health has said, there are many discussions and many dialogues that take place that actually do not end up in a piece of legislation, or they end up in a discussion internally or something, that there is a range of things that can happen out of a consultative process.

For the members of the Opposition to be talking about a hypothetical situation that has been stated over and over again is still hypothetical and it will remain hypothetical until and if there is an item in the Order Paper, it seems to me is taking the time of the Legislature and of the public that probably could as easily or even better be spent on discussing issues that we are involved with, the 50 bills that are before us. How many bills have actually gone into or are prepared to be passed into committee? Not that many.

We have 50 bills on the Order Paper. I do not think any of them have come back from committee, have gone to committee. I understand some are going to committee next week, but there is lots of discussion that can take place over actual pieces of legislation that are before the House, where you can take a look at the preamble; you can take a look at the definition section; you can take a look at all of the sections of the bill. You can discuss the proclamation. You can discuss all of these issues. The comments, the specifics of the bill are there. There are 50 of them. Why are we not discussing those issues?

The member has talked about the role of concurrence. Well, Mr. Chair, whether we had 240 hours of Estimates or 140 hours, my understanding is that the concurrence section can go on for as long as people have questions and ministers have answers, whether you are under the old rules or the new rules.

But, Mr. Chair, the role of concurrence, my understanding is, is to discuss policy issues, to discuss pieces of legislation, to discuss a continuation of the discussion that took place in the Estimates process, and especially when you only have 140 hours and you had far fewer hours. I know the Health Critic, the Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), has a number of specific issues and questions arising out of the Estimates process that she was not able to get into the Estimates process because of the agreement to go to 140 hours.

* (17:30)

I was in the committee several times when she made that comment, that she was waiting for the concurrence motion to be able to ask the minister questions on issues that are currently before the House. They are before the House either in the 50 bills that we have in front of us on the Order Paper, printed, available for discussion between the critic and the minister, as well as the page after page of Estimates in the Department of Health that never got discussed. There are huge policy issues involved in the budget in the Department of Health. The single largest part of our budget is in the Department of Health.

It is critical. I know, as a former critic in the Legislature, that it is very important for the Opposition to have the opportunity to question on the Estimates, on the bills that are before the House, and this is a wonderful opportunity for that information to be asked and to be given. It is essential that the minister be asked questions that are focussing on issues that are before the Legislature. So, Mr. Chair, I would just say in conclusion that we cannot possibly tell the Opposition or critic what questions to ask. That would be wrong. But I do think that it would be perhaps, from my perspective, a better use of the concurrence time to actually talk about issues that were not able to be raised in the Estimates

process and issues that are before the House in the form of legislation.

Do not tell me that, of those 50 pieces of legislation, there are no problems with any of those 50 pieces of legislation. Then, if that is the case and nobody wants to talk about any of the health bills that are before us, let us pass them all through. Let us take them to committee. Let us talk about what is real and here in front of us because there is no more critical issue facing us than the issues that come out of the Department of Health. So let us get on with the business of the Legislature and ask the questions and answer the questions that deal with the Estimates, the Budget and the legislation.

Mr. Derkach: The Minister of Labour has just put some very interesting material on the record. This will be shared with, indeed, people in Manitoba. But the issue here is not a phantom issue because what the Minister of Labour has just done is she has belittled the people who have expressed concern about this particular action. She has belittled the people who are the chief executive officers of the RHAs by saying that there is no issue here, by saying that this is a phantom issue, by saying that we have no specific action to ask questions about.

An Honourable Member: There is no bill here.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, we are not debating whether there is a bill or not.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Derkach: I hear howls from the Government's benches: There is no bill. Of course, there is no bill. We have acknowledged that. We have never asserted that there was a bill. The Government has. The Government is telling Manitobans that we are asserting certain things which we are not. But it is very evident that people in Manitoba, specifically the chief executive officers of the RHAs, have been given an announcement, and they say so in their letter. I want to quote it: Further to your announcement regarding the proposed Health essential services act, at the meeting of the chief executive officers of the regional health authorities on May 9.

Now is that a phantom issue? Mr. Chair, is that an issue that there is no substance about? I

do not think so. That is a real issue, and that is an issue that Manitobans have some concern about. I have not received an answer yet from neither the Minister of Health nor from the Minister of Labour. I asked the Minister of Health whether he gave the instructions to his deputy minister to make the announcement to the chief executive officers. He has refused to answer that. I have asked the Minister of Labour to tell us whether it was her instructions that caused this particular action, and I want to go back to the Minister of Labour, because she is the one who said: This is an election commitment that we are going to fulfil. On that basis, because obviously this matter falls within the area of labour as well, she must be the one who gave the instructions to proceed with this election commitment.

So I want to ask her, as Minister of Labour in the Province of Manitoba, whether, in fact, it was her office that gave specific instruction to proceed with the election commitment that she says that they were given a mandate to do. To proceed with the action that was taken by the Deputy Minister of Health. *[interjection]* Mr. Chair, I am not finished yet, please.

Mr. Chairperson: Oh, he still has the floor.

Mr. Derkach: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I ask the Minister of Labour whether or not it was she who gave the instructions to proceed with this legislation as she has indicated was the commitment from them as an election commitment.

Mr. Chairperson: The Opposition can ask the question, but it is within the prerogative of the Government which minister to designate to answer.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Chair, I am delighted actually that the Member for Russell has acknowledged in a plain declarative sentence: There is no bill. He acknowledged this. I am delighted because it only reinforces the comments that I made earlier, that the Minister of Health has made earlier, that because there is no bill, it is hypothetical to be discussing what is not in a bill. Simple logic tells you that we should be talking about things that are concrete, things that are in the Legislature, things that we have, as legislators, a responsibility to do.

Mr. Chair, what we have as legislators, all 57 of us, is a responsibility to debate and discuss issues surrounding the Budget, through the Estimates process and the concurrence process; and issues surrounding actual, real live, written down in black and white legislative bills that are on the Order Paper. That have been printed, that members can see and discuss and ask questions about, and discuss the principles and policies framed in the legislation, framed in the actual legislation. That is the role of the process that we are involved in here, the Estimates process, the legislative debate on bills and the concurrence process. They are all part and parcel of the same whole. The role of the Legislature is to discuss these issues.

Mr. Chair, when the member talks about the piece of legislation, in the last part of his question, he is doing a 180-degree turn because, in his earlier comments, after my earlier response, he acknowledged that there was no piece of legislation. There is no legislation before us. There are consultative processes that are taking place. There are issues that we are discussing in government, many, many issues in many, many departments, and we have a good legislative package. We have 50 bills on the Order Paper. I believe it is 50; it might be 49 on the Order Paper, no, there is 50. They have not all been printed. There are 1, 2, 5 bills that actually have not been printed yet but notice has been given; 50 minus 5 is 45 bills that members in the Legislature have an opportunity to discuss. I should think they would want to discuss it. There are some very, very important pieces of legislation here. There is The Liquor Control Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act. There are a number of bills by other ministers. There are other bills, actually, from the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak).

* (17:40)

You know a really important piece of legislation that we should be spending our time talking about? We should be spending our time talking about the podiatrists act, I think, Mr. Chair, and that is not being really facetious. I know that we have made jokes and comments about The Podiatrists Act, and I am going to request that the Minister of Health not share those at this point, but this would appear, on the

surface, to be a fairly innocuous piece of legislation, but it is a real piece of legislation. It is actually here. You can look at it. You can hold it in your hands. You can read it. You can talk about it. You can say, as a member of the Government, we support this because that is the process we went through, or it would not have been here on the Order Paper, it would not have been printed. Then it is the Opposition's responsibility to take a look at these pieces of legislation, to ask questions in concurrence where the discussion can take place about the principles behind the pieces of legislation.

Critics can ask the ministers for an interview or meeting to discuss the individual pieces of legislation while they are on the Order Paper, so they have an understanding of what is actually in the legislation, whether they agree with it or not. That is the role of the House at this point in the session. Let us talk about issues that are concrete, that are actually here. Again, as I have said before, the member agrees that there is no piece of legislation. There is no bill. If there is no bill, there is nothing concrete to discuss, there is nothing to say, to point a finger at saying: Well, why did you put this in? Why did you put that in? Why did you leave this out? Why did you not go here with that? That is the legitimate role of a dialogue and a debate and a discussion on legislation, to clarify and then discuss and debate the elements and the utility and the validity and the value of an actual piece of legislation.

So I suggest that the Opposition take advantage of this very important opportunity that we, as legislators, have, which is to discuss and dialogue about issues that are in front of us, issues that are in legislation, issues that are in Estimates that came up, and again I reiterate the Member for Charleswood has got to be concerned. I do not mean to be putting thoughts in her mind, but, if I were in her position, let me say that I would be concerned that there were many issues that I was not able to ask the Minister of Health in Estimates and that I would like the opportunity to do so now because there are some very critical issues that are reflected in the Estimates, in the Department of Health, because that is the minister that has been asked for today, and are reflected in the legislative agenda that we have before us.

The legislative agenda that we have before us, which, as the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) has acknowledged, does not include a bill on essential services. That is not a part of the legislative package we have before us, so again, in closing, I just make the suggestion that there are many, many critical issues that I think the people of Manitoba would like to have discussed dealing with the Health Department and the health legislation. So let us get on with it.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, if one were to read the record of what has just been placed on the record, one would hardly call this a knowledgeable or academic discussion.

I have asked specific questions. I have not resorted to the rhetoric that I am hearing from the ministers opposite. Mr. Chair, I am not suggesting in any way that this is a piece of legislation before the House. That is not the area that we are contained to in asking questions. The minister should at least acknowledge that much, that there is the latitude for us as Opposition to ask questions on actions taken by Government that are outside the legislative package that is before us here in this House. So we are not precluded from asking questions about actions that are taken by Government outside the legislation, and that is precisely what we are doing.

The minister has belittled the RHA chief executive officers by saying this is phantom, that there is no substance to this. We have a letter that was written to the Deputy Minister of Health that identifies certain problem areas. The minister, in the election commitment that was made by this Government, has acknowledged that this is a political action. This is not something that is administrative, and so what we are trying to do is to determine from my questions which minister gave the instructions to the deputy minister to proceed with the action.

In the last week, Mr. Chair, there have been allegations made with respect to which minister was responsible for this. All we are trying to do is identify which minister has responsibility, had responsibility for giving the instructions to proceed with this, since it has been acknowledged that this is a political action that is being taken by Government.

I am not pulling that out of the air. These are statements that have been attributed to certain ministers within the Government. Mr. Chair, we have not one, but two letters that identify that, indeed, the Government is moving in this direction. The Government has every opportunity to do that. They have every right to do that. But this is where we can hold members of Executive Council accountable for their actions. That is specifically what we are doing here. We can disagree on the process and on the approach that is taken. That is fine. But what we are asking is that ministers be forthright with the public of Manitoba through the questions that are being placed before them in this Chamber.

Mr. Chair, we are not the Government. We are the Opposition. We are asking the questions, and all we are asking for are some straightforward answers which we are not receiving and neither are Manitobans. I would think that Mr. Byron here would at least deserve the courtesy of a response from the deputy minister, or from the minister, or from the Government, regarding the letter and the assertions that were made in this letter. I would ask one of these ministers, whichever one, whether it is the Minister of Health or the Minister of Labour, whether or not—in fact, if these are not correct, if these assertions that are being made here by the regional health authorities which both ministers have said they are not correct, both ministers have now put on the record that this is frivolous. They have both indicated that, indeed, this is not something that should be taken seriously because there is no bill before the House.

Mr. Chair, if this is frivolous, then I am saying that both ministers hold the CEOs in this province of the regional health authorities in great disrespect, because I view this, I hold this, as serious business. I hold this as business that has an impact on the lives of people. This is business that has an impact on the quality of health that people have.

So, Mr. Chair, this is not a small issue in my mind. It is not a small issue to the people who are served by the health authorities in my part of the province. All the CEOs are asking here is that the Government, fine, take your action, change the act, but please consider one thing. When it comes to the expertise of medical

experts in the field versus the Labour Board, that you give due consideration to maintaining that essential services be identified by the medical experts as it is in the current legislation. It is there.

* (17:50)

Obviously, there has been identification that there is going to be a change here, that indeed it is not the medical experts who are going to be making this determination anymore, that the Government has signalled through their meeting with the CEOs that it is going to be the Labour Board that is going to be identifying which essential services are going to be identified in the various hospitals in case of a labour strike.

So, Mr. Chair, I do not look at these matters as being frivolous or unimportant. All I am doing is asking serious questions of the ministers, and I am asking them to give us some response. Three times today I have asked the question about who was responsible for giving the order to the Deputy Minister of Health to proceed with the announcement that was made on May 9.

I think the record will show that to this point in time there has been no answer given. Why? Why is the Minister of Health dodging the question? Why is the Minister of Labour dodging the question? Why are they not telling Manitobans who gave the order, or did this order come from a different source? Did it come from beyond the administrative offices of the Minister of Health or the Minister of Labour, and did it come from a political body of the party that is in power today, the New Democratic Party? Is it an ideological move rather than a prudent administrative move to ensure the safety and the quality of health for the citizens of Manitoba? Has ideology taken over common sense and a practical approach to the safety of people in this province?

An Honourable Member: You have no concept of how we work.

Mr. Derkach: Now I am being told that I have no concept of how the party works. Well, I do not want to know how that party works, Mr. Chair, in detail, to be honest with you, but I do

believe that as a party who has now taken the reins of government, they have a responsibility to be accountable to the people of this province and indeed to the people who are depending on the services of this Government to protect them in times of strike, to protect their needs in times of strike. That is why these questions are being asked.

So, Mr. Chair, I am not attacking this Government on anything else. I am not attacking them on their past actions. I am not attacking them on actions that they have taken on different issues. I am simply asking straightforward questions, and I am not getting any answers.

I think it is important that the record shows that indeed the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) has refused to answer the questions that have been put forward to him. The Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett) has also refused to answer the very basic question that was put to her. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray) asked this question of the Premier (Mr. Doer) of our province, who also denied and who also refused to answer.

So the issue here is who is accountable to the people of Manitoba? Why is the Government trying to hide from this issue and why are they not forthright with us as Opposition and with the people of Manitoba? Why is the minister, the Premier and the Minister of Labour refusing to be honest—well, I will rephrase that because that may be unparliamentary—refusing to be forthright with the people of this province when we ask the question on behalf of the citizens of Manitoba, on behalf of the people who have concerns with this particular issue?

So, Mr. Chair, I know that we have a mere five minutes left in this session, in this particular sitting to have the minister answer this question, but I ask the minister one more time whether he is prepared to tell us whether in fact he gave the instructions to his deputy minister to proceed with the action, to proceed with the announcement that was made regarding the Health essential services act that was identified to the CEOs of the RHAs on May 9, 2001.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, first off, I have already answered that question two or three

times for the member. I think of a biblical phrase about having ears but does not hear. It seems to apply in this particular instance.

We have indicated, I have indicated very clearly, but I cannot let go inaccurate information that has been put on the record by the member opposite. The member seemed to indicate that this issue is frivolous. It is not frivolous. For the member to indicate that the issue of patient care and the issue of dealing with this issue is frivolous, I think is not appropriate. So I just want to clarify that.

I would also like to indicate that the member somehow took the fact that we were questioning their accuracy in suggesting that this is legislation before the House or questioning the accuracy of their questions of which they have good experience in being inaccurate, but questioning the accuracy of their questions, somehow the member turned it around and twisted it around and said that we are somehow not showing respect for CEOs, an incredible leap of logic.

Mr. Chairperson, what we do not understand is the actions of members opposite who are trying to find an issue to raise up the flagpole for their own political ends. Also, for the member to suggest that policy initiatives on this side of the House, regardless of what the initiatives are, are political is a disservice. I never accused them of being political when they brought in Connie Curran, even though it was wrong. I did not accuse them of being political when they signed the deal in SmartHealth, even though that was wrong. I did not accuse them of being political when they hammered home the frozen food deal. I never accused them of being political.

I criticized the agreements. I criticized Connie Curran. I criticized frozen food. I criticized SmartHealth, but I did not accuse them of being political, Mr. Chairperson. The member opposite, I think, is going down the wrong road. They may have made decisions. They may have made policy decisions based on politics, but we make decisions based on issues of health care and issues of what we believe is in the best interests of the population.

So I had to put on the record the fact that the member's assertions in his rather long preamble

were inaccurate factually, and I wanted to put on the record. I know the member does not want to put inaccurate information on the record.

As I indicated on two or three other separate occasions in this regard, the member asked about the issue of dealing with policy initiatives and putting out consultations. I said there is a variety of areas that we consult on. There is a variety of policy initiatives that we have dealt with in the past, are dealing with as current and as recent as today and will deal with in the future. Some of those issues end up as legislation. Some of them do not end up as legislation. Some of them end up as change for the period of time when we began consulting till they actually came before this Chamber in legislation. Some issues, Mr. Chairperson, actually changed during the course of debate in this Legislature, when we have a bill and when we have a law that we can change.

What I have found out from the member of Roblin-Russell is he does not want the Labour Board of Manitoba to be involved in making decisions on essential services, despite standing up and passing the legislation that we are dealing with now, despite voting in favour of it, so he has changed his mind. I respect that. The member has changed his mind. The Conservative Party has changed its position with respect to utilizing the Labour Relations Board to make determination of essential services. The member has brought it forward and made it very clear. They have indicated that they do not want the Labour Relations Board to be involved. That is useful, and that has been about the only aspect I think that I could recognize as useful from members opposite: that they put their position on line with respect to the Labour Relations Board, which is different than the pre-existing essential services agreement.

To that end, we have answered the question that the member has asked three or four times, and over and over again I have indicated to the member the response. The problem is the member is not getting the response he wants in this whole conspiracy theory that is being developed out there, Mr. Chairperson. The member does not have the response that has developed as a result of this conspiracy theory that they seem to have about all of the issues percolating out there.

The member suggests a hidden agenda when governments decide to consult. Would the member have it do what happened during the Conservative years when issues were not discussed, when policy was made on the back of a memo pad under the direction of the Secretary of Treasury Board, Jules Benson? Do members want us to return to that? I do not think so, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairperson: Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, June 6, 2001

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Presenting Petitions		Bill 37—The Inter-jurisdictional Support Orders Act Mackintosh	2673
Kenaston Underpass		Bill 301—The Bank of Nova Scotia Trust Company and National Trust Company Act	
Loewen	2669	Maloway	2673
Driedger	2669		
Stefanson	2669		
Manitoba Hydro Lines Routes			
Schuler	2669		
Reading and Receiving Petitions		Oral Questions	
Manitoba Hydro Lines Routes		Essential Services Act	
Schuler	2669	Murray; Doer	2673
		Driedger; Doer	2675
Kenaston Underpass		Derkach; Chomiak	2677
Loewen	2669	Praznik; Chomiak	2679
Driedger	2670	Black Bears—Riding Mountain Area	
Pitura	2670	Gerrard; Lathlin	2680
Stefanson	2670	Gerrard; Lemieux	2681
Ministerial Statements			
Minnedosa Area Chemical Fire		Tuberculosis Outbreak—Wildlife	
Lathlin	2671	Gerrard; Lathlin	2681
Gilleshammer	2671		
Gerrard	2672	Members' Statements	
Tabling of Reports		Marion Clemens	
Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the fiscal year ending February 28, 2001		Schuler	2681
Mackintosh	2672	John Taylor Collegiate Teachers Rondeau	2682
Introduction of Bills		Fort Garry Legion Poppy Trust Fund J. Smith	2682
Bill 24—The Liquor Control Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act		High School Credit Requirements	
S. Smith	2672	Aglugub	2683
Bill 35—The Improved Enforcement of Support Payments (Various Acts Amended) Act		Pharmaceutical Products for Children with Cancer	
Mackintosh	2672	Gerrard	2683

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Motion of Condolence

Gildas Molgat

Doer	2684
Gerrard	2686
Murray	2688
Selinger	2689
Dacquay	2691
Struthers	2691
Cummings	2692
Gilleshammer	2693
Korzeniowski	2694
Rocan	2694

Asper	2697
Loewen	2698
Praznik	2700
Laurendeau	2700

Committee of Supply

Capital Supply

Santos	2701
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Concurrence Motion

Derkach	2702
Chomiak	2703
Barrett	2713