



Fifth Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature

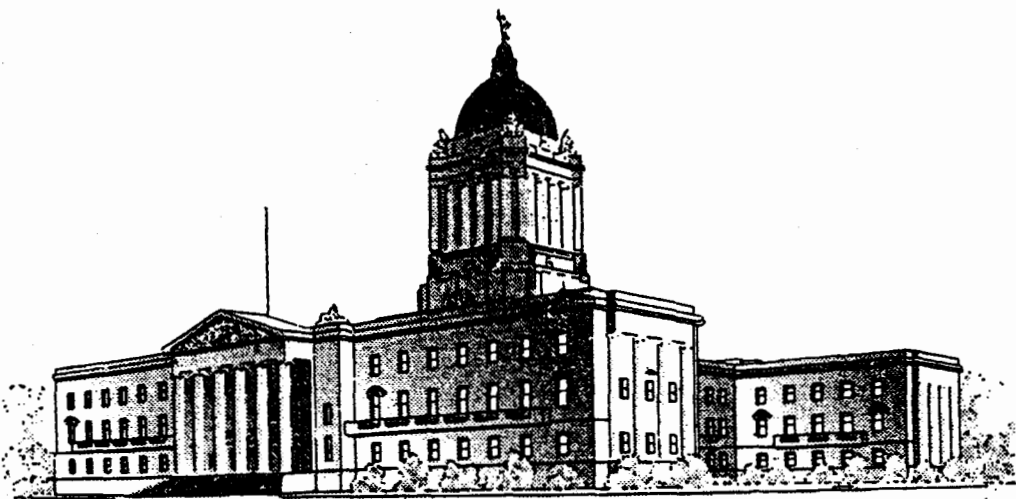
of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(Hansard)

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The Honourable Denis C. Rocan
Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, June 8, 1994

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table, first of all, the Annual Report for the Department of Rural Development, 1992-93.

I would also like to table the first Annual Report for Manitoba Decentralization.

I would also like to table the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review for Decentralization.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 18—The Insurance Amendment Act

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme), that leave be given to introduce Bill 18, The Insurance Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les assurances, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 19—The Mental Health Amendment Act

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey), that leave be given to introduce Bill 19, The Mental Health Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé mentale), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 21—The Manitoba Medical Association Dues Act

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey), that leave be given to introduce Bill 21, The Manitoba Medical Association Dues Act (Loi sur la cotisation de l'Association médicale du Manitoba), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 20—The Municipal Amendment Act

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mr. Gilleshammer), that leave be given to introduce Bill 20, The Municipal Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les municipalités), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 22—The Statute Law Amendment Act, 1994

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey), I move, seconded by the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson), that leave be given to introduce Bill 22, The Statute Law Amendment Act, 1994 (Loi de 1994 modifiant diverses dispositions législatives), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

* (1335)

Bill 23—The Manitoba Historical Society Property Act

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme), that leave be given to introduce Bill 23, The Manitoba

Historical Society Property Act; Loi sur les biens de la Société historique du Manitoba, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, having been advised of the contents of the bill, recommends it to the House. I would like to table the message.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 214—The Freedom of Information Amendment Act

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), that leave be given to introduce Bill 214, The Freedom of Information Amendment Act.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Inkster, seconded by the honourable Leader of the second opposition party, that leave be given to introduce Bill 214, The Freedom of Information Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la liberté d'accès à l'information, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, The Freedom of Information Act, the act which the government takes great pride in, has one clause in it that many refer to as the Mack truck clause, in which it gives so much discretion to cabinet and cabinet ministers to deny access to opposition parties to getting vital information that would help us in terms of facilitating a more constructive critique of the government.

So this is an attempt from the Liberal Party to try to get government to provide the information that is needed, Mr. Speaker, and we anticipate the official opposition and, hopefully, the government will see the light of day in providing better information to the opposition parties, will ensure that in fact there is better debate inside the Chamber. Thank you.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the

gallery, where we have with us this afternoon from the Springs of Living Water Academy, we have seventeen Grades 8 and 9 students under the direction of Mr. Brad Dowler. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render).

From the Roland Lauze School, we have seventeen Grade 5 students under the direction of Mrs. Matilda Gibb. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

From the Mafeking School, we have twenty-one Grades 5 and 6 students under the direction of Ms. Gladys Wyatt. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk).

From the Pinawa Secondary School, we have twenty-six Grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Brian McKenzie. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik).

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

* (1340)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

The Winnipeg Jets Operating Losses

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in November of 1991, we opposed the deal the government had signed with the Jets and the City of Winnipeg. We opposed it, because it was a blank cheque for the operating losses of the team for capital liability and also a blank cheque to guarantee a return to the owners.

We have been trying for two and a half years to find out the projections the government had about the exposure that the public and the taxpayers would have to the agreement that was proposed and ratified by the Premier. Unfortunately, we could not get those numbers and I had to ask the Provincial Auditor on May 5, 1994, for an analysis of the numbers that the provincial government had and what it meant to the public of Manitoba.

Today, we have been given, for the first time, information that the government in 1991 knew the projected losses would be \$43.5 million for the terms of the agreement.

I want to ask the Premier: Did he inform his cabinet of the potential \$43.5-million losses? Why did he not inform the public of Manitoba, who are also responsible for these losses?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, of course, is attempting to sensationalize a situation in which the objective was to ensure we had a reasonable business arrangement under which to maintain the operations of the Winnipeg Jets in Winnipeg over a period of time in order to preserve over a thousand jobs and estimated annual revenues to three levels of government of some \$14 million annually.

We were, in effect, becoming partners in an arrangement that would ensure that various things happened, one of which was that the commitments that already had been undertaken by Winnipeg Enterprises Corporation to accept their share of the losses—rather, to accept losses in excess of \$200,000 annually would also result in the shares that were then beneficially held by the Enterprises Corporation being able to be sold on a pro rata basis with other shares of the club, should that club ultimately have to be sold because it could no longer function in Winnipeg.

In other words, the upside being the potential of receiving back some, of course, of the 36 percent shares—some \$18 million was not there under the previous agreement, and is there under the current agreement—the continued revenue stream of \$14 million annually to three levels of government remains in Winnipeg; and the employment in excess of a thousand jobs, a thousand people over the period of time of the agreement.

All of that on an interim basis until a solution could be found as to whether or not we would be able to build a new arena or a facility that would accommodate the Jets for the future. That, of course, was the objective, continues to be the objective and is the rationale behind the acceptance of responsibility for losses of the club

in order to maintain all of those benefits and in order to ensure, should a sale be the only option, that in fact the \$18 million would accrue to the governments who own the shares.

Mr. Doer: The Premier did not answer the question.

Mr. Speaker, I asked the Premier whether he in fact had informed his cabinet of the downside of the agreement, and why he did not inform the public of the downside. I recall the Premier, when he had his press conference, telling us we had peace in our time in terms of the hockey team, that he informed us of all the upsides. But I do not remember at all—and we looked back through our numbers, because we have been asking this question for two and a half years—the Premier presenting the downside of the agreement.

Why did the Premier withhold the projections that he had in his hand from the public who are paying the money and responsible for the money? Why did he only give us the upside of the agreement, which he repeats today in the House? Why did he not make public the downside of the \$43.5-million projections that he had in his hands when he agreed to this interim arrangement with the Jets?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, firstly, there was no hesitation ever to acknowledge that we would be responsible for the losses. That was part and parcel of the agreement and we said so publicly, and nobody ever attempted to hide it. It was an area in which the—but by the same token, if the member takes the projection of direct revenues to government over those same six years, he will have a figure that is double the level in which he is talking about losses.

So the upside is that you retain a revenue stream that is twice as large as the average losses that are accrued over the period of time, and you retain over a thousand jobs, and you retain a \$40- to \$50-million economic spinoff to the economy as a result of it—

An Honourable Member: And 36 percent of an asset.

* (1345)

Mr. Filmon:—and 36 percent of an asset that can be sold, should it prove that the team no longer is viable here if an arena is not to be built in the future.

All of those things were talked about, and he knows very well that they were talked about. That was the basis on which he made his judgment and we made our judgment. Our judgment was to attempt to preserve the team here.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, but the public never had this information; the public was never given the projected losses. The cabinet—and I cannot believe cabinet agreed to this agreement—had a \$43.5 million in November of 1991. That was never shared with the public. It required an auditor to go in and ferret out the minister's and Premier's briefing notes from 1991 so we can finally know the exact amount of money of losses. We heard the upsides at the press conference that the Premier had with the mayor. We have heard the upsides all the way through, but we had never had the downside. We have never had the bottom-line numbers until today.

My final question is to the Premier. He has referred this matter to one blue-chip committee, to another blue-chip committee, to a third blue-chip committee. I believe it is now before the Burns committee. The objective of the interim agreement was to resolve the issue of the Jets and its ownership and its facility here in the city of Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba.

Are we any further ahead in terms of resolving the issue of a long-term ownership of the hockey team in Manitoba today than we were in November of 1991 in spite of the losses that we have had and the losses that are projected to take place in the next seven years?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, firstly, I repeat. It was made public that we were taking the responsibility for the losses. That was never denied. That was never hidden. Secondly, I point out to him that if he wants to look at those figures, in the first two years, where losses were anticipated, losses did not materialize. So those losses did not take place in the first two years, and in the third year they were less than what was projected. So, in fact, nobody is

attempting to mislead anybody or ever has. The only one who is attempting to mislead is the member opposite with his sensationalism.

Point of Order

Mr. Doer: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Premier is imputing motives in terms of misleading the public. We have called for the last two and a half years to find out these numbers, and we had to go to the Provincial Auditor because the Premier would not tell us these numbers. It is the first time ever we have had the fact confirmed that in 1991 he knew the numbers and withheld them from the public.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Filmon: No one knew the numbers because the numbers were only projections, projections which may or may not ever come to be. I point out to him, in the first two years projected losses did not materialize. In the third year projected losses were less than—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. For clarification, I ruled on your point of order. There was no point of order, and then the honourable First Minister was finishing answering. Oh, on a new point of order. Okay.

Point of Order

Mr. Doer: I believe the First Minister had sat down when I stood up on a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable First Minister did sit down on your point of order. I ruled on your point of order, and then I recognized the honourable First Minister to finish with his response.

* * *

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, as I pointed out, in the first two years the projected losses did not materialize. In the third year the actual losses were still less than the projected losses. So, in fact, the information shared was the information that was appropriate to be shared and there continues to be two sides to the issue, one of which was: There are revenue streams that accrue directly to government

in terms of taxation revenue. There are people employed in excess of 1,000, there are economic benefits throughout the economy in the range of \$40 million to \$50 million, and our objective is still to attempt to keep the Winnipeg Jets operating in Winnipeg to maintain those benefits for the people of Manitoba.

Domestic Violence Stayed Charges

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Acting Minister of Justice.

Yesterday, the government introduced its new tolerance policy on domestic violence. This new get-soft approach to assault means charges are dropped if the victim agrees not to testify.

My question to the minister is: How is there justice when a charge is dropped and, apart from the victim's testimony, there is evidence of an assault? An assault is an assault.

* (1350)

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, the honourable member and the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) have discussed this initiative in detail during the Estimates discussion for the Department of Justice, so for the honourable member to call this some kind of a new policy, he already knows, is incorrect, and he is absolutely wrong because this initiative is an enhancement of our zero-tolerance policy. It is, as part of the project, the Crown and a representative from the Women's Advocacy program interviewing complainants, and the Crown will only stay proceedings where the victim does not want to proceed through the court process. This allows the court process to work more efficiently. The honourable member knows all this. This was discussed in detail.

However, if there are any other questions like this, I would be pleased to pass them on to the Minister of Justice, but the honourable member is very wrong—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Mackintosh: Just to clarify, Mr. Speaker, this matter just became known publicly yesterday and has not been dealt with in Estimates.

Women's Advocacy Program Funding

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): My question is: Given that charges can now be dropped even if the victim has been coerced or intimidated from testifying by the assailant and counselling for victims is essential to prevent this, would the government confirm that it is closing another door to victims by refusing to continue funding to victim services in five Manitoba communities and has refused to enhance the Winnipeg Women's Advocacy Program?

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Minister of Justice and Attorney General): The reason this government supports and funds the Women's Advocacy Program and has seen it expanded and the Family Violence Court expanded over the last few years is because of its commitment to the zero-tolerance aspect with respect to family violence.

The honourable member does not say much positive about the ability of the Women's Advocacy people to identify where intimidation exists, and I think the honourable member owes the people involved in that program some explanation for his comments today.

Domestic Violence Court Backlog

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, this government's response to backlogs is to drop cases rather than competently managing the court.

Given that on one day the Minister of Justice said to this House the backlog in Family Violence Court was four and a half months, the next day in this House said it was seven months, while everyone in the system knows it is up to one year, my question to the minister is: What role did the government play in effectively disciplining the only judge who has spoken up against this backlog?

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I remind the honourable member that because of the conduct and the performance of the government that he surely supported before ours came along, the backlog in our courts was 14 months. Through measures like the Family Violence Court and other measures, that has been reduced significantly, and while traffic in the courts is always heavy these days, the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) is doing everything in her power to make sure that the system works well for people.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the latest question of the honourable member as a lawyer, I am shocked and outraged that he would suggest that the government of Manitoba or the Minister of Justice would have any role whatsoever in a decision properly made by the judiciary in this province. His question implies that the Minister of Justice has somehow interfered in the independence of the judiciary. I ask that honourable member to lay a charge, to make a charge, or else to make an apology to the honourable Minister of Justice and all of the members on this side of the House.

The Winnipeg Jets Liability Cap

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, picking up on some of the comments from the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) and the responses of the Premier (Mr. Filmon) on the agreement signed in November of 1991 with the Winnipeg Jets organization, my question is to the Premier.

In the same agreement that committed the government, the taxpayers, the combined City of Winnipeg and provincial obligations, to \$43.5 million, the franchise was valued at \$50 million.

Why did the government agree to pick up losses over a five-year period in excess of 80 percent of the value of the franchise, given that, in the very same agreement, they put that value at \$50 million, and why was there no cap put in place on the liability of the taxpayers?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Because of the very simple reason that through the agreement that Winnipeg Enterprises already had, they were already obligated to pick up those losses.

Secondarily, it did, in fact, validate the value of their shares by virtue of the new aspect of the agreement that ensured that, on the sale of shares, the \$18 million or whatever was the sale price would, in fact, be repaid. Under the old agreement, legal opinion suggested that the 64 percent majority ownership could transfer the team and never have to recompense the Winnipeg Enterprises for the existing shares.

Finally, in addition to that, the member neglects to say that it maintained a revenue stream to governments of some \$14 million annually during that period of time.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, the Premier consistently talks about—because, of course, he has to, given these loss projections—the other value of the Jets in terms of creating jobs in the outside economy. What he does not say is how many thousands of people could have been employed spending that \$43.5 million some other way. That is never talked about, the lost opportunity of those millions of dollars, paying people a fraction of what the players of the Winnipeg Jets get.

Private Investors

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): My second question for the Premier: The private investors put up \$7.8 million. That is a secured fund, secured by the province with their shares in the Winnipeg Jets. Why was it only required that private investors put up less than one-fifth of what the taxpayer is committed to in covering losses? Indeed, the private investors were allowed to have security for their investment, making it in effect a loan rather than an outright grant to the Winnipeg Jets.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I do not think that economics is probably involved in a lawyer's training, given that question, because the member does not recognize that our share of the losses is only a small fraction of the money that is

spent by the operations of the team here. In fact, the team's budget is four times that which is involved in the picking up of the losses. That all pays people who work in hotels, in restaurants, in transportation, in travel, in support services, in arenas and all of those things. That is where over a thousand jobs come.

I dare say that the expenditure by governments of something like \$6 million in a year would not create over a thousand jobs, would not create anywhere close to that. So I would suggest that he go back and get a little bit of economic understanding before he makes those kinds of suggestions.

Baade Report Government Position

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my final question for the Premier: The economist who did the most thorough study of professional sports and its economic benefits is Dr. Robert Baade from the United States who studied 57 cities over 30 years in four professional sports. There are a number of reports conflicting on this issue.

My question for the Premier (Mr. Filmon), because I asked him this a number of weeks ago in Estimates: Has his government assessed that report? Can he produce today a synopsis from government of that report's conclusions which specifically states that the economic benefit of professional sports teams, including the Winnipeg Jets, is massively overstated? That is the conclusion of that report. Can the Premier produce a critique of that report? He obviously does not agree with it. Where is the—

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

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the second opposition party has raised this question once or twice before. One of these days I guess we will find out where the Leader of the Second Opposition really stands on the entire issue of the Jets and the economic benefit that they are to the province of Manitoba and what he wants to try and do and what he believes in. I do agree with the Premier (Mr.

Filmon) that it would do some good for the Leader of the Opposition to take some economic courses in terms of economic benefits of business entities here in our province.

We have had an opportunity to receive the Baade report, and we have had an opportunity to review that report. We also have the Lavalin Report. We also have the Coopers and Lybrand report, reports that suggest that there is a \$50-million economic benefit in the province of Manitoba that indicate there is approximately 1,400 jobs generated by the Winnipeg Jets in the economy of Manitoba and the significant economic benefits that they derive to our province.

The Baade report takes a certain approach in terms of comparing investments in sporting professional organizations and facilities, to other kinds of investments, and it takes a different approach than some of these studies. But I would also encourage the Leader of the second opposition party to be serious on this issue, to look at all of the kinds of reports, reports done by very reputable organizations right here in our province and by senior business leaders, Mr. Speaker, like Mr. Art Mauro.

* (1400)

Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Funding

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, in Family Services Estimates, the Minister of Family Services announced a new strategic thrust for Child and Family Services agencies of stressing family support and family preservation. There is already an excellent organization that is doing that and that is the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre and they have written to the Minister of Family Services and said that another year at a 10 percent reduction is creating havoc with the delivery of our programs to the community we serve.

I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services: What is she doing to implement this new strategic thrust by giving additional resources to the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre in order that they can carry out the mandate that they have which keeps children out of more costly care?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, indeed, we have set forth as a government a new vision for child welfare in the province of Manitoba, and that is family support, family preservation and family responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, we will be working and I will continue to work and to meet with community organizations to ensure that that new thrust and that new vision are followed through with. I have indicated there is a fund, and it is committed in our budget, \$2.5 million, the Family Support Innovations Fund, that will look at innovative and creative new ways of doing business.

Mr. Martindale: I would like to thank the minister for that answer and to ask her if the Ma Mawi Wi Centre is eligible for the Family Support Innovations Fund, and if so, will this make up for the funding they have lost, partly through research studies and partly through the 10 percent cut last year, which was not restored this year?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, I will be meeting with and working with all community organizations and the Child and Family Services agencies to ensure that the dollars we put into early intervention, early child development, family support, family preservation will be used in the very best manner possible to ensure that we reach out to as many children and families as we possibly can right throughout the province of Manitoba.

I will be, as I said, working on that new initiative with the community, and when those announcements are ready and available, they will be made.

Mr. Martindale: I would like to ask the minister if she will agree to meet with the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, since she has agreed to meet with organizations, and will she take seriously their concerns and their need for funding? Since moving to their new location, their caseload is up by 75 percent. Will she undertake to meet with this organization at the first available opportunity?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I take very seriously the concern for all children throughout the province of Manitoba to ensure their safety, their security and

their development. I have never refused to meet with any organization. I have indeed met with many people since I have become the Minister of Family Services, and I will continue to do that. At their request, I will certainly sit down and meet with them and discuss all of the options and opportunities available.

Private Personal Care Homes Operating Agreement

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, last Thursday the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) raised questions about Mr. David Pascoe, and I have a brief response for the honourable member.

The Nursing Home Association of Manitoba, an organization representing proprietary personal care homes, retained Mr. Pascoe to act as a consultant for their organization. Manitoba Health played no role in Mr. Pascoe's retention by the association nor in his remuneration.

All honourable members should be aware that my department continues to rely on the expert research resources of the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation.

In their report of November of 1993, assessing the quality of care in Manitoba personal care homes by using administrative data to monitor outcomes, they concluded that, and I quote: Overall, the care in Manitoba's nursing homes appears to be very good, and I am advised that long-term care staff are following up on the report carefully monitoring quality and performance in Manitoba's proprietary and nonproprietary personal care homes.

Environmental Legislation Enforcement

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, the report of March 1993 from the Economic Innovation and Technology Council review on environment labs stated that Manitoba has typically followed in the implementation of legislation and enforcement as opposed to leading it, and that Manitoba typically has not been

aggressive in the enforcement of various environmental legislation.

With 58 different types of establishments mandated under different legislation for inspections and enforcement, everything from swimming facilities to air emissions to hazardous waste storage, I would like to ask the Minister of Environment: How does the decline in the number of staff years in the department affect this government's ability to enforce environmental laws?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, I hope the member did not intentionally put on the record misleading information, because I am sure she knows full well that the number of staff that are employed in the Department of Environment has been adjusted this year because the laboratory is now run independently of the Department of Environment. The Department of Environment will in fact be a client of the laboratory. That accounts for, I believe, 36 personnel who are employed in Ward lab.

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Speaker, the staff complement in the department has decreased in staff years from 224 to 175 since 1991, with an 11.4 percent reduction in the budget.

Does Manitoba have the resources in the Department of Environment to enforce all of its regulations in the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the vast majority of issues that are raised that come through my office are that we are very often accused of overregulating. Yesterday, in Estimates, as a matter of fact, we reviewed some of the inspections and regulatory aspects of the department.

We, by prioritization, have carried out some very intensive inspections in specific areas. For example, the numbers would indicate that potentially every swimming pool for which we are responsible in the province probably received three inspections last summer. It seems to me to be a fairly adequate inspection program from the public health inspectors within the department. On the public health side, the food services

inspections, in fact, were a considerable multiple of the number of establishments for which we are responsible.

So, Mr. Speaker, our level of inspection is quite high.

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Speaker, since in the Estimates the minister confirmed that there are 70 staff responsible for inspection and enforcement in all of Manitoba for all of the laws for which this department is responsible, can the minister explain to the House why reports are saying that Manitoba has not typically been aggressive in the enforcement of various laws and legislation on the environment in this province?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, there is a difference between being aggressive and doing a comprehensive job of taking care of the responsibilities within the department. We talked about this yesterday in Estimates as well, but I guess there was no opportunity to get it on camera.

The fact is that we, through the Department of Environment, take advantage of a number of other department to assist in enforcement. We use Natural Resources people; we use RCMP; we use a number of other government employees wherever the situation warrants.

As a matter of fact, a perfect example last fall was the very successful operation that was completed to control the amount of smoke that might get into this city during the period of stubble burning in the fall. We had complete co-operation from the RCMP, local police officials, the Department of Agriculture, and Natural Resources. All of these combined to make a very effective workforce on behalf of the environmental law.

Private Personal Care Homes Operating Agreement

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health, who only half answered a question that I asked last week after a week.

My question to the minister is: Can the minister confirm that the Nursing Home Association has entered into or is in the process of entering into an

agreement to be self-regulating with respect to nursing homes with the provincial government?

An Honourable Member: He half asked the question.

* (1410)

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Somebody observed that it was only a half-asked question, too, Mr. Speaker. So if it was only half answered, perhaps that explains it.

Mr. Speaker: What did I hear?

Mr. McCrae: I think the honourable member asked if we were engaging in some kind of arrangement whereby there would be self-regulation. The regulation of personal care homes is not something to be treated without a great deal of seriousness by the government. That is why we have a task force at work addressing issues like the regulation of personal care, about the standards that are existing today and whether or not they are being properly lived up to. I have made no agreement to relinquish control of the regulation of personal care.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Prior to recognizing the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), I believe in the response given by the honourable Minister of Health—and I am not too sure exactly the comments or the words spoken by the honourable minister, but what I am going to do at this time, sir, I am going to take this matter under advisement. I am going to peruse Hansard, and I will come back to the House and I will be either asking him to withdraw or to—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have suggested that I have not heard the comments, and I am going to peruse Hansard and I will come back to the House after carefully reviewing the remarks.

Point of Order

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, it is my sincere hope that when you peruse Hansard that Hansard correctly sets out precisely what I said. The words that I used had a “k” in it, and I used the expression “half-asked question.”

Mr. Speaker: I would hope so, sir. I would sincerely hope so.

* * *

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, in his response the minister seemed to contradict himself between his previous response and his first response to my question, and that was, the minister said everything was fine in the nursing homes, and there was no need to look at them. In his second response he said, well, that is why we are looking at redoing the regulations.

What is the purpose of the task force then to examine the existing conditions in nursing homes as they presently exist today?—because there are some problems.

Mr. McCrae: I would not have meant to imply that there is not always room for improvement. I did not mean to imply that at all. I was simply setting out for the honourable member what the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation said in its report. It used the words, overall the care in Manitoba’s nursing home appears to be very good.

That is not an all-inclusive statement. As I am sure even the centre sets out in its report, there are areas that need to be addressed, and we are addressing them through the task force that I referred to.

So I hope the honourable member would not deliberately misunderstand me when I quote something from the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation. That was said by this independent agency, but we are still having a task force to review the regulations and standards, staffing and compliance. That is because we place the needs of the residents of personal care homes in Manitoba as the highest priority.

Mr. Chomiak: Can the minister therefore confirm that there is no proposal on the table right now whereby proprietary nursing homes under the Nursing Home Association of Manitoba will be self-policing or self-regulating and that in fact that is the reason Mr. David Pascoe has been hired by that association to carry out that work?

Mr. McCrae: If the honourable member wants to know why that association hired Mr. Pascoe, let him ask that association, because I do not speak for the association.

Louisiana-Pacific Emission Controls

Ms. Norma McCormick (Osborne): My question is to the Minister of the Environment.

The minister has repeatedly assured us in Environment Estimates and in this House that the process for setting environmental control standards is adequate, well understood and sufficient to protect the health of Manitobans.

Today, in a CBC report, Louisiana-Pacific official, Dan Dilworth, is quoted as saying VOC emissions are not an issue in Manitoba because the province has not made any rules about emissions of these chemicals. Unfortunately, the company is correct.

My question to the minister: Does he disagree with Mr. Dilworth's statement, and can he table the standards which he says do apply?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, as we discussed yesterday in Estimates, the setting of the air quality standards, the premise with which the department and the regulatory regime begins, is that the human health and the best possible level of protection for human health is the requirement for which we then base our standards.

The company is then challenged to produce technology, to produce a process that will guarantee that any emissions they may release or may possibly potentially have for release are not such that they will exceed those standards which are set at the maximum level of protection for human health.

Ms. McCormick: A toxic chemical expert speaking on behalf of Louisiana-Pacific yesterday admitted under questioning that there could be dozens, even hundreds, of chemicals with unknown health effects which could be released by this operation.

For how many and what compounds does the department intend to set emission standards to

ensure the protection of the surrounding community?

Mr. Cummings: I am not going to enter into a debate in this House to do the work of the Clean Environment Commission at this particular juncture. Presentations that may or may not have been made at the commission, I will wait until the commission has examined the relevance of those comments.

Let me be very clear that the province—[interjection] Yes, let me be perfectly clear—I need a little help from behind me—that the province avail itself of the best possible information across the country, and that means that we do not preclude any information that will be brought to bear on this particular licence or on any other. Because the province is not specifically pursuing one particular emission, that does not mean that we cannot acquire the information and the technology to do so.

Clean Environment Commission Report

Ms. Norma McCormick (Osborne): My final question to the minister: Is the minister confident that the report of the Clean Environment Commission will be available by the early summer deadline for construction that Louisiana-Pacific has placed? What does he plan to do if the commission requires more time to produce a comprehensive—

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

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, I am a little bit offended by the direction that this questioning is taking, because we have said very clearly that when the Clean Environment Commission embarks upon the process which Louisiana-Pacific is now undertaking, they will act independently. They will take whatever time they need to make a decision, and that is the time frame which Louisiana-Pacific and the Province of Manitoba will have to fall into.

**A.E. McKenzie Co. Ltd.
Privatization**

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Culture and Heritage.

Two months ago we learned that this government, as the owner of McKenzie Seeds of Brandon, had authorized negotiations with foreign seed companies to enter into some type of partnership, which could lead to privatization and possibly threaten its continued existence in Brandon. We were told that a decision would be made in six to eight weeks; two months have elapsed.

Can the minister tell the House today whether a deal has been made between McKenzie Seeds and a foreign seed company? If so, what are the details of the arrangements?

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister responsible for A.E. McKenzie Co. Ltd.): Mr. Speaker, there has been no deal made.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Can the minister advise this House whether the company will continue to seek out other potential buyers, or has the minister closed the door on this matter so that the government will not allow the company to continue seeking a private partner?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, as the member knows from some of the discussions that he has had with Mr. West, the company has enjoyed tremendous success over the last number of years. We have set out preconditions, which I have explained to the member for Brandon East before.

Because of the success of the company, there is still a tremendous amount of interest out there in forming some sort of strategic alliance or partnership, and we have not precluded some deal being made.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Will the minister be prepared to provide information to this Legislature on the names of the companies that McKenzie Seeds has been negotiating with and any other companies that might be interested in entering into some arrangement with this company?

* (1420)

Mr. Gilleshammer: We have just completed in recent weeks an exhaustive review of the annual report and are in the midst of that. We have set out the preconditions that we have set before any companies that want to enter a strategic alliance. I do not think the member would want me to interfere with negotiations at this stage.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you call Bill 21, please.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 2—The Prescription Drugs Cost Assistance Amendment and Pharmaceutical Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), Bill 2, The Prescription Drugs Cost Assistance Amendment and Pharmaceutical Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aide à l'achat de médicaments sur ordonnance et la Loi sur les pharmacies, standing in the name of the honourable member for Inkster.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I had adjourned debate the other day knowing that our critic, the member for Crescentwood, was wanting to say a few words on this bill.

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand today and put a few comments on the record in regard to Bill 2, The Prescription Drugs Cost Assistance Amendment and Pharmaceutical Amendment Act.

I am pleased to see some progress made in this particular area. The Liberal Party, as many will know, have been interested in the idea of developing a system of a Health Smart Card here in Manitoba. We have been consistently putting our ideas forward and on the record since 1988. Although it is six years later, and we still have not seen a Smart Card in terms of a Health Smart system, at least we are moving a little bit forward when we now are in the process of looking at a

Pharmacare card system. So we are pleased to see some progress made in that area.

I am hoping that we will actually see the implementation of a Pharmacare card program in Manitoba within this year. I understand that there have been some potential delays, and we are not ready to actually implement the program as yet. I hope that we will see that as soon as possible. I know that the government—I believe their intentions are sincere and that they want to get the program established.

I am hoping that it comes as quickly as possible for those seniors and other individuals who in fact will benefit very much from this program. I also appreciate and understand that if there are bugs to be worked out in the system and things are not up and running that we could create more problems by trying to implement a program or a plan that is not ready to go. So I can appreciate that perhaps expectations of when a program could be up and running were perhaps premature, or there were more complications that occurred in terms of getting the system up and running than was originally thought.

I would hope as well that the minister, in looking at this particular bill, might have considered emphasizing as well the five principles that are in the Canada Health Act as he looks at this particular piece of legislation. Those particular five areas in the Canada Health Act, of course, are comprehensiveness, universality, accessibility, portability and public administration. I think the intent of this particular amendment act incorporates a number of these particular principles, and I would like to have seen those principles clearly indicated in this particular piece of legislation.

I would really hope that the minister would take the opportunity when he is looking at implementing the PHIN, the personal identification number, and the entire purpose behind the Pharmacare card system, that he would also look at the Health Smart Card idea where not only do we look at prescription drugs and other costs that are identified in this particular act in terms of having them on a system, but we look at

other aspects of health care as well including number of visits to doctors, to physicians, et cetera.

I hope that we will see that as the next step in regard to moving towards a system that not only is more efficient for the consumers but also assists the professionals as well, be those professionals pharmacists or physicians or other individuals who provide service to the consumer in the community.

The Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) has stated in his remarks that the Pharmacare card system will reduce adverse drug reactions and that it will promote better communication between physicians and the pharmacist. It also may assist in preventing double doctoring which, of course, could result in doubling of the prescriptions as well.

I surely hope that this particular act does do that. I very much look forward to any presentations that the public and other professionals may have at the committee stage to hear from the public as to what their concerns are.

I know my colleague from Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) has raised some issues in regard to confidentiality and privacy in regard to this particular amendment act.

On first read of this particular act and in having a number of solicitors also review this act, it would appear that the confidentiality guidelines are in fact very good in this particular act. Again, we will be very interested in hearing from members of the public at the committee stage to hear their concerns, if any, on the issues of privacy and confidentiality.

We have seen some amendments in this particular act as well that talk about fines and giving fines for faults or misleading information in claims or issuing false prescriptions. We have seen an increase in the dollar amount for those fines, and we support those increases.

We think it is very important in any piece of legislation that if fines are related to doing something that is not allowed, that those fines not just be token but they be substantial. We look forward to hearing from the public on those particular issues.

The Minister of Health also talks about streamlining administrative procedures. If we had moved to a Health Smart Card, we could have seen even more of a streamlining of that administration, but at least this is a first step with the Pharmacare card system.

In the last number of months, in regard to Pharmacare, in regard to the health care system here in Manitoba, we have certainly raised grave concerns about the increase in deductibles to the Pharmacare claims, the fact that this government has continued to delist drugs and the fact that this government also has created an inflexible deadline for Pharmacare claims.

We believe, because of the calls that we have received from constituents and from people in Manitoba, that these changes have imposed hardships on many Manitobans. There is a certain segment of our population, of our society, where these changes have not created any hardships, particularly financial, but there is a certain group of people in our province where there has been hardships.

We have received calls from individuals who are concerned that we have people on fixed incomes who have not been regularly filling their prescriptions because of the concern about that initial outlay, that initial cost. We received calls from individuals who have expressed concern about individuals who may be diabetic who, in fact, are reusing their syringes, who are not testing their blood as often per day as they should be. Again, they have done this, they have reduced the methods that they have used to assist in their own health care merely because of a concern for the cost of prescriptions, the cost of supplies, the cost of any equipment that assists them in taking care of themselves.

So we are concerned about that, Mr. Speaker, and those individuals are not being assisted by the department and in fact their health may deteriorate because of financial hardships, not able to access the equipment and the supplies and prescriptions that they need.

The minister in his comments on this particular bill talked about the instant rebate once the

Pharmacare card system is in place, once the PHIN number is in place, and we very much hope to see that instant rebate, because this is the type of situation that will assist those people of limited income and limited means so that in fact they will not have to worry about putting an initial outlay of dollars. That is a large concern. Yes, people do receive a certain amount of money back from the Pharmacare system, but it is that initial cash flow problem that really is creating hardships for people in the community. So we certainly hope that there will be that instant rebate.

Mr. Speaker, I had wanted to keep my remarks very brief, basically to say that we support the principles of this particular assistance act. We look forward to hearing from the members of the public in the committee stage to see what their concerns are. Oftentimes we as legislators, and even as bureaucrats who help in the formulation of these bills, sometimes miss a particular aspect of the bill that someone from the public, that someone as a consumer or someone as a professional out in the community picks up on, and we hope that we will hear those comments, concerns at the committee stage.

We, again, would encourage the minister to look at adding five principles of the Canada Health Act in this particular piece of legislation, and again we would ask him at the committee stage to look at that and we hope that we can see that being amended to this particular bill as it comes back for third reading.

* (1430)

Mr. Speaker, we of the Liberal Party and our Liberal caucus with these few comments are certainly prepared to have this particular bill go to the committee stage. Thank you.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to add a few words to the debate on this particular legislation regarding Pharmacare in the province of Manitoba.

As our Health critic has already indicated, we are quite prepared to pass this bill to committee and have no intention of holding it up, but I want to take an opportunity in observing that the

Pharmacare program that we have in Manitoba has been deteriorating over the last few years under this government. There is no question that the increases in the deductible both for those over 65 and those for under 65 have placed a greater financial burden on the people of this province. As of January 1994 the deductible has increased now for those over 65 to \$129 from \$117.25, and it is again increased on those under 65 from \$206.90 last year to \$227.60 this year.

This is a long way from when this program was originally established under the New Democratic Party government of Ed Schreyer back in 1973. At that time the deductible was \$50, no matter what your age, and the Pharmacare program picked up 80 percent of any costs after that.

(Mr. Bob Rose, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

It was a substantial improvement in the medical care system and the health care protection that we offered Manitobans, Mr. Acting Speaker, because it is vital for many people, particularly handicapped people, disabled people, elderly people particularly, but also others who are suffering from chronic illnesses who happen to spend a great deal of money, are forced to spend a great deal of money, on medicines in order, in many cases, to stay fit so they can function properly or even, in some cases, to be able to stay alive.

There is no question in my mind that the proper utilization of medication under the supervision and guidance of a medical doctor is one way to keep people out of hospitals and personal care institutions, which, as we all know, are very expensive to operate.

Basically, therefore, you could say that the proper utilization of pharmaceuticals is a preventative measure, a preventative type of program, and therefore nothing should be done to discourage people from utilizing the medicine that has been prescribed for them by their family physician or by their doctor.

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

Yet, Madam Deputy Speaker, with the increases that have occurred under this government, people

are now in a position, particularly those on low income, including many senior citizens, of wondering whether they can actually afford the medication. I am worried that many people may be discouraged from taking the medicine that their doctor prescribes for them, simply because they cannot afford the deductible or they cannot afford the 40 percent, that is, if you are under 65, the 40 percent that is now required of the cost of drugs.

We know, of course, thanks to the former Mulroney government and the protection afforded patent medicine or the protection afforded the drug companies in this country, the nongeneric drug companies in this country, that the cost of pharmaceuticals is virtually going to the moon. The cost of medicine is escalating astronomically and imposing a great burden on Canadians.

I would only hope that the present government of Mr. Chretien would see fit to change this legislation so that we can again allow generic drugs to flourish, generic companies to flourish, in this country. However, I am not too hopeful about that, given the reports that we have heard out of Ottawa and the commitment to, it seems to me, certain Quebec-based corporations that seem to have a great deal of influence with the government.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the fact is that the costs of medicines are going up and at the same time this government is cutting back the amount of assistance, so people are having to pay more and more for their drugs. As I have said, I am concerned that some may not take the medicine and therefore in the long run cost the taxpayers of Manitoba a lot more money than if they were able to get medicine at the relatively lower price that they were able to previously.

I will give you one example: in my riding, an elderly lady, calcium Sandoz that she had to take, her doctor ordered this by prescription. It turned out that it was—well, it was very expensive in the first place, but I want to talk about the fact, in this case, that it had been delisted.

This is another complaint I have, Madam Deputy Speaker, and that is the whole matter of delisting. I dealt with the matter of increasing cost,

but the matter of delisting also discourages people from taking the medicine that they should probably be taking under their doctor's supervision. This particular lady said that if she was not taking this particular medicine, because of her very extreme case of osteoporosis, she would soon end up in a nursing home and costing the taxpayers a lot more money.

It was delisted. It is costing her a lot of money. Her doctor appealed to the Department of Health but to no avail. It is still delisted. There are other cases of hardship of people who have been affected by delisting.

There was an article, a letter to the editor not long ago, a couple of months ago, by a resident in Winnipeg talking about the difficulty he was having with the rheumatoid arthritis and the problem that he ran into with it being delisted. It is now costing him approximately \$300 a year, and he just does not know how he is going to manage. The individual whom I mentioned earlier, my constituent, was an elderly person on just the basic Old Age Pension and was having a difficult to make ends meet.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, the fact is that the government's Pharmacare program is not the same one that was brought in by the NDP under Premier Ed Schreyer. It was a step forward made in this province in 1973. Incidentally, that was the same year we put the nursing homes under the medicare system, enabling people to enter nursing homes without losing their lifetime savings in the process and being forced on welfare when they had used those lifetime savings up.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it seems to me that we are going backwards. An excellent program that we had in place in 1973 has been eroded substantially. We have transferred the burden of maintaining a healthy lifestyle, maintaining health, from society through our health care programs onto the individual, and I say that that, no question, is a backward step, particularly when you think of the fact that medicines can play a role in keeping people out of costly institutions. So it is not right from that logical viewpoint, and it is not right from the viewpoint of imposing a burden on those who

are ill. Why should one be overly penalized because he or she is threatened with an illness, or he or she is disabled, or he or she is elderly and simply must use a lot of medication?

Madam Deputy Speaker, you may know, many of us know, of people who virtually spend thousands, if not tens of thousands of dollars, a year on medications because they have to in order to be able to live. So, while we agree with the particular bill before us, and hopefully it will provide some improved efficiency and more immediate assistance to people because of the methodology of using this card system, nevertheless it does not take away from the fact that people are still going to have to pay. The average person in Manitoba is still going to have to pay a great deal more for medication. To that extent we have gone backwards, it seems to me.

* (1440)

I have been around this House for 25 years, and a lot of the excellent programs that we established to improve health care back in the '70s have been eroded by this government, whether it be this program of Pharmacare, whether it be increasing the rates unduly on residents of nursing homes or whether it be the elimination of the rural Children's Dental Health Program. That too, Madam Deputy Speaker, was a preventative program, and that too is going to cost us as a society a lot more in future because of the elimination of it. There is no question in my mind that thousands of children in rural and northern Manitoba will no longer get the dental care they need, and we as a society are going to pay for it in terms of more difficult dental problems in the future for those people, more costs in the future for those children as they grow.

So with those few words, as our official Health critic has indicated, we are quite prepared to have this bill passed on to committee and hopefully hear representation from the public in Manitoba. Thank you.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

The question before the House is second reading of Bill 2 on the proposed motion of the honourable

Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), The Prescription Drugs Cost Assistance Amendment and Pharmaceutical Amendment Act.

Mr. Harry Schellenberg (Rossmere): I welcome the bill. Various groups have supported the bill in the health industry, and I have heard a good support in the community. We look upon it being very valuable. It will prevent abuse and give eligible drug buyers an immediate rebate at the counter, and these Health Smart Cards will provide, you know, a person's entire medical history. Also, it will eliminate the need for those with Pharmacare coverage to pay up front and wait for a rebate. So we actually support this very much.

The Minister of Health back at that time, 1989, promised that he was looking at it to bring in this health card back in '89 already. So it is a long time coming. During the Rossmere by-election, I must say that I was faced with health care, and part of that health care, of course, was home care and Pharmacare. Every block, every street it was health care and Pharmacare. Really, I do not have to tell the members opposite this because they were down those very same streets, and I am sure they got the same message that I got.

An Honourable Member: Did the member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) help get you elected?

Mr. Schellenberg: I got quite a bit of support from members opposite.

I also must mention the Liberals were a little slow in getting on this issue. After they saw we raised it, the people were behind us. The Liberals, like Lloyd Axworthy and the member here for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), were very much in support of health care once they found out the people of Manitoba were concerned about universal health care.

There is one promise that was broken by the people opposite, and that is the promise to increase Pharmacare at the rate of inflation. Well, since 1988, the people under 65, it went from \$150 to \$227.60; over 65, it went from \$85 to \$129. Also the reimbursements have fallen from 80 percent to 75 percent.

To know what the people want in health care, and Pharmacare is just one small part of a larger

package, all I have to do is listen to the phone calls I get, the letters I get. I get long letters written to me from all over Rossmere. We do not have to do a lot of research and studies; just listen to people and we will soon know that Pharmacare, as part of health care, is a very, very major issue to them.

I did welcome the debate in the Rossmere by-election, and now I welcome a debate right here in the Legislature. Not only broken promises of increasing at the rate of inflation, but many drugs are delisted. I do get phone calls, I do get letters about this, the great cost. They go to a doctor. They think it is all covered. Then suddenly a bill comes. Also the increase in the deductible is another issue.

So the whole concept of health care, and Pharmacare is just part of it, is under attack. Universal health care is under attack. What seems to be followed is the Connie Curran model of health care and to privatize and Americanize our health care system, and Pharmacare is just part of that.

I hear the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), the present one, and the former one said it as well, that he is concerned about the patient—patient care. Continuously, everyday I hear patient care. It is a very honourable statement, but I think the members opposite are more concerned about profits than patients. I think they are more interested in profits for certain companies than they are in patients.

Just look at the generic drug companies that are being bashed. New drugs do not come on the market as a result of the federal Tories or the Mulroney government's legislation, and our government here has done very little in pressuring them to change it. I must say the Liberals have made very little effort as well. So profits for these big drug companies are No. 1. That is the main issue.

I must say our party has, through its history, a very different perspective on health care. We began, the Schreyer government began a lot of these programs: Pharmacare, health care. One reason is we thought, our party thought, health care was a major issue. It should be universal, we should all have it, but it is cost-efficient. It is far

cheaper to keep patients at home instead of in a costly hospital bed.

We are the pioneers in this area. I often feel we are the only ones that seem to be standing in there and supporting universal health care, and Pharmacare is just part of this package.

I must also mention the minister last year, the former minister, imposed a date here, and it denied 1,800 people last year from \$300,000. This again shows how serious they are about Pharmacare.

Yes, we have a new Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), but really there is no difference, only a new face. The same policies go on year after year. If we are not careful—the people of Rossmere told me this year in the by-election. They did not just tell me, they also told the other parties at the door. If we are not careful our health care program will be or could be dismantled, and they encouraged me, they encouraged others, to speak out.

* (1450)

Continuously, I get phone calls, I get letters. They ask me, are you telling the people in the Legislature what is happening? I say, I have not had the opportunity, but I have said a little bit now. Really, what I said here, I have heard at the doors, and all those members, they know those streets in Rossmere. During the by-election I would go down one street, my opponents down the other. I am sure we got the same message, and that message was preserve universal health care, home care and Pharmacare.

Continuously at meetings I am called aside, and they say, are you aware of this delisting? It goes on continuously, one thing after another, very, very well done. People are aware of this, and I would just like to have this bill with a few more things added to it. However, I will leave it at that.

Personally, I support the Smart Card. It is a beginning. I thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill No. 2, on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of

Health (Mr. McCrae). Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? [agreed]

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Would you call second readings of Bills 12, 13 and 14?

SECOND READINGS

Bill 12—The Provincial Auditor's Amendment Act

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Orchard), that Bill 12, The Provincial Auditor's Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le vérificateur provincial, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Ernst: During the consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for the Legislative Assembly—part of the jurisdiction, part of the expenditure of the Legislative Assembly, of course, is the Provincial Auditor—the Provincial Auditor approached the Legislative Assembly Management Commission and indicated to them that she thought a change in some of her practices—practices that had been quite longstanding and historically were no longer required in her view, and that the resources she put to this particular issue, that is, the preaudit of vouchers coming from departments, the resources she expended on that would be much more appropriately used elsewhere in her function as an Auditor.

After some consideration, LAMC agreed to do that and, of course, that necessitated this bill, which deletes the requirement for the Provincial Auditor to expend some five staff years and resources on a practice which she indicated, and which LAMC, I think, agreed, was somewhat ancient and no longer required, and that the resources would be better off put to doing other audit functions within her purview.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the bill was brought forward and I commend it to the members of the House.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Madam Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the member

for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 13—The Condominium Amendment Act

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson), that Bill 13, The Condominium Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les condominiums, be read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Ernst: I am pleased to introduce for second reading today, Bill 13, The Condominium Amendment Act.

The Condominium Act has for many years guided the development and management of condominiums in Manitoba, and, in so doing, the act requires condominium corporations to have a reserve fund to be used for emergency expenditures such as major roof repairs or replacements of heating systems and other major common elements of the property.

Under the act, reserve funds must currently be held in a special account such as a savings account at a bank or other financial institution. Until recent years the interest earned on such accounts was reasonable to say the least, but currently, however, the rate of return on unit owners' money held in reserve funds is extremely low.

In recognition of the low interest rates on savings and other types of accounts, Bill 13 will now enable condominium corporations to invest reserve funds in a broader range of financial instruments. For example, condominium corporations will be able to acquire government bonds and other government-backed securities.

Considering a broader range of investments, we have consulted in the department with the condominium managers as well as the Canadian Condominium Institute which represents managers, developments and unit owners. While the people consulted have differing views as to how wide the range should be, all feel the reserve

fund should be held in relatively low-risk instruments. I, Madam Deputy Speaker, concur with that view.

I think it is important to know that while condominium managers should manage their investment funds to the maximum benefit of the condominium unit owners, at the same time they ought not to be involved in speculative investments and ought not to put at risk the reserve funds which are intended for major repair or replacement of their home.

With that in mind, the range we have chosen will allow for a greater return on the fund while not exposing it to excessive risk.

So in summary, I believe the amendment will be a significant improvement to the act. I think it will benefit those for whom it is intended, that is condominium owners, and allow them to provide for investment of their funds for a reasonable rate of return yet not be involved in the speculative types of investments.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I ask that all honourable members support the bill and that we refer it to committee.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): I move, seconded by the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 14—The Real Estate Brokers Amendment Act

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson), that Bill 14, The Real Estate Brokers Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les courtiers en immeubles, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Ernst: Madam Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to offer, for the benefit of the members of the House, a brief explanation of the main principles outlined in Bill 14.

* (1500)

Although the bill contains a number of provisions, perhaps the most significant relates to unclaimed real estate deposits.

By way of background, I remind all honourable members that all real estate brokers in the province must maintain a trust account for their clients' deposits. Occasionally, a broker is unable to dispose of that deposit, either because the parties have abandoned it or one or both of the parties cannot be located by the broker. In still other situations, deposits are orphaned when the broker goes out of business or leaves the province.

There is no provision currently in the act for the ongoing custody of the funds in these cases, except for the Manitoba Securities Commission, to impose a freeze on the account at the broker's bank. However, in such a case, the funds simply remain on deposit with the bank indefinitely. There is no way to remove it.

This bill provides the means for a broker or the Manitoba Securities Commission in these situations to request the unclaimed or orphaned funds to be paid to the Manitoba Securities Commission.

The commission will hold the funds in trust, pending claims by persons entitled to the funds. If the funds remain unclaimed, the balance held by the Securities Commission will be paid to the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the province on March 31 of each year. Should a claim occur thereafter, the deposit would be paid to the rightful claimant out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

The bill contains several other amendments which will serve to bring the act in line with current business practices in the real estate industry.

The act in its present form does not permit an individual who is registered as a broker to expand the brokerage operation by opening up a branch office or employ an authorized official to manage the branch office. This bill makes it possible for this to be done.

The current act does not require brokers to notify the Registrar when they open up a branch office. As a result, the Securities Commission is not

always aware of brokers' branch offices or who is responsible for managing the branch office. The bill will require brokers to register all branch offices and provide the Registrar with the name of the branch manager.

Thirdly, where a broker's head office is located outside of Manitoba or the broker has many authorized officials, there is no requirement in the act for the broker to designate an official representative of the Province of Manitoba. An amendment introduced by this bill will require brokers to name one of their authorized officials as the Manitoba representative so that members of the public and the Securities Commission will know who is authorized to speak on behalf of the broker in Manitoba.

The act prohibits registrants from displaying their registration certificates in their offices. Evidently, there was a perception 30 or 40 years ago that displaying certificates publicly could lead to the ~~misunderstanding~~ on the part of the public that the broker's office was a government office or that the broker was in some way associated with the government. Representatives of the industry have suggested this prohibition is terribly antiquated and should be discontinued, given the number of other licences, certificates and permits displayed in business offices today.

Finally, there are a number of housekeeping changes which honourable members will notice, including one changing the heading for Section 9 of the act, repealing Section 18 respecting fees and transferring that provision into the regulation-making section, which is more appropriate under the present statutory format, and making it clear that the authorized official must be an individual rather than a person, which in the act a person is described as a corporation, association, syndicate, et cetera.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that concludes my remarks on Bill 14, and I commend it to the House.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): I move, seconded by the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader):
Madam Deputy Speaker, would you call Bill 8.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 8—The Fisheries Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 8, The Fisheries Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la pêche, standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

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

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Madam Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to be able to have the opportunity to speak on this bill related to the fisheries in Manitoba. The basic areas of the bill are an increase in fines, penalties for convictions under the act, for violations of the act, to raise the increase in fines from \$500 to a new limit of \$10,000 for infractions.

The bill also gives inspectors power to enter and inspect any place, including vehicles, to examine them for fish, for records, for bills of lading, or open any containers to search for fish without a warrant where it is practical. The bill also gives the inspectors the power to stop vehicles.

I think it raises a number of issues of concern, but the focus that I am going to take, Madam Deputy Speaker, in my comments is that in a lot of ways this bill is completely missing the mark. This bill does not deal with a number of the factors related to fish stock reductions and the reduction in fish catches, the reduction in the amount of fish travelling through the Freshwater Fish Marketing Board, and the number of fish being caught in the province of Manitoba in some of our large fisheries.

Madam Deputy Speaker, no matter how much we increase fines, it is not necessarily clear if these fines are going to go back into fish stocking of lakes. But once the fish are gone, no amount of fining is going to bring them back, and I think that is one of the reasons that this bill is missing the mark. We have to look at dealing with the real

problems and preventing ongoing reduction and depletion of fish stocks in the province.

We also know that this government in other areas where they have increased similar kinds of fines under The Environment Act. There has never been an increase in the kind of penalties and enforcements that have gone along with increasing fines. We can go along and increase the total amount of fines available under the law, but it is going to be, I think, more enforcement and prevention that is going to be the issue.

I think a lot of times what happens is that these big numbers become, for this government, a chance to make it look like they are doing something when in fact they are missing the mark and not really doing anything at all.

I have been doing some background to try and get a picture of what is happening in this area. We have discussed this somewhat in the Environment Estimates, and one of the things that I am trying to get a better understanding of is if this government is doing anything to look at the relationship between water quality, particularly in Lake Winnipeg, and the decline in fish stocks.

It has been confirmed that last year there was a significant reduction in activity in the fishery. There were significant layoffs at the Freshwater Fish Marketing plant, and we have to start looking at putting all the pieces together so that we can understand why this is happening.

There were some comments made by the minister in Estimates, again, in a sort of placating fashion, that there really is a natural cycle to fish stocks, and we should not really get too excited. But we do not have to look too far, only out east to the Atlantic, to see what happens with that kind of thinking.

We have had one of the most devastating environmental disasters in this country, that has occurred on the planet, in terms of the depletion of the fishery in Atlantic Canada. It is a travesty. I cannot even find the right extent of the words or the adjectives to describe this.

I have some connection to Newfoundland through my family. I guess I look to this too in

rather a personal fashion, because I know that members of my family have come from a fishing background from Newfoundland. I had the chance recently to talk to some women who are from Newfoundland and were describing the impact it has had on their lives. They were describing the impact it has had on the entire region. When you have an industry that is so vital to a region, as the Atlantic cod fishery is to that region of the country, we can see that we have to start being much more careful with what we are doing.

The warnings were given, Madam Deputy Speaker, regarding the fishery in Atlantic Canada. There were people talking about overfishing. There were people talking about the use of the dragnets and increased technology. We have seen all the incidents in terms of encroachment of foreign vessels into the Grand Banks and all the conflict that that has caused.

* (1510)

Hopefully, what will happen from all of that disaster and crisis is we will learn some lessons and start applying principles of conservation and ecology into our economic activity and industries when we rely on the natural resources in our province.

I am not convinced that that is happening under this government. I am not convinced that they are learning the lessons of the Atlantic experience in Canada, and that they are trying to see if we can avoid a similar disaster and fate here in Manitoba.

That brings me back to looking at what is really happening and understanding the impact of going to a reduced net size for fishing in Manitoba.

There are some people that believe the last year that the fish are still there. There are some people that might say that the fish are there and because it was a cold winter, that affected the fishing this past winter in Manitoba, and that is what led to the fact that there was a reduction in the number of employees kept on over the winter at the fish marketing plants and affected the fact of the employment decrease by the fisher people that rely on that industry throughout northern Manitoba.

As I was saying earlier, we have to start looking at the entire picture and putting the pieces together. I wanted to pursue this issue of water quality in habitat related to the fishery in some of these large freshwater lakes in Manitoba in particular, because we know that there is a lot of activity along the water basins that lead into these lakes that has been causing problems.

We have had major accidents like Dunnottar within the last few years, where sewage has flowed into the basin of Lake Winnipeg, and we know that on a regular basis there is effluent from a variety of other sewage systems that goes into the lake, particularly into spawning ground areas. We cannot help but assume that this is having a detrimental impact on the ability of the fish to regenerate itself.

Other activity along river basins that could be having an effect as described to me is agricultural runoff and how that is again affecting fish spawning areas.

The Winnipeg River is one river, I think, that has a large amount of industry on it, and it is one of the tributaries into Lake Winnipeg that we have had some focus on. It has the ACL facility upriver and it has Pine Falls upriver. We know that there have been spills confirmed of pesticide and chemicals, and all of that ends up into the Lake Winnipeg.

We are starting to get more results from studies done by scientists at the University of Manitoba and starting to find out that there is an impact on the quality of the fish. We can only then extrapolate from that, and understand that there is likely also an impact on the ability of fish to breed and reproduce.

The other thing that becomes clear, and this is part of the debate going on in British Columbia with the salmon, is the effect of industry and water use on water temperature and water quality, and the sensitive balance that exists when fish are spawning when they need the water to be at a certain temperature, and how that temperature is affected by the amount of water that is in the tributary or area where they are spawning.

If we have a reduction in the water level, that will increase the temperature and consequently will prevent the fish from being able to spawn and reproduce effectively. So it is apparent that we have to look at all of the variables that can be affecting the fishing and the catches that are occurring, and we cannot assume, as this bill does, that we can deal with it simply by developing a system that is going to look for the individuals who are exceeding their quotas or their limits.

That, I think, is admitting that there is a problem. So this bill is beneficial in that. It is showing that the government realizes that there is a problem with the fishery in Manitoba, but, as I said, I do not know if it is going to deal with the reasons for that problem.

I am also concerned that aboriginal bands and organizations have not been consulted on this matter despite the number of court decisions on their hunting and fishing rights and despite the number of recommendations we have had through various committees and commissions that have toured the province. We still do not seem to understand the relationship that is there for aboriginal people to activities like fishing, and that they do have an important contribution to make and they have important rights that need to be respected.

I do not claim to have a lot of experience in these kinds of issues. I have never lived in the North, but I do know that there have been programs in place, this northern transportation program that was there to ensure that these northern communities were going to have some equal access to market, and they were not going to be penalized by their geography.

I think it is incumbent on this government to ensure that they are going to take a comprehensive view and ensure that there are programs in place that are going to mean that all of these communities are going to be able to continue to participate in the economic activity that fishing has given them for generations. The world of fishing has changed tremendously over the years, and we cannot allow that to penalize the First Nations of the province.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I do not think that I can overemphasize the concern that we have in this area. It seems ironic that after all of the cutbacks that this government has made in the Department of Natural Resources, the cutbacks in all the conservation officers and in all the staff that are there to support safe use of natural resources, that we now have them bringing in what I think some people would call a very authoritarian or Draconian bill. It seems that the government is getting quite desperate.

I think that the government is acknowledging that there is this problem by bringing in this bill in such a manner. They are admitting that there is a problem and they are starting to panic. We cannot continue in the same vein and think that we can have the kind of approach that is at the back end or the far end of the system without putting equal resources into the front end in terms of prevention. So I think, especially by my questions in the House today, the government cannot accuse us of being opposed to strong environment and natural resources legislation enforcement, but why do we not have this government looking at the problems with fish stocks in the various regions of the province?

I know that my colleagues who represent different areas of the province in different rural and northern areas have asked repeatedly, over and over again, for this government to deal with the question of fish stocks in various regions of the province. It seems like they will continue to take the attitude that they do with environment and development issues where they will say, well, there are problems with budgets. This is the kind of issue that shows us very clearly that we cannot separate environment and development, and we cannot only look at the tail end of legislation and government programs. We have to start realizing that we cannot just talk about integrating environment and development issues, we have to do it, and we have to find ways that are going to be able to ensure that we are going to protect our natural resources.

* (1520)

We have to look at the practices that are being utilized in the province, and one of the things I do not think this government has looked at carefully enough or really developed enough is co-management of natural resources with aboriginal communities. This does a number of things. One of the things that this does that I support is it puts the responsibility where the responsibility belongs. So we can get away from what is happening in our economy where we have decisions being made with respect to our local economies and our natural resources by people who are not even in our province.

That is what happens when we privatize the Crown corporations like Freshwater fishery, when we take away their authority and we give the control of our natural resources over to private companies, often who have their head offices outside of the province.

So we have to find ways, as through co-management, of having communities who have a long-term interest in the viability of that industry to have some authority and decision-making power in determining the management in the future of how that resource is going to be utilized. We have to be better at coming up with creative models of doing that. There are some examples from the province and from other parts of the country where there are successful co-management agreements being developed.

This also addresses the issue of justice for aboriginal communities. I have spoken a number of times in this House about the need to connect environment, development, health and justice issues. This is how we are going to do it, through models of co-management that are going to mean communities in rural and northern regions will have some power and decision making at the table and be involved in the benefits, as well, from the management of natural resources.

We can also look at different models, such as that from the Berens River fisheries co-op, where we have co-operation between a number of people involved in the fishery. We can use those kinds of models to ensure that there is not going to be the element of—I do not know what the words are—

but so that we can make sure that there is going to be a co-operative approach, and that we can use shared resources to make sure we are going to effectively and equally utilize natural resources in the province.

I know there will be a number of concerned groups who will come forward with some proposals regarding amendments for this bill—fishermen, aboriginal organizations. I look forward to that committee hearing, when we will hear from the community. I think it is unfortunate that there has not been more consultation with respect to this bill.

It seems there are a number of initiatives being undertaken by this government related to environmental matters that are knee jerk—sort of the politics of panic. There was a survey that was done recently by the Department of Environment where they only gave people two weeks to respond. That does not give people adequate time to consult with their organizations, their volunteer boards, their executive boards, their members, so that they can think through a survey that asks some very detailed and important questions so they can respond.

I think the hearings on this bill are going to bring out a lot of information that is going to be very important for this government to pay attention to and for all of us to pay attention to as we deal with this very serious matter of the fisheries in Manitoba.

I look forward to those hearings. Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to ask how much time I have remaining.

An Honourable Member: Lots.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Eighteen minutes remaining.

An Honourable Member: Go for it. Say it again.

Ms. Cerilli: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

An Honourable Member: Marianne, explain it to him one more time—that little bit about the catfish.

Ms. Cerilli: This is the part about this House that I enjoy so much.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it seems that I am going to have to tell you again—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. Cerilli: —of the issues related to the fisheries in Manitoba that are of deep and important concern, the issues that are not being addressed by this government in terms of natural resource management. That is exemplified by the fishery.

The interesting thing is the ministers talk about doing their work, as I was saying earlier, the effects of the cutbacks in Natural Resources and the questions I asked today in terms of enforcement and inspection and the fact that we are not going to have the staff, the personnel there to enforce this act and this amendment to the act. So, although they are increasing the penalties to \$10,000, which, I am sure, would put a number of these fisher people out of business—[interjection] Fisherpersons, as the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) comments. That—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Madam Deputy Speaker, the member is indicating that she is looking for higher fines. Would she also be prepared to acknowledge that the RCMP help enforce those regulations?

Madam Deputy Speaker: The honourable Minister of Environment does not have a point of order.

* * *

Ms. Cerilli: Madam Deputy Speaker, not only does he not have a point of order. He does not have a point because that is not what I said. We went through this yesterday in Estimates where the minister continually tried to put words in my mouth and accused me of putting words in his mouth.

I think that what I am saying is not to that we should be increasing the total amount of fines, as this bill does, that what we need to do is enforce the law and start making the polluter pay and start ensuring that we are going to have some teeth in our environmental legislation.

I just finished saying that the \$10,000 fine would probably put a lot of these—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. Cerilli: —individuals out of business.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I am experiencing some difficulty hearing the honourable member for Radisson.

Ms. Cerilli: Madam Deputy Speaker, maybe the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) is feeling rather sensitive, considering the issues that are being raised. I mean, the amount of reduction in both the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Environment for enforcements is tremendous, and we have reports coming to this government criticizing them for their lack of ability and lack of willingness to enforce environment-related regulations. We have, over and over again, examples—

* (1530)

Point of Order

Mr. Cummings: Madam Deputy Speaker, the member talks about reduced budget. I wish she would learn to calculate that the saving in our budget is money we no longer have to put out for the Hazardous Waste Corp. We are saving the dollars for the taxpayers, and she wants us to waste them.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Environment does not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Ms. Cerilli: Madam Deputy Speaker, maybe the Minister of Environment can explain to me where the 49 staff from the department are. A few of them are with the lab that has been transferred.

We have a lot of problems on this side of the House with privatizing lab facilities. We think that the public has the right to be able to know what kind of water that they are drinking, and they should be able to get that water quality—

Point of Order

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Madam Deputy Speaker, this is my bill, and I am trying to find out how all this conversation is related to my fish bill. I wonder whether you could ask the speaker to maybe refer to the bill once in a while at least.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The honourable Minister of Natural Resources does indeed raise an interesting point. I would remind all honourable members that relevance is indeed supposed to be specific to the principles of the bill.

* * *

Ms. Cerilli: Madam Deputy Speaker, the point that I was making is that the Department of Natural Resources, as well as the Department of Environment, is eliminating the staff that are going to enforce these kinds of amendments and this kind of legislation. They cannot, on the one hand, claim to be wonderful natural resource managers and concerned about ecology and environment and, on the other hand, eliminate the people in their departments that are going to do the work. We have talked over and over again about how if they really mean it, they would put their money where their mouth is and they would put the staff in the departments that are going to do this work, because without the staff you are not going to have enforcement.

The Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) was talking earlier about having the RCMP involved in enforcing the stubble burning regulation. So I was responding, Madam Deputy Speaker, to his comments. I think that is a precedent-setting move—we realize that—in terms of environment legislation, but they are involved, as I understand it, solely in that issue in terms of stubble burning. They had to bring in an amendment to the act that allowed that to happen.

I think I asked questions at other times regarding the powers of the police and the RCMP relative to environment and natural resources legislation. We have to look at the kind of laws that we have in this area and if they are actually criminal laws. It is interesting. I was looking at some of the environment legislation from parts of Europe over

the winter when we were not in the session. I was looking at how other parts of the world are looking at putting more penalties for environment and natural resources related infractions under their penal code. That is something else that is related I think to the comments made by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) when he talked about the RCMP being involved in enforcing some amendments to The Environment Act.

I want to go back again, Madam Deputy Speaker, to the comments I was making about Newfoundland and the fishery in the Atlantic, because I was saying that we have a lot that we can learn from that Canadian experience. One of the things I learnt there with that issue was that over 80 percent of the fish that are caught in the Atlantic are exported whole and frozen from the Atlantic without being processed. We have an agreement with the United States where this 80 percent or more of the fish goes, that we have to give them that fish without having any of the benefits of the value-added jobs being done in the Atlantic.

Again, let us take that and apply that into Manitoba and see if we are getting into that kind of a situation here, because we keep talking about, the government keeps talking about this thing called value-added jobs, but yet we keep seeing them getting themselves into situations with respect to natural resources where they are not doing that, where they are not ensuring that all of the jobs related to whether it is fisheries or agriculture, particularly in livestock, where we are going to see that the processing jobs occur here in Manitoba so we can complete that loop of economic activity and have more of those jobs in Manitoba.

Some of the other changes that are occurring in the fishery I think would cause us some concern. We are concerned that there are going to be the processing jobs retained in Manitoba. It is sort of related to what is happening in some of the agriculture related industries. I represent a constituency that has the Swift plant and those kind of industries in the constituency. I talked to constituents who work at the fish marketing plant, and they have told me their concerns. They have told me their concerns about being laid off this

winter and about their concerns of what is going on in this industry.

I think that we have to look at the big picture, Madam Deputy Speaker. We cannot come forward with simplistic answers, as this bill does, which is looking at the tail end of the problem and trying to tack on this authoritarian approach that is not looking at the full picture.

It is similar to what the government is doing on its young offenders policy. It is a similar kind of approach where they are not going to put it into the broader context. They are not going to look at the problems that are causing there to be difficulty in the industry. They are not going to put it into the context of the economic, social and environmental problems. They are just going to try and go for some band-aid solution where they do not even have the staff to follow through and carry out and enforce the regulations they are brining in.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I think it is pretty clear that it is going to be very important for this bill to go before the committee so the public can have its say. Over and over again on these kinds of natural resources issues we hear very important comments from the communities that are most affected. I think that is also one of the themes that should be recognized that is lacking from this legislation, is there is no place for those communities, for those people who are making their livelihood from these resources. I hesitate sometimes to call fish resources, but we will use the term here today.

I think I have made myself quite clear. I am looking forward to, as I said, hearing from the community, hearing what people from the North and rural Manitoba have to say. I know there will also be some people from Winnipeg on hand, hopefully some people who also make their livelihood from the fishery in terms of processing, manufacturing and sales, and we can start to put together the big picture. The big picture is, I am sure, what the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) will also refer to. I thank you for the opportunity to put my remarks on the record.

Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake): Madam Deputy Speaker, it is a pleasure to be able to rise today and make my comments to an amendment to an act that

affects one of the most important industries this province has, and that is the commercial fishing industry.

The bill and the changes, to me, do not make necessarily a whole lot of sense. Here we are regurgitating old acts and saying we are going to increase enforcement; we are going to increase the fine levels; we are going to increase to make it unavailable for people to poach, for people to sell fish on the side when right now the minister knows the fishermen can do that. They can do it one or two ways. They can do it by registering through Natural Resources to sell their fish, or they can do it through their quota system where they can indicate to the local Natural Resources people that if they are selling some fish from their quota through Freshwater that they can inform and get a receipt claiming they have sold X amount of fish besides what they are selling through Freshwater and receive a receipt for that and it will go against their quota.

* (1540)

One of the questions I have with regard to this is, where was there no enforcement before? Natural Resources officials could stop pretty well anyone they think are doing something illegal in the fishing industry. They can do that now. They do it now, because I have seen it and I have heard it in my own constituency. They do it now. They stop the fishermen and they check out whether the truck, the boat, whatever—they can do it now. Now all of a sudden we are going to find five pounds of fish above and beyond what they are supposed to and get fined \$10,000 for it. Where are the real culprits? How is this minister, is this minister going to, this summer, get a boat and travel on Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba? Is he himself going to be out there enforcing this? Is he going to enforce this? [interjection] You hope so.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the minister puts in amendments to an act. Where is he going to get the staff to do this? Where is he going to get the staff? Right now Natural Resources staff are at a minimum to enforce such an act. Even before there

were hardly any officers to be able to do what this minister is implementing in the act.

The minister asked me if I read the spreadsheet. Well, I do not have the spreadsheet because I cannot find the spreadsheet. So if the minister had given it to me, I would have been able to speak to it. I apologize. I have not seen the spreadsheet. I am speaking from what I am aware of. The minister is saying the spreadsheet. Are you saying, then, that you are going to increase the enforcement? Is that what you are saying? Well, if that be the case, so be it. Right now there is not the enforcement. Previous, there was not the enforcement.

So how this minister thinks that he is going to come in with a cavalry load of enforcement officers taking care of his amendment and fining people up to \$10,000, taking away their licences, doing whatever, their quotas, their livelihoods—perhaps the issues are not necessarily the poaching and the enforcement. Perhaps the issues are more. Some of them, one of them is the stock. Now you talk to the fishermen out in the areas, and they can tell you in certain areas there are no fish. The stock is down. The stock is down from overfishing. Perhaps stock is down from poor spawning. Stock is down, perhaps, from opening up the lakes too soon in some areas.

These are the concerns of the fishermen. These are the concerns more than the fact that they are worried about the people who are overfishing and not going through the Freshwater Marketing Board—the stock.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I have questioned this minister and the previous minister about stock enhancement. I have written to the minister. I have met with people who talked about stock enhancement on Lake Winnipeg—very important to them. Their feeling, and in certain areas, certain management areas of the fishing industry say that the way to go is to enhance the spawning and the hatchery situation on Lake Winnipeg in different areas. The minister, in his reply and in some of his comments, says that is a good idea, and we are going to look into that.

I have comments here from the minister saying that, for example, the Dauphin River hatchery: I would agree the operation in Dauphin River hatchery would complement the projects proposed by Fisher River First Nation and others. The department is pleased to assist with Fisheries Enhancement projects.

Madam Deputy Speaker, when? Are we going to have something in action this year? I doubt it.

An Honourable Member: Have they applied?

Mr. Clif Evans: Yes, they have applied. They spoke to the minister's department. They spoke to the minister's department requesting it. The Dauphin River hatchery has been a request from the Dauphin River Band for years. The communities that I have written to the minister about want to take and enhance the spawning program and enhance the stock that is being depleted in Lake Winnipeg in certain areas. I think that if we had that end of it, if we could support the enhancement of spawn, increasing spawn and the hatcheries, we might not have these problems. There would be plenty to go around and again if it was managed properly. Management of the source is an important part of the commercial fish industry in this province and for our people who do depend on commercial fishing.

That, again, leads to my saying: we have to work with the fishermen. We have to work closer with the fishermen. I am not saying there is or there is not; perhaps there are some people within the department who feel there are lots of fish, and others who feel there is not. Who knows better than the people who in generations and generations have fished Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin, McBeth Point? These are the people who have been there for generations, passing on the quotas to their sons, their daughters. These people know. You go into aboriginal communities where fishing is the mainstay economically for that community, and they will tell you. They will tell you exactly where there are fish, why there are not fish and how we can enhance and improve the supply and the quantity of the pickerel and sauger and whitefish stock in these lakes.

Lake Winnipeg, the largest inland lake in North America, and the approximately 800-plus commercial fishermen in Manitoba fish from Lake Winnipeg, right from the south basin directly north through Gimli, through Nason, through Pine Dock area, Mason Island, up through Berens River, Bloodvein, McBeth Point, all these areas.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would think that before we start imposing such severe penalties we should start working with the fishermen to enhance the fishing industry, not go out and have people running around checking every truck, every boat, every vehicle, every skip that is up there and saying, let us see what you have, let us see your net size, let us see what you are using, what are you catching, let us see your quota. Not only are you taking away the time that these fishermen have to fish, but unless you can be certain, you are imposing on people's rights to make a living.

I am certainly not saying that people who go against the regulations, people who overfish should not be penalized. I am not saying that for one minute. I am saying again, are you going to enforce it? How are you going to enforce it? Who are you going to get \$10,000 from? These people just get by from fishing season to fishing season, mostly in the red every season. They are mostly in the red. Their expenses have increased. The cost of boats for these fishermen has increased. The cost of motors has increased. The cost of nets has increased. Everything has increased in costs for these fishermen.

* (1550)

Granted there may be people out there and fishermen out there that are trying to subsidize some of these costs by selling fish not exactly legally. Perhaps that is out there, but is that the real, real cause of the situation that our commercial fishermen have in this province? No, it is not.

Madam Deputy Speaker, some years ago the Minister of Natural Resources during Estimates reduced the freight subsidy. The freight subsidy has caused a great, great deal of hardship on the fishermen. I would ask the minister to come with me to my constituency and talk to the fishermen out there when they talk about the cuts in the

freight subsidy. Perhaps a small cut, as the government would say, but the freight subsidy decrease is causing a great, great deal of hardship. Freight subsidy cut; a cut in prices for the fish; increase in all the cost of the equipment—then you wonder why these fishermen even fish.

The industry needs to survive, and it needs to survive with support, enhancement programs, support from government and ideas and consulting along with the fishermen and the government of the day to be able to say, let us do something about our commercial fishing industry.

One of the other issues that we have is the prices for the fishermen. The prices for the fishermen over the last couple of years have been increasingly down. So now prices of fish are down, costs are up, fishermen in the areas cannot get the loans that they once could. Who is going to give them a loan when their assets are in the red as compared to others?

In most cases, of the 800-plus commercial fishermen, it has become a nonviable process. We need something to enhance these people. Communities all around in my area and the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) and others, in Thompson, Rupertsland, the economic situation in those communities, the economic high in that community, comes from whether the fishing industry is surviving, whether it is flourishing or whether it is stagnant.

We can attribute a lot to costs and prices as our farmers have. Our farmers are faced almost in the same situation, but at least there are programs. There are support programs for farmers that make available to these people, to these farmers, an opportunity that if they have a little bit of something left over they can increase their viability by the support programs and by entering into agreement with the support program. Fishermen have none of that.

Fishermen are basically businessmen totally on their own. Every year costs are up, and the fishermen, to be able to make it viable and survive, have to depend on the market, have to depend on the good price through Freshwater Marketing.

You go out, and I have been at two very large conferences held here in Winnipeg over the past two or three years, people in support of the Freshwater Marketing system, people opposed to it, but the majority of the fishermen in this province support the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. They support it. They do not want to go back to the old system. They want to maintain the system.

To be able to do that, Madam Deputy Speaker, they need the marketplace for their fish. The pickerel and sauger prices have to increase. We had word just a couple of weeks ago—I heard on the radio that pickerel and sauger prices were in fact going to be on the upswing this year for the fish market—offering and letting the fishermen know that the prices will be up so they will be able to fish their full quotas for this year.

The last couple of years, because of the prices, quotas were not filled. If the price was not there the fishermen were saying, why would I want to go out and fish in 30-below weather, out onto the lake and put my nets in and come back later on in the day and come out of there with half a tub. It does not make sense, so we have to enhance the lake. We have to provide the fishermen, not only with the price for their catch, but also we have to provide them with the fish themselves in the lake and sustain that level of fish stock in Lake Winnipeg, Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer) has dropped by here to help me in my discussions. He very well knows what the fishing industry has been doing in the last couple of years. Part of his constituency is on Lake Winnipeg and he knows. I am sure the fishermen have come to him and have said, we have to do something about the fishing industry in Manitoba. I am sure the member for Gimli agrees with me on what I am saying, that we do need something to be able to provide our fishermen with an industry that will provide them with the proper amount of fish, with the proper price so these fishermen can be in the black. If the prices are available, quotas are filled, the bills are paid. If the bills are paid, the quotas are filled, prices are there, there is

economic development in the community that they live in and spending increases.

It is like any other industry. If your hard work is rewarded, you will in fact respond by spreading what you have economically within the system.

* (1600)

Madam Deputy Speaker, fishermen have ideas. Fishermen come to governments or Natural Resources with ideas on fishing. They may talk about net size in certain areas in certain seasons. They know, these are the people that know exactly what they are talking about. They know that perhaps a three-and-a-quarter inch mesh in a certain area at a certain season is not the right way to go. There is where perhaps we are finding out that a lot of the problems are being caused: the mesh size certain times of the year, a certain season and certain areas.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I have had people come to me and say to me that we caught 20 tubs of fish today and most of them still had spawned. That is perhaps one of the causes of the industry and the stock and viability and sustainability within the system that we are having a problem with. Why are there still fish being caught in the spawn? Season, start of season, mesh size, overfishing in the spawning area—there could be many reasons. I think the Fisheries department in Natural Resources should be looking at that.

At a meeting that I was at and attended with the Gypsumville-area fishermen in Lake St. Martin, we had Natural Resources people, we had Freshwater Fish Marketing there, we had Dauphin River bands represented, the Lake St. Martin Band, Dr. Gerrard was there. One of the discussions, of course, was Freshwater Marketing, and how they felt that the Freshwater Marketing system should be working with the fishermen and for the fishermen on a greater scale to be able to enhance the market value for their sauger and for their pickerel and their whitefish.

At the meeting, there was also concern about—again, and I go back to the freight subsidy—the

season length or the season area that they are in for their area, how much of an area they have to be able to fish in during the different seasons. Those are concerns brought to Natural Resources, to myself, to Dr. Gerrard.

Now, are we addressing those concerns? I do not think so, Mr. Speaker. I do not think we are addressing those concerns as quickly as we should be for this industry, because if we do not move quickly on certain issues, and if we do not consult and listen to the fishermen, if we do not consult and listen to the aboriginal communities who fish, who depend on fishing, then we will get so far behind that there is talk out there, there is conversation out there—and it made me feel very, very sad to even hear that fishermen were talking about shutting the lake down at certain times of the year. If you do that, once you do it you will never get it back. Why stop something if you can take another avenue by enhancing, by sustaining the level of fish supply in these lakes?

Another concern, one of the concerns, I guess, that the fishermen brought to my attention, is the fact that the seasons—some fishermen do not have quotas for all seasons. Some fishermen only fish in certain seasons with one or two quotas. Because of the lack of fish in certain areas these fishermen now, because of the federal government's changes in UIC, need 10 weeks. Well, Mr. Speaker, before it was 12. They could not get 12 weeks in. There is no fish to fish. I am sorry, it went from 10 to 12, it was 10 before. They could not get 10 weeks in before, now it is 12 weeks.

When that was brought to the attention of Dr. Gerrard, he defended that. He said he would look into it, but he defended it. Now, without really understanding what he was saying at the time—but he did not understand that there are two different seasons. Also, the UIC year for fishermen is split into two sections, and the fishermen do not and cannot overlap on their seasons. They do not have the weeks in for their UIC to take them over until the next season. Dr. Gerrard did not understand that. I tried to explain to him, and now I see that he has made some announcements to enhance young people, a program brought through to get young

people interested in assisting with spawning and doing other work with the fishing industry.

Well, that is well and fine, and we should maintain, we should keep our young people interested, especially those who are not in the industry itself, to make them aware of just what the fishing industry in this province is going through now in these past few years and perhaps could continue.

Mr. Speaker, an increase of pickerel and sauger in one year, in one season, does not make for long-term decisions that these fishermen have to make. The prices can go down, the market could go down in a matter of weeks, and these fishermen depending on that price are going out to be able to go to CEDF and to the different operations that supply them with boats and motors and nets and whatnot, and they have to go on that word.

The meeting in Gypsumville, another issue there was that the opportunity to get money to tide them over to begin and start is getting more and more difficult. I mean, Mr. Speaker, we all understand that in anything that we do, any type of small businesses that we are in, we have to have certain assets and we have to have certain liabilities that we are going to incur. We have to have equipment to be able to do things with, we have to be able to maintain the equipment, but if we are not getting a price—on one hand, fishermen cannot pay the bills. The next time around when it comes for the next season to be able to get some more money to start them out again, CEDF is looking at it in a much stronger way. They are not being as co-operative or as lenient, if you want to call it lenient, with some of the fishermen in helping them obtain that start.

Mr. Speaker, when the fishermen's loans section was under MACC, there was out of all the, I believe, and I can be quoted wrong here—I might be wrong in my quote as far as one year there was \$9 million loaned out to fishermen in the province of Manitoba with something like a 3 percent to 5 percent failure to repay these loans, and that is pretty good. But now, if we look, I am sure that the amounts of the loans over the last couple of years have decreased. CEDF is just not providing these

fishermen with the availability to access funds to be able to start their business.

Mr. Speaker, another issue that was brought up and I think is an important one for the future too for our fishermen: The rough fish industry and the rough fish processing industry is something that fishermen are looking at and are wanting government to look at very seriously and perhaps set up some sort of a system, some sort of plant, a processing plant, in co-ordination perhaps with the Freshwater Marketing operation.

* (1610)

An Honourable Member: In Garden Hill?

Mr. Clif Evans: The honourable member says, in Garden Hill? I might say I met with the mayor of Riverton just two weeks ago, and one of the topics that we discussed was putting in a rough fish processing plant right in co-ordination with the Freshwater Marketing plant that is there in Riverton. So rough fish could in fact be a saviour for some of the fishermen, another avenue of branching out their market, rough fish. During the seasons when you cannot get the price for your pickerel, your sauger and your whitefish, you have the rough fish. In fact, rough fish, processed properly, is a delicacy in many countries.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to just continue on with what I have said about working with the fishermen and how we can help. I would very strongly suggest that before we start imposing these new regulations and imposing these fines of up to \$10,000, from \$500 to \$10,000, why not get together with the fishing communities of this province and have the fishing communities set up a task force.

I know now there is the fishermen's advisory board that works with the government. Well, perhaps we should be listening to this board more. Perhaps we should be not only listening to the board members but going out. I mentioned to the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger) earlier whether he was going to go out in his little boat this summer and enforce some of these regulations himself.

Well, perhaps he and I could go out, Mr. Speaker, this summer and we could go and visit some of the communities and let some of the communities and fishermen explain to the minister just exactly what is needed to maintain the sustainable viability of the commercial fishing industry in Manitoba. Come out and listen to these people, listen to some of the staff that are out there that hear the concerns every day and every week, hears the concern that fishermen have.

If we do not do that, do we start just imposing different rules and regulations and stiffer penalties, enhancing penalties that were there already? I mean, why are we adding in a search and seizure? Why are we adding in a warrant where a warrant is not necessary?

As I said earlier, at the beginning of debate, that was not necessary before. They could be stopped anytime. I have seen it done. Now the minister wants to go about and say and give authority, enhance the authority, secure the authority to say that now anybody—an inspector, the RCMP, the Natural Resources people—can just pretty well walk in anywhere and check out your boat, check out everything. Just like total Gestapo action. Just walk in there and just say, I want to see it and if you do not have it, you are getting a \$10,000 fine.

Well, without, Mr. Speaker, does this act give the fishermen an opportunity to defend why? It does not say anything about that. What is the process for the fishermen if in fact he should receive a fine? Where does he go then?

I want to get back to freshwater.

Mr. Speaker, this past fall and winter in my communities around Riverton, Matheson Island, Pine Dock, Jackhead, Fisher River, Peguis—good people there, excellent people, excellent fishermen, and when I still had the opportunity to see these people in the local establishment, the conversation would always come to fishing and how poor the season was. [interjection] Sometimes in certain areas, as I mentioned earlier, and the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) reminded me of that, that in certain areas, yes. But the problem with that is that when the

season—particularly during the winter season, fishing is particularly good in certain areas.

You get everybody from the south basin, from everywhere, that can afford to, can afford the gas that it takes to go up there, the bombardiers and the whole equipment and everything to go up to that area. The next thing you know that little area that was doing well in fishing for the local fishermen in that area, you see fishermen all over. So there are complaints on the other side.

Mr. Speaker, in accordance to that, the Berens River community and the Lake St. Martin fishermen's association has indeed asked the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger) to attend a meeting to discuss not only this situation about winter fishing in the open areas, but also other situations, one of them also being the opening up of areas in other seasons so that fishermen can go back and forth. But, again, what good would that do if there are no fish? If we are talking about pockets of fish here and there, we are not achieving anything, we are not accomplishing anything. It may be a very good idea, and I will be meeting with my fishermen in my communities to discuss that.

A big problem was last winter because of the lack of fishing and the poor supply of fish in around the Hnausa and the Riverton and Pine Dock area, Duck Point. Fishermen from all these areas are travelling up into the Jackhead area, into different areas and perhaps overfishing there because the regulations do not abide to the fact of maintaining a certain area during the winter fishing season. It is wide open during the winter, and perhaps that should be looked at too, but then you could say, well, why should you take away the availability for a fisherman in the South Basin who has a winter quota, has a winter licence, not be able to fulfill his quota. If he can afford to go out to another area and catch to maintain his winter quota, why should he not be able to do that?

And so be it, but then that works the other way too, Mr. Speaker. Why are people fishing during other seasons who have trouble because of stock in this province? Instead of dealing with punishments and with heavy duty fines, we should be dealing

with the fishermen to be able to enhance Lake Winnipeg, Lake Manitoba, Lake Winnipegosis and the northern lakes through hatcheries, through spawn, through co-ordination and co-management with the fishermen, proper mesh sizes in the proper areas, co-ordinating their areas, bringing up the stock in this province, in these lakes up to standard so we do not see what we saw some years ago with the lake being shut down; so we do not see fishermen selling their quotas and selling their licences because they cannot afford to go from year to year; so that fishermen who are getting on in age, just as farmers, can pass on their quotas and their licences to their sons and to their daughters, to make it viable so that the fishing industry in this province maintains a viable economic place in this province.

We should definitely be looking at more than just bringing out \$10,000 fines for somebody who has got two or three pounds over or if somebody feels that a black truck driving down Highway 8 looks suspicious and has the right and warrant to be able to go and search the person. We should be looking at other ways of dealing with the industry in this province, not so much just implementing fines that are outrageous.

I think that hard work by this government should be dealing with the fishermen, dealing with the people that know the industry, right from the fishermen, right to Freshwater Marketing, and I would say that this industry is too important to be able to be shut down at a level that it is, and I hope that this government looks at ways, better ways to be able to enhance our fishing seasons.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to stand today to put some comments on the record with regard to Bill 8, The Fisheries Amendment Act, and listening to the last two speeches, from the member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans) and the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli), I must admit that I have learned an awful lot about the fishing industry this afternoon, and I am sure before the day is out, I will learn a lot more about the fishing industry.

I was particularly intrigued by the member for Interlake's comments on the fish processing plant,

and I only wish that he had more time allotted to him so that could elaborate a little more on what plans he has for a fish processing plant in the Riverton area.

I might say that the member for Interlake may in the future be around to see this dream of his, the fish processing plant in Riverton come to fruition, because it is only a matter of time, Mr. Speaker, only a matter perhaps of a year when this government must have an election, and I think what we are going to see is the Conservative group opposite cut in half, reduced in half and with the remnants of that caucus sitting over here.

* (1620)

Mr. Speaker, earlier the member for Interlake, talking about the bill and the penalties and the enforcement of the bill, had made comments about offering on his part to go with the minister this summer and consult with different groups in the province and so on about the advisability of this legislation. He had asked about how this government was planning to enforce this legislation, Mr. Speaker, when we have had a reduction in the amount of staff available to the department.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I think the answer may be self-evident, because if the Conservative caucus is cut in half in the next election, there will be an extra 20 people who can apply for fishery inspector jobs, and so the sardine patrol, as it will come to be known, will be amply stocked with fishery inspectors who can go out and inspect the fish that people are catching.

So, Mr. Speaker, what the member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans) was pointing out, I believe, to the House was that the government, in its wisdom or lack thereof, is bringing in a bill which is going to increase the penalties under the act from \$500 to \$10,000. The member for Interlake was describing a bill which is going to give the inspectors power to enter and inspect any place, including vehicles, to examine records and look for fish and so on when in fact the real problems associated with this industry are very wide and wide-ranging in their nature.

The member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans) and the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) have outlined a number of areas that this government should have embarked on before bringing in this legislation. The one area, gaping area, that this government has missed on is the consultation area. This government has not consulted properly on this bill. It has not consulted with people who are directly affected by the bill, and as a result of that, we will have to wait till the bill goes to committee to hear presenters and so on, at which time I would expect that we may be able to introduce some amendments to the bill that may in fact make it somewhat more palatable to the people involved.

But that is just indicative, Mr. Speaker, of a government that has clearly gone through the aging process. I remember very well the members on the other side when they were bright-eyed and bushy-tailed when most of them came to the House in the election of 1986, and they were going to change the world. I remember the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) when he had a full head of hair in 1986 and came in here with his colleagues, the former member for Portage la Prairie, who many of us are very happy has since retired, but came in here and were out to change the world.

I heard a litany of criticisms of the government of the day, a litany of criticisms about the government not consulting enough, and I have concluded over the years that governments do go through stages. They start out with a consultative sort of approach, but as time goes on, a certain rigor mortis sets in and at the very end—and this government clearly is at the ending stages of its life. I mean, one only has to take a look and watch the everyday proceedings in this House to see that the government is tired, the government is out of step with the electorate, and it is really losing or has lost, I believe, its mandate to govern.

The legislative session that we are in right now is, to me, clearly indicative of that. We have perhaps 15 to 20 bills before the House. We have bills dealing with minor amendments to The Insurance Act, The Real Estate Act. We have the amendments to The Fisheries Act, which have not

been well thought out. We have this Bill 8, which has not been properly consulted with the groups, and we have the overriding issue of an industry in trouble. We have a fishing industry that we have seen closed down in the Maritimes. We see a fishing industry in this province with low prices, with major problems, not unlike other sectors of the business community are facing right now, but an approach by the government that really is indifferent, a failure to understand what is really wrong with the industry and take an overall approach to it.

Instead, what we see are essentially housekeeping amendments, minor amendments to a bill. In fact, in the minister's own comments on Bill 8, the minister talks about the fact that the authority to do the inspection is given to the minister, to the government, under at least, I believe, three other acts. They feel now that they want to bring in the amendments to this particular act, to complete the circle and to allow a search. The minister says that currently he is allowed to make an inspection of the vehicles, but he thinks that that is not strong enough, and he would like to have the power to do a search.

Mr. Speaker, maybe I missed something here, but perhaps you could tell me what the difference is between a search and an inspection? If I am looking in a person's trunk of their car and I am inspecting it, which I am allowed to do right now, then you tell me how much better a search is going to be? What does a search allow me to do that an inspection does not?

It is just another example of why this government is out of control, why this minister is out of control, why this minister is allowed to run amuck in this department. At least the previous minister, for all his faults, had a more or less balanced approach to his department, his responsibilities. He was willing to advance different ideas that he had to improve his department. I know some of his ideas we did not necessarily approve of but nevertheless he did have ideas. I remember the former minister asking me at one time, you know, whether or not it was possible to procure some military-type uniforms

for his park staff. He was pretty insistent that he wanted the material and the uniforms, but he did not want any medals included with them because he planned to issue his own.

I would say, Mr. Speaker, that that was an idea from a former minister, an idea we did not necessarily approve of over here on this side of the House, but where at least the minister had a bit of a sense of humour and was prepared to look at different ideas and was prepared to do things that this minister does not seem willing or able to do.

So my colleague, the member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans), asked this minister whether he would be prepared to go along and attend with the member for the Interlake certain locations this summer for the purposes of doing some consulting regarding amendments to this bill and others pending in this area and in this department.

* (1630)

I see the member for the Interlake discussing this matter at the present time with the minister. Perhaps this very valid suggestion by my colleague, the member for Interlake, will be taken seriously by the minister, and we will see the two members do some real consulting this summer. We will see these two members out in the Interlake, out around the province this summer, in fact, doing some consulting about some very real needs that the fishing community require and desire and really need to turn around the fishing industry in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I have a feeling that his efforts will go unheeded. His efforts will go for naught because this government has no intention of taking my honourable friend from Interlake around on a tour this summer to consult with people. This government has no desire to deal with the real problems dealing with the fishery of this province. That is something that has been made and pointed out quite clearly by other speakers this afternoon.

I would be very interested to know where the Liberal Party stands on this bill because you know, Mr. Speaker, on most other bills and most other questions, policy in this House and this province, you have the Liberals sitting back and sort of

seeing which way the wind is going to blow on any particular day.

You know the Liberal juggernaut, led by the—and he claims he is not the deputy leader, but the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), you know while he is driving that juggernaut, trying to keep it off the sandbars, that the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) keeps driving it up to, is driving that juggernaut into the winds. When the winds blow one way one day, the Liberal position shifts to the left, if it is blowing to the left. Then it blows to the right and the juggernaut heads to the right, and the Liberal position goes with it.

We have seen that time and time again. We remember what the Liberals were like back in 1989 when they were here with their caucus of 20. I have never seen a more confused group. One could argue that with 20 Liberals there has got to be much confusion, and with seven Liberals things would clear up a little bit. It would be less confusion, but, Mr. Speaker, I see just as much confusion with a group of seven as I saw with the group of 20. You know, the reduction in numbers has not cleared up their confusion. Now one would think that when they came back into this House after being in the wilderness, having no members for a number of years, one could expect that Liberals would have difficulty with policies because they had no members for a number of years.

Mr. Speaker, you have been around here as long as the former Leader of the Liberal Party has. You know that you have certainly learned a few things in the last eight years. You would think that the Liberals, particularly with reference to Bill 8, would have developed some sort of a position by now, that after eight years of experience, you could open the mini red book for the provincial Liberals and you could pull out a policy on things like Bill 8, on other issues.

Mr. Speaker, you cannot do that because there is no Liberal policy on anything. In fact, when they do develop what passes for a policy in Liberal ranks, a week or two later they contradict themselves. I remember on an issue just a few weeks ago, they were found wanting and

disregarding a position that their Leader came out with in his agenda for the session just before the session started.

Mr. Speaker, does that sound like a government in waiting to you? Does that sound like a group of individuals that could possibly put together a cohesive team and a coherent group of policies and platforms for the people of Manitoba to look at? I think this is what we have to do. We have to present to the people of Manitoba the inconsistencies of the Liberal Party in this House. We have to point out to people that as much as people may dislike the policies of Tory governments, of the Deputy Premier and other members of his caucus, at least they have some understanding of what a Tory is, or at least they did.

I think they have an understanding of where the NDP stands on different issues, whether they agree or not. I think that the public is comfortable making a decision between those two different very clear ideologies.

Mr. Speaker, I think the public is very unclear and very unsure of making a step to a party that has no policy, is prepared to change on a day-by-day, week-by-week basis in terms of policy. Of course, time will tell. The Liberal Party, the Liberal juggernaut is riding along a little bit right now and scaring the daylights out of the government opposite. But after the Quebec election and the Liberal Party starts to see what happens among the Liberal Party in Quebec, I think that given the circumstances of a future where we see potentially a different situation involved as far as Quebec is concerned, we see a new Liberal budget in Ottawa, and when the Liberals finally have to stand on their own, when the Liberals finally have to go out there and they do not have the skirt tails and the coattails of Lloyd Axworthy and Sheila Copps to pull them through, when they have to stand on their own, that is when we are going to see the Liberal Party and its Leader put in perspective. That is when we are going to see the true Liberal position.

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

In another year, Mr. Acting Speaker, I think that time will tell, but we may see the Liberal Party getting the support that it really does deserve from a very critical public. Then we will see whether they come up and retain the seven seats they have or whether they move into Portage la Prairie and into Reston, Manitoba, and throw out the deputy Premier. Now, I am hearing some heckles from behind me and in front of me and all around. I would like to respond to some of them, but I must stick to Bill 8 because I know you would want me to do that.

I thought it was important to get on the record the Liberal's position on things. The Liberals like to sit back, listen to what we have to say, listen to what the Tories have to say and then kind of pick and choose. I remember the former member for—he is a federal member now, one could not find a member—the member for Inkster and others in that caucus have a little higher consistency rating than some of the former members, the member for Osborne, I believe it was. It was unbelievable how he would change his position on very fundamental questions. [interjection] You know, Mr. Acting Speaker, the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) asks on what.

This group, the Liberal caucus, ran up an unbelievable record of promises before the last election. They went out and promised—I do not have my list here now. They should be embarrassed if they were to go back and look at that list of promises they made. They just promised everything to anybody and in their inexperience they never thought that it would catch up to them. We were able in this House to bring out and add up their promises and show that they were just totally irresponsible in their amount of expenses.

Point of Order

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Acting Speaker, if I might raise a point with you, Sir, that this is my bill and I have listened very attentively to the remarks of the member who is speaking. It has been a long time since I have heard anything even close to fish on this bill. If there was at least fish mentioned once in awhile I could relate to it, but this is getting to be a

little bit of a problem. I wish you would call the member to order.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I am not critical of the fact that the member does not know a sweet thing about what he is talking about, but at least the word "fish" should be mentioned once in awhile.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Order, please. The honourable minister does have a point of order. On page 20 of the rule book, Relevancy 30. Speeches shall be direct to the question under consideration or to a motion or amendment that the member is speaking to, to move, or to a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Acting Speaker, well, I must be speaking in a vacuum here because I distinctly saw the minister in the last 10 or 15 minutes speaking to the member for the Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans). I would invite the minister to consult Hansard tomorrow. I am sure the Speaker can verify this, but as I was speaking to the Speaker about Bill 8, I kept repeating Bill 8 and the provisions of Bill 8 as I discussed the Liberal position on Bill 8, the minister's lack of clarity on Bill 8. We have been talking about fish for the last 20-some minutes, and we will continue to discuss Bill 8.

So if the minister would kindly listen to the remarks and listen to the comments that I am making on the bill, he would see that the comments are relative to the bill. The whole argument about relevancy, which he and his colleagues used to relish bringing up the past six years ago, never worked for them then, and it obviously is not going to work right now.

Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, I got so excited over here about this speech that I have dropped all my notes. I am just going to have to start over and reinforce these very important observations that I have on this bill.

I know I was discussing the red book. The red book is a source of pride to the Liberals.

An Honourable Member: Does it mention fish?

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Acting Speaker, my colleague, the member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans), asks whether it mentions fish.

To read the press and hear the commentators and so on join in the general love affair with the Liberals over the last six months, one would think that fish would obviously have to be mentioned in the red book because it dealt with everything. As time goes on we see that the red book is going to become, eventually, an albatross around the necks of all Liberals in this country, because as the Liberals start to renege on their promises federally, we are going to see a lot less enthusiasm for the red book from the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

The red book is going to cease to become a source of pride for Liberals, is going to cease to become the Bible of all Liberals in this country. So they can have their fun. They can have their fun with the red book. How that relates, Mr. Acting Speaker, to fish and Bill 8 is beyond me. So I think one should call the heckling member, the member for Inkster to order for these constant comments, side comments about a red book, which really has absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with Bill 8.

Mr. Acting Speaker, dealing with the matter at hand, I think it bears repeating that this is a government that is bankrupt of ideas. It has absolutely no legislative schedule at all. Normally we would have our hundred bills before the House. This government is afraid of its shadow. It is afraid of its five-o'clock shadow.

The fact that it would come in as tentative as it has with minor bills, bills that have not been properly researched, bills that have not been consulted upon, and would expect that somehow we should be standing up and accepting that this government is doing what it is supposed to be doing is beyond me. How does this government, how does the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) expect to be able to fight an election on its current legislative session? Obviously, it is not going to get very far with Bill 8.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I know that the member for Point Douglas has been dying to get up all afternoon on this bill. As a matter of fact, he has

been trying to restrain me. I recognize that he has only about 14-15 minutes left to speak on the bill, so I think that it is probably appropriate that I turn the floor over to him so that he can set this government straight on what is wrong with Bill 8.

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): I am not going to go too long or too hard on the red book here. I want to talk about The Fisheries Amendment Act because reading the bill, if one looks at it, it talks about search and seizure and ability to inspect boats. If you go out onto any lake or if you have done any travelling, you know that the conservation officers already have that power to do that. I do not know what new is being added on here except for increasing a fine from \$500 to \$10,000.

It seems to be a pretty heavy fine if a person is out fishing and they have, like my colleague from Interlake was saying, say, five extra fish in their boat, and now they are going to get a \$10,000 fine.

I do not agree with breaking rules or regulations, but sometimes people do need to feed their families when they are unemployed or out of work. One of the biggest problems that I see with the whole industry was brought in when the government cut the Northern Fishermen's Freight Assistance Program by \$90,000. That hurt fishermen more than anything, because throughout the years you see the increased costs in motors, boats and the cost of buying nets, and every year the costs of those go up and up and up, yet subsidies to help the northern fishermen stayed the same. Then last year it was cut by \$90,000.

If you look at the impact of that cut of \$90,000, who did it impact the most? It is not hard to figure out that it is the people from the North. That is who it hurt the most.

The former Minister of Northern and Native Affairs says, no, no. But if you look at some of the remote communities, when they do catch their fish and they have to ship them out, a lot of those fish have to be brought out by planes. It costs you a lot more to fly fish out by airplanes than it is to, say, jump in your truck from Gimli and drive to Freshwater fisheries. It is a big difference of dollars.

I know going into some of the northern communities and especially Berens River, I was there with some of my colleagues, and we had a meeting with Berens River fishers' co-op. They were really feeling the pinch at that time of the cutbacks, and they said, well, it will be almost impossible for us to continue fishing because we rely on those subsidies. We do not have a road to haul our fish out. They said, any fish we catch we have to fly out.

That is one of the things that I wish this government and all governments would do before it makes universal cuts or actions that will hurt people, and that is to try and consult with the people that it is going to have the most impact on.

When we were up there we were talking to the fishermen from Berens River, and they had not been consulted. They did not have a meeting with the minister or anyone, so they raised that issue with us. We raised it in the House on more than one occasion, and we were told that yes, the minister would meet with the fishers' co-op in Berens River. That has been well over a year, and that has yet to happen.

*(1650)

Also, if you look at the real negative impact it has, one only has to read from this article that was printed by a Chemawawin talking to a fisherman from one of these remote communities. What it says, the elimination of the federal freight subsidy spells disaster for fishermen in remote northern Manitoba communities who relied on the break to cover the cost of shipping their catch to market.

The president of the Pukatawagan Fisherman's Association says the Department of Indian Affairs, in all its wisdom, decided last year to cut the freight subsidy which means we have to pay transportation costs.

I hope my Liberal colleagues will support us and talk to Mr. Axworthy and ask him to put those dollars back in place to help northern fishermen because it is having a real negative impact. It is really hurting the North.

An Honourable Member: George, you are overstating it.

Mr. Hickes: Well, I am reading exactly from a quote from the president of the fisherman's association of Pukatawagan.

It also goes on and says: Matthew Sinclair said, we will lose at least 10 cents on every dollar we earn. The fishery has already been wiped out in Brochet and Lac Brochet, and if anyone in this Chamber has been to those communities, they know that those communities rely heavily on fishing and trapping to feed their families and to earn a few dollars, and also, when they are out fishing, they keep some fish to feed their families.

I would hate to see the fishing industry go down like trapping did in northern Manitoba. I was raised in the North and I have spoken to many people in northern communities who are aboriginal, and when they were out trapping it was not only to earn a few dollars, it was also to talk to their grandchildren and their children and to discuss the whole culture value and learn the language. As soon as the children were out of school, they were taken out to the traplines by either their parents or their grandparents. When they are out on the trapline, they have no access to TVs, so they were out there working with their grandparents or their parents so they were learning the work ethic.

An Honourable Member: They were better for it, George, you say.

Mr. Hickes: Much so.

When they were out there, the elders would speak to the children in their own language so they would have to learn and retain their language. Plus in the evening when the beavers were already fleshed and skinned, then they would talk about the old days. That is where a lot of the culture was passed on from generation to generation. Now if you go into a lot of those communities, what you see is the kids, as soon as they are out of school they run home and get in front of the TV and they play those games, or else they are wandering around the street, and they are not learning their language and the value and the culture of their people. It is a real shame.

If you look at what happened to trapping, it was forced upon the aboriginal community and the

aboriginal people because the protests of individuals from a lot of southern communities drove trapping right out, because everybody was scared to wear fur. I feel personally, myself, that it is a real shame, because it is really hurting the aboriginal communities and it is putting back many years that the aboriginal elders worked very hard to try and educate their children and their grandchildren in the values of one's own language and one's own culture.

To go on with the newspaper article, it states by Mr. Sinclair, it says, the fishery has already been wiped out in Brochet and Lac Brochet, and he said, we will be next. That is the only alternative a lot of those communities have. They lost the trapping. Now they are in jeopardy of losing their only alternative and that is fishing. Mr. Sinclair, who has been fishing for about 25 years in an industry that was once profitable for fishermen, at least 10 years on his own, says earning a living was hard enough before the subsidy was hacked. He says the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, the federal Crown corporation, since the late 1960s, has had exclusive marketing rights to Freshwater fisheries in the Prairies, Northwest Ontario and the Northwest Territories, is unresponsive to the concerns of fishermen and needs to be overhauled. I hope that since that time Freshwater fisheries has met with the aboriginal communities and aboriginal fishermen and worked out some kind of conclusion that will profit both the fishermen and the corporation.

The prices the corporation doles out have remained relatively the same for the past 20 years and do not reflect increasing operating costs. Pickerel, the most popular species, nets 30 cents to 60 cents a pound. So when you are talking about increasing costs, that just goes back to reflect upon what I was saying earlier. Every year we see the price of boats and motors and the price of nets going up, yet what Mr. Sinclair is stating is the price of fish is going down. So there is no balance there, and something has to be done.

He goes on to say, moreover, the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, which earned \$42 million last season, must develop new markets to

avoid gluts such as the current one with whitefish. But Mr. Sinclair says these are old tunes fishermen have been singing to government for years.

Last fall, he said, delegates to the Manitoba commercial fishermen's conference in Winnipeg—no federal representative showed—voiced major concerns that they were getting a raw deal. Then earlier this year, the former federal Fisheries Minister sent his deputy minister to meet with Manitoba fishermen and to report on their concerns over the role of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. The report has not been made public, and they are wondering why. They want some answers. It is their whole livelihood that we are talking about.

It goes on to say, earlier this year the Filmon government introduced legislation to allow fishermen to by-pass the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, but Mr. Sinclair says fishermen in remote communities pose no threat to the corporation's monopoly since they have limited access to outside buyers.

Bob Johnson, manager of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation office in The Pas who met with the Pukatawagan fishermen last week to discuss their concerns, says the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation has lobbied the federal and provincial governments to reinstate the freight subsidies. Fishermen also had to endure the elimination and the earlier 50-percent cut in the provincial freight subsidies, so it is both levels of government that have cut the freight subsidies.

I hope that when we are talking about fines to individuals who are overfishing, and you are talking about \$10,000 fines, I hope this government in their wisdom will set aside some of that money to put back in for freight subsidies for the fishermen who have been greatly affected.

The other interesting part of this bill is there is absolutely no mention or no consultation with aboriginal people, and yet when I was reading this report that was prepared for the ad hoc committee on the status of Manitoba commercial fisheries, it states right in there the role of native people in resources allocation. There is a unanimous agreement that the role of native people in fisheries

resource management will increase dramatically in the future. The government has to be listening and they have to hear this, and it states in there, the fisheries resource management participating with aboriginals will increase dramatically in the future.

What does that tell you, Mr. Acting Speaker? The need for the province and Indian organizations to work together to develop policies that would establish the parameters of joint decision-making arrangements was identified. Recent Supreme Court decisions have provided native people with a strong—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have 27 minutes remaining. As previously agreed, this matter will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

* (1700)

The hour now being 5 p.m., time for private members' hour.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Res. 17—Improved Benefits for Part-Time Employees

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I move, seconded by the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), that

WHEREAS in the last 15 years economic technological and social influences have created significant changes in the workplace and within the workforce presenting difficulties for both employees and employers; and

WHEREAS almost 20 percent of Manitoba's workforce is employed part time; and

WHEREAS most of the 94,000 part-time workers do not enjoy the same benefits as their co-workers who work full time; and

WHEREAS in today's economy two-income earner families and single-parent families are the rule rather than the exception; and

WHEREAS there is a need to create a better balance between part-time and full-time workers' benefits;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba call on the provincial government to consider introducing legislation amending The Employment Standards Act to provide for prorated benefits for part-time employees, including prorated sick leave, pensions, termination rights and vacation.

Motion presented.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Acting Speaker, of course, we have experience under a Conservative government a decline in employment since the government has been elected. In fact, if the minister responsible for unemployment in the province of Manitoba was to look, he would find that there were 2,000 less people working today than when he was sworn in in May of 1988.

There are also problems, though, within those numbers, and it indicates a trend that should be of some major concern for members of this Chamber and indeed it is for Manitobans. What we see is an increase in the number of part-time employees in the province of Manitoba. Since, again, January of '88, we are looking at some of the numbers of part-time people, we have gone up from 86,000 people to January of '94, looking at the whole year figures, to 97,000 part-time employees in Manitoba. Mr. Acting Speaker, that is a 13 percent increase in just six years of the number of people working part time in Manitoba, and this is not unique to our province. It is certainly not unique to North America, but it does present us with a very real demographic and economic challenge.

Clearly, 73 percent of those part-time workers are women. In other words, we have an increase in the number of part-time employees, and we also have a reality that even with those increases close to three-quarters of those people that are working part time across Manitoba in our workplaces are women. We believe this is one economic component that we must deal with in terms of the quality of life and the economic opportunities that the people have and the fairness of our economy to

deal with all individuals in the Manitoba workplace.

This, along with other issues, the issue of part-time work and the issue of minimum wage, we think are two of the twin areas that must be dealt with in our economy. The minimum wage has been basically flat under the Conservatives. We used to have one of the highest minimum wages in the country under the previous government, a government that believed that a fair minimum wage was essential to have money, disposable income in our economy to allow people to purchase goods and services, which in turn created more employment.

Also, we believe that the issue of prorated benefits for part-time people is essential to ensure that part-time employment is only developed by employers because of the nature of the work that has to be done. We do not want to see the increase in part-time workers because of the differential of benefits in the Manitoba economy.

If people are creating part-time work and having people work part time only because of the issue of benefits—in other words, if employers feel that dividing up two full-time jobs into two part-time jobs is an economic advantage for them, because of the provisions of The Employment Standards Act in terms of the requirements that the government makes, then I suggest to you that it is not only a disadvantage for those two individuals who are working part time, but it is also a tremendous disadvantage for our economy.

Let us look at the macro issue of our economy: a 13 percent increase in part-time employment. People who do not have the same kind of wages as full-time workers and the disposable income of full-time people do not have the security and the flexibility to make economic decisions that I would suggest are not only in their own best interest, but also in the best interest of the economy of Manitoba.

We know from studies performed by the Conference Board of Canada some three years ago—Good Work and Bad Work, I think was the name of the study, or I might have the wrong title of it—

An Honourable Member: Jobs.

Mr. Doer: Jobs. I recall reading it, that there is a clear demonstration that people with full-time incomes purchase more goods, more services, create more economic activity and in fact develop more employment and jobs for other people in the retail sector, in the tourism sector, in the construction sector, and in many other sectors of our economy.

Mr. Acting Speaker, members opposite must look at what is going on in our economy now that it is basically flat and wonder, where did they go wrong and what can they do to do something about it? I would suggest, besides the issue of minimum wage, the whole issue of prorated benefits for part-time workers is another area that they can look at to ensure that employers are hiring people on the basis of actual occupational need, not on the basis of a lower cost because of requirements under The Employment Standards Act.

We know that this is an issue. We hear this from individuals. I was talking to a business person as late as last week. He went up to me and he said the one thing that we have to do in our economy is get a way in our Manitoba laws of discouraging employers from hiring people only on part time. He said that it is affecting members of his own family in terms of their being hired on part time. His two daughters have been hired on part time in places where he believes that there is full-time work available, and they are only being hired on the basis of the lower cost for the employer. He said that will also, in turn, affect his business because people who are not making full-time salaries will not make the same kind of investments that full-time salaries allow people to make in terms of houses and other durable goods that help the Manitoba economy.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we have, as I say, a very stagnant economy. I recall a few years ago—I think in '87, '86—there was 6,000 new housing starts per year, I believe. The member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) will recall those numbers. We are now down to 2,000 housing starts per year and that is notwithstanding the numbers that have lowered in terms of interest rates and the

ability to purchase homes. We have a stagnant economy, and we cannot allow the only growth in our economy to take place in the part-time economy.

The only growth we have seen from the province when they are citing these statistics is in the area of part-time work. I would suggest, this is one of the other reasons why Manitoba is tied for last place in growth rate in 1993. Your only growth in employment is in part-time work. You have less people working today than we had six years ago when you took office and that growth rate is in part-time employment.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we believe that prorated benefits is one way of giving fairness to individuals, particularly women, the 75 percent of people who are in this part-time status, and also giving benefits to our whole Manitoba economy. We believe that workers who are working across the province should get these benefits prorated. Also, in the so-called International Year of the Family, we could look at some of these employment standard provisions for families who are prorated and give greater rights for families to spend some quality time together. What about a family today that has one worker working part time for one retail outlet, possibly being required to work on a Sunday. Another member of the family is working at another retail outlet. They have very little prorated benefits for vacation. They do not have the right to take vacation as time off right now. The employer can decide to have that person take that time as money, 4 percent in lieu of salary, and they do not have the right to take that vacation together as a family.

* (1710)

You know, if you really want to do something, and if we collectively want to do something for families, we can do it under The Employment Standards Act, both by providing prorated benefits which allow individuals to take time off—not a bad idea for families—and allows them to take time off as a family unit so that they can spend quality time with their children or with each other, which they do not presently have under The Employment Standards Act of Manitoba.

Why are we just having public relations events on the Year of the Family? Why are we not having real, substantive changes for the families of Manitoba? Why are we not trying to make a difference for families? Why are we not trying to make a difference for people in terms of our Manitoba economy? Why are we not trying to some degree to redress some of the balance in our economy between employers who are hiring people as part time—and we would rather have part-time work than no work, but we would also want to guarantee that where there is the option of having full-time work, that that also could be available for people. Why do we not do some real things and take real action this year on the International Year of the Family?

Is this more than just photo events and press conferences and fancy pamphlets and glossy pamphlets and the cover of the phonebook? This International Year of the Family, does it not represent something more to people in this Chamber in terms of dealing with the brute reality that some families are facing out there, where it is really tough to make ends meet, where it is really tough to get a full-time job, where it is really tough to get the security of employment, where it is really tough to spend quality time together, where it is really tough to get time off guaranteed as a part-time worker? Are these not the kinds of things that families want, some of the things that we may, I would suggest, take for granted?

Mr. Acting Speaker, the trend is the opposite direction. I suggest the members opposite in the economic benches of that cabinet, that the trend is in the wrong direction, a 13 percent increase in part-time work, with a static workforce over the last six years is not heading in the right direction in terms of our economy in Manitoba, and it is not heading in the right direction for those individuals.

The Province of Saskatchewan has introduced some measures on part-time work, and, yes, it is controversial. Every time you bring a minimum wage change in, in a positive way, you will get some criticism. Every time you try to move the balance a little bit more to people, a little bit away from employers perhaps and their perception, you

may get some criticism. But it is the role of government, I believe, to provide a balance, and I believe this balance is being lost in our society in terms of those people who are in a part-time work situation or those individuals who are faced with minimum wage situations.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we believe that responsibilities under the law to provide certain benefits to their workers should include part-time people. I would refer the members opposite to their own Employment Standards Regulations, A Guide to Manitoba Employment Standards Act. Many items are not covered by labour legislation, and many other items are left to collective bargaining agreements.

Now, members opposite know that many part-time people are not covered by collective bargaining agreements. Not all individuals in Manitoba are covered by union agreements, and even where union agreements do apply, sometimes their applications are not as expansive on part-time workers as they should be, Mr. Acting Speaker.

I believe that we should not have to rely only on collective bargaining agreements and union employer agreements in the province of Manitoba, that we should have a floor. The Employment Standards Act should be a floor, and that floor should be a fair floor for part-time people. It should be a fair floor for the individuals. It should be a fair floor for our families. It should be a fair floor for our economy, and the only way to have a fair floor for us is to have prorated benefits for part-time people.

It is not a huge cost item, Mr. Acting Speaker. I would suggest the opposite. It is costing us money in terms of our economy and costing us jobs when we do not have as many people working full time as is possible, from the occupational perspective.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we believe that the costs are low and the benefits are high. We believe that the balance must be returned for part-time people, and therefore we may see a decrease in this trend of 13 percent increase that has taken place while members opposite have been in government. I dare say it is not only in the province of Manitoba, but it is certainly something that we can deal with

because The Employment Standards Act is provincial legislation. It is something we can do something about.

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, in closing, I would highly recommend that we pass this resolution in the chamber. I really believe that we should put some teeth in our Employment Standards Regulations for part-time people, and sometimes what is good for workers, part-time workers, and good for particularly the 75 percent of part-time workers who are women, is also good for all of us in the economy.

Let us do something for the International Year of the Family. Let us let people take time off together instead of having to take the 4 percent. Let us actually do something instead of just having photo ops and fancy brochures. Let us take a step forward for families. Let us take a step forward for part-time workers, and let us take a step forward for all of us in our Manitoba economy.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Labour): Mr. Acting Speaker, I very much appreciate the comments of the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), on raising this matter. It is certainly one that is in the current realm of debate in the area of labour legislation in Canada today, and it has been for some time.

There are a number of comments the member for Concordia has made that I have to challenge, Mr. Acting Speaker, because I do not think they can stand on the record. The member talks about the Year of the Family and what it can be, but there is one underlying fundamental point that has to be made, that the greatest disservice we do the citizens of Manitoba, indeed the families of Manitoba is continue to run a debt, a deficit in this province that the province cannot sustain, because the very fundamental services that government provides in the area of health care, social services, et cetera, are absolutely threatened if the financial situation of the province quite frankly cannot sustain them.

The member for Concordia, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer), said, well, why do you run a deficit? I do not think anyone on this side of the House is particularly proud of the fact that we still

have a deficit in this year's budget, but from his members and from him we continually hear more and more demands on where to spend money. Yet we do not find the realistic alternatives as to where that can come out of the budget. It is easy to throw off, throw out a particular comment on a program, Mr. Acting Speaker, but if you add up the mathematics, it nowhere nears equal the kind of demand that is there.

Another comment that the member for Concordia made is an interesting observation. I appreciate his comments about the need for full-time versus part-time jobs, Mr. Acting Speaker. Yes, part-time work does offer a flexibility to some people, who prefer that for a variety of reasons, particularly if it is a second income in a family, the flexibility that it brings, but for the prime earning of an income to support a family, I think most people would agree that a full-time job, certainly I do, is far better and probably the goal for most.

It is interesting to note that in a particular industry that at one time was significantly or substantially staffed by full-time employees, a host of collective agreements over the years—I am talking about the food industry and I am talking about agreements that were made on behalf of their employees by the United Food and Commercial Workers—have led to a large degree, I mean it is not the only factor in that change, but have been a significant factor in seeing that industry that at one time was almost entirely full-time employees, a large portion who were women, now has gone to a virtually, not entirely, but a very significantly part-time industry.

* (1720)

One of those reasons was, as the member points out, because of differences that were negotiated in those agreements between full and part-time workers, but that was done by those people in that industry. It was done by the union representing those people, and it is kind of ironical that a New Democrat Leader today would make that point when one of their biggest allies politically has been pursuing policies in their collective agreements that has led significantly to a change in that particular industry.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has referenced our employment standards material and there are a couple of points to note. He is right when he points out that some of the particular provisions for benefits to employees, whether they be part time or full time, are not referenced in that legislation. I am thinking particularly of sick leave. Our Manitoba legislation, quite frankly, has no minimum requirement for sick leave currently.

It was an area that concerned me as Minister of Labour as we review our statutes. One of the questions that I put to our staff in Employment Standards is to track for us the number of complaints going back over the years, part time, full time, that we have had with respect to sick leave. We have not had one that our staff had been able to track down, where we have had either a full-time or a part-time employee raise the issue or been denied a job because of a request for sick leave.

That is not to say it has not happened, but it has not been one that has been raised with us or been one that the Federation of Labour, through our Labour Management Review Committee, has raised. It is one issue that we have indicated sometime ago, the next time we do a review of that statute, there would be a question that will be put to the Labour Management Review Committee on sick leave requirements, and certainly the part time, full time will have to be taken into account.

Mr. Acting Speaker, on pensions—and I am referencing the resolution that the member has put forward. On pensions we certainly recognize that we have a problem in the area of pensions in the private sector. In fact, the only growth in Manitoba in pension plans over the years has been on public sector pension plans. We recognized that we had a problem. It was not just a part-time/full-time issue. It was that the regulations that governed our pension plans in Manitoba in the private sector had become so onerous, particularly with the growth in small employment situations. Where we had new employers with small numbers of employees, the rules were so onerous that pension plans, quite frankly, were slipping away. The larger operations,

by and large, that employ a lot of full-time or part-time people that have pension plans, take into account part-time workers and their pension plans.

The problem is in small workplaces where the number of people are limited, and that is why we introduced very significant amendments to our Pension Benefits Act that provide for a lot of the flexibility and certainly the ability to have pension plans with a larger base that small employers can access. We would hope that as that develops it will address significantly the pension issue with respect to part-time employees.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the member referenced termination rights. I can tell him that our change has been made in the last round of amendments to The Employment Standards Act with the provision of the 30-day grace period where an employee, whether it be full time or part time, could leave their employment with notice or without notice or be let go without notice, is applicable there. The termination provisions under The Employment Standards Act, which the party of which he is a member when government brought in the terms of notification dates, apply. It is not quite the difficult issue that he would raise by his resolution.

One practical difficulty in this area, and it is one that if we were to draft legislation at some particular time we would have to overcome, and it is a very real difficulty, is if we simply, by law, say that all benefits will apply on a prorated basis, we get into the difficulty in benefits such as dental benefits, for example, where, whether you are a full-time or part-time employee, the service or the need is still the same but the cost of the service, the cost of the benefit, particularly if there is an employee contribution, is not the same. That poses a very real difficulty in how you do, or how you would structure a law that would require the prorating of those types of benefits.

I note that the Leader of the Opposition did not include that in his resolution, so I am not sure if that was an area which he intended to exclude in such legislation because of that difficulty or it was an oversight, but it is a very real practical difficulty in bringing in any such legislation.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I say to the members opposite that we as a government are not opposed to part-time employees being treated fairly and having the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of full-time employees on some sort of basis, and as I have outlined, many of those standards, minimal standards, are already applicable to part-time employees or are not referenced in The Employment Standards Act, such as sick leave.

Those particular areas I have committed when we next look at that particular legislation because they have not been pressing issues. We have not had the complaints, we have not had the cases brought forward that we had a problem. They are not particular areas that we have decided to move on at this time, but when that legislation is opened up at some point in time, they will be referenced to the Labour Management Review Committee that advises government on these particular issues and allows for a fair and open discussion between the stakeholders that works out recommendations that I think everyone can live with and works well.

My experience as Labour Minister, both on our Labour Relations Act and on our Employment Standards Act when we made changes to accommodate unemployment insurance changes with respect to maternity and paternity leave, which we were the first government in Canada to act upon to allow Manitoba workers to take advantage of those changes, had very good recommendations coming forward from that process.

So the issue that the Leader of the Opposition raises is certainly one that is worthy for discussion. It is certainly one that we have had some discussions on. Some of the practical problems are certainly there in areas, and I am not sure whether or not they are areas that the Leader of the Opposition would recommend that we legislate.

Mr. Acting Speaker, in some of the practical areas such as sick leave and pensions, termination rights and vacation, we have either taken steps, to date through other vehicles to allow for part-time employees to access those benefits in their own processes, or are ones that we will look at, at some point in time, because quite frankly we have not

had the level of complaints from the Employment Standards branch or through our contacts through organized labour.

So I say to the member, it is a good debate, a good discussion. We are certainly cognizant of these issues, working toward resolving the ones that are pressing. The last comment I make to him is that we must not though abrogate or take away from the responsibility of employees or their unions at the negotiating table to settle many of these issues at the table where most of them should be ultimately settled. Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Ms. Norma McCormick (Osborne): Mr. Acting Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of this resolution, and as a beginning point, I would like to expand on the Leader of the Opposition's definition of who in fact are part-time workers.

If we look at Manitoba's labour force statistics, we will find that of the 95,000 people who are part-time workers in our province, approximately 71,000 or 73 percent of them are women. When we look at the increase in part-time workers, the increase is almost entirely attributable to women. In 1973, there were 67,000 women who were working part time. By February of '94, it had risen to 70,000 and by 1994 to 71,000. This is an increase, despite the constancy of the total part-time workforce.

* (1730)

Another interesting examination shows that if you look at the participation of men in part-time work—in fact in 1993, there were 29,000 men who worked part time—this number had dropped to 24,000. So we are talking here about a problem particularly for women.

Also if we look at women in full-time employment, we will see another very startling statistic.

An Honourable Member: What is that?

Ms. McCormick: Thank you for asking. In March 1993, there were 159,000 women who were employed full time. By the time we hit February of '94, that number had gone down by 6,000. By the time we—

An Honourable Member: What is the source of your information?

Ms. McCormick: I am citing from the labour force statistics report March 1994. By the time we come to March 1994, we find that there are only 146,000 women working full time in our province. So what we have here is evidence that the full-time opportunities for women are shrinking and the participation of women as part-time workers is increasing. So it is for this purpose that it is so important that we pay attention to the plight of part-time workers.

Now, when we look back at job growth, unfortunately, the average rate of job growth over the 1980s fell so sharply by comparison to preceding decades, almost anyone who has young children, and I include myself in that group, knows that our young people have a very difficult time finding jobs, particularly full-time or permanent jobs that many of my generation took for granted.

The Leader of the Opposition cited in his remarks a particularly good report which expands on some of these concerns. The Economic Council of Canada in 1990 made a considerable contribution to the body of information on this issue in a report entitled Good Jobs, Bad Jobs.

What the council described was strong employment growth in well-paid, high-skill jobs in fields such as financial services and computer applications, but the report described an equally frightening growth in what the council characterized as nonstandard jobs. These are low-paid, low-skill jobs, many of them temporary or part time.

Where the shrinkage came from was in the middle-range employment, jobs in mining, forestry and on factory assembly lines, which have traditionally been the backbone jobs of our labour force in Manitoba.

The trend continues. Nonstandard jobs account for half of the job growth in the 1980s and by the end of this decade will account for 28 percent of all employment.

Statistics Canada shows that part-time employment rose by 211,000 people between 1990

and 1993, while full-time employment fell by 400,000. The problem here is that disproportionately represented among those holders of nonstandard jobs are people with below average education and opportunities, single parents, disabled people and young people.

Single parents, predominantly represented by women, are by large measure overrepresented. Women form an increasingly large percentage of the underclass of Manitoba's labour force. The service sector, which in the past two decades has accounted for 90 percent or more of net employment growth, is primarily comprised of women.

I think I want to, at this point, say that concern for these issues is no longer the domain of one gender, of one party or of one generation. We must seek solutions to this and we must seek them co-operatively and rigorously.

The question has to be asked, is there a solution? I will grant that there is no single cure for either unemployment or for underemployment. However, we must recognize that there are starting points upon which we can embark on cure.

One very useful starting point would be to recognize that we, as a society, must treat the provision of quality employment as a high priority. I feel that the government of Manitoba does not treat as important the quality of jobs or the well-being of those who perform work, but continue to talk only of net number of jobs. Part-time, low-paid, no-benefit jobs do not meet the needs of Manitoba families, Manitoba parents or of the children they are raising. What we must recognize is that we are not growing jobs in the sufficient number to meet the needs of our population.

I also want to reflect on the wisdom of Henry Ford who used to raise his workers' wages and give them progressive benefits by the support of the day because he recognized that a well-paid, well-supported worker could buy a car. Businesses today can hardly fail to recognize that continual erosion in the number of hours worked and the consequent reduction in real wages must

necessarily have a depressing effect on demand for the products that business wants to sell.

I would also like to suggest that there are ways in which we can stimulate and encourage a move to full-time jobs. The Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik), in speaking before me, talked about the deficit being a problem with respect to addressing this challenge. I tell you I was troubled when I heard the burden of the deficit placed on the backs of part-time workers rather than on seasonal workers like hockey players, who in fact are very well sustained by our province's budget.

I do not want to discourage the minister from his laudable words about fair treatment of part-time employees, but I have heard nothing from him as to where he will go to redress this problem. He talked obliquely about re-examining The Employment Standards Act to look at fairer treatment of people but no promise as to whether this will be done or when. So we must not, in my opinion, put faith in this government in the terms of this mandate to solve this problem.

An Honourable Member: Oh, come on, come on.

Ms. McCormick: I hear the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) saying that perhaps within the mandate of this government—

An Honourable Member: You never heard me say anything.

Ms. McCormick:—that they will in fact address the problem, so I would look forward to amendments to the standards act which will make sure that the Deputy Premier's words come true.

* (1740)

The minister also spoke of the preference of women and of unions to move toward part-time work, as though this is a matter of choice. I think that we must be very careful to look at what kinds of choices people are making. There is a real problem for women when this approach is taken. Women often prefer to job-share. When women are home with young children, the demands of domestic child rearing and family life, added on to those of a full-time job, are extremely demanding. A creative approach to work-sharing, however, is not available to many women because in doing so,

to move from full-time to part-time employment, their option is to sacrifice their benefits, their opportunity to pension plans and to many other things like sick leave, necessary when you have young children. So I would support any move which encourages work-sharing but not any move which penalizes the person for that choice.

I also would like to point out that these kinds of approaches would benefit families and employers, but we must ensure that we provide benefits to encourage the job-sharing desired by so many women who have young children without forcing on them a deliberate choice of a sacrifice of benefits.

The other thing I want to talk about is action which is now being taken at the federal level to modernize our income support programs. We recognize that these programs are not well suited now to the needs of contemporary society. Most welfare programs are designed simply to keep individuals at a poverty level or below, and they include few provisions to help transition people from welfare to employment and training. They also provide built-in disincentives for people to move off welfare. This is one other very strong benefit for transferring the benefits of full-time employment to part-time work.

Think about a single parent with young children who is home on welfare, who has, as part of that income security, protection of dental coverage or drug coverage, which she must then relinquish when she goes into the workforce. She cannot afford to work in less than a standard job. I think that when we begin to think about that, when we begin to think the real ways in which we can address the dehumanizing and debilitating consequence of spending time on an income security program for a very long time, we must recognize that the transition to employment is also often through part-time work, and it is only when we can remove that barrier to employment of the lack of benefit that we will find ourselves making effective gains in this area.

Single parents have no incentive to take part-time jobs with no benefits. As I say that, it is also true of people with disabilities. People with

disabilities form a considerable percentage of people on social assistance. Many of these people cannot contemplate going into full-time employment, because their health problems in fact create a barrier. They perhaps do not have the stamina or the strength to hold down jobs full time. But what would cause a person who is on disability to move from income security onto employment? The problem, of course, is that again they would require a relinquishment in the benefit.

The last point I want to touch on before I wrap up is the problem of growth of income. Oftentimes people in part-time jobs have no wage increases unless the minimum wage goes up. They have no sick time. They have no pensions and no benefits.

In my opinion, I am pleased to support the resolution put forward, and I look to the government to contemplate both the spirit and the wording of the regulation and to make the necessary amendments to its act. Thank you.

Mr. Brian Pallister (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Acting Speaker, it is my questionable privilege, I guess, to rise and speak to this resolution today in regard to improved benefits for part-time employees.

First of all, I would like to address a couple of the aspects of what the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) put on the record in his comments. Although I am in agreement with a lot of what he said, I think that there is certainly some question as to the validity of his statement that the changes he proposes favour people at the expense of employers. Certainly, I think employers are people, too. That seems to be very seldom in evidence in the comments made by members of his party, unfortunately. I think the previous Leader of the New Democratic Party was dead on when he observed that that party sometimes suffers from a lack of business acumen in its benches.

This particular resolution addresses a concern that I think we all share and that is a legitimate concern that there be better benefits. We all would like to see better benefits for work we do, I am sure. But the fact is that, for example, the member for Osborne (Ms. McCormick) made a number of good points I thought, but she reveals something of

an elitist attitude towards work. That is to say that—the idea being that all those jobs out there are at the level of income of, for example, university professors, is an unrealistic attitude in the reality of our economic climate today and has been for a long time.

I think frankly, Mr. Acting Speaker, that the person who is on social assistance today, not dissimilar from previous years, is one who is looking for a source of income from a job. The job is at the essence of what they are searching for, not the benefits themselves.

In my own experience in my business career in Portage la Prairie and throughout Manitoba in terms of the clients whom I dealt with, I found it was a very difficult challenge to be in business. For a business person to take the capital and muster up the courage to risk capital in starting a business is not an easy thing but yet—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Order, please. Could I ask the honourable members wanting to carry on this conversation to do it out in the hall or in the loge so I can hear the honourable member for Portage la Prairie.

Mr. Pallister: Mr. Acting Speaker, I was just trying to make the point that it is difficult, I think, for those who perhaps have never been in business or have never started a business or even entertained the thought of doing that, to understand the risks involved in doing so, to understand the courage it takes for people to drum up capital and to invest it, to invest in their own education and to start from scratch to start up a business and, in fact, put at risk those resources they have been able to muster up to try to create a job.

I think it is a difficult thing for many people to understand why someone would take those risks. Certainly, in my life, I have chosen to do that and so have a great many Manitobans. As a consequence of those risks of capital, and certainly of time that we have been willing to take, jobs have been created. Those jobs were created without any guarantees for those who chose to employ, without the guarantees of benefits, without the guarantees of wage, certainly without the guarantees of pension, yet those jobs were created. I think it is a

tribute to those of us on this side of the House who recognize that small businesses are very, very vital to the ongoing job creation that we all depend on in this province, that small business is the key to those jobs that we must have. I think there seems to be a lack of that.

I find it difficult to accept the vision of the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) as the white knight aboard the white stallion being the saviour of part-time employees in this province when at the same time this member was part of a government that was characterized, I guess, by its creative ability to generate new revenue sources, principally those which involved taking money from people in business, those which involved taking money from working people and in the form of tax grabs on a regular basis. I find it difficult, when one understands that those types of tax grabs are truly a disincentive to employment and a disincentive to jobs, to believe that member represents anything other than a regressive attitude, punitive attitude, towards job creation and towards employment.

* (1750)

My experience in business was that I started a business out of my car, Mr. Acting Speaker, many years ago now. The time flies, and after three years I had the wherewithal to take a risk. I decided to hire someone to work with me. That person was a single mom with two children to support.

She was not someone who was that concerned, frankly, in the job interview, nor were the other people that I did interview with things such as the member alludes to in his resolution, prorated sick leave, pensions, termination rights and things like that. She was very concerned however with the pay cheque. She was very concerned with getting a job.

As a consequence of the interview—and I must admit I think she would not mind me saying this—the way the interview process went, I had a person with a great deal of administrative and office experience helping me in the interview. We interviewed six people. Of those persons then, following the interviews, we decided to use an approach like this. I rated the six people from one

to six, my order of preference, and my associate who was doing interviewing rated the people from one to six, No. 1 to No. 6, one being the top choice.

My first choice was not my friend's first choice, but my No. 2 choice was the same as hers. So the No. 2 choice in our interview process became my assistant and became my friend and my full-time employee in the months and years ahead and a key person in my business for a number of years.

At the start of her period of employment she was paid a minimum wage, and after that period of time where we felt that was no longer reflective of her contribution, her salary was increased as were her benefits in due course increased.

The interesting thing is that some three months after I had made the decision to risk the capital and the wage obligations and expand my little business to add this person to my staff—and she appreciated it because as a single mom she had to have an income, wanted to have an income from earning, and did. We exchanged her ability to contribute to my business in exchange for a salary, and it was a great relationship. It continues to be a great relationship to this day. But the fact of the matter is that some three months after making this major decision, we received a letter at my office, and it was a letter from the government of Manitoba.

My secretary and assistant was quite excited to see this letter. She brought it in to me, and we agreed it was very likely a letter of congratulations certainly for embarking on this hiring and job creation program that we had done together. I was quite dismayed upon opening it to find that it was not at all a letter of congratulations; in fact, it was a bill. It was a thing called the payroll tax, a bill for employing.

I was disappointed, and no doubt so too was my new employee when she saw the disappointment on my face thinking that perhaps this would be a disincentive for me to retain her services as it, I expect, was for many Manitoba employers.

Unfortunately though, Mr. Acting Speaker, it seems clear and evident in this House on a regular basis that the lip service paid by members opposite to small business and to job creation is just that and

nothing more. Certainly we will remember, as will many others who attempted to create jobs in Manitoba, the encouragement of the payroll tax and how it reflected the genuine attitudes of the members of that party who put it into place.

My little company expanded with the help of my employees, of course. We together established a company that grew and at one point, prior to entering politics, did have some nine employees. The fact is, it does not today.

I think there is another point that needs to be made. When a company is not profitable or as profitable then decisions have to be made and people have to be laid off. I know that the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) has proposed in this House something akin to an antilayoff bill, an anticlosing-down bill or that type of equivalent idea. It is an antireality bill, in fact, because it misses the whole point of what is business. Business is in fact risk and capital at risk.

When my company began to decline in terms of its profitability, as was natural and an understandable thing in terms of my absence from it, one of the most difficult things I ever had to do in my life was to agree with my employees to part company. I think the reality of that association and the reality of how small business works is that employers and employees are not as would be portrayed sometimes I guess by members opposite, are not at odds with one another. It is not always accurate.

I guess it is understandable, the member for Concordia, having been a union activist and a union representative at a large level of a large union, would take the attitude that these people are adversarial, that employers and employees do not see eye to eye, that they are very different.

They are not, in small business. They are a team. They are part of a team. They work together on a regular basis, and they are very much capable of working together and working in productive manners with one another. I think all too often we see this adversarial attitude creeping into discussions of business when really it does not exist in successful small businesses.

You know, there are perverse incentives, and the member for Osborne (Ms. McCormick) did allude to some of those, the disincentives that are there for people to go back to work, for couples who are on social assistance, I believe she referred to, who if one of them was to go back to work it would cost them money, a reduced income. There are these perverse incentives. They are difficult things to understand or to accept, but they are there.

I share this story with you because I think it is reflective of another perverse incentive that is also real and that is undeniable. My brother is a local farmer, a very successful farmer. I am very proud of him. We grew up on a small farm— [interjection] Well, he is not that far ahead.

We grew up on a small farm which was not small in the days when we grew up on it. It was a half section of land. That was pretty typical of farms in rural Manitoba in those days. My father agreed after my brother graduated from the University of Manitoba with his Ag diploma and Ag degree, agreed to help subsidize my brother and encourage him to get the farm going, and he expanded it. Today, instead of cropping 300-odd acres, he will this year put in over 4,800 acres of crop in rural Manitoba. This year he will employ over 10 people in the operation of the farm. The reality is, he did not have to do that. He did not have to take those risks. There are a lot of risks involved, and in fact I think we all recognize the risks inherent or should recognize the risks inherent in business.

When my brother first expanded and first bought a half section of land, he knew he needed some help. I was not there. I was a good hired man, but I was not available to him, so he had to hire somebody. So he put an ad in the local newspaper, and a gentleman came out to the farm and applied for the job of helping him. When he came out, my brother decided that he would ask him some questions, as is the case in these interviews. So he asked him what his goals were. This gentleman said that his goal was to get six weeks in so he could go back on UI. And see, this is the perverse incentive that we have in our society. My brother said, you know, I appreciate your honesty. I appreciate your being forthright with me, and can you tell me what you expect to be paid? The gentleman said, well, you know, what are you offering? He had been through this before. What are you offering? My brother said, well, how be you work for us for a couple of days, and we will pay you what you are worth? I cannot possibly live on that, he said. I cannot possibly live on that. We have a lot of people in society, I am afraid, who want to be paid more than they are worth, more than they are willing to work for. That is disappointing, and that is part of the perverse incentives that exist in our society today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Order, please. The honourable member's time has expired.

The hour now being six o'clock, this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until tomorrow (Thursday) at 1:30 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, June 8, 1994

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