



Second Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(Hansard)**

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



Vol. XLVI No. 59 - 1:30 p.m., Thursday, October 3, 1996

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, October 3, 1996

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Pharmacare

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

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Yes. The Clerk will read.

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

THAT during the 1995 provincial election, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) promised not to cut health services; and,

THAT the Pharmacare program brought in by the former NDP government was the first in Canada and has served as a model for pharmacare programs in Canada; and,

THAT the Manitoba Pharmacare program has enabled thousands of Manitobans over the years to be able to stay out of costly institutions and to avoid financial ruin due to the high cost of necessary pharmaceuticals; and,

THAT previous cuts to Pharmacare have reduced the budget from \$60 million to less than \$50 million over the past two years; and,

THAT as of April 1996 the provincial government is slashing benefits, effectively putting a tax on the sick and reducing the Pharmacare budget by \$20 million; and,

THAT these cuts more than double the deductible for most Manitobans to over \$1,000 for most families,

effectively ending Pharmacare for the vast majority of the population regardless of health.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier and the Minister of Health to consider reversing their plan to cut Pharmacare in 1996.

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

**Standing Committee on Agriculture
First Report**

Mr. Peter Dyck (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the First Report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Your Standing Committee on Agriculture presents the following as its First Report.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your committee met on Tuesday, October 1, 1996, at 7 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider bills referred.

At the meeting of October 1, 1996, your committee elected Mr. Tweed as vice-chairperson.

Your committee heard representation on bills as follows:

Bill 24—The Agricultural Credit Corporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société du crédit agricole

Mr. Ken Fegol - Private Citizen

Bill 31—The Livestock Industry Diversification and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur la diversification de l'industrie du bétail et apportant des modifications corrélatives

Gary Stott - Manitoba Elk Growers' Association
 Brion Whitford - Keeseekoowenin First Nation
 Ronald Mentz - Manitoba Veterinary Medical Association
 Vicki Burns - The Human Society
 Tracy Hughes - Private Citizen
 James Pearson - People Acting for Animal Liberation
 John Rutley - Private Citizen

Your committee has considered:

Bill 5—The Horticultural Society Repeal Act; Loi abrogeant la Loi sur les associations horticoles

Bill 6—The Veterinary Science Scholarship Fund Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le fonds des bourses d'études vétérinaires

Bill 24—The Agricultural Credit Corporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société du crédit agricole

Bill 30—The Dairy Act; Loi sur les produits laitiers

and has agreed to report the same without amendment.

Your committee has also considered:

Bill 23—The GRIP and Related Programs Termination and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi abolissant le régime RARB et des régimes connexes et apportant des modifications corrélatives

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

MOTION:

THAT the title of the bill be struck out and the following substituted:

“THE GRIP AND RELATED PROGRAMS
 TERMINATION AND CROP INSURANCE
 AMENDMENT ACT”

Your committee has also considered:

Bill 31—The Livestock Industry Diversification and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur la

diversification de l'industrie du bétail et apportant des modifications corrélatives

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

MOTION:

That the following be added after section 37:

The Veterinary Medical Act

Consequential amendments, C.C.S.M. c. V30

37.1 Subsection 20(1) of **The Veterinary Medical Act** is amended by adding “or” at the end of clause (f) and by adding the following after clause (f):

(g) an activity carried out by a person who is not a qualified veterinarian if

(I) the activity is authorized in a regulation made under **The Livestock Industry Diversification Act**, and

(ii) the person carrying out the activity has received training in the activity that is acceptable to the Director of Veterinary Services;

MOTION:

THAT the title of the French version be amended by striking out “sur” and substituting “concernant”.

MOTION:

THAT Legislative Counsel be authorized to change all section numbers and internal references necessary to carry out the amendments adopted by this committee.

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

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister responsible for Multiculturalism): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to

table the Annual Report, 1995-96, for the Multiculturalism Secretariat.

* (1335)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Regional Health Boards Laboratory/Imaging Services

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

We have seen a climb-down on the government's position dealing with regional health and religious boards. We have seen this Minister of Health botch the Pharmacare decisions. He has botched the emergency wards issue that were closed last year at this time. He has botched the privatization of home care and now we are proceeding into, allegedly, a stage of superboards and regional boards in the health care sector.

I would like to ask the Premier, can he table today the plan his government has set forth to provide for lab services, X-ray services and imaging services? Can he table today for the people of Manitoba the standards of those services across Manitoba and the access to those services that the public of Manitoba will have with the changes that the government is proposing?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, laboratory services are indeed important to the ongoing quality of our health care system, and on August 20 we announced that in future there would be a consolidation of laboratory services and the retention of certain of the stat services that are required in our hospitals.

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, I want to table today a memo sent from the Province of Manitoba to all CEOs of rural hospitals terminating the operations of labs and imaging facilities, terminating all the contracts that the government of Manitoba has in place with these facilities.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health, given that we are dealing with some 265 people, we are dealing with thousands of people who use those services in the

province of Manitoba, we are dealing with a termination of all agreements, can the minister today table the plan he has and the government has, can the Premier (Mr. Filmon) today table the plan that they have for the services, the quality of services, the access of services, the standards of services they have in place prior to terminating contracts, potentially for 265 people all across Manitoba, in terms of what it will mean to the patients and people of this province?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, the reason for the changes in health care in Manitoba as anywhere else in this country, as everywhere else in this country, is to use the health care dollars that we have in the most cost-efficient and effective manner possible. We know that laboratory services can be delivered in a more efficient manner. Everyone knows that. I think even the Leader of the Opposition knows that. He also knows the structures that we are putting in place to bring about a more efficient and cost-effective health care system, a system that will provide better services with as many dollars. The honourable member also knows that in Manitoba we are working on all of these things with funding that, at 33.8 percent of our budget, is the highest level anywhere in Canada.

* (1340)

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, the public knows that every time this government fires or closes or changes something, they have absolutely no plan in place, no strategy in place and no consideration of the patients and people of Manitoba. We saw that with the emergency wards. We have seen that with the privatization of home care, so we have absolutely no faith in this Premier (Mr. Filmon) and this government in providing access and quality of services.

I would like to ask the Premier today, what plan does he have in place to ensure that there will be equal access to these services and that we will not have the imposition of user fees, as articulated in their new proposed regional health bill, as they terminate the contracts for public access to lab and technological services here in the province of Manitoba?

Mr. McCrae: The honourable Leader of the Opposition ought not to misrepresent what is contained in Bill 49, ought not to misrepresent the intentions of the

government. Not unlike the discussion we had about home care earlier this year, this time around the NDP is trying again to tell people that user fees and reductions in service are what are in store. We proved that to be wrong before and we will prove it to be wrong again.

Education System Special Needs Review

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): My questions are for the Minister of Education. After several years of staying tuned, to use the minister's terminology of yesterday, for the announcement of a special education review, the test pattern has now cleared and we know that the government has chosen not to have an independent review and there will be no public hearings. But what the press conference also revealed was that this minister did not know how many special needs students she was funding, and her first request to the review committee was to ask them to tell her what programs and services her department has been funding since 1988.

Would the Minister of Education explain this extraordinary lack of accountability in her department?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I do not know what press conference the member was at this morning, but she certainly has drawn conclusions that I find require a lot of creative imagination to conclude.

However, I indicate to the member that a special needs review will indeed be an independent special needs review with widespread public consultation and public input. That review committee will be taking a look at all that we do now in terms of special needs education and will be examining that to see if what we are doing is getting the outcome that we are hoping it is producing and, if not, to tell us then or make recommendations to us as to what needs to be done to improve the situation. They will also be indicating to us what we are doing well and how to build upon those strengths. I think the member has grossly misinterpreted some of the things she thinks she heard this morning.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Speaker, if the minister believes that a committee composed half of civil servants—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Wolseley has been recognized for a

supplementary question. Would you please pose your question now.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister confirm that having undermined special needs by cutting clinicians, cutting professional development for special needs education, cutting school board funding that she is now delaying the receipt of the special education review until 1998, into the next election, and that this whole maneuver has in fact been a cynical manipulation of the hopes and expectations of parents and teachers?

* (1345)

Mrs. McIntosh: I completely reject the preamble the member has put on the record, distorting the facts much as she did the other day when she held her news conference on user fees the minute I got on the plane to go to the ministers' meeting in Newfoundland.

I think the member should understand that this review has been long awaited, it is being conducted or will be conducted by professional consultants, researchers and that the call for proposal deadline is Monday. The steering committee composed of people that have the highest integrity and widest respect in educational circles will provide leadership to that consultant as he, she or they go about their widespread consultation with the people of Manitoba.

This is the member who says we rushed through our studies. This is the member who, on a study of this magnitude, this massive amount of data and information to be compiled, she wishes now to have us rush through. Madam Speaker, to do this job properly and well will require a minimum of 18 months. It does not mean the world will stop in the meantime. We will continue as we have in the last four years. We have in the last three years increased funding to special needs by \$10 million, and our commitment will continue while the review is underway.

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

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister explain how she is able to say in her press conference that qualified special needs students are automatically granted funds when according

to the Lord Selkirk School Division seven students who recently moved into the division were told by her department that they could only be funded if monies were withdrawn from seven other special needs students? What kind of message is that?

Mrs. McIntosh: The member knows, because that was also explained in the press conference, that needs are demand-driven at Level II and Level III, that block grant funding is provided for Level I, that students are assessed at Level II and Level III and if they are deemed to be in need the money is automatically provided up to \$8,000 for Level II, up to \$18,000 for Level III. The more students there are, the more money is provided.

In terms of Level I, some years ago the government moved, and this was a widespread request because of the administrative entanglement that arose out of trying to identify Level I students case by case, that a certain percentage of the population is deemed to be Level I students. Divisions are given block grants for that money. In some cases they do not require it all, hence the request from some divisions if they had more money for Level I special needs than they used, could they use it instead for libraries. We granted that flexibility this year for 20 percent if they were in that situation.

The question has arisen, and we will be asking this question as well, in terms of students who move after the September 30 deadline, should the money that has already been assigned to Division A move with that student? It is a good question; it is one we will be asking the review to examine.

Domestic Violence Review Committee Minister's Meeting

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Of this year's 22 murders in Manitoba, the majority have been women. It is in this context that I want to turn to the Pedlar report. The Pedlar report's history in this Legislature has been a real study in equivocation, that we do know that on Monday, October 2, the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) told this House that she would meet with the Domestic Violence Review Committee, and we do know that on June 25, 1996, Dorothy Pedlar, testifying under oath at the Lavoie inquiry, said, and here I quote: Neither the former Justice minister nor the current minister has made any serious effort to implement the report's recommendations.

I want to ask the Minister of Justice when she last met with her Domestic Violence Review Committee.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, as the member knows and I believe Dorothy Pedlar spoke about, there was a meeting in my office with Dorothy Pedlar, representatives of that committee. Some members of that committee, to my knowledge, have also moved away and were unavailable for that meeting.

The committee at that point felt that because we were into—the inquiry I believe had been announced at that point into the Lavoie case—that there would be a requirement following the reporting of Lavoie for perhaps some kind of continued committee, but no one could foresee what was required at that time. So following that meeting we left it with the understanding that the Lavoie inquiry would continue, and following the receipt of the recommendations we would then look at what was required further.

* (1350)

Pedlar Report Recommendations

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): In view of Ms. Pedlar's very sound condemnation of the minister's response to domestic violence, I want to ask the minister if she will now keep her promise of October 1995 and table in this House documents detailing the implementation of the Pedlar report recommendations along with the schedule of those that have yet to be implemented.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): The member obviously did not follow the course of the Lavoie inquiry and testimony that was given by many Manitobans in that inquiry.

Madam Speaker, we do expect to have the results of that inquiry. However, I am very happy even now to go through our government's record in the area of domestic violence because it is clear, and there was also testimony before the inquiry, that Manitoba is a leader in the area of domestic violence in terms of management of domestic violence not only in Canada but in the world.

I believe Dr. Jane Ursel testified in her testimony before the Lavoie inquiry: I think the data indicates very early on with the Family Violence Court that the message from the bench was very strong and very consistent that there would be serious consequences for family violence. She goes on to say—

An Honourable Member: Pedlar.

Mrs. Vodrey: Well, Madam Speaker, if the members want to speak only about Pedlar, and yet there is vast testimony regarding the steps that this government has taken across this country in terms of meeting the requirements of Pedlar—this government has gone very significantly in meeting those requirements.

Domestic Violence Minister's Consultations

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, since the truth is that the Domestic Violence Review Committee, frustrated with the minister's disrespect, unwillingness to return phone calls and general prevarication, I want to ask this minister which community people and front-line workers she will consult, or will she continue to go it alone?

That is, will there be some consultation—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The question has been put.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I really have to reject all of the comments that the member has put forward on the record, has attempted to portray. Really, I have to wonder where she has been in relation to the testimony at the inquiry.

Madam Speaker, this government, the now-Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), who was Minister of Justice, and myself as Minister of Justice, on behalf of our government have met with community groups, have worked with community groups, have meetings with the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson), who represents those who operate shelters. Our record in terms of the training of Crowns in the area of domestic

violence—in fact, we will be offering a national program in domestic violence in June of 1997.

Madam Speaker, we have set up the first and the only, to my knowledge at this point, Domestic Violence Court in this country. Now, how the member can look at such a concrete step where this province has in fact led not only the country but the world is amazing.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, Madam Speaker. Beuchesne Citation 417 is clear that "Answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate."

Madam Speaker, the minister was asked why she has ignored the committee and has not even answered phone calls from committee members. I would appreciate it if you would ask her to answer that question and not engage in the irrelevant debate that she is currently.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, on the same point of order. I mean, it is very clear in Beuchesne that second and third questions require no preamble, and the first question needs one carefully worded sentence. What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

Madam Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Thompson, I would remind both sides of the House that the minister indeed can choose not to give specific comments relative to the question. I would also remind the government side of the House that answers should be as short as possible and deal with the question raised.

On the point of order raised by the government House leader, I would remind the honourable government House leader that he raised a new point of order and did not speak to the original point of order. On his point of order, I had already spoken and was attempting desperately to get the attention of the honourable member for Osborne to get her to pose her question.

I would remind those members posing questions that no preamble, postamble or midamble is required on supplementary questions.

* (1355)

**Lavoie Inquiry
Department of Justice Meeting**

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice. After a lot of pressure, the minister finally agreed to an inquiry in public into how the justice system deals with domestic violence and, specifically, how it dealt with Rhonda and Roy Lavoie. So the inquiry proceeded in public with examination of government officials and others by five counsel and heard all submissions in plain public view. We have now confirmed after final submissions by the parties in June that the Lavoie inquiry secretly on September 12 met with officials of the minister's department behind closed doors. The public inquiry turned private along the way.

My question for the minister is, would she agree that the evidence given confidentially by several probation officers apparently about their views, the programs, caseloads and statistics go right to the heart of the issue whether her department is able to deal with domestic violence or not, that this is not a private matter between her department and the commissioner but a public concern?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, first of all, let me say there was no pressure from the other side for this government to call the public inquiry. This government made that decision, and the member always attempts to take some credit. It just would be nice if every now and then he would join in and support the decisions of this government.

Madam Speaker, I am not able to confirm that there was any meeting at that point. The justice who is in charge of dealing with this inquiry is dealing with the inquiry in the way that he sees fit. If that was what he had requested or had agreed to, then that is within his ability to determine how in fact he will search out the facts. He does have that independence. If we were to step in to provide any direction as a government, I am sure the member would not agree to that.

Mr. Mackintosh: How convenient to forget our questions and letters demanding a public inquiry.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for St. Johns, please pose his question now.

Mr. Mackintosh: Would the minister, who surely knew that her officials and indeed her department's lawyer, strangely the only counsel who knew about this meeting, were going to meet, explain why she failed to get a guarantee that they testify in public?

Mrs. Vodrey: I have to say, what is he afraid of? What are you afraid of? Unbelievable, Madam Speaker, unbelievable.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. This is not a time for debate; this is Question Period.

The honourable minister, to pose her response.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Speaker, as I said in my first answer, it is up to Justice Schulman, who is conducting this inquiry how he wishes to proceed. Now, if the member opposite wishes to give direction to Justice Schulman, as he appears to be doing here, let him do so. Let us see how it is accepted by Justice Schulman, let us see how the direction of the member of the opposition in terms of how the inquiry should be conducted is accepted by the independence of the judiciary.

Mr. Mackintosh: Would the minister who is the one after all who ordered a public inquiry—that is what The Evidence Act says, that is what her press release says—to avoid any appearance of collusion involving the Justice department, take all steps to ensure that the parties and the public can respond and review to the evidence which was taped, so that we can get this inquiry back on track? Will she show some leadership and make sure that what she ordered is being fulfilled?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Speaker, I am sure Justice Schulman will take the comments of the member opposite from St. Johns into his consideration as he continues his independent public inquiry.

Madam Speaker, it was important for this government to set out the independent review. We have confidence in Justice Schulman to conduct the inquiry. The member opposite has now cast a shadow on the ability of Justice Schulman to do his work. He has questioned now

whether or not Justice Schulman is conducting this inquiry in the appropriate way.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, Madam Speaker, you just earlier admonished the minister for not engaging in debate. For her to turn a question that was asked about matters within her jurisdiction, her staff, their attendance at private hearings into suggesting that the honourable member for St. Johns is making any aspersions whatsoever on a justice matter in the province of Manitoba is not only in violation of Beauchesne's Citation 417 but is absolutely unacceptable coming from this the Minister of Justice.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I will take the matter of the point of order raised by the honourable member for Thompson so that I may research Hansard and report back to the Chamber.

* (1400)

Oak Bank Personal Care Home Government Commitment

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): My question is for the Minister of Health.

There are a great deal of residents and citizens of the Oakbank area that are quite disappointed with this government because this government, prior to the last provincial election, made a commitment in terms of a personal care home facility. Because of the freeze, we have seen that particular project being put on hold. This community has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to see this project get off the ground and were disappointed that this government failed to live up to their commitments.

My question to the Minister of Health is, when is this government going to live up to its commitment and bring in the personal care home facility that led that community to believe was going to be there?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, this is the me-too member for Inkster. He ought to get in line behind the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Findlay).

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Inkster, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Lamoureux: He may have to get in line behind me because he has yet to ask the question, Madam Speaker.

My question to the minister—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

The honourable member for Inkster, to pose a supplementary question.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the residents of the Oakbank area do not treat this as a joking matter. They feel that they were entitled to this personal care home because of this government's commitment. Is this government going to be living up to its commitment to the residents in Oakbank, or are they not?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, we take our responsibilities extremely seriously, but I can tell you that when these projects come back on track like the Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation did and when the Oakbank project comes on track, it will not be because of the urgings of the honourable member for Inkster; it will be because of the good constituency work being done by the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

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

Health Care Facilities Capital Program

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, can the Minister of Health indicate whether or not he is going to be reinstating the capital program that was initiated prior to the last provincial election in the next coming fiscal budget, or is he looking at reinstating it just prior to the next provincial election?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): The last time I was in Oakbank, it was to open up a new service put in place with the assistance of Manitoba Health with our partners in mental health. On that day, federal

member of Parliament David Iftody was there and he was reminded of some of the concerns that we have, Madam Speaker, that bring us to the point where it was necessary to suspend the capital budget. The honourable member for Inkster I think understands a little bit about the kinds of problems I would be raising with Mr. Iftody with respect to funding from Ottawa for things like personal care homes in Oakbank, for things like Boundary Trails hospital project, and for many other aspects of social services in this province.

Laboratory/Imaging Services Privatization

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, earlier in the Question Period my Leader tabled a letter indicating the province is terminating all of the contracts regarding lab and imaging services in rural Manitoba, and the minister indicated he has no plan.

Will the minister be up front with Manitobans, will the minister be honest with Manitobans and advise Manitobans that this plan is to privatize lab and imaging services and the province is negotiating with at least three companies: Dynacom [phonetic], which is associated with KPMG; a Winnipeg consortium; and MDS, which has now employed the late and unlamented member for Pembina, Don Orchard, as one of their consultants to design a private system to provide private services, lab and imaging, to rural Manitoba.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): It seems clear that the honourable member for Kildonan does not feel that his Leader raised the question adequately earlier on in Question Period and wants to take another kick at the cat, Madam Speaker.

The honourable member for Kildonan has legal training. He knows that if you are going to move to a new system of governance on April 1 of 1997, that a number of contractual arrangements have to be—notice has to be given about that. He knows how all of that works—uses a letter written by Dr. Hammond, director of the Public Health branch, with respect to those contractual arrangements as sort of a springboard to ask questions about laboratory services. Well, the honourable member should let us know where he stands. Does he want us to deliver laboratory services in a cost-effective and efficient manner? I will just leave my question there, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, can the Minister of Health explain how the government could terminate all of the existing contracts when the bill that is heartily opposed by almost everyone, MHO, everyone in the system. Bill 49 has not even been passed or considered by this Legislature, and they are going out and terminating the contract and moving towards a system of privatization? How can they do that and have any respect for this Legislature?

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member is clearly wrong to suggest that the implementation of regional health authorities is opposed in Manitoba. He is totally wrong about that. As I have answered in previous questions, concerns that I have invited to be raised have been raised and are now being dealt with. As we move to committee, the changes that will be required to take account of the accommodations that are being made, that is the time for that to happen. The honourable member seems to want to debate in Question Period something that ought better to be left to a committee of this House.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, will the minister now finally admit that the reason for this termination is that the government is negotiating with three private consortiums, including MDS and Don Orchard, Dynacom [phonetic] and KPMG and a private Winnipeg consortium, to take over the operation of all of the lab facilities in Manitoba and privatize it and that is why they are ending all of these public contracts?

Mr. McCrae: Whatever services that might be in future delivered by suppliers other than those being delivered now or assisted by suppliers other than those involved now, whatever happens in the future would be the result of an appropriate and fair process by which those who might provide services would be chosen to do so.

* (1410)

Three Bears Day Care Centre Post-Traumatic Stress Counselling

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupert'sland): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Family Services.

On August 28, an unfortunate incident occurred in Pine Falls with the fire at the Three Bears Day Care Centre

and, at that time, of course, the communities of Powerview, Pine Falls and Sagkeeng First Nation took the matter very seriously and took it hard, to say the least. In total, there were 15 children in the daycare, 14 of them from the Sagkeeng First Nation and one from the community of Pine Falls. Unfortunately, it has been reported to us through the fire chief of the Sagkeeng First Nation, Allen Courchene, that no post-traumatic stress counselling has been made available to these children from the Sagkeeng First Nation.

I would like to ask the minister if she would embark upon a relationship with the Sagkeeng First Nation and work with these children who are going through nightmares and flashbacks of that incident.

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Madam Speaker, I thank my honourable friend for that question because, indeed, it is a very serious issue when a child dies as a result of a fire, especially in the circumstances that were found in the Pine Falls daycare.

I would love the opportunity to sit down with my honourable friend and discuss the issues and the problems that the children are going through. If there is any way we can facilitate working together to ensure that those children are dealt with in the appropriate fashion, I am very prepared to do that.

Replacement of Personal Articles

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupert's Land): Madam Speaker, just one further question. As many know, the Sagkeeng community is hard-pressed for employment. The unemployment rate there is quite high. A lot of these children at the fire lost personal articles, clothing and even shoes. I wonder if the minister would take the responsibility in ensuring maybe that there be a reimbursement of these articles that were lost by these young children.

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): As I indicated in my first answer, I think if my honourable friend would like to share some of the information that he has received, we will very much look at a co-operative approach to dealing with the issues that are facing the children and the families that were involved in the Pine Falls incident.

Workplace Safety and Health Violations

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Speaker, on Monday a construction worker was nearly killed when an excavation site collapsed onto the worker.

An Honourable Member: A grandstanding session . . .

Mr. Reid: Well, the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister) does not take this seriously obviously, Madam Speaker. [interjection]

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Reid: Madam Speaker, is this appropriate behaviour for the member for Portage la Prairie?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Reid: Is this appropriate, Madam Speaker? [interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, Madam Speaker, you have been attempting to ask for order in this House so that the member for Transcona can ask a question and the Minister of Government Services, the member for Portage, is continuing to make personal attacks, make statements that have no place in this House from his seat, refusing to allow you to bring this House to order or the member to ask a very serious question. I would like to ask you to bring the member for Portage to order.

Madam Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Thompson, I want to remind all members on both sides of the House that when the Speaker stands and requests order, the members are to sit in their seats.

An Honourable Member: What did I do?

Madam Speaker: You did not sit down.

I will repeat: Order, please. When the Speaker rises to maintain order, I would request the co-operation of all members. Those members standing are procedurally to sit down and take their seats and all members are to cease the bantering from one side of the Chamber to the other.

The honourable member for Transcona, with a supplementary question—the honourable member for Thompson.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, I raised a point of order relating to the conduct of the member for Portage. I would appreciate your ruling on whether it was acceptable for the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Pallister) to continuously make comments which were basically a personal attack on the member for Transcona, who was attempting to raise a question on behalf of the injured workers of this province.

Was it acceptable for the minister to make those comments, and if it was not, I would like to ask you to call him to order, and if he refuses to listen to your authority, to throw him out of this House.

Madam Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Thompson, it is neither appropriate for the honourable Minister of Government Services nor any other member to continue to debate back and forth once the Speaker is attempting to maintain order.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Transcona, to pose his question.

Mr. Reid: On Monday, a construction worker was nearly killed when an excavation site collapsed onto the worker. Now we have learned that the Kordite Construction Company and its owner, Karl Unrau and family, are involved in six other construction companies, some of which have folded for Workplace Safety and Health violations.

I want to ask the Minister of Labour, who is responsible for Workplace Safety and Health, is it the

policy of this government to allow companies and their owner-managers to escape responsibility for workplace accidents where workers are killed or nearly killed by simply folding their operations and then starting up again the next day under another company name?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Labour): It is the responsibility of Workplace Safety and Health to investigate all such accidents to ensure that as much as possible the workplace safety and health is secure in this province, and those are my clear instructions to that department.

Mr. Reid: Then perhaps, can the minister explain why his department has not and does not cite owners of companies, in addition to the company name, when referring to Justice cases involving Workplace Safety and Health Act violations as is permitted under Section 55 of the act? Why does he not cite the company owners as well?

Mr. Toews: In all cases where they are referred for prosecution, all appropriate individuals or corporations are named, and it is the Crown attorney's decision as to where and how the process continues.

Mr. Reid: I want to ask the Minister of Labour then—the act is very clear, Section 55 says that individuals can be named as they do for working people of the province—why will this minister and his department, as they have cited individual working people of the province, not cite the company owners by name in addition to the company name, when these cases are referred to Justice for prosecution? Why will the department not take that action?

Mr. Toews: Madam Speaker—[interjection] I believe the Leader of the Opposition has a comment to make on the record. If he wants to state—[interjection]

Point of Order

Mr. Toews: On a point of order, Madam Speaker, I believe there is an allegation being made that there is a contributor or supporter of mine that I am favouring, and I would like to—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Leader of the official opposition, on the same point of order.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I did not make that statement. If the minister thought that I did make that statement, I would retract it.

Madam Speaker: I thank the honourable Leader of the official opposition.

* (1420)

Mr. Toews: In respect of the issue, if there is any kind of an oversight that is in the departmental policy, I will ensure—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Could I please implore all honourable members to stop using what might be perceived as unparliamentary language and in particular unkind remarks directed at each other, particularly when a member has been—order, please—particularly when a minister or a member has been recognized to either respond to a question or pose a question. It does nothing to improve the decorum in the Chamber.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Labour, to quickly complete his response.

Mr. Toews: I will review any practices inside the department; if there is some kind of an oversight, I will give the appropriate instructions. I want to assure the House, though, that this department is very concerned about worker safety. Our record in lowering deaths and injuries over the prior administration has been demonstrated time and again, and we want to continue on a path of ensuring that workers are safe in this province.

Health Care Facilities Capital Program

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, in asking the Minister of Health the question with respect to health care, in his last answer he said, well, blame the feds.

Madam Speaker, I would like the Minister of Health to acknowledge that the Minister of Health was fully aware of the decrease in equalization payments prior to the last provincial election, that he is trying to deceive Manitobans when he tries to pass the buck.

Will he take responsibility for the capital cuts? Do not try and pass the buck.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Well, I think we know why we have a problem—because the honourable member makes reference to cuts in equalization payments. The cuts that we have been talking about for the last two or three years in this House have to do with the health and social transfer. So if the honourable member could at least get his understanding of those issues straight before he decides to come and try to do the job of the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Findlay), who is doing an excellent job advocating for his constituency, it would be helpful.

The honourable member wants to raise questions related to our capital program, which I am quite happy to answer with regard to the reason for the things that we have—the things that we do in relation to reduction in federal transfers, in relation to a very significant change and overhaul to the total health system. These are reasons enough to suspend a program long enough to get a handle on what we should be building and how we are going to finance it in the future.

Madam Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Speaker's Ruling

Madam Speaker: I have a ruling for the House.

On September 25, 1996, I took under advisement a point of order raised by the government House leader about a supplementary question posed by the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid). The government House leader stated that Question Period is not a time for debate and that a supplementary question needs no preamble.

Beauchesne Citation 410(7) reads: "Brevity both in questions and answers is of great importance." Citation 410(8) reads: "Supplementary questions require no preambles." I have reviewed Hansard and I do believe that the member for Transcona was too lengthy in his

preamble. Therefore the government House leader did have a point of order.

I would ask members when posing supplementary questions to uphold the spirit of the Question Period guidelines and to put them without preamble or debate.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Canadian National Customer Service Centre

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Madam Speaker, our government, through responsible leadership, nine years of no tax increases, economic initiatives and a balanced budget that protects Manitoba taxpayers, has created a truly attractive business climate. This business climate has recently attracted a new investor in the province. Canadian National has opened a customer support centre in the city of Winnipeg, and this centre is the most up-to-date, high-tech customer service centre in North America.

Canadian National invested \$100 million in information management technology and approximately \$7.5 million in training aimed at improving its customer focus. This massive investment in Winnipeg brings with it employees from 25 locations across Canada. A total of 500 people are now employed at the customer service centre; 400 of these jobs are new to Winnipeg. These new employees have bought houses, goods and services in Winnipeg and will continue to live and raise their families here in this province.

The economic boost to Winnipeg will be enjoyed by a great number of businesses and citizens. The new centre in Winnipeg is the hub of a complex business requiring 24-hour-a-day, seven days per week of co-ordinating everything from order taking to final delivery. The centre handles 45,000 calls per week, varying from billing inquiries to updates on the whereabouts of a load.

On behalf of all Manitobans, I would like to welcome Canadian National's new customer support centre and the new 400 employees to the province of Manitoba. Let us all, Madam Speaker, get behind this initiative and celebrate the tremendous announcement for the future of all Manitobans who will benefit from these jobs and the injection into this positive economy.

Federal Government Policies

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Madam Speaker, I would like to read a statement here that I wrote for myself.

In the last federal election, the Liberals promised Manitobans that they would do things differently from the Mulroney government. For example, they said that a million tonnes of grain would go through the Port of Churchill each year, VIA Rail would be maintained, the GST would be scrapped, CBC would thrive, et cetera. Instead of acting on these promises and doing things differently, the Liberals have simply broken their promises and they continue the Mulroney agenda.

Rural and northern airports are being dumped upon local municipalities. At The Pas, Gary Hopper, the local firefighter, was disciplined and then fired when he spoke against the fire truck being locked and barricaded in The Pas Airport garage. Now the province is also dumping the Clearwater Lake airport on the community of The Pas. Similar stories are being told across the province from the loss of the weather station at Norway House, Berens River and the Thompson control tower to the dumping of Lynn Lake, Flin Flon, Dauphin, Brandon and Gillam, amongst others.

As well, the Liberals have broken a major promise on rail transportation. Protection of branchlines has been scrapped. CNR was sold off to the Americans. Over 11,000 employees have been cut in the last three years with more to be cut in the next few years. The Liberals proclaimed their new Canada Transportation Act on July 1 giving railways the right to sell or abandon any lines as long as they give notice. The next day, privately owned CN announced it was abandoning northern Manitoba, as well as lines in the Interlake and the Parkland. Since that date, the president has said he can sell northern lines as salvage to China or Zimbabwe for \$65 million. In the next three months since the announcement, neither the provincial government nor the federal government has had any success in ensuring that somehow all of the threatened lines will not end up as scrap overseas.

Thank you for listening to me, Madam Speaker.

* (1430)

Youth Business Institute

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): A week ago the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) announced our province's commitment to support business training for young people. The Chamber of Commerce Youth Business Institute will use the money to support business people training in high schools through a partnership combining educators and business people involved in local Chambers of Commerce across the country.

Manitoba's youth remain our greatest resource and our greatest hope for the future. Through support for programs like the Youth Business Institute, we hope to be able to provide high school students with the entrepreneurial skills they will need to launch successful careers. Statistically, Manitoba's economy relies heavily on small businesses. Providing youth with the skills they need now will help ensure that a greater number of viable new businesses will prosper in the future.

Madam Speaker, this government is working to make Manitoba a better place for young people. We are attempting to reform post-secondary education in order to strengthen employment opportunities for our young people. We are investing in business training for our young people. This government cares about the future of this province, and that is why we are investing in our youth and that is why this government will help make Manitoba strong. Thank you.

Island Lake Fish Plant

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupert's Land): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased today to congratulate the people of Garden Hill on the opening of the Island Lake Fish Plant in that community.

This new enterprise, in operation for some six weeks now, has begun hiring as many as 50 local people and is making commercial fishing viable for some 150 fishermen in the area which encompasses Garden Hill, Wasagamack, St. Theresa Point and Red Sucker Lake. This is truly good news for northern Manitoba.

The elimination of the federal freight subsidy for commercial fishing along with a cut in the provincial subsidy virtually ended commercial fishing in many northern communities, including the Island Lake area. With this new plant and sales of processed fish to

markets beyond Manitoba itself, the Island Lake area is showing by example what can be done in the North. The plant cost more than \$1 million to construct and was built without government funding. The plant manager, Barry Barney from Minneapolis, has identified and begun shipping to American markets local pickerel.

The Island Lake area is known in this province as one of the best for pickerel and other popular commercial fish. Regrettably, due to the cost of shipping whole fish, commercial fishing has become virtually extinct.

The Island Lake Opakitawek Co-op is a model that will be looked at by many other First Nations communities in this province. It is worth noting that the plant can process some 3,175 kilograms of fish a day and that there already are plans for expansion. The fact that Ministic Air is owned 98 percent by the Garden Hill First Nation gives the plant and community an added asset in shipping and marketing fish processed at the co-op.

On behalf of all members of the Legislature, I want to state our support and encouragement for this very worthwhile endeavour.

Canadian Wheat Board

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I want to take this opportunity just to express some concern with respect to the Canadian Wheat Board to the government because I do believe the government has been very successful at sitting on the fence on this particular issue, and it is interesting when we have the federal minister who in fact has taken a fairly strong supportive stand of the Canadian Wheat Board. I think this is a time in which provincial Legislatures and particularly the Provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta need to be sending a very strong message to Ottawa in terms of what we feel is in the best interests of the farmers in the province of Manitoba, and on that particular issue, it is really disappointing to see that the government has not articulated as to what it believes is the future of the Canadian Wheat Board.

They have decided to sit back and let people speculate as to what they might think their position actually might be, and I think that is most unfortunate because whatever we can do to reinforce the strength of the Canadian Wheat Board we should be doing, and it is not to say that

we oppose any change within the Wheat Board. The vast majority of farmers would like to see some change with respect to the Wheat Board, but a vast majority of those farmers do not want to see the Wheat Board undermined and this is something which the government appears, because it is being so silent on the issue, to support.

That is definitely not in the best interests of the grain farmers in the province of Manitoba, and that is one of the reasons why we ask this government that if you want to start taking legal action—you were quick to jump up on your feet on the gun registration—why not be quick on your feet and jump up or stand up for the grain farmers. With those very few words, we ask and suggest the government stand up and represent the vast majority of the wheat farmers and reinforce the importance of the Canadian Wheat Board. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

House Business

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): By leave, Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh), that the duties performed by those members who from time to time were appointed to be Chairpersons of the third section of the Committee of Supply during the second session of the Thirty-sixth Legislature, shall be deemed for pay purposes only to be the same as those of the Chairperson of a standing or special committee.

Motion agreed to.

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable minister have leave? [agreed]

Mr. Ernst: Madam Speaker, I noticed some looks of puzzlement on the members opposite. I did clear it with both the opposition House leader and leader of the Liberal caucus here with regard on what was in agreement.

I would like to advise the House that I have called the Standing Committee on Economic Development to sit on Tuesday next, October 8, at 10 a.m., to consider Bills 21, 42, 52 and 53. I will have an announcement a little bit later with respect to further committees, but in the interim would you please call Bills 12, 54, 49, 39, 14 and 15.

Madam Speaker: On a matter of House business, the Standing Committee on Economic Development will sit Tuesday, October 8, at 10 a.m., to consider Bills 21, 42, 52 and 53.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 12—The Barbers Repeal and Hairdressers Repeal Act

Madam Speaker: To resume debate on second reading, Bill 12—[interjection] Order, please. May I just inform the House the order that I heard the government House leader cite the bills, please, and then get clarification as to which order you really prefer? Bills 12, 54, 49, 39, 14 and 15.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Deputy Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, if I can just clarify, I believe we would like Bill 39 called first and Bill 49 called last. Sorry for the confusion.

Madam Speaker: So I will repeat. Bill 39—

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, if we could have a two-minute recess, I will meet with the opposition House leader.

Madam Speaker: I would appreciate that. There will be a two-minute recess.

The House recessed at 2:39 p.m.

After Recess

The House resumed at 2:41 p.m.

Mr. Ernst: Madam Speaker, disregard everything that I said before with respect to the bill numbers and replace it with Bills 39, 14, 15, 54, 12 and 49.

Bill 39—The Pari-Mutuel Levy and Consequential Amendments Act

Madam Speaker: To resume second reading debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey), The Pari-

Mutuel Levy and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi concernant les prélèvements sur les mises de pari mutuel et apportant des modifications corrélatives), standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk). Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? No. Leave has been denied.

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, let me say, to simplify things at the outset, that we intend to support this legislation and think that it achieves some significant increases and accountability and clarity for the public of Manitoba who will understand better now how money flows from the pari-mutuel levy into the racing commission and back to the track in the form of purse support. That, in a nutshell, is the purpose of the bill, because it improves the accountability and clarity of the relationship and avoids the difficulty of Industry, Trade and Tourism having to receive monies in their budget and disburse monies in the form of grants which are not clearly related to the revenue under the current arrangements and therefore are not transparent to members of the public. We see this bill as an improvement, and we will be supporting it.

Having said that, Madam Speaker, I want to raise some concerns about the current state of the racing industry in Manitoba and put some perspective on that. I trust that the government will be aware of all these issues, indeed they may already be aware of them but that they will realize that we are fast approaching the day when this industry may no longer be viable in at least its current form in Manitoba.

To put a bit of perspective on this, Madam Speaker, in 1987 the Woods Gordon Company made a study on behalf of the government of Manitoba, the then-Pawley government, indicating what the economic impact of horseracing in Manitoba was. This study is dated February 1987. It is the only study that is available in the public domain and indeed I believe it is the only study that attempted to quantify the impact of racing on the provincial economy, both in terms of jobs and in terms of the spinoff benefits, as well as the consumption of supplies, feed, racing trailers and that sort of thing.

Madam Speaker, in that year, some 12 years ago, the total wagering in this province on gambling at tracks was \$57.6 million. That was comprised of approximately \$18 million on standardbred racing and \$40 million on thoroughbred racing. The estimates at that time were that

the industry with that level of wagering and prizes worth in total \$5.3 million supported an industry of approximately 2,500 persons directly and indirectly off track and on track.

Madam Speaker, according to the most recent report of the Manitoba Horse Racing Commission, the total wagering at the track level has fallen to \$11 million from \$57 million. And I am sure that the members realize that is a fall of some 80 percent from its level of only 12 years earlier, actually 11 years earlier, given that you count summers. So, in 11 years, we had an 80 percent fall in the amount of wagering.

Now, in fact, what has happened during that time is that off-track betting and betting theatres on races, not in Manitoba but elsewhere in North America, has risen to approximately \$24 million, but those bets and those races could be bet on anywhere. They have really nothing to do at all with the business of operating a racetrack at Assiniboia Downs. During that same time, the purses in actual dollars have fallen from \$5.3 million, as I said earlier, to approximately—it was slightly under \$3 million. Now those are nominal dollars in both cases. They do not take into account the effects of inflation, and so the actual fall in the purses offered is probably more in the order of 60 percent to 70 percent from the level of 1985.

Madam Speaker, an industry that has had an 80 percent decline in the wagering and a 60 percent or 70 percent decline in the purse structure cannot be supporting the same number of people in an economic way today that it was 11 or 12 years ago. Nevertheless, the government is still suggesting that close to 2,000 person years of employment are being generated by this industry. I would respectfully ask the government to investigate those who are putting forward such numbers, investigate the basis on which they suggest that on a fifth of the wagering and less than half of the prizes of 11 years ago in nominal dollars, anything like that level of employment is actually being supportive.

There was a case to be made over the years until recently that we were justified in putting forward some support for purses, and in the past this has been done by rebating the revenues from the horseracing and betting industry through a mechanism put in place by the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism. I want to just review that situation as well. Provincial revenue from the pari-mutuel tax has fallen from about \$5 million

in 1990-91 to just under \$3 million in 1994-95, the last year for which information is available. The government provided the revenue from this tax back to the track in the form of grants and in the form of purse support, in the form of support to breeders and other small grants related to the industry, and up until recently the total support provided to the industry was matched by the total revenues from the industry.

* (1450)

However, by 1994-95, the total revenues to the industry from government exceeded government's revenue from the industry by some \$600,000. To put it another way, Madam Speaker, Manitobans are now directly subsidizing the racing industry, not simply by rebating revenue from it but by making an additional grant in the amount of at least \$600,000 to this industry. We have to begin to ask ourselves, if we have to subsidize an industry every year to an increasing amount, at what time do we then say wait a minute, maybe the public interest is not being well served by these arrangements.

I asked for assistance from the department which they graciously provided through the minister—and I appreciate that—to give me a better idea of what was going on in the background of this industry around North America, to see whether this was a local issue or whether this was an issue across North America. Mr. Johnson completed a—I guess what I would say was a qualitative report, a very broad report that does not have a lot of statistics in it but which was completed in June of 1996 and which the government released. Mr. Johnson in his report makes the case that across North America there have been serious problems of decline in virtually every track, particularly in what might be called the secondary tracks of North America, that this is an industry that appears to appeal to an older sociodemographic group. Young people do not appear to be being drawn into the industry in any significant numbers, and there are many who suggest that there is just no way that this industry can continue to operate in Winnipeg, given the decline in betting of 80 percent over the period of time in question.

So Mr. Johnson's report concludes that this is nothing to do with the quality of the management of Winnipeg's track or of the efforts government has made to keep the industry viable, and I am certainly not suggesting that it is. What I am saying is that Mr. Johnson, I think, is clear

that all across North America tracks are in trouble, and this track is no exception, and that there is no data that suggests that this trend is going to change.

In short, the sociodemographic profile, to summarize Mr. Johnson: The sociodemographic profile of the industry and its fans is of an aging and a shrinking base of support.

I think that government should, in a very forthright way, examine carefully what the true costs of this industry are to Manitobans at this point and, regardless of one's affection for horses and for horse racing and the beauty of the beast, whether or not it continues to make sense to pour significant public dollars into subsidizing what appears to be a dying industry in North America.

Madam Speaker, the scale of public subsidies to this industry is also not widely understood in Manitoba because the government has not been entirely forthright about the betting theatre which was established in Assiniboia Downs. In the Assiniboia Downs I believe there are some 120 VLTs. They are rather a special kind of VLT, called a video gaming machine, but essentially they are not being used for their capacity to do simulcast betting on tracks across America, like Saratoga or any of those other tracks, because it has been found that the demand for that betting is too small to pay for the very high communication costs of the land lines and satellite lines to make the use of the gaming machines for that purpose viable.

So we enabled the Jockey Club to put in a very large betting theatre on the expectation that perhaps the betting in the theatre on races and tracks that have survived, such as Saratoga, would be sufficiently high to offset the costs here and would keep the track viable. But unfortunately after an experimental period of several months, the track found that this was not the case and so they shut down their communication links with the off-track betting into American tracks and into Woodbine, for example.

However, what I think most Manitobans do not realize is that there is a rather special arrangement for the VLTs at Assiniboia Downs. For every hotel and bar that has VLTs in Manitoba, the standard arrangement is that the owner of the bar or hotel retains approximately 20 percent of the net take from the VLTs after prizes have been paid out and after certain operating expenses have

been covered. So the split with the Lotteries Commission is an 80-20 split.

The Manitoba Jockey Club got a very, very special deal from Manitoba in the form of what I think can only be called a hidden subsidy to the track. Certainly the public does not understand that the track is receiving 75 percent of the net proceeds after prizes have been paid out and after operating costs have been covered.

I have been provided with information by Mr. Warner from the Jockey Club that indicates that the net revenue the last reporting year, '94-95, was approximately \$3.8 million, of which the club is keeping 75 percent or, in other words, \$2.8 million. That is a subsidy that I do not think the public of Manitoba is aware is going into this operation. We are favouring this club with an arrangement that any hotel owner or bar owner would dearly love to have and of course we would not think would be appropriate. So we are giving a nonprofit corporation an additional \$2.8-million subsidy to maintain its operations.

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if that were not troublesome enough, it is even more troubling that the Manitoba Jockey Club does not print its annual statements, and I was unable to obtain statements of the operations of the Jockey Club in spite of requests to the minister's office through his staff for those statements. So the public is not only unaware of the additional subsidy of \$2.8 million going into the Jockey Club, in addition to the revenues from the betting taxes, the public does not know how much this club costs to operate. We do not know what it costs to operate Assiniboia Downs. We do not know whether the public is supporting 20 percent, 50 percent or 80 percent of the costs of operating the Downs.

I think that the public has a right to know what the total costs of the operation are and, therefore, what percentage of those costs are being subsidized. I say that to emphasize and to underline what I said at the beginning of my remarks. This is not an issue of being unsupportive of an industry. It is an issue of wanting to know whether that industry is viable in the medium or long term, and the government is not providing the data to allow us to know whether in fact this is the case or not.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have those concerns about the industry that we are proposing to subsidize through Bill 39, The Pari-Mutuel Levy and Consequential Amendments Act. The act itself we support because it increases accountability. It increases transparency in terms of how the monies flow into the government and how the monies flow out. Our concerns are that through this act the public will be aware of about \$3 million flowing into the Horse Racing Commission and flowing out in the form of an annual plan which the commission has to make public.

However, there is an additional amount somewhere in the order of \$3 million of which the public is not aware and which appears to be increasing annually. Secondly, the public is not aware of the total costs of the operation that they are subsidizing through the various grants.

So we support the legislation, but we will be raising and will continue to raise questions about the scale of the subsidy and the viability of this industry and be asking government to be, as it claims to be, transparent and concerned about openness by making public to Manitobans what this nonprofit corporation, the Jockey Club, spends on the operation of the track and what the sources of that spending are.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in concluding my remarks, let me underline that this is the government that seems greatly concerned to have us all know the salaries of those over \$50,000 of income regardless of whether they work in the public or the quasi-public sector. Surely a nonprofit corporation supported to the tune of over \$5 million by government money ought to disclose its operating costs, if not the salaries of its senior officials.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will be asking that the government extend its newfound commitment to transparency to the Manitoba Jockey Club. With those remarks I conclude my remarks on this bill.

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): The minister, when he presented this bill, referred to it as the Paul Edwards destruction bill, so we are very interested in this. We might want to call it the when gambling is not gambling bill. When it is horse racing, that is when we do not call it gambling any longer, and we know the problems we have had with the gambling industry in this province.

This act changes the tax as collected by the Department of Finance into a levy administered by the Horse Racing Commission. This levy is 7.5 percent if a person bets on not more than two horses, and 12.5 percent if the bettor bets on more than three horses.

* (1500)

Why is this being done? In some respects, you can thank Paul Edwards, since he wanted to redirect some of the money that was going to promote horse racing into Manitoba, into more useful areas like education and social services. What a terrible thing. Since this money, which the minister describes as a tax collected on behalf of the Horse Racing Commission, was part of the province's general revenue, it was a good idea. Unfortunately, the Horse Racing Commission did not take kindly to an attack on its sources of revenue.

The new act transforms the tax into a levy administered by the Horse Racing Commission. This means that we will no longer be accounted for in the province's books as either expense or revenue, and those nasty politicians like Paul Edwards cannot get their grubby little hands on it in the next election. The money raised by this levy will now go into a new fund. This Horse Racing Commission will retain 1 percent of this levy for operating expenses. The balance of the levy will be deposited for the use of promoting horseracing in Manitoba. Distribution from this levy will be approved by the minister. It is hard to believe that the government is not rewarding the Horse Racing Commission for its good work during the last provincial election. We also see that what we have is another rainy day fund that the Tories can influence for its use in the next provincial election.

So we know the Horse Racing Commission, we will see them at the committee, and I am anxious to see their presentation to the committee. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading, Bill 39. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 14—The Manitoba Trading Corporation Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey), Bill 14, The Manitoba Trading Corporation Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société commerciale du Manitoba), standing in the name of the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar). No? There is no leave.

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will be supporting this legislation as well. It is essentially a cleaning-up of the current Manitoba Trade Corporation Act that I think is appropriate in virtually all respects. The one concern that I will raise—and the minister, I am sure, is not unaware of it—is that he is providing in this act a change which appears to be consistent across government at this point, and it is a trend which I deplore. I wish all honourable members opposite would examine carefully for themselves, because I think if they looked at it objectively they would not want to see this happen either.

Government increasingly seems to want to contract out audits and this act provides for the option of contracting out, and we deplore the contracting out of audits by government directly. We have said in Public Accounts and in other committee hearings that we recognize that it may be quite appropriate for government to use private auditors from time to time, that the use of those auditors should always be under the direction of the Provincial Auditor. I am sure that those who are experienced in government on the opposite side of the House understand the concern and that is for the integrity of the audit of a given department. There should not be several auditors auditing several pieces of a department. Any desire to have contracted-out audits is a matter of policy; That is not the issue. We do not agree with that policy, but government has the right to make such policy. We do not argue with that.

What we do suggest is that it is inappropriate for government to do so directly by its own Order-in-Council. If it wishes to instruct the Provincial Auditor to use private auditors in some proportion or in some particular areas, let the government give that direction, but let the audit be under the clear scrutiny of the Provincial Auditor for accountability, for consistent

standards and so that the ability of the Provincial Auditor to have a complete overview of government and its financial activities is unimpaired.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the concern about other issues in the act can be raised at the committee stage and they are more of a technical nature, and with those comments I will conclude.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading of Bill 14. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 15—The Tourism and Recreation Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey), Bill 15, The Tourism and Recreation Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur le tourisme et les loisirs), standing in the name of the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar). Stand?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Leave has been denied.

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Mr. Deputy Speaker, to be clear as well on this act we will support this legislation. In conversations with the hotel association and with other tourism groups and with the department, it appears that the purpose of this legislation is largely to catch up existing legislation with existing practice and to remove what is essentially some red tape that has not been adhered to for some years in any case. I am never happy when we find that government has not been adhering to its own acts in recent years, but I understand the concern here.

Essentially, the current act regulates the building and operation of what are now called transient accommodation facilities, in other words, this act provides for the licensing of all motels, hotels, tourist camps, lodges, outcamps, campgrounds, et cetera, but in practice the Minister of Tourism has not issued such

licences for some five years now, and in 1993 the responsibility for licensing these facilities was transferred by Order-in-Council to the Minister of Natural Resources.

Bill 15, in effect, eliminates the licensing requirement for all accommodations other than those that the Minister of Natural Resources has particular concern for, namely hunting lodges, fishing lodges, or outcamps. In effect, that is the only kind of accommodation that would be covered. The definition of what constitutes a lodge is handled through an interdepartmental committee. I spoke with people involved in that and I am satisfied that that seems like an appropriate mechanism.

The one concern that I have, and I will ask the minister to elaborate on this issue in committee. I hope the Minister of Natural Resources will be at that committee, and that is that there do not appear to be any sections dealing with the licensing of guides or what the act calls outfitters. Presumably, it is the quality and the skills of those people on which the quality of the lodge that is being licensed depends, so we will be asking for some clarification about standards for the licensing of guides.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with those comments, I would call the bill.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading Bill 15. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 54—The Municipal and Various Acts Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), Bill 54, The Municipal and Various Acts Amendment Act (Loi concernant les municipalités et modifiant diverses dispositions législatives), standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), who has 11 minutes remaining. Leave? Leave has been denied. And standing in the name of the

honourable member for Transcona. No? Leave has been denied.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to put a few comments on the record about The Municipal and Various Acts Amendment Act which deals with the governance of all municipalities and cities in this province.

The intent of this bill is to completely update an act which has not been overhauled for close to a century. The bill streamlines municipal government decisions so as to relieve the province of its dealings in municipal affairs while, at the same time, giving the province greater leverage over municipal spending.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I say this, there are major changes involved in this bill and one that affects all municipalities. There was an awful lot of work done prior to passing this bill. There was a committee struck to review the process back in 1983, and many, many meetings were held around the province. Over 200 people made presentations, so as you can tell, there are many issues that are being addressed here, but when we were looking at reviewing this bill and being in contact with municipalities, there were very little comments made by the municipalities. It has only been in this last couple of weeks that municipalities and councils have started to raise concerns with various aspects of the bill. It is only understandable that there will be parts of the bill, in such a large bill, that the people within the councils do not agree with, and they will find some problems with it.

* (1510)

So I would urge this government to recognize that there will always be concerns, and even though they have made major amendments, this will have to be an ongoing process. I am sure that there will be many amendments that will come and many presentations that will come at the committee hearings, but it is one that will have to be ongoing. The government will have to recognize that as each year goes along there will be issues, and I am sure that we will see many amendments brought forward to this legislation as years go on. This would be something that we would expect, to recognize the concerns that are put forth by the many groups across the province.

The major changes of the bill include reducing the number of types of municipalities from five to two, urban and rural, and converting LGDs to urban or rural municipalities. That is one of the areas where there are some concerns. The municipality that I represent, the majority of it is the LGD of Mountain, a council that I served on for many years as a councillor, and they have put forward concerns that they have with the result of this legislation. They are concerned with the financial impact on an LGD being forced to incorporate as a rural municipality, and in the words of the people from the LGD of Mountain and in other LGDs, this will be devastating.

The major issues that cause grave concern are the withdrawal of the grant in aid to LGDs. I am sure you understand that populations within an LGD is, at most times, a very large area with a very small population. At the present time, the government provides a 50-50 program to help cover the costs of the roads within the LGD. With the shift to a municipality, there will be a loss of this funding, and services on these roads would have to be cut dramatically if provincial funding is withdrawn, eventually resulting in a deterioration of the road system. I think that that is something that we look at.

As a province, we recognize that not everybody has the same tax base, and we have always looked at equalization and providing equality for people across the province and those people who live in sparsely populated areas. By taking away this grant in aid from the LGDs, we will see a deterioration in the quality of services. Also, the next concern that LGDs have raised is the transfer of responsibility of main market roads to municipalities. Again, when you look at a municipality and the amount of roads—I will give you an example of the LGD of Mountain where there are approximately 83 miles of market road. In order to estimate the possible financial impact of transferring main market roads to the LGD, an average cost per road of \$852 is what they arrived at by dividing the total of the 50/50 budget over a number of 50/50 roads.

At the rate of \$852 per mile, the cost of maintaining these main market roads would be well over \$70,000, and again much more than could be expected to bear by the people with a very small tax base. What the result will be is either deterioration in the quality of roads or a

dramatic increase in the property tax for the people living in those areas.

The other concern of people living within the LGDs, as a result of this bill, is the transfer of the responsibility of providing social assistance. Again I will use the example of the LGD of Mountain where they were levied close to \$20,000 for social assistance in 1995. As they were unable to obtain accurate figures with respect to the costs of the province for the provision of a social assistance to the ratepayers, it is necessary to estimate the potential impact based on rather sketchy information.

At the time of the inquiry, within the LGD there were 69 people on general assistance. The fund ranges from \$200 to \$300 for a single family and up to \$1,000 per family. The amount varies according to the size of the family. Again it is estimated that if this was shifted completely over to the LGD it would be a cost of close to \$250,000 annually, again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a level of funding that is virtually impossible for an LGD to carry out.

The other concern is the vast areas of unproductive, vacant Crown land which are exempt from taxation. Again I think this is a concern within this LGD. I only use this as an example. There are over 240,000 acres of Crown land within the LGD. These lands are exempt from taxation, therefore add nothing to the tax base of the district. The district does, however, have to maintain the roads around these vast pockets of nonrevenue-based land.

We are therefore in the opinion that the provincial government should be required to pay grant in lieu of taxes on these lands. That is something that the government should consider. In these large areas where it is the government that owns large tracts of land, it should be considered that there be grants in lieu of taxes. Again, LGDs are the ones where there are large areas of uninhabited land, Crown land, again where the tax base is very small, that there will be a problem.

The final concern that they have put forward is the possible transfer of responsibility of administering LGD lands presently administered by the Crown back to the LGD. The Crown currently administers a considerable amount of land owned by the LGD of Mountain and

charges 10 percent for the rental value of these services. If these lines have to be administered locally, the costs will be considerable.

These are the concerns of the LGDs, and I hope that when we get to committee, we can discuss these in more detail and look at ways to address the concerns so that we do not create disparity between people who are living in LGDs and people who are living in larger areas where there are higher populations. In areas where there is a low tax base, combined with geographic conditions, the potential increase in costs and loss of revenues could decrease the ability for this LGD and other LGDs to operate at a level and provide adequate service for the people. Because people live in areas that are sparsely populated, they should not have to deal with poor road systems, should not have to have poor drainage systems, and the government has to recognize that in these remote areas there is a responsibility of government to bring some equity between the people.

That is the concern that is faced by some of the LGDs, and I am sure the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) has heard concerns from others. I hope that when we get to committee we will be able to rectify these problems or discuss them further, or, as we go along and see that these problems are overwhelming for these areas, that the government is prepared to put forward further amendments to deal with this.

Another issue in the bill is that an elector who is a property owner or a resident in Manitoba may now be a candidate in a municipal election. Traditionally, it has been that if you are a landowner, you may vote in the area but you could not run for municipal council. This is now changed, and there has been some concern raised by some municipalities that if people do not actually live in the area but are landowners, they could have a different interest. For example, somebody might own land in an area, but not live there during the winter months, so if he or she is on council, they may not be that interested in keeping roads open or keeping the roads maintained at a level where they will not deteriorate during the spring months. So that person's interests will be a little different from a person who lives in a municipality full time, and it is one that has been brought forward by a few people.

* (1520)

Again, when I have talked to people on councils, they have not thought this to be a big concern, but as one that has been cited by a few municipalities as having the risk. I guess it would be a bigger risk in areas where you have a large number of summer cottagers whose interests are more in providing services during the summer months but they are not so interested in perhaps winter maintenance of the roads or keeping roads open. So there is a bit of a risk that is there by opening up the candidacy to people who are not residents but who are property owners in the area.

Municipalities will have new powers to promote economic development and share taxes and services with other municipalities. As well, there will be greater control over financial administrations and, in particular, taxation. The council structure, as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will also change in that it must have a minimum of five or a maximum of 11 councillors. Here is one change as well that is quite different: now the head of council or a reeve in the municipality or mayor in a city will now be able to vote on motions, and it will be required to have a chief administrative officer appointed to council who will report to the minister.

Again, this is quite a change, because it was always the role of the reeve or mayor to chair meetings and act impartial on issues and only vote if it was necessary with a tie vote. Now the person at head of council will have the ability to vote and, certainly, that has not caused much concern.

The changes, there will now be more cities in Manitoba because the city will now consist of 7,500 people, and that is a change. I guess my honourable friend from Dauphin, with this legislation passed, will live in the city of Dauphin rather than the town of Dauphin. I am not sure what the implications of that will be but, certainly, it will put the towns of larger population on the map. I think that will certainly not be a disadvantage to those towns of at least 75 people—7,500 people. My goodness, if it was 75 people even the village of Cowan would be classified, but that is not going to happen; 7,500 people will now be a city, and I do not think that is a disadvantage. It certainly will probably enhance and it will help the province of Manitoba to say that we can have more cities in Manitoba. I understand that now with this passing, we will have seven cities in Manitoba. I do not see that as a major problem.

In the bill also, there is an increased public access to municipal documents. Almost all meetings are to be open to the public and public hearings and public meetings processes to be clarified. There will be a new municipal Ombudsman.

The part of opening up public meetings more to the public, I see that as an advantage. I really do not see why councillors should have to have private meetings unless they are discussing issues of personnel and things that must be held discretely. But there have been problems in the past where it has been difficult to get access to documents and meeting minutes but certainly not in the municipality where I come from. I can tell you that at the present time almost every council, the LGD of Mountain and the R.M. of Swan River, the Town of Swan River, most of those publish their minutes in the local paper, so I do not see that as a problem. Certainly, in areas where there have been difficulties with having access to council minutes, this is a plus and one that we do not see as a problem.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the issues that was raised with me in one of the municipalities was that the municipalities will have more flexibility and be able to operate more efficiently. However, at the present time, the department does the audits for municipalities, and now they are given an option as to whether or not they want to do that audit, or else they can go to an outside auditor, and one of the municipalities saw that was a bit of a concern. However, the department will continue to supervise and monitor financial matters to safeguard a strong financial position for Manitoba municipalities. It was raised at one of the municipalities as a concern, but mostly the concern was that this was such a big bill and people would have to wait until the bill was enacted, and they would see a little bit more how it was operating.

There is another section of the bill that says that where a municipality is in financial difficulty it must submit to the supervisor, by an officer of the minister, their financial plan and proposals and proposed taxation and shall comply with the instruction of the supervisor. A municipality in danger of insolvency can be put into receivership by the minister. So there is still the department overseeing the activities of the municipalities, and those that are not handling their finances properly can still be brought under the supervision of the

department and be dealt with and given the necessary guidelines that they need.

This can happen. Many times councillors do not all have the expertise, and they may have run into difficulties with their staffing. They need the supports of the Department of Rural Development, and it is right that there should be that supervision available.

* (1530)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the section that has caused concern and discussion around the province is a proposal for annexation. Annexation need only come from council without solicitation for public support. The setting up of a framework for amalgamation and annexation may create problems for the city of Winnipeg which is already losing part of its tax base when you see breakaways like the community of Headingley. As we look at having more cities in the province, people looking at annexing from councils to improve their tax base, we have to be sure that this section of the legislation does not create problems for urban centres versus rural centres.

The exercising of by-law powers includes dealing with any development activity or industry in different ways including establishment of classes and systems of licensing and permits. The impact of this power will depend on the strength of the provincial legislation in areas of environment, workplace health and safety and labour laws.

Again I want to say that as we see more and more economic development in rural Manitoba and opportunities for industry growth and looking for value-added industries and particularly increase in livestock production, we have to be sure that the proper laws and by-laws are put in place to ensure that all people who live in rural communities have the opportunity to benefit from economic development but at the same time we do not sacrifice one group of people who are living in a rural centre against those who are living in an urban centre.

Under this legislation, economic development grants cannot directly or indirectly reduce municipal or school taxes. Under this legislation there will be the opportunity to raise money for economic development, but it must not be at the risk of reducing municipal or school taxes.

In terms of taxation, a municipality may apply local improvement or special levy taxes on the basis of property value, rent value or unit value, frontage areas or any amount for each business or parcel of land. The range of options may not lead to inequitable distribution of taxes. Supplementary taxes may be added after the tax roll for the year has been completed. Where a municipality owes money to a creditor and must borrow that money, a municipality must repay the borrowed money through taxation, so there are safeguards put in this legislation in this section.

Another area, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the area that is addressed in here and that is the role of the Land Titles Office. The role of the Land Titles Office has been removed from the sales tax process, where the owner's right to redeem property and the municipalities prior right of purchase will no longer exist. Where a parcel of land is required for local improvement the owner must give it as a gift or give up part of his claim for compensation.

Another area that is of concern and one that was raised with some of the municipalities that I talked about, talked to during discussion on this bill, is the liability. Under this bill the liability of the municipalities is quite limited. For example, there is little or no liability for failing to conduct a building inspection, for loss or damage on a municipal road or for failing to do something that it has been mandated to do in good faith or not to do.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

So, Madam Speaker, there are issues that are within this bill that cause some concern but, on the whole, I want to say that we support the bill. It is time that The Municipal Act was looked at. Certainly a bill that has been in place for close to or almost a hundred years should be reviewed. I think that there has been a lot of discussion, but I also think that because it is such a large bill it is very difficult to pick out and understand all the detail in it. Certainly we will look to hear what municipalities have to say as they make their presentations. There have been a few issues raised by UMM and MAUM with respect to this bill, and I am sure that they will be making presentations.

I am sure that, it is my understanding in fact that there have been several of these issues pointed out to the minister, and we will be seeing amendments brought forward to the committee stage. But I guess what I want

to also say is that the government will have to be ongoing, continue to recognize that there will probably be amendments that have to be followed up on in the following year, and I urge you to do that.

Again, outlining the concerns that I have, and that one is the potential loss of revenue to rural Manitoba, with a loss of the special assistance that has traditionally been paid to LGDs. This will be a large loss and a large burden to the people that live within the LGDs. If there is not a way defined, how we are going to provide those extra services within the LGD, we will see a deterioration in the quality of life for those people.

The limitation on economic growth in rural communities set by the estimated expenditure formula, which does not include borrowing or having a watchdog of the minister enforce this formula.

Madam Speaker, there is the potential mishmash of development in industry by-laws in the absence of strong provincial legislation. As I said, we hope that we will see growth in rural Manitoba. There have been changes and there are some parts of the province that will see growth but, if we do not have strong by-laws, we run the risk of setting one group of people against the other, and we have seen that. For example, we have just recently seen it in the Interlake with the expansion of the hog industry in that area. Without proper guidelines or proper enforcement, we have seen one group of people in the community opposed to the other.

So, Madam Speaker, we are prepared to let this bill go to committee and hear the presentations and bring forward amendments that we have heard from other people. With those few words, I will close my comments.

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise and speak about The Municipal Acts and Various Amendments Act, Bill 54. This bill is as a result of extensive consultation throughout the province with almost every stakeholder that would have something to say about The Municipal Act. I agree with the government that The Municipal Act, as it currently stands, is an unwieldy document that does not reflect today's realities and, in principle, agree with many of the changes that are being proposed in the act.

I would urge the government to listen to our concerns when the bill gets to committee stage. I believe that the amendments will be forthcoming at committee stage and I hope that the government will be open to listening to those amendments so that The Municipal Act can begin its life as well thought out and well put together as possible. The Liberal Party supports the principle of producing a new Municipal Act, and we will be very interested in what the committee hearings engender when this bill goes to committee.

I however do have major concerns in one area of The Municipal Act, namely, within the section that deals with the formation and dissolution, amalgamation and annexation of lands that are currently within the city of Winnipeg boundaries. My reading of Bill 54 shows that in order to form, dissolve, amalgamate or annex lands in the province of Manitoba, whether they be the municipalities or the city of Winnipeg, there are three possible scenarios.

One scenario is a scenario where one municipality wants to form, dissolve, amalgamate or annex portions or all of another municipality or a municipality wants to be created in its entirety.

* (1540)

The second scenario is if the City of Winnipeg wants to annex or amalgamate land outside the city of Winnipeg. The process and procedure for that part for the city in this situation is exactly that of municipality to municipality. In Section 4(2), the city is treated as a municipality for the purpose of annexing lands outside the city of Winnipeg. So that is the second scenario.

The third scenario is the one that is causing me and causing members of City Council in the City of Winnipeg some serious concerns, that is, if a municipality outside the city of Winnipeg wishes to annex land that currently is in the city of Winnipeg boundaries. There is a very different procedure in place for that third scenario. It is not only a different procedure, Madam Speaker, but it is a very much shortened procedure. The procedure for the first two scenarios is very clearly laid out in 10 or 15 pages of Bill 54. We do not, at this point, upon first reading of this, have any problems with this. As a matter of fact, it appears to us to be a clarification of the process and simplification of the process. The proposals to

amend or dissolve or annex or amalgamate municipality to municipality or the City of Winnipeg to amalgamate or annex a portion of land can be initiated by the minister, which is a new thing in the act by the council of a municipality or by a petition signed by at least 30 percent of the affected municipalities.

The city of Winnipeg, under Bill 54, is open to rating by any of its surrounding municipalities who may wish to amend their own land and take in parts of the city of Winnipeg. There is virtually no protection for the city of Winnipeg. But in the section dealing with the city of Winnipeg, the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council may refer the matter to the Municipal Board and may request the board to consider and make special recommendations on matters that cabinet considers relevant to propose alteration.

So cabinet can decide even after a study has been done that there are certain elements that should be looked at by a municipal board. The cabinet does not even have to take this proposal to the Municipal Board. A huge chunk of the city of Winnipeg land could be annexed to a rural municipality with, if they are all present and accounted for, 18 cabinet ministers making the determination, with no input from the people who are mostly affected, i.e., the residents in the city of Winnipeg. Because there is so much legislation that has to be drafted this spring and it is such a complex piece of legislation, perhaps governments simply made an oversight. I am hoping that the oversight will be addressed in committee hearings, so we will be welcoming this bill to proceed to committee. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading of Bill 54. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 12—The Barbers Repeal and Hairdressers Repeal Act

Madam Speaker: To resume debate on second reading Bill 12, on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Education and Training, The Barbers Repeal and Hairdressers Repeal Act (Loi abrogeant la Loi sur

les coiffeurs et la Loi sur les coiffeurs pour dames), standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?
[agreed]

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, I am glad to be able to have the opportunity to put a few words on the record about this particular act. The Barbers Repeal and Hairdressers Repeal Act is a very short act. It contains three sections which essentially cancel, repeal The Barbers Act and The Hairdressers Act.

What the government proposes to do, as I understand from the minister's speech in introducing this, is to eliminate these two particular acts and to substitute regulations in other areas of her department, in Apprenticeship and in Workplace Safety and Health areas.

I think the basic problem for any legislation—and by this I include all members of the Legislature not just side of the House—the basic difficulty for any member of the House in looking at this bill is what will replace it? We are being asked essentially to—I do not know what the right analogy is, but perhaps cut off our right hand and believe that the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) is going to replace it and regraft it in some magical manner in a way that will be acceptable.

There are probably other analogies I could use, but that one I think perhaps gets to the heart of the matter because the minister is cutting out both of these bills and both of the provisions for training, for regulation, for apprenticeship and in some cases for health and safety concerns that were contained in those acts.

I have spoken to a number of people in the industries in this area. I have spoken to teachers who deal in this area as well, and there is a great deal of interest. It is certainly true, as the minister said, that there is desire to change both of these bills, and we are quite willing to accept that. There has been a great deal of interest I think for the past four years in trying to find new ways of pulling together regulations for apprenticeship and for training and for licensing for people in an industry which has changed considerably since these bills were passed. It is unlikely now that people are trained exclusively as

hairdressers or as barbers. They tend much more frequently, not only in Manitoba but across the country, to be trained as a hair stylist and to be able to work in salons which cater to both male and female.

There is also a growing body of services known as personal services or as esthetician services, which at the time these bills were passed were not particularly well established as businesses, but indeed they are across the country a growing area of business. It is one that has been informally governed by parts of The Barbers and Hairdressers Act and by add-on regulations from time to time. In accordance with these changes, there has also been new curriculum developed both in the public schools which teach this area as well as in the many private schools and private colleges across the province. So it is an area that has been changing. I think it is useful for the minister to have brought this to our attention. I think it is a good idea, in conjunction with the industry and with the educational facilities, to begin to look at the changes that we need in apprenticeship and in training and in health and safety provisions in this area.

Every one of us, at some point or other, does go to a hairdresser or to a barber. Some people perhaps much more so than in the past, but it is something that does affect most members of the public. So this is not a bill affecting a small number of people; it is a large industry. It has one of the largest areas of apprenticeship in the province, and it is one which affects the safety and concerns of a broad section of the public.

I would like to congratulate the minister for looking at these bills. I know that the trade committee has been looking at the regulations, the proposed regulations, for a number of years. Indeed, some of them have told me that the regulations have been under discussion for the last four years. I know that in recent months the Trades Advisory Committee has been looking more intensively at specific regulations. I know that even in the last few weeks those meetings have been carried on and the draft regulations have been put before them and before other members of the industry, and this is a very useful procedure. I understand that this goes on in many areas of government drafting, that those kinds of proposals and draft regulations should come before those kinds of committees to get the widest range of advice.

The difficulty, Madam Speaker, for any member of this Legislature is to cut off their right hand and to imagine that the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) is going to regraft it to perfection. The problem with this legislation is that we do not know what will replace it. I have tried to find out. I began this odyssey in the summer by talking to people in the industry. I then, in the middle of August, phoned the deputy minister for post-secondary education and said, look, this is a bit unusual. You are asking us to approve a bill that eliminates a whole series of important regulations in education apprenticeship, health and safety, and you are not giving us any idea of what will replace it. No sensible person would agree to those conditions, and I would anticipate that we are all sensible people in this Legislature and would expect that there would be some discussion of the principles of the regulations.

The deputy minister said to me, well, that is something you are going to have to ask the minister on. So I wrote to the minister. On September 3, I wrote to the minister and said there are concerns in the community that I have heard from barbers, in particular, but also from others who are concerned about what is going to replace these bills, when they will replace them, and what the principles will be that underline those regulations. I asked the minister for some discussion, the opportunity to discuss or to look at or to examine some of the principles behind the new regulations. I did not anticipate that the minister would give me the regulations. That is not a normal procedure in this House, although perhaps it would be a useful one, but I did ask for a discussion or something that I could look at on the principles which the minister was going to use in addressing the changes in this bill, but I did not receive them. It did not surprise me. This is not a government which is known for accountability or for its willingness to share information or to provide information to all members of the Legislature, so I was not surprised.

* (1550)

Even to get that letter, I think I had to phone the other deputy minister to say, look, it has been two weeks and this letter has not been answered. But when the minister did answer the letter, she did say that one of the principles that had concerned me—that was the issue of the grandfathering of existing barbers' licences—she said

that that had been recognized and that the government would be incorporating some principle of grandfathering of existing barber and hairdresser licences into the new bill, or into the new regulations, I should say.

I think that is very good. I intend to table that letter at the committee hearings because otherwise there is nothing on the public record that suggests what the minister intends to do in replacing this bill. It is important I think to maintain that public record and for a minister to be accountable to many of those people, particularly outside Winnipeg. Many of those people are now going to be brought under the provisions of regulations, which most of them have had no input and most of them really have not had the opportunity to discuss them in a broad public context. Many of them are concerned about the status of their licence and the status of the future of their particular salon, because many of the holders of licences are also salon owners and small business owners. So this is their livelihood that we are talking about.

I was not surprised. Well, no, that would not be true. I was not surprised, but I was disappointed that the minister did not see fit to discuss with the public, with the opposition, with the Legislature, the principles, just the principles, behind which she would be developing the regulations for the new barbers and hairdressers regulations. As I say, I was not surprised because this has not been the most accountable government in my experience. It is a government which refuses to be accountable for the millions of dollars, and I say millions advisably, which have been poured into the Workforce 2000 fund.

In the region of \$8 million a year has been given to private companies, and the government refuses to provide information on the educational plans that those companies have followed. I have asked for this a number of times. I have asked for it through Freedom of Information. I have appealed the denial that I have been given on Freedom of Information and the government has been able to continue to pour \$8 million a year into Workforce 2000 without any accountability for the educational plans.

Yet, this is a government which prides itself on accountability on public education, which wants to have accountability in curriculum but only from the public

sector, which wants to have accountability in so many areas of accounting procedures, but when it is called to account itself, called to provide information on the principles which affect the livelihood of so many people across Manitoba, there is a complete silence from this government.

The government really feels it need not answer, and one need not look any further than Question Period today and the disdainful and arrogant manner in which this government dealt with questions. I thought it was quite striking. I was really appalled at the attitude of the government to so many of the questions and, in a sense, it really concentrated in a short period of time the kind of attitude which we have seen growing over the last few weeks, the demonstration of this over the last few weeks by this government.

It is no wonder, Madam Speaker, that there is a growing disdain for politics amongst the general public. When people turn on their television and they show a government time after time which refuses to answer questions, which deals in name-calling of people who dare to answer questions, then I think you have a problem. The cynicism which this government deals with, with public information and accountability, is something which does not, I think, stop at the borders or the doors of this House. It is something which has a much larger public impact, and I urge the government to consider that.

Madam Speaker, we have a number of concerns about this bill. In the absence of any information it is difficult to phrase the questions, but I hope to do so at the committee hearings. There are questions of health concerns, the area of personal services, particularly manicuring, but other areas, where there are metal tools which are used, then it becomes very important, I think, that we know both in principle and preferably in specifics the issues of regulation that the minister is going to be developing.

I am concerned about the impact of the possible regulations, what might be in the minister's mind about curriculum and the number of hours that are to be required for apprenticeship and the order in which those hours are to be served, and the way in which those hours are to be related to the actual practical apprenticeship on the shop floor. Those are very serious concerns for the hundreds, and there literally are hundreds of apprentices

in hairdressing and barbering across the province. They are of concern to the public schools as well as to the private colleges. There are a number of public schools which teach hairdressing and barbering and manicuring, and if the government intends to change the order of curriculum, if it intends to change the number of hours of curriculum, if it intends to change the relationship of formal curriculum to the practical curriculum, then indeed it does have impacts upon school timetabling and upon the opportunities that are available for young people in public schools.

It also has an impact upon the nature of apprenticeship, and in that case I think there are people again across the province, the small-business people, who are the owners of the salon and who are the journey people who supervise the new apprentices. Those kinds of regulations will have an impact upon how they run their business.

We were interested in the inspection of apprenticeships. We know that very little inspection of apprenticeships has gone on in this province for many years now, been a reduction in inspection. I do not know, for example, how many barbers and hairdressers we have who have been inspected in the last number of years. We do not know that. There is no reporting system for that. We do not know how the apprenticeship system has been or will be inspected. Again, on the perspective of both the private and the public colleges, it is important that there be a strong link between the formal written and academic curriculum and the practical curriculum that takes place on the shop floor. There need to be strong links between those educational institutions, private and public, as well as the small businesses, the owners and the supervisors of the apprenticeships. We have no idea whether the minister is going to change that. We do not know how she is going to change it because the minister has refused now through her department and in person through letter on three occasions to offer any information at all.

We are concerned about the grandfathering of people who have barbers' licences. If barbers' licences are to be repealed, then those who have existing barbers' licences or who perhaps have come from other countries and are working as barbers, then their livelihood is in jeopardy and they are very much concerned. Several of them, in fact, have contacted a number of my colleagues. So I was

pleased, and I will repeat again for the minister's benefit how pleased we were that she put in the principle in her letter to me that she would maintain the principle of grandfathering of existing barbers' licences. We have no way, of course, of knowing how that will be done or when it will be done, and I hope to raise that with the minister at committee and to table, as the only piece of public evidence that we have, that this is the government's intention. I will table the letter that she wrote to me.

We are also concerned, Madam Speaker, about training. Many of the sections of the existing barbers and hairdressers acts deal with the hours of training that are required for an apprentice and for a journeyman and for the licensing in the opening of a salon. We are concerned about how those will be changed.

It is clear that the government wants to change it, it is clear that the industry wants to change it. Without any evidence, without any information, without any accountability on the part of this government, we have no way of knowing whether in fact the government is going in the same direction as the industry wants. I think that would be crucial.

* (1600)

One of the most important elements—not the only one, but one of the most important elements—is whether the format of apprenticeship, the format of training and the format of licensing are acceptable to existing schools, colleges, and businesses. So the minister's refusal to provide evidence is an important part of our concerns with this legislation.

Madam Speaker, we would all like to believe the minister when she says, trust me. But there have been so many opportunities for us to trust this minister where, in fact, I think we have been so disappointed. I had hoped, for example, today for an independent review of the special needs education proposals, but we find what the minister means by an independent review is a review which is staffed 50 percent by her own civil servants, which I do not think is what the general public views as an independent review.

I think many of the families had trusted the minister to have public hearings, to provide the opportunity for them

to speak publicly to each other, to have a public conversation across Manitoba about the needs of special education and the difficulties that both parents and families were—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would remind the honourable member that debate at second reading is supposed to be relevant to the bill, and the bill, to the best of my knowledge, has nothing to do with special needs. The bill is The Barbers Repeal and Hairdressers Repeal Act.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Speaker, I accept your ruling, but what I was talking about was trust and the issue of whether we could trust this minister, because the issue in this bill is that we are being asked to trust this minister. She is not providing evidence of what regulations are going to be made. We are asked to eliminate a whole area of a bill, the regulation of barbers and hairdressers, the regulation of training and apprenticeship, and the minister is essentially saying, trust me. So I think it is relevant to discuss whether or not we can in fact trust this minister.

Madam Speaker, I think we might want to look at some of the parallels. For example, how would the minister deal with a school board which requested that it be allowed to drop a particular protocol or policy and said to the minister, well, trust me, next year we might develop another one and we might put it into public form, we might have public discussion on this and formal written regulations but, really, Madam Minister, you are going to have to trust us on this one. Well, no minister, no sensible minister, would accept that. That is not accountability. But that, in fact, is what this minister is expecting the people of Manitoba to do.

I want to close by drawing to the attention of all members of the Legislature that this is a bill which affects all members, that this is a bill that affects people right across Manitoba, in rural Manitoba as well as in the city of Winnipeg. It is a bill which has implications for health, it is a bill which has implications for training and for apprenticeship and for small business, and it is a bill which is asking us fundamentally to trust the Minister of Education to provide regulations and principles of regulations that are in accordance with the best interests of all Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, we do hope that, we do expect that, but we are very disappointed as we move to committee on this bill that the minister has not yet seen fit to bring forward those principles of regulation.

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

Bill 49—The Regional Health Authorities and Consequential Amendments Act

Madam Speaker: To resume second reading debate on Bill 49, the Regional Health Authorities and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi concernant les offices régionaux de la santé et apportant des modifications corrélatives), standing, firstly, in the name of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), who has 24 minutes remaining.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): When I left off the other day, I was talking about the centralizing power of this bill and of this government, and how they have abolished local decision making under Bill 49 and basically abolished all the boards. We are going to be left with nothing but a mission statement and an advisory capability and the responsibility for volunteers. I was drawing a couple of parallels, and the first one I drew was this government's abolition of 98 locally controlled housing authorities and the setting up of one province-wide Manitoba Housing Authority with a government-appointed board of political friends.

The other example that was given to me by the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) was Winnipeg Child and Family Services where we had I believe four regional agencies all with their own board elected from the community. This government chose, for reasons that never proved to be true, to abolish those and set up one city-wide Winnipeg Child and Family Services agency, initially with all appointed board members, and now moving gradually and slowly to having some elected board members. So there are parallels for this government in terms of their desire to centralize and control boards of organizations, and probably Bill 49 is the best example of this, because the largest number of locally controlled boards of hospitals and other institutions are covered in this legislation.

I would also like to correct the record, since last time I mentioned my Conservative opponent in Burrows and said that he had been hired as staff to a regional health board, but in fact he was appointed as a board member. I appreciate the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) correcting me on this, because I do not like to have wrong information left on the record. I indirectly complimented the member for Lac du Bonnet for taking care of a defeated Tory candidate in this way by appointing him to the board. They are certainly taking care of their own on these boards, as was pointed out in Question Period today, and ignoring the needs of people in the community.

One of the examples was in northern Manitoba where 50 percent of the population are aboriginal but only one board member is aboriginal, and I believe only one member is a woman. So not only are they ignoring demographics of the aboriginal population but the demographics of women in that area as well.

Now I would like to continue and talk about the commissioner who will be appointed by cabinet. The Manitoba Health Organizations have sent a very interesting letter addressed to the Premier (Mr. Filmon), which all of us were given copies, and this organization has a lot of concerns about Bill 49 and the structures. They have detailed recommendations on changes that should be made to the Regional Health Authorities bill, and one of them concerns the authority of the commissioner, whom they point out has no public accountability.

One of the other concerns that they have is that the commissioner will get involved in labour relations issues. They believe that labour relations issues should be assigned to the Manitoba Labour Board which is an existing and proven mechanism for the resolution of labour relations issues. We agree with that. There is already an existing mechanism, and this power is not needed by the commissioner and should not be given to the commissioner. I also noticed that the Manitoba Health Organizations have pointed out in their analysis of Bill 49 that the commissioner is exempt from requirements of The Manitoba Evidence Act, and they described this as being very autocratic. We would have to agree. They question, and I question, what possible reason would there be not to post particulars of hearings or inquiries, which is also part of Bill 49, apparently?

So we see that there is a commissioner, the commissioner has a lot of power, and we have concerns about that. We have concerns about the Manitoba labour relations procedure not being followed and the commissioner being given power in this area.

* (1610)

We believe that the existing rights of workers to choose their own union should be upheld and that this legislation should not override The Labour Relations Act. This bill, as our speakers have pointed out again and again, and as Manitoba Health Organizations have pointed out, gives a lot of power to the minister. One of these powers is the ability to approve all the plans of regional health authorities. So the power given to the minister is almost dictatorial in this case, in spite of making the regional health boards responsible for decisions that are being made and giving them less money but a lot of responsibility. Ultimately, the minister has much more power than the health authorities, but, I think, much less accountability, because, as I said before, whenever we ask questions in the Legislature, the minister is going to deflect the criticisms and deflect the questions and say, well, ask the regional health authority why they made such and such a decision. Yet all of their plans and many other parts of the health authorities will have to have approval by the minister.

We are concerned as well in Bill 49 that there will be no provision for maintaining a nonprofit health care system. Regional health authorities will be given the power or the authority to charge direct fees for individual or categories of service. So we think that this bill opens the door for user fees. Now, user fees are something that have been discussed by the public ever since medicare came into being on a national level in Canada, I believe, starting, first of all, in the province of Saskatchewan in 1962, I think, and then, by the federal government, I believe it would be about 1966. In spite of the fact that we do not have user fees for most kinds of medical services, when you knock on doors between elections or during elections, or when you talk to the public, user fees frequently come up, partly I suppose because it is being pushed by people in the community, but partly because of public concern about services that are being deinsured and because people are concerned about the fiscal capacity of government to pay for the existing services. So user fees seem to be a logical alternative. The public

seems to think that they would have a deterrent effect on misuse of services, but unfortunately there are a lot of myths around about what user fees would do and whether or not they would be a deterrent.

I have read research, for example, that shows that user fees are not a deterrent, because what happens is that affluent people who have the ability to pay will still go to see their doctor, whether it is necessary or not, because a user fee does not deter them, but it does deter low-income and poor people from seeing a doctor. Now, in many cases, when people use the example of user fees, they say, well, what about a charge of \$5? I mean, that would be reasonable, it would not be a hardship for people and it would provide the government and the system with some money. Well, that approach is very naive because, when governments have looked at user fees, and I understand that at least one province in Canada looked seriously at user fees as maybe a budget decision, they considered premiums which still exist in a couple of provinces in Canada, and the premiums would have been in the area of \$300 to \$400 three or four times a year. So people are kidding themselves if they think that a user fee would be \$5 for a visit to the doctor, and of course the costs of collecting user fees are much higher than what a \$5 fee would recover.

There would probably be exemptions. Probably people who are of low income would not have to pay a user fee, so then you get rid of the idea of universality and then what happens is, the middle class and the upper classes resent low-income and working people who are exempt from having to pay this fee. That results in all kinds of problems, as we have seen in other examples in Canada where universality has been taken away and a kind of means test has been put into place.

In fact, I was just recently talking to a reporter about the child tax benefit and the federal Auditor's Report commenting that there has been something like \$20 million a year in overpayments so now they are having to set up an overpayment recovery system, which is probably very expensive. When you get rid of universality, there are other administrative costs and overpayment problems and fraud problems that then you have to hire more civil servants to police the system, so a user-fee system is definitely not a good idea. People are naive to think that it would be \$5 per visit to the doctor,

for example. There would probably be premiums and it would probably be in the area of hundreds of dollars.

The Manitoba Health Organizations have commented on this as well, and they said that in Section 25, this is but one of many references to the charging of fees for unnamed services, and they say, we do not support the deinsurance of health services and do not believe that such an important issue can be left to the regulations. They have put in a proposal which makes some sense. They say, at a minimum, the act should state that fees shall not be charged for categories of services listed under Section 3(2).

Then they give examples: health education, health promotion and disease prevention, communicable disease control, public health services, social services, home care services, long-term care residential services, rehabilitative services, chronic care services, acute care services, palliative care services, diagnostic services and emergency services.

So they have a very specific recommendation. [interjection] The minister would like to put words in my mouth, but I am not going to let him do that. The minister is missing the point of what I am saying, which is that—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Martindale: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for calling the members to order.

We also have a concern that the reason that this government has allowed for user fees in the act is that they are going to cut major amounts of money out of the health budget for rural Manitoba. In fact the figure that we were given was \$99 million over the next two years. What are the regional health authorities going to do, and what can they do? What does this legislation enable them to do? Well, it enables them to charge user fees. So if they have their budget cut by the provincial government, how can they make up that money? They can make it up by charging user fees, so there is a logical reason as to why this is in the bill.

We also have some concerns about the Winnipeg superboards, one board for hospitals and one board for nursing homes. We are not the only ones that have

concerns about that. The faith-based institutions have concerns about that, and so they have begun a lobbying campaign and I understand they may even be quite successful in this. Certainly, the faith-based hospitals and nursing homes are concerned, and they are starting to encourage their supporters to write letters to the editor and to write letters to the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) and to the Premier (Mr. Filmon), and we brought this up in Question Period the other day.

Just the other day, I talked to a board member from a faith-based nursing home about some of their concerns. I have talked to people who have family at a faith-based nursing home, and the comment that was made to me is that they are like a family at this institution because, well, many of the family members provide supports and services to their family members and their loved ones who are in the institution that used to be provided by nurses and other staff and are no longer being provided. So they are very involved as volunteers and as family members and as caregivers.

Now, what is going to happen if they do not have their own board and they lose the ability to make decisions locally, and if people do not like the way the institution is being run? Then they are going to lose the services of these volunteers, because people are not going to feel a sense of ownership. They are not going to feel a sense of attachment to their local institution. I know that this happened with housing authority boards. I remember talking to someone in Deloraine or some other community where a volunteer board member used to walk through the residence at night, they used to plant flowers, they used to trim the trees, they used to provide all kinds of volunteer services to the government free of charge. What happens when you no longer have a local board? People do not feel the same kind of attachment. [interjection]

As the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) says, it is not going to be there anymore. Of course, the member for St. Boniface should be very concerned. We will expect that he will speak for 30 minutes on this bill because it affects St. Boniface Hospital, and so, of course, the member for St. Boniface would be concerned. We look forward to his 30-minute speech on this Bill 49.

The other group of institutions that are concerned that I have spoken to have to do with community health

centres. I belong to one, Nor'West Co-op Health and Social Services, and I talked to the executive director there. Their concern is really not unique. It is shared by many other nonprofit community health boards and centres. In Winnipeg, for example, we have Mount Carmel Clinic. We have a number of nonprofit clinics who have community-elected boards in most cases, some of them organized as nonprofit organizations, some as co-operatives. What is going to happen to these communities, to these health clinics, to these health centres? Well, the first and most obvious thing is that they are going to lose their ability to make local decisions because they are going to be run by a superboard, and their board will probably be left to do things like run the volunteers and send out a mission statement.

* (1620)

So, basically, they are going to be powerless. They will have no role in setting important policies. Why would anyone run for a board like that? They will become totally advisory. Not only will they be only advisory, but they will lose an important role in decision making in these institutions. I think it is important that the community be part of decision making and setting policy for a nonprofit or co-op board.

Just to use Nor'West as an example. They are located adjacent to public housing with a large number of people on social assistance, a large number of aboriginal people. They are located adjacent to a housing co-op, and they are located close to single-family detached housing. So they have three very different communities and members and users of their health clinic, but they have taken a particular interest and responsibility to responding to the needs of low-income people in their midst.

So, for example, they have tried to hire staff to meet those needs. Their users, all of their members, are going to be disempowered by this legislation, and they are concerned. Will they get the funding to have an abuse councillor? Will they get funding for some of their special programs or will it all be centralized or will they be referred to large hospitals or larger clinics instead of in their own community? They have had some very creative things there. They have a staff person who has been involved in a lot of community development. In fact, they won, I believe, a national award for healthy

communities, and it was students at a local school who drew pictures and illustrated what they thought a healthy community would look like.

They have also started food bingo for people, to educate people. The member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) is listening intently here, and he should because he has a food bank in Killarney. His business is across the street, and the good people in Killarney tell me that he has never stepped a foot in the food bank. So I would recommend that he do so. I have been in the food bank, and I would recommend that he talk to the volunteers who run the food bank in Killarney and find out about the issues in his community and why people use the food bank in Killarney, a fairly affluent community. He would learn that it is not just people on social assistance that are forced to use the food bank in Killarney.

Of course, we know that food banks basically are a form of charity, and at places like Nor'West Co-op they have got very involved in community development and social justice issues. One aspect of self-help that they were promoting is that, instead of just handing out groceries, as many places do, they have conducted food bingo, which is a game that teaches nutrition, and, instead of winning money, people take home groceries. It is very popular, it is educational, and it is a good idea. It is a good example of the kinds of things that can happen in small community-controlled health centres.

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

We are concerned that kind of local input and local control might disappear entirely under Bill 49. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for these and many other reasons, we in our caucus are opposed to this legislation, and we hope that the government might listen to the public, especially at the committee stage, and listen to the many submissions that they are going to get and the submissions that they have already received, for example, by the Manitoba Health Organizations, and that they would seriously consider amendments to improve this legislation and take out the authoritarian and centralizing and draconian parts of it and make it more democratic, more fair, and listen to the people of Manitoba instead of offloading all their problems to another layer of bureaucracy. Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there leave for this matter to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans)? [agreed]

House Business

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to announce that the Committee on Economic Development will meet on Thursday, October 10, by leave, concurrently with the House in order to consider the reports of Venture Manitoba Tours. So we will require leave.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed? Is leave granted then? [agreed]

Mr. Ernst: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to call the Committee on Law Amendments for Monday, October 7, at 7:30 p.m., to consider Bills 8, 9, 10, 13, 20, 38 and 300. [interjection] No, it does not. I checked already.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Law Amendments then for Monday, October 7, 1996, at 7:30, Bills 8, 9, 10, 13, 20, 38 and 300? Okay. Economic Development, Thursday, October 10, 1996, at ten o'clock, Venture Manitoba. Correct? Okay.

Mr. Ernst: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is Thursday, October 10 at 2:30 p.m., concurrently with the House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: At 2:30 p.m. then on October 10. Thank you for that correction.

Mr. Ernst: Concurrently with the House for which leave—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Concurrently with the House. That is why we had leave, and leave has been granted. I thank the honourable minister for that.

* * *

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to also speak on Bill 49, a bill that is very important and one that is going to affect many people in rural Manitoba.

I want to look back at the reason for this bill. This bill came out of The Action Plan that was put forward by the Northern and Rural Health Advisory committee that was established by the Department of Health to look at health services in rural and northern Manitoba. When the recommendations first came forward we were concerned with the number of regions that were put forward and how the boundaries were drawn. I speak now from my constituency. There was a concern that the Swan River health area was combined with the whole Parklands, and we made an effort to have the government recognize that that was a unique area. The government would not set aside another area in that area but, not surprisingly, in other parts of the province, in southern Manitoba, where there is representation by Conservative members, where there was some conflict about the size or the description of the regions, they were able to establish new regional health authorities in those areas of the province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this bill is a bill that is causing great concern for many people across the province. The first concern arose when we had the appointments of the boards. Although we do not know, the minister will not let us know, has not released the names of the people who are on the boards, the regional health boards are already in operation. There is no legislation for them to operate under. Anyway, we were disappointed when we found out, not from the government but from the public, who the people were on the board. This, in fact, as my colleague from The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) said the other day, seems to be the opportunity to reward past Tory candidates and Tory members. Rather than looking for a balance of people across the province, people who have interests in health care, we are seeing appointments from Conservative supporters, and that is very disappointing.

I am also disappointed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the number of women who are on this board. Women are more than half the population of this province, but for some reason the government could not find women who would—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Swan River will have 27 minutes remaining.

As previously agreed, this matter will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans).

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 200—The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), Bill 200, The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-maladie), standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Praznik).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

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

* (1630)

Bill 201—The Aboriginal Solidarity Day Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson), Bill 201, The Aboriginal Solidarity Day Act (Loi sur le jour de solidarité à l'égard des autochtones), standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

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

Bill 203—The Public Assets Protection Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), Bill 203, The Public Assets Protection Act (Loi sur la protection des biens publics), standing in the name of the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer).

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

Bill 205—The Dutch Elm Disease Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), Bill 205, The Dutch Elm Disease Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la thylose parasitaire de l'orme), standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

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

Are we proceeding with Bill 202? No?

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS**Res. 14—Reform of Post-Secondary Education**

Mrs. Shirley Render (St. Vital): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed), that

WHEREAS the federal government has made the decision to unilaterally reduce transfer payments for post-secondary education in Manitoba; and

WHEREAS students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders are re-evaluating Manitoba's system of post-secondary education; and

WHEREAS the University Education Review Commission has presented recommendations for change in its report "Post-secondary Education in Manitoba: Doing Things Differently"; and

WHEREAS the major recommendations in "Doing Things Differently" have focused on the need for the universities and community colleges in Manitoba to re-examine program priorities, reorganize programs to avoid duplication, identify centres of specialization, explore the development of a process of interinstitutional co-operation, redesign internal management, and improve the process of credit transfers among post-secondary institutions.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that all members of the Legislative Assembly support the provincial

government in its efforts to implement the necessary changes in Manitoba's post-secondary education system.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Render: Mr. Deputy Speaker, as the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) said, it sounds so good when it is read the second time.

An Honourable Member: Sounds better.

Mrs. Render: Sounds better. In all seriousness, Mr. Deputy Speaker, post-secondary education is a very important subject. I am not too sure that most of us realize just how many people are enrolled at our four universities and our three community colleges. There are some 70,000 people enrolled at the universities, at the community colleges, and, of course, there are a number of trade and vocational schools which also offer courses and certification programs.

Now there are some students who are mature, older than 30, going right up to the '70s and the '80s decade, I am sure, but the bulk of the students at the universities and community colleges are in the age range of 18 to 25, and that just says to me right there that this is our future. So it is absolutely vital that we have a post-secondary education, a higher education system that is going to be serving the needs of these students.

My background, I went to both University of Winnipeg—it was called United College back in the '60s when I attended. Both my undergraduate and graduate degrees are from the University of Manitoba, so I can speak first-hand that the facilities are excellent. But what was happening 10 years ago, 20 years ago, 30 years ago, 40 years ago, if times have changed? And as the students themselves, in their very, very good booklet that they put out called Path to Excellence, have identified that gone are the days of ample resources, and it is in the light of the harsh—and I am quoting the students here—fiscal reality that universities in our country must re-examine and redefine themselves. Universities, then, are at a crossroads. And they are at a crossroads, and like any institution that has been around for a long time, it is time to examine and make sure that our universities and our community colleges are operating in an effective and efficient way.

That is exactly what we have done. A number of years ago, I am sure all members here will remember that we appointed Duff Roblin to head up a commission. In December 1993, he released a document entitled *Post-Secondary Education in Manitoba: Doing Things Differently*. Now the commission examined a variety of issues, such as the mission and roles of institutions, scholarship and accountability, accessibility, aboriginal peoples, post-secondary education in northern Manitoba, the educational linkages between business and university, business and industry and of course governance and financial matters, and made a number of recommendations, many of which this government endorsed.

One of the recommendations was to establish a council on post-secondary education. We have introduced earlier this session a bill, Bill 32, *The Council on Post-Secondary Education*. I think this is a very, very important initiative of this government, because again I am going to refer back to the students. When the students pointed out that at both universities there are a number of duplications, overlapping, and in this day and age when funding is a problem—I am talking not just here at the Manitoba level but about our decrease in funding from the federal government, but there is no point in pointing a finger at the federal government because they are just trying to get their House in order as we here in Manitoba are trying to get our House in order. But, as I say, I was very impressed with the document that the students put out called *Path to Excellence*, and this was released by David Gratzer, UMSU president, 1995-96, in June 1996. This document was a result of a full—and I am quoting from his letter to the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh).

After a full year of observing and studying the University of Manitoba, I offer 37 tangible recommendations for improving the institution within the context of all the universities in Manitoba. And this paper, on university reform, incorporates the concerns and ideas that our student membership have expressed to us over the past year.

He goes on to say that the student membership is roughly 3,000 students, and it is from these students that these recommendations came about and these students have endorsed this particular project.

* (1640)

Now some of the things that the students recognized was the fact that there is overlap in programs at the universities, and they give a number of very specific examples. I would just like to read into the record some of these examples, because sometimes people think that government does things just for the sake of doing things, but no, we are doing things because they need to be done. After many, many years of not making any changes it is time to make a change. It is time to make sure that our universities are going to be able to cope and produce programs that are going to be valid for the students as they move into the next century.

Now here are some of the problems that the students themselves recognized in the system. Presently, over 38 academic programs are offered at more than one university in Manitoba, 13 of which are offered at all four. This duplication must be addressed, said David Gratzer, particularly between the University of Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba which target similar populations with virtually identical undergraduate arts, science and education programs.

So, as I say, this is not just an initiative that government is bringing in without any consultation with those prime consumers. Those prime consumers are the students, and obviously we consulted with many, but, as I say, the students themselves have identified that there are ways in which we can make our universities better. There are ways in which we can approach the problem, the problem of shrinking or frozen funding, possibly decreasing funding.

One of the recommendations I was very pleased to note was that the province should establish a council on post-secondary education, and it suggested that this council be established in the very near future. It also went on to suggest that this council should facilitate the reduction in overlap in both program offerings and administration.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are right on track. This is exactly what we are doing. We are establishing a council. For the first time in Canada a council on post-secondary education is being established. We have taken the initiative here. We are bringing in a formal coordinated system of planning and budgeting to higher education through this new council on post-secondary education.

Now the mission of this council is to bring better co-ordination, articulation and planning to the post-secondary education system by having universities and community colleges brought together under a single body. Students, I think, will very much benefit from this legislation as it will lead to increased flexibility for them, as well as having the potential to contain the costs which just seem to go up. Of course, the costs will be contained because, by working together and co-ordinating, we will be able to redo some of this unnecessary duplication.

Now, specifically, the council will co-ordinate and monitor system-wide credit transfer arrangements, and again, I think this is absolutely vital, so that students can move from one institution to another, if the necessity arises. They will not have spent time at one university which could be if they could not transfer courses or transfer credits, that time could be lost so this will, as I say, be a very great benefit to the students.

The council will also develop a strategic plan for the post-secondary education system. The council will also allocate the appropriate level of operations in capital funding to each of the seven institutions. Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think this is very important because too often in the past each was operating in isolation. Again, we cannot do that. We have to remember to look at the global picture; we have to remember that education is not just one small component. It is the overall look at universities, at community colleges, at training, at apprenticeship, and we have to remember that our resources are finite and we have to remember to look at the broad picture, not just focus in on one small area. This fact that we now have one council that will oversee the funding to all seven institutions, I think, will be a great benefit.

Council will also establish a system-wide tuition fee policy. Council will also approve academic programs, develop and oversee the implementation of plans for strategic program specialization. Now, again, when government brings in changes, when government brings in very dramatic changes—and this is a dramatic change, I would suggest—there is often a lot of fear because human nature being what it is, we fear change. People often like to keep doing things the way they have always done things. However, there is support for what is being done.

I cannot remember where I was coming from, but I had CJOB on last spring. I was listening to Professor Tim Ball from the University of Winnipeg. [interjection] Yes, as the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer) said, he is a very interesting person. I think many have heard him speak. He is a geography professor.

Now listen to his comments, and I quote from Professor Tim Ball, who said: I think universities are medieval institutions that are being dragged kicking and screaming into the 17th Century, and the ivory tower syndrome really exists.

Now those are pretty drastic words from a professor, but there is definitely a grain of truth. As I say, it is very hard sometimes to accommodate change. Regretfully, there are some people who are resisting change because they like the way things are done. They feel that there are always going to be resources and why should we make change. But it is absolutely vital to make change, and, again, we have to remember that universities are there not just for staff, the ultimate consumer is the student. It is the student that we have to remember.

I will just refer once more to the fact that to my knowledge this is probably the first time that the UMSU president has put out such a comprehensive document. I will just name the title again, Path to Excellence, and it talks about what should be happening in universities to make sure that universities survive into the next century.

Now let me just quote another university professor, and this is a university professor from the University of Manitoba. This was in the Winnipeg Free Press on September 25, 1996. He talks about Bill 32, and he refutes what another professor had said who talked against the bill. This professor, Professor Hymie Rubenstein says: What this other professor “fails to mention is that the main purpose of the act is to encourage co-ordination among post-secondary institutions, . . .” He goes on to say that “other provinces are considering enacting similar legislation, that university standards have been under attack for years, and that institutional and intellectual independence must be reciprocated by accountability to the ultimate shareholders of the universities, the people of Manitoba.”

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have spoken to a number of people at the university, and many of them recognize that

change is inevitable and they really do not have a problem with this bill, because they realize that we cannot live in competition with the other universities, that there simply has to be co-operation among the universities if all of them are to survive. So change and innovation is overdue. It is time to make these things happen.

Our secondary institutions here in Manitoba have provided Manitobans with high-quality education for decades. Our universities and community colleges represent a key economic and social asset in our province. They are vital, but they must keep pace with the changing economy and they must provide young Manitobans and the older ones with the same educational advantages of previous generations and, for this reason, change is necessary. For this reason, I urge that all members of the House support this resolution. Thank you.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to be able to respond to this resolution. I want to say, first of all, that I understand where it is coming from. I understand that the mover of this motion has a genuine concern for both universities and colleges and that she is speaking in what she believes to be the best interests of a particular future for those colleges. So I recognize the sentiments as genuine and welcome the member raising this issue for the Legislature.

* (1650)

I think the first WHEREAS, the federal government has made the decision to unilaterally reduce transfer payments for post-secondary education, is also another useful element for the member to bring to our attention, both parts of that WHEREAS, the idea that it is unilateral or was unilateral I think is an important thing to mention in this resolution. It was, I think, unconscionable, and I think most provinces would agree—perhaps Mr. Harris would not agree—but certainly an unconscionable alteration of the nature of Confederation and of the nature of the responsibility that the federal government has taken since the Second World War for the research and for the overall equitable serving of post-secondary education across the country, because I think those were the two principles that they adopted in the 1940s and 1950s, that there should be a national responsibility for research and there should also be some

attempt by the federal government to redistribute resources so that young people everywhere across this country had the opportunity for an equal access to, in the first place, an undergraduate education.

So I accept the member's sincerity, and I congratulate her on raising the issue of the unilateral federal withdrawal. It is certainly going to make a different kind of Canada. It has certainly withdrawn money from so many areas of research, from science, from engineering, from medical research, and this makes it extremely difficult, not just for universities but for the economic strategies of particular provinces.

In the case of Saskatchewan, for example, the agribusiness and for the added-value agriculture technology that they have entered into, the addition and federal responsibilities in that I think are being withdrawn, and it is to the credit of the government of Saskatchewan in fact that they are continuing to put their efforts very successfully into those changes and into those focuses at the University of Saskatchewan. I think it makes it very difficult for other provinces to deal with accessibility. It has made it difficult for smaller provinces in particular to continue to deal with equal access or even expanded access to undergraduate education. It makes it difficult for a province like Manitoba, and most governments of Manitoba have centred some of their attention upon medical research and the role that it plays in the economic future of the province. The reduction of federal grants in medical research, I think, will have a significant long-term impact upon the overall economy of Manitoba, Manitoba's ability to continue in the kind of specialties in which it has been so successful and has been enabled in fact to contribute to the national economy in this way.

However, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I welcome this resolution in other ways, too, because in the time-honoured words of the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) it gives me the opportunity to talk about the Roblin commission. The member has raised the issues of Post-Secondary Education in Manitoba: Doing Things Differently, the title of the Roblin commission, and I would have thought that at this stage, at the end of 1996, most members of this government would have been very reluctant to raise the issues of the Roblin commission, because if anything characterizes the attitude of this government to education or to policy development or to

strategic management it is the way in which they have dealt or not dealt with post-secondary education.

I often say, in fact, this is the only way in which this government acknowledges R & D, and in most people's parlance, that is research and development, but in the parlance of this government it is review and delay because that is what they have done in post-secondary education, as they are doing in the special education review, as they are doing in so many areas of public policy. Get us past the next election. Let us make another promise. Let us not actually put it into effect and let us just review, respond to the review and then wait a few more months and we will be into another election and we will make another set of promises and nothing has happened.

In the case of the Roblin review, for example, this government came into office in 1988 and in 1990 in the throne speech they announced they were going to create this commission. But it took two more years, from 1988 now we are in 1992, and they created the committee to examine post-secondary education or actually university governance, I think it was originally called, in the June of '92. Now they promised that its report would be in in the spring of '93, but finally—I think it is actually dated December '93; it did not really appear for discussion until January '94—shortly before the election there was the appearance of a review called *Doing Things Differently: Post-Secondary Education in Manitoba*.

So what the Tory government of Manitoba was able to do from 1988 to 1994 was to have no policy and no changes in post-secondary education. The member for St. Vital uses very frequently in her presentation the language of change, something that Tories seem to equate with improvement. It is not. Change is a neutral word; it does not mean improvement. In the hands of the Tories it generally means a backward step, a narrower and a more secretive and less accountable process and procedures.

However, the government did eventually in 1992 create what they called a blue ribbon committee composed of Duff Roblin, Miss Richardson, Mr. Kavanagh and Mr. Gordon. They did not choose a representative committee of Manitobans. They said very specifically, this is a blue ribbon committee. There were no students, there were no representatives of aboriginal people, there were no staff; there were no professional representatives, there were no

research people in the many areas for which Manitoba has been known in research on that committee. The report that they produced, I believe, reflected the concern of managers for efficient, market-driven institutions. That is a narrow view on universities and colleges. It is certainly one view. It is certainly a view that should be taken into account. But we should recognize that when the government finally did appoint a committee, it appointed a committee which would give it the very narrow basis for change that it desired.

Roblin's report was brief. It is about 88 pages. Sometimes, of course, that is a benefit. Sometimes we can welcome a brief report. But in spite of earlier promises, there was no publication of the written or oral briefs. There was no publication of any of the synopses of presentation and, again, this is a strong characteristic of this government.

The desire for accountability that they want in so many other areas of public policy they are simply unwilling to accept themselves. So that sense of a public conversation, a publicly documented discussion where people in Roblin would know what people were saying in Winnipeg and where people in Winnipeg would know what the issues were in The Pas or in Dauphin, that simply did not happen, because the publication was not there and they were not generally available to the public.

So, as in so many areas, whether it is going to be under special needs review, whether it was in the Render-Dyck inquiry, whether it was in the boundaries commission inquiry, we will have no knowledge publicly of what one part of Manitoba told the others.

When you put things into that kind of perspective, you are not, I do not believe, serious about accountability or about stimulating the kind of general discussion which I think the member for St. Vital referred to, and I think she did it in good faith. I think she does want to see that. I think she referred to the citizens of Manitoba as the shareholders of the universities and colleges. It is not the language I would chose, but I think the idea of a public interest and a public concern and a public responsibility for the whole of post-secondary education is an important one.

But if you are serious about that, if you really mean it, then you have a much broader-based discussion about

post-secondary education and, at every stage of the way, whether it was in the creation of the Roblin commission, whether it was in the nature of the discussions which they held and the publications which were produced, whether it was in the creation of the interim transition committee, whether it was in the secretness of their deliberations, whether it is now in the nature of the final, appointed post-secondary education council which is proposed in Bill 32, at every step of the way the government has proceeded along the lines of a narrow and secretive perspective upon reform and change.

If we look at the Roblin commission overall, we can see that much of the evidence which was cited in that report, and I know that evidence is not something that most ministers of this particular government are interested in, but the evidence that was mostly cited in the report came from the columns of *The Globe and Mail* or from the 1990 Smith report on Canadian universities. There was a startling lack of Manitoba evidence, and we understand why this commission was not given a very large research budget. It was not given really the mandate to produce that kind of evidence. It was given a mandate in fact to produce changes in management and governments, and it took that narrow mandate as its first priority.

But I will say, and this is to Mr. Roblin's credit, he went beyond the mandate the government gave him. They gave him the mandate of looking at universities governance, and he said very sensibly, this is not the issue. The larger issue is the issue of post-secondary education in Manitoba, and what he did was to make recommendations on community colleges.

* (1700)

He argued, as I think any sensible Manitoban would, that the most obvious gap in Manitoba's education system lies in the very small number of our students who for the long time this situation has existed, a very small number of our students have gone on to community college. He pointed to the fact that what we needed to do was to expand the number of programs in our community colleges.

The recommendation was made in December 1993, we are now in the end of 1996. I would have welcomed from the member for St. Vital some indication of the first

steps, perhaps even second steps of the recommendation of the Roblin commission to double, double, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the number of programs in our community colleges. I know that some steps have been taken in some of the colleges, but I think over three years we would have anticipated that we would have seen much more effort made in that respect. Of course, what we saw was the very opposite. This was the government which took \$10 million out of community colleges. This was the government that in the budget two years ago, added \$2.5 million and then took it away again with another hand.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the sincerity of this government, and I do not doubt the sincerity of the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), but the sincerity and the ability of this government to grapple with and to produce a strategic plan for post-secondary education, I think, has to be very much in doubt.

Mr. Roblin in his report did not provide any planning framework. He did not look at the population of Manitoba in the next generation, and I do not think he had the time or the staff in fact to do that. And so, I see, unfortunately, that my time is up and I have only just begun I thought. My concern is that both the Roblin commission and this government I think are focusing in a very narrow area. There may well be reasons for the government to look at areas of governance, to look at change, to look at tuition fees. I think that is an important area, another one for example where they have done nothing since 1988 and no tuition fee policy yet.

But I do think that the final resolution of this—the final section of this resolution of the member for St. Vital that we support the provincial government in its efforts to implement the necessary changes in Manitoba's post-secondary education system really are not the kind of resolution that I would like to leave on this record. Although I am not proposing an amendment, it seems to me that the way we should be looking at post-secondary education in Manitoba is that we would support a government which was serious in its efforts to make accessible to many more Manitobans the benefits of post-secondary education.

We would support a government which was serious and demonstrated its ability to maintain the high quality

of teaching of community service and research in the service of all the people of this province.

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): I would like to put a couple of comments on the record in regard to this resolution. But in my comments I would also just like to point out to the members opposite, and I say this sincerely, as I sit day in, day out listening to resolutions come forward and the positive things that I see and hear about what are happening in Manitoba, I guess, I would like to suggest that it must be awful to wake up every morning and see the sun shine and figure out a way of how you are going to explain to the people that it will rain eventually and that things are never as good as they appear.

It is something that I have had to learn to deal with since coming to the House, and I guess I will manage to cope with it, but it is something that I will probably never accept as long as I sit in this Legislature or as long as I probably live. I think we are all aware that the federal Government of Canada has made a decision to reduce transfer payments for post-secondary education in Manitoba. I recognize that they are in a position, as we are in Manitoba, of trying to become more and more fiscally responsible. I think the method that we have taken to achieve this goal is probably one that would be perhaps a model for them to follow in the sense of the time and the investment that we have put into the three major categories that are major concerns. I think the people of the province of Manitoba would identify as their major concerns. I think we all know what they are: it is health; it is education; and it is the social services that we provide.

I think that the resolution that has been brought forward today by the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), which I gladly support and seconded, is just that, it is saying to the people of Manitoba, we do respect what you say, we do want to listen to what you have to offer, and when we hear that information, we are going to formulate it into a policy that will provide the services that the people of Manitoba want and need. I think that, as the member earlier had stated, there are a lot of young people in our educational systems, in our universities, of which there are four, and three community colleges.

I, too, had the privilege, I guess, of attending two of the universities in Manitoba as I was going through my

university days. I also had an opportunity to attend a university in the United States. When we compare the systems of education and the direction that we are taking with these types of resolutions that are being brought forward, I think that we are going to see a real improvement in the delivery of education and also in the education portion of educating our children or our young adults.

I think that, in order to ensure Manitoba students have access to the best post-secondary education, we have to be responsible with the economics of it, and we also have to be responsive. So I think that the formation of this council is one of the first positive steps to helping us recognize and realize these goals.

The council will definitely help us gain a better sense of our post-secondary education priorities as a community. They will be listening to the stakeholders that are involved in this. I think that for far too long in a lot of areas of government we tend to listen to the people who are closest to us and we do not go out that extra step to get the information. I think this government has probably led the way in consultation and listening to what the people actually want, be it in Education, Health, social services and other departments.

It is the students who will benefit the most from this legislation. It will lead to greater flexibility for them. As I understand, there has been some discussion and some negotiation, and I think the ability to transfer in and out of schools at the same level and not having to worry about the courses that they may be taking in one university whether they are accepted in another—even in our own province, we have to, I believe, have some consistency and some form where students can move freely because that is actually the way the world is going as far the ability to transfer.

I can remember growing up and going to university, and one of the things that was always told to me is, be prepared as you enter your working career, that you will change careers three, four, maybe five times in your lifetime. As much as we said that at that particular time, I do not believe many people really believed it was going to happen. It did not maybe happen as quickly or as fast as we anticipated at that time. I would suggest that in the age of the '90s it is happening, and it is happening far quicker.

We have certainly seen where, as much as we would like to think we have job security, people are always looking for a better way and a better opportunity for themselves. Now they are acting upon those opportunities instead of just sitting and trying to, I suggest perhaps, hesitantly trying to make the decision. Quite often, that time passes them by as it has in the past.

I think that the legislation, which is the first of its kind in Canada, will establish and should establish a single planning and co-ordinating body for colleges and universities. What better way to present the most not only economical and efficient way of education, but it is a system where everybody can offer and probably, I would proffer to the people, that the course and the content will improve because I think you are going to see some specialization. I think that is what this competitive world dictates that we do.

* (1710)

Whenever business finds itself running even with its competition it tends to take one segment of that competition, specialize in it and promote itself that way. I think in this case that education can do that, and when they do we will be providing a better education for the children that are taking it and also a more positive direction for the people that are implementing the education programs.

Although the Roblin commission on post-secondary education examined issues such as the mission and roles of institutions, it examined the scholarship and accountability. It examined the accessibility, aboriginal peoples and post-secondary education. It examined post-secondary in northern Manitoba, post-secondary education linkages with business and industry, governance and financial matters, and I suggest that all these things are important and integral to forming a policy of direction that we must go in the future incorporating all of these issues.

The Roblin commission also recommended the creation of this fully co-ordinated, articulated post-secondary educational system in Manitoba, and I think with this council, the direction that it will go will lead us to that co-ordinated position. We have endorsed the commission's recommendations with the legislation that

has been introduced into the House as Bill 32. Today I stand before you to put the several reasons as to why.

Some of the objectives of the council that they would carry out would be to co-ordinate and monitor system-wide credit transfer arrangements. I am a student in the university in Brandon and I want to transfer to Winnipeg because of an opportunity that has been presented to me. Quite often in the past—

Mr Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for The Maples, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): I just want to have some clarification on the rules of the House. If there is a bill before the House for debate on second reading, during the debate on this resolution, should we be referring to that bill and be debating the subject of that matter during this resolution?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for The Maples does have a point of order. The debate on second reading of the bill that is before the House, the honourable member for Turtle Mountain should not be referring to that bill at this time.

The honourable member for Turtle Mountain, to continue.

* * *

Mr. Tweed: I do apologize for the reference. As I stated, no matter where you are in today's world, you are never too old to learn. I have learned something, and I appreciate the information that has been provided.

I think that I would like to talk a little bit about the council and what functions it would carry out, if that is agreeable to all honourable members. The co-ordination and monitoring system-wide credit transfers, as I was suggesting earlier, there was always the threat. To me, I could hardly believe that in a province as small as Manitoba with three universities that credit transfers would not be possible amongst the university systems. To me it only makes common sense. We are trying to encourage our young people to finish their education in our province and yet we are not providing them with the

opportunities through transfer to complete courses on the schedules that they have set out for themselves, and I think this council will enhance that.

I think it is imperative that we develop a strategic plan for post-secondary education. I think that anything that goes forward without a plan is doomed to fail, and I think this council will provide the plan that is necessary and will be understandable for all Manitobans to follow through. With the council, with the ability to develop the strategic plans, obviously we will have the ability to allocate the appropriate level of operations in capital funding to each of the seven institutions and, again, I suggest that that is an efficient use of our dollars in the sense that we will not have redundancy in our universities where courses are being offered at three different universities, all teaching the same aspect and perhaps being attended poorly in all three communities or all three universities. This will allow that particular council to make those decisions and certainly offer the courses as the system has demand for it.

The approval of academic programs. I think that we all want to have the best available post-secondary education available possible in Manitoba, and, with the council that we are proposing, this will be possible. Each university will be, I presume, provided with certain academic programs to offer, and, as they see the need to change and develop certain academic courses to suit the needs of the consumer, this council will provide them with that ability to do so. I think definitely when they are involved with this type of organization, they will want to oversee all the implementations of the plan in regard to specialization and academic programs, and certainly want to develop and implement an accountability framework.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

That is one of the major things that we have discussed in government is the fact that everyone in today's world has to become accountable. Whether you believe you are doing the right thing or whether some people criticize you for what you are doing, the bottom line is you have to be accountable to the people that you represent. I think that the council will be responsible to implementing the recommendations of the commission.

The council, again, will help us gain a better sense of our post-secondary education and priorities in the community. Through discussing and meetings with the

public, we are certainly going to be able to gain knowledge as to what they would like to see coming out of their universities, their community colleges, and I think this provides an excellent opportunity to do so.

The 70,000 students that are attending Manitoba's universities are really the big winners of this council. I think that they are going to see that the ability to change and adapt will suit them, will suit their needs, and I refer back to the honourable member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render) in her final resolution that says: I do ask "all members of the Legislative Assembly to support this provincial government in its efforts to implement the necessary changes in Manitoba's post-secondary educational system." It is necessary. It is imperative that we do it. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be able to stand in the House and speak a little bit about the resolution brought forward to us by the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render). I want to extend my thanks to her for allowing everyone an opportunity to discuss an issue as important as post-secondary education to the students and the future of the province of Manitoba because the future of the province of Manitoba can be made a lot brighter if we show the necessary support to our students from across our province who would wish to take part in post-secondary education, be that at the universities in Manitoba or our province's colleges.

The one thing that does kind of irk me in the speeches that I have heard so far has to do with this idea that the students of the province of Manitoba are looked upon as consumers rather than as learners. When we start to reduce our young people to the form of consumers, then it tells me that priorities—

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

Mr. Struthers: Madam Speaker, when we reduce our students to the very basest level of being a consumer of education, we are accepting that old notion that says that all you need to do is unscrew the top of their heads and start pouring the information in and it is all going to be consumed and then you just—[interjection] Well, somebody across the way forgot to open up the head and pour it in.

With the post-secondary education, we cannot look strictly at our students as consumers. In that way, what we do is simply think that this is a dollar item and that we can simply cut and cut and cut some more like the Conservatives have done in this province. What we do when we look at education simply from the perspective of consumerism is, we exclude large chunks of our student population from attending universities. We make the almighty dollar the base upon which you enter universities instead of what has traditionally been the entrance requirement for universities, which is good marks, intelligence and hard work.

* (1720)

An Honourable Member: It still is.

Mr. Struthers: The member across way says, still is. I would suggest to him that he get a grasp on what is really happening out there in rural Manitoba. As a school principal, it was my unfortunate experience to talk with many students, very bright, very capable, very hard working students at the school that I was the principal at, at Rorketon, who simply could not go to university because they could not afford to go.

The problem is twofold. Number one, tuition fees under this government have raised and raised and raised and increased over the years to a point where the students find that to be an obstacle to university. If the student does not work hard, then I do not believe they should be there. If a student does not have good marks, then they do not require university. But if a student has good work habits and if a student has good marks and cannot afford to go to university, then this government should step forward to the plate and take responsibility for that. We are putting up against our students so many obstacles that have little to do with an educational basis, and that is absolutely shameful.

The other thing that I want to point out is that this provincial Tory government is not absolutely the only people that are messing up the chances of our young people having a crack at going to university or any post-secondary education.

In the resolution that the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render) puts forward, I must fully agree with what she says in the beginning, in the first WHEREAS, where the

federal government has made the decision to unilaterally reduce transfer payments for post-secondary education in Manitoba. That is not supporting the students in rural Manitoba that I represent. That is not going to help the kids at school where I used to be a teacher go to university and have a chance to help society by obtaining a higher education and then going out into the workforce and putting that higher education to work.

The success of a nation is at least partly measured by the way we educate our people. The success of a nation is enhanced when you have a society and a population that is well educated, that does know the facts and all the methods by which to apply the facts that humans around the world obtain. By not showing at least the minimum amount of support for public education, whether you be the federal Liberals or the provincial Tories, you reduce our nation's chances of success, you reduce our nation's quality of living.

Madam Speaker, the report entitled Post-Secondary Education in Manitoba: Doing Things Differently, I must say that I do like the title, Doing Things Differently. I think both the federal government and the provincial government have to start doing things differently, or they are never, ever, going to produce the number and the quality of students that we need to have in this province in order to be successful.

The other prime factor that we need to consider when it comes to post-secondary education is the inaccessibility of our universities for rural students. Number one, they cannot pay the tuition fees. Number two, a rural student is faced with the further monetary obstacle of putting out money for room and board when they attend university in the city.

Now, there are some options that this government has in terms of reducing that particular obstacle for rural students, and one of the those is distance education. A distance education option in this province is something that is sorely lacking and something that this government has been dragging its feet on. When you look at the alternatives and the other provinces which have been committed to distance education, you will notice some things differently than what you have in Manitoba. You have a much higher degree of rural and northern students participating in higher education programs in provinces where there are distance education programs that are funded and supported by provincial governments.

This government has a lot to learn when it comes to providing education opportunities for rural and northern students, and just simply pointing a finger at the federal government and whining about the amount of money that is being cut by the federal Liberals is not good enough. The provincial government has to stand up and take responsibility itself for education, not just at the post-secondary level but across the K to 12 level, as well. Manitobans expect a little bit more than the whining and finger pointing that this government in Manitoba has come up with so far.

Madam Speaker, probably the most disconcerting of what I have heard so far, though, has to do with the way we treat our students, particularly in rural Manitoba simply as consumers of education. It is a combination of the federal government and its cuts to transfers to post-secondary education and to health that I think we need to spend some time considering as well, and that part of the resolution before us today is something that I am in agreement with, with the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render).

The part that I find I cannot agree with is how this resolution goes from all those WHEREASes, which actually are not too bad, to the THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED part, that all members of this Legislative Assembly support the provincial government in its efforts to implement the necessary changes in Manitoba's post-secondary education system.

Well, Madam Speaker, on the one hand, this government is being told to do things differently because the people of Manitoba do not accept and do not support the

things that this provincial government is doing in post-secondary education, and at the same time, this resolution is saying that we need to implement necessary changes. Well, not all change is necessarily good change, and I will support any change from this provincial government that I consider to be good for the students of rural and northern Manitoba and all students in the province.

But, Madam Speaker, what I have seen come out of this government in the area of post-secondary education is nothing that I would believe is good change. Increases in tuition fees I do not think is good change for the students in Manitoba. I do not think that throwing up more and more obstacles for my students from the Dauphin constituency to attend university is a good change.

So, Madam Speaker, I will not support that. If at some time the provincial government decides that it would implement some positive change that, say, our side of the House would come up with or that other groups from around the province would suggest, then, yes, I would gladly stand and support those kinds of changes. But from what I see so far, I do not believe that the change put forward by this government is beneficial to the students and prospective students in the province of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) will have three minutes remaining.

The hour being 5:30 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday next.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, October 3, 1996

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Reading and Receiving Petitions		Laboratory/Imaging Services Chomiak; McCrae	3971
Pharmacare Martindale	3963	Three Bears Day Care Centre Robinson; Mitchelson	3971
Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees		Workplace Safety and Health Reid; Toews	3972
Standing Committee on Agriculture First Report Dyck	3963	Speaker's Ruling Dacquay	3974
Tabling of Reports		Members' Statements	
1995-96 Annual Report, Multiculturalism Secretariat Gilleshammer	3964	Canadian National Customer Service Centre McAlpine	3975
Oral Questions		Federal Government Policies Lathlin	3975
Regional Health Boards Doer, McCrae	3965	Youth Business Institute Tweed	3976
Education System Friesen; McIntosh	3966	Island Lake Fish Plant Robinson	3976
Domestic Violence Review Committee McGifford; Vodrey	3967 3968	Canadian Wheat Board Lamoureux	3976
Pedlar Report McGifford; Vodrey	3967		
Lavoie Inquiry Mackintosh; Vodrey	3969	ORDERS OF THE DAY	
Oak Bank Personal Care Home Lamoureux; McCrae	3970	Debate on Second Readings	
Health Care Facilities Lamoureux; McCrae	3970 3974	Bill 39, Pari-Mutuel Levy and Consequential Amendments Act Sale	3978 3980
		Bill 14, Manitoba Trading Corporation Amendment Act Sale	3981
		Bill 15, Tourism and Recreation Amendment Act Sale	3982

**Bill 54, Municipal and Various
Acts Amendment Act**

Wowchuk 3983
Kowalski 3987

**Bill 12, Barbers Repeal and
Hairdressers Repeal Act**

Friesen 3988

**Bill 49, Regional Health Authorities
and Consequential Amendments Act**

Martindale 3992
Wowchuk 3996

Private Members' Business

Proposed Resolutions

Res. 14, Reform of Post-Secondary

Education	
Render	3998
Friesen	4001
Tweed	4004
Struthers	4006