



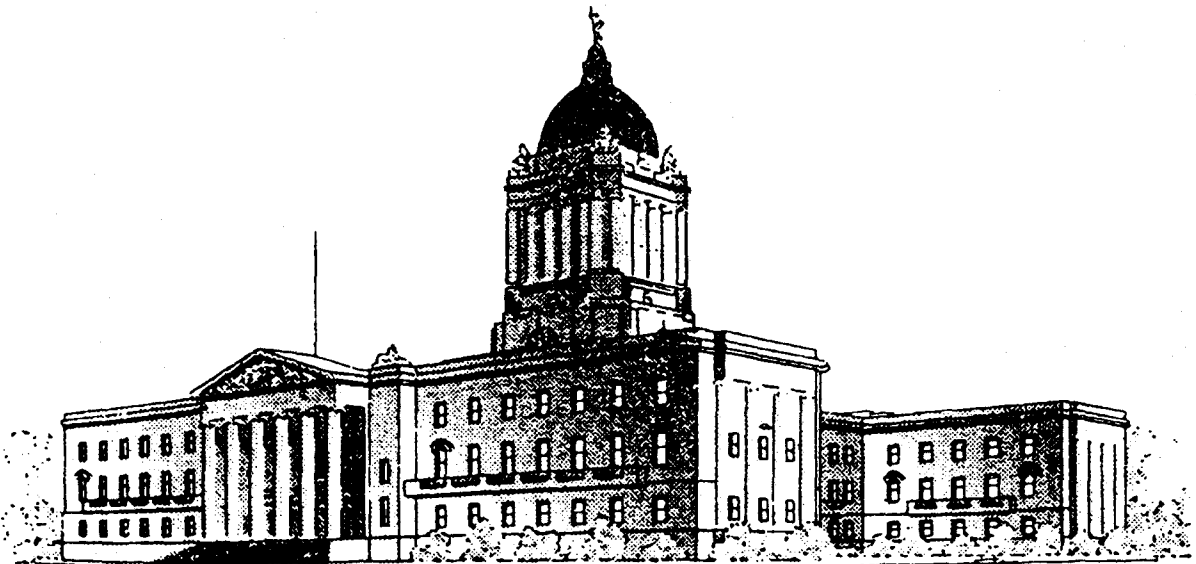
**Second Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature**

**of the**

**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**

**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS  
(Hansard)**

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authority of  
The Honourable Louise M. Dacquay  
Speaker*



**Vol. XLVI No. 70 - 1:30 p.m., Thursday, October 24, 1996**

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Sixth Legislature**

**Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Party</b>
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	Rupert'sland	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 24, 1996

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

### PRAYERS

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

#### Guaranteed Annual Income

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

### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

#### Manitoba Telephone System

**Madam Speaker:** I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk). 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 the Manitoba Telephone System has served the province well for over 80 years providing province-wide

service, some of the lowest local rates in North America and thousands of jobs and keeping profits in Manitoba; and

THAT MTS contributes \$450 million annually to the Manitoba economy and is a major sponsor of community events throughout the province; and

THAT MTS, with nearly 4,000 employees including more than 1,000 in rural and northern Manitoba, is one of Manitoba's largest firms, headquartered in Manitoba and is committed to Manitoba; and

THAT the provincial government has no mandate to sell MTS and said before and during the 1995 election that MTS was not for sale.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) withdraw Bill 67 and not sell the Manitoba Telephone System to private interests.

\* (1335)

#### Guaranteed Annual Income

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

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense.

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

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

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

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

*WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Family Services to consider withdrawing Bill 36 and replacing it with improved legislation which provides for a guaranteed annual income that allows people to have adequate food, clothing, housing, child care and health care and that this annual income increases as prices increase and that this new legislation also provides for the creation of real jobs with the goal of creating full employment so that individuals on social assistance can find safe, meaningful work of their own choosing that allows them to meet their needs and the needs of their families.*

#### **Manitoba Telephone System**

**Madam Speaker:** I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway). 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:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense.

*THAT the Manitoba Telephone System has served this province well for over 80 years providing province-wide service, some of the lowest local rates in North America and thousands of jobs and keeping profits in Manitoba; and*

*THAT MTS contributes \$450 million annually to the Manitoba economy and is a major sponsor of community events throughout the province; and*

*THAT MTS, with nearly 4,000 employees including more than 1,000 in rural and northern Manitoba, is one of Manitoba's largest firms, headquartered in Manitoba and is committed to Manitoba; and*

*THAT the provincial government has no mandate to sell MTS and said before and during the 1995 election that MTS was not for sale.*

*WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) withdraw Bill 67 and not sell the Manitoba Telephone System to private interests.*

#### **The Grand Lodge of Manitoba of the Independent Order of Oddfellows**

**Madam Speaker:** I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans). 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:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense.

*Praying for the passing of an act to amend the incorporating act to, inter alia, remove restrictions on the monetary value of real estate owned by the corporation and to remove borrowing restrictions on loans incurred by the corporation.*

#### **PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

##### **Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs Third Report**

**Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs):** Madam Speaker, I beg to present the Third Report of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense.

*Your Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs presents the following as its Third Report.*

*Your committee met on Tuesday, October 22, 1996, at 7 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider bills referred.*

*At that meeting, your committee elected Mr. Laurendeau as its Chairperson and Mr. Helwer as its Vice-Chairperson.*

*Your committee considered:*

*Bill 36—The Social Allowances Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aide sociale et apportant des modifications corrélatives*

*which had previously been considered by the Standing Committee on Law Amendments on Thursday, October 10, 1996, at 7 p.m. and on Friday, October 11, 1996, at 9 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.*

*At the October 10, 1996, meeting of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, the Law Amendments committee elected Mr. Tweed as its Vice-Chairperson.*

*Also at the October 10, 1996, meeting of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, the Law Amendments committee agreed, by motion, on a counted vote of 6 Yeas, 4 Nays, to establish a time limit for presentations and for questions and answers, of 15 minutes per presentation, for presentations to Bill 36.*

*The Standing Committee on Law Amendments heard representation on October 10 and October 11, 1996, as follows:*

*Bill 36—The Social Allowances Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aide sociale et apportant des modifications corrélatives*

*Theresa Ducharme - People for Equal Participation, Inc. (PEP)*

*Joan Johannson - Canadian Association for the Non-Employed (CANE)*

*Donna Ansell - Private Citizen*

*Sid Frankel & Ellen Kruger - Social Planning Council of Winnipeg & the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba*

*Annie Marie Partanen - Private Citizen*

*Michelle Forrest - Private Citizen*

*Councillor Glen Murray - Fort Rouge Ward, City of Winnipeg*

*Jim Finlay - Community Action on Poverty*

*Pauline Riley - Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women*

*Allan Bleich - Canadian Union of Public Employees, Manitoba (CUPE)*

*Leslie King & Brent Rosnowski - Director of Social Services and Manager of Intergovernmental Affairs, City of Winnipeg*

*Paul Moist - CUPE Local 500*

*Doug Lambier - Private Citizen*

*Raymond Blue - Private Citizen*

*William Seymour - CHOICES*

*Valerie Price - Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties*

*Alison Norberg & Gary Loewen - Church and Society Committee, Winnipeg Presbytery, United Church of Canada*

*Tammy Sutherland & Mary Helen Ross - Inner City Ministries Volunteer Project*

*Denise Flett & Ray Despatis - West Broadway Community Ministry*

*Sharon Olson - Private Citizen*

*Kristine Barr & Catharin Johannson - Manitoba Young New Democrats*

*Susan Bruce - Private Citizen*

*Louise Simbandumwe - Private Citizen*

*Margot LaVoie - Oblate Justice and Peace Committee*

*Deborah Graham - PETAS*

*Eric Cote - Private Citizen*

*Cindy Ellman - Village Clinic*

*Dr. Mary Pankiw - Manitoba Society of Seniors*

*Yvonne Naismith & Irene Sale - St. Matthew-Maryland Community Ministry*

*Linda Churchill - Community Action on Poverty*

*Bonnie Caldwell - Private Citizen*

*Glen Nichols - Manitoba Northwestern Ontario Conference of the United Church of Canada*

*Rhonda Chorney - AIDS Shelter Coalition of Manitoba*

*Monique Foucart - Private Citizen*

*Marlene Vieno - Manitoba Network for Mental Health*

*Charley Housley - Private Citizen*

*Written Submissions*

*Lorna Wilson - Private Citizen*

*Sylvia Bector - Private Citizen*

At the October 11, 1996, meeting of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, the Law Amendments committee adopted the following motion:

THAT this Committee recommends to the Government House Leader that another meeting of the Law Amendments Committee be scheduled for the purpose of clause by clause consideration of Bill 36.

Your committee also considered:

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

which had previously been considered by the Standing Committee on Law Amendments on Tuesday, October 15, 1996, at 7 p.m. and on Wednesday, October 16, 1996, at 7 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building. Information pertaining to these meetings, including the names of persons who made representations on Bill 49, is contained in the Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, which was presented in the House on Monday, October 21, 1996.

Your committee also considered:

Bill 54—The Municipal and Various Acts Amendment Act; Loi concernant les municipalités et modifiant diverses dispositions législatives

which had previously been considered by the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs on Thursday, October 17, 1996, at 7 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

At the October 17, 1996, meeting of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs, your committee elected Mr. McAlpine as its Chairperson and Mr. Sveinson as its Vice-Chairperson.

At the October 17, 1996, meeting of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs, your committee heard representation on bills as follows:

Bill 54—The Municipal and Various Acts Amendment Act; Loi concernant les municipalités et modifiant diverses dispositions législatives

Sylvester Yakielafhek and Ray Frey - Council of the Local Government District of Park  
Rick Borotsik - Mayor, City of Brandon  
Garry Wasylowski - Reeve, Local Government District of Armstrong  
Rochelle Zimberg - Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities  
John Nicol - President, Union of Manitoba Municipalities  
Leonard Gluska - Reeve, LGD of Consol  
Larry Johnson - Chairperson of UVD of Cranberry Portage  
Clarence Braun - Mayor, Town of Niverville  
Mary Hrabarchuk - UVD of Landmark (Unincorporated Village District of Landmark)  
Ken Holme - Village of Grunthal  
Diane Wright - Secretary-Treasurer, Tache Ratepayers Association  
Evelyn Giesbrecht - Private Citizen  
Bill Summerlus - CUPE, Manitoba Division  
Glen Murray - Councillor, City of Winnipeg & Fort Rouge Ward  
David Sutherland - Private Citizen  
David Sanders - Colliers Pratt McGarry  
Victor Vrsnik - Manitoba Taxpayers' Association  
John Angus - Councillor, St. Norbert Ward, City of Winnipeg  
Nick Ternette - Private Citizen  
Carolyn Garlich & Elizabeth Fleming - Council of Women Committee on Urban and Regional Issues

Written Submissions:

Grant McMillan - President, Manitoba Municipal Administrators Association  
Jack Kehler - Town Manager, Town of Steinbach

Your committee on Municipal Affairs has considered:

Bill 36—The Social Allowances Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aide sociale et apportant des modifications corrélatives

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

**MOTION:**

THAT the following be added after section 30 of the Bill:

*Consequential repeal*

30.1 If during the second session of the 36th Legislature Bill 54 entitled "**The Municipal and Various Acts Amendment Act**" is assented to, section 279 of that Act is repealed on the proclamation of sections 4, 7, 17 to 27, and 30 of this Act.

**MOTION:**

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

Your committee on Municipal Affairs has also considered:

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

and has agreed to report the same, by a counted vote of 5 Ayes, 3 Nays, with the following amendments;

**MOTION:**

THAT the following be added after subsection 2(1):

**Canada Health Act criteria**

2(1.1) This Act shall be administered in a manner that complies with section 7 of the Canada Health Act, which sets out the criteria of comprehensiveness, universality, portability, accessibility and public administration in relation to the operation of the Manitoba Health Services Insurance Plan.

**MOTION:**

THAT section 5 be amended by renumbering it as subsection 5(1) and that the following be added as subsection 5(2):

**Agreements with health corporations**

5(2) Without limiting the generality of subsection (1), the minister may enter into agreements with a health corporation, or an organization representing health

corporations, respecting the preservation of corporate ownership, autonomy, governance and mission of the health corporation or health corporations.

**MOTION:**

THAT subsection 62(1) be amended by striking out the definition "commissioner" and substituting the following:

"**commission**" means the labour relations commission appointed under section 63; ( «Commission » )

**MOTION:**

THAT section 63 be struck out and the following substituted:

**Appointment of commission**

63(1) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may appoint a commission of three persons to inquire into and make recommendations respecting trade union representation and jurisdiction in the health sector in the context of the transition to regional health authorities under this Act.

**Chairperson**

63(2) The Lieutenant Governor in Council shall appoint one of the commissioners as the chairperson.

**Knowledge and experience of commissioners**

63(3) As to the appointment of the other two commissioners,

(a) one must be a person who, in the opinion of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, has knowledge and experience related to the management of health services delivery in the province; and

(b) one must be a person who, in the opinion of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, has knowledge and experience related to the representation of employees in the health sector in the province.

**Consultation regarding appointment**

63(4) For the purpose of making the appointments referred to in subsection (3), the Lieutenant Governor in Council shall consult with

(a) regional health authorities;

(b) trade unions representing workers in the health sector; and

(c) health corporations.

#### **Term of appointment**

**63(5)** The commissioners shall be appointed for a term to be prescribed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

#### **Remuneration**

**63(6)** The Lieutenant Governor in Council shall determine the remuneration of the commissioners, which shall be charged to and paid out of the Consolidated Fund.

#### **Expenses**

**63(7)** The commissioners shall be paid such travelling and out of pocket expenses incurred by them in the performance of their duties as may be determined by Lieutenant Governor in Council.

#### **Recommendations**

**63(8)** If the commissioners cannot reach a unanimous agreement with respect to a recommendation under this Part, the recommendation of the chairperson shall be the recommendation of the commission.

#### **MOTION:**

THAT section 69 be struck out and the following substituted:

#### **Powers under Part V of The Evidence Act**

**69** The commissioners have the protection and powers of a commissioner appointed under Part V of The Manitoba Evidence Act, but section 85 of The Manitoba Evidence Act does not apply to the commission, and no notice of appointment, of the purpose and scope of inquiries to be made by the commission, or of the time and place of the holding of any hearing or inquiry by the commission need be published as required under section 86 of The Manitoba Evidence Act.

#### **MOTION:**

THAT section 74 be renumbered as subsection 74(1) and the following be added as subsection 74(2):

#### **Judicial review**

**74(2)** Notwithstanding subsection (1), a recommendation, action or decision of the commission may be reviewed by a court of competent jurisdiction if the commission has committed an error of law or acted beyond or refused to exercise its jurisdiction.

#### **MOTION:**

THAT the French version of sections 76 and 77 of the Bill be amended by striking out "Commission des relations" wherever it occurs and substituting "Commission".

#### **MOTION:**

THAT subsection 78(1) be amended by striking out " , by regulation. ",

#### **MOTION:**

THAT the following be added after section 78:

#### **Repeal**

**78.1** This Part is repealed on April 1, 2002.

#### **MOTION:**

THAT Part 6 be amended

(a) by striking out "commissioner" wherever it occurs other than in section 69, and substituting "commission"; and

(b) by making any other necessary grammatical modifications.

#### **MOTION:**

THAT subsections 84(4), (5) and (6) of the Bill be struck out and the following substituted:

**84(4)** Subsections 4(1) to 4(7) are repealed and the following is substituted:

#### **Appointment of medical officers of health and deputy medical officers**

**4(1)** Subject to subsection (2), the minister may appoint medical officers of health and deputy medical officers of health for the province.



**Appointment for City of Winnipeg**

**4(2)** *The council of The City of Winnipeg shall appoint a medical officer of health as required under section 64 of The City of Winnipeg Act, and may appoint deputy medical officers of health for The City of Winnipeg.*

**Duties and powers of deputy medical officer of health**

**4(3)** *A deputy medical officer of health shall act at the request of the medical officer of health or where the medical officer of health is absent or unable or unwilling to act, and when so acting a deputy medical officer of health has all the powers and authority of a medical officer of health.*

**Remuneration and dismissal**

**4(4)** *A medical officer of health or a deputy medical officer of health*

*(a) appointed by the minister*

*(i) shall be paid such remuneration out of the Consolidated Fund as the minister may set, and*

*(ii) may be dismissed by the minister; and*

*(b) appointed by the council of The City of Winnipeg*

*(i) shall be paid such remuneration by The City of Winnipeg as the council may set, and*

*(ii) may be dismissed by the council.*

**MOTION:**

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

*Your committee on MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS has also considered:*

*Bill 54—The Municipal and Various Acts Amendment Act; Loi concernant les municipalités et modifiant diverses dispositions législatives*

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

**MOTION:**

*THAT the definition “council committee” in subsection 1(1) be amended by striking out “board or other body established by a council under this Act” and substituting “or other body established by a council under subsection 142(2)”.*

**MOTION:**

*THAT the definition “population” in subsection 1(1) be struck out.*

**MOTION:**

*THAT the following be added after subsection 1(2):*

**References to population**

**1(3)** *A reference in this Act to the population of a municipality or other area means the population of the municipality or area as shown by the most recent census taken and available under the Statistics Act (Canada).*

**MOTION:**

*THAT the following be added after section 1:*

**Indian Reserves excluded**

**1.1** *Despite any Act of the Legislature,*

*(a) land within an Indian Reserve is not part of the area of any municipality;*

*(b) persons residing within an Indian Reserve are not residents of any municipality; and*

*(c) any description of the boundaries of a municipality or the area within a municipality is deemed to provide that land within an Indian Reserve is excluded from the municipality.*

**MOTION:**

*THAT subsection 4(2) be struck out and the following substituted:*

**Application of Division to Winnipeg and to land in Winnipeg**

**4(2)** *This Division does not apply to land within the boundaries of The City of Winnipeg, but for the*

*purposes of this Division The City of Winnipeg is deemed to be a municipality in relation to land outside the boundaries of The City of Winnipeg to the following extent:*

*(a) the council of The City of Winnipeg may initiate a proposal and make application under this Division to annex land outside the boundaries of The City of Winnipeg and annexation regulations may be made in relation to the proposal and application;*

*(b) The City of Winnipeg is entitled to receive notice of a proposal that affects it and to participate in proceedings arising from the proposal;*

*(c) regulations annexing land from a municipality to The City of Winnipeg may be made under section 46.*

**MOTION:**

*THAT subsection 9(4) be amended by striking out "in the form of" and substituting "accompanied by".*

**MOTION:**

*THAT the following be added after section 9:*

**Sufficiency of petition**

*9.1(1) A petition is sufficient if it complies with this section.*

**Information about each petitioner**

*9.1(2) A petition must include the following:*

*(a) in printed form, the surname and given name or initials of each petitioner;*

*(b) each petitioner's signature;*

*(c) the date on which each petitioner signs the petition;*

*(d) the address of each petitioner's residence;*

*(e) in the case of a petition to form a municipality, a statement that each petitioner is eligible to be an elector of the proposed municipality;*

*(f) in the case of a petition to dissolve a municipality, a statement that each petitioner is an elector of the municipality.*

**Manner of witnessing signature on a petition**

*9.1(3) Each signature on the petition must be witnessed by an adult person who must*

*(a) sign opposite the signature of the petitioner; and*

*(b) make a statutory declaration that to the best of the witness's knowledge the signature witnessed is that of a person eligible to sign the petition.*

**Number of petitioners required**

*9.1(4) A petition must be signed by not less than the 30% of the persons*

*(a) who would be electors of the municipality proposed to be formed; or*

*(b) who are electors of the municipality proposed to be dissolved.*

**Counting the number of petitioners**

*9.1(5) In determining whether the required number of persons have signed the petition, a person's name is not to be counted if*

*(a) the information required under subsection (2) about the petitioner is not provided or the information, other than the signature, is not legible and cannot easily be determined by the secretary of The Municipal Board;*

*(b) the person's signature is not witnessed, or the witness has not made the statutory declaration required under clause (3)(b); or*

*(c) the person signed the petition more than 90 days before the petition was filed under subsection 9(3) or more than 150 days before the petition was re-filed with The Municipal Board under subsection (10).*

**Representative of petitioners**

*9.1(6) The petition must have attached to it a signed statement of the individual named as the representative of the petitioners under clause 10(e) that he or she is so named and that any inquiry or notice respecting the petition may be directed to the individual at an address that is set out in the statement.*

**Filing of petition**

**9.1(7)** A petition must be filed with the secretary of The Municipal Board.

**Secretary to determine sufficiency of petition**

**9.1(8)** The secretary must determine the sufficiency of the petition not later than 30 days after it is filed.

**Process where petition is not sufficient**

**9.1(9)** If in the opinion of the secretary a filed petition is not sufficient, the secretary must within the time set out in subsection (8) give written notice of the manner in which the petition is not sufficient to the representative named in the petition under subsection (6).

**Re-filing of petition**

**9.1(10)** The petition may be re-filed, with or without changes, with the secretary within 30 days after notice is given under subsection (9), and subsections (2) to (8) apply to the re-filed petition.

**No change in petition after filing or re-filing**

**9.1(11)** No name may be added to or removed from a petition after it is filed under subsection (7) or re-filed under subsection (10), except an addition or removal made after a notice is given under subsection (9) and before the petition is re-filed.

**MOTION:**

THAT the following be added after subsection 22(4):

**Copy of report to be provided on payment of fee**

**22(5)** The chief administrative officer must provide a copy of the report to a person who pays any fee set for the report by the council.

**Fee**

**22(6)** The fee must not exceed a comparable fee payable under The Freedom of Information Act.

**MOTION:**

THAT the following be added after subsection 38(4):

**Copy of report to be provided on payment of fee**

**38(5)** The chief administrative officer must provide a copy of the report to a person who pays any fee set for the report by the council.

**Fee**

**38(6)** The fee must not exceed a comparable fee payable under The Freedom of Information Act.

**MOTION:**

THAT subsection 50(2) be amended by striking out "and may operate despite a collective agreement".

**MOTION:**

THAT the following be added after the heading "LOCAL URBAN DISTRICTS: FORMATION, FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES AND DISSOLUTION" and before section 52:

**Interpretation of sufficient petition**

**51.1** In this Division, a sufficient petition means a sufficient petition within the meaning of Division 3 of Part 5.

**Application to the Local Urban District of Ninette**

**51.2** In the case of the Local Urban District of Ninette, in any provision of this Division relating to the amendment of the regulation forming it or to initiating, or making a regulation for, its dissolution, a reference to

(a) "municipality" is to be read as a reference to the "municipalities of Strathcona and Riverside"; and

(b) "council of a municipality" is to be read as a reference to the "councils of the municipalities of Strathcona and Riverside".

**MOTION:**

THAT clause 52(a) be amended by adding "or such other density as the minister may in a specific case consider sufficient for the type and level of services to be provided in the local urban district" at the end.

**MOTION:**

THAT subsection 71(2) be amended by adding "with or" before "without".

**MOTION:**

THAT clause 79(1)(d) be struck out and the following substituted:

*(d) to keep in confidence a matter that is discussed at a meeting closed to the public under subsection 146(3) and that the committee decides to keep confidential until the matter is discussed at a meeting of the council or of a committee conducted in public;*

**MOTION:**

*THAT the following be added after section 79:*

**Member may discuss confidential matter with C.A.O.**  
**79.1** *Despite clause 79(1)(d), a member may discuss with the chief administrative officer or a designated officer a matter referred to in that clause before the matter is made public as provided in that clause.*

**MOTION:**

*That subsection 80(3) be struck out.*

**MOTION:**

*THAT clause 81(3)(a) be amended by adding “, and the references to the first Wednesday in September in subsection 17(5) (list of electors), subsection 19(1) (notice of revision) and section 30 (return of lists to enumerator) of that Act shall be read as a reference to the first Friday in June” after “May”.*

**MOTION:**

*THAT section 85 be renumbered as subsection 85(1) and the following added as subsection 85(2):*

**Application to Flin Flon**

**85(2)** *Despite clause (1)(c), a person who is a resident of the boundary area defined in The Flin Flon Extension of Boundaries Act, S.M. 1989-90, c. 73, is eligible to be nominated and elected as a member of the council of the City of Flin Flon.*

**MOTION:**

*THAT subsection 87(2) be amended*

*(a) in the part preceding clause (a), by striking out “Subject to subsection (3), an” and substituting “An”; and*

*(b) in clause (a), by striking out “seek” and substituting “subject to subsection (3), seek”.*

**MOTION:**

*THAT subsection 87(3) be amended by striking out “Subsection (2)” and substituting “Clause (2)(a)”.*

**MOTION:**

*THAT subsection 87(4) be struck out and the following substituted:*

**Leave of absence for municipal election**

**87(4)** *An employee who proposes to become a candidate for election as a member of the council of the municipality by which he or she is employed may apply to the chief administrative officer, on or before the last day for the nomination of candidates, for a leave of absence for a period starting on the last day on which nomination papers may be filed and ending not later than 30 days after the day on which the results of the election are officially declared, or for any part of that period, and every such application must be granted.*

**MOTION:**

*THAT subsection 87(8) be amended by striking out “or” at the end of clause (a) and substituting “and”.*

**MOTION:**

*THAT clause 89(1)(a) be amended*

*(a) by striking out “two consecutive” and substituting “three consecutive”;*

*(b) by striking out “either of the two meetings” and substituting “any of the three meetings”; and*

*(c) by striking out “second absence” and substituting “third absence”.*

**MOTION:**

*That the following be added after clause 89(1)(a):*

*(a.1) is the councillor appointed to the committee of a local urban district under clause 107(1)(a) and is*

absent for the full duration of three consecutive regular committee meetings unless the absences are with the leave of the committee granted by a resolution of the committee passed at any one of the three meetings, a prior meeting or the next meeting following the third absence;

**MOTION:**

THAT clause 107(1)(b) be amended by striking out "two" and substituting "not more than three".

**MOTION:**

THAT the following be added after subsection 107(1):

**Status and membership of committee**

**107(1.1)** Despite subsection (1), the committee of the Local Urban District of Ninette is a committee of the councils of the Rural Municipalities of Strathcona and Riverside and consists of

(a) one councillor from each of the Rural Municipalities of Strathcona and Riverside appointed by council; and

(b) not more than three members elected by the electors of the Local Urban District.

**MOTION:**

THAT subsection 108(2) be amended

(a) by adding the following after clause (c):

(c.1) section 87 (leave of absence);

(b) by adding the following after clause (d):

(d.1) section 89 (disqualification);

**MOTION:**

THAT the following be added after section 117 and within Division 5:

**Regulations about Local Urban District of Ninette**

**117.1** The Lieutenant Governor in Council may in relation to the Local Urban District of Ninette, the

Committee of the Local Urban District of Ninette and the Rural Municipalities of Strathcona and Riverside make any regulation that the minister considers necessary to give effect to the intention of this Part.

**MOTION:**

THAT section 147 be struck out and the following substituted:

**Petitions must conform to this Division**

**147** Where a petition is required under this Act, other than in Part 2, the petition must meet the requirements of this Division before it is presented to the council.

**MOTION:**

THAT subsection 148(3) be amended

(a) in clause (e), by striking out "subsection 9(4) to form a municipality or "; and

(b) by striking out clause (f) and substituting the following:

(f) in the case of a petition under clause 62(1)(a) (dissolution of a local urban district), a statement that each petitioner is an elector of the local urban district;

**MOTION:**

THAT clause 148(4)(b) be amended by striking out "subsection 9(4) (formation or dissolution of a municipality),".

**MOTION:**

THAT subsection 154(1) be amended by striking out "by this or any other Act to hold" and substituting "under this Act to hold".

**MOTION:**

THAT subsection 154(2) be amended

(a) in the part preceding clause (a), by striking out "entire"; and

(b) in clause (a), by striking out "all or any part of".

**MOTION:**

*THAT subsection 154(3) be struck out.*

**MOTION:**

*THAT the following be added after subsection 158(3):*

**Utilities**

**158(3.1)** *The council must ensure that the amount of estimated revenue from a utility is not less than the amount of estimated expenditures in respect of the utility unless, before adopting the operating budget, the council obtains the minister's written approval, which may include any condition the minister considers necessary or advisable, including referring the matter to The Public Utilities Board.*

**MOTION:**

*THAT clause 162(2)(b) be struck out and the following substituted:*

*(b) in the case of a reserve fund that is supplemented with the approval of The Public Utilities Board, the Board approves the proposed expenditure.*

**MOTION:**

*THAT the following be added after subsection 163(2):*

**Expenditure or transfer of revenue exceeding estimate 163(3)** *A council may authorize expenditures from its operating budget, or transfer amounts from its operating budget to the capital budget, that are not provided for in the operating budget if the total of the expenditures and transfers does not exceed the total of*

*(a) the amount of revenue from grants and transfers in excess of the amount estimated under 158(2)(b); and*

*(b) the amount of revenue from sources referred to in clause 158(2)(d) in excess of the amount estimated under that clause.*

**Expenditure from capital budget**

**163(4)** *A council may authorize expenditures from its capital budget that are not provided for in the capital budget if the total of the expenditures does not exceed*

*the amounts transferred from the operating budget under subsection (3).*

**MOTION:**

*THAT section 164 be amended by adding "or otherwise insured" after "bonded".*

**MOTION:**

*THAT clause 174(1)(c) be struck out and the following substituted:*

*(c) the loan is authorized by by-law; and*

**MOTION:**

*THAT section 176 be deleted.*

**MOTION:**

*THAT the following be added after section 229:*

**Charge re local transportation system under 227(1)(m) 229.1** *Despite The Public Utilities Board Act, including section 106 (conflict of interest) of that Act, a rate, toll, fare or other charge established by a council in respect of a local transportation system referred to in clause 227(1)(m) is not subject to that Act.*

**MOTION:**

*THAT sections 233 to 236 be deleted.*

**MOTION:**

*THAT clause 249(1)(b) be amended by striking out "subject to Division 2 (Economic Development),".*

**MOTION:**

*THAT subsection 261(1) be amended*

*(a) in clause (f), by adding ", except the minutes for any part of a committee meeting that was closed under subsection 146(3);" at the end;*

*(b) in clause (h), by striking out "clause 37(1)(b)" and substituting "clause 37(2)(b)".*

**MOTION:**

*THAT subsection 261(2) be struck out and the following substituted:*

**Council may authorize access to other records**  
**261(2)** *The chief administrative officer must provide access to any other municipal record in the possession of the municipality if he or she is authorized by the council to provide access to the record.*

**MOTION:**

*THAT subsection 269(1) be amended*

*(a) by striking out the section heading and substituting "Certain urban municipalities"; and*

*(b) by striking out "Every city and town and every village" and substituting "Every urban municipality".*

**MOTION:**

*THAT subsection 269(2) be amended*

*(a) by striking out the section heading and substituting "Other urban municipalities, and rural municipalities"; and*

*(b) by striking out "A village" and substituting "An urban municipality".*

**MOTION:**

*THAT subsection 270(3) be amended by striking out "holds office during the pleasure of the council and".*

**MOTION:**

*THAT section 290 be amended in the part preceding clause (a) by adding ",subject to the Mines and Minerals Act," after "may".*

**MOTION:**

*THAT subsection 296(1) be amended by striking out the definition "taxpayer".*

**MOTION:**

*THAT section 316 be amended*

*(a) in subsection (2), by striking out "subsection (1)" and substituting "this section"; and*

*(b) by adding the following after subsection (3):*

**Notice where tax to be levied on all taxpayers**  
**316(4)** *Despite subsection (1) but subject to subsection (3), if all taxpayers in the municipality are potential taxpayers under a local improvement plan or special services proposal, the municipality may give public notice of the plan or proposal instead of mailing a notice to each potential taxpayer.*

**MOTION:**

*THAT subsection 318(3) be amended by striking out everything after "the council must" and substituting the following:*

*(a) give public notice of and hold a public hearing in respect of the plan or proposal before considering a by-law to approve it; and*

*(b) send notice of the hearing by mail to each potential taxpayer who objected to the plan or proposal.*

**MOTION:**

*THAT section 327 be amended*

*(a) in the definition "admission price", by striking out clause (b) and substituting the following:*

*(b) the amount paid for*

*(i) a ride or the use of a thing, or*

*(ii) participation in an amusement, and*

*(b) by adding the following definition in alphabetical order:*

**"amusement"** *means a contest, dance, entertainment, exhibition, game, performance, program, show, riding device or amusement ride;*

*(c) in the definition "place of amusement",*

(i) by striking out clause (a) and substituting the following:

(a) an amusement is given, held or played or takes place, and

(ii) in clause (b), by striking out "entrance or admission fee" and substituting "admission price".

**MOTION:**

THAT section 328 be amended

(a) in subsection (1), be striking out "to a place or places of amusement";

(b) in subsection (3),

(i) in the part preceding clause (a), by adding "by by-law" after "may";

(ii) in the French version of clause (b), by striking out "prennent" and substituting "prendre"; and

(iii) by striking out "and" at the end of clause (a), adding "and" at the end of clause (b) and adding the following after clause (b):

(c) authorize inspectors, police constables or auditors to conduct inspections or audits related to compliance with this Division and, for that purpose, to enter places of amusement and any other places where records relating to amusements might be kept.

**MOTION:**

THAT section 330 be amended by striking out everything after "exempt" and substituting "persons or classes of persons from amusement tax on the admission price for certain amusements or places of amusement or classes of amusements or places of amusement."

**MOTION:**

THAT clause 341(1)(c) be struck out and the following substituted:

(c) pay interest on the excess taxes to the taxpayer, from the date they were paid, at an annual rate prescribed by

regulation by the minister for each calendar year, or any part thereof, which rate must be prescribed at least once in the year.

**MOTION:**

THAT clause 378(1)(b) be amended by striking out "six" and substituting "three".

**MOTION:**

THAT clause 387(a) be amended by adding "service line," after "pipe,".

**MOTION:**

THAT subsection 394(1) be amended by striking out clauses (a) and (b) and substituting "within three days after the event."

**MOTION:**

THAT subsection 416(1) be amended

(a) by striking out clause (d);

(b) in clause (f), by striking out "fines, penalties and costs" and substituting "fines and penalties"; and

(c) by adding the following after clause (j):

(j.1) for the purpose of clause 341(1)(c), prescribing the annual rate of interest to be paid on excess taxes;

**MOTION:**

THAT the section heading for subsection 419(2) be amended by striking out "meeting" and substituting "hearing".

**MOTION:**

THAT subsection 425(1) be amended

(a) in the section heading, by striking out "urban municipalities" and substituting "towns"; and

(b) by striking out "Urban Municipality" and substituting "Town".



**MOTION:**

THAT the following be added after subsection 428(2):

Application of clause 86(d) and subsection 87(7)

**428(3)** Clause 86(d) (municipal employees who are disqualified) and subsection 87(7) (employee elected as member of council or committee of L.U.D.) do not apply to an employee of a municipality who is a member of the council of the municipality or the committee of a local urban district in the municipality at the time this Act comes into force until the term of office for which the employee was elected expires or the employee ceases to be a member of the council or committee.

**MOTION:**

THAT the following be added after subsection 431(1):

Continuation of unincorporated urban districts

**431(1.1)** An unincorporated urban district formed under *The Local Government Districts Act* is continued under this Act as a local urban district.

**MOTION:**

THAT subsection 431(2) be amended

(a) in the section heading, by adding "and U.U.D.s" after "U.V.D.s";

(b) in the part preceding clause (a), by adding "or an unincorporated urban district referred to in subsection (1.1)" after "subsection (1)"; and

(c) in clause (a), by adding "or the unincorporated urban district" after "unincorporated village district".

**MOTION:**

THAT subsection 431(4) be amended

(a) in the section heading, by striking out "unincorporated village district" and substituting "U.V.D.s and U.U.D.s"; and

(b) in the subsection, by adding "or unincorporated urban district" after "unincorporated village district".

**MOTION:**

THAT the following be added after subsection 431(4):

By-elections before first general election

**431(5)** Despite anything in this Act, when the office of a member of a committee referred to in subsection (3) (in this subsection referred to as a "member who holds office as if elected") becomes vacant before the first general election following the coming into force of this section, a by-election is not required if

(a) the committee has remaining at least two members who hold office as if elected; and

(b) a majority of the members then on the committee request, not later than 30 days after the vacancy occurs, that council not hold a by-election.

**MOTION:**

THAT the following be added after section 439 of the Bill:

Tax sales and redemptions

**439.1** Where land within a municipality is sold for taxes before the coming into force of this Act, the provisions of the former *Municipal Act* respecting the rights, powers and obligations of the municipality, the tax purchaser and the person who owned the land before the sale continue to apply in respect of the land until the period for the redemption of the land provided for under that Act has expired.

**MOTION:**

THAT section 440 be deleted.

**MOTION:**

THAT section 442 be renumbered as section 421.1.

**MOTION:**

THAT section 457 be deleted.

**MOTION:**

THAT the following be added after subsection 458 (1):

**458(1.1)** The following is added after section 1:

**Indian Reserves excluded****1.1 Despite any Act of the Legislature**

(a) land within an Indian Reserve is not part of the area of any local government district

(b) persons residing within an Indian Reserve are not residents of any local government district; and

(c) any description of the boundaries of a local government district or the area within a local government district is deemed to provide that land within an Indian Reserve is excluded from the local government district.

**MOTION:**

THAT the following be added after clause 458(8)(d):

(e) section 18.

**MOTION:**

THAT the following be added after section 460:

**The Municipal Council Conflict of Interest Act**

C.C.S.M. c. M255 amended

**460.1** Subsection 9(1) of *The Municipal Council Conflict of Interest Act* is repealed and the following is substituted:

**Annual statement of assets and interests**

**9(1)** Not later than the last day in November of each year, and in the case of *The City of Winnipeg*, not later than the fourth Wednesday in November of each year, every councillor shall file with the clerk of the municipality a statement disclosing assets and interests in accordance with section 10.

**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. Laurendeau:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), that the report of the committee be received.

**Motion agreed to.****Introduction of Guests**

**Madam Speaker:** Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery, where we have this afternoon 10 students from the English language centre at the University of Manitoba under the direction of Ms. Lori Downey. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey).

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

Also seated in the public gallery we have this afternoon 30 students from Collège Jeanne-Sauvé, under the direction of Monsieur Bernard Desautels. This school is located in the constituency of the Speaker.

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

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD****Health Sciences Centre  
Heart Surgery Cancellations**

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, earlier this week I asked the Premier (Mr. Filmon) about cancellations of heart surgery at the Health Sciences Centre due to a lack of beds at the ICU at the same Health Sciences Centre. I asked the minister how many operations were cancelled last week. Could the minister please inform Manitobans how many surgical procedures were cancelled in heart surgery last week as a result of the lack of beds in the intensive care unit at the Health Sciences Centre?

\* (1340)

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** As I told the Leader of the Opposition in answer to previous questions, Dr. Luis Oppenheimer, head of surgery for the city of Winnipeg, and the Deputy Minister of Health, Dr. John Wade, as well as the leadership of the cardiac program are meeting. They are meeting, as a matter of fact, today, to address the issue of cancellations of surgeries.

But all of this is being done against the backdrop of increased funding for the cardiac program at both Health Sciences Centre and St. Boniface General Hospital to the extent that in the last four years the numbers of surgeries has increased very, very dramatically in Manitoba from 523 surgeries in 1993-94 to a minimum of 1,000 surgeries this year, so there is a lot of activity going on in that area, and any cancellations due to emergencies presenting and that sort of thing, we are attempting to make sure that as little disruption as possible occurs in the system.

**Mr. Doer:** Over the last five years, the government has promised a solution to these problems. We have tabled material in 1992 talking about the situation. We tabled a memo last year, in 1995, talking about the ICU situation, and every year this government promises to do something about something that they have been warned about for the last six years.

I would like to ask the minister, how many surgeries—and he has not answered the question about heart surgery—have been cancelled today and are predicted to be cancelled in vascular surgery and abdominal surgery again this week because there are no beds at the Health Sciences Centre in the ICU unit? Of course, the minister knows that his cuts have resulted in the reduction in beds. What is the impact on patient care and how many surgeries have been cancelled?

**Mr. McCrae:** Madam Speaker, while I acknowledge, as occurred during the time when the Leader of the Opposition was in government in Manitoba, cancellation of surgeries occurred from time to time then and they occur from time to time now. This is not a positive thing, not something we want to see happen, but the honourable Leader of the Opposition referred to solutions to problems.

Well, for hundreds and hundreds of Manitobans, year after year, the solution to the problem has clearly been coronary artery bypass surgery. As I pointed out to the honourable member, in 1993, we performed 523 of them in Manitoba; in 1994-95, we performed 594; in 1995-96, there were 729 and there will be a minimum of a thousand of them this year. In 1995, additional funding amounting to \$941,000 for the Health Sciences Centre and \$894,000 for St. Boniface General Hospital was made available. In 1996-97, this additional funding was

incorporated into the global budgets of these two facilities.

**Mr. Doer:** Madam Speaker, I asked the minister on Monday and again today, how many surgeries have been cancelled because of the lack of ICU beds at the Health Sciences Centre? I would hope after four days this minister could give the people of this province, Mr. Kowalyk and other families today that had cancellations of surgery of their loved ones at the Health Sciences Centre because of his lack of action, I was hoping today he could give us some specific answers.

I would like to ask the minister—and he heard similar testimony with presentations with Bill 49; he heard people on the floor level of the hospitals saying the same thing as he is hearing from us today in this Legislature—when is he going to fulfill the promise that he made in 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995 and in 1996 to have a plan to deal with beds in the ICU unit and other units so people can get surgery when surgeons are scheduled and staff are there to take those surgeries for our patients?

**Mr. McCrae:** Madam Speaker, as I said to the honourable Leader of the Opposition, discussions are underway today, as a matter of fact, as a result of concerns that have arisen with respect to cancellation of surgeries. Discussions are happening with the leadership of surgery in the city of Winnipeg and the leadership of the cardiac program, headed by Dr. Bill Lindsay, who has returned from the United States to provide leadership to us in the city of Winnipeg and for all of Manitobans.

The honourable member makes suggestions that the government has not been responsive to the growing need for coronary artery bypass surgery, and I point out to the honourable member—I do not think he heard me before—in 1993, there were 523 performed in Manitoba; in 1994-95, there were 594; in '95-96, there were 729 and there will be a minimum of a thousand of them this year, Madam Speaker.

I can go over for the honourable member again the additional dollars built into the budgets for the cardiac program, which have become a permanent addition to the budget for those programs.

\* (1345)

### Holiday Haven Nursing Home Investigation

**Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan):** Madam Speaker, the allegations about Holiday Haven that occurred this week in the House are not the first time that allegations have been made about Holiday Haven. There have been many. As recently as two years ago, a family whose mother had her arm broken for five days and it was not diagnosed made a complaint to the department and the department promised that that complaint would be dealt with and the situation would improve and, obviously, it has not.

My question to the minister is, what guarantees will the minister give to the families and individuals of the complaints that have come in and will be coming in, amounting in the dozens, that these complaints will be investigated and will be acted upon?

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** I gave the honourable member assurances yesterday about concerns that have arisen with respect to the Holiday Haven personal care home. I told the honourable member that indeed issues have been made known to the department.

The honourable member indicated yesterday his willingness to co-operate and to make information available, as he wants to see to it that no one should feel intimidated or under any pressure about this. The honourable member, of course, does not feel that kind of pressure and it is appropriate that he does not, and it is appropriate that he bring forward whatever information that he has to share so that we can continue as a department to address the issues at Holiday Haven with the management of that personal care home.

We have asked the personal care home to retain a consultant to assist in solving the problems and to report back to the department by the end of November so that we can correct whatever deficiencies exist.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Speaker, is the minister not concerned that these complaints would include complaints from other parts of the minister's department, from other nursing homes, from Grace Hospital, from Deer Lodge hospital, from the Public Trustee? Is the minister not concerned that in fact management at Holiday Haven is in fact one of the major parts of the problem?

**Mr. McCrae:** Madam Speaker, of course we are concerned about the care provided to vulnerable fellow Manitobans who reside in personal care homes all across the province. Of course we are concerned, and that is why we have put into place the measures that are being put into place to ensure that whatever deficiencies exist are corrected.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Speaker, how is it that two years after the minister's much publicized report on personal care homes that recommended mandatory accreditation and a system of resolving and dealing with complaints, we still have these kinds of problems that have to come out in this Legislature before they get acted upon?

**Mr. McCrae:** Madam Speaker, the honourable member is incorrect. The visits were made by Manitoba Health to the facility on October 3 and October 25, long before the honourable member decided that this was an important matter.

### Manitoba Telephone System Privatization—Conflict of Interest

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** Madam Speaker, yesterday, once again, in Question Period we received another conflicting version of the events surrounding the recommendations to privatize MTS from the Premier (Mr. Filmon).

I want to ask perhaps the Minister responsible for MTS questions in regard to that, because we have raised concerns, obviously, about the role of the investment brokers who got paid to look at this decision. I want to quote someone who stated that they were concerned that "We want to get the best advice possible and we want to avoid the advice being driven, as the members say, only on the basis of a decision to sell shares that obviously would be in the interests of a brokerage firm."

I am wondering why that individual, one Mr. Filmon, the Premier, on December 8, 1995, was concerned about the conflict of interest at that time, and now we see a point where after that recommendation was made and MTS is to be sold off, they have no concerns about the obvious conflict of interest with those recommendations.

**Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister responsible for the administration of The Manitoba Telephone Act):**

Madam Speaker, very clearly our objective is to get the best value for the government of Manitoba and the citizens of Manitoba in the process of moving MTS to a situation where it can aggressively compete and deliver the services to Manitobans, make the future capital investment with some degree of confidence without weighing on the provincial Treasury of the province of Manitoba.

The window was there. We have had the analysis of experts, and we have the ongoing process that will lead to an offer to Manitobans. We have made it exclusively to Manitobans in the early weeks because we know Manitobans will willingly invest in the Manitoba Telephone System.

\* (1350)

**Mr. Ashton:** Perhaps I will rephrase my question because obviously the minister either did not hear the question or chose not to answer it.

I asked about the brokerage firms, and I asked about why the Premier (Mr. Filmon), in December, indicated some concern about possible conflict, why this group was paid the money and why now they are going to be benefiting directly from the sale.

I would like to ask a supplementary to the minister in regard to that, if he can indicate when the government made the decision to ignore the more stringent ownership requirements that were put in place in Alberta with the privatization there, when they copied pretty well everything else, except the fact that here in Manitoba they are allowing individual shareholders to own up to 15 percent compared to 5 percent in Alberta and up to 25 percent foreign ownership in Manitoba compared to 10 percent in Alberta. When did they make that decision?

**Mr. Findlay:** Madam Speaker, in the process of developing the legislation that is tabled in this House.

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

**Mr. Ashton:** As a final supplementary—and this, by the way, is based on information from these three brokerage firms—I would like to ask the minister to come clean and explain to Manitobans how he can justify a process of a

two-day decision-making process for MTS during which the fate of our telephone system was made, when in fact back in December even the Premier (Mr. Filmon) understood at the time there was a conflict of interest in only listening to the brokerage firms.

When are they going to come clean with the people of Manitoba and explain how they made that decision in two days?

**Mr. Findlay:** The member also knows that back in August of '95, Crown Corporations Council made serious comments about the risk element of MTS, put us into a position of bringing forth the advisers who we asked to look at the recapitalization of the Manitoba Telephone System and the risks and challenges they faced.

The options they brought forward were many and varied, one of which was recapitalization through a private offering, and it is the one we chose.

#### **Westfair Foods Labour Dispute—Mediation**

**Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona):** Yesterday we asked the Premier and the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) why they have a double standard in appointing mediators depending on whether or not the dispute is in a Conservative minister's constituency. The response was that the evaluation is done on a case-by-case basis. The minister appears to be taking advice, in the case that we raised yesterday, only from the company Westfair Foods.

I want to ask the Minister of Labour to table and to explain to members of this House what criteria he uses in determining when he will appoint a mediator.

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Labour):** As indicated in the House yesterday, we look at each situation separately. We analyze the situation, and we come to a conclusion. The deputy makes a recommendation to me, and unless there are very obvious reasons why I should question that, I accept what my officials advise me. I have confidence in those officials to advise me correctly.

**Mr. Reid:** Well, then, will the minister confirm that the reason he states mediation will not be successful is, as his deputy minister stated yesterday, that the company Westfair Foods is not interested unless the union

withdraws its bad-faith bargaining charge to the Labour Board against Westfair Foods. Is that the reason why this minister is not appointing a mediator—

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

**Mr. Toews:** I thank the member for Transcona for that question as it gives me an opportunity to put my comments on the record. The position that the member for Transcona raises again demonstrates the unique situation in this particular case. There is a unique situation, there are unique concerns, and on the basis of those unique concerns, we make those decisions.

I would say to you, Madam Speaker, that if Westfair Foods and the union agree on a mediator, I will appoint that mediator. If either of the two parties agree on a mediator and cannot determine who that mediator shall be, I will determine that mediator if so requested.

**Mr. Reid:** Again, another double standard from this Minister of Labour—

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

**Mr. Reid:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Since it appears that the company keeps a veto in this process, I want to ask the minister: Since the main outstanding issue in this dispute is full-time jobs, as the union wants, versus the part-time jobs that the company wants, why is this minister only listening to his Deputy Minister of Labour and to the company when the company states and the minister's staff state that mediation will not be successful because it will add extra financial cost for the Department of Labour? Is that another one of your criteria that—

\* (1355)

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Toews:** Unlike members opposite, Madam Speaker, we do have to examine and analyze all issues, including cost. I might say that in this particular case I would not consider mediation costs to be the sole or even the important factor. As indicated from my answer to the previous question, in fact the government of Manitoba is

prepared to appoint a mediator if the two parties recommend that a mediator be appointed. If they will not agree to a mediator, in terms of a specific individual, we in the Department of Labour can do that.

I would be remiss in not stating that there are ongoing meetings with conciliation. Those meetings are taking place. They are certainly welcome to discuss issues further with the Deputy Minister of Labour and I will certainly take all recommendations and make all appropriate considerations in any final determination.

### Road Maintenance Privatization

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Madam Speaker, we have argued in the past that this government has taken somewhat of a hard right turn. Now, once again, we hear some rumours of privatization.

My question is actually for the Minister of Highways and Transportation. We are led to believe or are of the understanding that the Department of Highways is now considering the possibility of privatizing the highway line painting department. I am wondering if the Minister of Highways can respond to this concern.

**Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation):** Madam Speaker, I actually thank the member for that question because we are under incredible challenge in this province to deliver enough dollars to keep our road, bridge infrastructure up to an acceptable standard. We must do whatever we can to minimize our cost to deliver our essential services, and we must analyze the way we can save money in the way we deliver services in the department to maximize the dollar for capital and maintenance.

We put all our tax revenue through the Department of Finance into our roads. The federal government collects \$180 million a year out of the roads system in Manitoba and next year will not contribute a significant dollar to Manitoba. He should ask his federal counterparts why they will not share their responsibilities. If they are going to take the tax out, why do they not put some dollars back in the infrastructure replacements?

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

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, to get the minister then to confirm that the Department of Highways is now currently looking to privatize this particular area of the branch, is that what he is saying today?

**Mr. Findlay:** Staff in the department are going through a lot of analyses of a lot of the ways in which things are done as we go into the next budgetary process, and if I recall right, it was employees who brought that forward to us sometime in the past and it is in some state of discussion within the department. That is all discussion.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I would ask the Minister of Highways if he can detail for the Chamber in terms of what is next. We have seen the privatization of the signs, now the privatization of the painting.

Can the Minister of Highways tell this House today to what degree is he prepared to privatize his department?

**Mr. Findlay:** Madam Speaker, we spend in the vicinity of \$100 million a year on capital in the highway network of Manitoba. Right now in front of us, driven by municipalities primarily, road users, MLAs, I have \$1,100 million of requests, \$1,100 million with a hundred a year to serve it. As roads wear out, as bridges reach a point where they cannot carry today's trucks, that grows. I am really disappointed at the member saying, you cannot meet all those demands by changing anything. I mean, he is just really out of touch with the way the world is right now.

\* (1400)

### **Winnipeg Police Services Illegal Weapon Pursuance**

**Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns):** My question is to the Minister of Justice.

Can the minister assure Manitobans that peace officers in her department are vigorously pursuing criminal proceedings against anyone found in possession of concealed or prohibited weapons, whether they be handguns, military assault weapons or even pepper spray?

**Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Madam Speaker, the member's

question, I believe, relates to police officers in our province and their vigorous work in terms of dealing with what may be an illegal weapon or an illegally held weapon, and I have no reason to believe that that is not the case.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I was referring to peace officers in her department.

### **Law Courts Building Amnesty Bins—Weapons**

**Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns):** Could the minister possibly explain why the proposed metal detector security system at the Law Courts Building will apparently pardon or excuse persons found with weapons at the doors by providing so-called amnesty bins, and I quote from the notice from the Sheriff's Office: Should users wish to dispose of their weapons prior to entering the complex.

**Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** The member does highlight another move by this government and the Department of Justice to provide more secure facilities and, yes, there is a bin which is placed there for people to dispose of their weapon. We believe that the security matters will in fact assist Manitobans and people who work and appear in our courthouse to be safer.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for St. Johns, with a final supplementary question.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Madam Speaker, I will table the notice from the Sheriff's Office on this issue.

Would the minister tell us what is wrong with this picture? Someone is caught red-handed breaking the Criminal Code, coming into the Law Courts Building, of all places, with, for example, a concealed or stolen handgun, a weapon used in the commission of an offence or an Uzi for that matter, and her department says, leave your gun here in the bin, no questions asked, enjoy your visit. Is the department again refusing to enforce the laws of this land?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** The member continues to make allegations which are unfounded. He adds to his list

every day he gets on his feet regarding unfounded allegations.

There are court cases which occur within the Law Courts on a regular basis and evidence gathered in relation to that. This is an effort on behalf of Courts to make our Law Courts in fact a safer place to be and it deals with concerns that are concerns of the public, concerns of people who appear in the Law Courts and also people who work there on a regular basis.

A new security system does not always meet with the approval of the member opposite as do many of the very tough measures that this government has taken; he tends to be unsupportive.

#### **Leipsic Communications Contract Information Request**

**Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood):** Madam Speaker, on June 11, 1995, we requested an FOI on all contracts with Brenda Leipsic or Leipsic Communications. One month later we received information that there had been one contract. We knew this was incorrect so we appealed for further information. We got no information, so we appealed to the Ombudsman. Finally, in the House we were told there was not one but three contracts, mainly through the Department of Natural Resources.

My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger) in whose Sustainable Development Unit Ms. Leipsic works. Why did it take four months to find out what contracts were let involving a person who works daily in the department, in an office in the department? What was being hidden?

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment):** I responded earlier to this question, so I will respond today as well. I presume, and as I had said in discussion with the member, there were two different departments that were in fact funding the contracts and that may have accounted for the confusion.

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

**Mr. Sale:** I want to ask the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger), whose officer, Bill Podolsky, and Director of Administration, Wolf Boehm, reported to

this House through The Freedom of Information Act, why was Ms. Leipsic paid at the same time from June 15 to November 30 under two separate contracts at the same time for \$250 a day each?

**Mr. Cummings:** That does not conform with any information that I have, and I will certainly review the information the member is bringing forward.

**Mr. Sale:** Madam Speaker, what we have before us is more evidence of the good stewardship of this minister, when a former president of the Conservative Party—

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

**Mr. Sale:** My question, Madam Speaker, to the minister is, is this more good evidence of the stewardship of this minister when a former president of the Conservative Party is paid over \$111,000 on various contracts plus some \$16,000 in salary to raise money for the government?

**Mr. Cummings:** Madam Speaker, the member knows full well that the contracts were tendered, as it was indicated to him before. As a matter of fact, one of the responsibilities of this individual was to do the organizational work and provide corporate assistance to fund the Sustainable Development awards process so that it was not a burden to the taxpayer, a project that she was quite successful at.

#### **Deputy Minister of Natural Resources Expense Account Claims**

**Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin):** Madam Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Natural Resources.

Yesterday this minister said that he does not have to justify the expenses of his publicly paid employees. He also claimed that he had no problem with what his deputy minister has claimed.

Why is it that this minister is now responsible for investigating expenses that he himself approved when he knows the proper course of action is to have the records reviewed by the Provincial Auditor?



**Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources):** Madam Speaker, over the last period of time requests have been received under The Freedom of Information Act related to expenses of my deputy minister. These requests were received and they have been replied to, and based on that information, the issue was raised in the House yesterday related to the expenses. I have since had the opportunity to review the expenses, and I feel comfortable that they comply within the government guidelines.

However, in order to assure impartiality, I have written the Clerk of the Executive Council and have asked him to go through all the bills and to make recommendations, if required.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

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

### Provincial Auditor Review

**Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin):** Given the minister's obvious conflict and bias in this situation, why is he so scared to send this mess to the Auditor?

**Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources):** Madam Speaker, it is exactly by this insinuation that I have basically written to the Clerk of the Executive Council, asked them to review all the expenses of my deputy and to make recommendations if required. I will wait on that response until I deal with the issue further.

**Mr. Struthers:** Madam Speaker, why will the Minister of Natural Resources not follow precedents set in the '80s where, in a similar case, the Auditor was requested to look into a matter such as this one which ended up having a former head of the MPIC fired by a previous government? Why does this government not have the integrity to do the same thing?

**Mr. Driedger:** Madam Speaker, I will table the letter that I basically have sent to the Clerk of the Executive Council. I would assume that, if recommendations are required, it should go to the Provincial Auditor, that the Clerk of the Executive Council is going to make that

recommendation, then I would have no difficulty with that.

\* (1410)

### Deputy Minister of Natural Resources Provincial Auditor Review

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, the Clerk of the Executive Council reports to the Premier (Mr. Filmon), the deputy minister reports to the Premier; both are hired and fired by the Premier. The Premier, in this House, defended the decisions yesterday in the House and so did the minister. We respect their right to defend those decisions.

Why do we not send this issue to an independent person, a person who is independent of cabinet who reports directly to the public and this Legislature? So I would like to ask the Acting Premier to just do the right thing today and send these expenses to the Auditor and we can have an independent review of whether the Deputy Minister of Natural Resources used proper judgment in the exercise of his expense filings here in the province of Manitoba.

**Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier):** Madam Speaker, I believe the minister has dealt with it adequately, indicating as he has tabled the letter that he is sending to the Clerk of the Council. The Clerk of the Council is asked to report back, and if it is essential to have other services or other activities brought to that investigation, he is free to do so.

### Road Maintenance Privatization-Advertisements

**Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas):** Madam Speaker, I would like to this afternoon ask the Minister of Highways why there are advertisements being put in The Pas paper advertising for work, particularly snowplowing, work that is normally being done by staff of the Department of Highways in The Pas.

**Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation):** Madam Speaker, the department has the responsibility to look after snow clearing on provincial roads and will find ways and means to do it most cost-effectively, and the department may choose to

do it with using private contractors, nothing unusual about that. It has been done here and there all over the province on a regular basis in conjunction with department resources. There is always a combination of department resources and private resources that are used for maintenance of roads and, particularly, snow clearing.

**Mr. Lathlin:** Madam Speaker, could I ask the Minister of Highways what communities are going to be affected and, also, could he perhaps advise the House how many employees are going to be affected in this, what appears to be privatization of the maintenance of roads in The Pas?

**Mr. Findlay:** Well, Madam Speaker, through the Estimates process they had lots of discussion on the way we deliver services. What we are doing in that instance he is talking about, I do not know the specific example, but I know in the general context, as I have said earlier, of how we clear snow on roads, there is a combination of using employees in the department and the private sector in the various relationships depending on the severity of the snowstorm in an ongoing process. So whether employees doing the work are from the department or the private sector, there will still be, I am sure, employees out of the town of Dauphin.

### **The Pas Health Complex Dialysis Services**

**Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas):** Madam Speaker, on another question for the Minister of Health. About two months ago or six weeks ago, I wrote a letter to the Minister of Health regarding a Mrs. Amelia Young from The Pas who had apparently spent four to six weeks at the Health Sciences Centre and about a month ago was discharged from the hospital, and for over a month now she has been staying at the St. Regis Hotel here in Winnipeg because apparently she was told that she could not go back; she is a dialysis patient. She could not go back to The Pas because there are no services available in The Pas.

Would the minister confirm that please?

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** I will refresh my recollection of this matter and report to the honourable member on the present status.

### **Crown Corporations Privatization-Evaluation**

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** I want to ask a further question to the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Telephone System.

I want to ask the Minister responsible for MTS if he could perhaps explain to the Legislature if in fact the decision to privatize MTS is part of a much bigger plan by the government, and if he can confirm that the Premier (Mr. Filmon), on December 8, in response to questions about MTS, indicated that he had told the Chamber of Commerce that, quote: We are going to be evaluating the operations of all our Crown corporations to see whether they are appropriate under today's circumstances.

I would like to ask, therefore, whether in fact we are seeing the thin edge of the wedge with MTS and in fact if the Premier himself has not already confirmed that we are going to be looking potentially at seeing Hydro and MPIC privatized in the same undemocratic manner they are selling off MTS.

**Mr. Glen Findlay (Minister responsible for the administration of The Manitoba Telephone Act):** Madam Speaker, I think it is imperative that government in every function it is involved in review how it is doing business and how it might be best done in the future.

I think the member should pay attention to Saskatchewan, which has gone through a complete review of all its Crown corporations.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable Minister responsible for the Manitoba Telephone System, to complete his response.

**Mr. Findlay:** Madam Speaker, I speak only for the Manitoba Telephone System, which is now in an area where 70 percent of its revenue is in competition. We have to be very careful that we use scarce government resources only where it is necessary. We very firmly believe the Manitoba Telephone System is very, very capable of continuing to deliver the same high-quality service at the same affordable rates to Manitobans from

now on into the future as a corporation standing on its own two feet.

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

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Manitoba—Economic Performance

**Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson):** Madam Speaker, I was really pleased to be present at a function in St. Malo yesterday where there were some 30-odd business people honoured for having started new entrepreneurial businesses in our area in the southeast part of Manitoba.

I was surprised, pleasantly surprised, to read an article this morning called, Manitoba's economy is alive and well, by Martin Cash of the Winnipeg Free Press, and it coincides with what I heard last night from our local entrepreneurs, that the unemployment rate is down, manufacturing shipments of retail sales on mining, agricultural exports and business investments were very strong.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. I am experiencing great difficulty hearing the honourable member for Emerson, and I wonder if I might ask for the co-operation of all honourable members who are holding private meetings to do so quietly or in the loge.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Cash, in his column in the Free Press, says that Manitoba is not just doing well, it is becoming an all-star economic performer amongst all the provinces—all-star.

We have heard a lot from the honourable members opposite, especially from the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), about out-migration of Manitobans. Well, the article says that there have only been 33 out-migrations in the first six months of 1996. That compares to 10,000 people migrating out of the province of Manitoba in 1988 when the NDP last held office in this government. I think this speaks very loudly and very clearly about the economic performance based on the economic strategy that this government has set for this province of Manitoba, and we have heard criticism

after criticism from members opposite about our record. I think this speaks clearly about the intention of Manitoba's economy and the actions that we as a government have taken in regard to taxation, in regard to deficit reduction and spending.

So I applaud those young entrepreneurs that have taken it upon themselves to create new businesses and jobs for Manitoba based on our economic strategy.

### Cattle Producers

**Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River):** Madam Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to put on the record and plead with the government to address the concerns facing Manitoba cattle producers, particularly those whose livelihood is being threatened.

Cattle producers are holding their annual meetings at this time of the year. A couple of nights ago the cattle producers in my area had their meeting, and their main concern is the shortage of feed that they are facing. We have raised this issue with the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) and the minister of disaster assistance but have had no response.

Cattle producers who depend on native hay along Lake Manitoba, Lake Dauphin, Lake Winnipegosis are experiencing great difficulty in securing their hay supplies for the winter. Both private and leased land is flooded and is not receding due to the large amounts of water that have come into the area from other lakes and from the Portage Diversion.

With cattle prices half of what they were in 1994 and in light of high costs of cattle operations, many producers are finding it extremely difficult financially to purchase badly needed feed. Coupled with the fact that there is no insurance available for native hay, farmers are now looking for assistance from the Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board.

I urge this government to look at a short-term solution to the problem and that is to help farmers and respond immediately to the problem put forward by farmers to get a hay supply so that they do not have to sell their herd off because they cannot get enough hay. The government also has a responsibility to look for a long-term solution to this problem. A plan has been put forward in previous

years, and that is to upgrade the Dauphin River outlet at Fairford Dam.

I would urge this government to recognize the importance of the cattle industry to this province and recognize that they are facing hardship because of decreased prices. But the hardship is much harder because this government will not recognize that, because there is no assistance for them through disaster assistance, there must be a program put in place to help them through this at this time.

\* (1420)

### Small Business Week

**Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina):** As we all know, this is Small Business Week in Manitoba, a time that we recognize and celebrate the achievements of men and women who drive Manitoba's economy. Today I would particularly like to pay tribute to those people who contribute to small business in the Portage la Prairie region.

In the past 11 months, 46 new small businesses have opened in the Portage area. This growth is partly due to the favourable business climate that this government has been developing over the past eight years.

Some of these small business people were honoured at a luncheon yesterday at the Portage and District Chamber of Commerce. Jacquelyne Henry was a recipient of the Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award. Jackie has been a hair stylist in the Portage area since 1986 and this past spring opened her own salon named Head Turnz.

The Entrepreneur of the Year Award went to long-time business people in the community. Ian and Elaine Borland have been servicing the people of Portage since the '70s with their small business, Western Bearing and Auto Parts.

The Company of the Year Award which employs up to 15 people was Sarasue Fashions. Sarah Culbert is the owner and operator of this company that has been in business for nine years.

The Company of the Year Award that employs 16-plus employees is McCain Food Ltd. McCain is currently

under a massive expansion that will generate 150 new jobs in the Portage area.

Finally, the Executive of the Year Award was presented to Tom Tenszen of the Portage Daily Graphic. Tom is relatively new to Portage, however has put in countless hours of volunteer committee work for the area.

As an added note, today the front page of the Winnipeg Free Press featured another growing Portage company that just landed a \$10-million contract to supply combines to the Ukraine. Western Combine is not only improving the Portage economy with this deal but also is part of a larger effort to improve trade relations between the Ukraine and Canada. On behalf of the honourable member for Portage (Mr. Pallister) and all members here, I would like to congratulate small business in the province of Manitoba.

### Manitoba Telephone System Privatization

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** Today once again I raised questions in this House about the Manitoba Telephone System, and I thought it interesting that the Minister responsible for MTS talked about Saskatchewan, where they have had a very public review of their Crown corporations, with meetings held throughout the province. I want to note for the record, this is the same minister who wrote to many Manitobans back in March saying that that would be the case here in Manitoba. In fact, he said, contrary to some reports, no decisions have been made or will be made about the privatization without public discussion. That was in March.

On April 30, they received the report from the three investment brokers and they made the decision, announced it on May 2 without a single public meeting, and they have not had a single public meeting since they made that announcement. That is one of the contradictions, the many contradictions. The government also said they were not going to sell off MTS. Another contradiction: Yesterday in the House the Premier stated, "What we needed, obviously, from the investment bankers was to know whether or not we could get a fair price for the corporation before we made the decision to go ahead with the privatization."

Madam Speaker, this is the same Premier who in December stated, and I refer members to Hansard, on December 11, that part of the reason for them having the investment brokers brought in in the first place was to get analysis based on that decision, whether to make the decision or not. Which is it? Did the government have the plan to sell it off and they brought the investment brokers in and decided on the price, or were they brought in for the analysis? Either way, at some point in time, the government was not telling the truth to Manitobans, because they were saying various different stories about whether a decision had or had not been made and when it would be made.

The bottom line is that the people of Manitoba deserve a lot better. Right now MTS is spending \$400,000 of the people's money trying to go and promote the government's propaganda campaign. Why does the government not do the right thing, stop the privatization of MTS and get the people involved by doing the only right thing, and that is having a vote of the people on the future of the Manitoba Telephone System?

#### **Police Officers—Credibility**

**Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples):** I would just like to put on the record some concerns and comments in regard to recent events in regard to the cynicism of society in general, about people in authority and specifically about police officers.

I remember years ago, when a police officer presented evidence in court, his word was viewed as golden. He was viewed as an officer of the court. A police officer was seen as an unbiased person who gave evidence for the benefit of society, who had no stake in the outcome of the trials and his word was accepted unless there was compelling evidence to the contrary.

We have come now to the point where, unless the police officer is videotaped, his word is not of value. His word itself by some would be perceived not as valued. The word of a police officer is of no more credibility than the people he is arresting. Although, being Liberals, we believe in the rights of individuals, sometimes we have to look at the rights of society in general and whether it is police officers, politicians, priests, anybody who at one time was held at high authority and high respect, society in general is becoming cynical and skeptical about all

these people, and I think we are all the losers for it, and it is a concern. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

#### **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, I believe there might be a willingness of the House to waive private members' hour today.

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

**Mr. Ernst:** Would you call report stage on the bills listed in the Order Paper.

#### **REPORT STAGE**

##### **Bill 22—The Credit Unions and Caisses Populaires Amendment Act**

**Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. McIntosh), that Bill 22, The Credit Unions and Caisses Populaires Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les caisses populaires et les credit unions), as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, be concurred in.

**Motion agreed to.**

##### **Bill 25—The Jury Amendment Act**

**Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that Bill 25, The Jury Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les jurés), reported from the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, be concurred in.

**Motion agreed to.**

\* (1430)

##### **Bill 28—The Winnipeg Stock Exchange Act**

**Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey), that Bill 28, The Winnipeg

Stock Exchange Act; Loi sur la Bourse de Winnipeg, as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, be concurred in.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Bill 29—The Winnipeg Commodity Exchange Act**

**Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that Bill 29, The Winnipeg Commodity Exchange Act; Loi sur la Bourse des marchandises de Winnipeg, as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, be concurred in.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Bill 45—The Consumer Protection Amendment Act**

**Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. McIntosh), that Bill 45, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection du consommateur, as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, be concurred in.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Bill 46—The Securities Amendment Act**

**Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews), that Bill 46, The Securities Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les valeurs mobilières, as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, be concurred in.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Bill 60—The Law Society Amendment Act**

**Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that Bill 60, The Law Society Amendment Act (Loi

modifiant la Loi sur la Société du Barreau), as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, be concurred in.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Bill 62—The Jobs Fund Repeal Act**

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment):** I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey), that Bill 62, The Jobs Fund Repeal Act (Loi abrogeant la Loi sur le Fonds de soutien à l'emploi), reported from the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, be concurred in.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Bill 66—The Boxing and Wrestling Commission Amendment Act**

**Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister responsible for Sport):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews), that Bill 66, The Boxing and Wrestling Commission Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Commission de la boxe et de la lutte), reported from the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, be concurred in.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader):** Would you call Bill 72 and Bill 67.

**Madam Speaker:** To resume second reading debate on Bill 72, on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh)—I am sorry.

With the indulgence of the House, I will recognize the honourable member for Point Douglas for committee changes prior to calling the bill.

**Committee Changes**

**Mr. George Hickey (Point Douglas):** I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations be amended as follows: Wellington (Ms. Barrett) for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen); Transcona (Mr. Reid) for Osborne (Ms. McGifford), for Thursday, October 24, 1996, for 7 p.m.

**Motion agreed to.**

## DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

### Bill 72—The Public Schools Amendment Act (2)

**Madam Speaker:** To resume second reading debate on Bill 72, (The Public Schools Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques), on the proposed motion of the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), that this bill be not now read a second time but be read this day six months hence, standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), who has 14 minutes remaining.

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Madam Speaker:** No. Leave has been denied.

**Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James):** Madam Speaker, today I rise to speak to Bill 72, The Public Schools Amendment Act, and put on the record some of the concerns that teachers have expressed and other community members in the education system, as well as, my own concerns about the impact of this legislation on an already attacked public education system, and why indeed I support the motion by the honourable member for Wolseley, which requested that this be considered in six months. My preference would be six years or, in actuality, never.

Madam Speaker, the bill has caused more harm to our public education system than any other piece of legislation or decree from the minister's office since this government took office eight years ago, and there have been many examples of some very bad decrees and legislation from this government. So, that is quite the unfortunate statement as it tops a list of on-again, off-again policies, attacks to teachers, attacks to our public school system and ultimately now we see a personalized attack to the very professionals who are in the classrooms with our children.

Now, the pressure from school divisions to deal with this issue is not an artificial one. Madam Speaker, having been a trustee in my past life for six years, during

the time that I was elected, unfortunately, in the school division that I represented we were in a phase of downsizing since 1989. Every single year we had to reduce supports to our children. Every single year we had to cut staff.

At a time when our public education system is facing challenges and, everyone agrees, new challenges that we want our children to be adaptable, forward looking and ready for the future, this government has decided that there is too much money for our children. I disagree. I would say, at a time when pressures are even greater for our children, what we need is an investment in our public education system, not the erosion of our public education system.

Ultimately, for many, many years and personally since 1989, we have seen reductions in the public school system, underfunding by the provincial government, often tried to be moderated by school divisions' attempts to increase local levies.

We have seen the impact of local levies on individual families skyrocket. We all know that the burden on property taxes for families in terms of education is at the ceiling or near the ceiling. Individual families prioritize education, and that is why they have been willing to adopt the further downloading of the responsibility of education, because they understand that their children need the supports, even though this government does not.

\* (1440)

If you look at the overall budget within a school division, somewhere between 80 and 85 percent of the costs, the expenditures of that budget, are related to human resources. The majority of those are teachers; teacher assistants working one to one with children, helping teachers to provide the educational stimulation and challenge that we all want for our children; caretakers who ensure that our buildings are maintained, clean and safe communities where our children can attend; counsellors who are helping our children get through some very difficult times.

Madam Speaker, I have got a 14-year-old, so I can understand he is going through a tough time. Junior high teachers have to be commended; they deal with a time when our children are facing a lot of personal crises.

Whom do they go to? They go to their guidance counsellor and the people that they trust in their local schools.

There are resource teachers that provide that extra stimulation for those that are gifted or those that need extra help. There are also, and a very small portion of them, principals, vice-principals, administration, but the overwhelming number of people that are in the school system are teachers, and that is where this government has decided to attack. They have tried to attack the fundamental principle, the fundamental component, of the learning experience. They are attacking our teachers who are with our children for eight to nine hours a day. This is an unwarranted, uncalled for, and unreasonable attack on a professional group who have given more and more as times have become tough in the public school system. The crisis in our public school system is not the fault of teachers; it is the fault of the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh), the Filmon government and the Tory agenda for slashing public education.

Madam Speaker, what is the life of a teacher today in a classroom? Class sizes, we are seeing, are increasing. Needs are clearly variable, and we applaud that. It is about time we recognized our children were not widgets in a factory; in fact, they are all unique individuals with different abilities, requiring different challenges and different learning styles. We are asking our teachers to recognize different learning styles and abilities and to modify and be adaptable to every single child in their classroom.

At the same time we are seeing special needs students who have now been mainstreamed or in the classroom with others, and we applaud that concept. The problem is that the supports have not been put in with those children. At one time our children with special needs were in institutions, and just the economics alone was a horrendous cost. Look at the learning experience those children received in institutions. We know it was deplorable. We commend the move to moving children into the classroom, into the community, but we condemn the government for not providing the supports that those children need and then relying on the classroom teacher to provide those when they may need a health aid, when they may need some extra help, when they may need a special computerized support. That is the responsibility

of the government. In fact, what they are doing is again downloading onto the local ratepayer and onto teachers and onto the public school system.

Madam Speaker, within a classroom, we all know that our children have certain abilities and gifts. We are very proud of them, and we want our teachers to be able to recognize and exemplify those gifts. When the classroom environment is becoming more hectic with larger class sizes and more needs, are those teachers going to be able to do that, to teach each child as an individual? Actually the minister's blueprints, whether they are on again, off again and modified, are actually moving us into a system of factory-modelled education. Grade 3 children are all tested at the same time with the same tool. That does not recognize individuals' abilities. It does not recognize their own individual learning styles or their learning timetable. What we need is a minister who has confidence in the teachers, in the professionals whom we trust in the classroom and that is not what we are seeing here by this minister.

Madam Speaker, not only do we see a wide range of abilities, but we see other things that are making life extremely complicated for the teacher: increasing migrancy, families having to move from low income housing in this community to another community, to another community, looking for a place, for a residence that is going to house their family. Each time they move disrupts the educational learning of the child for months, perhaps half a year before that child is re-established into a new school. Many schools have now attempted to provide housing registries, a job I would think that the Manitoba government has the responsibility for doing, providing decent housing so that families can stay in their local catchments, in their neighbourhoods and remain in schools, so that those children can receive the educational instruction they deserve.

There are more hungry children. Poverty—children in poverty is actually increasing, a deplorable state of events for this government while we see some examples of this government's lack of reality: enormous expenditures on elaborate restaurants and fine dining by ministers while we see children and schools having to be forced to appeal for a milk program. The dichotomy between the government, which thinks that this is reasonable for \$11,000 to be expended on food and alcohol consumption by a deputy minister, and cutting programs



to our children when they are hungry and are witnessing poverty at greater levels than ever, is shameful.

Madam Speaker, poverty and hunger also leads to poor attention. Many of the people on this side and on the other side have families which care and have the resources to provide food, well nourishment, the resources, libraries, computers, a wide diversified educational experience for their children. If you are in a situation where you are attempting to provide food for your family, basic food, if you are struggling to find meaningful work or any work, or if you are working two jobs part time, the family is in a state of crisis and education gets put behind the basic needs of providing food, clothing and shelter. These children need extra resources. They do not need to be cut. The teachers who are trying to help those children do not need to be attacked by the Minister of Education.

What is the workplace like for a teacher? We are saying, at a time when shrinking budgets have meant reorganization, what does that mean? You are in a community. You have met the students. You have met their parents. You are building a relationship with that community. Suddenly you have been downsized. That means that there are more children in the classroom and perhaps you have been singled out; unfortunately, you have to move. Uncertainty about your professional workplace is not conducive to the long-term health of an education system which likes to see stability, likes to see an investment in a local place.

Madam Speaker, there are increasing transfers. There are new curriculum requirements. There are increasing needs for teachers to locally supply classroom materials as budgets for within the schools have been drastically cut and do not provide what is, what we would consider, a normal classroom array of stimulating experiences.

I have a situation where a constituent has been substituting or on limited term contracts for seven years—seven years, Madam Speaker—searching from one location to the other for a position so that she could use her abilities as a teacher. Why is that person out there looking for employment for seven years? Because what we have seen are dramatic cuts to the public school system and the reduction in the number of positions for professionals, and so you see young, qualified, brilliant

teachers who cannot find a spot in our educational system.

Madam Speaker, not only do they have an enormous challenge in terms of the classroom and the uncertainty within the public education system, but there is now a greater and greater need for computer reporting, a trend that we see across the board. I ask, are those teachers going to be given the resources to be able to prepare computer reports? In many other workplaces, at Great-West Life probably, at Inco, and at Energy and Mines, computers are provided for the staff so that they are able to become technologically literate, able to become more efficient, a reasonable request.

\* (1450)

Unfortunately, the public school system is to the point where there have to be fundamental decisions: Do we buy the computers, or do we keep our teachers? Do we increase the classroom size to the point where we know some children will be ignored, will be left aside; they will not get challenged? That is not a reasonable way to approach public education. Look at your own offices, look at what teachers have as resources. I argue with you that teachers have to be a profession that has done without for much, much too long.

They do without what we consider basics: telephone communication. At a time when we expect teachers to be in contact with parents, they do not have a telephone available in their office, in their classroom. In fact, they do not have an office. Many teachers sit at their desk in front of the classroom and do not have technology or the ability to phone out from their classroom to the home. They have to go either into the staffroom or into the office to access what we would consider a basic requirement.

Madam Speaker, we have also seen ministerial dictates that are particularly disturbing, blueprints that are not workable, plans that when analyzed by professionals, suddenly we realize that there is no time for recess in elementary school. If you put the mandatory number of minutes of the curriculum together, there are not enough minutes in the day to do it. It is still an issue that we have not settled.

The fact is that the minister's bill, one of her bills, says that school boards and teachers must comply with what

the government decrees. Unfortunately, we have several examples in the past couple of years where their decrees do not make sense. You just cannot put what they have decreed into action, and so I would ask, why would the Minister of Education want to centralize power in something that she clearly does not have a handle on and, in fact, invade the territory of the professional, of the classroom teacher?

Madam Speaker, Bill 72 deals with collective bargaining, a process that teachers have had in place for 40 years and has successfully provided reasonable collective agreements over those 40 years. Manitoba has not witnessed teachers' strikes. We have not lost days. Our children have remained in a learning environment and, overall, things have been fairly good.

Madam Speaker, the teachers are a group of individuals who wish to comply, they wish to be co-operative. They will try and go out of their way to provide service for the children during tough times, and they are willing to sacrifice. This is the first time that I have seen teachers take such, what we would call radical—for a group of professionals, it is very difficult to get them angry.

It is amazing. When we saw 3,000 teachers on the steps of the Legislature last spring, that is a significant number of individuals who came out who have traditionally—

**An Honourable Member:** That would not be a little bit exaggerated, would it?

**Ms. Mihychuk:** Madam Speaker, somebody is questioning the number 3,000. That is what I recall from a newspaper reporter who I am sure used some sort of viable technique of counting the audience.

The need to look at other forms of arbitration or negotiation is only because of the government's refusal to fund public education at a reasonable level, and they have chosen to attack the worker, they have chosen to attack the teachers. Some people have suggested that it is a vendetta or perhaps a lack of support. I do not know why the government has chosen to do that. They wish to drive down the wages of teachers. I understand that certain members on the other side have stated that they feel teachers are paid too much and they are not carrying their load.

Madam Speaker, if those things are true—

### Point of Order

**Mrs. Shirley Render (St. Vital):** A point of order, please. The member opposite for St. James has said that members on this side have stated that we feel, members on this side have said that teachers are paid too much. That has never been said by a member on this side, so I would challenge the member to name the member rather than putting incorrect information on the record. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, on the same point of order, first of all, it is a dispute about the facts. I think that—[interjection] Let me finish. I know the member has supernatural powers across the way, but I do not think she has been in every room at every place at every time all across the province of Manitoba and, I would say, to use the infamous words of the Deputy Premier, stay tuned.

**Madam Speaker:** On the point of order raised by the honourable member for St. Vital, the honourable member does not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

\* \* \*

**Ms. Mihychuk:** Madam Speaker, I will refer to my colleague's comments from Wolseley in terms of a meeting that was held in the constituency of Seine River where apparently such comments were made, and I would encourage the members on the other side to read Hansard, because that is what the record states.

Madam Speaker, I would like to go on. I am getting further and further behind in my prepared speech, so I am going to move along.

The result of this unprecedented attack on teachers has been, and the reduction in financing to public education has meant that there is less out-of-the-classroom supports, there is a greater deal of isolation for the classroom teacher, less professional development, there are larger administrative cuts.

Administrative cuts is a popular topic with the Minister of Education. In fact, in the minister's press release for

the boundaries announcement which they made on June 24, the minister is talking about school divisions should set goals on administrative expenditures. The hypocrisy of the minister is incredible. When we look at her own department's expenditures on administration in the 1995-96 Estimates book, her administrative costs are 9.8 percent. The administrative costs for the average Manitoban school division across Manitoba is 3.7 percent. In Winnipeg No. 1 School Division, administrative costs are 3.0 percent. I would suggest that the minister and the government look at their own record before advising school divisions on administrative costs.

The result of underfunding to the public education system has generally been where trustees have tried to look at everything but the local classroom. Maintenance has been postponed, the painting schedules have been extended, transportation routes have been cut, the distance has been extended, roof replacements have not been done, teacher aides have been cut, caretakers, consultants have been lost, and whose fault is it, the government would claim, is it trustees' faults? No, they say no, it is the teachers' fault. It is the teachers' fault they are overpaid, and they need to earn less, even at a time when there are greater challenges, and you have a Minister of Education saying that those who are willing to stand up and speak out for their fair collective bargaining process are not real teachers.

\* (1500)

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

That is a blow to their very professionalism. I would suggest that, as the Minister of Education, I hope, would want the respect of those teachers, then she should be the first to recognize the value and professionalism of those very people she is so quick to put down.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is the lack of the government's commitment to public education, and as the government has made several different recommendations to cut public schools, perhaps they could use Filmon Fridays. Filmon Fridays, well, it was not really available, so why do you not just cut the available professional development? So much for keeping our teachers up to date, so much for providing those in-services that are very important to ensure that our teachers have the necessary skills on an ongoing process. Many of the civil servants that we work

with and many of the professional business people will take some time off to go and get some professional development, not a priority for the government. They are suggesting that Filmon Fridays be used to balance the budget, a very short-sighted approach to economic difficulties created by the government.

The other thing that I would like to point out about the government's record is, after they have tried to use Filmon Fridays, they also suggested to school divisions that having a surplus, having a reserve fund was somehow unconscionable, somehow poor management, when at the very same time this government has now decided—actually, during the election year—that a surplus fund is exactly what is needed for the government of Manitoba. Mr. Deputy Speaker, what is good for the goose is good for the gander. You have decided to have a stash. You have decided to cut public schools while keeping money for a rainy day. If our public education system does not need an infusion of some real continued sustained funding, I do not know what does, not the Winnipeg Jets, not Barry Shenkarow, not Barb Biggar, not fancy expense accounts at Le Beaujolais and Rae & Jerry's—although it is in my riding, and I appreciate the business—but what we need are priorities, and the priorities are our children.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of my favourite discussions for an absolute waste of money is the grants that the Minister of Energy chooses to give to the oil industry to come and pump the oil out of the Virden and other associated oil fields. This is a case where you have a limited resource of less than 10 years. You have brought in Alberta companies to pump it out faster than ever, the jump-to-the-pump Minister of Energy who has an extra million bucks to give to Alberta oil companies. Outrageous.

I would just like to conclude by saying what we have seen—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable member is concluding, and I would really like to hear this conclusion. So if I could have some order in the Chamber, so that we can hear the honourable member, I would appreciate it. The honourable member, to conclude.

**Ms. Mihychuk:** To conclude, I would like to say that what we have seen is an unprecedented attack on a group of individuals who, I believe, are very hardworking, sincere individuals trying to provide the best education service for our children that is possible. The move by Bill 72 has placed them in conflict with the government of Manitoba, something that our teachers do not want to be in but are being forced into the position. At a time when our children need more help with the challenges of the global village, information explosion, technological revolution, increasing poverty, at a time when most educators recognize the value and the uniqueness of each individual child, at the same time we are seeing that this government lacks the confidence in teachers. Parents are overwhelmingly in support of the teachers in their classroom. We have seen study after study that indicates 80 to 85 percent of parents have total confidence in their teachers.

The people who do not have confidence in the teachers are sitting on the other side and are personified by the Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. McIntosh). The attack on our teachers must stop.

Rescind this bill and work together with the teachers who are in the classroom with our children.

### House Business

**Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Law Amendments will sit tomorrow morning, Friday, October 25, at 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. which requires leave of the House because the sitting rule is 10 to 12, in order to consider Bill 32.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Is there leave for the committee to sit tomorrow, Friday, from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. Is there leave of the House? [agreed]

**Mr. Ernst:** I would also like to advise, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Standing Committee on Law Amendments will sit on Saturday, October 26, from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. to consider Bills 33 and 47.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The Standing Committee on Law Amendments will sit on Saturday, October 26, from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. to consider Bills 33 and 47. That is agreed.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona):** I am pleased to rise to add my comments to Bill 72, The Public Schools Amendment Act (2).

I listened to the comments of members of this House, the member for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk), when she spoke a few moments ago about the impact of this bill upon education in the province of Manitoba and in particular how this bill is going to impact upon teachers and school trustees and the relationship that is between the two of them that has developed over some 40-year period.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is very clear by this piece of legislation that the government's intent by this legislation is to bring down the wage packet or the wage bill that the government sees that is occurring for those that are employed in the teaching profession and that that is one of the main focuses of Bill 72.

As we have seen, it is very clear that the government is wanting, as is being shown in other areas of the legislation that they have brought forward in this session and in past, that they want to move the economy of this province into an area where we have low-skilled and low-paid workers in the province of Manitoba to feed the desires or the political bent of this particular government.

I think that is the wrong direction to take. I mean, you would think we would want to bring high-tech industry and to have high-skilled people in our province leading to a better way of life and better living conditions for everyone in this province, but if you see the way this government is proceeding with their legislation over a number of bills, their intent is quite clear. It is to undermine the public education system in the province of Manitoba and those that perform the very vital function of teaching our children.

\* (1510)

It is very clear, if you take a look, for example, at the way the government has structured the system in which they are now going to allow the negotiations to take place between the teachers and the school divisions of the province. Under Bill 72, the government is going to have a process in place through the Ministry of Education.

They will announce sometime early in January of the year what the government's intent is on releasing to the various school divisions the grant monies that would be allocated to those various school divisions.

After that process of course the various school divisions will take the grant money that has been allocated to them for regular instruction and special needs instruction and then develop their own budgets. The government is not even interested in learning about the requirements that the school trustees see, being the ones that are working with the communities, with the schools, with the students day in and day out.

The province is now not interested in what the school divisions see as being their needs to provide education to our children. After the point where the school trustees have developed their budget, and I believe to be tabled back, to be tabled by the 15th of March, only then, under Bill 72, will this government allow for negotiations to commence between the school divisions and the teachers that are employed in the various school divisions throughout the province. So it is very clear that the bottom line will be developed long before anybody goes to the negotiating table, and the teachers will know very clearly, right in front of them, that there will be no room for movement on any areas and that the government is indeed interfering in the free negotiating process that has normally taken place in the past in this province.

We have seen the same situation occur, looking at the other government bills that we have before us, whether it be Bill 54, Bill 49, Bill 73, Bill 26 or even this Bill 72. The government is very clearly undermining the ability of working people to freely negotiate with their employers in the province of Manitoba. That is the intent of this government. You are undermining the collective bargaining process.

Now, I think that the government is intent on doing this, in particular for the reason for Bill 72 and the other education bills that we have before us, because they are intent on punishing teachers in this province. They are intent on punishing the Manitoba Teachers' Society in the province of Manitoba, because this government views that during the 1995 provincial general election, the teachers association and the teachers themselves were opposed to what this government was doing to public education in the province of Manitoba. There is no doubt

in my mind that is why this government has brought forward Bill 72 and the other education bills that we have before us. You want to punish teachers and their duly elected representatives.

Teachers, teachers in our community, teachers in other communities around the province that are employed and working diligently in the public education system want what is best for public education. They work day in and day out with children, with our children in the public education system. They see the problems. They are there to find creative solutions to those problems, and yet they find themselves faced with a government that is challenging them and undermining their ability to educate our children.

I think that is a wrong direction and that after 40 years of harmony in the relationship that is taking place between teachers and the school divisions and the trustees of our province, by Bill 72 you will drive a wedge between the teachers and the trustees of this province. You will create a rift that will be difficult to overcome, and I believe, in time, as a result of this bill and your other education bills, you will destroy the relationship that has taken 40 years to develop.

I want to talk a few moments about what public education teachers have meant to me, my family, my children and others in my community. I remember back to the comments that were made by the former Minister of Education who is now retired from this Chamber. When he brought forward recommendations prior to the 1995 general election, where he said he wanted to eliminate history as part of the instructional program, and he wanted to, was it, either reduce or eliminate physical education from the portion of the instruction as part of the curriculum of the children in the public school system.

Well, I can tell the members of this House—and I do not want to single out any one particular individual, but in this case I feel I must because he has made a significant difference to the attitude and self-esteem of the young people of my community that are in the public school system that he has come in contact with. Mr. David Markham was a physical education instructor at one of the schools in the Transcona-Springfield School Division, and he has taken his time and his efforts, not only during the long school day, but also in the after hours to provide instruction, guidance and counselling

and involvement, with himself as a teacher and the young people in the schools in which he teaches. This is a dedicated, professional individual who has taken of his own free time and turned it back to the service of his community to build the young people into the adults we all want them to become, to provide the guidance necessary, to provide the leadership and to encourage the building of the self-esteem of these young people.

I am very fortunate that Mr. Markham has been one of the teachers, one of the fine teachers in the public school system who has been teaching my children, and I must compliment Mr. Markham for his dedication, perseverance and belief in the public education system of the province of Manitoba.

I can only think back too, as well, just canvassing this week in the constituency of River East, going door to door, talking to residents in that particular part of Winnipeg, I encountered one doorstep and knocked on the door and went in to talk the family, a man and woman, the parents obviously, and their two children, sitting at home that evening when we knocked on the door. When I was invited inside the house to talk with the family to find out their thoughts on the way Manitoba was moving and whether it was the right direction or the wrong direction, one of the things that struck me very clearly was that there was a briefcase open on the floor and there was a pile of papers sitting in the lap of the man. When we starting conversing back and forth, I discovered that this man was a public schoolteacher in the city of Winnipeg. Here was this schoolteacher at eight o'clock at night sitting in his home with a pile of papers on his lap, marking those papers and preparing his lessons for the next day.

Yet we have, through this government here, through Bill 72, and by the comments that have been made by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and by the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) that say that teachers are overpaid by 15 to 25 percent. The Premier said that, that was his comment. Yet, when I encountered this individual, and I am sure there are many others, and I know some in my own community who go home night after night, prepare their lessons for the next day and also mark the papers from the tests that they have.

**An Honourable Member:** I did that for years.

**Mr. Reid:** The member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), my colleague, says that as a teacher within this public system, he himself did that year after year as a dedicated teacher in the province, and there are many dedicated teachers in this province. For this Premier to come forward now and say that the teachers in the public education system are overvalued and overpaid I think is deplorable.

It is very clear that this government dislikes teachers, and as a result of the teachers—public education teachers know—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. It is starting to get away on us. Would the two members wanting to carry on this conversation choose to do so out in the hall, so that I do not have to stay standing all afternoon.

The honourable member for Transcona, to continue.

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

It is very clear that this government dislikes teachers, dislikes teachers in the public education system. When teachers in the public education system took the necessary steps and spoke out in protection of the public education system during the 1995 general election, the provincial election, this government is now intent on being vindictive in its nature by bringing forward this bill and some of the other education bills.

\* (1520)

You do not like to have, as a government, anybody in society stand up and defend themselves in the face of the efforts that you are making to undermine the rights of people to speak out on behalf of their employment and on behalf of their communities. It is very clear in the comments that were made by the head of the school trustees when I believe the individual said that when this government tabled Bill 72 and announced their indications with respect to public education, the head of the school trustees said that this government went much further than what the trustees had hoped for. It is very clear that even the school trustees, I believe, do not want to create a split or create disharmony or anything that will undermine the public education system. I believe that school trustees and teachers alike want very much to

work together to try and resolve the differences that are occurring between them.

I believe that is why setting aside this piece of legislation for six months to allow the school trustees and the teachers of our province to come to the table and to negotiate a reasonable solution to the problems that are occurring, that is why I support the motion that has been brought forward by my colleague here, to set aside this Bill 72 for six months to allow the parties to come together.

We do not need a provincial government that is going to have divide-and-conquer tactics. We need to have a provincial government that acts as a facilitator in the process. We need a government that is willing to bridge the gap between the parties and to bring them together to a common position or consensus for the betterment of all of the public education system. I believe that is what teachers in the public education system want, and I believe that is what public education school trustees want throughout the province of Manitoba, and Bill 72 will not create that type of system, that type of negotiations, that type of process that we want to occur. Bill 72 will not facilitate that understanding.

I was very offended when the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) said, in her comments, when the teachers came to the Legislature here in defence of public education and were in the hallway listening to the comments, were up in the gallery here listening to the comments during Question Period here, the questions and the responses, that the Minister of Education had the nerve to go in the hallway and say that real teachers would not be here defending the public education system, that real teachers would be in the classroom. It is very, very unfortunate that the Minister of Education would make that derogatory comment about public education teachers.

What we want, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we want a public education system that is responsive to the needs of the young people, our children that are in the public school systems. We do not want to have a government that undermines financially, year after year, public education in the province of Manitoba. We do not need, and we do not want, a government that will use the divide-and-conquer strategy by driving a wedge between the parties, as Bill 72 will do, and force the parties apart, destroying

40 years of peace and harmony in the public education system. That is why I support the setting aside of Bill 72 for six months to allow the parties to work out a reasonable consensus on the issues that are between them, and then for the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh), perhaps if it is necessary, to come back to this House with something that is reflective of the needs that would be remaining and to reflect the agreement that would be worked out between the parties.

So I hope that the Minister of Education and the government members will listen to what is taking place and to recognize that they are seriously eroding public education in the province of Manitoba and to support the setting aside of this bill for six months to allow the parties to come to the table and to work out a reasonable solution to the problems that face us all in education.

With those few words, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am prepared, as I am sure members on this side of the House are, to go to a committee, to listen to members of the public that may wish to come forward to add their comments on the government's direction with Bill 72. So thank you for the opportunity to speak.

**Mr. Doer:** Speaking to the hoist motion here before this Chamber on Bill 72. Now, again, this is another one of these bills, or proposed legislation, where nobody across the way had the nerve or the backbone or the integrity to campaign on this bill, to campaign on the components of this bill dealing with teachers' salary arbitration. In fact, I can recall in the campaign last time, I was coming back from Lac du Bonnet, and the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Praznik) was quite curiously distancing himself from some of even the white papers, the blue papers, that were put out by the former Minister of Education, one Clayton Manness. In fact he would say, well, that is just Clayton Manness and he is not running again and do not worry about all those papers that are out there. In fact, I had the great privilege of running into him about five minutes later coming back from Swan River, I might point out. He and the former member for Pembina were just coming off the plane and I happened to pass on his best regards from the Minister of Energy and Mines. They were not surprised about it.

It is interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that again we have a piece of legislation that was not part of the so-called government agenda in the last campaign. It was

not part of the so-called agenda. It was not part of the platform. I have read it very carefully. It was not part of the so-called future that the Tories saw here in the province of Manitoba, and now after the election without a democratic mandate for many of the legislation that is before us today, we have a hard right-wing turn by members opposite, and not even in terms of the ideological extreme that we see and the kind of meanness that we see towards people in our society, but really an ideology of conflict and confrontation and bullying that tends to put people down instead of building them up, that tends to work in conflict with people and diminish their contributions to our society rather than praising their contributions and enhancing.

You know, I found it very curious in the past number of years, and I think it is indicative of the real mean spirit that we see from members opposite. Oh, they hide it, you know, maybe in 35-day periods, and they go out in the hallway with their spinners around them to try to look like warm, fuzzy Tories, which is like a contradiction in terms. But the real sign of where they were going on education was probably displayed a couple of years ago when results of tests came out for the public education system, and Manitoba in one of the tests had one of the best results in Canada.

Another result, we had not even had the curriculum in place, and the students did not do as well, understandably, as the other students. The members opposite made public statements about the scientific credibility of the tests and diminished the results of the public education system in terms of the results of our kids. They were disappointed that our kids did well. It was quite curious. Now I am thinking to myself, and the member opposite, who is on leave of absence from Great-West life, I would like to ask him—I can see Great-West Life competing against other insurance companies, but I cannot see the president of Great West Life standing up saying how horrible insurance is.

But we have a Minister of Education in successive governments across the way that run down public education instead of celebrating its successes. Would it not be nice to have a Minister of Education that would actually go out and tell the parents and community how good we are doing, how successful we are, how we can do so much better if we had the proper resources and proper investment? Would that not be a nice kind of

attitude instead of implicitly funding private education with enhanced grants and running down the contributions of the public education system.

Why do the members opposite, if they want to spend some energy and time dealing with public education and the education of our kids, and I say this as a parent, why do they not spend the time and effort to eliminate textbooks in science and physics and chemistry that are nine and 10 years old? Some of those textbooks have not been replaced since members opposite came into office and started becoming members of the front bench.

\* (1530)

Do you know how much money is being spent by teachers—and I do not know about the copyright laws—on xerox machines because the textbooks are so out of date? You know, you talk about the 21st Century. Some of these kids cannot get textbooks that are 1990 and 1991. Forty-five million dollars; the teachers are great, give them the resources, give them the tools because, well, there are not a lot of successes in education. The great education successes are the human resources we have in our education system that is being underfinanced and underfunded by members opposite—\$45-million cut in the last three years and more money cut when you look at the way in which the tax system across the province operates and claws back money in terms of the mill rate. We know that; you know that.

Look at other issues in education: Clinicians cut back; after clinicians were cut back in the pre-school years, speech therapists; behavioural therapists; hearing therapists. Now we have a study that shows that it is two and three years of pre-school years before a kid can get reviewed or get an assessment, and then, if they are lucky enough to be able to go to school, it may take them another two or three years to get an assessment because you have cut and cut and cut. You talk about the future; every study shows that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

The Postl report, a good report; I applaud the government for commissioning it—recommendation after recommendation after recommendation, criticism about the government's action to cut clinicians in pre-school and early years school. What are we going to do about that? Well, we cannot implement those recommendations. We



have Jules Benson going around, running the whole government—and he is. Members opposite, all you people in cabinet, save the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), have less power than this unelected senior bureaucrat.

**An Honourable Member:** Get out of here.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, you want to face the truth, just face the truth.

This man is going around; he is not going to put any money, any money, into our children's future that will make a difference in our education system and make a difference to families. When you people stand up and talk about family values, you should just—I do not even know how you can do it, because you have cut back and cut back and cut back on the investment in our most vulnerable children in special needs. What are you going to do now? You are going to have a cynical study that is going to release its results in 1998 or 1999, and you will have a press conference to say, these are all the things we are going to do, which will all be the opposite of what you cut, and you will hope that the press that has had enough turnover that they do not realize that you have said it before and you did not do it; you said it before and you did the opposite, and it is on and on and on.

And, you know, of course, you can fool some of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time, and that is why there is going to be a major day of reckoning for the little tacticians that operate the strategy across the way, that pick on the most vulnerable and in the most cynical way you reannounce and reannounce and reannounce something that you have cut, cut, cut.

When we deal with the hoisting on Bill 72, it really is a call on you and members opposite to get your act straight, because the Render-Dyck committee, as it is commonly known, or the Dyck-Render committee, or whatever committee it is, was a document that had so many holes in it, it looked like Swiss cheese. It was an awful document to be put out by the government. I suggest it came probably more from the Compensation Committee of Cabinet and therefore through the Jules Benson route than it came through the Education department.

Let me give you one example, and the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) who guffaws his way around the province talking about how great the economy is should appreciate this, because in the document, in the Render-Dyck document, it says that the Manitoba economy is ninth place in Canada in the last six years. Now, who was in office in the last six years? Was it the members on this side who had the economy growing, or was it the Deputy Premier and his other colleagues, his band of Tory members, over the last six years? A minister of the Crown released—do you ever proofread this stuff? A minister of the Crown releases a document that says, you are in ninth place, but the honourable Deputy Premier in his usual Ed McMahon guffaw tells us the economy is great; there is a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. So how can you have it both ways? [interjection] Okay, the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) could tell us, are you in ninth place as you have stated, or are you in first place as the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey) says?

That is just one example of the lack of credibility and lack of honesty members have across the way for documents they are releasing in Education, ninth place in the Education document, first place in the Finance minister's document, first place in the budget, last place in the Render-Dyck report, and it goes on and on and on, and you wonder why there is no credibility with teachers. You wonder why the Minister of Labour has to run to Valley Garden and say, oh, we really like teachers; the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) was just kidding; some of my best friends are teachers.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable minister, on a point of order.

#### Point of Order

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Labour):** I just want to ensure that what I heard was correct, that the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) indicated that I appreciate the services of teachers, that I value their services and, if that is in fact what he said, then I must agree with him on the point of order.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable minister did not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

The honourable Leader of the official opposition, to continue.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Doer:** Well, there is an old Latin saying, *facta non verba*; deeds, not words. Teachers are evaluating you, and members opposite and parents and superintendents and others in the education system are evaluating you not on your words but on your deeds in Bill 72. It comes very severely wanting.

So the Render-Dyck committee went out and had public hearings. And what did they find? The majority of people, of trustees, parents, teachers, members of the community said, do not go backwards in terms of education. Do not look at this conflict with teachers in this document. Throw out this ridiculous and biased research and start working in a co-operative way with the people of this province.

\* (1540)

They asked you to work in partnership and co-operation to move into the 21st Century. They asked you and implored that members opposite would not rush in and not be fools rushing into something that will not make sense. They pointed out as correctly as they should that we have had a partnership with teachers and trustees and parents and educators in our communities for the last 40 years. Do not bust up this partnership just because you need to get a bill in in the next couple of weeks.

You know what? That is what this hoist motion is all about. This hoist motion is all about getting it correct, because I will not say, get it right. Get it correct to have a partnership moving into the 21st Century. That is the responsibility you have. You have to take the extra time and effort to do it properly. The superintendents have joined the teachers to say, this is too hasty, this is too quick. This is rush, this is panic, this is ill thought out.

I suggest you read the presentations they made to the Render-Dyck committee that was just made available. We have read that document and we have met with the superintendents since then and they are saying the same things we are saying. Slow down, do not pass anything today that you are going to regret. Do not instill this conflict across our province that will affect our kids and

their future without trying to have a consensus. We have asked trustees, we have asked teachers, we have asked parents advisory groups and we have asked superintendents, is there ability to sit down and still come up with a partnership that was so wonderfully developed some 40 years ago?

Of course, they say, we can do it. We believe it should be done, but only members opposite have to march to the beat of their own extreme political drum and not allow all of us to march together in partnership here in education. The government knows this is tied, it goes hand in hand with the other part of their education decisions. A \$45-million cut in public education means you have to change the rules on arbitration and the scope of arbitration.

I thought that it was an interesting letter to the editor today when somebody was trying to point out to the public the difference between a government that sets all the rules in arbitration versus a government that abides by a third party independently. Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we are worried about and what we are very concerned about is the partnership that we have today in Manitoba. The kind of social convention we have, and the legal convention and political convention we have to resolve our disputes through arbitration is going to be totally put out of whack, out of balance, and what is resulting is anger, frustration, low morale. I fear that the whole arbitration process itself has been put into disrepute by the government essentially dealing from the bottom of the deck in terms of how an arbitrator would decide a case.

Now, I have dealt in arbitration before. I have some experience in this. I have been actually both on the management side of this and on the union side, and I know how operators work and how they operate. I would say that arbitration has some advantages and has some disadvantages for arbitration to be successful, and it has been in education. It has been very good for the parents, it has been very good for teachers, and I believe it has been very good for taxpayers.

There is a problem with arbitration, but it is not a long-term problem. Arbitration awards usually are a little bit—they are not as instant as strike and lockouts in terms of the general economy. When the economy goes generally up, the arbitration awards are usually behind that, and when the economy goes down, usually

arbitration awards are behind that as well. So you may have a year or two where the awards in arbitration and the awards in the private sector are slightly different, but if you look over a long period of time, I suggest to members opposite, and you have to look over a long period of time because you have to look at an ascendancy of the economy as well as a descendency of wages, you will find that over that long period of time there is a lag time, but generally they are in sync.

Now, you can pick any year to say the wages are too low this year from a teacher's perspective or you can pick another year to say the wages are too high, but generally speaking, over a 40-year period, I challenge you to find that the balance between the average industrial wage increase and teachers' arbitration awards are not very much in sync, and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it begs the question, why change it?

You have settlements all over the province negotiated, both with arbitration and without arbitration, at zero percent. Now I know there was a settlement a couple of years ago that may have been, the government expressed its view that it was, too high, but you do not change a whole system on one settlement either too high or too low; you have to take the long-term view. The Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) knows that a bad court decision sometimes can make bad law. Why are you overreacting to zero percent settlements all across the province? Why are you bringing all this conflict upon our kids and our professionals for something that is already succeeding by your definition of zero? We believe the people should be getting modest increases just like MLAs received, through another arbitration process that was not binding for every year thereafter. We think that the government is being foolish in changing it.

The other issue that really bothers me is the scope of arbitration, the fact that arbitration awards cannot deal with, for example, transfer of teachers. That is a very important issue as we see populations change and be mobile. Why can we not have the ability to negotiate those things? Why can we not have the flexibility to move into the 21st Century with our educators? Why can we not devise ways to work in partnership in many items that affect the classroom, the students and teachers? Obviously, that means you have to take into consideration the students' needs and the teachers' qualifications as well as demographic changes.

So many, many people, and I have talked to business representatives as well, want—some of them have told me privately, this is crazy. This government is crazy to be going this fast. It should stop; it should look; it should listen; it should go back and try to have a partnership and co-operation on these matters.

Of course, this is legislation whose genesis is in a low-wage, low-skill mentality. Its genesis is in a conflict government, rather than a co-operative government. I would suggest to members opposite that we want teachers working with us to move into the curriculum of the 21st Century. We want to have parents and teachers and educators working together to move into the 21st Century. What have you done? You started a fight; you started a war, so to speak—a conflict. How is that going to help my kid going to school, my other daughter going to school in a couple of years? How is it going to help your children? How is it going to help children or grandchildren of members in this Chamber? It is not.

It is not. Nobody can say that in all consciousness it is going to help. I am very, very disappointed because, with the funding cuts on the one hand and this legislation on the other hand, it is an attack on teachers. You can deny it, you can do whatever you want, but it is and people know that. Teachers can read; teachers can write; teachers can explain. They know what is in this bill. They know the motivation for what is in this bill. Members on this side of the House, I think they are right, I think they are correct.

The other part of the whole fact of Education funding cuts is the whole idea of courses being cancelled. I thought a student here in front of the Legislature just a while ago was quite articulate. Now, that was a meeting that the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) did not attend; the Premier did not attend. I thought it was quite ironic that the Minister of Education talked about that real teachers would be in their classroom; well, a real Premier would have stood up and defended the decisions to cut education and to take away rights of teachers in collective bargaining through the arbitration process.

That student said—and I ask you to consider this when you are making your funding decisions again next year that affect this bill and this hoist. That student said something that was quite poignant and all of us should listen to. He said that every time you cut the money for

public education that results in courses being cancelled in my school, you close another door in my future. Think about it. How many doors have you closed across the way in kids' futures? How many doors are you closing to people that are our future, because our future is our children. Our future economy rests with our public education system.

Many people now are drawing the strong relationship, bringing together the strong relationship, between the future economy, the 21st Century economy, and an education system. People are saying, and I agree, that you cannot have an economic strategy in place for the 21st Century unless you have an education strategy. The world is changing so quickly; it is changing so quickly that your education strategy must be in sync with your economic strategy. Teaching kids how to learn is the most important thing we can impart in our education system. Teaching them to co-operate, to work as community, to work as citizens, to work in a co-operative and skilled way is so important for our future.

\* (1550)

Why do we want to drive our kids out of this province? Why do we not want to provide our kids with the educational and economic opportunities to allow them to stay here? Have you listened to people lately about how many of their kids are going to leave this province? It scares me. As a person who believes this is the most beautiful place in the country to live and the most affordable place to live, I am very, very worried about what I hear across this province and across this community, and I think members opposite should be worried about keeping their kids and their grandchildren here in this province.

We believe this bill should be hoisted. We believe this province should be working in co-operation with teachers and children and parents advisory committees and superintendents and educators. We believe that this bill needs more work. This province needs more co-operation and less conflict.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the editorial in the Free Press a little while ago said that this minister has shown herself to be nothing more than a schoolyard bully. You know something, I disagree with that editorial. I disagree with the editorial saying that this minister is nothing more than

a schoolyard bully. I believe it is this Premier, who is calling the shots across the way, who is the schoolyard bully. I would like members opposite to stand up to that bully, finally stand up to that bully and withdraw this legislation, vote for the hoist.

Let us vote for our kids. Let us vote for a future economy. Let us vote for co-operative education. Let us get it right. Let us get it correct. Let us hoist this bill today.

Stand up to the schoolyard bully and vote for the hoist. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to make two points today. First of all, I want to make the point and I want to make the case that the rhetoric and the false accusations and the false information put forward by the opposition parties has created an atmosphere in the education system in this province that is detrimental to good learning in the school system. It has caused a false impression amongst the general public about funding to education and teachers and their attitudes.

I want to demonstrate why. There is an article I want to read from, and it is headlined: Thompson Teachers' Society supports public school education. I want to read from that article. John Collins, staff officer for the Manitoba Teachers' Society, was the keynote speaker for the rally. He concluded the only way to deal with the present government was to vote them out of office by casting ballots for the New Democrats.

Now, I ask you, this is a staff officer of the Teachers' Society taking a direct political involvement in organizational politics. It is a unionized effort to discredit the efforts of our Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) to provide an education, not for the officers of the Teachers' Society, but for our kids, and the false information that has been put forward on budgeting and staffing by members opposite is nothing short of shameful.

It has created a climate of mistrust amongst the general public, not about politicians, I am sorry to say, because some have believed what they have heard opposition members put on the record falsely. Some have believed that and are discrediting the education system with

destroying the effort to try and educate our children, and I think it is sad. It is a sad reflection on members in this Legislature to not have the credibility to put the correct information on the record.

I want to read another article, and it is headed, MTS Finance Administrator Retires. What are the biggest changes you have noticed in the operations of the society? That was a question that was asked of Eleanor Woloshen when she retired. Her answer was: Over the years the workplace and attitudes have changed, of course, not just for the society, but for everyone. But, when I started work 40 years ago, members of the society thought of themselves as professionals, and the society was perceived as a professional organization. Always in its dealings with government and others it took the high road. Now, teachers' attitudes and political activity, the society presents itself more as a union. This is the biggest change I have noticed in 40 years. That is a direct quote.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

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

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples):** On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have been listening to the speech intently, and I understand we are debating the motion to hoist the bill, and I have not heard any comment in regard to the motion at hand. I wonder if you would call the member to order. Talking about what teachers said how it was teaching 40 years ago and implying that unions are bad just because they are unions and using that as a derogatory remark have no relevance to the motion to hoist this bill.

**Hon. Darren Praznik (Deputy Government House Leader):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the point of order, I believe the member is correct. We are debating the hoist motion, which speaks to the urgency as to whether or not this piece of legislation should be dealt with in this current sitting or be put over to another time to be debated, which, quite frankly, in reality kills the particular piece of legislation. The question of urgency speaks to the substance of the matter. That is what the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) is addressing.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I thank the honourable members for their clarification on the matter. The honourable member did not have a point of order, but he did have a point. I would ask the honourable member to bring it towards the motion before the House.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Penner:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I will abide by your wishes.

The members opposite have tried to make the case that we should delay this decision on the bill. I will make the case, Mr. Deputy Speaker, before I am finished, that there is an urgency here to deal with this bill.

I want to quote another section of the article of the Thompson teachers' rally: Steve Ashton, MLA for Thompson, spoke in support of the education system, and he said he felt today's system was much superior to that of other countries.

Thank you for that, for recognizing that the destruction of the education system has not been perpetrated to the point where some members in his caucus would have led us to believe.

I want to put one other point on the record to make the case that it is urgent that we deal with this bill. I want to put some figures on the record for the proposed budget for 1996-97 of the Manitoba Teachers' Society. Governor's services, political action, communications is a budgetary item listed on their own budget. To make the case that they have, in fact, become a union political activist, intent on destroying parties or supporting parties, they are now going to spend this, your 34.2 percent of their budget, \$2,916,873 million, to become politically active in this debate. They are going to spend, Mr. Deputy Speaker, \$905,963 or 10.6 percent of their budget on professional development, curriculum, instruction and evaluation, teacher education and certification and professional development issues. Now I say to you, where are their priorities? And this is what the honourable members opposite are supporting.

I want to put on the record the urgency of the matter that we are debating today, and I want to put some numbers on the record. In 1982 the budget of the then-Education minister, Vic Schroeder, was \$569 million,

back in '82. In 1988 budget, Eugene Kostyra, minister, \$754 million, \$783 million with capital included. [interjection] Now, just hold on a minute. I want to make the case that in 1988-89 we had 197,730 students in this province. In 1994-95 we had 194,170 students, a reduction of 3,600 students—3,600 students less. It is a percentage change of 1.8 percent on an annual basis. The number of teachers have increased from 12,331 in 1988-89 to 12,643. Where is the reduction in our efforts to provide better training in our schools?

\* (1600)

The combination of factors that resulted in an increase in the average teacher's salary are varied; however, I want to make the case to you that in 1988 to 1994 our teachers' salaries have increased by an average of \$10,000 each, a 25 percent increase in salary. The members opposite have continually argued that there has been a reduction to the efforts in the teaching profession. Now, the honourable members opposite are making fun of these numbers. These numbers are real. I think the honourable members would do themselves credit if they quoted real numbers for a change.

I think the point that needs to be made, the real point that needs to be made is the efforts of the honourable members opposite, in trying to discredit the education system in this province on an annual basis, have done nothing short than support the union effort to do what? To support the union effort to discredit the education system to the point where they are at the verge of destroying the confidence of the general public in our system. That, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is detrimental to the education of the child.

I think it is about time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that governments pay attention to the actual instructional ability of our people in the classroom and pay attention to the needs of the education of the children, instead of continually arguing and bickering about the needs of the unions and the support of the unions' effort, as the speaker at the rally said, to elect an NDP government. That is, of course, the issue that is in debate here.

I would suggest to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we very carefully consider the hoist motion and what would happen if we do not deal with this legislation. If we allow this legislation to sit on the books for another six

months, that will delay the actions required to bring better education to the child and to look after the needs of the child. It will delay it another six months, therefore another year, and the NDP will take credit for not bringing better education to our children. I say it is absolutely imperative that we deal with this bill immediately and, therefore, I speak strongly against the hoist motion and the issue before us today.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Is the House ready for the—oh, the honourable member for The Maples. [interjection] Order, please. When the members have got it out of their system, they might let us know.

**Mr. Kowalski:** It was interesting hearing the speaker before me. I have learned that, being a member of the Winnipeg Police Association, I guess being a member of a union probably I would be held in disrepute by the members from the government side of the House, and teachers should hang their heads in shame because they are members of a bargaining unit. I did not realize that he was so antiunion.

But I want to speak to this hoist motion. Hopefully, I will be able to speak to the bill itself later but, yes, it is very important that this legislation be lifted immediately. This legislation should not proceed, other than besides the fact that it is just bad legislation. I think we have heard many speakers before me enumerate the reasons why it is bad legislation and the motivation behind this legislation. The government can colour it in whatever way they want, but it is basically about cuts in funding in Education, and the minister will of course point to the federal Liberals and, you know, I want more money from the federal Liberals; every province wants more money from the federal Liberals. But, hey, get over it. You know, same was when I was a school trustee, when I was on the Seven Oaks School Division. When we got government cutbacks, we could have complained and whined all we wanted, but you have to go beyond that and live within the reality. This is the government's way of living with the reality of the funding situation that they have; it is by cutting teachers' salaries.

We heard earlier the one member object to the mention by the member for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk) that the government members have said teachers are paid too much. Then the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) gets up and talks about a \$10,000 increase in salary over a

certain period of time. Ergo, he was saying those raises were not justified. Ergo, he is saying that teachers are paid too much. So he has proven his own point. Possibly, possibly, and I almost hesitate to say this, but there may be some things in this legislation that are worth doing, but sometimes it is not what you do, but the motivation and the way you do it.

The way this was brought forward, this legislation, has demoralized teachers. I have met teachers throughout the province—I have met recent graduates from the Faculty of Education that have left the province to find jobs elsewhere because they feel that this government does not respect the profession. Any time you question the salary of a person, you are questioning their value to society.

Another reason to hoist this motion is, this legislation has gone far beyond what the school trustees ever asked for. The Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) has said, hey, this is what the school trustees asked for, but then I hear that Betty Green, who, I believe, is the president of the Manitoba Association of School Trustees, says that the Minister of Education should include ability to pay with the other factors and that in the legislation it puts ability to pay as a paramount factor in consideration for an arbitrator to consider.

\* (1610)

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

It sends me a signal that possibly, rather than through the force, the sledgehammer of legislation, that the Manitoba Association of School Trustees and the Manitoba Teachers' Society could come to an agreement, without being forced by legislation, as to how the bargaining process can be improved in Manitoba. Of course, teachers are hesitant. When you are under attack and you are defending yourself, it is hard to extend a hand in friendship to bargain. That is how teachers feel these days.

As I said, myself and my colleagues in the Liberal caucus fully support this motion to hoist this legislation to allow the school trustees and the teachers to come to the minister with something that they have agreed upon, because any agreement they would come to, they would both have a stake in it, and I think the time is ripe for that agreement to come forward. I think they can do it, rather

than forced by legislation. So we support the motion to hoist this bill to six months hence. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

The question before the House is the proposed motion of the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), that Bill 72, The Public Schools Amendment Act (2), be not now read a second time, but be read this day six months hence.

#### Voice Vote

**Madam Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

**Some Honourable Members:** Yea.

**Madam Speaker:** All those opposed, please say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Madam Speaker:** In my opinion, the Nays have it.

#### Formal Vote

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader):** Yeas and Nays.

**Madam Speaker:** A recorded vote has been requested, call in the members.

Order, please. It has been moved by the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) that Bill 72, The Public Schools Amendment Act (2), be not now read a second time but be read this day six months hence.

#### Division

*A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:*

#### Yeas

*Ashton, Barrett, Cerilli, Dewar, Doer, Friesen, Gaudry, Hickey, Jennissen, Kowalski, Lathlin, Mackintosh, Maloway, Martindale, McGifford, Mihychuk, Reid, Sale, Struthers, Wowchuk.*

**Nays**

*Cummings, Downey, Driedger, Dyck, Enns, Ernst, Findlay, Gilleshammer, Laurendeau, McAlpine, McCrae, McIntosh, Mitchelson, Newman, Penner, Pitura, Praznik, Radcliffe, Reimer, Render, Rocan, Sveinson, Toews, Tweed, Vodrey.*

**Mr. Clerk (William Remnant):** Yeas 20, Nays 25.

**Madam Speaker:** The motion is accordingly defeated.

To resume second reading debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh), Bill 72, (The Public Schools Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques), standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Madam Speaker:** No, leave has been denied.

Is the House ready for the question?

**Mr. Kowalski:** I would just like to add some further comments to the main motion. When I spoke on the lift motion, the main impetus behind this bill, there is no doubt, is the result of this government's cuts to Education and their lack of support to public education.

I will be very succinct that one of the main concerns is the definition of ability to pay and putting it as the prime factor for an arbitrator to consider instead of putting it equal to all the other factors, so we do not support this legislation. We know that, when it goes to committee, there will be many presentations supporting that position. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is second reading of Bill 72, The Public Schools Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques.

**Voice Vote**

**Madam Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

**Some Honourable Members:** Yea.

**Madam Speaker:** All those opposed, please say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Madam Speaker:** In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

**Formal Vote**

**Mr. Ashton:** Yeas and Nays, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** A recorded vote has been requested. Call in the members.

\* (1620)

**Division**

*A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:*

**Yeas**

*Cummings, Downey, Driedger, Dyck, Enns, Ernst, Findlay, Gilleshammer, Laurendeau, McAlpine, McCrae, McIntosh, Mitchelson, Newman, Penner, Pitura, Praznik, Radcliffe, Reimer, Render, Rocan, Sveinson, Toews, Tweed, Vodrey.*

**Nays**

*Ashton, Barrett, Cerilli, Dewar, Doer, Friesen, Gaudry, Hickes, Jennissen, Kowalski, Lathlin, Mackintosh, Maloway, Martindale, McGifford, Mihychuk, Reid, Sale, Struthers, Wowchuk.*

**Mr. Clerk:** Yeas 25, Nays 20.

**Madam Speaker:** The motion is accordingly carried.

\* (1630)

**Committee Changes**

**Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Morris (Mr. Pitura), that the Industrial Relations for Thursday,



7 p.m., October 24: the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) for the member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer); the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) for the member for Riel (Mr. Newman); the member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey) for the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render).

For Friday, October 25, at 10 a.m., the Public Utilities and Natural Resources, I move, seconded by the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson): the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) for the member for Springfield (Mr. Findlay); the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) for the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau); the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render) for the member for Gladstone (Mr. Rocan); the member for Charleswood (Mr. Ernst) for the member for Rossmere (Mr. Toews).

The Law Amendments, 10 a.m., October 25, the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister) for the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau); the honourable member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) for the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed), seconded by the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render).

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed), (that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments for 10 a.m., Saturday, October 26, (be amended as follows): the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) for the honourable member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer); the honourable member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey) for the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister); the honourable member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render) for the honourable member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings).

#### **Motions agreed to.**

**Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments for Friday, October 25, 1996, for 10 a.m. be amended as follows: Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) for Osborne (Ms. McGifford).

#### **Motion agreed to.**

### **Bill 67—The Manitoba Telephone System Reorganization and Consequential Amendments Act**

**Madam Speaker:** To resume second reading debate, on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister responsible for the Manitoba Telephone System (Mr. Findlay), Bill 67 (The Manitoba Telephone System Reorganization and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi concernant la réorganisation de la Société de téléphone du Manitoba et apportant des modifications corrélatives), standing in the name of the honourable member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans), who has 16 minutes remaining.

**An Honourable Member:** Stand.

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

Also standing in the name of the honourable member for Flin Flon, who has 14 minutes remaining.

**Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon):** Madam Speaker, again I am pleased to rise today to continue and complete my comments on Bill 67, comments that I started last week.

Again I reiterate today, as I did last week and numerous of my colleagues have done as well, that the public of Manitoba was not consulted about the sale of MTS, and it is abundantly clear that the people of Manitoba do not want their telephone system sold. They do not want a privatized system whose main aim is profits, not service.

This government did not mention the sale of MTS during the election. This government has no mandate to sell the people's telephone company without the people's consent. Had this government made the sale of MTS part of their election platform, it is unlikely that they would be forming government right now. We know that well over 90 percent of Manitobans oppose the sale of MTS. Therefore, before the election, this government was keen on promising things they felt were proven vote getters, for example, keeping the Jets in Winnipeg, but not so keen on debating proven vote losers, such as selling MTS or regional health authorities stacked with nonelected Tories and so on.

Now it is not unusual for this government to be less than candid with the electorate prior to an election and shortly after the election to do all the selling and the cutting and the hacking and the slashing. In other words, this government does all the nasty stuff early on in the mandate and then prior to the next election hope that the electorate has forgotten all the pain, and promise the electorate then a tax cut here or there, a new program here or there, or another equivalent of keeping the Jets in Winnipeg here or there.

This type of political opportunism, Madam Speaker, may fool some of the people some of the time, but this time I believe Manitobans will not be fooled. They will not forget. This government will not get away with the cynical, arrogant way they are treating the people of Manitoba.

If you want to sell a major Crown corporation like MTS, then tell the people of Manitoba you want to do so, but tell them before the election. The obvious fact is that this government knew full well that they were intending all along to privatize MTS long before the election. They knew long before the election that there would be Pharmacare hikes and that the cost to the average Manitoban would dramatically increase. They knew full well that they were going to camouflage huge cuts to the health care system by installing nonelected, partisan regional health boards whose job is to deflect flak from the government and from the minister.

The government knows full well right now, after they have privatized MTS, or when they will privatize MTS via Bill 67, that telephone rates are going to escalate dramatically for the average Manitoban. They know full well that those most negatively affected will be the rural and northern Manitobans. But there appears to be nothing that the people of Manitoba or my colleagues or I can say to this government to make it change its mind. This government is determined to become as unpopular in rural and southern Manitoba as they are in northern Manitoba.

Apparently this government appears to be perplexed that any of us should be opposed to Bill 67. Why should it be puzzling to this government that Manitobans want to keep their telephone company, the one company they have always owned, a company they have come to trust

and respect, a company that has given them low rates and good service over the last almost 90 years?

Manitobans do not need expensive glossy pamphlets in appropriate Tory-blue colours to flog the privatization of MTS at over \$400,000 that could have been spent better elsewhere. Manitobans do not need investment brokers who are involved in the privatization of MTS to reap huge profits from the sale of the people's telephone company. The people of Manitoba do not want speculators in charge of what used to be the people's telephone company.

The people of Manitoba want to keep their telephone company in their own hands. They want competitive rates and decent service, something which they have now. Only a handful of Tory MLAs, right-wing ideologues, bureaucrats and investment brokers actually believe that the sale of MTS is good for the majority of Manitobans.

\* (1640)

I am sure that some of the Tory backbenchers, some of the rural MLAs, are having second thoughts about the privatizing of MTS, despite their faithful adherence to the party line. For example, it was with some interest that I followed the words of the member for Morris (Mr. Pitura), an honourable gentleman indeed and a gentleman I respect, in regard to Bill 67 when he stated a week ago from Wednesday: "... if every time you had to make a decision, you went back to the public for their approval, but if you are just into your mandate and if you have a Crown corporation that is performing at a very dismal pace and is creating a tremendous debt load on the Provincial Treasury, would one have to wait for the next election to get a mandate from the people as to what you did with that corporation?"

Now, with all due respect to the member for Morris (Mr. Pitura), whom I do indeed respect, yes, you would go to the people. You would go to the people for that mandate because you are dealing with a major asset of the people. You cannot wait for the next election; this is too major. Selling off MTS is not a minor decision that governments routinely make, as the members opposite are trying to make out. It is a major decision affecting all Manitobans, and such decisions should not be made without first consulting the public.

Nor do I agree with my honourable colleague from Morris that MTS is performing at a dismal pace. We just learned a little while ago that MTS is indeed making a decent profit. If there were reasons, other than ideological reasons, why MTS had to be sold, surely those reasons could have been discussed prior to the election. Members opposite, via Bill 67, want to create the impression that a privatized telecom system will save the taxpayer a bundle of money. That is their bottom-line argument.

Nothing, however, is further from the truth. The question that should be asked from the members opposite is this: Will all Manitobans, under a privatized system, be paying the same low rates and getting the same decent service as they have now? The answer, if Bill 67 is enacted, is no. Manitobans will pay more for their rates, and northern and rural service will likely start lagging behind that of the cities. Privatization is profit oriented, and the profits are in the high density areas, the urban areas. The cross subsidization will become a thing of the past. Telephones will become a luxury. The poor, the handicapped, the elderly, people in rural and northern Manitoba may, in many instances, no longer be able to afford a telephone.

I know the members opposite will dispute this. They are busy reading off long lists of countries that have privatized their telecoms. Yes, indeed, there have been Bill 67 equivalents in many countries in the right-wing frenzy that has characterized the last decade. I want to point out that the Reagans and the Bushes and the Thatchers and the Mulroneys are gone, so why should their legacy linger? Besides, do we have to jump into the well because others are jumping into the well? When it comes to dollars and cents, it is, after all, the telephone subscribers who pay the bill. Whether a telecom system is privately owned or publicly owned, the telephone subscriber pays. Will such a subscriber pay less under a privatized system as members opposite lead us to believe? Do subscribers in countries whose telecom systems have been privatized pay less than we do in Manitoba or in Saskatchewan under a publicly owned system?

Well, I decided not to take anybody's word for it, so I phoned. I phoned some of my cousins in Holland, and one particular cousin I would like to talk about. I asked her to pull out the latest telephone bill she had in

Holland, and I compared that to my bill. Now my telephone bill—I picked one at random—was for basic service, \$11.75. Now, with GST and PST, that was \$13.39. That was a bill for last March 15. Now her bill in Holland, for two months, was 46 guilder and 30 cents, approximately \$20, a little bit over \$20 a month, because it was for a two-month period, if we convert the Dutch money. So she was spending a little bit over \$20 basic service for a month; I was paying approximately \$13.

So, under that privatized system, she was paying a third more for basic telephone service, and that is in a high density area. I do not see how we are going to get a good deal. But that is not all. In the Netherlands, as in some parts of this continent, even local calls are subject to a fee, not just by call, but by the second. Therefore, in Holland, if you telephone someone across town or even your neighbour, you pay per second. My cousin suggested that for her an average telephone call, which is a local call, would still cost her approximately \$2 a call. Now, I will admit, she is quite talkative. Shorter conversations would cost correspondingly less, but I believe that even if you pick up the telephone in Holland and dial your neighbour and say hi and then hang up, you are paying a minimum of about 35 cents. Now, do we want this kind of system? I do not think we want that kind of system here.

Madam Speaker, the vast majority do not want that kind of system, that system where you pay through the nose, where the telephone is a luxury, a pure user-pay system, where the human and social aspects of the telephone is ignored; it becomes a business tool or a tool for the rich or a tool for those that can afford it. Manitobans are not convinced by the argument that we must privatize because others have done so. It is not an argument. Privatization is not a bold step into the future as the right-wing ideologues want us to believe. It is, rather, a sad step back into the past whereby the means of communication are controlled by a few for profit. The intent of Bill 67 is no different than the federal Bill C-14. As the federal government is abandoning transportation infrastructure, railroads, airports and ports to the private sector, so is this provincial government abandoning communication infrastructure to the private sector.

We have heard it all before, Madam Speaker. Bill 67 is only the latest gambit of transferring the people's asset to a few shareholders usually for a fraction of the true

value. We saw it in Saskatchewan, where the notorious Mr. Devine sold millions of dollars of road-building equipment to a few Tory friends, again, for a fraction of the value. When MTS is sold, if MTS is sold—and I hope along with 90 percent or more of the people of Manitoba that this government would reconsider—is there any guarantee that Manitobans will receive a fair price? If the scenario holds true to form, we will see senior managers, bureaucrats, buy shares of MTS at preferential rates. So, naturally, they will support and flog privatization. We can expect control of the company to be vested outside this province despite assurances from the minister. Any four people, in fact, could own up to 60 percent of the new company, and some of these people could be Americans. The loss of jobs would escalate. The priorities would no longer be Manitoba priorities but the priorities of those who control the company.

Northern and rural Manitoba, because of low population density, can expect to pay significantly higher telephone rates, and all this time our government in Manitoba tells us this pain is good for us as if we are masochists and loved suffering. They insist on fixing or, rather, selling what ain't broke, and they are doing it without consulting those most directly affected, Manitobans. This is not leadership making a tough decision, Madam Speaker. This is a carefully crafted attack on a public asset behind the public's back. This is not democracy. This is arrogance, and the 90-plus percent Manitobans who despise Bill 67 will not forget about the authors of Bill 67 when the next election rolls around.

Now, I know that the Minister responsible for Telephones (Mr. Findlay) never tires of telling us that a new privatized MTS will, like Cinderella, be transformed from an orphan into a princess. All will be wonderful. All will be new, and yes, indeed, there will be a new name, but as to this new, sleek, privatized telecom system, this new Cinderella, being better for Manitoba, we do not believe it on this side of the House, and most Manitobans do not believe it. The minister assures us that basic telephone rates will not escalate under privatization, but let us see what The Globe and Mail stated on September 21, on page 4, and I will quote, Madam Speaker, from the appropriate section. Quote: Consumer groups are concerned that local phone rates could double over the next six years. It is not a very pretty picture for consumers, said Pippa Lawson

[phonetic] of the consumer group Public Interest Advocacy Centre. The group says the cost of basic residential phone service could rise to \$30 a month in the next five or six years. The current average is in the \$15 to \$17 range. Unquote.

So who do we believe, the minister and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) or the Public Interest Advocacy Centre in Ottawa? Both the Premier and the minister led us to believe they would consult Manitobans extensively before MTS was to be sold. They have not done so. MTS is being privatized in a very sneaky way. Bill 67 is not acceptable. We cannot support it and neither do the vast majority of Manitobans support it, Madam Speaker. We reject Bill 67. Thank you.

\* (1650)

#### House Business

**Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Law Amendments will sit on Monday evening, October 28 at 6 p.m. to consider Bill 72.

#### Committee Change

**Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek):** I move, Madam Speaker, seconded by the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe), Law Amendments committee, (Saturday) October 26 at 10 a.m., the honourable member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) for the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck).

Motion agreed to.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain):** Madam Speaker, I too would just like to take this opportunity to put a few comments on the record in regard to Bill 67. I would like to start out by saying that I do support MTS. I think that as I discuss this issue more and more with my friends and with my family and with the people that I represent in Turtle Mountain that I have had quite a history, as I am sure some of the members opposite and members of my own caucus have, in regard to the history of MTS.

I can remember my first experiences living in rural Manitoba and how important it was for my parents that they stressed to us that in a lot of cases where we could not get to visit with our relatives, our aunts and our uncles and our friends and family that we did learn to pick up the phone and call them. It created a closeness of our families and I am sure of many of the members' families that distance would not allow.

I also remember, the advantages of the telephone to my father who was in business, I am proud to say, over 50 years. It gave him the ability and our family the ability to spend more time together with the phone services that we were allowed and that we had at the time, in the sense that he could quite often sneak away from work or at least be home at supper time to spend the evening with us, knowing that he could accept the phone calls as they came in and respond to the needs and the demands of the customer base that he had built up over that period of time.

I think it is also kind of unique. I do remember our first phone number, it was 254. Do not ask me what that meant or how it arrived to ring, but I know I guess when you got that number, you got our house. I do remember too that the services that were provided at that time were a party line, where quite often if you happened to be outside on your way in and you caught the last ring, quite often it was your line, or at least you presumed it to be, and upon answering you would discover that it was the second half of the first ring and you ended up in a three-way conversation with the people involved, who at that time were, I would suggest, all friends and all close, and there was certainly a relationship that was established in that sense too.

I later remember going to high school, where we had to travel further distances, and what an advantage the phone service became to me, because being approximately 15 to 18 miles away from my high school, I could communicate with my friends and with my teachers, if I so desired, to get caught up on the current requirements of my classroom should I happen to be away on a particular day.

I would also like to say that my experience now with that is very much the same in the sense of being an elected member and having to spend several days at a

time away from my family, that the opportunity and just the ability to pick up the phone and call them and find out how they are doing has helped maintain a closeness in the family that is sometimes quite difficult and strained due to the mileage and the distance that separates us. I think, as we lived in that small community and the relationships that we established with the phone company, I would say my experiences have all been positive.

In rural Manitoba we have only known MTS as our phone company for as long as I can remember. Only in recent years has competition entered into the market, and although I have not experienced the competition and what they can do for me, I have been offered the opportunity to partake or to switch my telephone business to a competitor. I have chosen not to. I find that the service that I have received from MTS has been very positive and very good, and I would say that as of this day I do not foresee any changes in that. I think that I, like a lot of the people that I represent, will continue to use MTS, and I would suggest that if they are happy with that service, that is what they should do.

I guess at this time I would suggest that the competition that has come into play has given the opportunity to people that are not satisfied with MTS to have the ability to choose, and I recognize that and I also support that, Madam Speaker. I think giving anyone the ability to choose and make decisions as to how they want to spend, be it their communication dollar, be it their travelling dollar, be it their accommodation dollar, they should have the right and the ability to choose. I have always said that when you have that ability to choose, you have the ability to choose based on price, you have the ability to choose based on service, you have the ability to base it on several factors that come into play. I think that is something that is positive, and that is something that even the members on the opposite side, I am sure, have from time to time gone shopping and found the best price for something they wish to purchase. They have that ability to do that, and I praise the rights to be able to do that.

I think that in every way, Madam Speaker, I would suggest to you that my experience with MTS has been a very positive one, and I would also like to comment on the people in my communities that I represent and people in every community in rural Manitoba.

The people who work for MTS are strong, community-minded people, and they serve the community with leadership and in every asset and every aspect of community living. I know, personally, that some of my friends who work with MTS, whom I participate in oldtimers' hockey with, have coached my children in hockey, have camped with my family. I certainly say that I respect the job that they do. I know that the good service and the good work that they are now doing will continue in the future. What I am really trying to say is that I have grown up with MTS, and I think, in the same aspect, MTS has grown up with me.

It is now a company that competes, and I talked about the competition before. It is hard to believe, but a company that has gone from a monopoly situation and was set up to provide the services to the people of Manitoba and has served it and provided in a very positive way, is now under some pressure, I would say, in the competitive field that is out there. I do not think that this is wrong. I think that the employees of MTS have responded very positively. I think the company has responded very positively. But I do think that you are in a competitive industry that changes so rapidly, as this one is doing and will do in the future, and that there are pressures on that particular business or that particular industry to change and to develop and to continually strive to meet the customers' demands—not only the customers' demands, but the competitors' ability to compete with them for the same services that they provide.

I think MTS has done that, and I think in the future, when this bill proceeds forward, that they will continue to do so and they will do so with the ability that government will no longer—I hesitate to use the word “interfere,” because I do not think that is the proper one—but when a government has management and funding ability over certain corporations, I personally, and this is my opinion, believe that they tend to be somewhat slower than the private industry that can adjust and compete and that are willing to invest their own money to go out and meet the demands of the consumer.

\* (1700)

I think that, in order for MTS to be put on equal footing with that competition, it means that it does have to have new ownership structure. I think it will allow that company to make quicker, faster, better decisions,

and it will allow it to compete in the market that is growing so quickly and so fast that perhaps today government, as I would suggest and as I have said earlier, would tend to restrict that development.

I think it is important that we notice that some of the services that MTS is providing now, and, again, as I come to sit in the House and have learned the developments of MTS and some of the things that they are doing now, it certainly has not been that long ago that the services that they now provide were not being provided even as shortly or long ago as five years. I think that, when the technology changes as quickly as it does, I would suggest to members opposite and on this side that the ability to change and adjust to the systems that we are working in has to be done and has to be done quickly, and that we have to be able to evaluate and proceed in the manner that best serves the people of the province of Manitoba.

I think that competition is good. I think that when customers have alternatives service improves. I think that when customers have alternatives competition will determine the bottom line. If it is price, as I said earlier, that you are interested in preserving, then the competition will certainly provide that.

I do want to just make a comment in regard to the increases in the costs of telephone services if they should go up. I would suggest that is something that will happen regardless, and I think in business that is what we have to accept, that if it is outside of our control, which the federal regulators will determine, then the ability to adjust and to I guess seize the opportunity would be in our best interest to have it into private hands.

As I stated earlier, the workforce in Manitoba is approximately 4,000 people, and I would say that they have endured some cutbacks, as every corporation in the world has in the last few years. I think that reorganizations, restructuring, as my honourable friend said, I think that they are providing a tremendous service to the people of the communities that they live in and also to the company, and I think the message, it says itself. MTS is a leading company in telecommunications. I think what Bill 67 does is provide for the future of that company to remain competitive, to grow, to create jobs in Manitoba and to make it better for the people in the province of Manitoba to be in the hands of a corporation

that can make decisions on its own without the shackles of government.

So I appreciate the opportunity to put a few comments on the record, Madam Speaker, and I look forward to the bill moving forward. Thank you.

**Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be able to put a few remarks on the record today, as one of the shareholders of this company. I think all shareholders should have the opportunity, as I am having today, to voice my opinion and what I think.

As the Deputy Premier was just saying, if you have money you can buy shares. That is the whole point. If you have shares, you can buy shares. In other words, if you have money you can buy shares. That is my whole point to this speech, because a lot of people who depend on MTS do not have the money to buy shares. They are owners today. Tomorrow, they will not be shareholders.

If you look at the way the whole events developed prior to the election, during the election, the government kept denying, denying, denying that MTS was not for sale and it would never be sold. So it was on and on and on, and then when they decided that, yes, we will sell it, instead of going to a company or consultants that knew about telecommunications and technologies to give them an accurate report, what they did was they went to stockbrokers, who will benefit greatly.

It is just like an individual who owns a little chicken farm, and all of a sudden that individual walks by one day and sees a big hole in their chicken coop. So that individual says, well, I should really get this fixed but, before I can fix it, I should have a report, and I think the person I will ask to give me an accurate report should be Mr. Fox. So Mr. Fox comes back with the report to the chicken rancher and says, no, I recommend we do not fix the big hole in the chicken coop because the chickens are getting more air this way, so I recommend not to fix it.

What, do you think for a minute that the fox has a self-interest in this?

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Mr. Hickes:** I do not think, according to the Conservatives. No. It is the same way as getting stockbrokers to come and bring in a report where they are

going to benefit about, what I have heard, \$20 million to \$25 million. So what kind of a report do you think they are going to bring back? Do you think they are going to come back and say, do not sell MTS, because if you sell MTS the rates will be too high for seniors, for northern communities, for rural communities.

Do you think that is the kind of report you would get? No, you would not. All you have to do is look at the impact that this sale will have on all Manitobans. You look at it, and if you look at the impact it is going to have on northern communities, where the unemployment, and some of these members here are very familiar with northern communities, in some of these northern communities there are 90 percent, 95 percent of the people that are unemployed, and the rates are subsidized by \$36.89 in order for the individuals to have a telephone.

I was listening to the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed). He was talking, and he made a very passionate speech about his family and the importance of the family connections through the telephone. Well, why cannot the northern aboriginal communities have that same tie, connection to their families, when the families have to be relocated a lot of times to the city of Winnipeg? The Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) is very familiar with these northern communities that I am referring to.

**An Honourable Member:** Would that be me, George?

**Mr. Hickes:** Yes, that is you. What happens is, a lot of those communities there are very, very few personal care homes, so when the elderly get sick they are flown out into the city. And the aboriginal communities have the highest percentage of diabetes in Manitoba. So what happens? They have to be flown out into southern Manitoba.

\* (1710)

We talk about the importance of family to stay connected. Even they said they can go to Thompson. That is fine, but if they are from Thompson and they are living in Garden Hill, they still have to use the telephone to stay in contact. And if they have to pay the full cost of recovery plus the profit, which will happen when you privatize MTS, right now the rate in northern Manitoba is \$11.75 per month. If you had to pay the actual cost it would be \$48.64.

Well, how many phones could you see being have to be cut off in these northern communities? There will be quite a few, because a lot of the people there do not have jobs. Do you care? Do you care about that?

I heard one member say, well, people are lining up to buy shares. That is fine. Is it these people that depend on telephones? Are they lining up to buy shares? They do not have the funds to buy shares. Sorry. That is the kind of things that when we talk about privatizing, about a private Crown corporation versus a public corporation, you have to look at the whole picture. You cannot just look at the benefits because I am living in a city where my phone is only subsidized by \$3.90. Maybe that is not so much of a hardship, but if you are living in a rural community, the rates are \$22.62. Not everybody that is living in a rural community can afford \$35.56 for a telephone every month. Sorry, but that is reality. But they still have to have a telephone. [interjection]

Pardon me? Is this all about money? How about the compassion about people? People do not matter anymore? When you talk about a government, a government is supposed to be for all people of Manitoba, whether you are rich, whether you are poor, no matter what. If you need hospitalization, you should be entitled to hospitalization. If you need education, you should have the opportunity for education.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. I am experiencing some difficulty hearing the member for Point Douglas.

**Mr. Hickes:** On social welfare, if a person needs a telephone and they cannot afford a telephone, you call this a social welfare agency? Holy smokes. I guess that is why we belong to different sides of the House. It is not a social welfare agency when an individual is sick—if they are seniors and they are sick and they need a phone, even if they are in the city, to phone 911, should they not be entitled to a telephone, if they happen to be on social assistance? Holy smokes. I guess that is why we have different philosophies, we belong to different parties.

I believe in sharing. If you have, you share. That is the tradition in the North. You could go into any northern community, the poorest individual in that community, if you are there for a day to do business or whatever have

you, they will invite you to their home. They will share with you whatever they have. That is just the way it is in the North. If that is not the way government should be run, well, sorry, but I believe government should be there for everybody.

When I look at the difference in rates, there are a lot of rural individuals that will be drastically impacted by having to pay full cost recovery plus profits by a private telephone company because private companies are there to make a profit for their shareholders. That is what they are there for. They are not there to make sure that everyone that needs a phone will have a phone. Private companies do not care, and it is not their business. [interjection] The member for Portage (Mr. Pallister) was saying, are they a social agency? Well, no, they are not a social agency, but we have a responsibility as governments, I hope, and a conscience, when we are in government, to make sure that every citizen has the means and is looked after by the government of the day.

When you look at the rates, the rate in Winnipeg is \$13.30. Western Manitoba is \$12.90. Northern Manitoba is \$11.75, and I am glad to see that the rates are lower in Manitoba. I am looking at figures here, and the actual cost in the city is \$17.20, a difference of \$3.90. In western Manitoba, the actual cost is \$35.56, for a difference of \$22.66. In northern Manitoba, the actual cost is \$48.64, for a difference of \$36.89. Those are MTS figures.

So, if you look at what happens when you privatize versus a public Crown corporation, all you have to do is just go back a few months. Do you think a private company would have put up a mobility tower in Thompson? Do you think they would have done that? It probably cost MTS \$6 million to \$7 million, but at least it gives the opportunity for individuals to use cellular phones for their small businesses and to hopefully keep in touch with family members. It gave that opportunity. A private company, I doubt very much, would have spent \$6 million or \$7 million dollars to ensure that northerners had opportunities as we in the south have today.

What is wrong with that? There is nothing wrong with that. There are small business people in northern Manitoba that travel back and forth. A lot of those communities are quite a distance apart. You get sales people and business people travelling from The Pas to



Flin Flon to Thompson, some even go up to Churchill and some will even take the awful chance and venture to Leaf Rapids or Lynn Lake whenever they can get by on that road. That is another story in itself. But that is what happens. We have to look at the whole province. We cannot just speak profit, private versus public, because we have to make sure that people get the services they need.

When you look at the communities where some of the elders—how many personal care homes are in remote northern communities? There are very few. Every time we travel in the North we hear that. We need personal care homes so we can keep our elders here and live in dignity and within their own communities, so they can have visits from their grandchildren and their families. I think that is great. That is the way it should be but, because of the lack of personal care homes, a lot of the elders are flown out so the grandchildren, the family members, the only way they can keep in touch with their loved ones is by a telephone, and I think that is great.

Also, how many times have we raised the question, my colleague for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) has raised the question and other northern members have raised the question about this seriousness of diabetes in aboriginal communities. There are lots of individuals that are flown out and spend a long, long time in hospitals in this city. Without the means of a telephone you are disconnecting the family unity, and for what? Just for some profit for certain individuals? Why not everybody profit and, being a citizen of Manitoba, everybody profit to be able to afford to have a telephone.

If you look at seniors, they are going to be drastically hit by the increases that a private company will bring forward, because a lot of seniors have to have access to a telephone for medical reasons. Also, a lot of seniors want to maintain contact with their families, their sons and daughters, their grandchildren. A lot of times that is the only way that they can communicate because, as you know, a lot of seniors have to move into the city from rural and northern communities to be close to a hospital, and we cannot lose sight of them.

When we talk about, well, sell the shares, sell the shares, we are all profiting, I ask a question of every individual in here, would you sell your house to charge yourself rent? That is what we are doing here. That is

exactly what we are doing here. We are all shareholders. We are all shareholders today.

I have a home. There is no way I would sell it to charge myself rent. It does not make any sense. But if you privatize MTS, you know what is going to happen? Alberta has already proved it when they privatized. Everyone says, the rates will stay down. It will be competitive and because of the competition the rates might even be lower. Do not fool yourself for one second. Alberta did it, and what happened in Alberta? The rates are 34 percent higher, 34 percent higher, and that is only in, what, six years? That is only in a matter of six years.

So when you look at private versus profit, I think we have to ensure that we do what we can to keep MTS as a public utility. If there is going to be a change, talk to the shareholders, hold public hearings, hold public hearings in northern Manitoba, go to some of those remote communities, hear some of the people in those remote communities and what they tell you. They will tell you exactly what I am telling you today, if you privatize it, we would not be able to afford the full cost. This is the actual cost, this is not even profit on top of that. You know, when you look at remote northern communities and the phone rates are going to be \$48.64 for actual costs, and they want the shareholders to make a profit, you are going to be looking at over \$50 per share per month, maybe even higher.

\* (1720)

What will happen when you privatize, when it goes into a private company, what is going to happen to the cell users in northern Manitoba? Are they going to let them use their telephone, subsidized by all users of Manitoba? I do not think so. So you are going to be hurting even small-business people in the North, who already have it hard enough as it is.

Also, when you look at people on fixed income, and, yes, there are people on social assistance, and, yes, there are people on social assistance who need telephones, and that is the way it is. They need telephones just as much as we do, and they should be able to access a phone as we do. We talk about a wealthy province, we talk about a wealthy community, well, let us share that wealth with the people who need it: the northerners, the rural

members, the seniors, the people on fixed incomes. There is nothing wrong with sharing a little bit. Sometimes you buy a whole box of bread and you only need a few loaves, some of them get stale, but if you share, none of it gets wasted. I think that is what we have to look at, a sharing, caring government, a caring, sharing province of Manitoba. I think that is what we have to look at.

I hope that the government will look at holding public hearings in northern, rural communities. Let the public have a say in this. If the public chooses to privatize it, fine, but if the public says no, then we should not privatize it. I think before we do anything we should ensure that we consult the public, consult the shareholders in Manitoba, and ensure that people who need the phone the most have the ability to access a phone to stay in touch with their families and to reach a doctor or hospital if they ever need one.

So with those few comments, I thank you for the time.

**Madam Speaker:** Prior to recognizing the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), is there leave to permit the bill to also remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway)? [agreed]

**Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk):** Well, I must say, Madam Speaker, I do regret having to speak on this piece of legislation. We witnessed a number of bills from this government in this current sitting of the session, and several of them are just terrible pieces of legislation and really demonstrate to us the direction that this government wants to take this province, and this bill is a clear example of that.

I do want to refer to the Annual Report of the Manitoba Telephone System, which was tabled in the House a number of weeks ago. On the first page of the report, it has the mission statement of the publicly owned Manitoba Telephone System, and I quote: "To meet the telecommunications needs of all Manitobans with the right solutions, outstanding service and superior products."

This is the mission statement of our publicly owned telephone system, the same system that this government opposite is now putting up for sale to private interests.

I think it has been mentioned before, but it is certainly something that needs to be repeated; that is, this government has absolutely no mandate at all, no mandate at all from the electorate in this province for this particular move.

I recall, I was the critic for the telephone system for a number of years, and I raised the issue with the member for Springfield (Mr. Findlay) who was the then and current Minister responsible for MTS, and they said at that time and they said subsequent to that: No, no, we have absolutely no intentions at all of selling off our publicly owned telephone system. They even said that when asked during the election campaign, and I recall at a forum in Selkirk and the issue was raised there, the candidate for the Conservative Party said: Oh, no, no, we have no intentions of selling off the telephone system.

**An Honourable Member:** Oh, yeah, trust me.

**Mr. Dewar:** "Trust me" was the word of the candidate there in Selkirk and of the minister and of the Premier of this province, and it was clear then and it is clear today that we cannot trust the word of the Premier or the word of any of the members opposite when it comes to this particular issue. But why are they selling it off? They are selling it off to pay off their political friends, those who can afford to purchase this.

The member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) clearly pointed out in his speech that it is only those who have the resources, the financial resources, that will be able to go to the marketplace to purchase the shares of this privately owned system. The other reason, of course, is that they are planning on and they are going to do the same thing that they did prior to this last election, that is, as my colleague for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk) said earlier, to stash away some money. They know that this is a \$1.2 billion asset. It has \$800 million debt. That leaves a significant gain, and that money will be, I would suggest, put away in a rainy day fund, the fund that will be once again used to persuade the voters of this province to unfortunately—well, we know it is not going to happen, but they are going to attempt to use that money from the sale of this public asset to persuade the voters to support them in the next campaign.

The members opposite talk about some of the reasons why, and I was with the member for Thompson (Mr.

Ashton) in the hearings, and the member for Thompson raised a number of issues with the minister, and the minister could not answer any of the issues raised by the member for Thompson. In fact, I was there, and, as he very accurately relates to the House, in fact it was Jules Benson that was doing a lot of the answering, and the Minister of Finance's brother, who is the chair of the board of directors, which was one time only a half-time job but when he was appointed they made it a full-time job, and that is what he did over the years. They made the job into a full-time job, and it was part of his mandate, obviously, to develop a plan to sell off this asset, this publicly owned asset that has been owned by the people of this province since 1908. It was a Conservative Premier that tried to and, I would suggest, did bring some order into the chaos that existed in this province in 1908 when it comes to the telecommunication industry at that time.

The MTS makes a significant contribution to our economy. There are 4,000 employees. At one time there were 5,000 employees. Madam Speaker, at the beginning of the 1990s, the minister of the telephone

system decided he had to do some "right-sizing" he called it, but in fact we all know that it was downsizing, downsizing the workforce of the Manitoba Telephone System from 5,000 to 4,000 employees.

Now with this privatization, we will see in rural and northern Manitoba, rate increases and job losses. We have seen that now and, unfortunately, it is going to happen even more. The mission statement of the telephone system to provide right solutions, outstanding service and superior products, all of this I would suggest will be in jeopardy when this government sells this telephone system.

It is deplorable the action of this government—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) will have 23 minutes remaining.

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

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, October 24, 1996

## CONTENTS

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### Presenting Petitions

Guaranteed Annual Income  
Martindale 4467

#### Reading and Receiving Petitions

Manitoba Telephone System  
Wowchuk 4467  
Maloway 4468

Guaranteed Annual Income  
Martindale 4467

The Grand Lodge of Manitoba of the  
Independent Order of Oddfellows  
L. Evans 4468

#### Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees

Standing Committee on Municipal  
Affairs, 3rd Report  
Laurendeau 4468

#### Oral Questions

Health Sciences Centre  
Doer; McCrae 4482

Holiday Haven Nursing Home  
Chomiak; McCrae 4484

Manitoba Telephone System  
Ashton; Findlay 4484

Westfair Foods  
Reid; Toews 4485

Road Maintenance  
Lamoureux; Findlay 4486  
Lathlin; Findlay 4489

Winnipeg Police Services  
Mackintosh; Vodrey 4487

Law Courts Building  
Mackintosh; Vodrey 4487

Leipsic Communications  
Sale; Cummings 4488

Deputy Minister of Natural Resources  
Struthers; Driedger 4488  
Doer; Downey 4489

The Pas Health Complex  
Lathlin; McCrae 4490

Crown Corporations  
Ashton; Findlay 4490

#### Members' Statements

Manitoba—Economic Performance  
Penner 4491

Cattle Producers  
Wowchuk 4491

Small Business Week  
Dyck 4492

Manitoba Telephone System Privatization  
Ashton 4492

Police Officers—Credibility  
Kowalski 4493

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### Report Stage

Bill 22, Credit Unions and Caisses  
Populaires Amendment Act 4493

Bill 25, Jury Amendment Act 4493

Bill 28, Winnipeg Stock Exchange Act	4493
Bill 29, Winnipeg Commodity Exchange Act	4494
Bill 45, Consumer Protection Amendment Act	4494
Bill 46, Securities Amendment Act	4494
Bill 60, Law Society Amendment Act	4494
Bill 62, Jobs Fund Repeal Act	4494
Bill 66, Boxing and Wrestling Commission Amendment Act	4494

### **Debate on Second Readings**

Bill 72, Public Schools Amendment Act (2)	
Mihychuk	4495
Reid	4500
Doer	4503
Penner	4508
Kowalski	4510
Bill 67, Manitoba Telephone System Reorganization and Consequential Amendments Act	
Jennissen	4513
Tweed	4516
Hickes	4519
Dewar	4522