



Fourth Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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authority of
The Honourable Louise M. Dacquay
Speaker*



MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
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	Steinbach	P.C.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	N.D.P.
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	P.C.
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	P.C.
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane	Osborne	N.D.P.
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	P.C.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn	St. James	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	P.C.
NEWMAN, David, Hon.	Riel	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank, Hon.	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
RADCLIFFE, Mike, Hon.	River Heights	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack, Hon.	Niakwa	P.C.
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Gladstone	P.C.
SALE, Tim	Crescentwood	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin	N.D.P.
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	P.C.
TOEWS, Vic, Hon.	Rossmere	P.C.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, June 17, 1998

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Rail Line Abandonment

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

WHEREAS affordable transportation is a critical component of grain production; and

WHEREAS under the Crow rate benefit, Manitoba was the cheapest place on the Prairies from which to ship grain but became the most expensive following the abolishment of the Crow rate; and

WHEREAS the Canada Transportation Act proclaimed on July 1, 1996, gave railways the ability to discontinue and scrap branch lines without public input; and

WHEREAS several lines were targeted immediately by CN for abandonment; and

WHEREAS CN gave notice on May 6, 1998, that the Erwood Subdivision will be discontinued in 1998; and

WHEREAS the loss of this line would severely impact upon the communities of Bowsman and Birch River as well as surrounding communities; and

WHEREAS in 1997, western grain farmers lost millions of dollars due to backlogs and delays by the major railways; and

WHEREAS as a result the federal government set up the Estey Grain Transportation Review which is scheduled to release a report later this year.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the provincial government go on record requesting CN and CPR to not proceed with any discontinuance of lines until that report has been tabled.

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

**Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs
First Report**

Mr. Jack Penner (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs): I beg to present the First Report of the Committee on Municipal Affairs.

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

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

Your committee met on Monday, June 15, 1998, at 9:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider bills referred.

At the June 15, 1998, 9:30 a.m. meeting, your committee elected Mr. Penner as its Chairperson.

Your committee heard representation on bills as follows:

Bill 36—The City of Winnipeg Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg et modifications corrélatives

Nick Ternette - Private Citizen

Dan Kelly - Canadian Federation of Independent Business

Jeffrey Lowe - Choices

Mayor Susan Thompson & Deputy Mayor Jae Eadie -
City of Winnipeg
Councillor Glen Murray - Fort Rouge Ward, City of
Winnipeg
Jenny Gerbasi - Private Citizen
Councillor Lillian Thomas - Elmwood Ward, City of
Winnipeg
Brian McLeod - Private Citizen
Paul Moist - CUPE Local 500
Carolyn Garlich - Council of Women of Winnipeg
Ambrose Percheson - Private Citizen
Paul Laboissiere - Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce
John Kubi - East Kildonan/Transcona Residents
Advisory Group
Richard Gagnon - Point Douglas Residents Association
& the Norquay Community Centre
Linda Eryou - Woodhaven Home Owners Association
Valerie Price - Manitoba Association for Rights and
Liberties
Paul Nielson - Private Citizen
Leonora Saunders - Provincial Council of Women of
Manitoba

Your committee has considered:

Bill 36—The City of Winnipeg Amendment and
Consequential Amendments Act; Loi modifiant la Loi
sur la Ville de Winnipeg et modifications corrélatives

and has agreed to report the same, by a counted vote of
6 ayes, 4 nays, with the following amendments:

MOTION:

THAT section 10 of the Bill be amended by striking out
subsection (1).

MOTION:

THAT the proposed clause 28(4), as set out in
subsection 13(4) of the Bill, be amended by striking out
everything after "subsection (2)".

MOTION:

THAT the proposed clause 28(5), as set out in
subsection 13(4) of the Bill, be amended by striking out
everything after "subsection (2)".

Mr. Penner: I move, seconded by the honourable
member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau), that the
report of the committee be now received.

Motion agreed to.

**Standing Committee on Law Amendments
Third Report**

**Mr. Jack Penner (Chairperson of the Standing
Committee on Law Amendments):** I would like to
present the Third Report of the Committee on Law
Amendments.

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

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your committee met on Thursday, June 11, 1998 at 10
a.m. and on Tuesday, June 16, 1998 at 3 p.m. in Room
255 of the Legislative Building to consider bills
referred.

Your committee heard representation on bills as
follows:

Bill 37—The Farm Machinery and Equipment and
Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur les machines
et le matériel agricoles et modifications corrélatives

John Schmeiser - Canada West Equipment Dealers
Association
Don Dewar - Keystone Agricultural Producers
Scott McDonald - Manitoba Wholesale Implements
Association

Written Submission

Glenn Dickson - United Grain Growers & Canadian
Association of Agri Retailers

Bill 41—The Life Leases and Consequential
Amendments Act; Loi sur les baux viagers et
modifications corrélatives

Derek Kindrat - Westman Lions Manor Inc.
Louis Tetreault - Private Citizen

Your committee has considered:

Bill 22—The Veterinary Services Amendment Act; Loi
modifiant la Loi sur les soins vétérinaires

Bill 24—The Crop Insurance Corporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-récolte

and has agreed to report the same without amendment.

Your committee has also considered:

Bill 19—The Public Trustees Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le curateur public et modifications corrélatives

Bill 37—The Farm Machinery and Equipment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur les machines et le matériel agricoles et modifications corrélatives

and has agreed to report the same, on division, without amendment.

Your committee has also considered:

Bill 41—The Life Leases and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur les baux viagers et modifications corrélatives

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

MOTION:

THAT subsection 38(3) be amended by adding “under subsection (1) or (2), as the case may be” at the end of the subsection.

MOTION:

THAT subsection 38(4) be struck out and the following substituted:

Defence

38(4) *No person is guilty of an offence under this section if the person can prove on a balance of probabilities that he or she took reasonable steps to avoid the commission of the offence.*

Your committee has also considered:

Bill 44—The Statute Law Amendment Act, 1998; Loi de 1998 modifiant diverses dispositions législatives

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

MOTION:

THAT section 8 of the Bill be renumbered as subsection 8(1) and the following be added as subsection 8(2):

*8(2) Subsection 113(1) of **The Financial Administration Act** is repealed and the following is substituted:*

Coming into force

113(1) *Subject to this section, this Act comes into force on April 1, 1997.*

Coming into force: subsection 25(3)

113(1.1) *Subsection 25(3) comes into force on a day fixed by proclamation.*

MOTION:

THAT section 20 of the Bill be amended

(a) in subsection (1), by adding “subsection 8(2),” after “and 9,”; and

(b) by adding the following after subsection 20(3):

Coming into force: subsection 8(2)

20(3.1) *Subsection 8(2) is retroactive and is deemed to have come into force on April 1, 1997.*

Mr. Penner: I move, seconded by the honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Driedger), that the report of the committee be now received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister charged with the administration of The Crown Corporations Public Review and Accountability Act): I am pleased to table the Report of the Provincial Auditor for June 1998, An Examination of Governance in Manitoba's Crown Organizations.

Hon. Mike Radcliffe (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the Annual Report for 1997 for the Residential Tenancies Branch and the Annual Report for 1997 for the Residential Tenancies Commission.

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 fifty Grade 5 students from R.H.G. Bonnycastle School under the direction of Mrs. Melaney Vermeylen and Mrs. Sophie Munro. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mrs. Vodrey).

We also have thirteen Grade 5 students from Westpark School under the direction of Mr. Wayne Sawatsky. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurshou).

Also, we have twenty-four Grades 5 and 6 students from Stanley Knowles School under the direction of Ms. Claretta Shefrin. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

We also have twenty-four Grade 5 students from Gillam School under the direction of Mrs. Tannis Corfield. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Physician Resources Report Tabling Request

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, in June of 1997, a working group dealing with physician shortages and physician resources made up of citizens, health officials, doctors and members of the public provided a report to the Minister of Health to deal with the long-term plan to deal with these shortages. We believe the public should have a copy of that report, that the public should be engaged in the recommendations and this Legislature should be informed of those recommendations.

I would like to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to today ask or require his Minister of Health to have the courage to make that report public a year after it has been produced for the government.

* (1335)

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, over the last year and a half that I have had the honour of serving in this portfolio, the issue of physician remuneration and retention has been an extremely dynamic one. We were faced with a walkout of emergency physicians last year that allowed us in a 90-day process to develop a new model that has stabilized that situation. We went on a major recruiting effort that has recruited some nearly 30 additional physicians to Manitoba that have plugged those particular holes. We have worked out an agreement on emergency doctors in Winnipeg that created for the first time a province-wide structure for emergency remuneration, and we are now into arbitration on a host of issues that are essential to retaining and recruiting family practitioners and other specialists.

So, to be blunt, I think time has overtaken any particular report. The situation has been dynamic and has been quite successful, particularly in the recruitment side.

Report Recommendations

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, this minister is so wonderful. We have health authorities from Brandon—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Doer: He is so wonderful. We have the community of Brandon raiding the community of Winnipeg for doctors. What kind of success is that?

We have Mr. Musick, a member of the committee, dealing with the immaturity of the present Minister of Health, saying that Mr. Praznik appears to think he can solve all the problems all by himself. He does not seem interested in engaging members of the community.

So, Madam Speaker, I will therefore table the physician resource report that the minister does not have the courage to do.

I would like to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon): which recommendations that were presented to the government a year ago are government policy, and which ones are not? The public deserve an answer and the courage of an answer from this Premier dealing with his immature Minister of Health.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I find it very interesting because the member for Concordia and his critic every day in this House attempt to blame myself and my colleagues for every problem in health care, and then when we attempt to resolve those issues in a fast way when we work with community organizations, when we work with regional health authorities, when we work with others to solve them, and we get success from time to time, then the member has to go down to the lowest denominator in his attacks on myself and others.

There is no simple solution to any of these problems. The member opposite complains about Brandon attempting to recruit physicians in Winnipeg. He should listen to his own members, because in this House they pointed out that we have surpluses of certain people in Winnipeg and need to have more in Brandon. So, again, could the NDP party just for once get its story the same?

Physician Resources Report Recommendations

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, in a special publication provided by the Manitoba Medical Association, their regular monthly publication, they devote an entire subsection to the failure of the government to deal with physician resources.

An Honourable Member: This minister.

Mr. Chomiak: —and this minister. Rarely in my experience in this area have I seen a more critical piece that deals with contradictions and failure to follow up and lack of confidence than this piece that has been produced by the Manitoba Medical Association.

My question to the Minister of Health is: after several years, after these recommendations, after we have been forced to deal with strike after strike after strike and contradictory statements, can the minister outline what the status is of the recommendations, including the incentive program, the rural relocation program, the education initiatives that were announced and the program for post-graduate students? They were all recommendations of that committee to deal with the rural and northern shortages in Manitoba finally.

* (1340)

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Is it not surprising that a party that prides itself on being a party of labour does not recognize that in a period of negotiations, that, Madam Speaker—and the document he refers to—we have just agreed to an arbitration in the last few weeks. I suspect that that document was part of the political campaign among its members that any organization particularly launches when they are developing their position. Members opposite know that. They try to sound naive coming to this Assembly. They are members who know it all too well.

The fact of the matter is there have been many good things happening in the area of physician attracting and retaining physicians. They never mention the fact that through our initiative we attracted nearly 30 additional doctors to Manitoba in this year to fill the holes in the system.

They do not mention the fact that we are working with the university to identify training opportunities for those who graduate to be able to go into rural and northern postings before they have to declare their specialty. They do not mention any of those things, but they are happening. They are real, and they are working toward solving the problem.

Contract Physicians

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Will the minister, I suggest, read this report which outlines contradictions between his department, the previous minister, his deputy minister over and over again and downright inaccuracies with respect to the program?

I would like to ask the minister a question that was a series of letters, at least 12 letters, between the department and the MMA about why the government is prepared to fund foreign South African graduates with contract positions in Manitoba but is failing to inform Manitoban graduates and others and fund those contracts for Manitobans so that they can relocate to rural and northern Manitoba and inform this House as to why Canadian doctors cannot take advantage of the same program that those foreign doctors can take advantage of, including Canadian doctors who are foreign trained.

Point of Order

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, on a point of order. Perhaps of the three questions the honourable member has asked, he could direct which one he wants us to answer.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Was the honourable government House leader rising on a point of order or the right to ask a question?

Mr. McCrae: On these supplementaries, Madam Speaker, the direction we have is to ask a question. The member asked three. Which one does he want answered?

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Kildonan, on the same point of order.

Mr. Chomiak: I believe the honourable government House leader does not have a point of order, and in fact it is a dispute over the facts.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised by the honourable government House leader, indeed the honourable government House leader does have a point of order. A supplementary question is to have no preamble and consist of a single question.

* * *

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): It is hard to have a dispute over the facts when the member for Kildonan does not have the facts, Madam Speaker, to be blunt, because what he is saying is simply not true.

Contract positions are available to any physician who is prepared to accept them. There has never been a restriction placed on this is only for South African recruits. The fact of the matter is the South African doctors who have come to Manitoba want, by and large, to work on that contract position. In fact, in communities where they have gone into fee-for-service relationships, they have usually chosen to leave because they have not been comfortable in that relationship with their fellow physicians.

So, Madam Speaker, those positions are in place for everyone, and I would remind the member as well that, through the efforts of the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed), we have negotiated an agreement with the university that will allow a number of their grads to go into practice after graduation and before they have to declare their specialty for up to three years. That is a first ever. We have been doing these things and they are real. They will put and are putting more physicians into rural and northern Manitoba.

Physician Resources Recruitment Strategy

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Madam Speaker, I wish to table for the information of the Minister of Health some of 1,600 signatures which we collected with very little effort, I might add, asking the minister not only to go to binding arbitration, which has now occurred, but also to ensure that we implement a physicians resource plan to have an adequate supply of physicians.

* (1345)

The minister knows full well from the rally that we held in Brandon of the depth of concern and feeling about the shortage of doctors in Brandon and rural Manitoba. If he gave the answer that he gave to this member, they would have run him out of the hall. They would have run him out of the Keystone Centre.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Would the honourable member for Brandon East please pose his question now.

Mr. L. Evans: On behalf of the hundreds of people that appeared at that rally, on behalf of thousands of people in rural and northern Manitoba and indeed among all people in Manitoba, will this minister now finally realize that there is a problem and, instead of patting himself on the back, guarantee that he will take some effective action to ensure that we have an adequate supply of doctors to Manitoba?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I have never seen such a display of someone trying to pretend they are not in the real world. The member for Brandon East does not even want to acknowledge that, through the efforts of the department working with the RHAs, we were able to recruit nearly 30 additional doctors. In fact, we had so many who were prepared to come to Manitoba, we actually provided their names to other jurisdictions who needed them, because we filled the positions that were there. We have talked about that; we talked about it at the meeting in Brandon.

An Honourable Member: Nobody believes you, Darren.

Mr. Praznik: I do not know where the member for Brandon East is, and the Leader of the Opposition says no one believes me. Go to the communities where those doctors are. They are there. Get into the real world.

Mr. L. Evans: Madam Speaker, this honourable minister has to refresh his memory of the questions—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Would the honourable member please pose his question.

Mr. L. Evans: The minister has previously said that the regional health authorities should be more responsive to the recruitment efforts of the government, but does this mean, is he suggesting that the RHAs should be going out competing one another for some very scarce resources to obtain sufficient doctors in the various communities? When will he realize that the

shortage of doctors, and I speak especially for Brandon and Westman, is real? When will he take some responsibility to deal with this?

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, the member for Brandon East, who has been in this Legislature since 1969, should remember that the responsibility for recruitment has traditionally not rested with the Minister of Health, not rested with Health authorities, but for clinics and physicians within communities.

I ask him: where was the Brandon Clinic in recruiting pediatricians? They had two that were the largest billers in the province. Is it surprising that they were not recruiting a third? Where was that responsibility?

The member totally does not want to recognize the realities of the past. We have stepped in and responded and said that there is a responsibility that we are prepared to take with RHAs. We have gone out and recruited, and we have created contract positions. We have worked with RHAs to recruit. We are taking and have taken the steps that the member asks for, but where is his criticism of those who had responsibility in the past?

Victims' Rights Amendment Act Victims Benefits

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, to the Justice minister. A few weeks ago the minister introduced victims rights legislation. He said how proud he was to table a bill to advance the rights of victims of crime. He said, and I quote: this new legislation ensures we never lose sight of the harm done to individuals by crime.

After we studied the bill in detail, Madam Speaker, we were shocked. My question to the minister is this: is the minister also proud that the bill eliminates for victims their death benefits, retraining allowances, the clear provision for maintenance of a child born of a rape and the legislated formula for benefits? Why did he not so much as mention this when he introduced the bill?

* (1350)

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, the committee considering that bill will indeed examine all those issues, and the committee will have an opportunity to discuss that.

We know that this member has brought a number of cases before this House where the facts simply were not correct. Indeed, the other day he stood up and admitted the—he did not know the facts even though he was making allegations.

So, Madam Speaker, in respect of this particular bill, we will deal with it in committee.

Point of Order

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Beauchesne's 417, I think, is very succinct and to the point, that the minister's answer should deal with the facts of the questions raised. I listened very carefully to the question of the member for St. Johns, who clearly asked the minister why he did not make mention in his bill of the serious rights that have been eliminated from Manitobans. The minister answered that question in the first part of his preamble, and then went off on his usual tangent of attacking the member for St. Johns on a whole series of unrelated matters.

I ask you to call him to order and either answer the question—if he does not want to answer the question, he can sit down.

Madam Speaker: The honourable government House leader, on the same point of order.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): On the same point of order, Madam Speaker, I do not know why the honourable member for Kildonan would suggest that the rules for members on his side of the House ought to be different and more special than the rules for honourable members on this side of the House.

He takes offence that the honourable minister might somehow chide or scold the honourable member for some of the positions taken by the NDP, and yet it is quite acceptable for that to come from his side of the House.

Madam Speaker, I think our skin is getting just a bit thin on some of these things, and in any event, there is nothing in Beauchesne that I know of that would point to a point of order in this particular instance.

Madam Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Kildonan, the minister did respond to a portion of the question, but in my opinion in the end did contravene Beauchesne 417 by provoking debate.

* * *

Mr. Mackintosh: A supplementary then: why does the minister not tell Manitobans what he is actually doing to victims by this bill, and that this government is also cutting the time to apply for benefits in half, is eliminating a level of appeal, is threatening victims with an arbitrary cap on benefits? Why is he somehow neglecting to tell Manitobans he is gutting our victim compensation system?

Mr. Toews: Madam Speaker, the particular bill was the subject of a lot of consideration within the department. Indeed, the member knows that the Prairie Research Associates did a long study in respect of victims legislation and made certain recommendations. Indeed, the member specifically asked us to follow those recommendations and that if we did not, he would.

We have followed many of those recommendations, and if the member believes that there are oversights, certainly that is the—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Toews: Madam Speaker, as I have indicated, if there are issues that need to be addressed, certainly they can be addressed in committee where there will be an opportunity to hear from the public, to hear from the members, and certainly this House will give consideration to any worthwhile suggestion.

Mr. Mackintosh: Given that answer, would the minister, instead of fantasizing about our views on

recommendations about the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board by Prairie Research Associates, now admit that he is indeed following their recommendation to gut victim compensation and eliminate benefits, put caps in, give cabinet jurisdiction and discretion rather than legislation? For what reason, Madam Speaker? Because it is recommended that these changes recover additional revenues. It is the bottom line. Would he admit it?

Mr. Toews: Madam Speaker, the Prairie Research Associates conducted a very detailed study which I understood the member for St. Johns supported. Now, for some reason, he appears to have changed his mind, and I do not know what has caused that. But—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

* (1355)

Mr. Toews: Madam Speaker, Prairie Research Associates made certain recommendations to the department that would, in their opinion, enhance the delivery of services to victims. This government has consistently enhanced the rights given to victims, including the \$225,000 program that is done on an annual basis to support victims programs in seven communities, including some of the communities that members opposite represent.

Gaming Facilities Cash Machines

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for Lotteries. We are now seeing further expansion of banking machines known in the private sector, and a great deal of concern is where these new private sector banking machines could be going, or cash machines, if I put it that way. My question to the Minister responsible for Lotteries: can the minister indicate very clearly as to the position of the government with respect to banking machines and proximity to VLT machines?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act): Madam Speaker, I think the member for Inkster knows the restriction that is

currently in place as it relates to utilizing debit cards in licensed establishments that have VLT machines, that that is not permitted. An individual cannot utilize their debit card at a hotel lounge or other facility that has VLTs, get cash and then go and play the VLTs. That would be a breach of their agreement, their VLT agreement, and any breach of the agreement leads to suspension and potentially ultimate, complete elimination of the machines.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, is it safe then to assume that you cannot, for example, have a VLT lounge and down the hall a cash machine?

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, we do not control where organizations and the banking industry decide to put in place various bank machines in malls and other jurisdictions, but I think the important point is the point that I have already made for the member, that in any licensed establishment that has VLTs, the owner or proprietor of that establishment cannot allow a patron or a customer to come forward, use their debit card, get cash and play the VLTs. That is not permissible. That is a breach of the agreement, and there are penalties that would be imposed against the owner of that establishment if they breached that agreement.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I would ask the Minister responsible for Lotteries to recognize the gray area, where you can literally go outside of the lounge, walk a few feet and there will be the debit machines. Is the minister prepared to take that particular issue to the Gaming Commission so that the government is in a better position to take a position on that issue, because surely the government recognizes the correlation between proximity—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, I am not sure that that is something that we could necessarily regulate, other operations, organizations in a mall, for example, wanting to put in place a banking machine with the support of that particular banking operation.

I think he should certainly pay attention to comments made by individuals like the executive director of the Addictions Foundation that does indicate there is still

a difference. I mean, the key being that, if a person does believe that they need to get access to more cash, they would still have to leave the facility, and if I recall correctly what the executive director said, he does believe that is beneficial.

It gives that opportunity to that individual to determine whether or not they really do want to access some more cash or whether they should perhaps head home or go and do something else, Madam Speaker.

So there still is a significant difference between being able to access cash right in the immediate facility as opposed to having to leave the facility to access cash. I am certainly prepared to provide the member with more information on that issue.

* (1400)

**Poulin's
Public Health Act Compliance**

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Speaker, yesterday I raised the case of Mr. John Janzen who suffered methyl bromide poisoning and now suffers myoclonic seizures and is confined to a wheelchair.

The Department of Justice plea bargained away 75 percent of the charges against the company, including one against the company manager. The use of methyl bromide requires an annual use permit administered by the Department of Environment.

My question is for the Minister of Environment. Since the Minister of Labour (Mr. Gilleshammer) on April 14 this year advised me that the Environment department was made aware of this case, did the Minister of Environment or his department recommend to the Justice department that charges be laid under separate issue under the Public Health Control Regulation 323-88R once you learned that Poulin's did not have a user's permit while continuing to use methyl bromide? I will table the regulation that affects the use of methyl bromide.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Environment): Madam Speaker, I will ascertain the role of the Department of Environment in this matter and report to the honourable member.

Mr. Reid: Madam Speaker, a supplementary question then to the Minister of Justice, because the Minister of Environment obviously does not know the issue. Can the Minister of Justice then answer: was your department contacted by the Environment department to lay charges against Poulin's for breach of The Public Health Act which states: no person shall use methyl bromide unless that person holds a valid permit to do so, issued pursuant to the regulation, and is subject to penalties of up to \$5,000 or up to three months in jail? Was your department informed by the Department of Environment of this matter? I will table copies of the penalty section that applies to this case.

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, as the member last day indicated that there were a number of charges laid against Poulin's, I assume that the Crown attorneys looked at the best charges in respect of this particular situation.

I know that the Crown attorney in the particular case has provided me with a briefing, and I would advise the member that if he wants a detailed explanation of the reasons why the Crown took the position they did in this very, very serious case, I know that the Crown or other members of my department would be more than ready to sit down with the member in order to give him the true facts of this situation.

Mr. Reid: Madam Speaker, a final supplementary to the same Minister of Justice then or to the Minister of Environment or anyone in the government who can answer.

Can you confirm that Poulin's failed to take out this permit and that they failed to notify the rural municipality involved—the community of Elie was involved in this particular case—and that there is a requirement under the regulations under The Public Health Act of Manitoba that state that medical officers must be advised that this product is in use so that the proper precautions and protections can be put in place?

Why did your department fail to make sure that this company had a permit and that the proper authorities were notified so that public protection could occur? Why did you not protect the public?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, I have said that I will ascertain the role that my department played. The honourable member, though, asks me to confirm something, on the one hand, and then, in his second question within a question, assumes that it has already been confirmed. So I think we will take it one step at a time and deal with this thing in a compassionate way and in a way that gets out the real facts.

Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Promotions—Vintage Locomotive

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, I would like to table a letter from the Vintage Locomotive Society, which I believe the Minister of Tourism also may have received, I received this morning.

For 27 years, the locomotive society's members have provided thousands of Manitobans and visitors with a chance to ride into history on the oldest operating steam train in North America. That train's future is in serious doubt now. We are at risk of losing this unique link with our past and the enormous tourist potential that goes with it.

Will the Minister of Tourism today acknowledge that their plan to force the Vintage Locomotive Society into an alliance with the Lotteries Corporation is wrongheaded and that the volunteers of the society have already expressed grave reservations about being used as part of a marketing campaign to increase gambling at McPhillips Street Station by using the train as a draw?

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Madam Speaker, I will not confirm anything at this particular time as I know there have been a group of people, particularly of the heritage locomotive society, that have been working very diligently and are to be complimented on trying to retain that piece of heritage in the province of Manitoba.

We have also been working with them through the department, and Lotteries as well have been doing some work as to whether or not there can in fact be some work done as it relates to preserving that piece of

heritage and providing the opportunities for it to operate as a tourism attraction in the province of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, I will await the report from both Lotteries and my department before I comment further.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, will the government tell the Lotteries Corporation that they cannot and should not and must not operate a second train in competition with the Prairie Dog? Whether it is another steam train or a diesel train does not matter. Will they tell them they are not to go into competition with the volunteers and compete for the attention of the public for a historic train ride in whatever direction?

Mr. Downey: Madam Speaker, first of all, I should point out that it is the objective of the province and those working with the heritage locomotive society that we do in fact preserve a piece of heritage in our province and that it is used in a productive way to enhance tourism in the province of Manitoba. There have been a group of people working on this objective. Until I get a more complete report, I certainly cannot take anything from the member for Crescentwood as fact. As for the rest of his colleagues, they do not really know what it is in most cases.

Prairie Dog Central Lower Fort Garry Route

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Madam Speaker, my questions are also for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism, and they follow up on my colleague from Crescentwood.

Will the government agree that the preferred route for the Prairie Dog Central is to run to Lower Fort Garry, where, in combination with river boats, visitors could experience a round trip from Winnipeg to Lower Fort Garry and experience our unique history of river and rails?

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Madam Speaker, that is one of the options that is being considered by the group of individuals who have been charged with this responsibility. It could be an option, and again I leave

it to those people who have been working on that project. I will not sit here or stand here and direct that something happen. There are a group of responsible people that are working on the options that are available for the Prairie Dog Central, which I believe we all would like to have operating in the province of Manitoba, adding to the overall tourism package that is available to the people who come to this province.

Future Usage—Pan Am Games

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Madam Speaker, will the minister commit today to a nonpartisan approach to ensuring the train and the society's survival, to sit down with the society, sit down with the officials from the federal government, from local governments and local MLAs, and commit the necessary resources so that the train is running next year for the Pan Am Games?

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): As usual, Madam Speaker, I will bring a nonpartisan approach to all of the activities that are carried out within my responsibilities.

Madam Speaker, I will continue to endeavour to work with the committee, all those individuals involved, so that we can in fact maximize the use of the Prairie Dog Central, maximize the tourism opportunities and preserve a piece of history which is very important to the province of Manitoba.

Video Lottery Terminals Revenues

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): My question is for the Minister of Finance. Sharing revenues from all sources—liquor, tobacco, VLTs, mining, income and corporate taxes—is the Manitoba way. However, it is difficult to understand this government's proposal of forcing or penalizing communities who choose to eliminate VLTs by having them lose their share of that revenue.

My question to the Minister of Finance is: what does the minister have to say to the urban municipalities in Manitoba who indicated in their recent news bulletin that they resent the fact that the government took no consultation process in introducing VLTs and

expanding them into virtually every bar and now are holding them basically hostage by threatening to withhold their share of that revenue?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act): Madam Speaker, the government is not holding anybody hostage. We are very proud of our record when it comes to dealing with municipalities in this province, in terms of some of the policies we have in place, where we are the only province in Canada that shares our personal income tax, our corporate income tax and so on.

The specific issue that she raises, she is well aware, I believe, that the independent Gaming Control Commission right now is soliciting input from Manitobans. They have a proposal before Manitobans. They are taking the next several weeks, in terms of public meetings, offering opportunities to meet directly and also soliciting input directly to them through the mail or e-mail or so on to get input on this very important issue. As well, I believe they will be consulting with the municipal organizations, the Union of Manitoba Municipalities and the Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities on this very important issue, so we will await their report and their suggestions.

* (1410)

Ms. Mihychuk: Madam Speaker, my final question: will the minister admit that by having municipalities threatened or believe that they are going to lose their share of the revenue basically closes down an open process? Will he, like the Alberta government led by Ralph Klein—even they saw wisdom, reversed their decision—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, the member for St. James does not seem to understand what is currently taking place. She talks about reversing decisions when no decisions have been taken at this particular point in time. There is a process right now. In fact, she has the opportunity to make representation to the independent Gaming Control Commission if she so chooses. They

are meeting in communities like Brandon, Winnipeg, Thompson. They are soliciting input on this very important issue of potentially having plebiscites here in Manitoba, and if plebiscites are held, what would be the ramifications to communities who decide to remove VLTs and so on.

So there is a consultation process taking place. That is something we certainly support. We support listening to, hearing from Manitobans, hearing from organizations. If she has some strong views on the issue, I encourage her to make a representation to that commission.

First Nations Communities REDI Funding

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Madam Speaker, on a regular basis I rise in this House to point out to the government about the double standards that they employ when dealing with First Nations people in Manitoba.

On May 29, in a letter to me from the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), which I would like to table today, the minister tells me that First Nations are not eligible for funding from the REDI program because they are already getting gaming revenue.

My question for the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) is: if using that logic and carrying it further, then why did Steinbach in 1996 receive over \$150,000 when there are no VLTs in Steinbach? On top of that, REDI program funding went to Steinbach, to a Steinbach entrepreneur.

Hon. Frank Pitura (Acting Minister of Rural Development): I will take that question as notice for my colleague the Minister of Rural Development.

Mr. Lathlin: I have one more question, Madam Speaker, and that is to the First Minister: why does his government say every day here in the House and out there in public that they would like to work in a partnership way with First Nations one day, and then the very next day they tell us that we are a federal ward? How can you establish a partnership relationship that way?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, my understanding of the way in which revenues flow to First Nations under our gaming agreements, which we have signed with about 30 First Nations, is that they get 80 percent of all the revenues from VLTs, as opposed to all other areas of the province in which they get 20 percent of the revenues. So they get four times as much funding by signing that agreement, so they are beneficiaries to a far greater extent.

If the member opposite is suggesting that we ought to enter into a change in that agreement to reduce their share to 20 percent, we will take that under advisement, but I am sure that his citizens in the First Nations in The Pas and other areas would be very upset with that. We do enter into dialogue and we do enter into discussion with the members of First Nations, but I will point out to him that it is by their choice, for instance, that they choose to work directly with Ottawa and leave us out of the discussions, for instance, on devolution. The First Nations said, no, the provincial government has no responsibility at the table with regard to those discussions. In fact, their relationship is with the federal government, so they are the ones who are dictating that they do not want us involved in those discussions. He cannot have it all ways.

City of Winnipeg Tax Reforms

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Madam Speaker, this morning the Committee on Tax Reform, chaired by a name very familiar to all members of this House and the citizens of Manitoba, Mr. Clayton Manness, gave to the City of Winnipeg a document entitled Rethinking Taxation: Making Winnipeg Competitive, where, surprise, surprise, the committee chaired by the former Minister of Finance and the former Minister of Education in the Conservative government made no acknowledgement, said not one word in that report about the impact that this provincial government's taxation policies, five years ago, have had on the City of Winnipeg and its ability to raise revenue that it needs—not only the City of Winnipeg, but the rest of the province.

I would like to ask the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer) if he will not acknowledge that the

government's programs to cut \$75 from the property tax credits and to cut as much as \$150 from the senior school tax assistance programs by this very minister, former Minister of Education and of Finance, has led to some of the tax problems facing the City of Winnipeg. What does he plan to do about it?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Well, without accepting most of the preamble of the member for Wellington, I hope she does get an opportunity to read that report that was tabled today, because I think there are some very important aspects to the report. One that she should make note of is some information that says based on 1996 financial statements and Statistics Canada population data, Winnipeg received over \$240 per capita in government transfers. In comparison, Calgary received \$77, Edmonton received \$47 and Saskatoon received \$71 per capita. All fair analyses to date show that no major Canadian city does better than Winnipeg with respect to cash transfers from the Province of Manitoba. That is what the report says, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Wellington, with a very short question.

Ms. Barrett: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Will the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer) not acknowledge that the people of Manitoba and the people of Winnipeg do not believe this government when they talk about taxation systems and fairness, because they know, and this report does not reflect the fact, that the province has been systematically cutting support services, putting user fees onto taxpayers and forcing the City of Winnipeg into untenable financial situations, which the former Minister of Finance in this government refuses to—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, I am not sure the member has read the entire report. I just read her one excerpt that outlined very clearly the treatment that the City of Winnipeg gets compared to other major Canadian cities. As well, as I responded to her earlier, we are the only province in Canada that shares our personal income taxes and our corporate income taxes with municipalities, including the City of Winnipeg.

As well, we have a six-year \$96-million capital agreement with the City of Winnipeg, approximately \$16 million a year, to enhance infrastructure in the city of Winnipeg. As well, in the 1998 budget, we put in an additional \$5 million for a residential street program here in the city of Winnipeg. Those are some of the facts in terms of the fair treatment that the city of Winnipeg receives from this provincial government.

Madam Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

* (1420)

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

1998 Canada Day Poster Challenge

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Madam Speaker, on Monday, June 15, 1998, I had the pleasure of attending the results of the 1998 Canada Day Poster Challenge at Government House. These posters were designed by students. They were wonderful representation of how students saw themselves within our country of Canada. Each year students from across the country are invited to participate in the Poster Challenge. Their posters reflect their pride, as well as the multicultural diversity of Canada.

This year marks the 11th anniversary of the Poster Challenge. In Manitoba alone, there were 6,500 posters entered in the challenge from over 300 schools in our province. I would like to congratulate all of those who participated in this year's Poster Challenge. Also, I would like to make a special mention of the students from Fort Garry School Division who participated and were finalists in the 1998 Canada Day Poster Challenge.

These students are Michaela Knispel from Ecole Viscount Alexander, Wilbert Vivas from St. Maurice School, Joanna Wasiak from R.H.G. Bonnycastle School, Charmaine Antonette Rona from St. Maurice School, Amy Yee from St. Maurice School, Nalinda Chandrasena from Acadia School, and the second-place winner, Mohammad Irfan Khan from St. John's-Ravenscourt. Congratulations to all of these students.

Mr. Sig Halldorson

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, I want to pay tribute today to Mr. Sig Halldorson of Flin Flon. Mr. Halldorson pedalled his bicycle from Flin Flon to Winnipeg in order to raise funds for the seniors and children at the Flin Flon General Hospital.

He travelled a total distance of 870 kilometres. Mr. Halldorson left Flin Flon the morning of June 8 and arrived in Winnipeg the afternoon of Friday, June 12. On the very first day of his bikathon, Mr. Halldorson pedalled a distance of 215 kilometres. Mr. Halldorson deserves a huge thank you for his outstanding efforts in support of pediatric and geriatric health care in the Flin Flon region. Also, a big thank you is in order for all who pledged and donated money to Mr. Halldorson's bicycle marathon.

Support from major sponsors was also greatly appreciated, namely, Sports on the Rocks, Dembinski's Limited, Creighton Furniture and the Flin Flon Rotary Club.

Thank you, Mr. Halldorson, for caring enough about our elderly and our young people to invest five full days of your life to raising funds for a very worthwhile cause.

Mr. David Faurschou (Portage la Prairie): Madam Speaker, I, too, would like to recognize the accomplishments of Mr. Sig Halldorson. I had the privilege of meeting this young man on the steps of the Legislature last Friday, and indeed he is determined to promote funding for pediatric and geriatric care in the Flin Flon Hospital. I had the opportunity to represent the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) on this occasion, and I am very grateful for that opportunity.

Mr. Halldorson trained for over 18 months for this journey from Flin Flon. He maintained a pace through wind and rain and other undue conditions, and he proceeded to continue and arrive here in Winnipeg unfettered for these weather conditions.

I would like to say, on behalf of all honourable members here, a strong note of congratulations to Mr. Halldorson, that he may continue on his successful

journey to making greater awareness of these health care issues of which all of us are aware. I congratulate him for raising funds for the Norman Regional Health Authority in this endeavour. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Domtar Site—Public Park

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Madam Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to put a few concerns on the record with regard to the Domtar proposal for remediation and end use. Recent reports in the media have provoked me to do this, because I think they are treating it as if it is only a good news story and that there are no community concerns. Many of the community members feel like they have to accept the current proposal or nothing at all will happen.

The community was told in a meeting prior to this year, the last community meeting, that they would have final review of the director's order prior to any action taking place, and this has not occurred. They have not seen the financial statements or the financial package which they were told they would have the chance to do at the final TAC meeting.

They were also told at that meeting that they would have input into the agreement and the relationship between Domtar and Fort Whyte Centre on the end use and that there would be a democratically elected committee of community advisers formed, and this has not occurred. They have a number of concerns about the bioserve, about the security, about the lack of facilities, the lack of lighting, the access, and they are very concerned that they will not have the information, the amount of money going from Domtar to Fort Whyte to operate this park.

This is new ground. It is going to be a privately owned public park with open access. There are a number of concerns about liability insurance. I think the whole way this has moved forward shows that there are a number of weaknesses in the contaminated sites legislation which is very discretionary and has basically treated the former Domtar site as disposable. The government has basically declared that this land is disposable. Now I think it will come to pass, when we see if this property is ever sold, that no one would be

interested in buying it. There are a number of concerns about Domtar being able to walk away from this property after the remediation and only having to put up \$571,000.

There are ongoing concerns about the property values for the residents located adjacent to the site. If contamination is found on their property, it seems that they are simply going to have to deal with this on a personal basis, and the government's and Domtar's approach to this is we will deal with it if the problem arises.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member's time has long expired.

* (1430)

Municipal Governments—Terms of Office

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): Today I rise on a member's statement on behalf of a couple of municipal governments in my area, namely the Town of Grandview and the R.M. of Dauphin, both of whom have expressed concerns about this government's objective in increasing terms of office at the municipal level from three years to four years. The Town of Grandview has been very emphatic that they believe that length of time is too lengthy, and it will in fact prevent the town from attracting good candidates to serve in terms of office representing the citizens of Grandview.

Madam Speaker, the R.M. of Dauphin has pointed out that, in regard to moving from three- to four-year terms, that may be okay for a jurisdiction such as the City of Winnipeg where substantial remuneration is paid to councillors to offset the amount of time they spend at meetings, that that might be okay for the City of Winnipeg, but in the case of the R.M. of Dauphin, they do not have that ability. I would suggest that many other R.M.s and town councils in rural Manitoba do not have that ability as well, since the money is constricted in small communities in rural Manitoba and throughout the North.

Madam Speaker, both the Town of Grandview and the R.M. of Dauphin really strenuously want the

Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) to consider both the pros and the cons of this move to a four-year term of office for councillors and really want the minister to understand why that is not a good move, why that is simply too long a term for councillors to be spending. They are really worried that they will not be able to attract the number of candidates for elections come this fall and in future elections at the municipal level if the government goes ahead with the move to extend terms to a four-year from three-year term of office. Thank you.

Committee Changes

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Gimli, with committee changes.

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments for Thursday, June 18, at 10 a.m. be amended as follows: the member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) for the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), the member for Roblin-Russell (Mr. Derkach) for the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer).

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, would you be so kind as to call Bill 35.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 35—The Mental Health and Consequential Amendments Act

Madam Speaker: To resume adjourned debate on second reading, on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik), Bill 35, The Mental Health and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi sur la santé mentale et modifications corrélatives), standing in the name of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), who has 10 minutes remaining.

An Honourable Member: No.

Madam Speaker: No? Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading of Bill 35, The Mental Health and Consequential Amendments Act. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I would like to announce that the bill just passed, Bill 35, would be among the bills referred to the Law Amendments committee, Friday morning at 9:30.

I just look to my honourable friend from Burrows for confirmation that that is our understanding, and that being the case, Bill 35 would be on the list for consideration with the other bills at Law Amendments, Friday morning, 9:30.

* * *

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Cummings), that Madam Speaker do now leave the Chair for the House to go into Committee of Supply to consider the resolution respecting the Capital Supply bill.

Motion presented.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): It was my understanding we were doing concurrence. [interjection] That is the same thing. Thank you.

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Capital Supply

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

RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$124,766,000 for Capital Supply for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1999. Shall the resolution pass?

Point of Order

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Just on a point of order, it says no debate if the 240-hour time limit has expired. Has the 240-hour limit expired?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Mr. L. Evans: So there is no debate.

Mr. Chairperson: For the member for Brandon East's information, the 240 hours has expired, so this is not a debatable motion.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: Shall the resolution pass?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Chairperson: The resolution is accordingly passed.

Concurrence Motion

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee of Supply concur in all Supply resolutions relating to the Estimates of Expenditure for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1999, which have been adopted at this session by the three sections of the Committee of Supply sitting separately and by the full committee.

Motion presented.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Chairman, I have some questions for the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik). The Minister of Health I think is well aware of how my community has expressed its concern about the closure of the Misericordia Hospital and about the concerns amongst senior citizens in particular, and those who are without telephones and those who are without cars, at the loss of a hospital in their midst, a

hospital of which they have come to depend upon and to which they feel very close.

The minister is aware that I have spoken on a number of occasions about the way in which this closure was accomplished. In the minister's own riding, I know that the health authority is doing health assessments. He has been doing health assessments of the community for over a year. Local meetings have been held in Grand Marais and elsewhere.

That was not accorded to my community, but resources were taken away before any health assessment was done, a health assessment which could have looked at the economic conditions of people in the area, of the way in which people had related to the hospital, of the patterns of usage of that hospital, of the percentage of surgeries which are done in that hospital, and the way in which those relate to the community and to the community's accessibility to hospital services.

That was not done. It is being done elsewhere in Manitoba. It was not done in my community, but before even any health authority could be put in place, before the health authority even had—and I will give them the benefit of the doubt—the intention to conduct any of these assessments, the resources were taken away from the hospital, and it was essentially to be turned into a long-term care facility. That is one of my serious concerns. I think it is a deliberate choice on the part of the government. I have called it asset stripping, and I think that is what they have done in the health facilities of my community.

I want to draw to the minister's attention, in particular, two letters. I have chosen two. They are not the only ones I have received. I am sure they are not the only ones the minister has received, but they are representative of the way in which people think and speak of this hospital and of the services they have received there.

One letter from a gentleman on Furby Street speaks of the emergency room that he went to with an ulcer and an infected gall bladder that came up very suddenly. He was kept in for a week and recovered and thankfully is back at home. He says: What would

happen, how many deaths will occur because the people who walk into the new urgent care facility will lack equipment, people and beds?

With this hospital gone there is no hospital in the downtown area to serve those with low income, and less access to cars and funds for taxis. He believes that the minister is deserting those most in need of care. They will probably wait longer for care because of the extra expense, and this will make healing them even more expensive. It will also make it more difficult for family and friends to visit and to keep their morale up for the same financial reasons. This is not good health care, he says.

* (1440)

Another family of senior citizens on Fawcett Avenue writes to me and said: As do many neighbourhood senior citizens—and, Mr. Chairman, I can certainly add my confirmation of that—we depend on the close proximity of the Misericordia General Hospital. We have had two emergencies requiring immediate attention. Recently, due to dental surgery a day earlier, an artery had burst unexpectedly in my mouth, my constituent writes. I would have bled to death, he said, had I not received emergency surgery at the Misericordia General Hospital. They go on to speak of the conditions that they had found at Health Sciences Centre.

I know that the minister has received this letter or at least it was certainly also sent to him. I want to ask the minister if he can first of all tell us and tell these people who have depended upon the Misericordia what is meant by the urgent care centre that he is to establish there? How will that serve the needs of people, representatives of whom I have spoken here?

I would like to ask the minister to tell me, too: what kind of surveys, what kind of research did he do? What kind of examination did he do of the health care needs of the inner city that led him to believe that the best answer to those needs was the closure of an inner city hospital?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Mr. Chair, first of all, I appreciate where the member for

Wolseley is coming from. As the MLA for this constituency she obviously has a duty and responsibility to ask the questions behind the decision that was made. I say very clearly. It was a decision made by government together with the Winnipeg Hospital Authority for the larger planning scheme for Winnipeg hospitals in delivery of the service, and I accept that responsibility.

I appreciate her role and her responsibility to ask these questions on the part of her community and her constituents who are very close geographically to that particular facility. But if one accepts the principle that everything that is has to remain without change and that the fact that a hospital has been there for some 100 years means it has to or is required to be there forever, or that particular level of service in living so close to the hospital is the standard that all are entitled to, this province would not be able in any way to guarantee that same standard even to everybody in the inner city.

Mr. Chair, there are very few places in this province or even in the city of Winnipeg that have that kind of close proximity to the hospital. People in those areas become ill. People in those areas are poor and do not have cars and have to have health care needs. They go to other facilities, and, you know what, they survive, they are treated, and they are treated well. So I appreciate the benefit to having a hospital right next or almost next to one's door, but that is certainly not the norm for most Manitobans and most Winnipeggers.

The rationale behind the change that we undertook is a very simple one. We have, in Winnipeg, seven acute care facilities. The needs in acute care have certainly changed. They have changed for one reason, a very significant one, because of medical technology, the advent of laser surgery.

A whole host of other new diagnostic and treatment tools mean that people do not require as long of stays in acute care facilities and that the need in our system, what has put pressure on our system, by and large, has been a shortage of long-term care beds—and we can debate decisions on freeze and rationale, and I accept it, that is fair debate—but the need has been for long-term care beds, and that within our system—and this is not Darren Praznik speaking, these are the people who

manage our system. They say to me, the physicians delivering programs and the administrators say to me, that we did not require that capacity of beds if we are using our beds correctly and we have the additional long-term care beds in our system.

We also faced another issue with respect to the Misericordia Hospital. Of all of our urban facilities, of the nine urban facilities, Misericordia is probably the one, with the exception perhaps of Health Sciences Centre, that is our major tertiary hospital, that is in need in the long term of a great deal of capital expenditure. It is an old building. It has many old components to it that need to be replaced. It needs capital expenditure to be able to live up to fire and safety standards.

So we do not require seven acute care hospitals in our system. Misericordia has some of the oldest infrastructure in need of major capital investment. So, if you are going to make that capital investment, you want to make sure you are making it where you really need it, not just to necessarily maintain a facility for the sake of saying we have it when it may not be needed within the system or is not necessarily needed within the system. The third part is that we have three downtown hospitals in Winnipeg.

You know, I walk by the Misericordia on occasion in the evening, and from the Misericordia Hospital, particularly from the roof of the Misericordia Hospital, you can see two tertiary hospitals. It is not as if that part of the city does not have access to hospital care. In fact, it has access to our two tertiary hospitals, a relatively close access. In fact, probably much closer access than many other poor areas of the city of Winnipeg. So let us not for one moment—I appreciate the sensitivity in the Wolseley area, and I appreciate her responsibility as the member for that community, but in the larger picture one has to put that into context.

So just simply for those factors, the need to get the right number of tertiary care or acute care facilities, the needed capital renovations that would be at that particular facility, and the fact it was in the inner city with two other hospitals, St. Boniface and Health Sciences Centre, already relatively close or in that area serving those communities, made it the candidate, in essence, for change.

I say to the member for Wolseley that I have had many people involved in health care planning for both Conservative and New Democratic Party governments over the last while speak to me and tell me that dealing with the Misericordia Hospital has been an issue in government and in health planning in this city for over 20 years, and it has never been able to be resolved because of the politics around the Misericordia Hospital.

What we have managed to do with the Winnipeg Hospital Authority—and their recommendation to me was that we take exactly this approach. That is why Neil Fast and I, Neil Fast being the chair of that hospital authority, actually put the proposal together and visited the bishop early last fall to make this proposal to their board, because it made sense for the whole Winnipeg scene. So, in that context, I think it is a very justifiable decision. It is a logical decision, given the overall planning, and although I appreciate the loyalty of many patients and I appreciate how wonderful it is to live in a neighbourhood that has a hospital located in it, ultimately the responsibility for myself as minister and for the Winnipeg hospital system is to build a system for the whole city and do it on a logical basis.

So the advice from our planners, the advice from people working in the system, was that this hospital needed to find a role. One thing I am very proud of in all of this is that, unlike, I think, attempts in the past to deal with the future of the Misericordia, we recognized that just the closure of that facility, the elimination of it was not a good idea.

First of all, one would lose the support base around the Misericordia, that there were health needs in the Wolseley area of that city, and that the central location of that facility did provide some tremendous advantages to the Winnipeg Hospital Authority in providing particular ambulatory services to the whole city and even some provincial programs because of the location and the parkade, which made it a very likely site and an easily accessible site in terms of the geography of the city. Far better than putting some of those services in any one particular community hospital where they would be a long distance from other quadrants of the city.

* (1450)

So we did make a proposal to give the Misericordia a new life, and we did, in a lot of discussions with them and within the Winnipeg Hospital Authority, develop a plan that would see them become essentially a long-term care facility—in fact, the largest one in the province—and its parking facility and location made it very desirable from that point of view.

We have talked about it as being a home for a host of ambulatory programs. Some of those have been identified; others, we are working on. I suspect there will be a continuing change in that as new needs and opportunities arise. But, with respect to the primary urgency care centre, what we envision—and I know there is a lot of concern around title, and the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) shared with me a document that had been put out by the WHA that left some concern and that I think it could have been better phrased.

But our intention is to have a facility in that area that does really two things. One is to be a primary health care clinic with a wide range of physician services with the ability to see physicians for one's primary health with nurses, other health care providers, so that it becomes an easily accessible place for health care, and the second part of this is to have an urgency care capability. Defining that further, identifying what will be in there is part of what is going on now, but I would like to ensure that it has as many urgency care services as possible, that it be on a 24-hour basis.

The difference, I guess, is with emergencies. Emergency in the true sense is there to be able handle trauma and a variety of things that, quite frankly, often end up at the Health Sciences Centre, because that is where our trauma capability is, that is where our high tertiary capability is, et cetera. But many of the things just below that in terms of emergency or urgency rating should be able to be done at that particular facility.

One of the issues, of course, is holding beds, observation beds, which may work itself into that configuration, and that is part of the discussion that is going on to make sure that it is a highly used and relevant facility, not just to her constituents—and I

appreciate her asking because it gives me an opportunity to talk about this in a public form—but we also envision that that facility has the potential to provide some citywide services. It has been identified by the WHA as being the home or situated with it is the sexual assault receiving area, so that victims of sexual assault will be treated in a facility other than an emergency room because that often creates a fair bit of concern and discomfort for them, so that sexual assault cases taken by the police or others could be directed there. They would specialize in that particular service.

We have also identified that internally as having the potential to be a flu clinic in flu season, so that it can gear up and staff up to deal with people wanting in for treatment for the flu. That is very important. We had success in some of the clinics we ran, particularly in Courts of St. James last year. So we see that as another purpose. We want to keep it open enough to add services to it. There is a great potential, I think, to see it be an urgency primary care facility, those two kinds of roles, 24-hour basis, access to the community.

The other component I mentioned to the member is that the WHA is now looking at its interfacility transfer arrangements, because we recognize, as you change and specialize the functions of facilities, people will access a facility. They may not be able to be treated in that particular facility, particularly if they need some specialty care, and part of how we transport is being addressed. A transport service of some type is being contemplated, and it is part of that planning. So, if someone does walk in with a condition that ultimately cannot be treated there or requires a medical or surgical bed, they can be stabilized in that particular setting and transported to the appropriate facility or emergency room, quite likely the Health Sciences Centre, which is almost within eyesight of the front of the Misericordia Hospital.

I say this sincerely to her and the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale), despite the debate that we have had over how one achieves that goal—I do say this sincerely to her and the member for Crescentwood and my colleague the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) and for Fort Garry, as that facility grows and develops, there is, I believe, a fair bit of room for the four MLAs from that area to have some input and

participation in helping with the community to find the roles it needs that that centre will be there. I do not want to say to her today that everything is hard and fast and written in stone. There is evolution, but it is our intention and our purpose—and we intend to support that financially—to make that a highly successful primary health care and urgency care centre.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, the minister may be able to see two hospitals from the roof of the Misericordia, but those hospitals have people on their waiting list, people in hallways, people who are there for 48 hours, 72 hours, waiting on gurneys in hallways. This is what you see from the roof of the Misericordia. It is not a system which is open to accepting all of the people who arrive there by taxi or by bus, or who do not have the facilities to go and come that other people do, so the minister is painting an extremely rosy picture of the ability of the existing facilities to take the traffic, to take the patients that the Misericordia has taken in the past. Twenty-one percent of surgeries, the second or third busiest emergency room in the city, those are the statistics that have always been there, that have not gone away from the Misericordia. The minister is essentially giving me a response based not upon medical service but upon location and age of building.

What I am asking for is an evaluation of the health needs of that community and of the ability of hospitals and clinics in Winnipeg to meet the needs of that community, and I do not think the minister has addressed that at all. What he has addressed is a planner's dream of age of building, fire codes, safety codes. I remind the minister that in Europe and parts of the United States, there are hospitals which are many, many years—perhaps even centuries—older than the Misericordia, which are still giving good service to the citizens of inner Paris or inner London. So the age of the building to me is not the issue. There has been a great deal of capital work at the Misericordia Hospital, the creation of new wings of the hospital. In the 1960s there was reconstruction of the kitchens, a very modern kitchen that was put in, I might remind him, by one of his own predecessors, Don Orchard, so I am not sure that that argument holds water at all.

What my constituents are concerned about is that they are not going to get the service no matter where.

It is not just that you are taking it away from a, quote, very convenient location, but you are distributing it to hospitals and to institutions which are not capable of meeting the needs. I think we have raised that not just on behalf of my constituents, but on behalf of many people over the last number of months in this House.

I want to ask the minister finally if he can tell us, because there is a great deal of confusion about what the urgent nonemergency care centre is going to mean. It is clear from the minister's answer that there are many possibilities, and I appreciate him putting that on the record.

There are certainly many ways of looking at this, and it is not yet decided. The minister indicates that the community—I expect that, when he says MLAs, he means the community, I hope he does, and, certainly, I know that all of us, including those on his side of the House, would be very interested in taking part in that. I should remind him that so far we have not—the community has not been invited, has not been spoken to, has not been consulted, not even constituted part of any consultation on the future of any part of the role of the Misericordia.

So this is a first, and I certainly appreciate the minister, some years into this process, effectively offering that opportunity. It certainly comes again after the assets have been stripped and after the options for the Misericordia and for the health needs of the community have certainly been narrowed. I would like to ask the minister what he exactly believes is the situation at the Misericordia today. Is the emergency department open 24 hours? Is it able to accept patients to be admitted to the hospital from emergency, or is it simply now a triage system where they are sent to other hospitals? If that is the case, how long is that situation going to last, when does the transition occur to urgent, essentially, outpatient care of a 24-hour variety? When do these shifts occur, and how are people going to be informed about them? Is there any time in that period, in that shift, for any kind of community consultation?

* (1500)

Mr. Praznik: The member has flagged a number of issues that I would like to address again in context. I

appreciate her comment about people saying, well, will I get the service at the other hospitals, is there room? To answer that I think one has to understand the complexities in the world in which those facilities are operating today. The problem in our other facilities, in terms of shortage of beds, has very much been the need to use primarily medical beds, at one point nearly 300 of our 700 medical beds in the Winnipeg hospital system to house those individuals waiting for long-term care. With the announcement—and members opposite may criticize us for not having done it earlier, and that is part of fair debate, and there are reasons we would argue why that could not be done, but that aside—those additional 550 beds, the vast majority of which are being built in the city of Winnipeg, will go a long way to taking that pressure off the current use of hospital beds, not for the purpose for which they were intended.

So, quite frankly, that should free up a major number of beds in those facilities. Part of the Misericordia plan, as well, is—and she has referenced the capital works and investments, and quite rightly so, that have been made in that hospital. I imagine the Cornish wing was built in the '60s; it looks about that vintage. Those parts of the facility, quite frankly, are surviving. In fact, they will have significant renovations, some of which I understand are being discussed to begin this fall, as we are doing the safety and fire upgrades to complete the entire renovation at one time, which is more cost-efficient. The Misericordia plan will have 280 long-term beds and approximately 170 or 175, depending on how the architect's work comes out, transitional beds. Those transitional beds, in essence, are for people who are waiting for placement in the personal care home of their choice.

Right now we house those people throughout our hospital system in Winnipeg. The plan here—and some of that will begin this winter, and I will touch upon that in a few moments—is to be able, as those beds are available, to move those transitional patients, in essence, to the Misericordia, thereby freeing up medical beds in other facilities.

With respect to emergency and concerns that emergency wards across the city, I do not have the numbers in front of me. On our analysis of what emergency wards are being used for today, there is a

high preponderance for people to use those wards to visit doctors, not being an emergency situation or even an urgent situation. We have also found that many hospitals use their emergency wards for admitting, both of which tend to not be efficient uses of a true emergency room.

Part of the plan with the Winnipeg Hospital Authority is making some of the adjustments and changes which will quite frankly get better use out of our existing emergency rooms in the system. Developing and using primary health care/urgency care clinics or facilities also, I think, will take pressure off emergency rooms because that is where you go if you are sick, your child is sick with the flu, maybe you have cut yourself and you need to be sutured. Many of the minor things that tend today to plug our emergency rooms, particularly in emergencies where you have trauma coming in, because those more minor injuries or illnesses wait while the trauma is being addressed.

So if we can develop our health care clinics to take on a larger role, and I envision this clinic at Misericordia, with the centre urgency primary health care centre, should take up a large percentage of the work that is currently being done in the emergency ward at the Misericordia hospital, that the amount of trauma cases or emergency, obviously high-need cases, is probably the smallest percentage of what they do. I do not have the numbers in front of me. So it is really those that are diverted to other centres, so that is part of the balance and the planning.

I say to the member, as well, one thing we learned last winter going through the flu season, we had a success at the Courts of St. James where we worked to put in a clinic to deal with the flu. There is a high preponderance of seniors in those blocks at the Courts of St. James. They are right next door to the Grace Hospital, and so when you are ill, you need to see a doctor and you go to the emergency ward at the Grace.

That tends to be a problem because it quite frankly fills the emergency room there with not really emergencies, but people who need to see a physician, have medication prescribed, et cetera. I think we would all agree that is really not what an emergency ward is there for.

So we did work to put in a clinic last year in the Courts of St. James to deal with flu, and that is something with the Long Term Care Authority we want to expand. We are looking at this fall for some expansions, particularly in areas where you have a high number of seniors blocks. Misericordia will be added to that.

Within the community clinic system across Winnipeg –I am thinking of Mount Carmel and Aboriginal Health and Wellness in Norwest and others—we are looking now, we are having the Long Term Care Authority looking at our ability to use those to pick up and extend hours in those clinics, to be able to pick up a lot of the stuff that finds itself in the emergency ward because their doctors' offices are not open, or they do not have physicians.

I would imagine that is part of the issue, as well, in the Wolseley area, having had friends who lived there in their university days, that there is an elderly population that has its physicians and services, but there is also a fair turnover of students and other people in that area who may not come with physicians and need the care, go to the emergency ward at that time.

So this clinic and this kind of walk-in service—

An Honourable Member: When is it going to change?

Mr. Praznik: Okay, yes, I will just get to that. We will be there. Now, with respect to about two things, the process of change and involvement of the community, we made the announcement of principle, about what we are trying to achieve, and the Winnipeg Hospital Authority, with the Misericordia Board of Directors and management, have struck an implementation team that was agreed between the two parties. They are working now with the care providers, physician groups in that area to devise the plan for implementation. There is a great deal of work and effort going into that because if one step is out of place, you can cause a plug somewhere else in the system, or have something fall through the cracks.

So they are working on the detail of that particular plan. We have encouraged them to involve the

community. One of the issues that is there, and I recognize, is community involvement. I do not mean to touch again upon a touchy subject, but when the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) and I had an exchange on this matter in Estimates, the member for Crescentwood flagged the Misericordia board, although very caring and compassionate, has not over the years been able to necessarily build the level of community involvement that he was, in fact, comfortable with.

This obviously is a shortcoming he has identified, and it is one that I am going to be encouraging our people to be suggesting to Misericordia very strongly that they have to ensure, particularly in this primary urgency care clinic, that they are involving the community, and the community represented by MLAs, city councillors, by the public themselves, should have a role. I am not the owner of that facility. They are. They are the governing board of that facility.

The reason I referred to the Member for Crescentwood's (Mr. Sale) remarks, and I stand by my statements, is that what he was asking for me to do in operating agreements with the Misericordia Hospital, which by the way I thought were very thoughtful and very wise on his part, and that he identified a shortcoming. He was asking that I ensure that—put these in and insist they be in and put in operating agreements—and the point I made with him that day is I do not have the power to do that. That is part of why we are seeking that in the Legislature.

But the member's point is valid and that message will be conveyed through the Winnipeg Hospital Authority to Misericordia. I am hoping that that board of directors pays heed to that message that they should be involving people in the community in the development particularly of their community-based particular needs in that clinic. I will convey that.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Chairman, when we saw the capital spending that the government put forward under one of the items listed under a major project, the nursing station for Sapotaweyak Cree Nation, and when we saw that, in fact I was very pleased to see that the government had recognized the importance of establishing a nursing station in that community. However, when we did some checking, we found out that although it was listed as a major project

and other projects that were not listed as major projects were getting up in the range of \$300,000 for renovations to facilities, but Sapotaweyak Cree Nation for their nursing station were only getting \$80,000, if I understand correctly the funding.

Mr. Ben Sveinson, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

I wonder whether the minister can explain this situation. This is a very important nursing station. It provides service not only to Sapotaweyak Cree Nation but there is also Pelican Rapids, which is a Metis community right next door. We are all looking for ways to provide better health care services for people.

One of the problems, and I do not know whether the minister is aware where this community is located, but they are about a mile—an hour and a half out of Swan River. At the present time, a tremendous amount of money is being spent transporting people back and forth when they need services, but also there have been losses of life because people have not been able to make it to the hospital quickly enough.

* (1510)

The facility is very important, but I also think that the province, if they list the project as a capital project, that they should show more commitment than they have. I would ask the minister to explain why this project was listed as a major project and then find out that there is only \$80,000 attached to it, because the minister is well aware that any renovations to hospitals—\$80,000 is actually a very small amount compared to some of the amounts that have to be spent on renovations.

So I would ask the minister if he could explain why that decision was made, and whether there is any possibility of revisiting that decision in order to ensure that the assistance that was required to help Sapotaweyak fulfill their dream of having a nursing station and providing services for the people of that area can actually happen.

Mr. Praznik: An interesting discussion on location because I know the concerns about Misericordia and I appreciate those. If I was the MLA for Wolseley, I would be asking exactly the same questions and making the same case. The member for Swan River and I, who both represent areas of this province that have much

larger distances between communities, appreciate that to have a hospital right in your own community is such a rare privilege or event for most Manitobans, for many of us in our communities, that we are an hour—I think it varies in the Rupertsland constituency, like Bissett and Manigotagan that are over an hour to the Pine Falls facility.

So, when one is sort of weighing these things in terms of priorities, obviously there is a recognition that in many parts of this province, the distances—even within the City of Winnipeg, the distance to various hospitals is far greater than one in—it is such a rare privilege to be in to have a hospital. The member nods in agreement. She knows of what I speak; it is part of that balancing.

I have addressed this issue I think three times. I think we discussed it somewhat in Estimates. It was raised with me the other day by, I believe, the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) in the Estimates committee. I have no problem addressing it again because I appreciate it is of concern to that community.

We are only a small party in this particular project. This is a federal project on a First Nation, and what we have done, though, is—the member has rightly flagged the Metis community that is next door which is a provincial jurisdiction community, and we provide a number of services in there. So, consequently, rather than reinventing the wheel twice, we have agreed to be part of their clinic or their building and to purchase by way of a capital contribution the space in that building that we will use for the delivery of provincial programs and services in our area of responsibility.

It was determined, I believe, in discussions with the federal government, who have the responsibility and are the lead in this project, that our share would be the sum \$80,000 or whatever is listed in our Estimates as what we have approved. But we are not the owners of the building, we are not the project managers of the building, we are not the developers of the building. We, in essence, are buying a piece of the building for the provincial services. So the work to deliver the project and the lion's share of the dollars, because it is a First Nations community, will come from the budgets within, I gather, the federal Department of Health and Welfare, Medical Services branch. I believe that is where they come from.

I indicated last Thursday to the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) in our Estimates, at the conclusion of our Estimates, that my staff would endeavour to find out for us exactly what the status is on the federal side. I would suggest sincerely, I do not say this to you in a partisan way, but perhaps it is time for a few letters from local politicians, M.P.s, councillors, and communities to Mr. Rock, again just to flag the issue and indicate its importance. I can assure her that the provincial co-operation and dollars for our share of the building are there and will flow when the building construction begins and we would normally flow those dollars.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, that is good advice about writing letters, and I will take that advice. I hope the minister recognizes that although they provide a small amount of services to the Metis community that the dollars that are going to be saved on the provincial coffers by having the service there, the transportation dollars, the province will recoup their capital very quickly. I think for that reason that the minister should give some reconsideration as to whether or not the amount of capital being put in is sufficient for the amount of service that is going to actually be gained because of dollars that will be saved in transportation costs and in lives that will be saved, I am sure.

But, you know, it is going to mean, if services are going to be provided right there, people are not going to be going out for blood tests, people are not going to be going out for treatment for diabetes or testing, and many of the tests will be able to be done right in the community, which will improve the quality of life in the community but reflect on the provincial expenses. I hope the minister will consider that in his decisions and maybe reconsider the amount of money that is being put in there.

I want to move on to another topic that is important to rural Manitobans. That is the service of mammograms. I was very concerned when I heard about what was happening at Misericordia Hospital and the fact that mammogram services were going to be fragmented and moved to different parts of the city, because rural women many times were the ones who were taking advantage of having the residential facilities right in Misericordia, to be able to have complete treatment as far as surgery, plastic surgery afterwards, treatment,

counselling, and it was all in a very compact area. So I was disappointed to hear that that service was being fragmented, and I hope that the minister can address how he feels that that is going to be addressed.

But another issue that I am very supportive of and one that I have lobbied the government on many times was that we would have mobile mammogram service in rural Manitoba. The government has made the announcement that we are going to have it, and I want to commend all of those people who have done fundraising in order to enable us to purchase that first mobile mammogram unit.

However, I would like to ask the minister how soon we can expect that service to be delivered in rural Manitoba and whether it is the plan of the government to ensure that during the winter months when winter roads are in place that we also have mammogram service in many of the outlying communities where women many times do not have the necessary tests that are required because it is so difficult to access this service.

Again, by taking the service out to the community, in the long run this is preventative health, and in the long run, as a province, we save many, many dollars and, indeed, save lives.

Mr. Praznik: A couple of issues just on the clinic. I appreciate the member's comments about savings. I do not know what the analysis would produce because there are still many reasons why they would be transported to Swan River to the hospital there. But those same savings will also come to the federal government because the same savings will be there for First Nations people.

We did negotiate, I understand, with the federal government and agreed that our contribution would be \$80,000 or whatever it is. The holdup is not us. It is the feds who have to make a decision to go within their budget, and that is really the issue. If that can be resolved, we are there and we are going. We certainly do not want there to be any holdup on that particular project. I appreciate its importance to the community.

With respect to mammography, there has been a lot of discussion and I think some confusion over breast

care issues in the city of Winnipeg. It should be noted that we did not have just one program at Misericordia. We had four different programs across the city, with surgery being delivered in seven hospitals.

So on an overall basis within Winnipeg, in the total breast care package, we have a very fragmented program today. The mammography part of it, although located at Misericordia, is not technically part of the Misericordia program. It is operated by the Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation, the mammography clinic which is a screening clinic, and is there, will continue. It is an ideal location because of the parkade being there. It is a central location in Winnipeg and obviously the province.

* (1520)

So as the general breast care program is being refined and put together, I know many of the community organizations with an interest in this area are at the table and have been invited to participate in designing that program, and it is going quite well. I do not have an up-to-date report on its status, but I know, if I remember correctly, the mammography portion at Misericordia is located there. That is the one centre I believe we have in Winnipeg for mammography, so it is not going to be split up with machines all across the city.

With respect to the rural program and the two machines, community organizations undertook fundraising for the capital cost of one machine, and they did a superb job in raising those dollars. I thank them for that tremendous effort and contribution. We agreed that when the dollars were in place for the machine, we would fund its operating. We recognize that one machine may not be enough, and so we as a province are funding the second machine, the second unit, and its operating.

I do not today have in front of me—and I apologize to the member. I have checked through my briefing book and notes, and I do not have before me an updated list with the start dates. I know the work is being done now to put the team in place. There is training to be done. I would say, as well, to the member, we learned a number of things about this program from our colleagues in Saskatchewan where they have the

machine. Saskatchewan is considerably different from Manitoba in that they have a lot of small cities and small centres, whereas Manitoba has one gigantic centre in Winnipeg, some larger centres in Portage, Brandon, Steinbach, Dauphin, Thompson, Flin Flon, The Pas and then a number of smaller centres, but we do not have the same kind of distribution. So our needs are somewhat different in terms of geography.

We did look at their program in Saskatchewan. We sought their advice and what they learned in getting into the program. What was described to me was an interesting component to this. In Saskatchewan, they have a motor-home type facility in which they have their machine. They found a couple of things, and the member hit upon one, the weather. They found that it was very awkward for the operators driving this, particularly in the winter. They found that it was often not suitable for delivering service in cold weather, just a small confined space, et cetera.

So their recommendation to us, or at least to our officials, was that a better way to deliver the program would be to use vans, put the equipment in vans, move the equipment into a public building or public place in the community, set up the clinic and operate it in a building, then pack up the equipment and move on to the next community.

So that is the approach, I understand, that we are taking in putting this together. It is simply learning from the experience of those who have walked before you. So our two machines will be on that basis.

With respect to using the North, I would hope that as part of the schedule—in fact, I expect, and I guess as minister when I expect something, it should be done, that northern communities, of course, will be part of that. I do not know how we are handling the winter road or those issues, but that has to be part of the consideration. There are some issues around funding, I guess, with the federal government, but that should not preclude service from being provided. Those are things to work out.

I would suggest that the member may want to just drop by my office and have a word with Bob Rauscher in my office, and he can probably get for you the up-to-date information on timing and expectation.

Ms. Wowchuk: Perhaps if I do not get a chance to drop by the minister's office, if the minister could provide us in writing the anticipated start-up dates, because we have a lot of interest and a lot of calls coming in for this service. So I will follow it up there.

I only have one more question to ask, and that is one issue again that I have raised many times with the government. It is a rural service and one that was provided for a year, I believe, and then the government withdrew the funding.

Given the situation we have in rural Manitoba with an increased amount of stress amongst many people, changing environment, stress within the farming community, I wonder whether the minister is giving any consideration to reinstating the additional funding that is required to ensure that the rural stress line operates and provides the necessary services. I know that we have the services that are provided through an organization in Winnipeg that people can tap into, but the minister is a rural person. He knows that the needs and issues in rural Manitoba are different many times.

There is a staff of people in rural Manitoba who have been trained to address the concerns and handle the calls in rural Manitoba, but the service is not being provided anymore as a rural service, and I wonder if the minister, if he does not have the information with him, if he could update me on any information that he has on the future possibilities of reinstating the rural stress line services.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Acting Chair, first of all, I appreciate the need for that line when we were going through a few years ago a terrible situation with low commodity prices, terrible weather, and just everything that could go wrong seemed to for particularly our agricultural community. Obviously, things have improved considerably, and, consequently, needs change for that kind of a stress service.

By way of a bit of an aside, we have approved the extension of the mental health teams that have been operating in the flood areas of rural Manitoba from last year. I think I have extended their operation until September, October. I do not remember the exact date, but if they are required to be extended again, we will, because there is certainly a need. There are still some

families who have been very traumatized by what they suffered last year.

I do not have my notes in front of me, but what I remember of this issue from some time ago, one of the difficulties is as the demand for that service declined, the cost of it on a per-call basis became just so exorbitant to maintain it as we did, so we did make arrangements with the service in Winnipeg that she has referenced to be able to provide that assistance, primarily because the service was not being used sufficiently which is a good sign, I would think, of improving conditions, and it made the cost per call just so prohibitive in terms of use of resources.

So we have made those alternative arrangements, and I say to her if there ever arose a situation again where the demand was obvious, because we are getting calls on the other line from time to time, if the demand grew where it was again better to have a dedicated line to that, we would certainly consider it.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): I was prompted by a comment of the minister earlier on with respect to the dilemma of the flu season to a commitment the minister had made during the course of Estimates to provide statistics on the flu-related illnesses that afflicted our emergency rooms during the winter and the spring of this year, and I wonder if we will be getting access to that information.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, if I have made that commitment, you certainly will be. I would guess at this time that it still has to be or is being compiled. Obviously, under the old regime, as we move through a transition, our tracking information to get specific numbers for him does take some time. When that is available, if I have in Estimates committed to that—we keep a list of those commitments—we certainly will provide him with that information.

Mr. Chomiak: Also during the course of Estimates, with respect to the United Shared Services and the food services provision, the chairman of USSC indicated that the savings as a result of the shared food services would be in the range of \$3.2 million with respect to the hospital and with respect to the cafeteria services,

something like \$2 million, for a total of about \$5 million per year.

I am wondering if the minister can confirm, in fact, whether that is the figure.

Mr. Praznik: As part of a more meaningful Estimates process, I had Mr. Sheil attend, as the CEO of Urban Shared Services, to answer those questions. As the member knows, I have my briefing notes on a number of issues. That is not one which I have, so I think we would have to check back to Hansard. The number does sound somewhat familiar, but I cannot confirm specifically. I do not have that in front of me here today.

* (1530)

Mr. Chomiak: Also during the course of Estimates, and the fact it might have not come out is not a fault of the government or the minister, but we had discussed with respect to the amount of capital required to convert the kitchen facilities at Health Sciences Centre, et cetera. The minister had used a figure of \$35 million, and that figure is in Hansard. We had talked both with capital people about arriving at some specifics as to that figure, and then when Mr. Sheil was in, we talked to Mr. Sheil specifically about how he arrived at that figure and neither with the capital people nor Mr. Sheil did we get to that particular issue.

I am wondering if the minister will commit to table, as a result of the Estimates, the specific information as it relates to the \$35-million expenditure that has been indicated by the minister that had to be expended in order to upgrade the kitchen facilities.

Mr. Praznik: That number is one I recall from my staff in capital planning and with Urban Shared Services as the estimate as to what the Winnipeg hospital system was facing in its upgrade of kitchen facilities. I will endeavour to firm that up in terms of how that was estimated.

I can tell the member that like all preliminary estimates on capital construction, because we face this in our own estimates of building costs on facilities, particularly renovations have the nasty problem when you get into them of sometimes producing some

surprises that you have to deal with. As well, when you get into tendering, sometimes you get some pleasant or not so pleasant surprises on your estimate. So they were, like all estimates at the beginning of the process, certainly not your final number, but those were the numbers that I was provided with, and I will endeavour to see what information we can provide to give a background to those numbers for the member.

Mr. Chomiak: Just for the information of the minister, I should advise I probably will not be as issue specific or area specific as we go through the course of these questions as we normally do because of the nature of this process, so I apologize for jumping back and forth on occasion from one area to another, but I am attempting to do in an hour and a half what normally might occur over a many, many-hour period.

An issue came up with respect to the seven-month waiting list as it applies to the bone density scanner several days ago. The minister indicated there was a plan as it related to the bone density scanner that was going to be put in place.

Can the minister outline specifically what is being done on a short-term and a long-term basis in order to deal with the seven-month waiting list as it applies to the bone density scanner issue? What is going to be done in the short term, the long term in relation to the present seven-month waiting list as it applies to bone density scanners in Manitoba?

Mr. Praznik: As the member knows, I was given a mandate to bring down the 1,200 on the list, which we did quite successfully actually a little bit ahead of schedule, if I remember correctly. We also wanted to ensure that the list did not go up again. The Winnipeg Hospital Authority, Dr. Blake McClarty, has been in the process of organizing, getting control, taking over this particular area. I understand there was a short period of time in which temporary dollars and new funding did not match as they should, as I have discovered. There was a period where there was a reduction in the number of bone density scans being performed of some weeks. That contributed somewhat to the numbers going up again. That has been corrected in that the dollars have flowed. The number of procedures, of course, per week is going up, which stabilized the list.

The other problem, I understand, that happened is there was a fairly pent-up demand, I gather. No one quite knew how pent up that demand was or would or would not be. So consequently, as the lists came down, they have filled back up again, certainly not a two-year waiting list as before. I understand they went up to something like eight months, stabilized, and are now back again on their way down.

This was brought to my attention, to be blunt, just a few days ago, the list having gone up to that point. Although it was coming down, it was not coming down as fast as I wanted. I had asked my acting deputy Mr. Potter to ensure Dr. McClarty had the resources he needed to be able to bring it down at a faster pace, and I understand that is happening, so a little glitch in the financing flow, and secondly, a great pent-up demand putting names on the list.

I understand, as well, that the protocols about who should be getting and who should not be getting bone density scans are just coming into place. I was told by our operational staff that those on the list currently, there are a number of those who may, in fact, not qualify on the protocols and quite frankly are on the list but do not require the particular densitometry. So that has to be sorted out somewhat, and I am hoping within the next couple of weeks that list will have come down or be on its way to coming down, back to kind of the stable level where we intend it to be.

The member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) has always, I think, appreciated the difficulties in managing the system, and some occasions has indicated these things are not always about money. There is a sense of how we organize and put these things together.

We have been over the last year in this transition to the Winnipeg Hospital Authority. The ability of a Dr. Blake McClarty and others to get their job done is growing daily, and there are going to be some kinks in this to work out. This is one that had that. As I said, when it was brought to my attention just the other day that there had been a problem with the list going up, we have moved to ensure that the additional resources are in place to bring it down to what should be a reasonable and acceptable waiting period for this diagnostic procedure.

Mr. Chomiak: Will the minister undertake to provide us with the protocols of all of the various protocols that are being established as it relates to diagnostic procedures similar to the bone density scanners so that we would have some idea as to qualifications in that regard?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, that is an excellent idea. I would imagine these are public documents. Barring something that I am not aware of that prohibits me from doing this in law or ownership, I have no problem with doing that. In fact, I would take it a step further. I think for some of these protocols it would be probably very effective to provide them to every member of the Legislature, because I know from time to time we get calls from constituents about why or why not services are available, and I am sure all members might be interested in being able to at least see the protocol.

They, in fact, are being developed by physicians, not by bureaucracies and planners, but by physicians, to ensure that services are being appropriately used and can be effective, so that resources are not wasted and spent when they have no health outcome in a particular case. I am fairly certain that the member agrees with that type of purpose in establishing protocols.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, we have had some discussions with respect to Victoria Park Lodge at Souris, Manitoba. We have made a suggestion, similar to the situation that developed as it relates to the Odd Fellows hall in Winnipeg, whether or not the government would consider some kind of a provision or a transitional arrangement so as not to cause dislocation in the community, particularly at a time when there is generally a shortage of long-term care beds.

I wonder if the minister might comment on the government position in that regard.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, perhaps the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) and I cut some new ground in the field of this Legislature, and we were both somewhat innovative in our approach. My legislative assistant has been handling this particular matter and meeting with parties, and if the member would agree to indulge the committee, I would ask of him as my legislative assistant if he could address this specifically, rather than have him say it to me and I repeat it to

members of the committee. Would there be leave to allow that to happen?

Mr. Chairperson: Is there leave to allow the minister's legislative assistant to answer that question?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, philosophically, I do not have a problem with it, but I would rather not be charting new ground at this point, given my relative inexperience in this Chamber compared to other members of this august body.

* (1540)

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I appreciate the position of the member, and although I have some different views on legislative reform and the roles of legislative assistants in this Legislature and working in process, perhaps today is not the day to cut new ground, even on a temporary basis.

The member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) advises me, and under instruction, I asked him to meet with the parties to see if some resolution could be found. I understand that he has done that. He has spoken to all those involved, including the residents, and that they, in fact, are working currently on a proposal that would see that facility converted into some form of housing, assisted-living housing, under some new organizational structure. That would allow for it to continue in a role for which it is appropriate with that new organizational structure and the other issues of long-term care being addressed.

I understand that part of the issue is that it is on a very beautiful site, and the community would like to see that remain in some form of community housing, given how beautiful it is. Yet there is a recognition that there is a need for Level 3 and 4 long-term care beds and that this facility just does not need that particular need or would not meet that need. So I think a good compromise is in the works.

It is not so much as a transition. It would be a personal care home in appropriate beds and appropriate place, and this particular building ending up some form of an assisted-living seniors housing complex on the current site under some community organization or arrangement. If that can be worked out to the

satisfaction of the community, I am certainly going to be supportive of that resolution.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, one of the issues that was significant by its absence from the plan of the Winnipeg Hospital Authority and that we did not have an opportunity to discuss in Estimates was the whole issue of labs and the future of labs in Manitoba insofar as there have been some developments in the past few months. I wonder if the minister might update us as to the status of that particular project.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, the member asks a timely but perhaps even too timely question, because I have been working with our Treasury Board to develop the options that I have not yet taken for the consideration of my colleagues in cabinet. My intention is to do that relatively soon because we recognize that a decision has to be made to allow people to get on with their lives and planning.

I do want to say to him this: that this is not a matter that is ideologically driven. It is one that I think is very practical, and the options that are available to us, I think, are very practical, and even some of them the member for Kildonan, I suspect, could heartily concur with. So we have been negotiating, as the member knows, with the MDs for some time. We have looked at all of our options, including a contract with them, although I can tell the member the expected savings were not as great as we had initially been led to believe.

So we have a number of options, and the specifics around those options we have been developing with our Treasury Board, and at some time in the relatively near future I will be taking the matter to cabinet for a decision.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I will ask two questions. The first I anticipate probably not a response to; the second, I am hoping for a response to. I wonder if the minister might outline the options that he is considering, and the second question is: can the minister give us an answer in terms of timing? This obviously affects people involved and who have been on tenterhooks for some time now. Are we talking weeks, are we talking months in terms of a resolution of this issue so people can have some ideas as to how they can get on with their lives?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, the great dilemma of a minister, knowing the answers to the questions, wanting to provide the answers but recognizing that I have an obligation and responsibility as a member of the Executive Council. As I have indicated in the previous answer, I have prepared a number of options. Obviously there is a recommendation I am making to cabinet, and in fairness to my cabinet colleagues I would not want to prejudice their right as members of the Executive Council to explore those options and come to a conclusion.

So, obviously, I cannot go into those options with the member. If I were to give a time frame around it, I might find that that is not the time frame of cabinet. So I have to refrain from doing that, but I can tell the member that we do recognize that this was a matter we were hoping to have resolved last fall because we did not identify in the negotiations the level of savings we had anticipated, and we have been negotiating very hard with MDS. It has taken somewhat longer to do, but I recognize there are people who are waiting, and any decision cabinet is going to make is going to have to be made on a very timely basis. Obviously these matters cannot hang around for too much longer.

Mr. Chomiak: Can the minister outline for us, briefly if possible, the status of the hepatitis C negotiations as well as the status of the new blood agency scheduled I believe to commence operations September of this year, if I remember correctly?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, there was a conference call this afternoon at one o'clock of provincial ministers of Health. Most regrettably, I was meeting with the chairs of the regional health authorities for their monthly meeting, and I was not able to get back to the building until 25 after one, and then come to Question Period, so I have not been briefed by my deputy minister who represented me on that particular call yet. So to give him the most up-to-date briefing, I am regrettably not in a position to do that.

I can tell him that on the hepatitis C negotiations, the smaller provinces have obviously taken the view that because of the shifting position of Ontario and somewhat of Quebec and the need to have a significant federal presence in any expansion that it is fundamentally important that those parties resolve

where they want to be on this issue and that once they have done that with some certainty, then the rest of us, I think, are very prepared to be there to put together a program that will be national in character.

The difficulty, though, of getting into it today and being asked for specifics on positions is that whatever we say or do is not going to matter at all if it is not acceptable to Ontario and the federal government. They are the key players in making this happen, and they have been having a relationship that has been a difficult one to be at the table.

I share with him very candidly that I find it somewhat disturbing when we have had meetings of officials recently where position papers and information that are brought to these meetings for the purpose of fleshing out options, the member knows from his experience as a councillor and in other roles that it is very hard to have meaningful negotiations on the pages of newspapers or in the media.

* (1550)

You have to have the ability to explore and discuss and speak candidly about where you can and cannot be. What we found most disturbing is when our officials met the next day, all of the documents appeared, I think, in one of the Ontario newspapers, in *The Ottawa Citizen*, and I do not know where they were leaked from. I have my suspicions, but that has been a problem with this process. So there is a great reluctance, to be blunt, of the smaller provinces to be taking positions on specific components today for fear that either Ontario or the federal government will then turn around and attack us or use us as an excuse for whatever they are or are not doing.

Just for example, if we all said we would do a program to a certain level, and Ontario initially had talked about doing something a little bit richer, well, it would give them the ability to say, well, we are bringing ours down but it is not our fault, it is the rest of the provinces and get into that kind of political game. We have been burnt once in this process as provincial ministers and, quite frankly, there is a reluctance to be burnt a second time. So the reality of this situation, and I say this very sincerely to the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), is that the Government of Canada has

to tell us what they are really prepared to put into this. The Government of Ontario has to say what they are really prepared to do so they are not out changing the game after everybody has agreed.

When they come to that resolution and complete their political maneuvering, then we will know what is on the table for the vast lion's share of it. Again, if it is reasonable and deliverable in Manitoba, because we want to be part of a national program, we will be there and participate in it. So I wish it was another way, believe me, but it is not. All of us smaller provinces have had that general perception of where we are at. As I say, I do not have an update as of today's telephone call, but that is where it was as of this morning.

Mr. Chomiak: Can the minister briefly update us with respect to the blood agency that is going to be set up, I believe, as of September 1 of this year?

Mr. Praznik: I forgot my reference. The board has been appointed and is in operation. They are getting themselves up and ready to take over from the Red Cross. The agreement with the Red Cross for the transfer has, in fact, I think, been very close to being worked out and concluded. There are still some issues being fleshed out.

The financial arrangements that will be required to put the blood agency in operation are currently making their way through Treasury Boards across the country, and we in Manitoba are in the process of working through the financial issues in our province. As far as I am aware, we are still on track for a fall takeover of the blood system from the Red Cross.

Mr. Chomiak: Just for my understanding with respect to the financing of that, is the minister saying that there is an additional appropriation to that that is already contained in the Estimates book to deal with transition, or is the transition funding already contained within the Estimates for this year?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, as the member can appreciate, we can attempt to book at budget time what we expect to need, but the negotiations for the purchase of assets—and the federal government is providing funding for a share of that—one could only anticipate.

So I know we tried to book an appropriate amount of money in this year's budget for what we anticipated. I am not sure if that is adequate or not. I do not have those specifics in front of me, because I have not seen the latest numbers. But our intention was to give the best guess for this year's Estimates, but it has been a somewhat dynamic and evolving process. I am sure within the next week or two that we will be able to answer that specifically.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, one of the issues that is on a recurring basis actually occurred in this Legislature and has occurred across the country, the whole issue of nurse problems, and there are a variety of issues. It is not nurses who are the problem; rather, nurses are having difficulties in the system.

The MNU did a report that was provided to the minister. Has there been any specific follow-up, and is there anticipated to be a specific follow-up to the issues raised by the MNU in their report that was recently provided to the minister?

Mr. Praznik: Yes, Mr. Chair, I am just looking for a series of letters from the nursing organizations. I think I had them in my House book yesterday for tabling, and I do not have them here. I think my staff is going to get them, and I would be prepared to provide them to the member.

The Manitoba Nurses' Union's survey—and they have done that survey for many, many years, and it is one based on their reports. The Manitoba Nurses' Union has a role to play in the small “p” politics of health care and advancing their issues and causes on behalf of their members, and I recognize that. I also recognize, too, that one should not just dismiss their report on that basis, that there are things to be learned from it.

What I am attempting to do is, rather than solve things on an ad hoc basis, although sometimes one has to do that, I am trying to address—and we have talked about this somewhat before. Many of those nursing issues stem from ability for hands-on relationships with patients, their workplace issues. Some, by the way, are the way we hire nurses, and I have recognized very fully Vera Chernecki's, their president's, comments about part-time, short-term jobs, and one of the interesting things that is happening out of the

regionalization process is I have been very strong on the RHAs to be developing ways of having more full-time employment of nurses because you are managing them on a larger basis. In Winnipeg, that is going to be very important to give people that stability. So that particular issue, I think, is on its way to being addressed. It will not happen overnight.

With respect to certain issues around nursing shortage, number of nurses in various facilities, what the right skill sets are, et cetera, rather than try to address things in some ad hoc manner, last winter I invited the nursing professional bodies together, the regional health authorities, the Manitoba Nurses' Union to be in the tent as an observer to this process, and I have charged them with a number of tasks. One is to be able to sort out the professional responsibility of the various organizations.

The member well knows that there has been an ongoing dispute within the profession about how LPNs and RNs relate. The irony of it is, in the workplace, they relate very, very well. But in terms of professional responsibility and turf, who is responsible for what, what is the future of their training and their role in health care, there has been a large debate between those organizations over the last number of years. So I wanted that sorted out.

There is enough room, I would suspect, given all the changes in nursing, the four-year nursing program, the expansion into health care aides where obviously there is a need to standardized training. There is more than enough room for both nursing organizations to define their respective roles, define their overlap and how they will handle those roles and get on with each doing their own thing.

I tell the member, one of my frustrations is that I have seen RNs and LPNs looking at some of their future needs, overlapping what they do, and it just looked very counterproductive, I think, to everyone from the outside. So we brought them together in that particular process.

I have had the RHAs, through their Council of Chairs, really drive this process, because what has been missing I think in the past is that the purchasers of the nursing service have to be driving the process to say:

what do we really need? What are the makeup and the skill sets? How do we educate people so that they can advance those skills for the ones they need?

The LPN association said to me that many times LPNs are denied a particular work role because a particular matter is not in their training program. Yet, it only may take a day or two-day course to gain those skills. So we want to see a greater degree of skill-based staffing as opposed to profession-based staffing. We want those associations to be part of that being put together. We want the RHAs to drive it and being very clear what kind of staffing needs they need, how we assess those kinds of things.

It would give us, I think, a far better understanding of where we have to direct more resources, quite frankly, money, to ensure that facilities and wards and services are properly staffed, adequately staffed, for the work that they are doing. I am not expecting that to take forever either, and I do not want any organization to be bogging down that particular process. Where I see that going, and this comes back to the implementation issue, the next stage, of course, is to more formalize this process and to ultimately involve the educational organizations in it.

I see this thing working almost on an annual basis. The RHAs should be able to assess what their nursing staff needs will be one, two, three, four years out and that in a collective way be able to give very clear indication to the trainers, educators, as to the number of enrollments that are required, changes in skill sets, et cetera, in a much more productive way than we have done in the past. I think within the Ministry of Health we tried to address it without having the purchasers at the table and in a way that becomes very direct and very much a normal and regular part.

I want to table for the benefit of the member four letters we have received, one from Carmel Olson, who is the chair of the Provincial Health Programs and Services Executive Network on behalf of the regional health authorities; a letter from the Manitoba Association of Licensed Practical Nurses; a letter from the Registered Psychiatric Nurses' Association of Manitoba—they are very much a specialty group, but they are important to be in the tent; and, of course, a letter from the Manitoba Association of Registered

Nurses, all indicating their concurrence to be involved in this particular process and as we move forward. I provide those for the member here today.

* (1600)

Mr. Chomiak: I wonder if the minister might outline what steps are being taken at the central level to deal with the issue of a retention and attraction of nurses to Manitoba, not dissimilar, I would suggest, from the situation as it relates to physicians.

Mr. Praznik: Just one addition. The Manitoba Nurses' Union is not a professional body, so this is really driven by professional bodies and the RHAs. They have been invited to be part of this process. They have indicated that they will be because they are the union that represents both LPNs and RNs and others within that system. So they are in the tent. They always will be welcome to be in the tent, and the essential part of the letters, of course, is because these are the professional bodies who make the decisions as to professional responsibility.

So that is why there is no letter from the Manitoba Nurses' Union, although I indicate that they are invited to be, will be, have been part of this process. Their role is somewhat different, because they represent employment issues and have a different role. I just wanted to flag that with the member. There is not a bad reason why there is not a letter from the MNU. It was the professional bodies who were invited to be part of that. MNU is part of it as an observer.

With respect to retention and recruitment issues, we know there are a number of issues that we can address rather quickly. Job stability becomes very important, and we have asked the Winnipeg Hospital Authority to investigate and develop within their structures the ability to eliminate as much as possible the casual, part-time, et cetera, pools, and be able to combine those in a manner that gives job stability within the pool, you know, on a full-time basis, so you still have a pool, but it may be the regional health authority who maintains it.

Employment is full time and it might be between one or two or three facilities, whatever works in a practical way. So we hope that we can eliminate some of that. We know that having adequate hands-on support at the

bedside is part of a better working relationship, and I suspect a good deal of the issues raised in the MNU report stemmed from the ability to have enough time to do the job. That is part of one of the things that I am expecting out of this process is what are the right hands, what are the right expectations of those hands in providing bedside service.

The other part of this is ensuring that our educational institutions who are training nurses and the professional bodies are so well tuned to the marketplace, and that is why the RHAs are leading it, that they can adjust and provide their training opportunities to meet in a much better way the specific demands that will be there in the system. So I think that goes a long way.

I think the member has heard me make reference on the Mr. Warren's Action Line when he asked me are we opening up the nursing contract. I have indicated that there are some issues there that there has been a willingness to discuss with the MNU, and we have had some very preliminary discussions in that way. So there are a host of things that are ongoing to address the issues the member has outlined.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, I believe we are making arrangements for another minister to be in this process. Just prior to that occurring, I wonder if the minister would be able to give me an update with respect to the issues that the minister acknowledged he was concerned about, as well as we were, as it relates to the VON and the provision of VON service.

Can the minister give us an update as to what follow-up has taken place and what, if anything, further the department or the long-term group is going to be undertaking in this regard?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I am not sure whether or not they have, in fact, settled their labour dispute. [interjection] They have settled it, yes. I have had a chance to speak with Ken Holland, who is the chair of the Winnipeg Community and Long Term Care Authority, which is the contracting party with them. I have spoken as well with their CEO, Marian Suski. I have indicated to them that because this is somewhat new ground for them, if they believe that helping with a management team to work with the VON to improve their management skills and their board skills is

something that would be useful that they should feel very free to do that.

He, of course, pointed out to me that that would require, and I am aware of that, concurrence of the board of the VON to participate in that kind of a process. I think that they would be very wise to do that, and Mr. Holland assured me that those efforts would be made if they would be well received. If they do not, and they do not correct their fundamental problems, and they are not able to deliver service because of that, then I feel no compulsion to renew or have their contracts renewed if they are not able to provide the service that Manitobans and Winnipeggers expect.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Chairperson, can the minister give us the status of the nursing adviser position? In the Estimates, the minister indicated that position had not been filled, and the minister talked about the possibility of that position being filled at the regional level. Can he update us as to what the status is in that regard?

Mr. Praznik: Because of this huge change in function from Manitoba Health where we are no longer or very rarely a provider of direct service, the regional health authority is taking over many of the services we have provided. Because our role as a ministry changes more to policy, administration of that policy through finance standards check, et cetera, we are in the process of planning what the Ministry of Health will look like and needs to be to deliver service.

This nursing process that we have embarked on and is kind of fleshing itself out as it goes and figuring out what it wants to be and what it can do, I am keeping that position open of a nursing adviser to see how, in fact, if there are support staff required to this process on a regular basis so that quite frankly the policy advice that I am getting on nursing issues is coming out of this process of the professional bodies and the RHA and the MNU sitting at a table together.

Mr. Peter Dyck, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

So until we see how this kind of works and what it needs, I am keeping that position open to be able to accommodate that new process. If I were to fill it now, quite frankly, I think it would be somewhat at odds or maybe at odds under its old form with where we see

this process going with getting people at the table. So once we have a little bit better idea of what skill sets are going to be needed to accommodate this new process and report back to myself and my executive in a working relationship manner, then we will be able to adjust that position and skill sets to meet that need, and then we will fill it.

Ms. Friesen: I wanted to ask the Minister of Health a question that I have asked him in Question Period, but I was not sure from his answer that the Minister of Health actually understood the question I was asking. It dealt with Winnipeg No. 1 and community nurses in the schools. The minister gave me a reply which gave his policy for the whole province, which was not the question I was asking. I had asked about the lack of an agreement between the Winnipeg Long Term Care and Community Health Authority and their provision for public health nurses in the schools.

I think the minister thought that his questions were over. I did actually have another question for him, and I do not think he has heard the beginning of it. So let me start again, Mr. Chairman. The issue is a question that I raised with the minister in Question Period. It dealt with the Winnipeg Long Term Care Authority and public health nurses in the schools in Winnipeg 1. The minister gave me an answer as to the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) which dealt with the provincial policy, but there is a very specific case here for the centre of Winnipeg, for Winnipeg 1, which did have, unlike all of the surrounding communities, public health nurses in the schools.

The situation has been in limbo for some time. People have not been assured that they were going to be able to get the funding to continue that program, so nurses who retired or moved were not replaced. So what has happened is that, I think as we speak now, the staffing of public health nurses in the city schools is now at just slightly over half strength, so we were having teachers being assigned to do what formerly had been medical duties.

At the moment it is dealing with issues of head lice, but clearly it could be more than that, given the staffing and the uncertainty. My concern is that teachers are not trained to do this and that we have no long-term plan,

publicly at any rate, for the maintenance of public health nurses in the schools.

* (1610)

The minister is aware of the Postl report, of the Healthy Child policies, and I am sure—and I think he said this in his answer—he is concerned that the schools do play an important part in the delivery of public health. So now that the minister has the full information, could he give me a sense of when that agreement is going to be reached, when we can begin to see some stability return to the public health system of nurses in the schools and if he would give me an assurance that public health nurses will indeed be returned to the schools of Winnipeg?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I appreciate the member's question, and I do not take issue with the intent of it. I guess the only difference one may have—and if I recollect the issue well enough—is the nurses who were in those inner city schools were employed by Winnipeg School Division No. 1. Is that the case, I ask the member? Yes, I suspect as we see some changes in delivery, I do not expect that the Winnipeg Long Term Care Authority will be likely funding the school division to put nurses in schools. Perhaps the member would clarify.

Ms. Friesen: I believe it is an agreement with the public health authorities of Winnipeg and the Winnipeg No.1 schools. I do not believe it is entirely funded by the schools.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I know we are trying to just understand the issue. If I gather from the member correctly, it is that the current public health services in the schools in Winnipeg are partially funded from the public health program of the City of Winnipeg, and she is referencing the amalgamation agreement.

I just look to my assistant. Those are being worked out, I understand, to ensure that there is a role. It may change somewhat in how it is delivered. It may not be funded necessarily through the school division. It may be a service that the Winnipeg Long Term Care Authority provides in the schools, but I would agree wholeheartedly with her. I know the Minister of

Education (Mrs. McIntosh) and we have recognized the need for some of that service.

In rural Manitoba, I know that the public health nurses that used to be employed by the province and are now with the RHAs provide many of those services in schools. We certainly will want that to be continued. It may not be continued in the same form in terms of who the employer is, but I think that agreement is just about done. It is very, very close between the Long Term Care Authority and the City of Winnipeg to do the transfer service.

The real key point, of course, is that the service be there delivered through the schools. Particularly, in the inner city in some of our poorest neighbourhoods, that is probably the best vehicle to deliver that public health, and we certainly recognize that.

Ms. Friesen: The minister says close. Can he give me an assurance that when the schools open in September, or at the end of August, that system will be in place, that agreement will have been made?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I would love to be able to do that. The only thing, of course, is that we are negotiating with the City of Winnipeg and I do not control both sides of the bargaining table, but we certainly do not want to see a disruption of service. The whole intent here is to improve services, so I would love to be able to do that. I continue to put pressure to have it done, and I will continue to do that. We should have it, and the reasonable expectation should be that it be in place for the return to school, but, as the member, I am sure, would appreciate, I am not both parties at the table. There are always things that can happen at City Hall that can put a wrench into it. I do not want to make a commitment to her in the House today that I do not have the tools or I am not in a position to fully live up to.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, I have some questions for the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh). I want to ask the Minister of Education—

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, if I may just indulge, I know she has had a number of Health questions. As the member can appreciate, I have a meeting in my office. If that could conclude, I thank her for that.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Dyck): We thank the minister.

Ms. Friesen: I want to ask the minister about the issue of students being asked to pay for the cost of substitute teachers in the Assiniboine South School Division. I am referring back to an article in the Metro of Tuesday, April 22, 1997. I know that the minister has written letters on this, which I have seen copies, but I think that the letters were not as clear as they might have been.

I wonder if the minister would take advantage of this opportunity of this time we have to put clearly on the record the position of the government on the requirement for students to pay for the cost of substitute teachers.

The minister may remember that it dealt with students at Oak Park High School who received letters from the school asking that members of the boys' basketball team cover the costs for a replacement teacher to replace the teacher who would be accompanying them. Could the minister tell us very clearly what the position of the government is on this?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): I apologize to the member. I do not have those letters here. The member has indicated that I have received some letters that she has seen, but I do not know which ones she is referring to. If she has them there, I would be pleased to take a look at them because I know I did indicate at one point the member had asked a question and there was an article in Metro One that said user fees were being charged for students to pay substitutes in schools.

Of course, no school division can charge parents for instruction. Certainly, throughout history, the member knows very well, as does the system, that user fees have been charged for field trips and those kinds of things forever in school divisions. What is not illegal was the money that was charged, I think, for a field trip in Assiniboine South, I believe it was, for students who went on a field trip out of town, and they had to pay a fee to go on the field trip.

Part of that fee went to cover a lot of expenses that the school incurred because the students were going on a field trip. Some of that then went to pay a substitute

that come in. That is not illegal because the fee was collected for the purpose of the field trip.

I do not have those letters here. The member referred to me receiving several letters. I do not recall receiving several letters on it, but the member says she has them or has seen them. Perhaps she could provide those to me. Then I could give a more clear answer based on those. I did receive, I think, two letters on the topic based on the newspaper article, and then, of course, questions that the member had raised, but it was not expressed as a general concern by the people.

User fees have always been in place. School divisions cannot charge for instruction, but it is not illegal to redirect some of the funds that are used for field trips to substitute costs when the regular teacher is still with the class in the field on that trip.

Ms. Friesen: I understand what the minister is saying about what Oak Park High School did because the fund is not illegal, because the funds were received, or at least were given indirectly to pay for the instruction and not directly. So it would be illegal if a school division asked students to pay directly, but if they ask for it indirectly, then it is legal. Is that what the minister is saying?

* (1620)

Mrs. McIntosh: No, that is not what I am saying. I am talking about specific events, such as particular kinds of field trips where the regular classroom, the instructional teacher, is with the students of her class in one location who maybe also has some other students back at the school.

The cost of the field trip, I understand that Assiniboine South, well, perhaps you could say that they did not use the money for the substitute then, that they used it for the cost of the field trip and their own money for the substitute. But out of the money that was collected for the field trip, there were certain expenses. One of the expenses of the field trip was the cost of a substitute teacher.

We have had occasions in the past where teachers have gone on field trips with students to France or to Israel. Substitutes are brought in for that purpose to

teach the remaining students when the teacher is away. School divisions do not charge the parents for that, and it is not a common practice.

Ms. Friesen: Let me try again. Is the minister saying that what Oak Park High School did in asking students to pay the cost of a substitute teacher is legal?

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

Mrs. McIntosh: The member is going to have to refresh my memory. Again, I have asked, she has referred to this issue as emanating from some letters that I apparently received that she has seen, and a subsequent article in the paper upon which she asked me a question in the House.

If that is the incident she is referring to—and I do not know that it is because all she is saying to me here is that Oak Park High charged students to pay a substitute—if the incident she is referring to specifically is the one that we responded to at the time through the department, we checked it out and determined through legal counsel there had been no violation of The Public Schools Act. If that is the incident that she is referring to, then, no, there was no violation of The Public Schools Act. If she is referring to some other incident, I would have to know the details of it because, to my knowledge, other incidents of that sort have not been brought to my attention.

Ms. Friesen: I was referring to the April 22, 1997—I think I read that into the record—issue of the Metro which talked about Oak Park High School, letters dated December 17, 1996, and February 13, 1997, according to the newspaper report, and the boys' basketball team was asked to cover the cost which included the teacher's substitute fees. I do not think I said actually letters that were written to the minister. We will have to check the record on that. I certainly did not intend to say that.

What I did say was letters that the minister had written on this were not clear and, in fact, were very similar to the first answer the minister gave today. No, this is not dealing with any additional issues. It is dealing with that original issue. The minister said that she had a legal opinion on this, and I wonder if she would be prepared to table this.

Mrs. McIntosh: I would have to call legal counsel in. It was a verbal thing, but we could get them if the member wants, bring in the legal counsel to reiterate the opinion they provided me. It was not in writing.

I thank the member for clarifying that because I did not recall receiving letters on the topic. I do recall the incident. I believe it was around the date the member mentioned because it was spring, but I do not have my materials here with me to look at my response which, at the time it was written, indicated that the Assiniboine South School Division had not contravened any funding rules or The Public Schools Act. I thought at the time that the letter was fairly clear. It seemed to have answered the question for the people to whom it was written. They seemed to understand it, as did other observers.

I do not have a copy of that letter here, and, again, I ask if the member could provide it since it is the subject of her concern. I could take a look and perhaps clarify what is not clear to her, although it was clear to the people to whom I wrote and to others who had read it. It said that the Assiniboine South School Division had not contravened The Public Schools Act by charging user fees, taking the total expense of the trip and using it to offset the costs that they incurred for that particular field trip.

Ms. Friesen: Would the minister be prepared to table the written legal report that she could obtain from her legal counsel? I do not think it is normal practice to bring legal counsel into the House. The Chair is shaking his head. I do not think that is possible. So I think the way for us to receive that would be for the minister to request legal counsel to draft a brief note on this that refers to the sections of The Public Schools Act on which he or she is basing the opinion. Would the minister be prepared to do that?

Mrs. McIntosh: I can certainly have our legal counsel proffer a written opinion. The member wanted a report? How many pages? Legal counsel has provided us a verbal opinion at the time. We did not request it in writing because lawyers, as the member knows, are very expensive, but if she would like us to spend that money that way to clarify for her the contents of a letter that were clear to all the other readers, we would be pleased to do that. Again, if she would be good enough

to provide me a copy of the letter which she is referring to here in the House, I could perhaps clarify it for her myself by reading it and finding out which sentence is not perfectly clear.

The letter states: Assiniboine South did not contravene The Public Schools Act. That sounds pretty clear to me. It was clear to them, it was clear to me, it is not clear to the member, and she has now asked that we have legal counsel prepare a report for her rather than accept their verbal opinion. Of course, we will do that because my staff has spent a great deal of time this session doing research for the NDP's questions and for the NDP's policies. We are here to serve, and I guess if the NDP wants to use our legal counsel as their researcher, far be it for me to argue. I will have him reiterate in language that is more understandable the language that is already in the letter that she has.

I think it is a bit redundant, but I can understand she is having trouble understanding, and I will do that for her. When would she like it? Shall I have legal counsel—

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, what I am asking for is some substantiation of what the minister believes is the interpretation of The Public Schools Act. I do not think anybody used the word "report" except the minister. I believe the record will show that I asked for a brief statement from the lawyer giving the sections of The Public Schools Act which he or she is interpreting, a substantiation of what the minister believes to be a nonviolation of The Public Schools Act. It may well be.

I am not a lawyer and neither is the minister, but she has had legal advice. The minister refers to the cost of legal advice. I understand that the government does have Legislative Counsel. I asked for a brief statement, and I asked for a substantiation of work that has already been done for the minister.

Mrs. McIntosh: I am pleased the member clarified that all she needs—excuse me. [interjection]

That is interesting. I can see you are really concentrating on the content of this exchange here. Well, I am pleased to see that the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) is so interested in the topic we are

discussing since he is busy talking about something completely different.

But I understand the member now would just like a brief paragraph or two saying the sections of the act—if the member would like to listen, I am trying to get some clarification whether this is what she is seeking. Perhaps if I could get her attention, or maybe I should wait until she is ready to listen. I would like to get her indication if what I am interpreting is correct. But she is busy in conversation now, so I will give the request. Maybe she can read Hansard and let me know tomorrow. I understand that the—

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Chairperson, on a point of order, the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) is listening to the answer. There is no requirement that she has to look at the minister. She is listening, and I am sure she will have another question if the minister ever gets around to answering the previous question.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable member does not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable minister, to conclude her response.

Mrs. McIntosh: Thank you, and, of course, I do not need the member to look at me; I just need her to stop talking to other people, unless she is one of those gifted people that can talk and listen simultaneously. [interjection] She is very talented that way, the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) calls across the floor.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. Could I ask honourable members to refrain from what I call a little fishing expedition. I think if we get back to answering the questions and dealing with the questions that are asked rather than searching for something that might cause a little bit of disruption in the committee, I think we might go a little further. The honourable minister, to conclude her remarks.

Mrs. McIntosh: The member has asked me to expend some money and time to address a concern that is in writing very clearly for her. This is not a fishing expedition. I am trying to ascertain just how far the member wishes me to go, beyond what has already been done for her. So I understand she would like a paragraph or two indicating—

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please.

* (1630)

Point of Order

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, the minister is putting words into my mouth. I did not ask her to spend money. I asked her to provide the legal opinion, which has already been given to her.

Mr. Chairman, if you could direct the minister to deal with the issues on the table, I think we would get on much better in this House.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable member for Wolseley does not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

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Mr. Chairperson: The honourable minister, to answer the question.

Mrs. McIntosh: The member then would request a simple paragraph or two from legal counsel to verify what I have already told her, that The Public Schools Act says Assiniboine South is not in violation.

So I have said that, I have written that, and she now wants a lawyer to write it, as well, so that it can be credible. I will certainly do that for her. That, of course, does necessitate a call to the lawyer again, and, Mr. Chairman, the member surely knows that lawyers do not work for free, but maybe she does not. So I will do that and provide that to the House as quickly as I can.

That information, by the way—the member is correct—has already been given, and she did state in her question both times that the information has already been given to the minister verbally, written, transmitted

to the field, provided to her and released to the public. But we will do it again because when it comes from the lawyer, it will be credible to her and not any other way, and I want it to be credible.

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Mr. Chair, earlier in the session, several parents whose children attend alternative programs were I think disappointed and chagrined when the minister referred to them as yesterday's parents, or yesterday's people—my memory does not quite serve me, but, anyway, either of those terms.

As the MLA for a constituency where several alternative programs take place in local schools, I did have some concerned parents calling me, and I wonder if the minister would like to clarify for the record exactly what she meant when she referred to these parents as yesterday's parents.

Mrs. McIntosh: This question was asked in Question Period by the same member and was answered in Question Period. The answer does appear in Hansard, but if the member wants to ask it a second time, I am pleased to answer it a second time. But let the record show that the same answer will be found in Hansard from Question Period. So, again, I will provide information that has already been provided to help them understand the first answer which maybe was not very clear, I do not know, but this information is the same.

The alternative parents have a program whereby students are not necessarily going through one grade at a time. I believe the member knows because in her first question to me during Question Period, she identified herself, I believe, as an alternative—that her children had gone through the program. So I think she is familiar with the program which would perhaps mean I do not have to explain the program to her, although I am quite willing to do that.

In no way, shape or form are standards tests contradictory to or not complementary with the alternative program, and in being asked a question about this issue by the reporter, the member has taken a quote out of context, as a stand-alone quote, and believes it is referring to the program or to the parents themselves, when, in fact, it is referring to the fact that denying people the opportunity to have standards tests

diagnosis is to condemn them to becoming yesterday's people and is not preparing them well for the future. So—[interjection] I will maybe wait till they are ready to listen, because there is no point answering if no one is listening.

Point of Order

Ms. McGifford: On a point of order, I was sitting in my seat listening intently to the minister. I know that she feels that she has the right to control public schools and dictate who can be on and off stage, but, Mr. Chair, I think that you saw me sitting in my seat, listening to the minister. So for the minister to suggest that I was not listening I think is an insult. It is not true, and I want to correct the record.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable member does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Ms. McGifford: Well, fact or not fact, the point is that I was here, I was listening to the minister, and I do not know how the minister can put such misinformation, clear misinformation, on the record. No, the minister does not have to describe to me the alternative program, as I do have a child who went through the alternative program—perhaps I should not say went through; it sounds like cruel and unusual punishment—who was educated in the alternative program and enjoyed it thoroughly. The reason I have to ask the question again is quite clearly because this minister never provides any answers, so that we keep trying to get information. We keep trying to get her to answer. I think today that I am finally beginning to understand, and perhaps the minister could provide a bit more information.

My understanding, then, is the minister was not referring to the parents as yesterday's people but was suggesting that students who do not have the benefit—and “benefit” is the minister's word—of standardized diagnostic testing will grow up to be yesterday's children.

I guess the minister means by this that these children will not be employable or will not be able to participate in the marketplace. Perhaps the minister could provide a little bit of clarification on this point.

Mrs. McIntosh: I believe if the member wants to reread Hansard from the day she asked her question in the House, she will get the clarification that she seeks. I will indicate to her that the alternative program is a perfectly good program that is respected and fits the bill very well for many people. We have no objection to the alternative program. In fact, for many people it is the best program, and people choose that for a variety of reasons.

The very nature of the alternative program makes it ideal for a standards test, because children are not necessarily at the end of the year finishing curriculum at the same pace. So therefore it is a very good program to use a standards test to measure progress. It is a diagnostic test. It is an enhancement to the other kinds of assessment that are done during the year.

In talking about the conversation which the member is fixated upon here, the member needs to understand that it is my—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. Could I ask the honourable members who want to carry on such a conversation to do so in the loge rather than across the way. It is interrupting with my ability to hear what is going on here. Thank you. The honourable minister, to conclude.

Mrs. McIntosh: It is my understanding and belief that a person who believes that standards tests do not fit in with an alternative program, the very alternative program the member is referring to, the one at Laura Secord School, for example, standards tests are a perfect augmentation to that program. People who do not understand that either (a) have never been through the standards test process and therefore do not understand how it could connect with any program, and it could be a particular benefit with this one, because it is purely diagnostic.

So the attitude that they have towards testing is yesterday's attitude because the information that was provided to me, which I presume would be correct because it has come from parents from that program who wrote to me at the time and said standards tests are, and then described a very inaccurate picture of a

standards test based upon their belief that a standards test, the type we administer today, is like the old standardized tests that used to be done in the '60s and '70s, and, of course, that is not true.

* (1640)

So I had parents saying in their letters to me that standardized tests—calling them “standardized” instead of “standards”—measured the teacher, forced children to conform and be all the same, did a whole series of other things that are just absolutely wrong. The standardized tests of yesteryear that you used to buy off the shelf were like that, but the standards tests of today are not like that.

So the attitude towards the test was a past attitude, an attitude that was prevalent yesterday not today. The attitude towards the test was yesterday's attitude described to me, in writing, by people who clearly had a very confused picture of what a standards test is really all about and what it is attempting to achieve. It also showed a very clear misunderstanding of how the student profiles were used; again, yesterday's attitude, not prepared for the future, not relevant to today. That was the one part of the reference to seeing things as they were in the past as opposed to how they really are in reality today.

It was nothing against the alternative program, nothing against the parents of the students in the alternative program and nothing against the students in the alternative program. It had everything to do with a misconception of what standards tests were all about, what they were designed to achieve, how well they fit into particular programs of education because current understandings were missing. The understandings were yesterday's not today's, and the preparation for the future for the children then would be based upon impressions of yesterday rather than a preparation for the future in terms of assessment, in terms of diagnosis, in terms of student profiles.

The alternative program, of all programs, is one where a standards test would be ideally understood by the teachers of the alternative program. I have parents who are going to say to me that the teachers would not know what to do with an alternative test or the test in an alternative program, and I think that is wrong. I think

the teachers in that program would have a better idea than most because they are assessing on individualized-type education programs all along. They are doing constant assessing with students at different levels of learning with differentiated instruction, differentiated teaching, learning at the child's pace, not completely perhaps, but more closely attuned than a grade-by-grade way.

So they are in a perfect position to take a student profile which says John needs some extra work on spatial relations. This showed up in question 2. Here is where his gaps are and here is what needs to be done to strengthen them, or Susan has done extremely well in her understanding of patterns and the early stages of probability, because those questions are there, and they can say Susan does understand the early understandings of probability and you can build on that strength to accelerate her at her own pace, because she has shown that she is advanced in that area.

The standards test for Grade 3 is particularly ideally suited to the alternative program, because it also has the ability to identify those students who have reached beyond the Grade 3 standard. In reaching beyond the Grade 3 standard, the alternative education teacher then can identify those students who can be moved into areas of deeper understanding at a more rapid pace. These are excellent diagnostic tools.

When I say "yesterday's"—and I am talking about attitudes, understandings, perceptions, patterns of behaviour—and I talk about the tests from yesterday that you used to buy off the shelf and give and they were standardized tests, and I compare them to these standards tests, the member will have to agree these are good tests. They are good tests, excellent, and they have been praised as such. They are prepared by practicing Manitoba math teachers.

If the member wishes to imply that the tests are bad or not relevant, then the member, if that is what she is implying, that standards tests have no place in the classroom because they are not in the best interests of students, if there is an implication in there that the test itself is bad, as was in some of the letters I got from the parents in the alternative program, then she is saying that those practicing Manitoba mathematics teachers

who prepared them do not know what they are doing, and I believe they do. They are master teachers.

The framework for the Grade 3 mathematics curriculum was prepared again by master teachers from provinces across the west. British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Yukon, and Northwest Territories developed the outcomes and framework upon which our Grade 3 curriculum is based and upon which those tests are written. They are curriculum congruent with those outcomes.

Those outcomes are outcomes that students in the alternative program should have no trouble achieving. They should have no trouble achieving them if their work is being done well in the alternative program. They should be able to do this test with no problem, and it is not traumatic for them if the adults in their lives do not wish it to be traumatic for them.

Again, I come back to the member wanting me to explain what I meant about yesterday. Yesterday is an era when tests were surrounded with a pass/fail mentality. When I took my senior high, I wrote my exams, 100 percent pass/fail departmental exam. We are not doing that anymore. The test was not based necessarily upon my understandings as much as it was on the drill. The language arts exam, for example, was not based so much upon literacy as it was upon whether or not you had memorized well a portion of a speech from *The Merchant of Venice*. A good thing to memorize, a good speech, I remember it still, but it was not a literacy test the way today's is. So today we are measuring, because the people of Manitoba have asked to have measurable standards. They have asked very clearly and overwhelmingly and indicated their support for measurable standards.

I have had students where the adults in their lives have a different attitude from the one displayed by the member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford) and those parents who wrote to me from the alternative program. I have had students write to me saying: I had one whole class write to me. The teacher had them write about the Grade 3 test and send me their remarks. I got the tests, I got these letters, and the students wrote things like: Dear Mrs. McIntosh: My favourite question was question number such and such. I really

liked that question because it was in the quiz book my grandpa gave me for Christmas. Those kinds of things.

* (1650)

So the attitudes of those students towards the test was not that it was something to be feared and traumatized over, it was, oh, today we are going to do the types of things we do in some of these mind-puzzler quiz books that kids get for Christmas from their grandpas. Those questions can be fun, and they are fun. The member should sit down and do the Grade 3 test. I invite her to do that. She will find that it is a lot of fun to do. If it is approached with the right attitude, that today we are going to do a test, we are going to see how much we can remember of the things we have learned, there will be some questions in there that will be fun to do, and when you are done, we will see how well you have been able to learn these things and what more you need to learn to carry on. Those are very good things to have happen, not bad things.

But if the adults in a child's life say to the child repeatedly day in and day out for two months, you are going to write a test, it is going to be terrifying, if you fail your life will fall apart and you are going to be sick every morning, guaranteed the child will live up to those expectations. So it is, again, which is the attitude for today and which is the attitude for yesterday.

In terms of preparation for the future for the child now—I am just waiting until she is listening.

An Honourable Member: You have a long wait, because I gave up listening a long time ago.

Mrs. McIntosh: Well, okay, the member has said I have got a long wait because she gave up listening a long time ago. She asked for a detailed response to a question that she said I had not given enough detail on in earlier times. She said I did not give enough detail to my answer in Question Period. She wanted a detailed answer today, so she can clearly understand what I meant by yesterday versus tomorrow.

I am trying to give her that because when I talk about yesterday, it is a very big thing I am talking about, she does not want the answer she asked for, and she is yelling from her seat something or other.

Does she or does she not want to have an intelligent dialogue about standards tests, what they are all about, why they are different from yesterday, and how they apply to tomorrow? Because I still now would like to talk about the children, and how standards tests apply to them in terms of preparing them to be tomorrow's people rather than leaving them behind as yesterday's people. If she does not want the answer, and it does cost \$10,000 a day to run this Chamber, then I will sit down and we can save the taxpayers some money.

Point of Order

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Chairperson, on a point of order. I would like to refer the Chair to 46.(2) Decorum in Debate, which concludes a discussion about disrespectful or offensive language against any member thereof, and I would contend that this minister is using disrespectful language.

So this is not a dispute over the facts. I think there is a rule that covers this, and I would ask you to request the minister to answer the questions rather than to attack members on this side. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable government House leader, on the same point of order.

Mr. McCrae: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I commend the honourable member for Burrows on the research he has done with respect to the rules of the House. I think that it can be an extremely subjective matter if one happens to be one side of the House or the other, depending from which direction the alleged disrespect emanates.

So, I think, what we have here is a situation where we will have a discussion going on about an issue, and as happens from time to time in legislatures right across our country, indeed in parliaments and legislatures going right back to the Mother of Parliament at Westminster, I suggest that debate often gets to a point, sometimes on a warm afternoon in a legislative Chamber, where members perceive a lack of respect, or sometimes that flows from a perceived lack of respect coming from the other side.

Who is really to judge at the end of it all as to whether indeed these events give rise to the matters complained of by the honourable member for Burrows?

My reason for rising is not to take so much issue with the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) in raising his point of order, but perhaps to ask you, Mr. Chairman, to, of course, consider the matter raised by the honourable member for Burrows but in the context of where are we and at what particular period of time are we there and look at the matter with the backdrop of all of the contributing factors that go into the consideration of such a point raised by the honourable member for Burrows.

By that I mean here we are at the 17th day of June, in 1998, some people, and I know when I return to my constituency on the weekends—I am trying to provide some help for Your Honour in arriving at a decision with respect to the point raised, and this is relevant, Mr. Chairman.

I go to my constituency, and first they want to know, well, is the House sitting and how are things down in Ottawa these days? This happens sometimes, forgetting momentarily, of course, that I work here at the Legislature in Winnipeg, but the key point here is, is that Legislature even sitting? Some people—

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. You cannot raise a point of order on a point of order, but could I ask—[interjection] I have stopped him for one second anyway. [interjection] Order, please. No, you cannot raise a point of order right now, but I will let you up in a minute.

The honourable minister, I would like to thank you for your presentation. I have heard enough on the point of order.

The honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) did not have a point of order. There are times in the House that we sometimes start to use words that drag us a little heavier into the debate than we tend to want to get to, but I do think that we as members should reflect on the words that we choose, as the Minister of Agriculture once said. Those words can sometimes drag us a little further into debate than we care to travel down that road.

So if I could ask members of both sides to choose their words very carefully as we are entering further

into debate, I would appreciate it to aid the decorum of the Chamber.

* * *

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, to the Minister of Education, during Estimates, the minister had agreed to table the teachers' comments on the marking of the standard exams, and she has not yet done so. I wonder if the minister could tell me when she intends to table those comments.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, yes, I did absolutely commit myself to tabling the comments that the teachers made on how much they valued marking the examinations. The assistant deputy minister, Carolyn Loeppky, was gathering those from the archives to have them all typed up on a sheet, so that they would not be revealing the teachers' handwriting. They should be ready—I had thought they might be ready by now, but I will check when I go back to my office to find out when we can expect to bring them in, and if they are not completed, I will submit the ones that are completed. But there were, as you know, many, many thousands of comments, and so it takes a long time to transcribe them all. I will submit either a full or a partial list before the session is completed, as promised.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, as the minister is aware, I had not anticipated that they would be transcribed. I thought I was looking for the archival documents. Of course, I had offered to come and read them at the archives, but the minister, I gather, has decided to transcribe them and to present them in that format. I could assure the minister that I am not familiar with the handwriting of any teacher, nor would—[interjection]

Well, the minister says from her seat that that was decided in Estimates, and the transcribing and typing of them I do not believe was. A transcribed document is not the same as an archival document, and it was not simply what I had expected.

I would like to ask the minister what her plans are for the Scurfield report. I gather that consultations have been continuing. I would like to ask the minister what kind of consultations she has done, the range of people who she has asked for written reports from and when

she anticipates that process will be complete, and what she anticipates the next step will be.

* (1700)

Mr. Chairperson: When this committee meets again, the minister can answer the question at that time.

The hour now being five o'clock, time for private members' hour. Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Committee Report

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Chairperson): Madam Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted a certain resolution regarding Capital Supply, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Madam Speaker: The hour being 5 p.m., time for private members' hour.

Proposed Resolutions. Resolution No. 41.

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, I believe there was agreement to go to bills today in private members' hour. You could solicit the House on that.

Madam Speaker: Agreed? [agreed]

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 201—The Crime Victims' Bill of Rights and Consequential Amendments Act

Madam Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh), Bill 201 (The Crime Victims' Bill of Rights and

Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur la déclaration des droits des victimes d'actes criminels et modifications corrélatives), standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau). Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? Yes?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Leave has been granted.

On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), Bill 203, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (2) (Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative), standing in the name of the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer). Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?

House Business

Mr. Doug Martindale (Deputy Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, on House business, if we could just reverse the order and do the graffiti bill first and then the elected Speaker bill, if we have leave from the government House leader to do it that way.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave now to revert to second readings, public bills, and then revert to debate on second readings, public bills?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Leave has been granted.

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 204—The Graffiti Control and Consequential Amendments Act

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): I move, seconded by the member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford), that Bill 204, The Graffiti Control and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur la lutte contre les graffitis et modifications corrélatives, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Mackintosh: We are asking the Legislature to agree in principle to this legislation. The challenge of dealing with graffiti has become greater over the last number of years, and that is not only in my estimation but in the estimation of others that I hear from and speak to. I also rely on people who devote their careers to dealing with the challenge of such behaviour as graffiti offenders, including Constable Shawn Matthews of the City of Winnipeg police department. He is reported as saying that there has been a definite increase in the cases of graffiti in the last two or three years.

There is no doubt that graffiti is no longer confined to the Kilroy-was-here type of writing on walls. Graffiti now, in the last two or three years, has become largely of two types, first of all, tagging and, second of all, gang graffiti. Gang graffiti, in particular, is a real threat to the community, but all kinds of graffiti are not simply of concern because they are unsightly or because of esthetic concerns. Graffiti of all types is an attack on the community's sense of ownership of neighbourhoods and an attack on the community's right to be free from the fear of crime.

I want to just quote from Winnipeg Police Services Chief Cassels, who is quoted in the Winnipeg Sun of June 20 as saying: There is far too much of it. Graffiti not only affects business, it affects how people feel about their neighbourhoods. Graffiti increases the fear of crime more than crime itself, end of the quote.

Madam Speaker, when you go through a neighbourhood that has graffiti throughout it put there by gang members, it was put there because the gang wants to identify that particular neighbourhood as the gang's turf. It is critical that Manitobans stand up and say: that is not gang turf, that is our turf, that is the community's turf. We have to ask: who are we going to have own this town? Well, we own this town, and it is time to get serious about this attack on our communities and sense of safety.

There has developed recently, particularly in New York City and now spreading throughout North America, a philosophy called the broken-windows theory. That philosophy holds that it is important to deal with some lifestyle crimes, to deal with issues like graffiti which once were thought of as minor

misdeemeanours and something that has been virtually decriminalized. It is important that the community reassert its ownership and control of neighbourhoods to prevent the further decay of communities and the proliferation of more serious crimes.

Constable Shawn Matthews himself is quoted, again in the Sun, that is August 27, as saying: People do not realize that when graffiti shows up, oftentimes other crimes like violence and drugs will then follow.

Well, Madam Speaker, there is also another dimension to the problem of graffiti, and that is its cost to the community and to individual property owners. The City of Winnipeg says that last year they spent about \$2 million removing graffiti. I suspect that that refers only to the cost of removing graffiti from City of Winnipeg property, and indeed I know that not all of the property that has been covered with graffiti has been restored in the last year. So that I think is a very conservative figure.

We know that School Division No. 1 last year spent \$72,000 removing graffiti from schools and other buildings in the school division. I look at that figure and I think, well, is that not enough to cover the salaries of about two teachers?

Madam Speaker, there is also a real burden on homeowners for covering up or removing graffiti. I know and I hear from individuals who are afraid to remove graffiti. Whether it is tagger graffiti or gang graffiti, they cannot discern the difference, and they believe that if they remove the graffiti, there will be some retaliation.

Solutions are needed and the first thing that has to be done is, of course, there has to be an effective graffiti removal program. Studies south of the border, in particular, have shown that the faster graffiti is removed, the higher the likelihood that graffiti will not reappear on that surface.

* (1710)

It is also important that we try and prevent graffiti in the first place, so to that end we announced an antigraffiti plan on September 17. As part of that plan, we urged the government to endorse our plan, which

we called Operation Cover-up, as well as introduce deterrent legislation. Well, nine months later we do see the province now contributing to an antigraffiti or cover-up campaign in the city of Winnipeg, and I am pleased with that. I hope that announcements and the pressure that we have brought to bear were helpful to the government in coming to conclude that it was important that they help fund municipal campaigns to rid the province of graffiti, at least in terms of a cover-up program.

But nine months later the government still has not moved on deterrent legislation. We have heard, for example, of different kinds of responses to graffiti all around North America. Even in this city I have noticed that Councillor Amaro Silva was pushing the idea of limiting the sale of spray paint in the city, but our research of jurisdictions south of the border indicates that that has very limited success. We know from studies done that about 90 percent of graffiti offenders are teenagers. We also know that, in terms of consequences, only about 5 percent of offenders are required to perform restitution.

Now, Madam Speaker, it is very important, in our view, that the victim be placed front and centre in any legislative scheme to deal with graffiti. In no way should, as it is happening in other jurisdictions, the victim be required by law to remove the graffiti. To us that is again victimizing a victim. We believe that, like in the city of Chicago, graffiti removal be a public service, no different than other streets and operations projects.

But we cannot always talk about covering up graffiti or removing graffiti without dealing with the real challenge, and that is how to prevent graffiti in the first place. This bill that is before the House provides, we believe, a significant deterrent to would-be graffiti offenders. The legislation proposes that an offender immediately be required to remove or cover up graffiti on pleading guilty, and that cover-up must happen within 72 hours. We believe there should be a minimum fine of \$500, mandatory restitution for the victim, and not less than 50 hours of community service. To speak strongly to teenagers in particular, we believe that there should be a suspension of drivers' licences, in the event of a conviction, of one year, and five years on a subsequent conviction. As well, the

legislation provides for parental responsibility where payment is not made for restitution by the offender.

Now, it is important, we believe, that legislation not simply allow the discretion that is now allowed to prosecutors and judges to deal with graffiti. We think that there should be a clear direction to our prosecutors and judges that this matter is serious. We want a strong message sent out so that would-be graffiti offenders will think twice, and so that the cost of putting up graffiti far outweighs that one moment of satisfaction or whatever it is to the graffiti offender.

Now, Madam Speaker, currently the law in Canada to deal with graffiti is under the Criminal Code, and the only place that graffiti offences fit has been mischief. Well, the mischief charge does not speak to graffiti. It does not speak to the victims of graffiti. It does not target the appropriate responses that are necessary according to people across this continent to effectively counter the challenge of graffiti. Within the jurisdiction of the province under property and civil rights and indeed in municipalities, antigraffiti legislation can be passed. We believe that the province has jurisdiction to enact this kind of legislation. This is not penal legislation. It is restorative in nature. It is victim oriented, and we say that particularly given the fact that the Criminal Code does not so much as mention graffiti in it at all.

So, Madam Speaker, the government, I am sure, has had the time over the last nine months to consider our proposals as they were unveiled in September. I am sure, with the resources available to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews) in particular, that they have studied our detailed recommendation to the government for this kind of deterrent legislation.

The legislation that is being brought in today mirrors the promise that we made in September to bring forward legislation and the urgings on this government to consider this kind of law.

So today we urge the government, particularly the Minister of Justice, to consider this legislation in the spirit that it is offered. If the government has concerns about the provisions, if for example it believes that some of the provisions are too harsh, if they believe

that some of the provisions may cause constitutional challenges, I say: let us discuss that.

I look forward to the government bringing forward any suggestions for improvement to the bill, any amendments, but I say: let us work in a co-operative way to deal with this challenge, let us pass Canada's first antigraffiti legislation, let us make a strong statement that this town is owned by its neighbourhoods and communities, that Manitobans believe and deserve to have the wrongdoing of graffiti elevated by this kind of legislation so that there are serious consequences and so that victims of graffiti will be restored to the position they were in before the wrongdoing and so that we can prevent graffiti in the first place.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Madam Speaker, I am deciding not to speak on this issue at this particular time.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): Madam Speaker, I will be very brief. I have not had an opportunity to see the legislation that the honourable member is bringing forward yet. I am looking forward to studying it very closely, but I am interested in the fact that last year they brought forward the issue of Operation Cover-up, as they called it, because back in 1993 and '92, we in St. Norbert, with Take Pride Winnipeg, started that Operation Cover-up when we started going through our community, with the support of the City of Winnipeg and the Province of Manitoba, covering up all of the graffiti.

We had the schools involved and some of the taggers who had actually done the initial work were involved in doing some of the cleanup, involved in the restitution. We felt that the proper thing for those offenders to do was to work on the projects that they had done in the community, which did not exactly improve the way the community looked.

Madam Speaker, I must say that the new work that they have put in place within my community, a number of those paintings are very nice murals. I think they have done some fantastic work, and I would like to say thank you to Take Pride Winnipeg, St. Norbert Collegiate, Fort Richmond Collegiate, and those children who were involved in correcting one of the

inequities of just a few. I do think that when we reflect on the children of today's society, in some cases we seem to put the blame on all of them.

It is very few of them that are doing this. When we look at the taggers that are out there, you will notice a lot of those signatures are the same. Those are the ones we have to work on. The member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) is right. Those are the offenders and the repeat offenders that we have to go after.

* (1720)

I understood that the Criminal Code covered those off. I would like to take a closer look at that, because the taggers who go out and repeat offend, we do have to have some way to reflect upon them. The education that we are attempting to do with some of them is not working, and we do have to have some recourse for those few, and I do mean very few that are out there.

I do not know if we have to bring in this type of legislation though for the small amount that are really out there. I do not think there is a dramatic amount of them. I think if we can catch those ones within the existing laws that we have today within our country, I think we just might have a case to be made. I do agree with the member though that we have to do something with the gang members who are going out and repeat offending. I do think that we have to take a look at what type of restitution they can bring forward.

But there is a problem with the restitution, because some of these so-called offenders or some of these offenders do not have the money, do not even have home addresses. I think that is probably the reason why they are doing what they are doing. It is an acting out that we do not agree with, it is a lack of supervision, it is a lack of parenting, and that is something that our government, again, is taking care of. It is something that our government is attacking and has been working towards, and now because we have resolved the issue of bringing a balanced budget, we are able to attack some of those social deficits that we have today. We are able to attack those now because this government took the steps that were necessary.

Madam Speaker, I think that if we can give pride back to our children and give pride back to Manitobans

and the people of Winnipeg, we will go a lot longer than passing legislation that is just—[interjection] I am sorry. I will wind up there. I could go on and on, but I would like to give the opportunity to the member for Osborne.

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for St. Norbert for his courtesy, as well as for his remarks. I understand from his remarks or I imply from his remarks that he will certainly be supporting this legislation. I am also pleased to join the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) and very proud to have seconded his motion.

I think we all understand that this is a provincial-wide issue, but the member for St. Johns having laid out the general parameters of the issue allows me to deal in specifics. So, as the MLA for Osborne, today I want to speak about my constituency because Osborne has been seriously defaced by taggers, and business people and citizens in Osborne are frustrated and very anxious to see some legislation and to have change.

Anyone who knows my constituency knows that it is dominated by Osborne Street, that Osborne moves north and south in the constituency, and I can assure members that there is graffiti everywhere you turn on Osborne. This morning, I spent some time driving along back lanes and looking at businesses, so I suppose I need to correct something because this morning what I discovered rather than graffiti was a recent cover-up. In the south end of Osborne, business owners have taken up the paint and painted white squares over graffiti. However, they told me when I contacted and spoke with people this morning, that they know that this is only temporary. In fact, Madam Speaker, when I saw these white squares on buildings, I had a sinking feeling that they might be interpreted as available canvases, canvases in the sense of places there waiting to be painted on.

I notice the same thing in the north end of the constituency, and when I contacted the Osborne Village business owners, they told me that they found that the City of Winnipeg's program was working fairly well, and here I refer to the 986-1234 number. However, we all know that there are limitations on this program. For one thing, there are only three colours of paint, beige, white and gray, and, of course, this is not necessarily

suitable for all buildings. If a business owner needs another colour, apparently they can get a \$15 certificate on the paint. So that helps to some extent, Madam Speaker.

However, both the business owners that I spoke to, both those in Osborne Village and those in the south end of my constituency, agreed that we needed legislation, that we needed to prevent graffiti rather than merely cover up once it happens.

I want to make the point here that business owners in Osborne, both in the south and north, are very serious citizens and have made very important contributions to our communities and certainly have been very active in doing things about graffiti. In the northern area of our constituency, the Osborne Village BIZ, as I said, is a very progressive business organization. It is a group that has always supported alternative employment programs for youth; they have always supported the reassessment and augmentation of social programs and health programs. They have worked very closely with Macdonald Youth Services, and they have been generous with their donations to Macdonald Youth Services.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Mr. Deputy Speaker, really, Osborne Village business people have helped make the village what it is today, that is a sound business district and certainly, I think, a tourist attraction, especially to people from outside the province but very attractive to Winnipeggers too. My point is that these people are very strong community people. They have made efforts in the community. They have worked very hard to create safety in the community; they have worked very hard to create the perception of safety in the community. As the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) has told us, graffiti relates both to safety and to the perception of safety. As I said earlier, there is a growing sense of frustration in my communities, both north and south.

When I spoke with the Osborne South BIZ this morning, in particular with Barb Gerrie, she told me that her business association was spending between \$4,000 and \$4,400 a year on the removal of graffiti. She noted and her business associates have noticed that this is a huge increase in the number of taggings, and

that it has become a severe problem in the south end of Osborne since 1997. She noted that graffiti was appearing in even very difficult-to-reach places.

In addition to this \$4,400 that was being spent, she pointed out that individual business owners were paying additional sums as their buildings required special treatment. For example, the question of matching colours and also the question of cleaning brick. Now the Osborne South BIZ people might recover a portion of \$4,400 from The Green Team, but the estimates still are that these business owners pay about \$2,000 in benefits like CPP and I suppose UI-EU, I think it is now called—and also in extra hours used to cover the graffiti. Clearly this is not right and should not be allowed to continue.

Of course, it is not only the businesses in Osborne that are defaced by graffiti. Mr. Deputy Speaker, our schools, our community centres and individual homes are defaced by graffiti. For example, the person who lives immediately behind me moved from a community that was considered a high-risk community into Osborne, believing that in Osborne the home would be safe. This individual constructed a new garage, and no sooner was the garage up and painted, that it was immediately tagged, and tagged in a highly despicable way.

One of the things that I have noticed in my community at the corner store, which is four houses from me, the store being on Osborne, is a whole raft of nasty, racist comments and nasty homophobic comments, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I suppose this is slightly different from tagging, and it is soon covered up, but it is something that occurs.

* (1730)

I think there are taggers who pride themselves on their artistry. I think we agree that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, but people in Osborne agree almost to a person that our businesses, community centres, schools, bridges, and other public structures—I just want to interrupt myself to say the St. Vital Bridge, which is at the end of Osborne, is particularly defaced. It is unsightly, unpleasant—does nothing for the community at all. Anyway, to get back to my list: homes and apartments, I think people in Osborne agree to a person

that these are not canvases for taggers; and, as the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) pointed out, this tagging is not only unsightly, but it really is an attack on property.

The member for St. Johns spoke about taking back the community, and he spoke about the importance of community ownership. I know that, as a woman and as a feminist, I have participated in annual Take Back the Night events, usually a parade, and I think it has been very empowering for the women's community. The idea of taking back the community and having ownership over the community, I think, is something that would be empowering to our citizens.

As it is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people to whom I spoke have talked about their growing sense of frustration. They have talked about their growing sense of anger. They have talked about the fact that, as far as they can see, nothing is happening. They have no confidence that the issue of graffiti is being taken seriously and regarded as the offence that it is. And it is an offence. I am sure members in this House all agree.

To return just briefly to the issue about safety and graffiti, when I was speaking to a few constituents this morning, I learned that there is a feeling in the south part of Osborne that some of the graffiti on our walls and buildings indicates that gang activity is prevalent. Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am certainly not an expert on the difference between taggers and gang-related graffiti, but what I found interesting here was that there is a perception out there then that there is gang activity and gang-related graffiti. I do not know whether it exists, in fact, or not, but, as the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) pointed out, and as I reiterate, the perception is real and the perception scares people. I think the member for St. Johns quoted from Police Chief Cassels to this effect.

Certainly graffiti in all areas intimidates, and I want to particularly cite here the Osborne Village area because it is an area of high-density housing, high-density population, and there are many seniors living in that area. I can go into many seniors blocks in the Osborne Village area, and almost to a person the seniors will tell me they are intimidated, they are nervous about going out on the street. Certainly graffiti

is not the only reason for this, but graffiti is one of the reasons for this. The seniors are intimidated.

There is agreement in my constituency that deterrents are needed, furthermore that the province has some responsibility to enact legislation in this matter. The Winnipeg Public Works line might handle the problem once the problem is there. I think we have already indicated it does not totally handle the problem and not to everybody's satisfaction, and that is not to put any blame on the Winnipeg Public Works line. It is just to indicate that there are limitations. Nonetheless, to return to the idea of deterrents, my constituents agree that deterrents and consequences are necessary.

My community agrees, and agrees on the penalties that were set forth in the bill. I have certainly sent the bill to business owners, discussed it with other constituents. The member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) has reviewed the penalties, which, of course, only apply when an individual is found guilty, but I have been told by my constituents that they are tired of this issue not being taken seriously. They are tired of mere slaps on their wrists. They support the removal of graffiti. They support the fine of not less than \$500. They support an order for the payment of restitution. They support an order to perform not less than 50 hours of community services, and they really like the idea that, when an individual is found guilty of drawing graffiti on the wall, some of that community service—the bulk of the community service—should be spent in the removal of graffiti.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): I move, seconded by the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurchou), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 203—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (2)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), Bill

203, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative, standing in the name of the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer).

Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave? Stand.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak on Bill 203, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act. This is not the first time that I have spoken on this private member's bill, and it probably will not be the last time, since this government has no intention of bringing in legislative changes so that we can have an elected Speaker. I believe the Premier is on record as saying he will do it after the next election, which, in my view, means that it will probably be an NDP government that will bring in legislation to bring in an elected Speaker.

I would like to begin by giving a rationale for an elected Speaker. I think the most important feature of an elected Speaker would be to give the Speaker the impartiality of the support of all sides of the House by way of a secret ballot that an election would give to an elected Speaker. This is part of Beauchesne's in discussion about the role of the Speaker in the House of Commons.

Beauchesne says: "The chief characteristics attached to the office of Speaker in the House of Commons are authority and impartiality. As a symbol of the authority of the House, he is accompanied by the Mace which is carried before him by the Sergeant-at-Arms and is placed upon the Table when he is in the Chair." It goes on to say that "Confidence in the impartiality of the Speaker is an indispensable condition of the successful working of procedure, and many conventions exist which have as their object, not only to ensure the impartiality of the Speaker but, also, to ensure that his impartiality is generally recognized."

Now, I think we are in this position today of asking for legislation to have an elected Speaker in the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba for two reasons: one, being that almost every other province in Canada has moved to an elected Speaker. In fact, I think we are just playing catchup here. Nova Scotia recently moved to an elected Speaker, and I believe that discussions are

underway in Quebec to have an elected Speaker, so we may be the last, or one of the last, to change the rules of our House. Secondly, we on this side feel very strongly that we have not had an impartial Speaker in this Chamber, and, regrettably, I say we have several times introduced motions of censure on the existing Speaker. So we believe that there is a need for change in this Legislature and a change to an elected Speaker, which would give impartiality.

* (1740)

It is very interesting to read about the evolution of the Office of Speaker and the different methods that have been suggested to have an elected Speaker over the years. In fact, I found very interesting research papers, and I thank the Legislative Library for digging some of them up. I was pleasantly surprised to find a paper which is titled *The Speakership of the Canadian House of Commons: Some Proposals*, a paper prepared for the Special Committee on Procedure and Organization, and it was prepared by Denis Smith, an assistant professor of politics at Trent University. In fact, he was one of my professors at Trent University.

I had a rather short career there. I was quite successful in politics and history, but not quite so successful in other courses, hence, my short career as a student at Trent University. But I remember Mr. Denis Smith quite well, so I was pleasantly surprised to find this very interesting paper.

He has a summary of his recommendations on how the Speaker should be chosen. In fact, it does not have to do so much about an elected Speaker as a permanent Speaker. It is rather interesting. I would just like to summarize and comment briefly on some of his recommendations.

He begins by proposing that the Chair be nominated by a government backbencher and seconded by an opposition backbencher, and then the Speaker, once elected to the Chair, should normally be re-elected to the Chair, without opposition, at the commencement of each Parliament. Thereafter, the party should make a co-operative and determined attempt to arrange for the acclamation of the incumbent Speaker in his constituency the next and each subsequent general election.

That is basically the British model where for many decades the Speaker's election in his or her constituency was not contested, I believe, with one exception in 1935, if memory serves me correctly. The idea was that once the individual had the confidence of the House of Commons in Westminster that this person, as long as they maintained that confidence, were re-elected unopposed by agreement of political parties.

Mr. Smith goes on to say that after that a special constituency of Parliament Hill should be created in this Canadian model for which the electors would be the members of the House of Commons and the member would be the Speaker of the House of Commons. So this proposal then was that once the Speaker was elected and had the support and confidence of the House that Parliament would create the new seat.

In this case, the person would be the member for Parliament Hill and thereby would have independence, would no longer be connected to a party, that would be my understanding, and would continue to get re-elected as the member for the House of Commons as long as he or she maintained the confidence of the House, a rather interesting proposal and one which died on the vine, although it was put forward by a number of people over the years, including the late member for Winnipeg North Centre, Stanley Knowles.

If memory serves me correctly, he was offered the position of Speaker in the House of Commons and he declined. I do not know the reasons for that. It would be rather interesting to find out the reasons for that. I suspect that he declined because he wanted to continue to be able to represent his constituents by speaking in Parliament, and certainly that is one of the, I believe it is one of the more restrictive parts or roles of being a Speaker, and that is the inability to speak in debate, and I think it is something that must be rather frustrating from time to time.

When I first came here, I thought that the position of Speaker looked like an attractive position. However, I think it would be quite contrary for me, given that I campaigned on being a strong voice for Burrows, to then become the Speaker. In fact, I am no longer interested in that position. I believe it is very important for me, especially representing so many poor people in

the north end of Winnipeg, to have the ability to speak out frequently and strongly on their behalf in the Chamber, which is something that the Speaker, under current practice and tradition, cannot do.

One of the former Speakers of this House, Mr. Jim Walding, conducted a survey of his constituents, and the results are rather interesting. I am sure he is remembered well by some people who have been here for many years. His questionnaire was about the Speaker. I happen to have a copy of it, and it is quite fascinating. He sent out a questionnaire to his constituents and he got 311 replies, which he said was more replies than he got to other surveys that he did.

His first question was: as a constituent do you feel it is an asset or a liability to be represented in the Legislature by the Speaker? He had a scale, and on the left it was definitely an asset and on the right was definitely a liability. There were more people saying that it was a liability. So I think even his constituents recognized that electing someone as Speaker means that they may feel not as well represented in this Chamber.

He asked: how important is it that the Speaker be impartial in the legislative Chamber? By a vast majority, people said it is very important that the Speaker be impartial. And then he asked a series of questions. To what extent should the Speaker attend political party social events, attend political party meetings, conventions, et cetera, attend political party caucus meetings, donate personal funds to a political party? The responses were fairly evenly split until it got down to attend political party caucus meetings, and then a majority said the Speaker should not. Similarly with donating funds to a political party, more people said they should not than should.

Then there were questions about whether or not people felt more represented or less represented by different people occupying different offices in the Chamber. For example, a government backbencher, an opposition backbencher, an independent, a cabinet minister, and the Speaker, the largest percentage of his constituents said that they felt they would be given a more serious hearing by a cabinet minister.

The least category, at 35 percent, was an opposition backbencher, a rather odd category, given that we are

all private members in opposition. Then there were some questions about bell ringing, but I would be getting off topic to read those into the record, although they are equally interesting.

So, just to summarize, I have talked about the rationale for an elected Speaker, mainly that we need someone who is impartial, and we on this side have not felt that we had an impartial Speaker in this Legislature—I believe this is the Thirty-sixth Legislature. Looking at the bill, I cannot speak on clause by clause, although it is a very brief bill, but our private member's bill says that it would be by secret ballot, and then we would follow the rules of the House of Commons in the standing orders.

I think it would be beneficial for the government to pass legislation before the next election, because it might preclude certain problems that may arise. For example, if we followed our current procedure in the absence of legislation until a bill could be passed, even if it was passed on the second day, imagine if the Premier stands up and nominates someone and a member from the other side nominates a second person and then the Clerk is in charge.

What does the Clerk do? The Clerk could not rule on points of order. What if there was no agreed-upon procedure? Would it be by secret ballot? Would it be by people standing in their place and voting, and who would decide? I mean, we could have a very chaotic situation in this Legislature in the absence of a bill, and I think we should pass this bill as expeditiously as possible. We should pass it today. We should have a procedure in place before the next election. We should not have to wait for the next election. We should not have to wait for a change in government to an NDP government to have an elected Speaker. We could solve the problem of the confidence of the Speaker immediately.

In fact, I know of three people on the government side who have expressed an interest in being Speaker, and a couple of people on our side have been suggested as well. So, with those few comments, I am going to wind up to allow other people to speak on this important topic.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

* (1750)

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Well, the Whips might be off today. Members opposite may be able to for once vote with their constituents, vote for the people, vote for the future. I was just hopeful that we could have a little bit of democracy in this Chamber that is supposed to represent democracy.

You know, hope springs eternal on this side of House, those of us who believe that the winds of democracy should start blowing through this august Chamber. I wanted that to start today. We are very disappointed that we see the kind of stonewalling old-think of members opposite and their subservient caucus members to the whips and chains of oppression that are held by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and his coterie of few staff for members opposite.

I want members opposite to throw off the yokes, the chains—the yokes of oppression and the chains of antidemocracy—that are holding them back. You know, the member for Gimli could stand up today and say: I have got a change in conscience. I am going to take the chains off finally, and I am going to vote for elected Speaker in the Chamber here. Why not? What have you got to lose? What is he going to do, take away the House leader's job from you? What is more important—being the government House—not the House leader's job, the Whip's job—to you? What is more important, the Whip's job or democracy in this Chamber? Of course, obviously, we see by the silence across the way that after 10 years the perks of these offices are more important than the people of this province. I regret that. I regret that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now, on the substance of this bill, we are now right there with Brian Tobin, Newfoundland, to be racing to be in last place of who is going to be the last province in Canada to have an elected Speaker. Now I remember the days of Manitoba when we were first. We were first with an Ombudsman in this country. We were one of the first provinces to establish a Human Rights Commission. We were one of the first provinces to have processes to electoral boundary commissions that were brought in by D.L. Campbell. We have been ahead. We have had a tradition of being ahead. Where were we with the vote for women? One of the first

jurisdictions that looked to bring in a vote for women, right here in Manitoba.

Now what we have is a Conservative government. You know, their vision of the future is the Bennett buggies of the past. They do not have the future of their children and our grandchildren in mind. This group is unwilling and unable to pass legislation such as an elected Speaker. Why are they opposed to it? What have they got to fear? Why not have all members of this House mark their secret ballot on the basis of who amongst us has the credibility and respect and skills—dare I say it—skills to be in the Chair on all of our behalf, because the fundamental principle of the Speaker is that that individual is supposed to represent all 57 constituencies equally. That is why we have moved from a system of patronage Speakers that is handed out sometimes as a preference to a member of the government side, sometimes as a consolation prize for failure to get into cabinet, but it has been handed out by the Premier of the day.

We know that Nova Scotia just had an election for Speaker to take place in the province, and, you know, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Acting Speaker—and you may well be the elected Speaker. I am not trying to entice you with my speech, but you never know. Any one of the 57 of us could receive that nod, including me or excluding me, because one would have to decide whether to run or not, and I might not have the—

An Honourable Member: Premiers do not run.

Mr. Doer: Premiers do not run. Well, he already controls the Chair. Why would he want to run? He has got both jobs now, right? He has got both jobs. Why would somebody with both jobs want to just take one of them?

An Honourable Member: And you could be so impartial.

Mr. Doer: I could be. But in Nova Scotia they just had an election, and regrettably Nova Scotia went down in history as the seventh province to bring in an elected Speaker, and our opportunity just moved down one more slot in history with the kind of drifting, antidemocratic views of members opposite, and Nova Scotia just had an election for the Speaker.

Now, what happened in that election? The Premier of the province, Mr. MacLellan, put forward a candidate. I do not believe the New Democratic Party put forward a candidate. There are a lot of new members to that caucus, a huge number of new members to that caucus, I might point out, a massive number of new members to that caucus, and the Tory party in Nova Scotia put forward a—they did not put forward a candidate, a Conservative ran.

Do you know what happened? A Conservative MLA in Nova Scotia won the election. They are now the Speaker of the Nova Scotia Chamber. But more importantly than the job, they have the respect of all the members because they were tried in a democratic process and elected by their peers to be the individual that will protect the integrity of the office to move forward in Nova Scotia.

Now, some of these provinces in Atlantic Canada have actually been perceived and portrayed as provinces with more patronage traditions than provinces in western Canada, in a historical sense. So I find it strange that Manitoba is going to be the last province in western Canada to have an elected Speaker and only probably will come about, regrettably, when an NDP government is elected shortly, when the next election is called, and we will bring in an elected Speaker.

I do not know who is going to win the job. Hopefully some of you will still be remaining, maybe just a few of

you, after the next election, and you might well win that job because you have the respect, the integrity, and the skills to do the job. Would that not be a wonderful thing, a Speaker on the basis of merit, decided by peers, rather than the old ideas, the old-think of a Speaker nominated on the basis of patronage?

So I was hoping that we would just come to an agreement right here. We have the power now to do what we want by leave. We have the power now by leave to say we are going to do it. We are going to just do it.

We are going to pass this bill at second reading. Why not have the courage of your convictions over there? Why not the small but relevant group in this Chamber take a step into the future and have an elected Speaker by passing this bill?

Thank you very, very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: As previously agreed, this matter will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer).

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Shall we call it six o'clock?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Shall we call it six o'clock? [agreed] The hour being six o'clock, this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until tomorrow (Thursday) at 10 a.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, June 17, 1998

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