



Fifth Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-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	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	Springfield	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	N.D.P.
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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.
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NEWMAN, David, Hon.	Riel	P.C.
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PITURA, Frank, Hon.	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
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VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.
<i>Vacant</i>	St. Boniface	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, July 12, 1999

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee of Supply

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

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Standing Committee on Industrial Relations First Report

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations):
Madam Speaker, I beg to present the First Report of the Committee on Industrial Relations.

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Industrial Relations presents the following as its First Report.

Your committee met on Wednesday, July 7, 1999, at 7 p.m. in Room 254 of the Legislative Building to consider bills referred. At that meeting, your committee elected Mr. Dyck as its Chairperson and Mr. Helwer as its Vice-Chairperson.

Your committee heard representation on bills as follows:

Bill 26—The Physiotherapists Act; Loi sur les physiothérapeutes

Gloria Gallant - Private Citizen

Roland Lavalée - Private Citizen

Terry Woodard - Private Citizen

Dr. Anthony Wright - School of Medical Rehabilitation

Dr. Greg Stewart - Manitoba Chiropractors' Association

Dr. Ken Brown - College of Physicians and Surgeons

Susan Morrow - Private Citizen

Kelly Robert Milan - Private Citizen

Marc Arbez - Private Citizen

Murray MacHutchon - Private Citizen

Evelyn Lightly - Private Citizen

Brenda McKechnie - Association of Physiotherapists of Manitoba

Dennis Desautels - Private Citizen

Madeline Arbec - Private Citizen

Written Submissions:

Paula Moreira - Yellowhead Physiotherapy Clinic

Lynda Loucks - Private Citizen

Neil MacHutchon - Canadian Physiotherapists Association

Bill 36—The Registered Nurses Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les infirmières

Sue Neilson - Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses

Bill 37—The Licensed Practical Nurses Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les infirmières auxiliaires

Verna Holgate - Manitoba Association of Licensed Practical Nurses

Bill 38—The Registered Psychiatric Nurses Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les infirmières psychiatriques

Annette Osted - Registered Psychiatric Nurses Association of Manitoba

Bill 39—The Medical Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi médicale

*John Laplume - Manitoba Medical Association
Dr. Ken Brown - College of Physicians and Surgeons*

Your committee agreed to defer clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 39, The Medical Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi médicale, until a future meeting of the committee.

Your committee has considered:

Bill 36—The Registered Nurses Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les infirmières

Bill 38—The Registered Psychiatric Nurses Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les infirmières psychiatriques

and has agreed to report the same without amendment.

Your committee has also considered:

Bill 26—The Physiotherapists Act; Loi sur les physiothérapeutes

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

MOTION:

THAT clause 3(1)(a) be amended by adding "as a physiotherapist" after "practice of physiotherapy".

Your committee has also considered:

Bill 37—The Licensed Practical Nurses Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les infirmières auxiliaires

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

MOTION:

THAT clause 3(1)(a) be amended by adding "as a licensed practical nurse" after "practice of practical nursing".

MOTION:

THAT subsection 6(7) be amended by adding "and" after clause (b), by striking out clause (c) and by renumbering clause (d) as clause (c).

Mr. McAlpine: I move, seconded by the honourable member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table before the House the Annual Report of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation for the year ending March 31, 1998.

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to table the 13th Annual Report, 1998-1999, of the Manitoba Law Foundation.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

**Flooding
Prime Minister's Visit**

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, in past disasters the Prime Minister of Canada has visited the Red River Valley, the Saguenay region, and the ice storms in Quebec and Ontario. Over the weekend, or Thursday and Friday of last week, Alexa McDonough was able to travel through the areas of southeastern Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and her strong recommendation to the Prime Minister is to come out to western Canada to see first-hand the devastation with the floods and the number of farmers and businesses that could go under because of lack of leadership. It is important that all federal leaders visit this disaster region, particularly the Prime Minister, who has the responsibility and, I would argue, the duty to visit this region and treat western Canadians the same as other regions of this country.

Madam Speaker, has the Premier had any success at all with the Prime Minister visiting

here, Manitoba, and southeastern Saskatchewan to look first-hand at the devastation and the number of family farms at risk and businesses along with it?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): At this point, we have not had a positive response from the Prime Minister. I have not yet given up on that possibility happening. Both my office and Premier Romanow's office maintain ongoing contact with the Prime Minister's office to attempt to make that possibility happen, either a visit here by the Prime Minister or an opportunity for Premier Romanow and me to meet with him to be able to emphasize and describe to him the seriousness of the issue.

I will continue to press the Prime Minister, and I will report back as quickly as I can if we have any success in that. I emphasize that both Premier Romanow's office and my office continue to liaise with the Prime Minister's office to attempt to ensure that we get some recognition in some ability to impart to the Prime Minister the seriousness of the issue.

* (1335)

Disaster Assistance—Federal

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, it is over a month since the provincial government has written the federal government asking for the approval of federal disaster assistance programs under the federal program. Certainly every day before the minister wrote the federal government and every day after gives further weight to the need of disaster assistance from the federal government. It is, as I say, over a month since that letter was written and certainly over 10 weeks since the disaster developed. Has the federal government responded to the provincial government, and have they approved federal disaster assistance as recommended by this government weeks ago and, as allegedly stated by Mr. Vanclief, had not been requested by Manitoba? Has this been approved?

Hon. Frank Pitura (Minister of Government Services): The short answer to the letter that was forwarded to Minister Eggleton in charge of the Emergency Preparedness program with the

federal government is that we have not received an answer yet from Mr. Eggleton. We are in the process of communicating with him again to press the issue and in fact to expand upon the issue in terms of greater detail. As well, the response that came back from Mr. Duhamel was an appreciation for the situation here, and again we are prepared and in the process of pursuing that with Minister Duhamel in terms of asking for a JERI-like program for the western side of the province.

Neepawa Health Centre Nursing Shortage

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): With a new question, Madam Speaker, the provincial government has fired over a thousand nurses over the last four years, and of course they are now trying to state that they are going to rehire a number, which we would welcome. The Neepawa Health Services just today issued a press release, or just late last week, effective immediately: Due to the extreme nursing shortage and inability to recruit nurses, we will have to close beds in the east wing except for emergency surgeries, maternity and chemotherapy. A number of surgeries will be cancelled.

I would like to ask the minister: what is the impact on patient care of this strategy of firing nurses after the election and not having any nurses in the communities to deal with it?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): Well, again, Madam Speaker, the member is wrong with most of his preamble. He is certainly wrong with the numbers he puts on the record, and he knows full well in the early 1990s right across Canada, not only in Manitoba, there was a surplus of nurses. Some left the profession for various reasons; some left the country. But today we do have a national shortage. The good news is, in a relative sense, Manitoba is in better shape than most provinces. We have dedicated over \$32 million in this budget, the budget that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) and his colleagues supported, to put in place some 650 nursing positions. We have a \$7-million fund that we will be reporting on very shortly that to date has been quite successful in terms of doing just what

it is put in place to do, to bring more nurses back into the profession, to bring more nurses back to Manitoba, and so on.

We are working with the faculties of nursing at the University of Manitoba, licensed practical nursing at Assiniboine Community College, doubling the enrollment, a number of strategies in place to continue to bring more nurses into the system. I am assuming that is one of the reasons that the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues supported our 1999 budget, for that very reason, because we have dedicated significant resources in a whole range of areas to do just that, to bring more nurses back into the profession here in Manitoba.

Mr. Doer: We are delighted to defend the position that we took to vote against the budget that fired the nurses and vote for a budget that might hire a few of them back. Regrettably, there is no faith and credibility left with this government after firing nurses for four years to rehire them just weeks before the election. That is why we have a shortage of nurses, and that is why we have surgeries being cancelled.

* (1340)

I would like to ask the minister directly: how many gall bladder operations will be cancelled? How many tubal ligations will be cancelled? How many other surgeries will be cancelled, and what will the impact on waiting lists be in the Neepawa health centre based on this government's strategy of firing nurses after the election and then taking a baby step to try to hire them back just before the election?

Mr. Stefanson: Again, the member's inconsistency is readily apparent. Another reason he says he supports this budget is because it is a balanced budget, but yet he turned around and voted against four previous balanced budgets. So I say to him: get consistent with what he is doing in terms of the positions he is taking on all of these fronts. He says he supports balanced budgets; he voted against balanced budgets legislation. So, again, let him not talk about consistency on a number of issues, and we will see how he performs on some others over the course of the next few days.

I have indicated very clearly for the member a number of steps that we have taken. First of all, when you look at nurses on a per capita ratio, Manitoba fares amongst the best in Canada. Having said that, we do acknowledge we need more nurses in our province. That is why we have done a number of things. We were able to reach a collective agreement with nurses at the bargaining table, something that we are not seeing happen in other provinces like Saskatchewan, Quebec and elsewhere. We have put in place a \$7-million fund to address the issue of recruiting more nurses.

We have got money in the budget for nursing positions. We are working with the faculties of nursing in Assiniboine Community College to bring more nurses through our educational system. We are doing a number of things that will be very successful to do just what the member is asking about, to bring more nurses into our profession, into our health care to continue to provide care to Manitobans.

Radiation Treatment Patient Transfers—U.S.

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): My question is to the Minister of Health. Can the Minister of Health indicate to the Legislature, to the people of the province, whether or not any Manitoba patients are being transferred to the United States for radiation treatment?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): To the best of my knowledge, no, but I will certainly undertake to look into that issue. I think, as the member for Kildonan knows, the Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation is aggressively working on the issue of pursuing more radiation therapists. Once again, this is a national challenge. I believe we are up in the numbers of in excess of 200 needed on a national basis right across Canada. We put the money in place, about \$1.3 million, to the Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation to provide the radiation services that we all want to see provided to Manitobans, but right now it is an issue of staffing and recruitment. That organization is aggressively addressing that. They have put in place national ads. They have gone to a national conference to recruit individuals, and they continue to take all

the steps that they can to attract more individuals to that profession to continue to provide that service.

Specific to the question about patients going to the United States, as I have already indicated, I am not aware of any patients doing that in Manitoba. I believe that is the case in other provinces today. In fact, I know for sure that is happening in some other provinces, but I will get back to the member with further details.

Mr. Chomiak: Can the minister confirm that in fact there are plans to transfer patients to the United States to provide for radiation treatment because of shortages?

Mr. Stefanson: No, Madam Speaker, but I know that the department, along with the Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation, is looking at all options to provide the services needed to Manitobans, and I know that other provinces are doing exactly what the member has just asked about, that other provinces are doing that, they are having some patients go down to the United States. Right now, as I have already indicated, the Manitoba Cancer Treatment Foundation is looking very aggressively at recruiting the radiation therapists. That certainly would be the most appropriate thing to do; that would provide long-term stability and security to providing these services. The money is in place to do that.

I remind the member this is not an issue of money, this is an issue of staffing. It is a result of some changes put in place to the educational requirements, primarily in the province of Ontario, which significantly reduced the numbers of graduates coming through that program, which put pressure on Ontario and as a result has put pressure all across Canada. The money is in place; the organization is aggressively attempting to recruit radiation therapists.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, will the minister undertake to report back to this House tomorrow about the plans for the transfer of patients to receive radiation treatment outside of the province of Manitoba? I know the minister spent a lot of time justifying this decision. I notice he did not talk about the cancellation of

the 1995 project, the lack of oncology people that we warned him of several years ago. Will the minister undertake to report back to this House tomorrow about the plans with respect to the transfer of patients for radiation treatment?

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, it is not a matter of justifying; it is a matter of giving the member for Kildonan some facts on the current situation. In fact, our neighbouring province, the province of Saskatchewan, has just shut down a treatment unit, treatment, again, due to the lack of radiation therapists. So it is not something unique to Manitoba. It is happening in Saskatchewan, it is happening in Ontario, it is happening right across Canada.

* (1345)

What we have done in Manitoba is we put in place the resources to address the issue. We are working with the Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation to assist them with the recruitment. We are advertising nationally. They are going to conferences; they are doing everything that they can to bring more radiation therapists into the system to continue to provide that service. We have dedicated in this budget \$1.3 million to expand those services, to increase radiation therapy capacity.

So the money is in place. It is a matter of getting on with recruiting the individuals to provide that service. We are certainly committed to do that. I have indicated, in terms of the rest of the question, I would get back to the member, Madam Speaker.

Skills Training Graduation Levels

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Madam Speaker, a report released last week by StatsCan put Manitoba at the bottom of the pack in the numbers of apprentices, post-secondary enrollment, college enrollment and the numbers of college diploma recipients. The consequences of this low-wage, low-skills strategy are clear as reported by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, and even today, Greg Mason of Prairie Research on CJOB is quoted as saying this will impede Manitoba industry.

Will the minister admit to the House that this policy of neglect of our young people has created the current skills shortage and has driven out young people from Manitoba as they waited and waited and waited?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Education and Training): Unlike the policy referred to by the honourable member, which was the one practised by the government which preceded ours, Madam Speaker, we are living in a time of unprecedented levels of employment which the honourable member very conveniently neglected to mention in her question. We know when the honourable member talks about policy, this government is the one that commissioned the Roblin commission to give us advice about the development of our post-secondary sector. It is this government which, with the support of the New Democratic Party, in the budget laid down \$4 million for development of further course offerings and further seats to be made available in our community college sector. It was this government that did those things, this government that is working towards doubling apprentices in this province and with the accompanying education program to go with it.

So there are a lot of things happening to help us grasp the opportunities that, with the help of this government, the Manitoba economy is making available to future citizens.

Ms. Mihychuk: Madam Speaker, I will ask the minister again: does he not see the connection between Manitoba graduating the fewest college recipients in the country in the 1990s and the current skills crisis? Long-term investment means that we would not have this. It is the government's responsibility to invest, and you did not.

Mr. McCrae: Never before in the history of this province have we seen the numbers of employed people that we see right now, Madam Speaker. The honourable member chooses to ignore that. Now I do not say that that is the end of the matter. If I felt that way, we would not have \$4 million in the budget for this year, supported by the New Democrats, for the development of college education opportunities, 1,000 of them this year. When you factor that into the numbers referred to by Statistics Canada

and by the honourable member, you get a very different picture indeed. But a very consistent picture is in these statistics. If you look at provinces where there are higher levels of unemployment, you will see people in those provinces making the choice to attend post-secondary education. Here, where there are jobs, many, many people choose to go to work rather than post-secondary education. We need to make sure that we are able to grasp the opportunities that are available in our future, in our economy, by continuing to develop our college sector, which is exactly what we are doing, with the support of the New Democrats by virtue of their enthusiastic support for our budget.

Community Colleges Waiting Lists

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Perhaps the minister can answer: why does it take an election call for this government to open the Roblin report and to finally give some positive action to those 1,500 young people on the waiting list to get into community college? Why do we need an election to get some action?

* (1350)

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, you know, the approach of the honourable member and her colleagues is to create a phoney \$200-million Jobs Fund which, after about six weeks of counting flowers by the roadside, the poor recipient of Jobs Fund funding found him or herself without a job. The grant money was gone. There was no benefit, no education benefit, no future for people who bought into that particular approach. No, we see planning for the future with our college sector and our university sector to ensure that Manitobans are able to take advantage of the opportunities that are there for them now and will be in the future. So rather than the old approach of the NDP, and even the Leader of the Opposition had some misgivings about that one as I recall, but rather than taking that approach to buying short-term, make-work projects and jobs for people, jobs that do not last, we want to have an enduring, positive and happy future for all Manitobans.

Child and Family Services Order for Apprehension Review

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, just prior to Question Period, I was having a very interesting dialogue with the Japanese national who, if you will, is a mother of a five-year-old flying from Cyprus to Japan, and her husband stopped her and arranged for a stopover here in Winnipeg where the Department of Family Services had apprehended the child. This occurred last year, and it should be noted that the husband's sister is one of the Crown counsels in the Family Law division.

Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Family Services: will the minister conduct an internal review of this case and assure this Legislature that no improper actions were taken by CFS, particularly as to how and when and why the order for apprehension was given?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): I thank my honourable friend for that question. I do want to clarify, though, for my honourable friend, that it is not the Department of Family Services that apprehends children; it is the Winnipeg agency that is a mandated agency that is responsible for delivering protection services for children.

I certainly will look into the issue and the circumstances surrounding my honourable friend's question. If he would like to give me a bit more detail, then possibly I could look into it. Any issue regarding apprehension and the protection of children is a serious issue, and I would, with detail, be able to investigate further.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, will the Minister of Family Services make herself available to meet with the mother sometime today or, if not possibly today, sometime tomorrow?

* (1355)

Mrs. Mitchelson: All depending on committee work, because we know that one of my bills is before a committee presently for presentations, I will either undertake to meet personally or have

senior staff within my department meet with her and get the information and the details.

Mr. Lamoureux: My final supplementary is to the Minister of Justice: will the Justice minister ensure that justice is served in this case and, after an investigation by his office, assure this House that the Crown counsel did not place herself in a conflict of interest or tip the scales of justice in favour of her brother?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I would prefer to have some detailed information on the circumstances surrounding this case and investigate it and ensure that we have all the facts and all of the information to ensure that justice has been done. Madam Speaker, I look forward to, at the very earliest opportunity, and I would imagine that might be right after Question Period, having my senior staff get the details and look into the circumstances further.

Winnipegosis Hospital Renovations

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, the need for doctors in rural Manitoba is very serious in many communities. Winnipegosis is one of those communities; however, they are caught in a vicious circle. They are told that to get a doctor they must have renovations to their hospital. Then they are told that the renovations have to be done before a doctor can come. The renovations were to be done under the conversion fund and were to cost around \$378,000 and now have risen to over \$500,000. This puts a tremendous amount of pressure on the community because they now must pay 20 percent of the costs.

Will the minister indicate when the tender will be let go on the renovations to the Winnipegosis Hospital so people of the area can know whether or not they will have renovations done and whether or not they will be able to get a doctor to their community?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, again, as the member knows, there are a number of health capital projects underway, as is always the case. In fact, this year's Health capital budget is \$123 million, I believe. We have a number of projects

underway doing conversions to some of our hospital facilities throughout Manitoba, building some new hospitals, building 850 net new personal care home beds.

In terms of the status of the tender for the Winnipegosis Hospital, I will certainly look into that matter and get back to the member, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Wowchuk: Can the minister give the people of Winnipegosis the assurance that these renovations will go ahead at no cost to them, that they will not be responsible for 20 percent, given that the first tender was much lower and it is this government that is offloading costs onto local taxpayers and preventing them from getting the renovations that they need and preventing them from attracting doctors to rural Manitoba?

Mr. Stefanson: Again, Madam Speaker, the member for Swan River knows full well that the issue of a community contribution is nothing new in the province of Manitoba. It has been in place for many decades in the province. She also knows that community contributions are not unique to the province of Manitoba. I remind her that provinces like British Columbia have a 40 percent community contribution, Saskatchewan has a 35 percent community contribution, and here in Manitoba, if the money is put up front, right at the front end of a project, the facilities can actually reduce that contribution down to 10 percent. To date, the contribution policy has not been an impediment for any of our health care projects going forward that have required a community contribution. So I am sure that this project will go ahead. I have confidence that the project in Winnipegosis will go ahead, and in terms of the status of the tender, I will get back to the member.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Speaker, I ask the minister to check those facts very clearly because in fact these kinds of costs are putting this project in jeopardy. The people of the area are very concerned that, if the costs are over \$500,000, they will not be able to go ahead with the project. Why are you not more concerned about rural Manitoba to ensure we have facilities and we have doctors in rural Manitoba that are very much needed?

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, we are concerned about rural Manitoba, and that is why we are seeing health capital facilities being improved, being built right throughout Manitoba, whether you go down to the Morden-Winkler area, whether you go out to Neepawa, whether you go to Beausejour, whether you go to Gimli. You can go throughout the province of Manitoba. You go to Swan River, her own community, where we are committed not only to a temporary facility but a state-of-the-art modern hospital facility for that region. That is because we have made significant commitments to capital projects right throughout the province of Manitoba, and the community contribution policy has in no way been an impediment to projects going forward. She knows that.

* (1400)

Gordon Howard Seniors Centre Funding

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Madam Speaker, my questions are also directed towards the Minister of Health. The city of Selkirk and the rural municipalities of St. Andrews and St. Clements have a higher senior population than the provincial average. The Gordon Howard Seniors Centre in Selkirk provides a seniors support program for Selkirk and St. Andrews but has not received funding for their proposal to expand this valuable service for seniors into St. Clements.

My question to the minister: is the minister aware of this deficiency in service, and is he prepared to fund this much-needed support program? I will provide a copy of a letter from the president to the minister's predecessor requesting funding.

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I will certainly look at the details that the member is providing here this afternoon. I know, when it comes to personal care home beds in Selkirk and that surrounding area, that community and that region stack up very well compared to other parts of the province and the provincial average; in fact it is higher than the provincial average in terms of personal care home beds. So I certainly recognize that that community is well supported

in terms of health care services, whether it be their hospital, whether it be personal care homes, and we are looking at some other initiatives in that area.

In terms of the document that he has tabled here this afternoon dated June 29, 1998, I will look into the matter.

Kidney Dialysis Selkirk, Manitoba

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Madam Speaker, why was there no mention of dialysis machines promised for Selkirk, which the minister promised in the Estimates during the Department of Health, when the minister recently made an announcement regarding dialysis services here in Manitoba? Did he forget?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, what a silly question. If the member followed the announcement, he would have noticed that we allocated \$5 million for enhancements of dialysis services across the province of Manitoba. There is more than one site affected by that allocation of dollars, and I tell the member for Selkirk to wait patiently for some additional information that should be coming forward very shortly as it relates to the total allocation of dialysis services throughout the province of Manitoba and enhancements. I should remind the member that we have significantly enhanced dialysis services over the last couple of years. I believe it is close to \$20 million of enhancements. We are now seeing services expanded into communities like Ashern and elsewhere. I encourage the member just to be a little bit more patient, and I think he will receive some additional information shortly.

Mr. Dewar: Madam Speaker, why do we have to wait for an election in Selkirk to get these machines? My question is to the minister: how many machines, and when?

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, again the member does not listen. We have been expanding dialysis services over the last few years. We have significantly increased funding for dialysis services. We have expanded those services into a number of other communities in

Manitoba, and again, I am sure that is one reason that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) and his colleagues supported the 1999 budget because of the \$194 million for health care, which includes expansion of dialysis services in the province of Manitoba. The \$5 million set aside in our capital program affects more than one site, and I expect that we will be able to provide information on that very, very shortly.

Deer Lodge Centre Residents' Council Meeting Request—USSC

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, last Tuesday the Resident and Family Council of Deer Lodge hospital met, expecting, and on their agenda was noted the expectation, that a senior representative of USSC would be present to answer some of their many questions about the quality of food that their relatives and they, themselves, in the case of the patients on the committee, had to endure at Deer Lodge. The USSC representative did not show up again. The last time someone was there was last October, in spite of promising month by month by month to be there.

Can the Minister of Health tell us why USSC is unwilling or apparently unable to have people at the family council to answer questions at Deer Lodge hospital?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, again, I will certainly look into that issue. I am not aware that there is any reason that USSC would not appear or would not provide information. But I just repeat what I had to say on Thursday because, again, this same member came here Thursday implying that media was going to be banned from Deer Lodge hospital. That is not the case. He came here implying that Princess Anne was going to eat a meal at Deer Lodge hospital. That is not the case.

If there is one thing that is consistent with the member for Crescentwood, it is the pattern of inaccuracies day in, day out, issue after issue after issue. So, again, it is embarrassing for him I know. I know it is embarrassing for his Leader. I will certainly report back on this issue, and I will be awfully surprised if the information provided is anywhere near accurate again.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, can the minister not see that having Mr. Tim Duprey as the president and chairperson of USSC is a fundamental conflict of interest for the patients and families of Deer Lodge hospital who are seeking to improve the quality of meals there, yet Mr. Duprey, in his role, is seeking to cut the costs to meet a budget that is already far out of sight?

Is he not clearly in a conflict of interest?

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, can the member for Crescentwood not see that the board of USSC has the chief executive officers of all nine urban hospitals on that board? They are as interested as anybody in providing quality, nutritional food to the patients who are in those hospitals that they are responsible for managing. So, Mr. Duprey, along with the other eight CEOs, all are members of this organization.

As I say, they are extremely committed to providing nutritional, quality food in the most cost-effective way possible so that any additional resources that are freed up are put directly to patient care in our hospital facilities.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, can the minister not see that the fact that USSC has not attended, in spite of many requests, when Mr. Duprey is on their board, is clear evidence the USSC is not accountable to the patients and their families at Deer Lodge hospital, but in fact Mr. Duprey, in his role there, is in some manner preventing accountability, because they are not coming to answer questions? Does he not understand that?

Mr. Stefanson: Well, Madam Speaker, I just have to be repetitive for the member for Crescentwood, and I hope he listens this time. When you have the nine CEOs of the hospitals on the board of Urban Shared Services Corporation, they are also the customer. They are the ones receiving the food at the facilities that they manage, and they are as interested and committed as anybody to providing quality, nutritional food to the patients in their facilities.

They do patient surveys, something that the member for Crescentwood does not have an opportunity to do. They survey the patient, and they show that month in and month out the approval rating for the food continues to go up.

They also compare the surveys to the previous food system, and the surveys show a higher approval rating today for the revised food system.

So those CEOs, including Mr. Duprey and the eight other CEOs of all the hospitals like Health Sciences Centre, like St. Boniface, like Grace, are all committed to providing quality, nutritional food to the patients in the hospitals here in Winnipeg.

R.M. of Wallace Municipal Board Decision

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): A new question, Madam Speaker. Last week I tabled a letter from Reeve Penner of the R.M. of Wallace indicating his concerns about pressure that was brought to bear on the minister of municipal affairs by the then Deputy Premier, the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey). I wonder if the minister of municipal affairs has had time to review his memory and review Reeve Penner's letter and see whether he does not owe an apology to the House for denying that the pressure was brought on him by the then Deputy Premier?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): It just amazes me at the erroneous information this member continues to bring to the House on all matters, and this one included. The member does not even do his homework properly because in the letter it alleges that Mr. Plaisier is my brother-in-law. I have no relationship with Mr. Plaisier whatsoever. The whole letter is just as erroneous, and the member opposite does not do his homework to ensure that his information is accurate and complete.

Mr. Sale: Is the minister then saying that the reeve of the R.M. of Wallace is a liar and that the member for Arthur-Virden, who told eight people in a meeting that he brought the pressure to bear, is also lying? What is the minister of municipal affairs saying?

Mr. Derkach: The truth is that we set the order aside in order to allow for a mediator to try and work out an arrangement between the Town of Virden and the Municipality of Wallace. There

was not an infinite amount of time that could be allowed for this matter to go on. On several occasions the mediator did attempt to resolve the matter between the town and the municipality. In the end, even after extending the period for an additional month, the mediator did make another attempt, and it was not possible, and so, consequently, the order was imposed with regard to the issue of annexation. Ample time was given to resolve this. As a matter of fact, this issue went back far before the annexation order was given. So both jurisdictions had ample time to resolve the issue without it going through the annexation process and the Municipal Board.

* (1410)

Mr. Sale: I want to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon) if he would convene a meeting of the councillors of the R.M. of Wallace, the former Deputy Premier and the minister of municipal affairs and review what happened at the meeting of December 7 in the then Deputy Premier's office where he confirmed that he had brought pressure to bear on the minister of municipal affairs to cause him to go back to the Municipal Board order. Will the Premier convene that meeting?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I would put the member for Arthur-Virden's (Mr. Downey) credibility up against that of the member for Crescentwood any day of the week. Day after day after day the member for Crescentwood brings false information to this House. That letter that he tabled contains the blatant inaccuracy to suggest that the former deputy mayor of Virden is the brother-in-law of the member for Roblin-Russell (Mr. Derkach), something that any idiot could have checked out in two minutes, but that fool over there from Crescentwood would not take the opportunity.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, Beuchesne Citation 484 is very clear in terms of referring to members in debate. Madam Speaker, in my years in the

House I have seen comments put across the floor, heated comments, phrases that are used, but I have seldom seen the kind of personal attack just made by the Premier. Comments like "fool" and "idiot" have no place in this House, and I would like to ask you to bring the Premier to order and have him apologize to this House for those totally inappropriate comments.

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

Hon. Darren Praznik (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, there is no doubt that from time to time in this House debates become heated and things are said, but it is incumbent upon all members when they are bringing information to this House that they do their utmost to confirm its accuracy. It is fairly evident that the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale), time and time again, does not do that but brings information that has not been checked out to this House, and certainly it creates a great deal of frustration. One almost would think he does it deliberately just to enhance his weak arguments.

Madam Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Thompson, indeed Beuchesne 484, I believe, indicates that all members should be referred to as honourable members. I would agree that the honourable member for Thompson does have a point of order, and I would ask the honourable First Minister to withdraw those words.

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, I should have called him an honourable fool, but I will withdraw those comments. Unequivocally, I will withdraw those comments.

Madam Speaker: I thank the honourable First Minister.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Crescentwood, for one very short question.

Mr. Sale: That was the least unequivocal withdrawal I have ever heard, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, in regard to the Wallace and Virden issue, the town has sent a brief of about one and a half inches which has been reviewed thoroughly by our staff. The CFO of the chief administrative officer of the municipality comprised the letter which Reeve Penner read and signed. I would like the Premier to confirm that he is calling Reeve Penner a liar in this House.

Mr. Filmon: Absolutely not, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Speaker's Statement

Page Program

Madam Speaker: On behalf of all honourable members, I would like to take this opportunity to most sincerely thank the pages for serving the Legislative Assembly in a most effective and dedicated manner. Pages, by their attention to their duties, provide members with very valuable assistance.

I would also like to draw to the attention of all honourable members some of the very outstanding scholastic achievements of our pages.

Sanela Begic graduated with honours from Elmwood High School. She received a general proficiency scholarship, a University of Manitoba scholarship for leadership of \$2,000 a year for four years, the R.A. Storch Scholarship, Chown Centennial Scholarship, the Manitoba Teachers' Association Scholarship and the Governor General's medal. She was also class valedictorian. Sanela plans to attend university this fall and will enroll in medicine.

Nicole Hennan graduated from Westpark Collegiate and plans to attend university in the fall.

Karla Kvaternik has just completed Senior 3 at Nelson McIntyre Collegiate and received the Nelson McIntyre merit award for outstanding

academic achievement, a United Way award for outstanding community service, and an outstanding achievement award in athletics for tae kwon do. Karla plans to return to Nelson McIntyre Collegiate to complete Senior 4.

Leanne MacDonald graduated with honours from Carman Collegiate and received an award for top marks in biology, a scholarship from Portage Mutual Insurance for hard work and student participation and a thousand-dollar academic excellence entrance scholarship for the University of Alberta. Leanne plans to attend the University of Alberta, majoring in political science followed by a law degree, and Leanne has political aspirations.

Sarah Marchand graduated from Nelson McIntyre Collegiate and plans to attend university in the fall.

Megan Pauls graduated with honours from the Steinbach Regional Secondary School. Megan received a Laureate merit award for an average of over 80 percent in all courses. She received a scholarship for the University of Manitoba and will be attending the University of Manitoba to take arts followed by a potential career in law.

Renee Smith graduated with honours from Dakota Collegiate and received subject awards in geography, mathematics and applied physics and a Dakota alumni award scholarship. Renee plans to attend the University of Waterloo, majoring in actuarial sciences.

* (1420)

Celia Valel graduated with honours from Glenlawn Collegiate and received subject merit awards for topics in mathematics, English, French, mathematics and chemistry. She received the Euclid mathematics contest medal for the highest math mark in her school, the Jostens grad committee scholarship, the Harvey Pearce physics and literary award and the Governor General's medal. Celia also received the president's citation scholarship of \$32,000 for the University of Alberta. Celia plans to study engineering at the University of Alberta.

Congratulations to all our graduating pages and best wishes in your future educational pursuits.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Kinsmen Reh-Fit Centre

Hon. Mike Radcliffe (Minister of Labour): Our government has long realized the benefits of both physical activity and community involvement in the promotion and preservation of good health. That is why we were proud recently to announce \$650,000 in funding to the Kinsmen Reh-Fit Centre that will allow them to expand their facilities. This funding represents one-third of the necessary funding for Project Blue Sky. The remainder of the money will be raised through fundraising and sponsorship. The renovations to the Reh-Fit Centre will see an additional 20,000 square feet added to the facility, which will provide increased space for exercise and educational programs. As well, patrons will benefit from the addition of new exercise equipment.

The Reh-Fit Centre has been playing a role in community leadership for 20 years. The exercise and educational programs they offer to people suffering from chronic disease such as diabetes, osteoporosis and stroke are exemplary and have helped patients and their families recover and live with the effects of these diseases. They are especially well known for the programs they offer to those recovering from heart attacks and heart surgery. I am pleased to learn that this centre intends to expand the public education forum in seminars and workshops it offers to the public once the renovations are complete.

The Kinsmen Reh-Fit Centre should be commended for the role they play in promoting wellness, prevention and recovery. I wish to thank the Reh-Fit Centre for this excellent service they offer to the community and wish them continued success in the years to come.

St. Andrews Airport Crash

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Madam Speaker, the crash of a small aircraft in St. Andrews yesterday, Sunday, July 11, and the

loss of four lives with the tragic loss for the victims, their families, and for Canadian Mosaic '99, the 1,200 Girl Guides of Canada camping in St. Malo Provincial Park. Our hearts go out to everyone affected by this accident, and I know all members will join with me in passing on our condolences to the victims' families.

Madam Speaker, volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers from Selkirk and St. Andrews and local residents deserve our praise for their prompt response and dedication during this difficult event. The ground was soaked with airplane fuel, and initially there were concerns that an explosion was possible. Fortunately, that did not occur, but the grim wreckage made the task daunting for all the workers at the site.

It will be months before we know what caused the accident. However, it will be a very long time before the horror of this tragedy is forgotten by local residents and the many others who knew the families and the victims.

Pallister Farm

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): Madam Speaker, recently I had the pleasure of attending a century farm celebration in the Edwin district near Portage la Prairie, along with 200 other invited guests. The occasion was to mark the 100th anniversary of the Pallister farm.

John Pallister, an English immigrant, established the family farm. Today, there are 101 direct descendants of Mr. Pallister, and currently his great grandson, Jim Pallister, and his family now farm the land. Jim remarked: My father said he could never sell this farm because it was not his to sell. He said: I do not really own it; I am just taking care of it for the next generation, and I cannot sell it either.

I am pleased to see so many Manitoba farm families recognize the importance of preserving the agricultural heritage. It is very commendable to see families such as the Pallisters, through their dexterity, maintain their farms for upcoming generations, just as their ancestors left them in their care.

The century farm designation was created in 1981 by the then Minister of Agriculture, the

Honourable James Downey, to recognize something that Manitoba farm families hold in great esteem. The gate sign that is part of this designation is displayed at the end of their lane, and it means a great deal to the farm families. It is an indication of the strength and commitment that the people who reside in those yards have towards agriculture in the province.

Having established a farm business that has lasted a century is indeed a tremendous accomplishment, and I would like, from all members and on behalf of myself, to congratulate the Pallister family for achieving this goal. Thank you.

Art in the Age of van Gogh

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, I took advantage of last Friday's recess of this House to attend the Winnipeg Art Gallery's exhibition, Art in the Age of van Gogh. The show itself was a remarkable opportunity to view the cultural and artistic roots of several Dutch artists, including Piet Mondrian, Lawrence Alma-Tadema and of course, Vincent van Gogh. The paintings, almost all of them landscapes, reflected the 19th Century preoccupation with natural light and nature, as well as the passage from romanticism to modernism.

Judging from the crowds at the gallery, many other Winnipeggers and visitors to our city were eager to visit the exhibit before its closing yesterday. All galleries, including those showing the work of Robert Houle, those showing Inuit work, those showing historical sketches of the Upper and Lower Fort Garry, were well attended. The restaurant was fully booked, tours were packed, and business at the gallery shop was booming. I cannot remember ever seeing so many people at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, and as well, a considerable crowd was buying tickets for the Art Gallery's Art Walk, which includes visits to many of Winnipeg's excellent galleries.

I want to congratulate Patricia Bovey, the new director of the Winnipeg Art Gallery and her staff, both for their work in bringing Art in the Age of van Gogh to Winnipeg and for their work in reviving our gallery. I understand that

the Winnipeg Art Gallery and the Art Gallery of Ontario are the only two galleries in Canada to show this exhibit. We are indeed fortunate.

In closing, I want to point out that, although van Gogh might have been the initial attraction, those in attendance appreciated all the exhibits, and I am sure many will return to view the works of Canadian and Manitoban artists. Finally, I ask the House to commend the Winnipeg Art Gallery's commitment to community, clear in their public-spirited policy of waiving entrance fees on Wednesday so that all citizens, regardless of income, can tour our publicly funded gallery.

Economic Growth

Mr. Ben Sveinson (La Verendrye): Madam Speaker, Manitoba's economy continues to prosper. The latest figures released by Statistics Canada show that our province's unemployment rate has dropped to 5.3 percent and remains the lowest in the country. I know we are the envy of the country on this front. Recently the Toronto Dominion Bank Financial Group predicted Manitoba will lead the west in growth in 1999. The TD Bank Financial Group says Manitoba's economy will record growth of close to 3 percent as the province benefits from a strong expansion in its diversified manufacturing sector. The TD Bank Financial Group recognizes what many other independent financial organizations have said, that the Filmon government sound fiscal management policies have cultivated an environment that invites business to succeed.

All around the province we see evidence of the strong economy. Recently, Air Canada's Winnipeg maintenance hangar won a major contract to do repair and overhaul work for America West Airlines. The new contract could result in the hiring of an additional 150 skilled workers. In only a matter of weeks the new Maple Leaf plant will open in Brandon, creating hundreds of new jobs in a wide variety of spin-off benefits for the entire provincial economy.

* (1430)

Manitobans are also snapping up homes at a fast pace, whether they are in Winnipeg,

Steinbach, Brandon or other areas. Indeed, home sales in Winnipeg are up 17 percent over 1995. It all bodes well for our economic future. Every day more and more people realize that Manitoba is the best place in which to live, work and raise their family. We have a plan to make this province even stronger, and we all know that plan works. It works so well the NDP would like to claim it. The consecutive surplus budgets, no major tax increases and a plan to pay off the province's accumulated debt, all serve well and send a message to the world: Manitoba is open for business.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Committee Changes

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Gladstone (Mr. Rocan), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments for Monday (July 12) at 2:30 p.m., or whenever the committee gets to work, be amended as follows: the member for Morris (Mr. Pitura) for the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau).

I move, seconded by the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs for Monday, July 12, at 2:30 p.m., be amended as follows: the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) for the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger).

I move, seconded by the member for Gladstone (Mr. Rocan), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations for Monday evening at 7 p.m., July 12, be amended as follows: the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) for the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render) and the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) for the member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Stefanson).

Motions agreed to.

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs be amended as

follows: the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) for the member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford) for Monday, July 12, at 2:30 p.m.

I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations be amended as follows: the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) for the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) for Monday, July 12, at 7 p.m.

Motions agreed to.

House Business

Hon. Darren Praznik (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, with respect to today's business, first of all I would like to announce that the Committee on Municipal Affairs that is scheduled at 2:30 p.m. will meet at three this afternoon. I would like to put it back a half hour. The minister requires a little bit of time rather than to be scurrying about, so that committee will sit at 3 p.m. rather than 2:30 p.m. as scheduled.

Madam Speaker: Just the one committee?

Mr. Praznik: Just that one committee.

Madam Speaker: The Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs previously scheduled for 2:30 p.m. this afternoon will now sit at 3 p.m. this afternoon.

Mr. Praznik: I would like to also announce that the Committee on Law Amendments which is hearing Bill 40 will also be called for 7 p.m. tonight should additional time be required to hear presenters, and it will also be called for 10 a.m. tomorrow morning should all presenters be finished to deal with the clause by clause.

Madam Speaker: The Standing Committee on Law Amendments will meet this evening at 7 p.m., Monday, July 12, to continue to hear presenters on Bill 40, and the Standing Committee on Law Amendments will reconvene tomorrow morning, 10 a.m., to continue to consider Bill 40.

Mr. Praznik: I would also announce today the calling of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources to meet tomorrow at 10 a.m. for the consideration of a number of annual reports of the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission.

Madam Speaker: The Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources will meet Tuesday, July 13, 10 a.m., to consider a number of reports including the Liquor Control Commission.

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, first of all I would like to see if there is a willingness to waive private members' hour?

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House to waive private members' hour? [agreed]

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, I would ask if you could call report stage on Bills 14, 24 and 31, and then if you could call for third reading Bills 20, 21, 23, 28 and 30.

Following completion of that, I would ask for the necessary leave for a number of reports from this morning's committees. I believe they require leave of the House. We are waiting for the translations to be completed. If they are completed by that point, we will be calling them following that process and hopefully receiving leave to be able to move them into report stage. We would ask then you return the Chamber to the concurrence process.

Committee Changes

Mr. Helwer: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Fauschou), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments for Monday, July 12, at 7 p.m., be amended as follows: the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) for the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger).

I move, seconded by the member for Portage la Prairie, that the composition of the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations for Tuesday morning, 10 a.m., be amended as follows: the member for Gladstone (Mr. Rocan) for the

member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine); and the member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey) for the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed).

Motions agreed to.

REPORT STAGE

Bill 14—The Amusements Amendment Act

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Environment (Mrs. McIntosh), that Bill 14, The Amusements Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les divertissements, reported from the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

* (1440)

Bill 24—The Municipal Amendment Act

Hon. David Newman (Deputy Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Environment (Mrs. McIntosh) that Bill 24, The Municipal Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les municipalités, as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 31—The Association of Manitoba Municipalities Incorporation and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. David Newman (Deputy Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Environment (Mrs. McIntosh), that Bill 31, The Association of Manitoba Municipalities Incorporation and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi constituant l'Association des municipalités du Manitoba et modifications corrélatives, reported from the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

THIRD READINGS

Bill 20—The Chiropractors Amendment Act

Hon. David Newman (Deputy Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Stefanson), that Bill 20, The Chiropractors Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les chiropractistes, be now read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I did not really get the opportunity during second reading to put just a few words on the record with regard to Bill 20, but suffice to say that we acknowledge that, in essence, the bill is just to recognize examinations from out of jurisdiction, out of the province of Manitoba, that is, and for that reason and given the proceedings of committee, we have no problem in terms of the bill passing through third reading.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is third reading Bill 20, The Chiropractors Amendment Act. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 21—The Ophthalmic Dispensers Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. David Newman (Deputy Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Stefanson), that Bill 21, The Ophthalmic Dispensers Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les opticiens d'ordonnance et modifications corrélatives, be now read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, again, very briefly, much like Bill 20, it

is a question in terms of internal trade agreements and the primary reason why it is that we have the bill that we have before us. As I indicated with the previous bill, we do not have any problem in terms of its passage.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is third reading Bill 21, The Ophthalmic Dispensers Amendment 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.

Bill 23—The Order of Manitoba Act

Hon. David Newman (Deputy Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Deputy Premier (Mr. Stefanson), that Bill 23, The Order of Manitoba Act; Loi sur l'Ordre du Manitoba, be now read a third time and passed.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 28—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (2)

Hon. David Newman (Deputy Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Deputy Premier (Mr. Stefanson), that Bill 28, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (2); Loi no2 modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative, be now read a third time and passed.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 30—The Veterinary Medical Act

Hon. David Newman (Deputy Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable House leader (Mr. Praznik), that Bill 30, The Veterinary Medical Act; Loi sur la médecine vétérinaire, be now read a third time and passed.

Motion agreed to.

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable deputy House leader have leave now to proceed to third reading on the bills previously agreed to at report stage? [agreed]

Bill 14—The Amusements Amendment Act

Hon. David Newman (Deputy Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I move (by leave), seconded by the honourable House leader (Mr. Praznik), that Bill 14, The Amusements Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les divertissements, be now read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

* (1450)

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, I just want to put on the record the concerns expressed by our critic, and I would like to indicate that we feel that the course of action taken here is not as strong as it should have been. We believe in far more than a voluntary system.

I believe that those of us who are parents and have sort of hit the stage of being parents of kids who have access to video games are quite aware of what is really out there. I certainly take my responsibilities as a parent very seriously, but I would like to see a stronger system put in place. I think we would generally because what is at issue here is not the parental role; it is the ability of a 12-year-old to walk into an electronics store and basically buy pretty well anything. [interjection]

Yes, there is some Duke Nukem and there is grand theft auto. I do not know if people are aware of some of the stuff that is out there. I have certainly come across it. There are a lot of demos, if you actually buy computer magazines. I have had the opportunity to see some of the games that are on those demos, and the degree of violence and gore is quite frightening, quite frankly, Madam Speaker.

I just want to put on the record not just as MLA for Thompson but I think in terms of our entire caucus that we feel that this is half a step, and there needs to be one step taken further. I

point out, by the way, that we do not allow kids access to certain kinds of videos. We certainly restrict access to movie theatres. Quite frankly, the degree of violence in a lot of the video games is far greater than anything you will find on a movie screen or on a video.

I realize there are some difficulties. A lot of games are now available over the Internet. That is a bigger problem. The fact is, though, most games are commonly bought at electronics stores here in the city and in my own community, and we do not think it is too much to require that there be a system that not only labels video games—which, by the way, exists currently anyway. A lot of the games are labelled. An industry process has been set up.

But I think it is not too much to say that if we say you cannot attend certain movies or rent certain videos because they are violent, why not for video games? And I just want to finish on that because, when I look at the current situation in our society, I think to a large extent we are ignoring the impact of certain influences on our kids.

You know, I have talked to a lot of teachers, and there are a couple of influences that go into some of the very violent behaviour that they are seeing acted out in their schoolyards, and I hate to say it, but one of them is actually wrestling from TV. You talk to a lot of teachers. They will tell you that kids are acting out some moves that are done by professional wrestlers that are, with the exception of the—in fact one wrestler was just killed recently. These are people who are very trained at this, but you are getting kids now acting that out in the schoolyards. There was actually a case just recently of a seven-year-old that killed a four-year-old in acting out a wrestling move. It shows the degree to which kids can mimic behaviour, not realizing its danger.

It is the same thing, by the way, if you look at video games. You will see a lot of kids, and I do not want to mention specific games, but there are a number of games out there that you will see kids following, and just to put on the record, these are not just simulated violence. You are getting to the degree now with the degree of animation that you are seeing blood and gore,

you are seeing some very interactive behaviour, to use the term that is appropriate. I realize we are living in a world where you cannot stop kids from having access to all of these kinds of influences, but one of the reasons we have a violent society is because we have this kind of "entertainment" available.

One way of dealing with that is to have a tougher control on it so that 12-year-olds cannot walk into a video store and pick up one of these games. I had this exchange with the Premier. He said, well, parental responsibility. Well, even the most responsible parent cannot stop kids from walking into a store or borrowing games from other kids who have gone and done that. What we can do, though, is we can make sure if it is violent and it is restricted, we can stop kids in a very formative stage from doing that. That is why we raised concern about this bill. It is not that there are not positive elements in terms of what is being dealt with but we certainly would like to have seen far more.

I think you can predict that if we are in the position in the next period of time, of course, with the election, if we are in a position in government, if we are successful in that election, I think this is one of the first areas we are going to revisit because, quite frankly, anybody who knows what is going on, and I have teenagers, by the way, and I trust them. My son, who is a regular video game player, is very careful what he plays. He knows I will find out anyway. We have a good relationship back and forth. He is very responsible. You know, even he, just to be fair too, with a lot of kids, there are some games he will not play because they are just too violent. He can tell you, you want to find out which ones to restrict, ask a 14-year old. I know my son would tell you.

So with those few words, we do have concerns about the bill, not enough to vote against it, but we put on notice that this is not good enough. We need to go further. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is third reading, Bill 14, The Amusements Amendment Act. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 24—The Municipal Amendment Act

Hon. David Newman (Deputy Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I move (by leave), seconded by the honourable Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer), that Bill 24, The Municipal Amendment Act: Loi modifiant la Loi sur les municipalités, be now read a third time and passed.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 31—The Association of Manitoba Municipalities Incorporation and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. David Newman (Deputy Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I move (by leave), seconded by the honourable Minister of Urban Affairs and Housing (Mr. Reimer), that Bill 31, The Association of Manitoba Municipalities Incorporation and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi constituant l'Association des municipalités du Manitoba et modifications corrélatives, be now read a third time and passed.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, I might be of some assistance. I am wondering, if there is still work required on that, if the next step we are looking at was getting into concurrence. So if we could go into concurrence until a certain time, we could then perhaps reassemble the House and deal with those other bills at that point in time, if that would be acceptable to the government.

Hon. David Newman (Deputy Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Urban Affairs and Housing (Mr. Reimer), that Madam

Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Motion agreed to.

* (1500)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Concurrence Motion

Mr. Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): The committee will come to order. While the member for Inkster is waiting for the Minister of Education (Mr. McCrae) to get here, and I am sure he is on his way, he might have a question.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I have a number of questions that I was wanting to pose with the Minister of Urban Affairs, the Minister of Housing (Mr. Reimer), and in case the Minister of Education will want to know, it will probably be a little while. So whether it is 15 or 20 minutes, a lot depends in terms of the dialogue that is created between myself and the Minister of Housing. I think that is the area in which I would like to start on. The other day I posed a question during Question Period. Actually there was a series of questions that I raised in regard to housing value, the assessments and so forth. What I wanted to do was to talk a little bit about the whole issue of revitalization.

I know on a personal note I have had experiences in the past, prior to being elected back in '88, in dealing with some of the communities and the deterioration that was actually occurring. I know in many different older neighbourhoods, and that does not even just apply to the city of Winnipeg, areas in rural Manitoba and the city of Winnipeg where you see a certain amount of deterioration that has occurred. Having studied at least in part urban revitalization over at the University of Winnipeg, one gains a few ideas in the different types of things that government can do in terms of assisting our local communities.

Personally I have always believed that the best way is through empowerment of the local residents. That is something which I believe is

critically important in terms of the long-term success of revitalization. If government chooses, for whatever reasons, to withdraw out of participating in that area, quite often what you will see is that downward spiral in which you see more and more slum landlords moving into houses that start to get boarded up before you know it. You have what would appear to be a very serious ghetto. Some might even, including myself in part, draw that ghettoization and compare that ghettoization to other major cities in North America, in particular south of Canada in the United States, and it raises a great deal of concern.

I, like no doubt all members of this Chamber, take a great sense of pride in the province of Manitoba, and we want to see it prosper.

One of the biggest concerns that I have as a whole is our housing stock. The housing stock is one of the things that ensures a certain standard or a certain quality of living. Every day I drive from my riding into the Leg. It seems that you see more and more of that dilapidation of homes, and it is quite discouraging.

Over the years I have seen housing prices just literally bottom out, and maybe they still have not hit the bottom yet. You have these beautiful homes, two-and-a-half-storey homes, of great character that are selling for literally peanuts, if in fact you can sell them.

I was driving down Burrows and there was one, this is a while back, home that was \$10,000. For a city like Winnipeg and our size, I think if you mentioned that to any other citizen across Canada they would say, what, \$10,000 for a house in a major metropolitan area, that is just a phenomenal price. For me, what it does is it really highlights the seriousness of the issue. I know the Free Press has done some stories in regard to some of the fire problems. It was quite sad to see the one house that implied burn me down, as in burn the house down. I think that is the mentality that many people are starting to have, and that is, the only way in which we are going to see the type of revitalization that is necessary is if we start to see some very serious vandalism and homes being burnt down and people just in essence giving up.

You have many seniors in the north end that have invested their life savings into their homes, now today to only see a good number of those homes drop in terms of prices. It was something which I was hoping to be able to address in the Housing Estimates, but unfortunately time did not allow for any form of dialogue with myself and the Minister of Housing (Mr. Reimer) on this issue. So that is the reason why I chose to bring it up in concurrence.

I think the way in which you need to deal with it is community by community. My personal experience was in the community of Weston. When I had got out of the military, I had moved into the north end of Winnipeg and into the community of Weston and very quickly got involved with the Weston Residents Association. In every meeting there was a lot of dialogue from local residents, and I was really impressed with the number of people who chose to attend these meetings to express their concerns. Even though this is a number of years ago, we are talking 14 years ago, the issues that were being brought up were stop signs. Of course, it seems always to be somewhat of an issue, but next to the stop signs was the condition of the housing stock.

For a lot of the long-timers, the individuals who want to see their communities prosper or at least at the very least to prevent its deterioration, they are prepared to put in some time and make the sacrifices that are necessary in order to contribute to that community's development. Well, that is what we saw with the Weston residents group, with individuals like Ron Keller and Les, and so many, Olie—wonderful individuals who were sacrificing their time and coming up in terms of solutions, how we could prevent it. Fortunately, for me, in using their expertise and being taught at University of Winnipeg some urban revitalization programming, we came up with a number of what I believe were good ideas.

* (1510)

At the time, we used to have the in-fill housing program. The in-fill housing program, for those who are not familiar with it, was a program in which we saw whether it was a vacant lot or a dilapidated house, a house that

was completely boarded up and really making the neighbourhood around it look that much worse. It is kind of like a dominoes effect. It has a negative impact on the neighbour's home. So what would happen is government would go in and, through subsidy, acquire and put up an in-fill house.

I am not too sure in terms of the actual number that we put up in the city of Winnipeg, but what I do know is that the community of Weston was fairly aggressive with that particular program. It is a program that, ultimately, I believe would work well in a number of different communities. It provided those residents who were wanting to participate in revitalization, a program that was very worthy. They did not mind investing some of that time in finding these homes and working with the government to try to change them.

Well, the community of Weston, and particularly along Alexander Avenue, had significant changes in the appearance of homes. That was done through things like the in-fill housing program, also beautification programs that were driven by residents. Then we had a wonderful opportunity through the Weston revitalization program which opened the window for really real involvement from the residents in the sense that they were able to come up, in many cases, with their own program. So whether it is parks that were greatly enhanced for community kids or providing facilities for our seniors who were living in the community, it really provided the opportunity for the community to come to grips and try to improve the area in which they live.

Mr. Chairperson, I believe that Weston, at least in part, because of the action of some local residents, has been able to keep its head above water, if I can put it in such a fashion. Had it not been for those residents, ultimately, we would have seen a community that would have deteriorated even more so. That would have had a negative impact in so many different ways. So I think that there are a number of programs that government needs to express its will to develop and ensure that residents in the many different communities across the province have the opportunity to participate in.

So my first question for the Minister of Housing is: what core programs does the Minister of Housing see as those types of programs in which residents would be able to directly participate in in terms of maintaining the appearance and the social fabric in a positive way in the many different communities across the province?

Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Housing): Mr. Chairperson, the member brings up some very interesting commentary in regard to not only his involvement with housing but also, I guess, his involvement with the social aspects of constituency involvement and constituency work that I think we all get involved with in our willingness to try to help not only our constituents but the residents and the people of Manitoba.

The member alluded to his former times at the University of Winnipeg studying urban studies. I guess he may have been one of the students or possibly in the same class with also another prominent Liberal in this province, Mr. Lloyd Axworthy. I am not too sure, but I think Mr. Axworthy taught at that time, maybe, because the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) has still got youth on his side, so I imagine he has had the exposure of Mr. Axworthy.

Housing is naturally very much of a concern, and it has been coming to the concern of many of us just recently because of some of the articles in the paper and some of the incidents that are not very enviable or very noteworthy in regard to the fires and some the vandalism in regard to boarded-up housing. We are naturally concerned about that, not only as a government and as Minister of Housing but also as Minister of Urban Affairs in working with the city and trying to make Winnipeg the greatest city in Canada. We are striving to work with the city and the mayor and council and EPC, trying to work with their goals and their aspirations and working for the same outcome.

As Minister responsible for Housing, naturally my portfolio is involved with the administration and the upkeep and the maintenance and the improvement of our public housing throughout Winnipeg and throughout all

of Manitoba. At one time, there was a participation between all three levels of government but predominantly the senior level of government, the federal government in housing in Canada, they were very much a partner in the establishment and the expansion of public housing throughout all of Canada.

But I think as the member is aware, the federal government, in most recent years, has pulled themselves completely out of public housing. They had initially informed the province back I believe it was in 1993 or '94 that there would be no more funding programs available for new construction of public housing in Manitoba or for that matter in Canada.

It was then further expanded to I believe it was 1995, where the funding that the federal government was participating in was capped, and the province was notified that there would be no new funding. In fact, the funding would be capped, and with that cap, there was a diminishing number of dollars that would be flowing to the province because of the payout on certain mortgages and loans that were made during the expansion of public housing. So, in essence, the major partner of public housing has pulled out, and that left either the municipalities or the provincial government to fill in the vacuum, and this could not be accomplished because of the tremendous costs involved.

What we have done is we have embarked on a program of modernization, of improvement and of upkeep on our public housing so that they do remain in a very liveable condition, so that people can still have access to a quality of public housing that they would expect from government. So we have continued that commitment.

The expansion of new housing, like I say, is not coming about, but we do have the ability, I guess putting on my Urban Affairs hat, to work with the communities in revitalization programs. One of the most beneficial programs that we did have was the Manitoba-Winnipeg Community Revitalization Program. That was matching dollars, that we had worked with the City of Winnipeg in actually three components. There was a five-year program that goes back approximately 12 to 15 years ago. I believe that

was just over \$6 million provincially and \$6 million citywise. That was a program where there was emphasis put in various communities where there was a need for revitalization or improvement or community involvement, community participation, and it proved to be very successful.

It was renewed for a second program which was, I believe, again, over \$6 million. There, again, this was a joint initiative between the city and the province, and it proved to be quite beneficial because a lot of existing and older communities that were on the fringe, if you want to call it, of deterioration were revitalized. For example, I know that Fort Rouge received funding and revitalization within their communities and in some of their areas. I know the Elmwood area was involved with the MWCRP program; the St. Vital area was involved with the MWCRP program. So they have proven to be fairly beneficial in directing funding to improve and to enhance neighbourhoods within Winnipeg.

*(1520)

There is provision in our budget for another program, if you want to call it a third program under the MWCRP program, but to date we have not had a response from the city as to how they would like to proceed with this new program, this second program. This one here has \$7 million earmarked for it provincially and \$7 million from the City of Winnipeg. But here, again, plans were more or less presented to the previous mayor and council and EPC. It seemed to have gotten a favourable response and a favourable recognition by the former administration and the mayor. It was then put over, with the election last October, to the new mayor and the new council to make the final decision on it, but I guess there was a different direction that was proposed or intended, and the city has not responded or has come back saying that they want a different type of program.

So there is a program out there that is waiting to be used and utilized which we are willing to participate in, but there has not been a formal alternative brought forth by the City of Winnipeg as to how it could be utilized. That component had a fairly strong housing sector in

it in regard to revitalizing, revamping or renewing housing structures and renovations throughout this component, this program. So there is that availability of possibly looking at incentives for housing upgrades in that area.

There is a program that is available called the RRAP program, which is the Residential Renewal Assistance Program that has a total funding of \$1.8 million, I believe it is, \$1.8 million, \$1.9 million. The provincial contribution of that—I believe it is \$616,000 that we participate in that. That is a joint program with the federal government. But that RRAP program is a program that is utilized by all of Manitoba. It is utilized not only here in Winnipeg but throughout Manitoba, and, in fact, it is mostly picked up by the rural residents. In that component, I believe that the amount of money that is available is a maximum of—I do not have the exact numbers with me, but I believe there is funding available of around \$16,000 maximum with a \$12,000 forgivable portion of it. I believe that is in southern Manitoba, and in northern Manitoba I think the numbers are even higher.

So that program is available, but it is very, very severely oversubscribed. There are a lot of applications for that program. I understand that there is quite a waiting list for that program. That is a program that is available for residential rehabilitations. Like I say, I believe that the total for all of Manitoba, with the federal and the provincial contribution, is about \$1.8 million or \$1.9 million.

There have been other programs that have been made available for community initiatives, because I think that it is not necessarily just a housing issue in the sense of how to try to renovate housing or get housing in a better condition. I think that there is also a responsibility for various justice initiatives in regard to vandalism or gang activity or graffiti. There is an overlap with some of the social programs and some of the programs that can be utilized in the community. There is very much a need for community participation. I know the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) has mentioned that a few times. I agree with him a hundred percent, that if the community is not involved, if the community does not buy into the

programming or part of the solution taking ownership of the problems and the solutions, these things just will not work.

It is not just necessarily government funding and government money that makes the difference of all the successes. It has to be a community participation and community leadership that gets involved and can take on the responsibilities of making results. I think that is where government can fit in as a catalyst funder or a supportive funder of sorts. The community itself would become the leader and the instigator of the change.

There is always room for those types of initiatives. I think that Manitoba and Winnipeg do have the advantage that we do have a lot of very active and very participative types of community organizations and people that do want to see a change. I think particularly in the last while people here in Winnipeg have become very, very proud of their city, and they do want to see it change. They want to see a difference in some of the problems that are always sort of highlighted by the press and by the media as to what is wrong with the city of Winnipeg, but Winnipeg has a tremendous amount of assets that can be capitalized on. It is this community capacity that we have to build. I think that those are the places where we can make significant changes and contributions as a government to be involved with these changes.

There have been various forums, there have been various studies, there have been various discussion groups as to what the alternatives are and what can be done. I think that that is the healthy part of decision making. To just go holus-bolus into communities with money and the offering of so-called change because somebody has identified a problem sometimes is not the best way to attack these programs, because I think that there has to be community involvement and community initiative.

This is one of the reasons why we have initiated the Take Back the Streets program. I think that that is the alternative to making change on a random basis, but more on a selective basis where things can change, where neighbourhoods can identify their problems and be part of the solution. It is for that reason that a

lot of my colleagues and myself have been out into the communities talking to groups, meeting with groups, encouraging groups to come forth, identifying where they feel that there are problems.

I know that there is a conference coming up, I believe it is this Wednesday, initiated by the mayor, which I intend on going to. Hopefully, the House does not keep me here in the sense of time commitments, but it would be a very interesting discussion group to be at, because it is challenging the community to address some of the problems and to come up with some of the solutions.

So there are a lot of things happening that do not get the perspective and the notoriety because maybe they do not hit the front page or they do not make the television of the day, whereas the number of people who are out there working for change, wanting to be part of their community, I think is a very commendable number. It is those types of people that we have to reach out to. It is those types of associations and those types of groups where the positive changes and the community capacity can be built upon. That is where the opportunity lies for government and for agencies to be involved with not only the volunteer groups, but I believe there is the ability for private entrepreneurs and private businesses and the responsibility that the businesses have to put back into the community.

I think more and more businesses are recognizing that just as there is an economic dividend to be realized by doing business in a community, there is a social responsibility of putting back into the community. It is that type of synergy that we have to generate to get some sort of response back from the various players in making change in the community.

* (1530)

So I am not saying that everything is on the rosy side or anything like that, but I think that the opportunities for change and the opportunities for constructive directions are coming about because communities are recognizing that they have to be part of the solution, they have to be part of the change, and that the opportunities are there for them to do these things.

Like I say, I wear two hats in the sense of the Minister of Housing where there is a concern for having adequate and comfortable housing for people who are in need and then as the Minister of Urban Affairs, being very concerned about anything and everything that can be of benefit for the citizens of Winnipeg, and our commitment by this government to the city of Winnipeg goes unchallenged by any other provincial government in Canada for our continued support for the city of Winnipeg and for the citizens of Winnipeg. I think that those are some of the things that possibly deserve consideration when we talk about how we can make changes within our city and within our province.

Mr. Lamoureux: I think that where the minister and I agree is the need for community involvement. The minister has demonstrated that first-hand, I know, in terms of other projects which I have had opportunity to have some dealings with the minister on, in particular with respect to Gilbert Park.

But having said that, once we get past that, as I say, we do agree in terms of the involvement. You know, one of the things that I believe makes us noticeably different in terms of opposition parties is, in fact, the budget vote. I believe, very much so, that there are certain aspects of the budget that were presented in which we could have presented some better ideas. One could always be very nit-picky and so forth and virtually go through every department, and no doubt the minister might even ask, okay, if you are going to enhance resources here, where are you going to start cutting back in order to enhance those services, which would probably be a fair question to be placed.

Having said that, the RRAP program, the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program, is a program which I am quite familiar with. I would hazard a guess that if you go back to the late '80s, you will probably find the community of Weston definitely had—at least I would be surprised if it did not have not only its fair share in the province of Manitoba but in terms of Canada. That was because we aggressively, as a group of residents, saw the benefits of that particular program and made a decision to

promote it extensively from within the community.

I know, myself, I had the opportunity to be able to literally knock on doors and talk to people about the program, and I believe that we had greater participation, I would suspect, than any other community. It was because the local residents took the initiative to say, hey, here is a great program, and what are we going to do to promote it? They came up with a number of ideas. In part, I was even paid to do some of that work.

But having said that, you look at the line of expenditure, what the minister is hoping is to spend somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$1.8 million of which half would come from the province. If you take a look at the demand, and the minister makes reference to the demand, the demand far outweighs, as well, as I would have expected it to under a normal situation, let alone if you started to promote the program, the supply. There is very little doubt in my mind that this particular program, whether the feds cough up more dollars or they do not or maybe we approach the city and put more of an emphasis on this particular program than even some of the revitalization programs, the government has committed \$7 million, I believe, is what the minister has said to revitalization programs, even using some of that money in order to promote the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program. The primary reason for that is because, as the minister points out, it is not a program that is just focused necessarily in one area, that it can have an appeal to all communities in Manitoba.

The thing that you have to watch out for is the parameters that you set around the criteria for those who would be eligible to receive some form of assistance. What you need to do is you have to look at the overall housing stock in the province of Manitoba. In some areas of the province, a program of this nature might be wonderful to have, but the need is not as great. In certain areas of the province, and the area that I am most familiar with, north Winnipeg, I know the demand is exceptionally high.

Now if we at this Legislature started to promote this particular program, I really and

truly believe that you could virtually quadruple the amount of money that is being provided in this program, and you still might not be able to meet the need, the demand for it. Right away one might say, well, how much money are you prepared to throw in? What you need to do is you have to look at the consequence of the dollars that you are spending. If you look at the administrative costs, let us say, of the revitalization program compared to a RRAP, on the surface, I do not know where they are in reality, but one would hope that the administrative costs would be less at the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program, and that could be wrong on that point. The point is that we need to better focus on those communities that can assist in the promotion and getting some of that housing stock fixed up. I really believe that the problem is going to get a lot worse before it starts to get better unless the government makes the political decision to get deeply involved.

A couple of years ago, the government had a program—and it escapes me. It was in the budget announcement or possibly the throne, a couple of years ago, for housing renovations. That sort of a program in allocating money out for that kind of a program, again, there is merit for it, but what we really have to start looking at when we talk about our housing stock is the question of need. Where you neglect, where the need really is, you are going to see those communities continue to deteriorate. Last Canada Day weekend, I was out doing some driving around along McGregor and Salter between, let us say, Burrows and Selkirk, maybe a few blocks south of Selkirk. It gets quite depressing in terms of the poverty that you see and the housing conditions that you see. I would find it quite difficult to live in some of those blocks, because they even give a scary appearance.

Now if you are a seven-year-old or a six-year-old, I guess, if you grow up there you have a bit of a different focus, but I think that these are areas in which I believe there is a very strong need for programs of ensuring that the housing stock is maintained. That is why again you have to look at the residents, the community local residents, to empower them to start watching over the communities, promoting the different programs, getting people excited about the

programs. You know, tying in or providing no interest loans to low interest loans for some of these areas, through a modified RRAP program, could go a long way in ensuring that windows that are boarded up get windows put in, or glass put in as opposed to boards; could ensure that roofing, doorways and things of this nature—in fact, those sorts of renovations—do, in fact, take place. It is through those types of changes, the cosmetics, that will ultimately, I believe, assist those communities in terms of overall development.

That is why, when I look at the bottom line, the bottom line being the 600-and-whatever thousand dollars going into RRAP, I personally do not believe that that is, in fact, enough money, that the need is so great today that the Minister of Housing needs to re-evaluate that need and what it is that the government is prepared to provide. If we address it today, it could save a number of communities even outside of north Winnipeg, because north Winnipeg is not alone; there are many areas throughout the province, throughout the city that could benefit tremendously by this particular program.

* (1540)

So my question for the Minister of Housing is in regard to the monies that have been allocated for RRAP. Does the minister feel that the only way in which the province would put in more money is if he had more money being matched at the federal level, or would the minister be prepared to even sit down with the city? He talked about the revitalization program, the \$7-million offer. If they are not biting on the \$7-million offer, well, maybe we can shuffle some of that money over into RRAP and get the city to agree to contribute to that, so I guess it is an open-minded question.

At the very least, if it at all possible within this particular budget, it is to do some form of a reassessment later in the year on these two particular programs or how the government might be able to top up the RRAP contribution that it has put into place today.

Mr. Reimer: The program that the member is referring to, the RRAP program, is a very

popular program, and it has proven to be quite beneficial, as the member mentioned in addressing problems in various sectors of Manitoba, and, in particular, as he mentioned in the western area of Winnipeg. The program is a successful program, and I guess, as he says: why do we not build upon these successes?

I guess one of the things that can be made available through funding and through possibly the reallocation of funding is the fact that, with the devolution agreement that we just recently signed with the federal government where we now become the managers and the administrators of all public housing in Manitoba, whether it is federal or provincial, one of the key elements of taking on the total portfolio was the fact that the federal government has said that, if there is a savings realized by the one-desk administration and the management of this program, you can keep—when they say "you," they mean "the province"—can utilize any type of savings. It does not have to be turned back to the federal government, but it has to be reinvested back into public housing of sorts. Now, it was an open-ended situation where the funding can be reallocated back into public housing in a way that we feel is appropriate.

The RRAP program is, and has proven to be, quite successful in Manitoba. As mentioned, the actual participation rate is a 75-25 breakdown. The federal government has a 75 percent contribution; the province has a 25 percent contribution. Does it trigger more money by the feds if we add to our 25 percent? That is something we would have to talk to the federal government on a more serious basis, as to how we can lever the 75-cent dollars from the federal government. It is something we could possibly look at as we start to get into the evaluation of how housing can be better utilized and how the program can be—and the administration of it. But the administration of it is entirely by the federal government. They do the administration of it on the RRAP program, but it is something we can look at.

Our commitment, as I said before, is just over 600. In fact, it is \$616,000, so that is something that can be looked at in a very possibly serious manner as to how we can get

better utilization of it. It has been used an awful lot in the rural areas, as I mentioned. The rural housing component has addressed the monies through RRAP on that program. There has been a fair amount of utilization of it, but, in the same manner, there is a tremendous waiting list from what I understand as to the uptake.

From what I understand, some people have been on the list for two and three years waiting for an approval of their applications, so by that it gives a strong indication that there is a good pickup on the program. Maybe there is something that can be looked at in the future as to utilizing that program even more extensively.

Mr. Lamoureux: I am really pleased with the minister's remarks at the very tail end of his comments, where he said that maybe we could look at something else. I think that is a very important point.

If there are some sort of obligations, of matching or whatever, there might be in terms of agreements and so forth in place, and if it is a question of fulfilling those agreements to the t and the i, then there is nothing that prevents the government at the very least from going on its own or entering into another program of a similar nature.

At one time, and I do not know to the same extent, if we have the Emergency Repair Program today? [interjection] We do. Maybe it is a hybrid between that program and the RRAP program in which the province can, in essence, just start discussions right away between the province and the city.

I know Mayor Glen Murray has indicated that he wants to see something happen with residential housing. I would be surprised and quite disappointed if he was not prepared to participate in a program with the government providing some financial assistance that would see some form of a RRAP or a home Emergency Repair Program initiated. I would ask the Minister of Housing (Mr. Reimer) to keep on his agenda the need for the government being more proactive, and I say that because maybe the best way to put it would be to ask some questions.

I do not know if the minister will actually have the specific answers here, or he might even want to guesstimate. When we talk about the housing stock, you can put it in many different ways. I guess the simplest way of putting it is in terms of percentages and try to date our housing stock. So, for example, in the province of Manitoba, we might have—this is a pure guesstimate—750 homes, whether it is apartment blocks to single-family detached dwellings, urban and rural.

Does the ministry in any fashion look at the overall housing stock and try to get an assessment? Specifically we might say, again, I would not want to be quoted on these numbers, because I am sure the numbers are out. Let us say 20 percent of our housing stock is 60 years and older. Out of that, does the staff have the ability to say out of that percentage that is 60-plus years of age, such and such percentage has, we can anticipate, gone past the point of any form of rehabilitation where it is only a question of time before we are going to have to start tearing down those homes? Is that sort of statistical information actually conducted through the Department of Urban Affairs?

* (1550)

Mr. Reimer: The member brings up a very interesting scenario. I guess you have to be a bit of a history buff of Winnipeg and the development of western migration through western Canada. Winnipeg is a very, very old city in comparison to western Canada. One of the first areas settled with the Red River Valley, with the early settlers, the expansion of the fur trading business and the capital of Manitoba at the Red and the Assiniboine rivers. Winnipeg at one time was thought that it would even rival Chicago in its world trading, its hub of activity, its rail transportation, its grain handling capabilities. Winnipeg became a very, very concentrated area for development of the transportation, the cereal grain industry. I guess, everything started to change really with the completion of the Panama Canal where there was a different route to get to Asia.

So Winnipeg actually has an awful lot of old buildings or old stock, if you want to call it, of buildings that were built at the turn of the

century, some very old. We are blessed in Winnipeg with some very, very wonderful heritage buildings. Some buildings have a tremendous amount of character that is recognized now because, as we know, of the film industry. The film industry has captured Winnipeg and its essence of where they can make some very, very interesting movies and use the facilities here in Winnipeg, because of our heritage buildings and our old buildings, and the condition of them. A lot of the buildings, granted they are buildings that are boarded up and they may look derelict, but there is a tremendous amount of character in behind the façade and in the façade. A good example is the bank building on Main Street, the Imperial Bank of Commerce building that was just opened recently just for public inspection, not public inspection, just for public preview, if you want to call it. It had been closed for, I believe, almost 20 years. The character and the structure is something that rivals any building in North America.

So Winnipeg has an awful lot of old, not only heritage, buildings because of the stone and the tyndall that was laid and also residential homes. The residential homes, in comparison to other cities, there are statistics available. I have seen them at one time, and I was quite interested in them, because it showed that a lot of the homes that were built in the early '30s, '20s and '40s are still standing. There are a lot of homes that were built in those times. We identify certain areas that these old homes are in, like River Heights and the north end, the downtown area, the Wolseley area, the Broadway area. These are all areas that have character homes that go back, well, I should not say hundreds of years but almost a hundred years, some of them.

So the emphasis on old buildings here in Winnipeg is quite predominant, compared to, say, a new city, if you want to call it, like Calgary. Calgary is all new buildings, new homes. Your population is younger; your buildings are young; your industry is younger. Winnipeg has a core of older, more stable homes. Our population is older. Our seniors population is the second highest in Canada. In all likelihood, we will pass to become No. 1 in our portion of seniors compared to the other people in our population within the next few

years, because Winnipeg and Manitoba, people seem to have stayed in Manitoba. They settle in Manitoba and they are aging in Manitoba. So we have a different not only demographics of peoples, but we also have the demographics, if you want to call it, of construction.

There is a need for these types of renovation programs and upkeep and the maintenance of these programs because a lot of these buildings have come to a cycle in their life, if you want to call it, where sometimes major structural repairs have to be done or upgrades or roofing or plumbing and heating and things like that. Nowadays, whenever there is a building that has to be touched up or renovated, there are totally different types of codes that come into effect in the application of it.

We find that ourselves in our Manitoba Housing program. Even though a lot of the buildings that we now manage were built in the '70s and '80s under the former administration of the NDP, those buildings now are becoming—because of the condition of them and the codes that are applicable, whenever we go in to do some major renovations, we are faced with a different type of scenario, and naturally your costs are reflected in what has to be part of the decision making at that time. So these are some of the things that have to be brought into play when we look at other programs in doing the evaluation.

We are very concerned, naturally, about Winnipeg and the housing component of it. This is the reason why we entered into an agreement with the City of Winnipeg for a joint funding project for the study of a residential market analysis of the Winnipeg centre as to its liveability, its market ability, the condition of housing, the alternatives for housing, the availability of possibly conversions to loft units or condo units or housing units that are part of a parcel of retail outlets. I think that the City of Winnipeg has shown its willingness to look at possibly different types of variances in their housing codes and in their application of the codes so that they can try to accommodate this. I think the city is recognizing that sometimes the codes are too restrictive in trying to redevelop some of these buildings that are vacant or that can be utilized for housing, for various

components, whether it is a condo conversion or just a building for residential use. So there is that type of emphasis that is available.

Just recently, a couple of years ago, this government passed legislation giving the City of Winnipeg the ability to give tax credits to heritage buildings. That has proven to be very beneficial because what it has done, it has opened up the ability for some of these heritage buildings, instead of sitting vacant, they can be upgraded; they can be modernized. They can be improved with modern facilities such as heating and lighting and air conditioning and things of that nature to make these heritage buildings now liveable and accessible for use, not only as a residence but possibly as a commercial endeavour. That is one of the things that this government brought in to help the City of Winnipeg, and it is something that I think is recognized as an emphasis for these heritage buildings to get back into utilization.

I think what can revitalize the downtown area more than anything, and faster, is the fact of getting these buildings back into circulation and back into use. Once you have people living in the downtown area, you are going to have commerce; you are going to have activity; you are going to have growth; you are going to have participation. So those are some of the things with which I think we will be willing to work with the city and look at their proposals. I look forward to working with the city in trying to explore some of these wonderful alternatives.

* (1600)

Mr. Chairperson: The hour is four o'clock. Is it the will of the committee that this committee rise to deal with some House business and then we can come back at the will of the House? [agreed]

Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Committee Report

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Chairperson): Madam Speaker, the Committee of Supply has been considering a motion regarding

Concurrence in Supply, directs me to report progress and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable member for Gimli have leave to give his committee report? [agreed]

**Standing Committee on Industrial Relations
Second Report**

Mr. Edward Helwer (Chairperson of the Committee on Industrial Relations): Madam Speaker, I beg to present (by leave) the Second Report of the Committee on Industrial Relations.

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Industrial Relations presents the following as its Second Report.

Your committee met on Monday, July 12, 1999, at 10 a.m., in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider bills referred. At that meeting, your committee elected Mr. Helwer as its Chairperson and Mr. Downey as its Vice-Chairperson.

Your committee had met on Wednesday, July 7, 1999, to consider Bill 39, The Medical Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi médicale. At that meeting, your committee heard public presentations on the bill. The list of presenters to the bill is contained in the First Report of the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations.

Your committee heard representation on bills as follows:

Bill 41—The Professional Corporations (Various Acts Amendment) Act, 1999; Loi de 1999 sur les corporations professionnelles (modification de diverses dispositions législatives)

Dr. Phil Poon - Manitoba Dental Association

Bill 42—The Community Protection and Liquor Control Amendment Act; Loi sur la protection des collectivités et modifiant la Loi sur la réglementation des alcools

Harry Lehotsky - New Life Ministries

Bill 35—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant le Code de la route

Written Submission:

Ken Mandzuik - Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties

Your committee has considered:

Bill 35—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant le Code de la route

Bill 39—The Medical Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi médicale

Bill 41—The Professional Corporations (Various Acts Amendment) Act, 1999; Loi de 1999 sur les corporations professionnelles (modification de diverses dispositions législatives)

Bill 42—The Community Protection and Liquor Control Amendment Act; Loi sur la protection des collectivités et modifiant la Loi sur la réglementation des alcools

Bill 43—The Highway Traffic Amendment and Summary Convictions Amendment Act; Loi modifiant le Code de la route et la Loi sur les poursuites sommaires

and has agreed to report the same without amendment.

Your committee has also considered:

Bill 44—The Gaming Control Local Option (VLT) Act; Loi sur les options locales en matière de jeu (appareils de loterie vidéo)

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

MOTION:

THAT the definition "video lottery terminal" in section 1 of the Bill be struck out and the following be substituted:

"video lottery terminal" means a video lottery terminal as defined in The Gaming Control Act. ("appareil de loterie vidéo")

MOTION:

THAT subsection 5(3) of the Bill be amended in the English version by adding "of" after "respect" in the part preceding clause (a).

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

Motion agreed to.

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, with leave of the honourable members, I would move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Housing and of Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer),

THAT the French titles of the following:

(No. 36) – The Registered Nurses Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les infirmières

(No. 37) – The Licensed Practical Nurses Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les infirmières auxiliaires

(No. 38) – The Registered Psychiatric Nurses Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les infirmières psychiatriques

as they appeared in the Order Paper and subsequently when they received First Reading, Second Reading and were considered in Committee be altered to remove in each case the phrase "Loi modifiant la" and that the First Reading, Second Reading and Committee Stages be now deemed to have been passed under the correct French title.

Motion agreed to.

REPORT STAGE**Bill 26—The Physiotherapists Act**

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, with leave, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer), that Bill 26, The Physiotherapists Act (Loi sur les physiothérapeutes), as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations, be concurred in.

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable acting government House leader have leave? [agreed]

Motion agreed to.

Bill 36—The Registered Nurses Act

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, with the leave of the House, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer), that Bill 36, The Registered Nurses Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les infirmières), as reported from the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations, be concurred in.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill 37—The Licensed Practical Nurses Act

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, with the leave of the House, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer), that Bill 37, The Licensed Practical Nurses Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les infirmières auxiliaires), as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations, be concurred in.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill 38—The Registered Psychiatric Nurses Act

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, with the leave of the House, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer), that Bill 38, The Registered Psychiatric Nurses Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les infirmières psychiatriques), reported from the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations be concurred in.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill 35—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (2)

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, with the leave of the House, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer), that Bill 35, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (2) (Loi no 2 modifiant le Code de la route), reported from the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations be concurred in.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill 39—The Medical Amendment Act

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, with the leave of the House, I move, seconded by the Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer), that Bill 39, The Medical Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi médicale), reported from the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations be concurred in.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill 41—The Professional Corporations (Various Acts Amendment) Act, 1999

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, with the leave of the House, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer), that Bill 41, The Professional Corporations (Various Acts Amendment) Act, 1999 (Loi de 1999 sur les corporations professionnelles (modification de diverses dispositions législatives), reported from the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations be concurred in.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill 42—The Community Protection and Liquor Control Amendment Act

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, with the leave of the House, I move, seconded by the Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer), that Bill 42, The Community Protection and Liquor Control Amendment Act (Loi sur la protection des collectivités et modifiant la Loi sur la réglementation des alcools), reported from the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

* (1610)

Bill 43—The Highway Traffic Amendment and Summary Convictions Amendment Act

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, with the leave of the House, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer), that Bill 43, The Highway Traffic Amendment and Summary Convictions Amendment Act (Loi modifiant le Code de la route et la Loi sur les poursuites sommaires), reported from the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

**Bill 44—The Gaming Control
Local Option (VLT) Act**

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, with the leave of the House, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer), that Bill 44, The Gaming Control Local Option (VLT) Act (Loi sur les options locales en matière de jeu (appareils de loterie vidéo)), as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

THIRD READINGS

**Bill 35—The Highway Traffic
Amendment Act (2)**

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, with the leave of the House, and seconded by the honourable Minister of Urban Affairs and Housing (Mr. Reimer), I move, that Bill 35, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (2) (Loi no 2 modifiant le Code de la route), be now read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, can I have a quorum count please.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): Madam Speaker, just to advise the honourable member for Inkster, we have two committees running concurrently with the House at this time. If he were to call a quorum, we would have to bring both committees back in the House for that quorum to actually take place, so I would ask the member to reconsider his question.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for St. Norbert is exactly correct. To the best of my knowledge, and I can get confirmation from the table officers, there are two committees sitting concurrently with the Chamber. The honourable member for Inkster is withdrawing his request? [interjection] I thank the honourable member for Inkster.

Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is third reading of Bill 35. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 39—The Medical Amendment Act

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, seconded by the honourable Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer), and with the leave of the House, I move that Bill 39, The Medical Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi médicale), be now read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I will be somewhat brief. I just wanted to comment coming out of committee, as I did in second reading, that I was going to be listening as to what was happening in the committee stage on this particular bill.

If one was to express some disappointment, the disappointment would have been in terms of the manner in which Bill 39 came before us. It is a bill of some significant impact in terms of the future health care professions. For a number of years, whether it is the current Minister of Health (Mr. Stefanson) or the past Minister of Health, where we talked about the potential role for a nurse practitioner, things of that nature, I think a number of people from within the public would like to see some form of an expanded role, myself included. I think that there is great potential in terms of getting our nurses even more recognized and involved in certain components of the delivery of health care. The concern, of course, comes in terms of, from what I understand, the element of surprise, that many from within the health care field were not aware of some of the changes that were being proposed in this particular amendment. In regard to the corporations aspect or the tax benefits, hopefully what we will see is at least in part, assist doctors

who choose to practise medicine, and in particular in rural Manitoba.

With those few words, we are prepared to see the bill pass. Thank you.

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

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed. Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 41—The Professional Corporations (Various Acts Amendment) Act, 1999

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, with leave, I move, seconded by the Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer), that Bill 41, The Professional Corporations (Various Acts Amendment) Act, 1999 (Loi de 1999 sur les corporations professionnelles (modification de diverses dispositions législatives), be now read a third time and passed.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill 42—The Community Protection and Liquor Control Amendment Act

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, with leave, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer), that Bill 42, The Community Protection and Liquor Control Amendment Act (Loi sur la protection des collectivités et modifiant la Loi sur la réglementation des alcools), be now read a third time and passed.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill 43—The Highway Traffic Amendment and Summary Convictions Amendment Act

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, with leave, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer), that Bill 43, The Highway Traffic Amendment and Summary Convictions Amendment Act (Loi modifiant le Code de la route et la Loi sur les poursuites sommaires), be now read a third time and passed.

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

Motion presented.

Madam Speaker: Just one moment, please. The honourable member for Inkster first, and I will re-put the question.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I just wanted to put on the record that we did get the opportunity to listen in on committee stage with respect to Bill 43 and do not have any problem in terms of its passage.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is third reading, Bill 43. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 44—The Gaming Control Local Option (VLT) Act

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, with leave, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer), that Bill 44, The Gaming Control Local Option (VLT) Act (Loi sur les options locales en matière de jeu (appareils de loterie vidéo), be now read a third time and passed.

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

Motion agreed to.

* (1620)

Bill 26—The Physiotherapists Act

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I move, with leave, seconded by the honourable Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer), that Bill 26, The Physiotherapists Act (Loi sur les physiothérapeutes), be now read a third time and passed.

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

Motion presented.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I did want to put a few words on the record with respect to Bill 26. The committee stage I found to be most interesting where we had a number of physios and others that came to pay special attention to this particular bill. I think it is this or possibly the welfare reform bill that has probably had the most presentations on the legislation that we have before us. Bill 26 is a very positive bill, a bill that is long overdue. I think that it addresses many of the issues that our physios were wanting to see addressed.

A lot of it, like when I make reference to malpractice and public accountability, is in essence virtually in place today, in particular in the private sector area, but the scopes of responsibilities in the sense of professionalism that I saw first-hand in terms of the numbers of presentations and the content of those presentations pleased me greatly and I found most interesting in terms of some of the discussions regarding spinal manipulations. There is no doubt in my mind that our physiotherapists will do a fine job in terms of representing the public's best interests in this area of health care service. With those few words, Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to see this bill pass to third reading.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is third reading Bill 26, The Physiotherapists Act. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 36—The Registered Nurses Act

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), that Bill 36, The Registered Nurses Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les infirmières), be now read a third time and passed.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill 37—The Licensed Practical Nurses Act

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, with the leave of the House, I move, seconded by the Minister of Urban Affairs and Housing (Mr. Reimer), that Bill 37, The Licensed Practical Nurses Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les infirmières), be now read a third time and passed.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill 38—The Registered Psychiatric Nurses Act

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, with the leave of the House, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), that Bill 38, The Registered Psychiatric Nurses Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les infirmières psychiatriques), be now read a third time and passed.

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

Motion presented.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, this, like other bills, is a bill that is quite necessary and which I believe there is all-round support for. We understand the need for changes because of the nursing practice environment, and it ensures the issue of more public accountability to the change in name to a college. As I say, it better defines scope and so forth, and with pleasure, we would like to see it pass through third reading. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is third reading Bill 38, The Registered Psychiatric Nurses Act. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

* * *

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, with the leave of the House, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), that Madam Speaker do now leave the Chair and—

Committee Changes

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

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources for the Tuesday, July 13, 10 a.m., sitting be amended as follows: the member for Gladstone (Mr. Rocan) for the member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck); the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) for the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurchou); the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey) for the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine); the member

for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey) for the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner); and the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer) for the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau).

Motion agreed to.

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, if everybody is now finished everything they wanted to do and with the leave of the House, I would move, seconded by the Attorney General of Manitoba (Mr. Toews), that Madam Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty the Queen.

Motion agreed to.

* (1630)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Concurrence Motion

Mr. Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): The committee will come to order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Chairperson, a number of years ago, the province came up with this wonderful idea of gambling in their attempt to really cash in on rural Manitoba. [interjection] I will tell you what, I will still make the point. The minister can choose to respond to it, if he feels comfortable in doing that. That is that we had the VLTs brought into rural Manitoba. I think that it far outreached the imaginations of this government in terms of the amount of cash that these VLTs were going to generate.

The initial argument of course was that with the VLT revenues, we are going to reinvest that money into rural economic development. My question to the minister is: can he give us some sort of an idea of the actual percentage of the VLT revenues that the province collects in rural Manitoba? How much of that in percentage terms, even if he wants to guesstimate, goes toward rural economic development?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): I am pleased to respond to that question. I think, if we go back to the time when

VLTs were introduced in the province of Manitoba, we will all agree that it was a time when our rural communities were facing some pretty desperate times. Specifically with regard to hotels that were in small rural communities, there was a problem. We were going to start losing a lot of our rural hotels. So the concept of VLTs was introduced into the province of Manitoba initially to assist small rural hotels so that they could survive in these small communities, and, secondly, that we would use the revenues that were generated to the province to assist in economic development in the province of Manitoba.

We approached the sharing of these revenues in two ways. One way was to share revenues directly with municipalities through a 10 percent grant or 10 percent share of the revenues that came from VLTs to the councils, to all the R.M. and municipal councils throughout the province. In addition to that, we also shared the revenues with the native communities as well, so that there was a distribution of these benefits throughout the province.

The other way of distributing funds into rural communities is through projects that are going to have long-lasting benefits to the communities. There are some criteria, and these criteria were developed under a program called REDI which really stands for Rural Economic Development Initiative. Twenty-five percent of revenues that are generated from VLTs are shared with Manitobans through that initiative. Under that initiative, I might inform the member, there have been some very, very positive things that have happened in rural Manitoba. I guess it does not matter where the revenue comes from, but because the Rural Economic Development Initiative program and the Grow Bonds Program were developed, we have something in excess of \$100 million that has been invested in rural Manitoba as a result of REDI. Over \$28 million of that has been leveraged as a result of the Grow Bonds Program. Something in excess of 1,500 jobs have been generated. I am speaking just from the top of my head with regard to the numbers that have been generated through the REDI program, and over 700 jobs have been generated in the Grow Bonds Program.

So if we look back, the two initiatives have really been positive initiatives. Now the member will, I know he will, remind me that there are problems with the issue of gaming and VLTs in communities. I would acknowledge it is the same kind of vices we have, and there are others that we have in our society. But when I go around the province and talk to communities about VLTs and about the negatives and positives of VLTs, most communities will tell me that it is a form of entertainment for citizens in their communities. We have to learn how to live with them. We have to be cautious about the impacts on those who have addictions, and we have to have programs in place to help those who fall into that category of addiction.

As I go around and talk to some of the vendors, I think that people are becoming much more aware today, that there are, in fact, problems, that there are problem gamblers that they have to be aware of, and it is their responsibility as well to make sure that they help these people as much as they can, whether through referring them to places and professionals who can help them or at least being cognizant of how much time they are spending at the machines and that sort of thing.

* (1640)

So, by and large, I think the program has worked in rural Manitoba from the financial side, and it does provide Manitobans who are outside the city with some opportunity for that form of recreation. I think it would be very unfair of any government to treat rural Manitobans as second- or third-class citizens by not allowing any form of gaming in that regard to exist in communities. I also agree that it is important for communities to set their own destiny. If they decide that for their community it is not fair to have VLTs or it is not their community's values to have those types of gaming machines in their municipality, they have the right to make that decision, and certainly we as a province need to respect that kind of a decision when that is made by the population of a community.

Mr. Lamoureux: There might be an opportunity, I am not sure if we will be able to continue the dialogue. Prior to our being

interrupted to having to go back into the House, I was having a series of questions with the Minister of Housing (Mr. Reimer), and what I would like to be able to do is to resume that line of questioning. I appreciate the response from the Minister of Rural Development, a most interesting response which could generate a number of discussions and questions in itself. We will have to wait and see if time will permit for it.

Having said that, I did want to, as I say, move back to the Minister of Housing. The minister had indicated that he was familiar with one particular report which he was somewhat fascinated by in the sense that it gave some idea of the percentage of housing stock and so forth in terms of its age. I would definitely suggest that it would be beneficial for this Chamber in the next Housing Estimates process to have some of those stats made available at the beginning of the Estimates process. I think it would go a long way in terms of some very good debate inside the Chamber. I say that because, as I indicated, the concern that I have, or our party has, with the overall condition of the housing stock—and so much of it is in dire need of some form of government promotion.

It does not necessarily have to be direct dollars going into each and every house that needs to be fixed up. Quite often, what you will find—and again I will go back to the RRAP program because we were just concluding our remarks on it before our interruption—is that, if you provide incentive in certain areas, what will happen is neighbours start to say, well, look, you know, John is fixing up his house, and there is a little bit more pressure on him or her to fix up their house. It kind of has a snowball effect which, I think, is very beneficial for the community.

Having said that, I wanted to move off the RRAP. That was one of three programs that the minister had initially made reference to. The second one that I wanted to touch upon was the revitalization program. I, in the past, was a member of a revitalization program, and, as I indicated in my starting comments, witnessed firsthand in terms of the benefits of a program of this nature. As the MLA for Inkster, I have been able to follow a revitalization program in the

Shaughnessy Park area, and again you will see a number of improvements that occurred that would not have occurred had that program not been available.

I think that there needs to be discussion as to how these revitalization programs can achieve their biggest bang for the buck, quite frankly. I have always had some concern in terms of administration costs and how that money is ultimately allocated out. I have always believed that there needs to be that extra push through revitalization programs on housing. I have seen parks and community clubs built with these monies, which is nice to see, but I think that there is a cost if you sink so much money into two or three projects in the community. I recognize the benefits of it, but I do not want to see future programs of revitalization that do not have a stronger housing rehabilitation program, because traditionally what we see is these revitalization programs go into older neighbourhoods. These older neighbourhoods you will find, I would think and speculate, homes that would definitely benefit by some sort of special attention through revitalization programs.

So I would start off by asking the Minister of Housing specifically on the revitalization program. If the City of Winnipeg did come up with the \$7 million, does the government already have determined where or which communities would benefit by the joint \$14 million?

Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Urban Affairs): The member had alluded, in his conversations, about the Manitoba Home Renovation Program which was initiated by this government back in 1995; I believe it was 1995-96. That program was grants of \$1,000 to people that did \$5,000 of eligible repairs in owner-occupied homes. I believe the criteria was homes that were assessed at under, I believe it was, \$80,000 or \$85,000. [interjection] \$100,000. It proved to be very beneficial. In fact, when we got the final wrap-up report in May of 1996, there was a total of 10,200 applications for grants received. Grants were provided to 9,607 applicants for a total expenditure for the whole program under the Manitoba Home Renovation Program of \$9,575,633. Of this total, it was estimated that

the amount of money that was spent, the approximately \$9.6 million in grants, leveraged approximately \$74 million in renovation work. That equated out to 1,260 person years of employment throughout the province when this program was initiated.

So the return is fairly significant if you look at an investment, if you want to call it, of \$9.6 million and you leverage over \$74 million in renovation programs. It has a significant rippling effect through the economy. Those types of dollars in renovation work would account for the builders, the suppliers, the material that is used and the upgrades that people look into doing their program. So the program was very, very successful in its application. I remember—I do not have the numbers in front of me—the breakdown as to the percentage-wise of rural and urban participants, and it was fairly well proportioned to the population breakdown between Winnipeg and the rural markets. So the money was well utilized by all areas of Manitoba. A program that would be specifically for Winnipeg, as the member is alluding to, is something that we have not looked at in its entirety.

We are looking at various ways to try to help the City of Winnipeg and respond to some of their requests. I know the mayor has indicated that he is quite interested in coming up with some sort of housing approach to the inner city area. I think that where he has to also get over the hurdle of is that he has to get the approval of his council and his EPC as to where funding can be allocated or where the money is available to look at a housing type of component. I think that what we are looking at right now is sort of a conceptual approach to how and where monies can flow. I do not believe that there has been a formal discussion with EPC and with the city councillors as to where the funding is going to come from or whether this is part of a reallocation of what I referred to earlier today, the MWCRP funding, because the MWCRP funding had various different types of community component spending involved with it, so it was not particularly all housing. In fact, in the two other original programs, there was very little, I believe, if any, housing. There was no housing component involved with the other two

MWCRP programs other than infrastructure for streets, for landscaping, for parks and for community endeavours and things like that. The actual renovation of homes was not part of the other two MWCRP programs.

So, if there is a direction that the city is wanting to redirect that funding from the MWCRP towards a housing component or a housing renovation program, I think that I would have to wait for direction from City Hall in the sense of a proposal from council or a strong indication that council is wanting to redirect the funding totality towards the housing component. It is going to be interesting, as I mentioned. There is a housing forum this Wednesday at the Freight House, I believe it is, and I believe that the mayor is making representation at that meeting to talk of various scenarios or directions that he feels that should be explored. I intend on going there. If I am not there, I will certainly have staff there to be aware of the proposal or the discussions that are transpiring so that we can be part of trying to come to some sort of solution or be part of the process of trying to look at different components of housing.

As was mentioned earlier, the Manitoba Home Renovation Program was very successful. It was instituted back in 1995-96. It generated an awful lot of repairs. It had a ripple effect of, as I say, from \$9.6 million to a leverage of over \$74 million and 1,260 person years of employment. Those are things that affect everybody in the community when you have that type of participation. Whether we look at a program similar to that, that is a decision that has not been made at this time, but it is good to see that there is success to build upon. Those are some of the things that will make decisions possibly easier to explore when serious discussions start to transpire.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, I think, in part, the minister makes the joint case that has been presented in terms of rehabilitation when he talks about the government's program where government spent \$9.6 million roughly and \$74 million was as a direct result of that initiation by the government through this particular program. If you take a look at the number of applicants, again it shows because at the time that was a very high-profile promotion that the government

took on in terms of making sure that Manitobans were aware of the program. As a result, you had in excess of 10,000 people who made application for it.

* (1650)

I would think that a program of a similar nature that would be more directed to really low-income or fixed-income individuals in Winnipeg and outside of Winnipeg—changing some of those criteria, one could even make it everything from interest-free loans at least in part, pending on another financial commitment from the homeowner—would go a long way in improving the housing stock, with special emphasis being placed on homes that would say be 30 years plus and older. I say 30 years primarily because I think that is a critical time for a home, everything from, let us say, the shingling to siding to windows and so forth. But it is something in which I think is definitely beneficial for the government to look at bringing forward yet another program with some different criteria that would address that specific area.

Having said that, my interpretation of what the minister's comments were regarding the revitalization program, that there is out of that \$7-million commitment from the province—and I would ask the minister to correct me if I am wrong—but there is no real tangible housing program that is set up that is a part of the program. I know that it would not be anything new, that in previous programs there was no real obligation. A lot depended on the volunteers at the time and their priorities, but if the minister could just enlighten me a little bit more as to what obligation he would see these volunteer boards having in terms of housing condition with any money being allocated out for revitalization.

Mr. Gerry McAlpine, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Mr. Reimer: When we were working on the so-called MWCRP 3 program, which was part of, as I mentioned earlier, a \$7-million commitment by this government and the matching \$7 million from the City of Winnipeg, we had instructed senior staff from both sides, from the province and the City of Winnipeg government, to look at alternatives and look at a different approach for

the expending of funds. After the MWCRP 2 program, there was a requirement for sort of an audit, not only a financial audit, but a program audit as to the effectiveness of the program, what we had accomplished, where there was need for change, where there was possibly overlap or duplication, just to get a sense of whether we were getting the best value for the dollar that was being spent and, more importantly, whether we were getting the best results in the community that was part of the objectives of the MWCRP.

When this so-called audit was finished, the recommendation was that we would look at various alternatives or various different type of program expenditures or directions to take the MWCRP. In fact, one of the things was to change the name because it became quite an anachronism. They were looking for something that was maybe a little bit more precise or more compact, so its acceptability and its visibility possibly could be more attractive to getting things happening in the community. So they were even looking at a different type of name.

This was not an approved program. It was just a working suggestion that was brought forth between the two senior bureaucrats. Like I say, it did not get final provincial or municipal approval through the City Hall, but it did have a component of housing renovation. There was a certain portion of that funding that would go towards housing renovation. There would be a certain portion that would go towards literally block revitalization, what I mean by that is a block of homes in a certain area. If that community in that particular area felt that there was something that should be identified as an improvement or a revitalization within a certain block, that block could also be identified for funding in that program. Like I mentioned, there was a residential component of looking at revitalization.

The other thing that was quite interesting about the discussions was looking at the so-called shoulder communities around the core area. The feeling was that if you try to work from the core out, it was not as beneficial as working from the shoulder communities working into the core area. So you worked from the established areas, the areas before they got to the

deterioration stage or where they got to a stage where they were of consequences where it was hard because of the deterioration. Look at the areas where there was strong community participation, strong involvement by communities and people involved and work with those groups, and move them towards so-called the core area. So that you are working towards the centre for improvement instead of working with the centre and trying to always look at the core area for improvement, not that that area does not need it. There was a funding component involved with that, but there was a different approach by looking at the shoulder communities and see whether we can work with them and bring them into a constructive direction so that they can help rebuild in towards the core area.

That was more or less some of the discussions in regard to a new MWCRP program, but like I say, there seemed to be a buy-in by the previous mayor, the EPC, and I believe possibly council have been exposed to that general concept; however, there was not a final approval on it. There was no formal resolution on it. The final decision was to be made by the new mayor and the new council. The mayor at that time felt it was incumbent to have the new look, if you want to call it, at City Hall make the final decision, because the final program sort of came together just very, very close to when the municipal election in Winnipeg came about.

Since that time, like I mentioned, there has been no new program or new alternative brought forth by the city other than the fact that the number the mayor is using as a housing component, that he is feeling that whole, total amount should go towards one particular area, but that is something that I am not privy to, that type of decision or that type of discussion that has taken place. So I look forward to the discussions that come about. Possibly on Wednesday there may be some sort of indication from the mayor as to what he feels is appropriate and how things can be redirected.

But there, again, we would respond, naturally, from a council perspective as a council resolution or a council directive saying that this is what would go. At that time, that is when we

would have further discussions as to how the so-called MWCRP 3 program would be initiated.

So that gives the member more or less as much information as I have as to what may or may not happen and how it can be allocated or in which type of direction it would go. I think the biggest thing is that there is a willingness by this government to continue with dialogue and to continue working with the city in trying to come to some sort of resolve.

The advantage of having Urban Affairs, the portfolio, and the Housing portfolio, is there is a linkage and there is an overlap. A lot of times it makes it easier to relate between the two for setting up possibly different types of programs or different types of housing components, so it works to an advantage not only for Manitoba but particularly for Winnipeg.

* (1700)

Mr. Lamoureux: I appreciate the response from the minister. In making a suggestion, I am interested in knowing whether or not the minister would see the merits of possibly articulating, so that when ultimately an agreement, and hopefully an agreement will be established, that future revitalization programs under whatever name one might want to call it, where you get joint partnership, that the direction from the province would be one of at the very least bringing to the attention of the stakeholders the need to ensure that there is some sort of a housing stock component.

For example, the question could and I would argue should be put to any potential future board of revitalization: how do you see the resources that have been given going to improve directly the housing stock in the community in which the money was meant to be spent? When I say directly, I am referring to programs or direct action from a committee in dealing with housing stock, not, well, we will put a playground here in hopes that in time the housing will improve because there is a much better playground on the other side of the street-type thing. I mean more direct involvement.

A suggestion, for example, if I was sitting around a board today, I posed the question

earlier in terms of the percentage game, the percentage of homes that are in that state of not repairable and the role that they could play in a demolition or getting assistance from the private sector in rectifying that particular issue. So I make that more so as a recommendation.

I did have some questions for the Minister of Education (Mr. McCrae), but I did want to conclude on one more question, and if time permits, maybe we will be able to get back into some discussion on it, and that was the infill housing. The minister made reference that this government was looking at three things. One is more of a social active role. I think it is the Street Smart program. Then he went to the revite program, and then he went into the residential rehab program.

Well, the two that we have covered thus far, the revite and the rehab program, there is a third one in which I have been a long advocate of. That was the infill housing program. I do not know to what degree the minister is familiar with the infill housing concept? I think that it is a program that does have some merit. If government, in some areas, can assist by moving in and taking down some eyesore as opposed to building—I was never really a big fan of building a house on a vacant lot. I know infill housing was done, they did do that. I much prefer where the government actually assists the community by taking an eyesore that is just not reparable down and then promoting it. And it can be done jointly with the private sector.

An example of a modified infill program would be to allocate \$5,000 or X number of dollars to a private firm or an individual who would be prepared to go in and take down an old house in favour of seeing a newer home built, ideally of a similar architectural design. I know in some areas it would work well with the private sector. In other areas you might need to have some other form of assistance through local residents and so forth. Does the minister have any intentions on revisiting the whole infill housing concept?

Mr. Reimer: I think the member is aware that we, this government, do not have funding available for new housing. Since the federal government pulled out of the public housing

sector we cannot participate. We do not have any programs of loan agreements or funding available to generate new housing. But I share his concern in regard to a lot of the abandoned housing and some of the derelict housing that is in Winnipeg. I think that this is one of the reasons why we are very, very interested in working with the city in bringing forth an amendment to The City of Winnipeg Act that would give them the ability to act more prudently and more expeditiously in the ability to tear down derelict buildings or abandoned buildings.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

I believe that there is an amendment that can be brought into The City of Winnipeg Act. One of the things that was brought to my attention, if the member is aware, one of the requirements for the Cuff report was the rewriting of The City of Winnipeg Act, which we are in the process of doing. It was brought to my attention that we can help the city by giving them this type of an authority. One of the things that we will be seriously looking at is giving them that type of ability. I think with that type of clout the city can then have a little bit more enforceable by-laws and some ability to bring landlords or derelict homes to task, in a sense, and if they do not comply that they have the ability to tear them down and to make that space into availability for other buildings or private development or possibly even green space or parks within the inner city area.

So we would look at that very favourably in bringing forth an amendment to The City of Winnipeg Act to help them accomplish that. As was mentioned, we do not have a program of new building or additional new home construction throughout any part of Manitoba, but that does not mean that we still have not got an obligation to look after our own public housing and the maintenance and the repair and the upkeep on all our public housing throughout all of Manitoba. We take that very, very diligently.

In fact, just last year I think we spent over \$10 million on our M and I budget. I believe this year we have got allocated almost \$11 million in our budget for the upkeep and

maintenance of our public housing here in Manitoba. So the commitment will be there for public housing. The only component that we do not have, as I mention, is the ability to finance our loan money or guarantee funding under a building renewal program.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, I did, as I indicated, want to move on to the Minister of Education, but you know there was quite a bit more dialogue that no doubt could have occurred in terms of revitalization in the whole commercial area, and it just really illustrates the point, for me at least, for government to recognize that it does have some role to play. It is a question of to what degree and how it can best accommodate saving some of our communities, and that is one of the reasons why I think that there is even some merit to having some form of a public forum or discussion where you get local residents who are concerned about their communities and look for some ideas.

In a few minutes we were able to have some dialogue, I think, on things that could really make a difference. I think that there are a lot of good ideas that are out there, and I would encourage the department to be very open minded in receiving some of these ideas that are out there in our communities and maybe not be as much concerned with turf protection and things of that nature, because at the end of the day it is not necessarily healthy for many of the communities in which we live.

Having said that, Mr. Chairperson, unless the Minister of Housing (Mr. Reimer) is willing to respond, I am going to move on to the Minister of Education (Mr. McCrae), if I may. Last Thursday I was in the midst of trying to portray to this House a very serious issue, the issue, of course, being the breach of the standards exams. I was quite surprised to have heard or to have read yet other allegations of the breach, and what really amazed me is that it was at the same school as these allegations were, in fact, being made. The author of the report had indicated that he was unable to conclude in essence either way, whether or not one of the allegations was true or false, but the individual that had made the allegation—again, I do not know who that particular individual that made

the allegation is. I can only suspect that it might have been a particular individual that I am aware of, but that individual said that they would even be prepared to state it in a court of law.

* (1710)

Well, when you start making statements of that nature, I think that one has to give some credibility to the issue, and what I would like to be able to do is, at least in part, to pick up on that point. But, prior to really getting into any dialogue with the minister, a number of days have passed since I raised this issue with the Minister of Education, and I will be right up front and ask the minister: has he had the opportunity to rethink his position on the need for having a truly independent investigation into this breach of security that has been admitted and other alleged breaches that have been referenced to in the report from the same facility?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Chairman, I will say one thing to the honourable member, and that is, that I do not agree with the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. L. Evans), who puts forward the position of the Leader of the Opposition in this matter when he says that what the honourable member for Inkster is doing is making mountains out of molehills. I say this to reassure the honourable member for Inkster. I do not agree with the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. L. Evans) speaking for the New Democratic Party when he says that what the honourable member for Inkster is raising is much ado about nothing.

I do not agree for reasons I have already given, and the response of the member for Brandon East speaking on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) is somewhat shocking to me as a citizen of this province and certainly as Minister of Education. The honourable member for Inkster is hearing from residents in his constituency about difficulties that individuals are facing as a result of the action of Mr. Brian O'Leary, who is now, I understand, an assistant superintendent of public schools in the Seven Oaks School Division. Previously, Mr. O'Leary had been principal of the Maples high school.

I was doing my reading and I note that there have been a number of newspaper articles about this matter. One of them appeared in the Winnipeg Sun for yesterday under the headline: Doer changes rules to suit NDP. After criticizing Tories, he bends own ethics.

Mr. Chairman, this is significant in that the honourable member for Brandon East has said that the serious matters being raised by the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) are much ado about nothing. I know that there are other members in the ranks of the New Democratic Party who feel that way, including the Leader of the Opposition. We know that because it was only recently that the Leader of the Opposition brought forward an NDP code of ethics. This was his response to the Monnin inquiry. We know honourable members opposite have had a lot to say about the events which gave rise to the Monnin inquiry, and they have had a lot to say about the inquiry itself.

But Mr. Tom Brodbeck writes for the Winnipeg Sun, and he has made a few observations which may bear repeating here today in response to the honourable member for Inkster, who wants to see this matter properly fleshed out, and he is right to want that, in the same way the honourable member for Inkster is right to want certain matters fleshed out in regard to another matter that he has raised with us related to one of our private vocational schools and a motor vehicle accident involving some of the students there. Just as the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) is right to want to get to the bottom of things in regard to that, so is the honourable member for Inkster right to want to get to the bottom of things with respect to the wrongdoings of Mr. Brian O'Leary, who just happens to be the assistant superintendent of Seven Oaks School Division.

But the reason I refer to the honourable member for Brandon East and the honourable Leader of the Opposition is that these people have said that this is much ado about nothing. Well, Mr. Brian O'Leary is the campaign manager for the New Democratic Party. Is that why it is much ado about nothing? I think that, all of a sudden, those standards and principles

and ethics of New Democrats somehow found their way out the window when issues come to bear on these matters relating to a good friend of theirs, obviously, their campaign manager, one Brian O'Leary.

Here is what Mr. Brodbeck had to say. He said and I quote: NDP Leader Gary Doer made a last minute change to his party's code of ethics last week when he let his campaign manager, Brian O'Leary, off the hook for breaching standards exams security. He goes on: Doer released a draft copy of the new NDP code of ethics last month, and it is a good thing it was only a draft copy because Doer, after refusing to apply the same ethical standards to his own party that he has applied to others, will probably want to add the following: all high-ranking party officials who breach provincial government directives, who compromise the integrity of a government program, and who violate basic fairness principles within a publicly funded institution shall be exempt from any sanctions by the party and will be permitted to maintain their position within the party.

Indeed, I did not hear the NDP complaining when Mr. O'Leary was actually promoted within the Seven Oaks School Division. It is funny. All we hear from them is really from their seats. We do not hear any statements about this matter other than the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. L. Evans) who says this is much ado about nothing. You know, as an educator, I would think the honourable member for Brandon East, a person with a vast political experience, I have to say I was somewhat surprised, coming from that honourable gentleman, to hear him say that a breach of the standards exam protocol and all that that entails, the message that sends to educators and students and parents right across this province is all much ado about nothing. I have to admit, I was disappointed in my friend and colleague across town in Brandon, the honourable member for Brandon East, for taking that position in such a baldfaced way. I found it somewhat strange coming from him.

In any event, after weeks of reticence, the article goes on: Doer finally took a position on his campaign manager's transgressions last week. He said he will take no action against O'Leary who will be able to stay on as campaign

manager. The article goes on, after months of attacking the government Tories for a series of what they called "ethical breaches," it seems Doer has turned off the ethics metre when it comes to his own party. There is a fair bit of hypocrisy around in this matter, in my unbiased view.

* (1720)

The article goes on: O'leary, the principal of Maples Collegiate did not try to rig an election like some of his counterparts in the Progressive Conservative camp. Granted, but what he did do when he broke open a package of Grade 12 provincial exams and hand out a copy to a teacher last year was thumb his nose at the very explicit provincial directive. By law, under The Public Schools Act, school principals are obligated to obey Department of Education directives. This article says that Mr. O'Leary thumbed his nose at that, and by their action and inaction and demeanour, every single member of the New Democratic Party opposite is guilty of doing the same thing.

The article continues: O'Leary violated that responsibility when he openly and knowingly breached exam security. His boss, Seven Oaks School Division Superintendent John Wiens, concludes in his report made public last week that O'Leary's actions caused no harm. O'Leary's actions caused no harm according to this article's report on Mr. Wiens' report, therefore, case closed he says, which I presume is the position of the honourable member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) and honourable members opposite. Case closed. It is all done. No harm done according to Mr. John Wiens.

Now who is Mr. John Wiens? Well, Mr. John Wiens is the superintendent of the Seven Oaks School Division, is he not, and the person who conducted this review? Now there are people who will tell you more about Mr. John Wiens and his experience, shall we say, with the New Democratic Party, but I will leave that for others to point that part out. He says case closed, but Mr. Brodbeck goes on and says that is about as credible as arguing Tory efforts to rig the election in 1995 caused no harm, because all the ridings targeted by them were won by the New Democrats.

I guess that is the position the opposition is taking with respect to their Mr. O'Leary, that much ado about nothing here. It is only a province-wide provincial standards testing scheme that we are talking about here which we do not like anyway, which the Manitoba Teachers' Society has told us we have to take some strong positions on, and we know New Democrats only do what their union boss friends tell them to do. We have seen evidence of that enough times. But that is really where the hypocrisy is here with honourable members. It is like do as I say but not as I do, or just allow me to have rules for you guys, but we do not have to obey those same rules. We make rules for our own people, but we exempt people like Brian O'Leary because, well, after all, he is a New Democrat, and we are better than everybody else in this province. That is what I am reading between the lines here, Mr. Chairman, with respect to this matter.

The fact is, according to Mr. Brodbeck, there was plenty of harm done by O'Leary's actions. This bears upon the perception of the matter, perhaps the reality of the matter, brought to us compliments of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) who has recognized early on that there are issues here that go beyond the simple actions that we know of, let alone the ones we do not know of, but the honourable member for Inkster has managed to divine exactly the problem here, and that has to do with our standards tests. He has said he has problems with the Grade 3 test, the honourable member for Inkster has. He said, however, that he believes in a system that has a good, solid curriculum. He believes in a system that has appropriate testing at appropriate levels. I think I am quoting the honourable member for Inkster correctly.

Well, for the most part, I think he is in agreement with what we are doing here. I know that the massive majority of our population are very much onside with the honourable member for Inkster, because that is also where the government of Manitoba stands on these matters.

We know the New Democrats hate testing. We know New Democrats hate anything that points to personal excellence. We know that they hate anything that leads to things that lead

to success and ultimate happiness for the population, because we know—

An Honourable Member: How about Daryl Bean? I have not heard Daryl Bean. I have not heard Daryl Bean yet.

Mr. McCrae: We are going to get to Daryl Bean. I was not going to talk about Daryl Bean today. I say this to the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) because I think he may be personally acquainted with—[interjection]

Oh, the honourable member for Transcona assures me he is not listening to me. That gives me great comfort. [interjection] I was not going to talk about Daryl Bean today—[interjection]

But now the honourable member for Broadway (Mr. Santos) insists on it, and the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) brought Mr. Bean up. Well, I will just make a note of that and try to see if I can work him into the time available to me. The fact is, according to Mr. Brodbeck, there is plenty of harm done by Mr. O'Leary's actions. I think it is somewhat irresponsible on the part of the New Democrats simply to ignore that because it is one of their buddies who did this wrongdoing. That is what Manitobans are going to judge honourable members on.

Honourable members like to laugh about it, make faces and make funny cartoon caricatures, and we hear people like the member for Brandon East (Mr. L. Evans) who has simply trivialized something that is very important to the people of Manitoba. I think that he may have to rethink that.

The honourable members opposite should probably discuss this further. It is just my advice. They will do whatever they want. They do not very often follow my advice, I am sorry to say. But in this case Mr. Brodbeck says the fact is there was plenty of harm done by O'Leary's actions.

He goes on: "the contents of exams are kept secret from students and teachers in order to ensure no one has an unfair advantage over another."

Do not honourable members of the New Democratic Party believe in that principle about fairness and that nobody gets an unfair advantage? Do they not believe in that? It is in their rhetoric all the time. How come their rhetoric and their performance are never the same? Why is that? Can anybody explain that to me? All I hear is silence on that point. Nobody knows the answer why the New Democrats are like that, why they have a double standard that other people have to do what they say but they do not have to do it themselves.

The contents of exams are kept secret from students and teachers in order to ensure no one has an unfair advantage over another, be it a student or a teacher preparing a class for an exam. Teachers have a large stake in seeing their class do well, and maybe principals have a large stake in seeing their schools do well. I am sure any educator would agree with that.

Bad class marks reflect poorly on them. Principals have an even larger stake in seeing their schools do well. The teacher that O'Leary gave an exam to the day before testing wrote the exam. He then went to his colleagues, some of whom were preparing their students for the exam the next day, and spoke about the contents of that test.

Now this is getting way beyond the initial allegation, what Mr. Brodbeck is writing about here, and I do not blame the honourable member for Inkster for being concerned about this and for raising this matter. As a result, Mr. Brodbeck continues: teachers may have been tipped off about what was on the exam. That would have given some teachers an unfair advantage over others when preparing their students.

The honourable member for Broadway (Mr. Santos) is a teacher, and he understands these things. Yet what do we hear from him about this? [interjection] We are all human is what he says; we are all human. So now it is a mountain out of a molehill, much ado about nothing, and we are all human. But that is okay because it was Brian O'Leary. He is a friend of ours, and he is our campaign manager.

Let us be hypothetical for a moment. Some honourable members are going to have trouble with this, but let us just assume Mr. O'Leary was the campaign manager for the Progressive Conservative Party, and the honourable member for Inkster is raising these matters in the House because he is concerned about test security and some level of integrity in our exam system, and Mr. O'Leary is the campaign manager for the Progressive Conservative Party. Where do honourable members opposite stand on that? [interjection] I think so. The honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) says that there would be 25 members of the Legislature calling for my head on a platter.

* (1730)

Funny how circumstances alter cases, is it not? Funny how when you apply certain principles to other people it comes out one way; you apply them to yourself, and, well, it is different, it is different here. It is just a mountain out of a molehill. We are hearing a lot from the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) who, I understand, is an educator himself. Are we hearing so much chirping from the honourable member for Dauphin because he is particularly sensitive about this, because Brian O'Leary—pick one, Mr. Chairman—(a); (b) is he a personal friend of one Mr. O'Leary? (c) is he a great admirer of one Mr. O'Leary, like the honourable member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale), who made it very clear last week about how he feels about Mr. O'Leary? The ground he walks on is not probably good enough for some of us to get even close to, so take your pick, Mr. Chairman. You do not have to do it right here. [interjection]

In my view, the honourable member for Dauphin, and maybe others, but the honourable member for Dauphin has joined the group, the group that seems to be chaired by the Leader of the Opposition but also a member of it is the member for Brandon East (Mr. L. Evans), who thinks this is much ado about nothing; the member for Crescentwood who just thinks the ground Mr. O'Leary walks on is hallowed. Now, the latest adherent is the honourable member for Dauphin who has been bowing down as if Mr. O'Leary were some kind of godlike creature that deserves our worship and adoration.

The point is, I understand Mr. O'Leary to be a human being, as pointed out by the honourable member for Broadway, and he made a mistake. The honourable Leader of the Opposition said: yes, he made a mistake, but it is okay, he is okay. The fact that he has been promoted, that is okay, just produce the report without the white-out on it. That is what they are relying on. Pretty thin gruel relying on an argument like that to try to defend the indefensible. But that is where they are at here.

Mr. Brodbeck went on—I do not know if honourable members have read this or not: That would have given some teachers an unfair advantage over others when preparing their students.

And I guess the honourable member for Dauphin is in favour of that or something, because his demeanour here suggests that.

Point of Order

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): I am used to a fair amount of latitude with respect to questions and answers during this course of debate. I was quite confused, in fact, from where the minister is commenting as to, in fact, what the actual question was that was raised by the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) in terms of the course of this debate. He indicated to me that the question, I believe, was, and I am paraphrasing: are you going to have an investigation into a matter? I know that the minister is relishing this opportunity, but I wonder if the minister might be relevant in terms of trying to at least deal, without limiting debate—the minister is clearly being combative and clearly attempting to prolong debate.

I wonder if you might call the minister to try to deal with the question at hand, which was raised by the member for Inkster. You know, if the minister wants to go on and on, that is perfectly all right, but it does use up valuable time when the minister is being irrelevant, completely irrelevant to the question as raised by the member for Inkster, which was: will you have an investigation? The only thing the minister has not done is dealt with the Magna Carta, and I am half expecting that to be during the course of his comments.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable minister, on the same point of order.

Mr. McCrae: On the same point of order raised by the honourable member for Kildonan, Mr. Chairman, coming from that honourable member I have to chuckle just a little bit that he would raise the point of order based on relevance. Was he not the same honourable member with whom I had the pleasure as Minister of Health of spending some 55 or more hours during the Estimates review process answering each and every question that he raised no matter how relevant or irrelevant those questions were. I think that is the same honourable member.

But he misses the mark on the point. I know that he is sensitive about this O'Leary situation. All New Democrats are pretty uncomfortable because they have a double-standard that is so very clear to everyone who is watching this discussion. But the fact is I was being relevant. The honourable member for Inkster is asking about a report, making a further investigation into matters, and in order to lay the proper groundwork for appropriate answers to questions like that, one has to get into a little bit of the detail of what has been going on here. I respectfully suggest that the honourable member for Kildonan, as much as I respect his knowledge of these things, and I think he has actually memorized the Beauchesne book, much as I respect that of him, I think he has missed the mark on this particular occasion.

Mr. Chairperson: I thank the honourable members for their advice on this matter, but the honourable member for Kildonan did have a point of order. The minister was at the 18-minute point of his answer. The member for Inkster did pose a direct question. I would ask that the minister attempt to be relevant to the question put.

* * *

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

Mr. McCrae: Well, as they say on Law and Order, Mr. Chairman, I will attempt to link it up if that would be satisfactory to the honourable member for Kildonan, and I hope it is.

The honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) quite seriously asks that this government bring about an appropriate investigation. I think he feels pretty strongly that the report I tabled in the House last week is pretty insufficient, to say the least. I mean, I know the New Democrats like to make fun of the fact that in order to protect peoples' identities and innocence and to protect people from defamation through the Freedom of Information process, names had to be blanked out. I know they ridicule that and have a lot of fun with that. I do not mind that because I do not mind being responsible for taking account of the law of this province. We are being ridiculed by New Democrats for obeying the law. I think this is sort of coming through more and more with New Democrats, that the law is pretty important when it applies to everybody else except themselves.

So, with or without the markings or the white-outs or whatever it is called on this report, Mr. Chairman, it is an unsatisfactory report. It does not deal with the things that it is supposed to deal with. It does not get answers to the appropriate questions that surround this whole sorry matter.

So I have said to the honourable member, and I say it again in direct response to his question, that I think the bigger issue for me—I know that members of the New Democratic Party are sort of keeping an eye on what is happening with respect to Mr. O'Leary, hoping he can sort of hang on by his toenails and his thumbnails and his hangnails to the job that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) has given him, but, you know, at the end of the day when people really do look at where people are and where they stand, they are going to say, well, what did the New Democrats say about the vote-fixing matter? What did they say about that, and did they apply those principles to their own situation when it came to the Brian O'Leary matter—some say the Brian O'Leary scandal, whatever you want to call it. The honourable members have taken a different position, and I am the first to say, of course the circumstances in those matters are different. I mean, everybody can see that. I think honourable members in the New Democratic Party think everybody but themselves is stupid.

You know, they have found out over a few elections that maybe they should look in the mirror if they want to find out who really is kind of ill informed or reading the program incorrectly. The fact is, I share the concern of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). I think New Democrats do, too, but they are worried about their own hides, and that is what it is about here. They are worried about their own hides, but, you know, while they worry about their hides, they are forgetting altogether about the importance of their credibility. Why is it that New Democrats have forgotten about the importance of their own credibility? Why is that? I think something is clouding their vision.

I look to members like the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos) because he is a man of integrity. He rises in this House on a regular basis and talks about that, and appropriately so. I am looking at the honourable member for Broadway to use his considerable clout and influence in his caucus to persuade his colleagues to put the children of Manitoba ahead of their own selfish political interests. Where do the kids stand in all of this, in all of this joking going on in this place, all of this ridiculing and trivializing the whole system of education for our children? While they are doing all that, do they take a moment to think about how this looks to the people of Manitoba?

* (1740)

I mean, you know, I can understand the hurt. I have been through it. I understand the hurt of watching a friend or a colleague in difficult circumstances, or I understand the hurt of being in difficult circumstances myself. I understand all that, but honourable members are applying a different standard to themselves than they are to others, and you are not going to be able to carry that forward. It is simply not going to work that way. You may think so, but all the while, as you go merrily about your business defending wrongdoers, somebody along the way is going to say these people cannot be believed. They did not have the courage of what they said was right. When it came to the vote-fixing business, they had all kinds of high-sounding words and phrases and used them often, but when it comes to a matter of ethics in their own ranks, it is a

whole different thing, and people simply will not accept that.

Point of Order

Mr. Chomiak: I really do hesitate to rise again, and I would rather not insofar as the minister is having a time of it, but I noticed in the last five minutes the minister actually moved toward answering the question, and actually to quote the minister, to paraphrase: and I recognize what the member for Inkster said about an investigation, and we are—and then, Mr. Chairperson, I am afraid that he fell off that track again which he was trying to construct and has spent the last five minutes criticizing members of the opposition which is fair ball. I am prepared to accept that, but I would ask you to report, with respect to your previous ruling, that if the minister is going to answer the question he should answer the direct question, and then he can go on and criticize us all that he wants.

But let us get to the heart of the matter that I know the minister was struggling to get to but unfortunately fell off of the path, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable minister, on the same point of order.

Mr. McCrae: On the same point of order, the honourable member for Kildonan is absolutely right. I was just that far away from getting to that very point that the honourable member was sitting on the edge of his seat waiting to hear me talk about. I was just there when he stood to his feet on a point of order, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable member does have a point of order on the relevancy side, but the minister does have three minutes left in his 30 minutes to conclude.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable minister, with three minutes to conclude.

Mr. McCrae: I do appreciate that I only have three minutes left. The honourable member for Kildonan, in a very parliamentary way, has brought my shortcomings to the attention of this

House on more than one occasion, I must say, but he always does it in a way that gets the job done but, on the other hand, also leaves me feeling well. Now here is a gentleman who can listen to reason as well, and in my closing three minutes, Mr. Chairman, I would make the—I know the New Democrats have been saying: have an inquiry. I mean, I do not know why they are saying that, but I guess that is for them because maybe it will buy them some time or I do not know what.

It is their own, whatever their reasons, the point is we do tend sometimes in this House to make a little bit light of some pretty serious matters, and honourable members are very guilty of that in this particular circumstance. The honourable member for Inkster is one person who has perhaps as much of a stake as anyone, but all the children in this province do have a stake in this matter. But some of these specific allegations arise in his own area, his own constituency, amongst his constituents, and so it is right and proper for the honourable member to be raising this and to be somewhat impatient if he wants about where are we going with this matter.

From my standpoint, I leave to the judges, the lawyers, the arbitrations and all of those things, those issues that are appropriately handled by those people, but in my responsibility, in the running of an Education department, we know that Manitobans demand fairness and integrity in their education system. It is lacking in this case, and we will be doing something about that. The honourable member is right to be asking about what it is we are going to do. As I have said, we have significant powers at our disposal; and, when you have such powers, one wants to be very careful about how they are used.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, the question in essence was: is the government prepared to now look at an independent investigation, given the report? He has had a number of days to look over the report. In listening to the Minister of Education, one would quickly surmise that the Minister of Education is not a fan of the report, at least the report which he had tabled, for a number of reasons. I guess I should maybe try a different tactic.

There was a great deal of concern in terms of the author of the report, and I looked to the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers), Broadway (Mr. Santos), Thompson (Mr. Ashton), Transcona (Mr. Reid) to please correct me if I am wrong. The author of the report being John Wiens, I have had very serious allegations that were made in reference to Mr. Wiens, everything in terms of a political connection within the New Democratic Party. One of them was that he was one of the speakers for annual general meetings, that he has been education advisor to the NDP.

These concerns, Mr. Chairperson, have been raised to me from individuals, at least two individuals, who, I would say, are quite credible, individuals whom I have a great deal of respect for. It has also been raised with me by other individuals wanting to, as much as possible, protect those interests because they do have a direct interest, wanting to try to get the government to recognize what I believe some people believe to be fact.

I think that there is a role for the Department of Education to be straightforward with this Chamber on this particular issue. As I have indicated and hearing absolutely no objections from any one inside the Chamber, does the Minister of Education not recognize that if there is any reason to believe that the report that the minister tabled, my version of the report which is the edited version of the report, has any credibility at all in which I have questioned, in which I believe it does not have the credibility from what I have read of the report, if the minister believes that it has any whatsoever, would he not concur that given the role that has been explained to me by a couple of others, and I have raised the issue inside the Chamber before in terms of Mr. Wiens' role within the New Democrats, in particular as education policy advisor and that there is no objection to that fact, has the Ministry of Education been made aware of it?

If this is in fact the case, would not the Minister of Education see that there is a conflict at the very least, that you cannot have a person in that position, given the background, doing the report in the first place? That is if you do not buy into the argument that I have put previously. I think that people who are affected directly and

indirectly by this incident are looking at this. Some of them have an understanding of that particular relationship and do not necessarily understand why it is the government does not see, as we feel from within the Liberal Party, the need to have that apolitical independent investigation.

* (1750)

I am not asking the department to spend \$100,000-plus, Mr. Chairperson. Look at the money that you spend on protecting the interests or the integrity of the standard exams. We are asking for a relatively small portion of that money in order to go towards whether it is a lawyer, not necessarily a judge—it is not of the same magnitude of the vote-rigging scheme—going to an independent lawyer who does not participate in party events. I just throw the name of a Bill Norrie. I do not know if he has political leanings off-hand, but someone that would at the very least be able to look into a number of allegations. I am looking—

An Honourable Member: Norrie is a Tory.

Mr. Lamoureux: Is Norrie a Tory? I do not know. If in fact Bill Norrie is a Tory, then we would scrap the idea of Bill Norrie. I would be prepared to look into tabling a number of names of which I would give the assurance that they do not appear on the Liberal membership list and ask for the same courtesy from the government to ensure that that individual who is appointed is not on any Tory list, with expectations that the New Democrats would do likewise, thereby being as much as possible apolitical.

What I am asking from the Minister of Education is given that political nature of involvement that I have heard by at least two what I classify as credible, strong individuals to others who have informed me of it, is there not any merit today to acknowledge that, yes, there is a need, in order to get justice on this issue, to have that independent investigation? Upon hearing that, I think then we could possibly expand on the dialogue of how that particular individual could be chosen.

Mr. Chairperson: Now, we have some house business that we have to take care of, so what

would be all right with the members? Maybe the minister could answer this question the next time we come back to committee because I know there is no way he is going to answer this in three minutes.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, if the minister is going to take more than two minutes to answer the question, then I would suggest, yes.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, the honourable minister with two minutes, so that leaves me three in the House.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, again, I appreciate the points raised by the honourable member, and I certainly do not take issue with anything he said about Bill Norrie, former mayor of the City of Winnipeg. I know Mr. Norrie, as I think everyone around here does, and he distinguished himself as mayor of Winnipeg. I will take the honourable member's point under advisement on that.

When he talks about education advisors to the NDP, without saying too much about Mr. Wiens, because the honourable member has suggested Mr. Wiens has connections to the NDP, or some credible people have suggested that to him, all I know is that whoever the education advisor is to the New Democratic Party, they are not doing a very good job.

Mr. Chairperson, the NDP is all over the place on education. They do not have a coherent policy. They seem to relish the idea that you can just cheat on standards exams and it is okay. They support people who do things like that with impunity and laugh about it and make jokes about it and ridicule people who are concerned about it. I think the NDP have a little comeuppance here to be done. They need a little attitude-reality check, is what the New Democrats need, and I am afraid that knowing them as well as I do, that that is not likely to happen. I have been watching them closely for years and they do not learn. They just think they teach and impose and intimidate and get other people to do their bidding, and sometimes they go a little too far with it.

But I look forward to the next opportunity to discuss this further with the honourable member.

Mr. Chairperson: Let us call it. Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Committee Changes

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Madam Speaker, first of all, I would like to rescind some of the changes that I made this afternoon to the Industrial Relations committee, the ones that we were going to have for tomorrow morning. That was the member for Gladstone (Mr. Rocan) for the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), and the member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey) for the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed).

Secondly, I would like to move, seconded by the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments for Tuesday, July 13, at 10 a.m., be amended as follows: the member for Rossmere (Mr. Toews) for the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine); and the member for Springfield (Mr. Findlay) for the member for Morris (Mr. Pitura).

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer), seconded by the honourable member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey), that the previously moved composition of the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations for Tuesday, 10 a.m., be rescinded. Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

It has been moved by the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer), seconded by the honourable member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments for 10 a.m. tomorrow, Tuesday, July 13, be amended as follows: the honourable member for Rossmere (Mr. Toews) for the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), and the honourable member for Springfield (Mr. Findlay) for the honourable member for Morris (Mr. Pitura).

Is it the will of the House to call is six o'clock? [agreed] This House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Tuesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, July 12, 1999

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