



First Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature

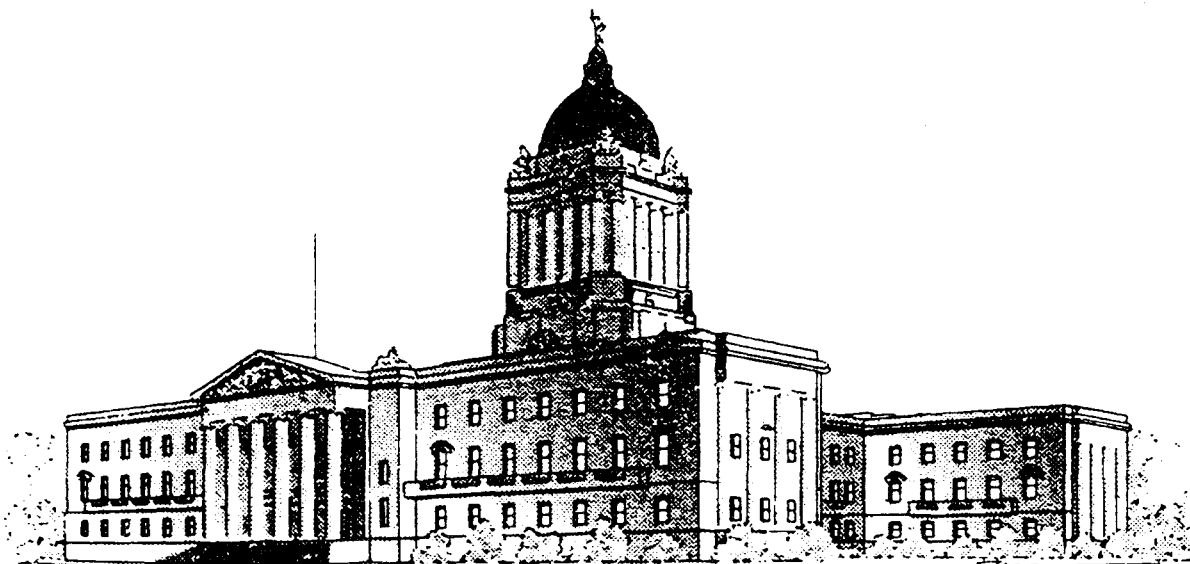
of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Seventh Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, December 14, 1999

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs First Report

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the First Report of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave? [agreed]

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

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

Your committee met on Tuesday, December 14, 1999, at 10 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Assembly to consider bills referred. Your committee elected Ms. Cerilli as its chairperson and Mr. Smith (Brandon West) as its vice-chairperson.

Your committee heard representation on bills as follows:

Bill 2—The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg

Mayor Glen Murray, City of Winnipeg

Your committee has considered:

Bill 2—The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg

and has agreed to report the same without amendment.

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Minister of Industry, Trade and Mines): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the 1998-99 Annual Report of the Department of Energy and Mines, copies of which have previously been distributed.

Hon. Eric Robison (Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the 1999 Annual Report of the Department of Northern Affairs, copies of which have already been distributed.

Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister of Conservation): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the 1998-99 Annual Report of the Manitoba Product Stewardship Corporation.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 5—The Wildlife Amendment Act

Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister of Conservation): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robison), that leave be given to introduce Bill 5, The Wildlife Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la conservation de la faune), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 6—The Water Resources Conservation and Protection and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister of Conservation): I move, seconded by the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robison),

that leave be given to introduce Bill 6, The Water Resources Conservation and Protection and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi sur la conservation et la protection des ressources hydriques et modifications corrélatives), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I draw members' attention to the loge to my left where we have with us today Harold Taylor, former MLA for Wolseley.

Also, may I draw the attention of honourable members to the gallery where we have with us today nine visitors from Upward Bound Program under the direction of Mr. Rob Campbell. This school is located in the constituency of the Speaker.

* (1335)

Also with us today from Rivers Collegiate, thirty-seven Grade 9 students under the direction of Mrs. Lesley McFadden. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer).

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you here today.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Rate Approval Process

Mr. Gary Filmon (Leader of the Official Opposition): When Today's NDP were last in office, the Crown corporations of Manitoba had a history of large losses, followed by very large increases in rates. For instance, MPIC lost \$125 million, which resulted in an 18 percent rate increase which yesterday's NDP cabinet approved. Since that time, MPIC has enjoyed both sound management and stable rates as set by the Public Utilities Board.

My question for the Premier is: will he assure the people of Manitoba that the Public Utilities Board will continue to set Autopac rates in our province in future?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Yes, Mr. Speaker. [interjection]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Filmon: The member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Sale), the Minister of Family Services, has answers to everything except the questions we ask him. He is very smart. He is being a very smart man.

Manitoba Hydro Rate Approval Process

Mr. Gary Filmon (Leader of the Official Opposition): Also, a question for follow-up for the Premier. In that era of yesterday's NDP managing and setting rates in our province, Manitoba Hydro, over a period of time, lost \$60 million which also, of course, resulted in cabinet having major increases to Manitoba Hydro rates.

Hydro has, over the past decade, enjoyed good management and stable rates, Mr. Speaker. Will the Premier assure the people of Manitoba that the PUB will continue to set Hydro rates?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, it is a bit strange that the Leader of the Opposition would take a position on Crown corporations after he sold the telephone system without the permission of the public. I wonder if the Premier referred that broken promise to the PUB. We need no lectures from the member opposite. [interjection] Well, the members opposite would not allow a vote in this Chamber and would not allow a vote from Manitobans about a sale of their own public asset, the Manitoba Telephone System.

Mr. Speaker, we are proud of the fact that the Limestone project has been—[interjection] Well, the former Premier can laugh. He opposed it. The \$1.9-billion Limestone project has been paid for by the Northern States Power sales negotiated by the previous government that he is so critical of.

The former Premier, who did not produce a watt of new energy in Manitoba, had the gall in Thompson, Manitoba, to promise a dividend in the form of funds to go to support infrastructure in northern Manitoba coming out of the Hydro

operation. So we need no lectures from a person who did not build anything in Hydro, unlike ourselves who saw the future, built it, and now we have the benefits of it, Mr. Speaker.

* (1340)

Limestone Hydro Project Debt Repayment

Mr. Gary Filmon (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the New Democratic–Today's NDP—the Premier, would like to check, the debt for Limestone has not been paid off. He may want to go and say those kinds of things glibly and dishonestly, but it is absolutely not true. I challenge him to repeat that statement. Is he saying that the entire debt, the \$1.9 billion that has been invested in Limestone, has been paid off?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I refer members opposite to an article that was in the Free Press about 18 months ago where the Hydro officials basically confirmed what I have said.

But, Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is the former Premier himself talked about the \$326-million-a-year export sales from Hydro. In November of 1998 the last agreement negotiated by the previous government, the 200 megawatts to Ontario came into force. That followed another 200 megawatts to Ontario that had been negotiated before that. That followed the Northern States Power deal that every year is producing record revenues to Manitobans.

The reason why we have the lowest rates in the world is people had the vision, unlike members opposite, to build Limestone, Mr. Speaker, and sell export power sales to build the future by having the lowest rates in the world. The member opposite had the temerity to promise a dividend in the election, something he is now criticizing today. Shame on him.

Crown Corporations Dividends

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, we see in the answer to the question by the First Minister the kind of philosophy that

guides this government, not to build hydro dams when they are required, not to build hydro dams when there are sales for the power but to build them for political reasons, to build them in advance of when they are needed simply to create the image of economic activity.

Because the concern of Manitobans is that that is exactly the kind of philosophy that they will use in managing our other Crown corporations, I ask the First Minister: is it the intention of his administration to bring in legislation to change any of the acts for our Crown corporations which will allow his government to take dividends and use them to fund the general revenue of the Province of Manitoba?

* (1345)

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): The unmitigated gall, the unmitigated gall of that member, the virtual godfather of frozen food in Manitoba, the man—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if you might remind the honourable Premier that all members in this House are referred to as honourable members.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I accept that, and I withdraw the term "godfather of frozen food."

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. On the point of order, the honourable First Minister has apologized.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: I recognize the honourable First Minister now to answer the question, please.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member who brought us SmartHealth, and then the fact that the SmartHealth losses were hushed up from the people of Manitoba, if he is asking us what

kind of legislation we are going to bring in, maybe we will bring a law in to make it absolutely mandatory that future Premiers reveal hush money so the public will know before an election campaign rather than holding up matters.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, I know that the Leader of the Opposition enjoys riding on a very high horse, but Manitobans do remember. They remember the deficits—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you could remind the former House Leader of Beauséne's Citation 410 which says supplementary questions require no preamble. Of the supplementary question, there was an extensive preamble. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable House Leader of the Official Opposition, on the same point of order.

Mr. Laurendeau: On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker.

If the honourable Premier would not put a question into his so-called response, we would not have to answer it.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order, may I remind all members that a preamble is not required on a supplementary question.

* * *

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, I will put my question again to the First Minister very succinctly. He has not answered the question to the people of Manitoba.

Will the First Minister today commit to the people of Manitoba that his government will not introduce legislation to amend any act that will allow the production of dividends for general revenue from rate-paying Crown corporations that are paid for by those ratepayers?

Mr. Doer: Well, Mr. Speaker, members opposite have imposed a capital tax on public Crown corporations. That was part of The Statute Law Amendment Act. Members opposite have been involved in the '70s, I believe, in introducing legislation on water power rental rates. That I believe was part of a budget that required statutory authority in this Chamber.

Furthermore, the promise made by the former Premier to return a dividend to infrastructure in northern Manitoba is a promise that has been made by members opposite. The announcement made by the members opposite, supported by us—in fact, we asked them to expand it to other communities, not just in Winnipeg, dealing with car thefts, dealing with the Public Insurance Corporation. I think that the members opposite do protest too much. The bottom line is we will keep Manitoba Crown corporations owned by Manitobans for the benefit of Manitobans, not like members opposite that have over a hundred million dollars a year in surplus in the Manitoba Telephone System going to shareholders, 80 percent of which are out of Manitoba. We are going to use our Crowns for the benefit of low rates, good investment and for all the people of Manitoba.

* (1350)

Mr. Praznik: I just ask again, on behalf of the people of the province: will the First Minister commit to the people of Manitoba? He may not like me, but the people of Manitoba want to know. Is it the intention of the First Minister to replicate what the New Democratic government of Saskatchewan does and use their Crown corporations to balance their books at the end of the year when it is not in the interests of the ratepayers to support those corporations? Just a yes or no, Mr. Speaker. That is all the people ask, a yes or a no.

Mr. Doer: One can disagree with one another and still like each other. If the member for Lac du Bonnet is feeling a little unloved today, we would like to say from our side, we like him, we like him. [interjection] I said I like him; that is as far as I am going to go.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has raised a very serious question, will you please answer it.

Mr. Doer: Yes, I have. You know what, in the spirit of the holiday season, I would like to say that all members on this side like all members on that side. If the member for Lac du Bonnet was so animated about his concern, perhaps he would have dealt with that with the former Premier when he promised to invest remaining funds from Hydro to support—

Point of Order

Mr. Praznik: On a point of order, I appreciate that the First Minister really wants to avoid answering the question, but if he could just give Manitobans that little Christmas gift of a yes or a no, they would appreciate it a lot more than his rhetoric.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order, the member does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable First Minister, to continue with the answer.

Mr. Doer: We have police officers hired by the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation, MPI, and they came from the operating revenue of the Public Insurance Corporation, going to prevent car thefts. We supported that; in fact, we asked that that idea be expanded to other communities in rural and northern Manitoba, that it not just have a Perimeteritis to it but rather it be more expanded. What is to say that we will not be looking at getting beyond the Perimeter in some of these ideas? Perhaps people outside of Winnipeg are concerned about car thefts. Maybe we will do something about that. Would the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) then feign indignation, after they did one thing and they are saying to us to do the opposite? I suggest not, Mr. Speaker.

Post-Secondary Education Funding

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Education this afternoon.

I would like to ask the Minister of Education, in the House, who has stated on a

number occasions that, in the 2000 school year, post-secondary students will be receiving a 10 percent cut in their tuition fees, if he can tell the House whether he will be increasing the level of post-secondary grants to post-secondary institutions by the level of economic growth in our province and the amount of tuition cuts that he is proposing to post-secondary institutions.

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, as the honourable member opposite knows, we are in consultation with members of the post-secondary community right now, as we sit in this House, to come to an agreement amongst the post-secondary institutions in the province in a spirit of partnership to deal with the tuition increase. An announcement on the funding levels will come in due course with the budget.

Tuition Fee Policy

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, I think I heard the minister just indicate something about tuition fee increases. In this House, the minister committed himself to a 10 percent tuition fee cut for all post-secondary institutions in the 2000 school year.

I would like to ask the minister whether he has consulted with the administrators and the student unions to indicate to them the details of his plan with regard to the tuition fee cuts that he has proposed.

* (1355)

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, yes.

Education System Administration Costs

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, given that on September 21 the New Democrats shared the details of their spending with regard to—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I

know the member wants to get a lot off his chest, but members' statements follow Oral Questions. I remind members of Citation 410: Supplementary questions require no preamble. I ask you to draw the member's attention to that citation.

Mr. Speaker: On that point of order, the honourable Government House Leader does have a point of order. Supplementary questions do not require a preamble.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: May I ask the honourable member for Russell to please put his question.

Mr. Derkach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister of Education tell the House and Manitobans how it is that his government plans to save \$3.5 million in the area of education administration, given the commitments that he has made and given the article that came out in the Winnipeg Sun and the plan that was presented to the media by the New Democrats where they were going to save, in the area of education administration, \$3.5 million?

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education and Training): Well, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to the member opposite, we are in consultations with our partners in the post-secondary domain, both administration and student unions, and in due course the information will be forthcoming in the budget year.

Education System

Reading/Writing Standards—Grade 3

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education has cancelled standards testing at the Grade 3 level, while at the same time guaranteeing that every child would be reading and writing fluently at the end of the Grade 3 year.

My question for the minister is: since this guarantee to all parents in Manitoba was made by the Minister of Education, could the minister please explain to parents and to Manitobans how the academic standards will be articulated throughout this province, in particular at Grade 3?

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education and Training): Well, there are a couple of questions there, Mr. Speaker, but the best way to respond to it is that we have made a commitment to work with parents, teachers and school divisions to create diagnostics at the beginning of the school year to give children an opportunity to have outcomes throughout the school year that contribute to the growth in literacy throughout the school year in the student, and that is what we will be proceeding with.

Mrs. Smith: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister: if the Grade 3 students cannot meet this guarantee where they will be reading and writing, will these same students be held back for another year until they are able to read and write?

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my first response, we believe in working together with parents and teachers to develop positive outcomes for students throughout the school year. Our priority is to enhance the literacy of children in our school system, and in conjunction with parents and teachers working with the child, we will have results that benefit the child throughout the school year.

Mrs. Smith: Mr. Speaker, could the minister please tell Manitobans when this guarantee will actually take place? The minister has guaranteed that every Grade 3 child will read and write. When does this guarantee take place?

Mr. Caldwell: We on this side of the House believe in children. We believe in working with parents and teachers to help children learn, and as part of that commitment, Mr. Speaker, there will be a diagnostic procedure in place for September 2000 so that throughout the school year the child can have opportunities for growth, working with parents and teachers.

* (1400)

School Divisions Amalgamation

Mr. Harold Gilleshammer (Minnedosa): When the Minister of Education met with school superintendents a few weeks ago, he indicated that he would be moving ahead with the Norrie

report on school division consolidation. In the November 19 Winnipeg Free Press story, the minister said the province could force amalgamations. My question to the Minister of Education: is he moving ahead with forcing school division amalgamations?

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education and Training): No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gilleshammer: This is a minister who is sending mixed messages to superintendents and school divisions, and this is the second time he has denied quotations in the public press. School divisions are looking for leadership. They are getting one message from the minister and a contrary one from his officials. Who is in charge of the department over there, and when is he going to start setting his policy?

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Speaker, the government is committed to our public education system. I had the opportunity to actually be in attendance at the superintendents' meeting, unlike the member opposite asking the question. There is a clear direction that is being chartered by this government, and it is one that is working in partnership with superintendents, with teachers, with parents in the school system.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Can the minister indicate what direction the department and he are taking on school division amalgamation?

Mr. Caldwell: Our direction is one to encourage efficiencies where they make sense and work in partnership with school divisions to come up with solutions that are most appropriate for the divisions in question.

Winnipeg Development Agreement Expenditures

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs on equity and fiscal management. It is, of course, important for the government of Manitoba to seek a balance in support inside and outside the Perimeter. Given reports that much of the funds in the five-year WDA agreement from April '95 to March 2000 had not been fully expended, can the minister enlighten us in terms of what are the actual

provincial expenditures to this commitment to date? That is not commitments, but what are the actual expenditures?

Hon. Jean Friesen (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I would like to thank the honourable member for giving me notice of this question yesterday when he began to raise the issue. The information that I have is that the total WDA commitments to October 31, 1999, are at 86 percent. That is \$21 million, and in the expenditures for October 31, 1999, it is about \$13 million and, hence, 53 percent. I think the member might want to compare that to the civic and to the federal expenditures, and I expect he will do so in his second question.

Mr. Gerrard: My supplemental to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs: the \$13 million I presume out of \$25 million, with virtually 90 percent of the time expired, can the minister provide an understanding or the reason why so little of this total commitment in proportion to the time passed has actually been spent? Was this due to the fact that there were only 14 departmental staff to deal with this issue and not enough focus by the previous government?

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, as the member for River Heights knows, much of this issue remains with the previous government.

The federal expenditures were spent relatively quickly, and I am given to understand that that was because much of the federal expenditure was in existing programs. The provincial expenditures and the civic expenditures have been at a slower rate, but I can assure you that by the expiry date of this agreement those funds will be committed. They will be committed to the issues that are affecting Winnipeggers, particularly the inner city.

I would like to assure the honourable member that we have a very different vision of the inner city from the previous government.

Mr. Gerrard: My second supplementary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs: perhaps you can enlighten us on your plans for expenditures, given the critical needs with child poverty, inner city housing, aboriginal initiatives and problems with arson.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for that question because it does give me the opportunity, as a previous minister used to say, to talk about our vision for the inner city. I would like to assure the House that it is not the vision that we saw from the previous government during the election.

I remember very well the advertisement that they had during—no, I guess it was a press conference that there was during the last election. It was the former Premier and the former Minister of Justice with guard dogs—leather jackets and guard dogs, I remember. I think probably one of the best moments I had during the campaign was when I mentioned that to a Tory acquaintance, friend indeed. I said: what on earth do you think they are doing with that particular press conference? He said to me, well, I think that we are giving a more progressive image to the Tories. That was, I think, one of the best—[interjection] Yes.

But, Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that guard dogs and video cameras on every street corner in the inner city are not the way that this government is going to go. We are going to build on the strengths of the people of the inner city. We are going to rebuild the housing, and we are going to make that commitment that that government never made.

Education System Administration Costs

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, earlier in his response to my question, the Minister of Education talked about consulting with student unions when I asked the question about education administration. The question had to do with the cut promised by the NDP in their details regarding education administration.

My question to the Minister of Education: how is it that he is going to cut education administration costs by \$3.5 million in the schools of this province in the year 2000?

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, we have been having an extensive series of consultations and dialogues with our partners in the post-secondary sector.

In fact, today, already, I have had the opportunity to meet with Constance Rooke, the president of the University of Winnipeg, and Paul Ruest, the president of the Collège Universitaire de Saint-Boniface. We have had extensive dialogue, something that is new to the experience of those particular presidents of those post-secondary institutions, and as the course of our ongoing consultation and dialogue progresses, the answer to the question of the member opposite will become clear.

Mr. Derkach: Well, Mr. Speaker, the commitment was made by the NDP in the details that they shared with the media. Is the minister not aware of the details that were shared with the media regarding the cuts in administration in education?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the details that members opposite are waving around in the House—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, those details did not include the fantasy of \$1 billion but did include the revenue projections from the 1999 budget. What a mistake we made to believe members opposite in terms of those projections because, when we came into office, we did not know about SmartHealth; we did not know about Faneuil; we did not know about frozen food; we did not know about overexpenditures in education. We did not know about a number of things that they withheld from the public.

Mr. Speaker, the real symbol of members opposite was to pay \$17 million because a boondoggle that they entered into—they did not want that to go public, and so they further advanced \$17 million of public money. We will be proud to come forward with our budget in the year 2000, but we will be coming forward with the revised numbers because of the fact that members opposite did not tell the people the truth about overspending.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, since the Premier has decided to answer the question, I want to ask the Premier if he would share with the House

and with Manitobans the details of the cut, not the expenditure but the cut, in education administration of \$3.5 million for the year 2000 that they shared with the media.

* (1410)

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, we have already reduced the number of deputy ministers in the Department of Education. We have reduced the number of cabinet ministers. We have reduced the number of deputy ministers. We have reduced the number of special assistants. We have reduced the number of executive assistants.

Mr. Speaker, we have taken initiatives now to cancel the—[interjection] Let me finish the answer. If members opposite would like to—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the decision on Grade 3—[interjection] Yes, the number was \$3.5 million. The decision on Grade 3 exams will save money for the people of Manitoba. So we are well on our way, in the 65 days or so since we have been sworn in, to meeting our targets, and I am confident by the time our budget is released in this Chamber in the year 2000 we will meet the projections that we have contained within that document.

Aboriginal Gaming Policy Expansion

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): I would like to ask some questions to the minister responsible for gaming. The First Nations of Manitoba expressed a desire to own and operate casinos. We know that there is disagreement in some of the communities for casino expansion, including even disagreement within the First Nations communities themselves.

Could the minister explain how the provincial government intends to facilitate the expansion of the gaming while balancing the needs of the diversion interests of the communities?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Just wanted a quick

comment with regard to the issue. I have mentioned previously—I guess I could ask members opposite to refer to Hansard because I am going to repeat my answer with regard to consultation between First Nations communities and other individuals. There is a partnership developing in this province, and what we are trying to do is go hand in hand. We are trying to provide help today and hope for tomorrow for First Nations people.

We keep telling members opposite about the opportunities, whether it be economic development and so on. There is consultation taking place, and when there is something to say with regard to any agreements in place, I will be pleased to share with members opposite as well as my own caucus with regard to those items.

Referendums

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): A supplement to the same minister. Will referendums be held in both the First Nations communities and the communities surrounding the communities? The members have mentioned that they are using the Saskatchewan model which does have referendums. This has been referred to in the House by the ministers. Now are they asking for the same type of treatment for referendums within the aboriginal communities and the communities surrounding the aboriginal community?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Once again, thank you for the question, to the member opposite. Just with regard to consultation taking place between communities right now and First Nations people, there is a lot of consultation taking place between a number of communities. There have been a number of communities who have approached First Nations people with regard to casinos and so on, and that is their right. They are negotiating, and they are trying to talk to First Nations people about potential investment and so on within their community and possible spin-offs and so on.

On-Reserve Casinos

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): A final supplement to the same minister. In the Bostrom report that he has made reference to, there is a clear

indication that the casinos are referred to as on-reserve casinos. Is this the position and the policy of this NDP government of today?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): In response to the final question from the member opposite with regard to casinos, I just mentioned previously about how a number of different communities are in consultation right now with First Nations communities. What I would like to just ask the member—I guess maybe I should not ask him this. A former colleague of theirs, Jim Ernst, is working for a First Nations community, hoping that this First Nations community will be a recipient of one of those casinos, as is their right to consult with whomever they want and deal with a number of different issues with regard to their area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Aboriginal Gaming Policy Request for Proposals

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Speaker, we have asked both the minister of native affairs and the minister of gaming, Consumer and Corporate Affairs, several questions and many times responses come back that they are working in consultation and in discussion with the involved communities.

My question for the minister is: is the minister fast-tracking destination casinos with completed RFPs as early as tomorrow, December 15?

Hon. Eric Robinson (Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs): Further to the question from the member, Mr. Speaker, we are making every attempt to make First Nations people trusting of the government. It has been a hard process to have the First Nations peoples' trust restored in government and how government works.

We have made every effort to have a serious dialogue with the First Nations communities, as represented by the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. We anticipate that we will come to a conclusion and agreement in due course, and when we have that opportunity, when we come to that conclusion, I am certain we will take the opportunity of advising all Manitobans and members of this House.

Consultation Committee

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Speaker, will the minister follow the Bostrom report and have a five-person consultation committee and not a two-person committee?

Hon. Eric Robinson (Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs): The Bostrom report, including some of the questions raised by the member for Southdale (Mr. Reimer), refers to a number of questions that have been raised by members of the opposition. The Bostrom report is being used as a guide by the government of Manitoba and by the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. Based on that, we hope that an agreement will be forthcoming for the benefit of First Nations people to begin addressing long-standing issues, including housing, economic development, education and many other social problems that First Nations communities endure.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Law Enforcement Officer

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): It is with great respect that I rise in the House today to honour law enforcement officers in Manitoba. Having spent 12 years at Child Find Manitoba working alongside these dedicated men and women, I would like to publicly recognize these everyday heroes. They have gained my everlasting respect.

Whether it is the members of the Winnipeg Police Service, the Brandon Police Service, municipal police forces or the members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, law enforcement officers make an invaluable contribution to our province. Through their daily duties, officers are working to make Manitoba a safer place for all of us. Regardless of whether it is dealing with domestic disputes, addressing a group of school children, preventing crimes or bringing an armed conflict to a peaceful resolution, police officers are dedicated to helping Manitobans. Too often, their contribution goes unnoticed. Each day when they put on their uniforms and go to work, police officers are

taking a risk. They do not know what their day will bring or what challenges they will face.

* (1420)

I would also like to recognize the tremendous sacrifices the families of Manitoba police officers make on behalf of our safety. They are the ones who see their sons and daughters, their brothers and sisters, their mothers and fathers, their husbands and wives go out every day to ensure Manitoba is a better and safer place for us all.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to commend all of Manitoba's law enforcement officers and their families and to say thank you. I would like to wish them all the best of the season and hope that their new year is filled with peace, health and happiness. Thank you.

Flora Place

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the residents of Flora Place for their successful fight to keep their homes and beginning the process of rebuilding their neighbourhood. Last year, Manitoba Housing Authority decided to board up houses as they became vacant, with the result that, by January, only 33 homes were still occupied. The government plan was to demolish the 67 vacant homes. This plan vastly underestimated the determination of the tenants and their attachment to their homes and their neighbours. With assistance from CEDA and a legal aid certificate, Flora Place residents fought back. The plan to demolish the homes was put on hold and a task force was struck to prepare new plans for Flora Place.

The Flora Place Housing Development Study recommends that the residents wishing to remain be acknowledged and recognized, and they be clustered in rehabilitated homes to form a cluster at the eastern end of Flora Place. It also recommended that consideration be given to redeveloping the rest of Flora Place with housing possibly for seniors, veterans, persons with disabilities, a personal care home, or co-op housing.

I particularly want to congratulate Julia Segal and Harold Millitaire, the co-chairs of the Flora Place Tenants Association, for all their hard work and leadership. I am sure that they and the tenants thought that they were going to collapse from exhaustion from all the meetings they attended.

The Flora Place tenants' success was celebrated by a victory party on November 27, 1999, which was attended by the former Minister of Housing, the current Minister of Housing and many friends and supporters of the tenants.

It is my hope that the City of Winnipeg and the Province of Manitoba will continue to work co-operatively with the residents of Flora Place as they rebuild their homes and their community.

Firefighters

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to bring to the attention of the House the work of an important group of people in our community. On a regular basis these individuals place the lives of others ahead of their own. I am referring to the firefighters in our province. The job of fighting fires and saving lives is a dangerous one. Every day presents new challenges and risks. This is not a job for everyone. I am certainly thankful for those who choose a career in this hazardous line of work. Firefighters do not always receive the recognition they deserve for the outstanding job they do. We take comfort in the fact that if the unthinkable occurs we will be in good hands. With the recent increases in arson that Winnipeg has experienced, their commitment should serve as reassurance to all of us.

We cannot forget that firefighters also play an important educational role within our communities. Various neighbourhood events and awareness programs, such as prior fire prevention campaigns are carried out by fire departments across this province. As well, we are all familiar with the charities that are supported by firefighters, like Koats for Kids. I am proud to acknowledge the tremendous danger that firefighters incur on a daily basis. I encourage all Manitobans to congratulate firefighters and their families for the valuable contributions they make in our communities.

Ramadan

Ms. Linda Asper (Riel): Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba Islamic Association built the Islamic Centre, located in Riel constituency, to serve its multiethnic community throughout Winnipeg. I was invited to share a meal with the Islamic community at the centre on Sunday, December 12, 1999. Now is the holiest month of the Islamic calendar and the most revered holiday, the month of Ramadan. I was very honoured to break the fast with the community, many who live in Riel, and to visit its place of worship.

The program commenced with the breaking of fast at sunset, 4:27 p.m., with refreshments, followed by the evening prayer, then a welcome address by Mr. Siddiqui, president of the Manitoba Islamic Association. Dinner followed, an opportunity for us as guests to interact with our hosts. I was pleased to bring greetings on behalf of my constituents to a growing and important minority in Manitoba.

Let us wish the Muslims of Manitoba a happy and peaceful Ramadan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Portage la Prairie Public Library

Mr. David Faurchou (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, Portage la Prairie residents gathered December 4, 1999, to officially open a new landmark within the city of Portage la Prairie, the new city library. The city library in Portage la Prairie is now Manitoba's largest public library outside of Winnipeg. It is, as well, the most technologically advanced public library in all the province.

I am extremely proud to congratulate Library Board Chairperson Eva Shewchuk, as well as Librarian Percy Gregoire-Voskamp, who collectively, with their board and staff, put together the plans through careful consideration and planning towards this new library.

Mr. Speaker, this library was opened at a cost of \$1.1 million borne by the City of Portage la Prairie. The new city library is a cornerstone of the new Heritage Square. I am very pleased to say that this facility is there to serve all residents of Portage la Prairie. Some three years

ago, it saw the deficiencies of the current library, and it was decided that more than 1,000 extra square feet were required to offer the space for the library books that we would need in the future and for the future of our residents in Portage la Prairie.

As well, I would like to compliment the vision of the city fathers who saw fit to finance this project. I was there at the opening. I would also like to pay special tribute to former Mayor Karen Devine who at that opening cut the ribbon with the same scissors which she, when mayor in the early '70s, cut the same ribbon. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

House Business

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I understand then that, if you canvassed the House, there would be leave for the following.

First of all, report stage of Bill 2, followed by third reading of Bill 2. I understand His Honour could be available around 3 p.m. this afternoon for Royal Assent; second of all, the recall motion for the House for the new year will be moved; thirdly, the motion on the Order Paper regarding Legislative Counsel will be moved; and, fourthly, I understand that there is leave to introduce a motion regarding the Clerk of the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave? [agreed]

REPORT STAGE

Bill 2—The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act

Hon. Jean Friesen (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh), that Bill 2, The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg, reported from the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

* (1430)

THIRD READINGS

Bill 2—The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): By leave, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Friesen), that Bill 2, The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg), be now read a third time and passed.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave? [agreed]

Motion presented.

Hon. Jean Friesen (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I just want to put some final word on Hansard about this bill, and I want to thank the committee for their work this morning.

I particularly want to thank the Mayor of Winnipeg who came to support this bill at a time that is a busy time for the City of Winnipeg. The mayor spoke quite eloquently, as he always does, on the importance of such a tool in the City of Winnipeg for dealing with the issue of properties which have had orders against them and which have not been met.

Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize to members of the House that this is one tool in a whole range of tools that cities and municipalities need in dealing with many issues within their jurisdiction, whether it is health, whether it is housing, or whether it is the more broadly framed nuisance issues. I want to point out to members that this amendment has been suggested by both the mayor, by councils of City Council, as well as by community organizations. I think that is a very important thing to notice about this particular amendment, that it has been driven by people who have experienced issues in the neighbourhood and who believe that this can help them.

I want to emphasize too that we do not believe that this is something which in itself is going to turn around or revitalize the inner city neighbourhoods of Winnipeg. It is simply one tool. The task of revitalizing the inner city, of

bringing strength to those neighbourhoods and to those community organizations, is one that is going to take a long time. It is not something that happens overnight, nor is it single dimensional. It is going to require the effort of all levels of government, of communities, of individuals, and it is going to take place across a number of areas, in housing, in recreation, in infrastructure, and also in education and training.

The purpose of this amendment is that it enables the city to register orders against a property. Once the order for repair has been complied with, it also requires the city to remove that order. That is where we want to get to, to protect neighbourhoods in Winnipeg, to rebuild housing, to ensure that housing for the citizens of Winnipeg is safe and healthy throughout the city.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is third reading of Bill 2. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Mr. Mackintosh: I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture and Food (Ms. Wowchuk), that when the House adjourns today, it shall stand adjourned until a time fixed by Mr. Speaker upon the request of the government.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Mackintosh: I move, seconded by the Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Sale),

THAT, in the case of all bills referred to committees of this House during the present Legislature and proceeding to enactment, Legislative Counsel be given the authority to take the following steps at any point before publication of the Acts:

(a) change all section numbers and internal references necessary to give effect to

amendments to bills adopted by this House and its committees; and

(b) without in any way altering the intended legal meaning, make minor changes to bills to correct obvious errors, like spelling, numbering, cross-referencing and capitalization errors, and to correct punctuation and formatting that is not consistent with Manitoba style.

THAT the Legislative Counsel be required to mark all changes made pursuant to this authority in red ink in the affected blue bills as soon as possible after the end of the session.

Motion agreed to.

W.H. (Binx) Remnant

Mr. Mackintosh: By leave, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau), that

"WHEREAS W.H. (Binx) Remnant has provided devoted and exemplary public service to members as the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly for 17 years;

"THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly express its appreciation to W.H. (Binx) Remnant for his years of service; and

"THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly extend to Mr. Remnant the privilege of access to the Loges of the House."

Motion presented.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, I, for one, have known Binx for over 17 years, and I have never known Binx to have ever been ill until yesterday and today. I am just so pleased that he came down here today. I understand there is a horrid flu going around this town, and I guess he has fallen to that. Perhaps it was the excitement of the great moments last week in this building when people from as far away as the Senate in Ottawa and Speakers as far back as 1970, former Speakers of this House and members—I recall Bud Sherman was there. I have not seen Bud for many, many years. Former Premier Sterling Lyon and, of course, the Premier (Mr. Doer) and the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Filmon) were

there. I think for all of those in attendance, it was a very important moment to reflect on the contributions of one person to the province of Manitoba in this democratic institution.

I suppose that we can reflect in this House on some of the more memorable moments that Binx has had in his tenure here. I was not in the Chamber for several of those years, but I certainly have very distinct recollections of the bell-ringing crisis, of the French language services crisis in this Legislature. Of course, that was a matter that revolved around the interpretation of the rules, in particular the rules about bell-ringing. It was a very difficult time for all of those at the table, I being one at the time.

It was a few weeks ago when Binx stopped me in the hall and said you have just got to see what I found in the office. When I stopped in there, he was very pleased to pull out a photograph reproduced from the front page of the Winnipeg Free Press back in, what, 1982 or '84. There was myself and Binx standing up by the recording station here, and the headline underneath was: Running on empty, because here we are in our daily service with no member in sight.

I think it had gone on for 10 or 12 days where the bells rang continuously in this building. The Legislature had to be staffed, so there were shifts. I recall myself sitting here, and I think the Sergeant-at-Arms was having a nap in the loges. Those were days I do not know if they bring back a nervous twitch or not, but, certainly, those moments cemented a relationship that I have enjoyed with Binx ever since. I have respected him before he came here, and I have respected him to an increasing degree since he has arrived.

* (1440)

I might add that perhaps it is in one way just as well that Binx is retiring because in the course of the presentations the other day there was reference made to how difficult it is working with House leaders, so perhaps it is good that our friendship is preserved, and I can continue as House Leader, and we can continue our friendship.

I also recall the difficult moments we had as there were a series of no-confidence motions made, and then Speaker Walding, which made it all very challenging from the point of view of sitting at the table. Of course, then, there was the Meech Lake accord and the Meech Lake crisis which really revolved around matters in this Chamber. Former Speaker Rocan, of course, played a role there, as did myself, but, notably, the Speaker of the House. Then, more recently, was the MTS debate in this House. So I think that there certainly is a lot of material there for memoirs, but at least for today there are memories.

I also want to thank the Clerk for agreeing to stay on past his agreed-on time for retirement. It was very important, we thought, that the continuity be maintained as we began the new government's role in the Legislative Assembly. I thank Binx for agreeing to give of his own time, to his continuing in office until adjournment of the pre-Christmas sittings.

Mr. Remnant, or Binx, has served under five Speakers, and I do not know how many Deputy Speakers, and, of course, countless numbers of committee Chairs. I think that his devotion to his duties has been, as stated in the resolution, exemplary. We have all enjoyed not only his great professionalism, his fantastic knowledge of the rules, which, I think, is unsurpassed, most likely in Canada, if not the Commonwealth, but as well his friendship, his sense of humour.

In every way, Binx, we salute you. We thank you for all of your years of service and outstanding service. Thank you very much.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): I just wanted to put a few words on the record. I do not have the same extent that the honourable member, the House Leader, has of a history with Binx, but mine goes back 10 years now to 1990. I must say, Mr. Speaker, that it is a history that I will not forget, and it is 10 years that I will not forget, because of the training that he gave me and understanding for this building which I will treasure forever.

Mr. Speaker, it is not only the moments that I had in here, but there are other moments that I would like to just touch on. There is one thing

that I guess Binx has always had, his 57 people that he was serving, 57 people who thought they were his bosses, and sometimes Binx looked like he was running in 57 different directions. Well, we all knew that Binx was the boss. I think today is the day to recognize that, so, Binx, thank you for always giving me the direction, even though I did not always take it. It usually proved that you were right when I had to stand up in the House and apologize the next day.

I would also like to thank Binx that during the 1997 flood he was the oldest sandbagger we had. He was known as a sandbagger too, but the days that he came out and we saw him side by side with the people on the sidelines taking the bags. We actually introduced him that day as the oldest member; the oldest sandbagger of the bunch, I think, was 92 years of age or something like that. Binx took it with where it come from, me. His humour was always on top of it, and, as my mother-in-law would put it, it was along the lines of British comedy—dry.

I think in some cases I needed a dictionary just to try and figure out why I was laughing at his jokes. In some cases I laughed at them, but I did not understand them. The things that he has told me about his history I have enjoyed. Binx, I would like to say thank you. On behalf of my colleagues on this side of the House and myself personally and my family Winni, Lanee and Amanda, they have all appreciated you.

Thank you, Binx, for your long years of service, and may your retirement be enjoyable and may you catch some short fish.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I rise in support of this motion, Mr. Speaker, though my acquaintance with Binx Remnant has not been of all that long duration. Certainly by reputation for many years and personal experience over a shorter period, I have come to have a great deal of admiration for the wisdom of Binx Remnant and his caring for history and tradition in this Legislature, as well as in others.

I would make one comment. After being elected and coming to talk with Binx about some discussions that I was having with members of the other parties, Binx, in his wisdom, said: Well, you know, this might happen or this might

happen, but one thing is for sure. You can never guess the outcome ahead of time, because you are always going to come up against the unexpected coming from the other parties.

Certainly, that has been my experience to date, and I am sure that sort of wisdom will help in the future.

I want to provide a strong compliment, good wishes from constituents in River Heights, from members on behalf of members of the Liberal Party throughout Manitoba. A compliment on an incredible career, a wonderful contribution to Manitoba and to Canada, and to wish you not only the best of the season but many happy and fulfilling years to come.

Point of Order

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Highways and Government Services): Mr. Speaker, I want to rise on a point of order.

Beauchesne Citation—I have never used this citation before—[interjection] It is not 417. I gave up using that when we became government, but I want to rise under Citation 221, Duties, The Clerk. I will not read the full citation into the record.

I want to confess that, on occasion, I may have been on thin ice before on the occasional point of order that maybe was not quite a point of order. Normally, on a point of order, and I want to be up front on this, one calls to the attention breaches on procedure in the House. I am actually not doing that because if you read Beauchesne Citation 221 and the 15 subsections thereafter in terms of the role of the Clerk, I just want to put on the record that Binx Remnant not only met all 15, and we have heard reference to Binx's long time in service before. I guess I am the one person on this side for whom 17 years does not sound like a long period of time, and I have actually sat with Binx. I even know what it is like to have a Clerk other than Binx. But, you know, Binx has always gone above and beyond the call of duty.

* (1450)

Having produced a fair number of points of order—a fair number which were actually in

order—over the years in my 10 years as Opposition House Leader, I want to put on the record that I think I speak for all members of this House in saying how much we appreciate Binx Remnant's service and particularly his integrity. I have seen some of the toughest situations in this House that anyone could ever imagine, and I know the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) has seen those and the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Filmon), and all of us have seen very difficult situations develop in this House. But you know one thing I never questioned in the most difficult moment we ever faced in this House was the integrity of our Clerk and, under his leadership, the integrity of the staff of this Legislature.

I want to say on a personal basis that this is a real honour I think, Binx, for you, but it is an honour for us to be able to recognize you as we will. You will be the only person other than former members of the House and members of Parliament to sit in the loge and, as not only the longest-serving Clerk in the Commonwealth, the person I would say with unmatched integrity. I am proud to be able to support this motion. I want to say on the record I enjoyed working with you, and I know that we will see you around in other ways.

I wear my Territories tie, by the way. It is now Nunavut but I know your close connection there, and I know the Speaker does. We have pretty good fishing lakes in northern Manitoba as well. So it is not goodbye, but, even though I know what it is like to be in a House without you as the Clerk, to a certain extent I still cannot imagine what it is going to be like when we resume sitting, because we will miss you, Binx, and I will miss you a lot personally.

* * *

Mr. Denis Rocan (Carman): Mr. Speaker, I hesitate somewhat standing here this afternoon to put a few remarks on the record on this resolution that has come forward before the House. At the outset of my comments, I would like to say that I am not supporting this resolution. Mr. Remnant, right about now, is floored and flabbergasted, as some of you might think; but, having spent many years with Mr. Remnant, he is right now thinking through his

mind: I knew it; there is always something that can go wrong.

We, on several occasions, and I say we, a very dear and close friend of mine, Mr. Binx Remnant, spent many, many hours, late evenings trying to figure out what was going to happen in this Legislature. For a little bit of food for thought for those of you who are unaware, when I first became Speaker of this Assembly, one of the jobs, duties, functions and roles of the table officers was to actually go through the newspaper clippings. They would go through the research articles that both sides of the House were using and they would put together a list of issues that might come forward today, so you, the Speaker, would have an opportunity to have a head up on what was actually going to maybe happen today.

Well, I recall the first two weeks, I recall vividly, let me tell you, a brand-new kid on the block and sitting in that illustrious Chair that you so look after today, Mr. Speaker, but in those two weeks time I do not think there was one issue that ever came to bear. I said to Binx and company one day, you know, Binx, what the hell are we doing here? I said, you know, we are wasting our time. I like to fly by the seat of my pants, and I think this would be a good occasion to dump this. Binx sort of agreed with me.

We went on just to fly by the seat of our pants, never knowing what to expect. As indeed the member for Thompson has just said, there have been some very trying times and issues that have actually faced this Legislature. We have dealt with them in an orderly manner, but because you never knew what to expect, and Binx would tell me that day after day after day. We would watch the House leaders and we would watch them negotiate back and forth, and then every now and again, Binx, in his usual manner, two steps, and he is right up there by the big Chair. It was always, I told you so, I told you so, I told you so.

Yes, you did tell me so, Mr. Remnant, you told me several times. I said that facetiously, I guess, because if my caucus so decides to support this resolution, we will do it. It is just the nature of what we do. Indeed, I believe, as the member for Thompson also has stated, you will

be the only other individual who would have that luxury to enter this Chamber.

Mr. Remnant would have grasped what the English language would say, something to the effect, he would be the only commoner who actually would come into this Chamber. That is where we all originally started, as the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) would say. We as elected officials have the luxury of walking into any jurisdiction in the Commonwealth, because we are an elected official and because we belong to this dear CPA, the Commonwealth. They come to this province and we allow them that courtesy and that luxury.

I have travelled to every province and every legislature in this country, and always at my side was my dear friend, Mr. Binx Remnant. I will recall vividly every moment that we walked into a jurisdiction and how I thought I was supposed to be the kingpin and everybody would flow to Mr. Remnant and say: what is happening in your jurisdiction? I was only the mouthpiece of the individual who was always at my side.

We attended many, many conferences together. Indeed, when I was a director of the Commonwealth, I was very fortunate also to have Mr. Remnant at my side because, as we all know, Mr. Remnant is the biggest, the strongest supporter of the CPA. The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, indeed, should be proud of the fact that Mr. Remnant was here in all his time in his tenure because of the proud supporter that he was. His grasp of the English language is second to none.

I had the good fortune one day to sit and have tea and crumpets with the then Speaker of the House of Commons, British Commonwealth, Westminster, Mr. Remnant at my side as usual, and Mr. Remnant, the conversation that he carried on with the individuals. He always knew which button to push and whom to see.

He would take you, Mr. Speaker, and you are going to miss him. I tell you right now, you will miss him, because his knowledge of each and every one of us—I say us, legislators in the Commonwealth—he is aware of each and every one of them. He knows their roles, their duty and their functions, and he knows them on a

personal basis. Mr. Remnant can grab the phone at any given time and, indeed, it is his name that carries him forward: Binx Remnant. There is only one Binx Remnant.

I can say here today I am proud of the fact that I can say that Binx Remnant was a very dear and close friend of mine. We have travelled far, and we have travelled hard miles. With Binx, we were able to survive. So congratulations to you once again, and have a great retirement and a Merry Christmas.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is:

"WHEREAS W.H. (Binx) Remnant has provided devoted and exemplary public service to members as the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly for 17 years;

"THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly express its appreciation to W.H. (Binx) Remnant for his years of service; and

"THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly extend to Mr. Remnant the privilege of access to the Loges of the House."

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

* (1500)

Mr. Mackintosh: On a matter of House business, I understand that His Honour is now available.

ROYAL ASSENT

The Acting Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms (Mr. Dennis Huyda): His Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

His Honour Peter Liba, Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Manitoba, having entered the House and being seated on the throne, Mr. Speaker addressed His Honour the Lieutenant Governor in the following words:

Mr. Speaker: May it please Your Honour:

The Legislative Assembly, at its present session, passed a bill, which, in the name of the Assembly, I present to Your Honour and to which bill we respectfully request Your Honour's assent:

Bill 2—The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg

Madam Clerk Assistant (Patricia Chaychuk): In Her Majesty's name, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, doth assent to this bill.

His Honour was then pleased to retire.

Mr. Speaker: Please be seated.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Before I adjourn, Mr. Speaker, I wish everyone a wonderful Christmas, Hanukkah and a great New Year, and, above all else, let us enjoy our families.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett), that this House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: The House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until a time fixed by Mr. Speaker upon the request of the government.

Happy New Year to everyone, and Merry Christmas.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

December 14, 1999

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