

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, 28 May, 1986.

Time — 2:00 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER by Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER, Hon. M. Phillips: Presenting Petitions . . . Reading and Receiving Petitions . . . Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees . . .

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, as members are aware, the Western Premiers' Conference begins tomorrow in Swan River.

The agenda was announced last week.

The first item is agriculture and renewable resources.

The second is trade, and

The third is western development, diversification and employment.

Agriculture is at the top of the agenda for this conference — and that is where it should be.

A year ago, the Western Premiers, at Manitoba's suggestion, began a concerted effort to get the agricultural situation onto the national agenda — and to place it high on that agenda.

Canadians in other parts of the country now understand better just how important a healthy farm community is to their own well-being and to the entire national economy.

Since that time, we have seen action by the Federal Government and by Provincial Governments. Just last week, our own Budget announced details of several initiatives in the agricultural sector.

But — there are limits on what individual governments can do on their own — particularly small provinces such as Manitoba, with limited financial resources.

The root causes of the farm crisis go well beyond our jurisdiction. The bulk of the problems are national and international in scope — particularly a devastating commodity price war between the United States and the European Economic Community.

These circumstances make it even more essential that all governments co-operate wherever we can.

Farmers across the west are naturally concerned about the cutbacks in federal agricultural programs recommended in the Nielsen Report. Obviously, we want to discuss Nielsen and the need for the Government of Canada to live up to its responsibilities, but we also want to talk about positive approaches for working better with the Federal Government.

I am sure we would all support stepped-up federal efforts to mediate in the international grain export war. Obviously, an accord is needed to restrict practices such as predatory pricing and massive export subsidies.

And, we continue to believe that domestic income stabilization programs have to be strengthened. The Western Premiers have talked about this problem in

the past and our concerns haven't yet been addressed in a satisfactory way.

Clearly, what we need is a comprehensive national farm recovery policy which includes adequate immediate action and measures to ensure viability and greater stability for Canadian farmers over the long term.

The second item on our agenda in Swan River is trade.

Next Monday night, the First Ministers will be meeting in Ottawa to discuss the Canada-U.S. trade negotiations. It's no secret that the provinces have been growing increasingly concerned about an apparent reluctance on the part of the Federal Government to fulfill its November 1985 commitment to "full provincial participation" in the negotiation process.

But now, in light of the events of the last few days, I am hopeful that the Prime Minister will recognize just how essential a united, consensus position on trade will be to protecting Canada's interests.

We have to stand together.

Last summer, we in Manitoba felt the impact of U.S. protectionism at the state level through import restrictions on hogs. Now, B.C. has been hurt — and additional measures are being threatened.

It is more important than ever that we get the provincial participation issue resolved, and get on with the job of working out the mandate for our trade negotiators — as well as satisfactory arrangements for ratification, if and when a new trade agreement is worked out.

The third item on our agenda, Western Development, Diversification and Employment — covers a wide range of issues.

Last year, for example, Western Premiers released strong statements on such related issues as transportation, investment, and the need for national tax reform. We also expressed serious concern about the negative economic and budgetary impact, especially for smaller provinces like Manitoba, of federal transfer payment cutbacks for Health and Post-Secondary Education — concerns which we repeated at the Annual Premiers' Conference in Newfoundland, and at the First Ministers' meeting in Halifax in November.

I expect those issues to come up again, and we will probably also deal with several other matters, including training and telecommunications.

I think the time is right for us to have a wide-ranging, general discussion of western development opportunities over the medium term.

Western Canada is still far too vulnerable to the "boom and bust" cycles associated with over-reliance on single industries and single resources.

Manitoba is relatively fortunate in that we have a more stable, a more balanced economy than those of our western neighbours, but we are also relatively small, and we can be just as vulnerable to the impact of international market conditions and insensitive national policies.

It has now been 13 years since the Federal Government committed itself to working with western

provinces to achieve greater diversification in Western Canada. The Prime Minister of the Day called the one-and-only Western Economic Opportunities Conference in the summer of 1973, and, for a while, some positive steps were being undertaken on a joint basis by federal-provincial governments.

But that co-operative approach wasn't followed up in a systematic way. The momentum was lost, and now, I think, we must find other ways of restoring that momentum.

I think that another "Western Economic Summit" — involving the Prime Minister and the Premiers of the four western provinces — may be an ideal time, and a time that we should undertake one again. I will certainly be exploring that and other proposals with my colleagues in Swan River.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I thank the First Minister for his statement on the impending Western Premiers' Conference in Swan River. There are a number of items that he has put forward in his statement that I think bear commentary, because it seems as though the Premier is intent on following the same path that he has been following for many months, if not years, of trying to force off all of his problems on Ottawa and trying to talk co-operation, yet practice confrontation.

It seems to me, Madam Speaker, that all of the things he says here don't stand the test of truth when we look at them in the light of day, to see that he has suggested that his administration has taken such a forceful action in agriculture, in attempting to solve the problems of agriculture and to compare that to the real action that has been taken in the Budget that was just released last Thursday evening by the Minister of Finance.

Madam Speaker, he talks about the initiatives, the major initiatives that have been taken — significant new initiatives that his administration has taken — in the field of agriculture, yet all we see is loan money for the farmers who are troubled, beleaguered, and already drowning in a sea of debt. He is offering them more loan money, Madam Speaker.

My colleague, the Member for Arthur, later today will be making the significant comparisons between what this administration has chosen as its priorities with respect to agriculture and what is necessarily needed, Madam Speaker, by the people in agriculture today.

But the Premier goes further in his statement and he suggests that the root causes of the farm prices go well beyond our jurisdiction, suggesting that they ought to be solved by action in Ottawa.

Well, Madam Speaker, I would hope that he is going to this conference, not only to speak, but to listen, to listen to the Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan, to find out what they have done for their agriculture sector. Because, Madam Speaker, what he will find out is that those two provinces have not just said that this is a problem that Ottawa has to solve. Those two provinces have taken the responsibility to offer significant initiatives on their own to their farmers. I suggest that he listen and learn that Alberta has put

forward a special assistance program for this year alone in excess of \$200 million to its farmers; that Saskatchewan has put forward a special assistance program, over and above its normal budget for this year alone, to its farmers of in excess of \$100 million. He will find that they are taking initiatives to reduce the burden on cost of the farmers of Alberta and Saskatchewan and to leave them in a much more competitive position than the farmers of Manitoba because of the inaction and the totally inept handling of the farm crisis in Manitoba by this administration, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, he talks in terms of full provincial participation in the discussions on trade. I have asked him on a number of occasions whether he would not have a committee of this Legislature go throughout the province and listen to the people of Manitoba and, indeed, the significant interest groups in Manitoba, before going forward to Ottawa with our position on free trade. Madam Speaker, he will not do that; he will not take that initiative and he will not extend the same courtesy to the people and the significant interest groups of Manitoba that he is asking the Federal Government to extend to him. But I compliment the Federal Government for including the the provinces, for allowing this Premier to be involved in the setting of trade policy with respect to the country as a whole, and Manitoba in particular.

Madam Speaker, he refers to the various indications that we've had of concerns with respect to trade in this country, the limits that are being put forward with respect to cedar shakes today, with respect to hogs last year. Those are examples of why we need to have better trade relations with our American neighbours, better opportunities to expand the markets for our products, not only across the country, but in Manitoba in particular. Those significant requirements, on the part of Manitoba producers, will result in more markets and more opportunities for them; and Manitoba, I would hope, is going to be arguing that Manitoba should have those increased market opportunities for its producers. I would hope that that's part of the position he'll be taking, but we don't know what position he'll be taking, Madam Speaker, because he has not allowed that position to be aired publicly here in Manitoba prior to going.

Madam Speaker, throughout this statement, the Premier has referred to more co-operative relations with the federal administration, but he begins by talking about the cutbacks of Health and Post-Secondary Education support from Ottawa. I remind you, Madam Speaker, that in fact that is a total misrepresentation and a total dishonest statement because, in fact, those cutbacks are increases in support from Ottawa that this administration has received and will be receiving in the future. You must begin, Madam Speaker, I would hope, by being honest, by being honest with the people that you expect to co-operate with you and to work co-operatively towards solutions that are important to the people of Manitoba.

So I thank the First Minister for that statement and I suggest to him, Madam Speaker, that he begin by getting his own House in order. He begin by laying some credibility for the statements he's going to make in Swan River and in Ottawa by telling the people of Manitoba the truth about how little he really has done

for agriculture, and telling them the truth about the transfer payment issue, and just the fact that Manitoba has received more money and will be receiving more money from Ottawa. When he begins with that base of truth, then perhaps we can have more co-operative relations with our neighbours.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of the Environment.

HON. G. LECUYER: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like to table, Madam Speaker, the Annual Report of the Manitoba Environmental Council.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Northern Affairs.

HON. H. HARAPIAK: I'd like to table the Annual Report of the Communities Economic Development Fund for the year ending 1984-85.

MADAM SPEAKER: Notices of Motion . . .
Introduction of Bills . . .

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MADAM SPEAKER: Before we move to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery where we have 30 students of Grade 11 standing from the Nellie McClung Collegiate under the direction of Mrs. Mueller, and this school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Pembina.

We have 21 students of Grade 5 standing from the Rockwood School. These students are under the direction of Miss Audrey McIntyre and the school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for River Heights.

On behalf of all the members, may I welcome you here this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Child abuse

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Thank you, Madam Speaker, my question is for the Premier.

Yesterday I asked the Premier, and I believe, as well, the Acting Minister of Community Services, about the 20 children who were identified as living in circumstances that put them at high risk of physical abuse, that identification having been acknowledged by the Minister of Community Services and Corrections, as well as professionals in the field. Can he now assure the House that the 20 children who had been identified as living in these high-risk situations have now been removed from these homes and placed in safe circumstances?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to inform the House that I've received this information

I took as notice yesterday. Of these 22 children, 12 children are currently in foster homes; one is in the custody of grandparents on the order of a court; one is in care of grandparents under agency supervision; two children are with parents — they've been abused by relatives who were babysitting, the two families are under supervision in Winnipeg; two children with mothers who have separated from fathers who were the abusers — all under supervision of the agencies, and the father under a restraining order from the court; one child living with a 19-year-old mother, and mother is in extended family and is at work training program at this time; one home with parents and the agency supervising — no current serious concern; one family requires follow-up, not seen as high risk, visit today is assured; finally, one case is transferred to a Child and Family Service.

I'm saying that there's also the negotiating — I think that was another question that was asked at the time. A contingency plan, in case of a strike, is being considered and I might say that the negotiating is progressing fairly well, satisfactory at this time.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Norbert.

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, given the statements by Dr. Charles Ferguson, the Clinical Director of the Child Protection Centre, with respect to the fact that an infant's life would be at risk if it were returned home, and a social worker is trying to return it to this situation, can the Minister inform the House whether he has investigated that situation and whether or not he will intervene to ensure that that child is not returned to that high-risk situation?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Madam Speaker, that is being looked at at this time by officials and we should have a report fairly soon.

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, given the predictions by Dr. Ferguson that more of the 34 infant children, who he is aware of and who are at risk, and whom I believe to be all under the age of 15 months, infants, that more of these children will die unless the present child welfare system is changed; is the Minister prepared to take charge and to make some of those changes that have been recommended, changes that we have advocated on this side of the House for the past number of years?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: I believe that some of the concerns — I think that this has been somewhat exaggerated. I am not saying that it is not a real concern. There have been some changes and, because of the interest of the government, these are known. The same thing as abuse for the spouses now, and also with the seniors. A few years ago these were not known and the department and the Minister is taking this very seriously and doing everything possible to protect these children.

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, would the Minister inform the House as to why half of these children who have been referred to, these 34 at-risk children, by Dr.

Ferguson, have now been returned to their homes and again are in danger in homes where they were subjected to this abuse, and are not being checked or monitored, and not sufficient resources are available to do that. Why does the government have this policy of requiring social workers to return these children to these high-risk situations?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: There is a conflict of information. I just gave the information that, of the 22 children that had been abused, the concern that we have, I explained exactly where they were. I think that it is clear that every effort is being done to protect these children.

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, I would ask, is the Minister of Health then giving the House his assurance, on behalf of the government, that these 20 at-risk situations, which were referred to on the weekend, and now it appears from Dr. Ferguson that there are 34 infants under 15 months at risk, that all of these children are in safe situations; is he giving us that assurance?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: I am certainly not going to try to play God. I am saying that everything that is being done, everything reasonable is being done to protect these children, and then the Minister will be discussing this with the doctor. I think it would be much better if these things were brought to the attention of the people responsible, instead of going to the media. We have conflicting information at this time.

Home Economics Directorate - status of

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. Recently, the department undertook to eliminate the Home Economics Directorate from the Department of Health. That action ran into considerable opposition from the community at large that uses those services, and it was subsequently put under review by the government.

My question to the Minister of Health is: at what stage is the review as to the future of the Home Economics Directorate, what stage is it at; and is it still an operative wing of government, wherein the Home Economics Directorate can still participate fully with the recipient groups that use their services?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Madam Speaker, it was always stated that the expertise would be provided to the people in the field. The decision was made to remove them from the Department of Health. There are some Home Ec. that will remain, of course, that are dealing with nutrition, and they belong in the department; others, it was felt, it was more of a community service or some of the work was done in Agriculture. The staff are still with the department at this time.

There is a study being made by the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Community Services, and the Minister responsible for the Status of Women, and a decision will be done fairly soon. There has been an assurance that the expertise will be given to the people in the field. Now I'm not saying that it will be to the satisfaction of everybody. This is being done at this time and, as soon as there is something new, it will be announced.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Then, can I take from the Minister's answer that, pending this review and decision as to where to locate the Home Economics Directorate, they are continuing to function in their normal way and able to carry out their responsibilities of providing support services to various groups throughout Manitoba?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: I see no change in the staff. I think there are six people concerned in the Department of Health. There has been no change, and there won't be any change until a final decision is done, until that study by the three Ministers that I mentioned is approved.

Tabling of Letter

MR. D. ORCHARD: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Premier. I am in receipt of the letter from a concerned individual, and I will quote an operative paragraph as my preamble, Madam Speaker, and table the letter.

This is a letter to the Premier. "The annual workshop for the 28 Field Home Economists in Health and Agriculture is to take place in Brandon starting June 3rd. This is the major program planning and training event for the coming year. The four specialists" — which we have been discussing with the Minister of Health right now — "affected have been told not to attend this important event."

Following the Minister's answer that nothing is changed within the Department of the Home Economics Directorate, can the Premier answer why these people have been refused attendance to a meeting which plans their activities for the next fiscal year?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Madam Speaker, if that decision was made, it was made by the staff in the department. Let me say that, to attend any meetings at any time, the staff of any department has to get the proper permission. So I can check in to see what the reason was for that. There was no instruction for the staff, for these people to stay there, and I'll find out more about it and give the information to the House.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Madam Speaker, my question to the Premier: will the Premier attempt to get the act together within his Cabinet Committee of the Minister of the Status of Women, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Agriculture so that the staff in the department know what this government intends to happen with the Home Economics Directorate?

On the one hand, we have the Minister of Health saying their functions can continue on; and, on the other hand, we have them being refused to attend an important planning conference. Will the Premier get

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control of his Cabinet Ministers and allow these people to function as they are being paid?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Madam Speaker, the First Minister and the Ministers are in control. I just finished explaining what the situation is and, when a decision is made, it will be announced to the House.

I might say that, in the time of my honourable friend, how many home ec workers did we have. That wasn't even considered a service.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet on a point of order.

MR. C. BAKER: No, a question.
Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member was interrupting the Honourable Minister of Health. The Honourable Minister of Health . . .

Sorry, the Honourable Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My supplementary then for the Minister of Health is: in view of the fact that he has now blamed staff within the Department of Health for the decision to refuse attendance by the Home Economics Directorate at the Brandon meeting, will he, as Minister of Health, pass the word to those responsible staff who made this erroneous decision, and allow those home economists to attend the conference in Brandon, as they have in the past?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Madam Speaker, first of all, let me say that I am not blaming staff. I am saying a decision was made by staff. I didn't know anything about . . .

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Do you want the answer, or are you going to give me the answer also?

The first time I heard about it was today. I'm going to check to see the reason why. The point that I made, that it's not automatic that people could go to any convention or anything. If they work for the department, they might be needed in the department.

Free Trade

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Madam Speaker, my question is to the First Minister.

Mr. Premier, in that your Conferences, both this weekend and next week, are going to deal with the most critical issue of free trade affecting Canada and, in particular, this province, can we be assured that, like Quebec, Ontario and Saskatchewan, you have set up expertise within your office to give you all sides of the free trade issue?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, there had been a number of initiatives that the Member for River Heights may not be aware of. Within the Department of the Minister responsible for Industry, Trade and Technology, there have been a series of meetings through the Economic Advisory Council with various constituent groups within the province, exchanging information and receiving information.

Secondly, there has been the tabling of a report which, I understand, is in the Legislative Library, by Professor Barbour pertaining to the implications of free trade insofar as the Province of Manitoba — no deletions there from either, Madam Speaker, all paragraphs included in that report.

In addition, Madam Speaker, there is continuing monitoring insofar as Manitoba is concerned as to potential implications of agreements that might be arrived at between the United States and Canada, and their particular impact upon the Province of Manitoba.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: A supplementary question, Madam Speaker, does the Premier not think it important that, because of the magnitude of this particular issue, that he in fact have an adviser at all times to be working just in this specific field?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, we do have advisers in respect to the issues pertaining to free trade within the Department of Industry, Trade and Technology that have been directly advising both the Minister and myself in regard to the free trade discussions.

I think what the Member for River Heights is referring to is the need for the province to appoint an individual to represent Manitoba insofar as the negotiations are concerned, which may include provincial representation around the table or may not, depending upon the consequences of the discussions that will take place Monday evening involving the Prime Minister and the Premiers of Canada.

The member is right, we have not appointed a negotiator to represent Manitoba around whatever the final formalization of the discussions will be.

Gasoline prices

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Riel.

MR. G. DUCHARME: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question is to Consumer and Corporate Affairs Minister. During the election, there was an announcement on February 12, 1986: "NDP promises lower gas prices for Manitobans." The Consumer and Corporate Affairs Minister announced on April 11, 1986 that an interim report of Costas Nicolaou, a commissioner appointed under The Trade Practices Act, recommended that the retail price of gasoline in Manitoba be regulated. Cabinet chose not to do so at that time."

Could the Minister advise us when we will receive that interim report?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

HON. A. MACKLING: Madam Speaker, I am delighted that one honourable member over there now has shown some interest in that question.

I'll be happy to furnish him with a copy of the report as soon as I can get one from my office for him.

MR. G. DUCHARME: A supplement, Madam Speaker. I was also referred to a final report, can the Minister tell us when he expects the final report to be completed?

HON. A. MACKLING: Madam Speaker, I'm not in a position to give . . . I don't think that was a funny question, I think it deserves a serious answer.

Madam Speaker, I continue to hear members deriding my opportunity to provide a concise and serious answer to a very important question.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.
The Honourable Minister of Labour.

HON. A. MACKLING: Madam Speaker, just yesterday I met with Dr. Costas Nicolaou to review with him the parameters for the complete study and I have an assurance that the study can be completed in approximately six months — that's an approximate time frame — and I have provided Dr. Nicolaou with instructions to proceed. As soon as that report has been received and considered by government, of course, it will be made public as well.

Grasshopper Infestation

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. C. BAKER: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. In the recent heat wave that we've had across the west, would he tell us what his department is going to be doing about the potential severe grasshopper threat?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question.

In view of the warm weather that we've experienced, I can report that grasshoppers are hatching in the province and our staff are out in the field doing the monitoring that is necessary.

As well, we will continue to have the student assistance that we've had in the past; and we have, throughout the winter months, been working with the municipalities, as we did last year, to try and make sure that a co-ordinated effort, in the event that the heat wave does continue and the outbreak is severe, that we will be able to be on top of the situation to provide the kind of co-ordinated approach we did last year, in the control of grasshoppers.

Manfor Annual Report

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have a question for the Minister responsible for Manfor.

Could the Minister indicate when we will receive a copy of the Annual Report of the Manfor organization?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

HON. J. STORIE: Madam Speaker, I believe I will be able to table that report within the next two weeks.

White Spur Drain

MR. J. DOWNEY: I thank the Minister for that answer, Madam Speaker.

I have another question to the Minister responsible for Water Resources. There is a major drainage project being proposed just across the US-Manitoba boundary, on the Souris River, called the White Spur Drain. A meeting was held last week, I believe in Bismarck, Madam Speaker, to received objections.

Has the Minister, on behalf of the people of Manitoba, made representation to the United States on that proposed drain?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

HON. L. HARAPIAK: Madam Speaker, I would like to take that specific question as notice.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Madam Speaker, when he takes the question as notice, would he also make an assessment of the impact that it may have, both environmentally and quantity of water which may be put on to the farmers and the people in the Souris River basin in Manitoba, when he's looking into that matter?

HON. L. HARAPIAK: I will take that as notice as well. Thank you.

Small Business Loans Fund

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie.

MR. E. CONNERY: Yes, to the Minister for Business Development and Tourism.

In the Budget Address, it was announced that there would be a \$50 million Small Business Loan Fund, \$10 million for this year, a very pathetic amount for the industry. It is also not clear if it is an interest rate reduction or a lending of last resort. Can the Minister give us the criteria for the fund?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Housing.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I don't think that the business community is going to think that this benefit that's going to be made

available to them is pathetic, I think they're going to welcome it.

It's one of the things that demonstrates this province's recognition that small business is one of the most important factors and tools for this economy.

Madam Speaker, we are presently in the process of setting up some meetings to have some discussion with representatives of the small business community so that we can get some feedback and information from them on things that they need and recommendations they're going to make. When we have done that, we will be making announcements about the program.

MR. E. CONNERY: The amount of money is going to make sure that the small business stays small.

Can the Minister tell us who is going to administer the fund?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Madam Speaker, I think I indicated that when we have completed this level of consultation we will be announcing all matters relative to handling of the fund. They'll all be announced at the same time.

A MEMBER: That's what you said about Main Street.

Nuclear Waste Repository

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. D. SCOTT: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have a question for the First Minister.

Back in the earlier part of this year, the First Minister had a couple of meetings with the Governor of Minnesota and also of North Dakota in regard to the potential development of nuclear waste storage facilities within the Red River basin in Minnesota. Has the Minister received any word at all, today or in the recent past, from Washington in regard to their proposal of the Department of Energy to build nuclear waste repositories in Minnesota?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for Inkster for that question, which is very timely in view of information just received from the offices of the Governor of Minnesota, Governor Perpich, who has indicated to us that the United States Department of Energy will be announcing today that the second nuclear waste repository program will be indefinitely suspended.

This is indeed good news for Manitobans and I think each and every member in this Chamber can take pleasure in the fact that such an announcement will be made today. It is in the interest of Manitobans.

I would like at this time to thank all Manitobans that joined together to express their opposition to the proposals to locate such a repository in the Red River basin. Also, Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the leadership of the Right Honourable Joe Clark, who co-operated with the Manitoba Government in expressing opposition to this move.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Inkster, with a supplementary.

MR. D. SCOTT: On a supplementary question, I'd first like to congratulate the First Minister and also the Minister of Environment on their efforts.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question.

MR. D. SCOTT: On a supplementary question, can the First Minister assure the people of Manitoba, as well, that within our boundaries we at no time will, under his jurisdiction and leadership, ever permit the storage of nuclear waste underground in Manitoba?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, as I've indicated on previous occasions, and again state, that this government will oppose any effort from any source to establish any storage facilities that would be utilized for the purpose of storing a nuclear waste repositories in Manitoba.

Rural Municipalities - funding to

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for La Verendrye.

MR. H. PANKRATZ: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Minister of Finance, in his Budget Address, announced a program to assist rural Manitoba communities in replacement of deteriorating infrastructure.

My question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs is, what level of funding will be provided for the 1986-87 period?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As you are aware, that program has been announced in the province at the present time, has hired a consultant to determine the nature of that particular program. The funding for that will follow once the guidelines for the program have been determined.

MR. H. PANKRATZ: My supplementary question is, what amount of funding is in the Budget for the 1986-87 season?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: Those funds that are available for the development of rural Manitoba projects, as been funded through the Department of Municipal Affairs, will be dealt with during the time of the Estimates. The members opposite will have ample time at that time to discuss previous programs and programs that are anticipated for the improvement of rural Manitoba.

Lotteries

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Charleswood.

MR. J. ERNST: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I have a question for the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation. In light of the rapid growth in lottery revenues and the concerns expressed by the public about how lottery profits are expended, does the Minister intend to table the Report of the Manitoba Lotteries Foundation, presently on our desk today, before a Legislative Committee of the House?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Lotteries.

HON. J. WASYLICIA-LEIS: Madam Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for his question and, as he indicated, he has received a report and will, no doubt, be studying that report very thoroughly. In terms of the process for Estimates, we are in the process of developing the best option for considering lotteries in the Estimates process and I will be able to inform the member very soon, in the near future.

MR. J. ERNST: Madam Speaker, I have a second question for the same Minister. I'd like to quote from the Winnipeg Free Press of May 8, 1986, from a column from Mr. Carr, dealing with lotteries. I quote the Minister saying, "The responsibility of government is to make sure that it is done fairly, that nobody is ripped off, and that the process is open to public scrutiny."

Now, in light of the Minister's answer that she's not going to table it before a committee, Madam Speaker, is she in fact not saying they are not telling the truth to the Free Press?

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please. Beauchesne Citation 362, for the member's information, says that "it is the Members's duty to ascertain the truth of any statement" from a newspaper report "before he brings it to the attention of the House."

Forgiven loans

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question is for the Minister of Finance. Order-in-Council 351 details a list of businesses who had loans deemed uncollectible by the government, and thus, having been written off. Seven businesses are listed out of a total of 168,481 that have been written off — they take into account 41,000 of that amount. The remainder of 127,413 is unidentified as to which companies and which businesses had their loans written off. I wonder if the Minister could provide us with a list of those companies and organizations that had their loans written off?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. E. KOSTYRA: I can review the information with respect to that Order-in-Council. As I recall, that relates to the uncollectible loans under the Interest Rate Reduction Program, and I would just ask him if that was Order-in-Council 351/85 or '86?

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, 351 of '86 and I'll just table it for the Minister if he would like it to facilitate his responding.

Nuclear Waste Repository

MR. G. FILMON: A further question, I wonder if, in view of the announcement the Premier has made today with respect to the welcome news about the indefinite deferral of plans for the nuclear waste repository in the central region of the United States, I wonder if that now means the government will be able to close its information office on that topic?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, I think that is a very reasonable assumption, as long as at the conclusion of today we can rest, fully satisfied that this is in fact the end of the proposals, as has been indicated to us.

MR. G. FILMON: Does that indicate that the Premier is uncertain that this had indeed been indefinitely cancelled?

HON. H. PAWLEY: I indicated a few moments ago that the information conveyed to us by the office of the Governor of the State of Minnesota, Governor Perpich, by the way, a very fine democrat, Madam Speaker, a very progressive democrat — who we have enjoyed a very cordial relationship — was to the effect that that announcement would be made this afternoon. I welcome that indication of announcement and, of course, I will want, as all members will want, to read carefully the announcement and the copy of said as soon as we can.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, I wonder if the First Minister could indicate how much will be saved as a result of the closure of that office?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, I think it's important, before we jump to over-hasty conclusions, as I indicated, that we re-read the exact terms of the announcement. It is my hope, as a result of that announcement, that obviously the monies that are provided for will be saved, but we will be reading the announcement which is being made this afternoon with interest.

CRISP Program

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. E. KOSTYRA: Madam Speaker, a few days ago I took, as notice, a question from the Honourable Member for Gladstone with regard to the costs anticipated this year for the enhancement to the CRISP program. At that time, I indicated I thought it was about \$2 million. It's estimated at \$2.5 million.

Liability insurance coverage

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Brandon West.

MR. J. McCRAE: Madam Speaker, I would just like to carry on with a question asked earlier in this Session

by the Honourable Member for Riel and direct a question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

The question has to do with the resolution passed by the council of the City of Brandon respecting the increase in the cost of liability insurance.

Madam Speaker, in view of the fact that boat rental operators in this province are facing horrendous increases in liability insurance rates, and that threatens their businesses and access to their businesses by their customers who, for the most part, are tourists; and, in view of the fact that the Federal Minister of the Environment and the Federal Minister of Justice are taking this matter seriously and they recognize the urgency of the situation and are looking at the options open to them, will the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs now take this matter seriously and consider the options that are available to him and report back to this House?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Labour.

HON. A. MACKLING: Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question, however I reject the premise in the question that this government and this Minister does not take some serious concern about the issue of the very significant rise in costs of insurance in this country. That is not fact. We are concerned about that but, as I indicated earlier, it's not a matter where there's a simple solution to it. There have been suggestions made that government intervened, capping liability. That's one course of action that someone may think is appropriate but, of course, that affects the rights of others as well.

We are looking at that question. We will have to consider — (Interjection) — Well, one of the honourable members says how long? I don't think members opposite want snap decisions made by government. They want consultation; they want consideration. I think they want considered action on the part of government and that will be our course of action.

MR. J. McCRAE: Madam Speaker, I would be the first to agree with you that the question period is not the place to debate this issue and the Minister seems to want to debate it now.

My question — I am asking a question, Madam Speaker — and that question is, has the Minister instructed his officials to begin the process of studying this situation and maybe carrying on a debate within the department so that the Minister can report something concrete to this House?

For instance, has he asked his officials to examine the possibility of establishing a fund to protect policyholders in the event an insurance company should collapse?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

HON. A. MACKLING: I know the honourable member the other night was criticizing this administration for a significant budgetary deficit and now I hear him talking about our providing a very significant fund.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, please. Obviously the Honourable Minister would like to answer the question and if the Honourable Minister would like to answer the question, he should not provoke debate.

The Honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

HON. A. MACKLING: Madam Speaker, I will merely reply in tone and in content similar to the question put.

Obviously the member expects that we should enunciate policy in answer to questions from him. That is not the course of action of this government. We will look at issues; we will develop policies and we will announce them in due course.

MR. J. McCRAE: Madam Speaker, the Minister's answer still reflects an intention to do these things.

The question, Madam Speaker, was has this process begun? I don't want to know what they might do six months down the road or a year down the road, Madam Speaker. The question was very simple, has the process begun?

If this Minister can't answer, maybe the Minister of Tourism can answer because it has a very serious impact on the industry for which he is responsible.

Another option that might be available, and I wonder if the Minister . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Does the Honourable Member have a question? This is not a time for debate.

MR. J. McCRAE: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Is the Minister's department also intending, at some point in the future, or has the department already begun looking into the possibility of legislating standards for determining liability and amounts awarded by the court?

HON. A. MACKLING: I could answer, yes, to all of what the honourable member said because all of the options, as I indicated earlier, all of the options open to government will be considered.

Letter of Bill McKay - response to

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I have a question for the Minister of Native Affairs. I ask the Minister if he has responded to a person by the name of Mr. Bill McKay in regard to a request to do something about a cheque which he received, and has not got payment for for services he has given through the Winnipeg Council. Has he responded to that letter?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister responsible for Native Affairs.

HON. E. HARPER: I will take that as notice because I have some information on that and I'll bring it forward in a couple of days or so.

MADAM SPEAKER: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

The Honourable Member for Thompson.

MR. S. ASHTON: I would like to ask leave of the House to make a non-political statement. (Agreed)

NON-POLITICAL STATEMENT

MR. S. ASHTON: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Today marks the 25th Anniversary of the founding of Amnesty International. As members of this House will be aware, Amnesty International is an independent, impartial, non-political organization working for the protection of basic human rights throughout the world. Of course, as members of this House will also be aware, one of its most recent campaigns has been for the abolition of torture throughout the world.

An indication of the stature of the organization is the fact that it was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1977.

I would note, for members of this House, that it was founded by a British lawyer, Peter Benenson, in 1961 and now involves thousands of people in literally dozens of countries throughout the world. In fact, there are more than 500 people who are supporters of Amnesty International and active in that organization here in Manitoba.

I'm sure I speak for all members of this House in commending Amnesty International for its fine work over these past 25 years and wishing it many more successful years to come.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Norbert.

MR. G. MERCIER: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Member for Sturgeon Creek, THAT under Rule 27, the ordinary business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely, the crisis in the child care and protection system.

MOTION presented.

MADAM SPEAKER: Under Rule 27 (1), I have received proper notice from the honourable member that he intended to make this motion and the honourable member has five minutes to explain his arguments in favour of the urgency of his motion.

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, I appreciate that under Beauchesne, a matter of this type must be so pressing that public interest will suffer if it is not given immediate attention; that urgency means urgency of debate when the ordinary opportunities provided by the rules of the House do not permit the subject to be brought on early enough and public interest demands a discussion take place immediately.

Madam Speaker, what could be more urgent for this House to discuss than the fact that children are dying in homes where the agencies know those homes pose high risks, and when we learned today of predictions from child care experts that more are to come, Madam Speaker, unless the system is changed. It is a matter, Madam Speaker, that must be discussed immediately.

The Honourable Minister of Health, Madam Speaker, cited some statistics but gave this House no assurances.

The information he gave to this House is information that he got from the Department of Community Services, Madam Speaker.

The information that we get from that department on this whole issue has always been wrong. This is a department that has mismanaged this whole issue for a number of years now, Madam Speaker. They recently cited statistics, for example, with respect to child abuse. There are other, more important statistics, Madam Speaker. The Children's Hospital cites statistics for the Child Protection Centre of 796 cases of child abuse for 1985, compared to the statistics brought forward by the Community Services Department.

I have a letter, Madam Speaker, from the Minister of Community Services from last fall, dated October 30, 1985, where I criticize this very policy and she wrote back indicating: "As to my policy, as you should know, we are trying to give child care workers the option of putting resources into the home and working with families to keep the families together, but this in no way," and that is underlined, "implies that children are kept in families when there is a danger of abuse."

Madam Speaker, we learned last week, and the Minister took the question as notice on Monday — the Minister of Community Services, not the Acting Minister — as to why did the Northwest Agency not know that the two-and-a-half year old who was killed last week was within their boundaries. There was a complete lack of communication between the agencies, Madam Speaker.

We learned that there are 20 children in high-risk situations on the weekend through Dr. Eric Ellis, a child psychologist in the child care field. We learned today, Madam Speaker, that there are 34 high-risk infants at Children's Hospital. We learned that a social worker is trying to return an infant to parents even though the doctor, Dr. Ferguson, is telling them this baby will be killed if she is returned. Madam Speaker, I point out to members of the House that the 34 high-risk infants that are referred to by Dr. Ferguson are infants under 15 months, and those are only at the Children's Hospital. Those are the only ones they have knowledge of. There are many more obviously, Madam Speaker, who have not been brought forward.

We learned, Madam Speaker, that more of these children on this list, the ones that they know of, will die unless practices in the child welfare system are changed, changes which we have been advocating for a number of times. We have advocated a centralized specialized child abuse team with enough resources to deal with this extremely important problem, Madam Speaker. We are talking about healthy happy babies born into this world who are subsequently maimed and left physically or mentally disabled, Madam Speaker.

Surely to goodness, this should be the highest priority for government funding. This is the practice that must be changed, Madam Speaker. It hasn't been changed despite efforts we have made over a number of years to have it changed. The Acting Minister still gets what I suggest is incorrect information from that department, Madam Speaker. This is a matter that urgently requires debate in this Legislature. There could be no matter more urgent than this, I suggest to you, Madam Speaker, and I therefore suggest to you that the motion before you is in order.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

HON. J. COWAN: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I listened carefully to the comments of the Honourable Member for St. Norbert and must mention that it was my understanding that when a member rises to speak for five minutes on the matter, the member is rising to speak to the urgency of the matter and not to the matter itself, which he did not do.

What we do have in fact is a serious situation . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please. The member has five minutes to state his case. May I please hear his case?

HON. J. COWAN: What we do have here is a serious situation, certainly; but it is a situation which is being dealt with by the government in a serious and a competent manner. What the member has done, by asking for a debate on matters of urgent public importance, is suggested that there is not an opportunity now before the House for him or his colleagues to speak to this particular issue because the motion itself, and it's important to review not only the motion but the purpose of it, the rules governing it and the provisions for it, is to set aside the ordinary business of the House to discuss a matter of urgent public importance.

Firstly, the matter must be so pressing, as the member indicated, that the public interest will suffer if it is not given immediate attention. Indeed, the matter before us is an urgent one and an important matter and the government is now, right now, and in fact for some time has been dealing with the issue outlined on a priority basis. The Acting Minister stood up today, and the Minister has stood up on other occasions, indicating that it is a concern and we are acting on it on that matter in that way. The Minister of Health today, as a matter of fact, listed a number of specific actions that are already under way.

So while the matter is pressing, the public interest is being considered and is being acted upon by the government. The suggested setting aside of the ordinary business of the House would do little to add to what is already being done by this government to respond to this serious situation. I believe we are doing a good job in doing that.

The rules governing the setting aside of the ordinary business are quite clear. The urgency of the debate does not refer to the matter itself, which the Member for St. Norbert should know, but rather to whether or not the ordinary business of the House would allow for an early review of the matter during the normal activities of this Legislature.

Of course, now being in the middle of the Budget Debate, there is ample opportunity for members opposite to debate the issue. There was ample opportunity for members opposite to discuss the issue, to ask questions during the question period, but they saw fit to ask questions about a whole series of other issues, even although they were given full and complete answers by the Acting Minister.

So there are many opportunities provided for in the normally scheduled activities to discuss the matter. The Member for St. Norbert, I understand, has not taken part in the Budget Debate. He can do so following the Minister of Labour finishing his remarks. There are many other ample opportunities available to them.

So in suggesting that the motion to set aside the ordinary business of the House be considered out of order, I want it to be clear that it is not because members on this side do not believe this to be a pressing issue, do not believe this to be an important issue, do not believe this to be an issue of public concern; but we believe fully that the Minister responsible, the department responsible, and the government, indeed, is acting on this issue in the manner in which it should be, and we are suggesting that the debate be ruled out of order because the Member for St. Norbert has not in any way in his remarks suggested that there are not other ample opportunities for him to make his comments known, which we would be pleased to hear and listen to. Hopefully, he can add, through his advice, some suggestions and comments that we may want to take into consideration. But he has that opportunity to do so, I hope he will do so during the Budget Debate and, for that reason, Madam Speaker, I would suggest that this motion is in fact out of order.

SPEAKER'S RULING

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

As members have referred to, according to Beaulieu Citation 286, "The specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, . . ." — and I'll skip part of this rule and go to — ". . . must be so pressing that public interest will suffer if it is not given immediate attention."

And Beaulieu Citation 287 states: "'Urgency' within this rule does not apply to the matter itself, but means 'urgency of debate' when the ordinary opportunities provided by the rules of the House do not permit the subject to be brought on early enough and public interest demands that discussion take place immediately."

Consequently, there are two major conditions to be satisfied and I am satisfied that there is no other ordinary opportunity, because:

1. The Budget Debate is relatively restricted in terms of relevance; and
2. There is no certain knowledge as to exactly when the Estimates of the Department of Community Services will be before the Committee of Supply.

I am satisfied that the matter is so pressing that public interest will suffer. Therefore, I find the Member's motion is in order and of urgent public importance.

Shall the debate proceed? All those in favour, say aye. All those opposed, say nay.

Under the rules of a matter of urgent public importance, each member has 10 minutes in which to discuss the issue.

The Honourable Member for St. Norbert.

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be able to address this subject matter, this very most important subject matter.

The whole issue of child care, child protection and child abuse has been before this Legislature for a number of years. From time to time now, we have seen this issue surface briefly. We continually have expressed concerns that go back, for example, to the moratorium on the adoption of Native children wherein this

government, through its policies, were going to prohibit the Pitzel family from continuing to care for a child in that situation; a decision that was approved by less than a quorum of the former Children's Aid Board appointed by this government. We expressed concerns then, but the government had a concern about keeping that child within the Native community that overlooked the best interests of that child.

Other issues have come up from time to time, Madam Speaker, when the whole matter of the disintegration of the Children's Aid Society was put forward by this government. We said at that time that by breaking up the specialized child abuse unit that the Children's Aid Society had and going to this regional system, there were measures that were going to have to be taken to deal with this whole problem of child abuse, and they were not taking it.

What happened was that the government went into a system of generic social workers. They cut out the specialists in child abuse and specialists in other areas that dealt with adoptions or foster homes, but most important to this debate, they cut out the specialists in child abuse. We have learned that there is a lack of training for child abuse workers. Madam Speaker, there simply has to be specialized people dealing with this particular subject. They all have good intentions, I'm positive of that; I'm not critical of the people who work within the system; they all have good intentions, but not all of them like to do that kind of work or are trained and qualified to do that kind of work. It's now turning up in the comments that we read today from Dr. Ferguson again. That is the main area, Madam Speaker.

If this debate does one thing, if it can persuade the government that they simply have to turn to a system of specialized child abuse workers with the resources, Madam Speaker, to properly care for the children that are known to be in these high-risk situations, then this debate — (Interjection) — The Minister for Highways says, spend more. That's exactly what I'm saying, Madam Speaker, spend more. Why should this not be one of the highest priorities of our citizens? Society will support the government, I am positive of that. It's just a matter of re-establishing some priorities within their existing spending levels. If this debate will just do that, it will encourage the government to create and approve those specialized child abuse workers, to give them the resources to do the job. All reports are that many of the workers, and particularly the workers in the northwest in the central areas of the city, do not have the resources to do the job; that's mainly where the largest number of problems are. They're the people who need the assistance to do the job.

There is, I think, Madam Speaker, a block in the Minister of Community Service's department. I must say that with respect to the Assistant Deputy Minister in that department, Mrs. Aleda Turnbull appears to have certain fixed views and attitudes and simply will not listen to the people who work in the field: the child care workers, the Child Protection Centre, the doctors, Dr. Ferguson, Dr. McRae, Dr. Ellis, all of the people who see these children and have to deal with the effects of what has happened to these children. That appears to be, to me, looking in from the outside, Madam Speaker, and speaking to people who work all over in this field, one of the main blocks to changes within the

system, changes which Dr. Ferguson is reported in the newspaper as saying today — that more children on this list of his 34 high-risk situations will die unless practices in the child care welfare system are changed.

Madam Speaker, to the government's credit, a number of the changes that they have made in the system are supported. Frankly, in my discussions with people who work in that field, the whole question of regionalization of services is not seen to be that bad an idea as long as you give it the resources to do the job. But they have not been given the resources to do the job. So, we have a situation that we saw last week where a two and a half year old girl was murdered, regrettably and unfortunately, who was not known by the Northwest Family Services to be within the boundaries of that agency, although she was referred there by the central agency. It was known that that situation was a high-risk situation. It was being investigated with respect to teenagers living in the home. If anything points out the need for this centralized, specialized unit of child abuse workers to deal overall in the total city, then that is a case for that.

Madam Speaker, how many children have died in this province within the last six or seven months as the result of abuse or neglect? I received some information today that there are seven deaths in the last six months since the Ruby Adriaenssens murder — not counting her — that one infant is in hospital, brain dead, and that case is under police investigation which prevents me from making some comments that would indicate that there was a situation there that was known to be or should have been known to be a high-risk situation because of previous instances.

Madam Speaker, we have those reports. We have Dr. Ellis' comments about 20 high-risk children. We have 34 high-risk infants today under 15 months referred to by Dr. Ferguson. We have an instance where Dr. Ferguson has to intervene and he doesn't know what the result is, whether that child has been returned to the home where it suffered risk. That points up the concerns about the child abuse policies and programs and management. Surely, a social worker acting on her/his own view of the government policy of apparently trying to keep families together in their homes shouldn't be making that kind of decision on his/her own. This was supposed to be a decision made by a group of experts, the child care workers, the doctors, the psychiatrists, the psychologists, etc. The rules that the government has set up are not being followed if a social worker on his/her own initiative is returning a child to a high-risk home situation without the consent of the group of professionals who are supposed to be reviewing each of these individual cases.

Madam Speaker, all of these questions have been raised just in the last five days, and this isn't it. These are issues that have arisen over the past two or three years on this particular subject. I'm not going to say that the government hasn't tried to do something in this field, they have tried to do something in this field, but this area of child abuse appears to need correction. It needs more training, more resources, more centralization, more specialization in order to solve these important problems. It should be a matter of priority for government spending that if these resources are required in this area, the people working in this field have 50-60 caseloads, and to deal with one of

these abused children cases, Madam Speaker, in a lot of the cases, you're dealing with children who have been partially abused already, who require daily care.

You're trying to tell me I have little time left, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Rhineland.

The Honourable Minister of Employment Services whom I saw second.

HON. L. EVANS: Madam Speaker, I would like to join in the debate. I want to reiterate what our House Leader has stated. That is that we certainly share the concerns of the Honourable Member for St. Norbert and members of the Opposition with regard to a very important and a very serious issue, a very regrettable issue, a problem that exists in our society today.

MR. G. MERCIER: On a point of order, Madam Speaker, I know it gets warm in here and, if it's a consensus . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: The . . .

MR. G. MERCIER: Just on a point of order, Madam Speaker, with respect to this ungodly noise that we have in the House. If it's the will of all the members to have it, I won't oppose it, but it makes it very difficult for anyone to hear a speaker. Perhaps it should be turned off.

MADAM SPEAKER: Perhaps I could just explain before the Honourable Minister begins, the usual practice is to have the air conditioner on on the opposite side of the person who's speaking. But if that is too inconvenient for members, we can dispense with it unless I get an indication that people are getting uncomfortable.

The Honourable Government House Leader, is that satisfactory?

HON. J. COWAN: Yes, we would agree with the Opposition in this regard, and perhaps we can give some further discussion at another time to the issue as to how we keep the Chamber . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Right. In that case, we'll turn the air conditioners off and, if honourable members want to bring it to my attention later, we . . .

A MEMBER: We'll bring it.

MADAM SPEAKER: As long as it doesn't generate heat and confusion according to the rules.

The Honourable Minister of Employment Services.

HON. L. EVANS: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As I was saying earlier, I agree with the concerns expressed by the honourable members opposite, particularly the Honourable Member for St. Norbert, and I echo the comments and statement made by our House Leader, that we on this side are very concerned about the problem of child abuse. It's a very serious issue, and indeed some of the events that have occurred in the past while are indeed very regrettable.

But I would observe that, in many ways, this is a problem that pervades society not only here but increasingly in other parts of Canada, in other parts of the world. In other words, I think we're seeing a phenomena of increased violence in our society. That indeed is regrettable.

I can't explain why there is an increase in violence. There are many reasons, many answers one could come up with, but I think that is an observation that is valid. In today's society, we have an increase in violence, and we see it in this particular area as well. It is indeed regrettable.

I would say, government would indeed like to have more money, more resources for many programs including this program, but I would like to remind the honourable member that the government has taken a number of initiatives over the last several years to be more responsive to the needs of children, to the needs of families throughout the Province of Manitoba.

In fact, I would suspect that, if we made a comparison, you'll find that Manitoba has taken more initiatives to deal with problems of the family, to deal with children's matters, children who are having difficulty in whichever way and child abuse included, more than any other province in terms of all the important social programs that we put in place to support families and to look after the welfare of children where necessary.

I can only refer to — and I don't have all the figures with me, but we have provided more resources to various agencies, more financial support to various agencies to assist in this regard. Indeed I was very pleased to hear the Honourable Member for St. Norbert agree with our thrust of decentralization of the agencies. I thought I heard him say that — (Interjection) — but you agreed with the idea of decentralization because the point — (Interjection) — yes, right. Because the point is that the decentralization was intended to provide agencies that would be more responsive to the community needs and to be more in tune with families in the area.

In fact, there is an elaborate procedure for broadly-based committees to the boards of directors of those agencies. There is a procedure for democratic elections to those boards. Indeed I understand there are various advisory groups around Winnipeg and indeed elsewhere in the province who are in place to assist the agency carry out its responsibilities.

Indeed more resources have been given to the hospitals. Instructions have been given through the education system and indeed through the medical system to be on the alert for any cases of child abuse. I would suspect, to some degree, the child abuse that we have reported today is a function of a better system of detection than was in place a few years back. I think there is some truth to that.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: But nothing done about it.

HON. L. EVANS: Well I would not agree with the Member for Sturgeon Creek that nothing has been done about it. The fact is that a lot is being done.

As a matter of fact, Madam Speaker, in order for governments to act properly, governments must study problems and how to develop a better system of response. I must say that we have studied it, and we've acted.

I would refer members also to the work of Judge Kimelman who has given us a lot of advice which we have accepted in large measure and put into place in large measure. Indeed, I suppose you might argue, we haven't acted on all the suggestions, but I understand many of the suggestions that the judge has made are actively being considered for implementation. But the point is, Madam Speaker, that we have looked at these questions relating to child abuse very carefully, and we have taken action.

We have had more support from Native organizations in the province than ever before and getting cooperation of Native groups, not only in Winnipeg but throughout the Province of Manitoba. Indeed, this government has signed the tripartite agreement with the Federal Government and with the Native organizations so that we could establish services right on the reserves. Indeed a massive move has been made in that respect and I think, to a large measure, that has had a great deal of success. We have a long way to go indeed.

I would like to say also, when you discuss the matter of dealing with children in cases of difficulty such as this, cases of abuse, it does come down very often to a matter of judgment, judgment on the part of the agency, judgment on the part of the doctor perhaps, judgment on the part of the social worker. A lot of this and how you deal with the children in need, children who need some care and assistance is a matter of the approach of the individual involved, the official involved and the group involved. Very often, you do get conflicts of view as to exactly how you should proceed with looking after one particular case. But hopefully, with good staff, we do get people that can exercise this judgment.

I see my light is flashing. I'm not sure how much time I have, just two or three minutes, so I would like to conclude my remarks by referring very specifically to the fact that we are providing more resources in the area of child and family support. If the Member for St. Norbert cares to examine the Estimates, Page 34, there is an appropriation under Child and Family Services and, specifically, looking at child and family support, the budget is being increased from \$45.334 million to \$50.334 million, quite a substantial percentage increase. A good deal of that is going directly to maintenance of children and also to external agencies. The increase to external agencies is going up approximately from 16.9 million to 20.5 million.

As I said earlier, Madam Speaker, there are other supports that are being provided, including my own department where we are making a greater effort than ever before to help particularly single-parent families and to help other families in need through our economic security system, our social security system, and indeed helping breadwinners to get out and obtain work in the labour force.

So I say to the honourable member in conclusion, obviously we have great concerns. We are doing things and the Estimates have provided the Minister with the funds, with the necessary dollars to provide increasing resources in the field generally of child and family support.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Rhineland.

MR. A. BROWN: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I thank you for letting us have this opportunity to discuss this urgent matter. There is no doubt in the minds of all of us, I am certain, that this is a matter which has to be discussed, and because of recent happenings it is urgent that we do discuss this particular area.

When we read in the paper today that there were an extra 34 children in the Health Sciences Centre which were in a dangerous situation and that one of them was reported as to be put into the situation again, out of which she had come where she had been abused, of course then we knew that something had to be done and it had to be done right away in order to prevent situations such as that.

I think we should maybe take a look at why we are in the situation that we are in at the present time and decentralization certainly plays a big role in the reason why that particular department has the problems it has at the present time. I know that it is difficult to get these organizations to operate when you set up a new agency, but this is now more than two years and there is absolutely no excuse for them to not operate efficiently.

Now what certainly is needed is one very strong central agency which could co-ordinate all the other agencies, and in that way you could also move away some of your high-priced help that you have out there administering these agencies. You could really cut down on a lot of administration and you would have money to look after situations such as this.

You have spent millions and millions of dollars on administration by organizing these six agencies. Now that money ought to go to the children who are placed in situations such as this. So it is time that the Premier took a good look at this particular department and make certain that something is done, that we get more value out of the monies which are being spent and that we do not run into this type of situation where we find that children are left without proper protection, without proper care.

This agency I am talking about certainly is needed at this particular time. I think when we take a look at what is happening in other cities — Toronto, which is a much, much larger city than what Winnipeg is — have only one agency. One agency looks after the entire City of Toronto and they're doing a good job.

We used to have a reasonably good job done in Winnipeg when we had one agency looking after the problems of the Children's Aid Society. They were doing a good job. There were some difficulties there, yes, but those difficulties could have been resolved with very little trouble and we would not have had to disrupt the entire department. But now we have a situation that we have and I suppose we have to make the best of the situation as it is. So that still means that we will need one very strong central agency to co-ordinate the other six agencies.

I think it is absolutely appalling when you read the story of the father of this two-and-a-half year old girl that was killed as a result of sexual abuse, that he had been drawing this to the attention of one of the agencies. Now it just so happened that the girl had been placed in a different agency and the message did not get through to that other agency that this girl was in danger.

Now this unfortunate happening could have been prevented. Now how many more of these situations do

we have? How many more of these situations are we going to tolerate? We have to take action on this right now and I would charge the Premier with the responsibility of seeing to it that the particular department does take the proper action that is required in order to get this situation under control. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Urban Affairs.

HON. G. DOER: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

There's absolutely no question in anybody's mind in this House that it was a terribly tragic situation with the death of the child last week and there's no question of the fact that the agency allegedly was not aware of the child being placed in that area, is very serious and a situation that we can all look at and must look at and analyze. I've discussed that situation informally with members of the board, with members of the staff, and they are greatly concerned about the situation.

But I also recall having worked in child welfare and worked with many of the children at risk, that we often had situations where one agency or one branch of the former Children's Aid Society didn't know what the other branch was doing; where the one group of social workers didn't know what the other group was doing; where the Children's Aid Society didn't know what the Welfare Department of the city was doing; where the Welfare Department of the city didn't know exactly what the provincial health situation was going to do. We've got to keep improving the situation and communication.

The police very often lose very critical pieces of information from precinct to precinct that could help us in terms of child abuse and child protection and for years we've been going through this debate of centralized versus decentralized child welfare services and child abuse services. The police themselves, at one point, left all members of the police responsible for child abuse, then they went to a central child abuse unit — I'm not sure of the current status where they've decentralized that again to all members of the Juvenile Branch — certainly I think the fact that they've trained as many of their members through the cadet training, etc., in child abuse as a key component, means that all members of the police force are aware of this issue.

Similarly with the child welfare agencies. I know that the training does go on in terms of child abuse. I know in each of these six agencies in the City of Winnipeg child abuse is a top priority. I remember at a time when the Children's Aid Society of Winnipeg was broken up into regions and they too had considerable problems, even though they were under one administration, so they came back in one area and had one centralized child abuse unit, part of which eventually ended up at the Children's Hospital of Winnipeg and working with Dr. Ferguson. We can debate the central versus decentral ad nauseam and I think it's an important debate and I'm glad we're having it this afternoon.

But I think we have to deal with the broader issues in child abuse and never forget the broader issues of child abuse, the causes, all the ways in which we can get to early detection, not only through the Provincial Government or the Provincial Government agencies, but all members of our city that work with children at risk or potentially at risk.

We have to improve our detection in the schools when you know one child is abused, you've got to get to the other children that may be younger because that situation is very serious. We've got to continue, and I know we've started that over the years, not just in a political way — I know the members opposite started that — we are continuing it and we're trying to improve that but we must get at the root causes.

Yesterday we had a debate and the Member for Charleswood was opposed to the training in the Core area. That's a legitimate debate and, yes, it costs a lot of money, but if there are 250 people or 300 people placed out of the Core area training program that were before — many of which were at risk — if there's 350 of those people who are trained and having jobs and their self-esteem changes and their whole dignity changes and the whole attitude of their family changes, we may get less abuse and that's costly, there's no question about it. But we have to start changing the cycles that produce the abuse. We have to get at the causes of abuse, and at the same time we have to do a better job when abuse does take place.

The argument about homes and non-homes, or leaving people in their homes or taking them out of homes — it's again a very difficult judgment decision, a very difficult judgment decision.

I recall, Madam Speaker, when the philosophy was to grab, at first, second or third option, and how many files have the members opposite read that have been dealing with child welfare? Have many files have you read where children have been taken from their home and placed in 29, 30, 31 foster homes before they turned 12 or 13 years old? There's never been any attempt to make it work at home.

They've been in 30-40 foster homes; they commit violent crimes against other people; they commit violent crimes against themselves and you read that file and we say, "God, why didn't we try to make it work at home? If we look at the house they came from, it's a heck of a lot better than the homes we place them in." And that is a judgment decision, not an easy decision.

We should never place a child in a place of risk where in fact they are going to be abused to the point of which certainly that child last week in that home took place; but at the same time, it's not an easy issue of when and why and how a child is taken from their home and what supports are produced in terms of the alternative placements.

Judge Kimelman - I remember many of these children; there were 80 of them in 1979 at the Manitoba Youth Centre locked up, many of them 13, 14 years old. We had the highest number of children locked up in the country on a per capita basis. We had Drury Street full of child welfare cases, many of them under 14 years old, and if you look at the pattern, they were taken from their homes at a very early point.

I'd like to know what the long-term success was. Judge Kimelman recommended that we move our Children's Aid Societies into regions of Winnipeg and increase the resources. Those things have happened. The Children's Aid Societies or the Child Welfare Agencies of Winnipeg are closer to the community. They have good quality staff and the number of staff has improved.

The member mentions the situation in Toronto. One must recall that in the City of Toronto that, yes, they

do have one Children's Aid Society, but they have another Children's Aid Society in Mississauga; they have another Children's Aid Society in another borough, because they wanted to keep the agencies as close as possible to many of the communities.

The members opposite mentioned the whole area of spending. I read their document, in fact, last night, and they recommended 6 percent spending, and this year we're recommending 10 percent spending, but we can get into that debate about how much we're spending. That's rather partisan and rather a game.

We have to build on the experience we have; we must improve the quality of services that we have, but I believe the agencies, the expertise, debate and the tragic circumstances, unfortunately, will help us make our agencies better for the children at risk. Let's not fall into the trap of believing it's central versus decentral or home versus not pulling it away from home. It's a very complicated and tough issue and we've got to continue to improve collectively in this Legislature and in the services we deliver for the children at risk.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

MR. C. BIRT: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Just listening to the remarks made by the Minister of Urban Affairs, one can understand why we have problems today. He's talking about a central versus a decentral situation. That's not the issue that brought this debate before the House today.

It's abuse of children, how they're handled and where they end up, and should they be turned back to the situation, in theory, they were removed to be protected from. We're not talking about who lost files; we're not talking about some bureaucratic snafu. We are talking about a very narrow specific area of community's concern, and that concern has no political bounds.

If the government thinks they have solved the problem by simply creating six separate agencies to handle child problems, then they are sadly mistaken. I'm sorry that the Member for Brandon East is not here to hear my comments, but I was . . . I'm sorry, I should not have made reference to the Minister, but the key in all of this was that I was an appointed member to the Children's Aid Board from City Council and was a member of that board for its last three-and-a-half years when it was in existence.

You know, the Council of the Children's Aid Board had the same problems dealing with very sensitive and difficult issues. The Minister of the Day, the Member for Brandon East, sat and was very pious in his statements as they emanated from Broadway. With every child problem, when every death occurred, he was the first to say, "Your system is failing; your system doesn't work. We have a better system. The system should be a community response system; it should be a community sensitivity system."

That's great. They redesigned the system. It's out there and it's working in the community. We're not talking about the amount of additional funds that have to be allocated to this particular problem area. What we're talking about is a co-ordinated, effective approach to a very important problem.

The Minister made reference to the amount of additional funds that were being spent today. We are spending more today than we did in previous years. Of what value is that to the child abuse system? Of what value is that to a child at risk?

What we have is a system that is spread across the city. It is identifying more children at risk, but the system has broken down, once the at-risk situation has been discovered. The Minister indicated he had put more resources into the hospitals to deal with this specific problem, yet when you read the comments in the press, it is the very hospital, it is the professionals in the field who are complaining that the government is not allowing them to do their job.

So it's not the question of it putting on huge additional amounts of money to buy more social workers. Granted, we may need a little more money in certain areas, but in a Budget of \$4 billion, I don't think small sums, allocated in this particular area, is that significant that we can't find them. We can find them for other contracts, for special employment, but we can't find them for this specific area; but what it needs is a co-ordinated working group that will work toward this particular goal. It's to preserve the children who have been found at risk.

Reference is made to the police abuse unit. As a lawyer, I've had clients who have been involved with this particular unit and let me tell you that unit works effectively and is very sensitive to the needs of all people who are involved in these circumstances; yet they are frustrated with the system because it isn't working.

They are doing only part of the job, but to be successful they have to be part of a whole picture that will be successful and help the children. It's not.

The Minister also made reference to the Judge Kimelman Report or reports and what work they have done in making his recommendations come into fruition. I believe this morning, Madam Speaker, Judge Kimelman was on CBC Radio condemning the government for failure to initiate one of the key proposals in his report, a child advocate, one who would take the interests of the child over all others. He says that his whole set of recommendations in the reports were built on that one specific cornerstone, yet we have the very author of that report condemning the government for their absolute failure to address the most important issue.

When we ask the question of the Minister responsible for this department, both in this House and when I was asking in Estimates last year, she advised that she had a committee studying this problem. We don't need committees studying the problem; we need people working together to solve the problem and the Minister has failed to bring about the effective means of dealing with this problem.

The resources are there; the people are there. All it requires is leadership and it's not being provided. In fact, it's being discouraged.

Madam Speaker, when a child is removed from a difficult situation, and that is the first response of most professionals, we want to be able to have an inventory, or at least a resource base in our community, where that child can be housed and taken care of. I would agree with the Minister of Urban Affairs that it would be far better to try and put the child back into the family setting than into some totally strange home. But

it is often that family setting that creates the problem or the related family problem and it isn't to the advantage of returning the child back to that situation.

A week ago, I had the privilege of seeing a one or one-and-a-half year old child who had been born normal, but because of the abuse that child had received, that child is now going to be a permanent ward of the community in a special care home. We believe it's the St. Amant Centre. That child was put back into the situation where it was initially removed from. If we can't solve this problem of child abuse and we've recognized it, we know it's a major problem out there, what else are we to do? What good are we to do? We're letting down society. Now we can spend all kinds of money on this particular situation, but unless we get leadership, cooperation and coordination of the people who are in this field and a priority given by everyone with all the resources, then we're never going to have a solution to this problem.

Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

If there was a massive accident at the middle of Portage and Main and it required a number of ambulances, doctors and attendants, and a number of police, no one would question the cost. If we had a riot at Stony Mountain and had to send in enormous numbers of staff, no one would ask at the time of the emergency: what is it going to cost?

Madam Speaker, we have an emergency in Manitoba because we have people who, unfortunately through economic circumstances or because they don't have parenting skills in many cases, choose to abuse their children. We have situations in our schools in which teachers abuse children. We have examples almost every day of children who have been sexually abused. It is hard, I think, for each and every one of us to understand the full ramifications of what that kind of abuse means.

When my daughter Cathy was in Grade 5, she experienced a form of mental abuse. I had a child who would bang her head against the wall and tell her mother and father how stupid she was. This child has just been accepted at Harvard University at the age of 17. This child was the victim of mental abuse. I have had students who couldn't sit down because they had been beaten so badly. I have watched other children with black eyes. I myself was sexually abused as a child. No one can tell me that there isn't enough money to deal with child abuse. The question is: how are we going to deal with it?

What we have seen in the last year or so, is that the facilities that we have are not working. I don't think it has been caused by decentralization, but I do think it has been caused by a failure to have a special unit which in fact can meet the needs of the abused child.

I think the abused child needs very highly skilled and trained people, and those are not available in a decentralized program. Other community services, other child welfare services can be provided within that system, and perhaps better than they were being provided for before. Don't allow us to permit children

to fall through the cracks because we have changed the system and have failed to recognize the needs.

As to the question of whether children should be removed from homes. Members, it surely is a very simple answer. If it is the need to protect a child or the need to protect parental rights, surely we come down on the side of the child who has no one to speak for them. If we have found that conditions appear to be unacceptable, is that not enough? Do we need to have proof? Do we need to see the welts? Do we need to see the bashed-in head? Let us reach out to each child within our society, accept our responsibility as adults and do whatever is necessary to be done.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

HON. R. PENNER: Madam Speaker, no one can be oblivious to the tragedy surrounding the death of any child under any circumstances. No one can be oblivious to such tragedies wherever they occur, however they occur. I think we have to recognize that collectively as a society and collectively as a government, as a Legislature, we have a responsibility, whether we are dealing with a particular institution that has been identified in this debate or we're dealing for example with the highway system where, regrettably, far more deaths of children occur in a year than within the system that has been made the subject of this emergency debate or in any other institution. Whether the deaths that we are concerned about occur in foster homes or similar institutional or quasi-institutional settings or where, as a matter of fact, regrettably more of these deaths occur in the homes of natural parents who haven't hitherto been identified as at risk.

What we do know from each one of the instances I have cited is that no matter how much is spent in terms of resources, there will be cases which fall through the cracks of the system, whether it is the highway safety system, whether it's the child welfare system, whether it's the general societal system and every such case that falls through the cracks for whatever reason is a tragedy and must be a cause of some reflection and the cause of some consideration.

But recognizing that is not the same as saying, therefore the answer is somehow or another to holubolus condemn the system we have or simply to say throw more money at that system.

I was pleased to note that in what I consider to be a very responsible speech, the Member for St. Norbert did say that there are many good elements in the system we have. I think that it is important to identify them and I'll speak very briefly about them. Then it's important to see where there are areas that can be improved and undoubtedly there are.

But, for example, for the Member for River Heights to say — and I'm just using this as an example — that: (a) we have an emergency; and (b) there is a failure to have a special unit. Manitoba is identified as the leading province with respect to the development of such special units. It took place as much under the leadership of the former Attorney-General as it did in this administration. We have in fact such units in the Health Sciences Centre, in St. Boniface, in Dauphin, in Brandon and perhaps in one or two other places and these are multi-disciplinary units in which doctors

like Dr. Ferguson and the social workers and paramedics and specialists in the area including generic social workers, i.e. social workers who have specialized in that area, are grouped and they make use of the child abuse registry system which we have in this province, which again is the best in Canada. All of this data is inputted, all of the data that we can possibly get is inputted so that the moment there is a cross-reference indicating an at-risk situation, action is taken. But there is human error that steps in, and we may have been faced with such a case in the case that gives rise to this debate. We have to consider it and consider what to do about it.

But I do want to mention this, that in terms of resources, some 12, 14 months ago, the then Minister of Education, the Member for Logan, myself, the Minister for Health and the Minister of Community Services announced a new networking program using as a front line the schools and teachers in the schools. From that time, adding this to the network that we had, there has been an identification of more children at risk than was previously the case. So we are getting an early warning system. We are strengthening our early warning system.

Perhaps there is more that can be done in that area because that probably is the best defence. But even with that, we are still going to have deaths of this kind not only in homes that are identified as being at risk but in those almost intractable situations where the deaths take place either at the hands of strangers or in the homes of natural parents who haven't hitherto been identified as an at-risk family. Let's recognize that.

The fact of the matter is what we have to deal with is hard and relevant data. We have to avoid, in dealing with this, making it a partisan issue, a political issue, and using the emotional aura which inevitably surrounds it in order to score political points.

As far as I am aware, and I'm prepared to bring more data to the House tomorrow or whenever, as the Minister of Community Services said in this House earlier this week, there has been a period of approximately two years in which there have been no such deaths; then, in a short period of time, there has been one death that we know of, possibly two.

In fact, I just met with the Director of Prosecutions, Wayne Myshkowsky, on another matter, put that question to him; that was his information to me. I have asked him to double-check it and, if the information doesn't come to me during the course of this debate, I will have it. But to the best of my knowledge, in fact that is the case, not that the death of that one child isn't that which should give us pause and warrant a discussion of this kind, which may turn out to be one of the best discussions we've had in this House, but that we shouldn't use it to say that the system is all wrong and we should simply find some more money and some more resources.

We've put more resources in what I call the early warning system. We have developed in the prosecution end a supremely competent, and recognized across the country as such, Crown Prosecutor. We have added to her staff so that she can do more work in the prosecution of identified child abuse cases. We've done that. We have entered into an agreement with the Federal Government — would you give me a two-minute sign when I'm about there, please? — (Interjection) — that's three minutes, fine.

We have, as members know, because I announced this not so long ago, entered into an agreement with the Federal Government with respect to being able to videotape the evidence of the victim of child abuse or child sexual abuse so that we can better work with that child and get to know more about the situation, get to know more about what to do with the situation. It's not that we have been standing still, resting on past achievements, past accomplishments. We know that there are many more things to be done, and let it not be said that we don't.

Let us, in the course of this debate, or in the course of the Estimates, identify those areas on the basis of hard and relevant data which can be improved. In that way, this debate will have served a far more useful purpose than the mere making of political points. Whatever we do, let's not use this debate for that narrow and unworthy purpose.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Madam Speaker, I join in this debate to ask some questions and put some comments forward because I think it is time that society paid a lot more attention to really we're going. I think that we have to fairly lay the blame where it should be blamed, and I don't think we have to make it a partisan issue, but we have to lay it with the government who have allowed the escalation, who have not been able to cope with not only this issue in our society but many, Madam Speaker.

I compliment my colleague, the Member for St. Norbert, who has finally been able to bring to the attention of this government this major concern of his and of our caucus. If the record stands correct, that I have, Madam Speaker, and I'm sure it is, that last November my colleague, the Member for St. Norbert, wrote a letter to the Minister who is responsible for this whole area and, to this date, has not received a response dealing with this important issue.

As well, I understand that there was a challenge or there was the opportunity to debate with my colleague from St. Norbert twice, once in January and once in February, but because of election fever and an election in the air, she was unable to accommodate such an important debate. Madam Speaker, one can only lay at the feet of this government the responsibility for the situation that it has escalated to.

Madam Speaker, I have some questions. This is in the City of Winnipeg that this has been identified. What about the rest of the province? What about our communities in the North? What of communities in the west and the south, Madam Speaker, where almost half the population live? Is it as deplorable there as it is in the City of Winnipeg? Is it out of control there as much as it is in the City of Winnipeg, Madam Speaker? Because, if it is, then we have a far greater problem on our hands than what we have been hearing about from the Minister of Health today who tried to cover up for his colleague who is, unfortunately, out of the province when such major issues occur.

Madam Speaker, it is urgent, and I am extremely pleased that we have had the opportunity to put on the record some of our thoughts. Madam Speaker, as

a parent and as an individual who has been very much involved in a close family life all my life, I really regret that we have such a society that we have those individuals who are abused in the way in which they are, but I think it's even a bigger regret that we have a government who have not been able to deal with it and deal with it in a responsible way.

Madam Speaker, I would recommend, because we have had a little bit of spare time as legislators — last week, we had to adjourn the House early because the government had not organized the affairs of the government to deal with it — I would request, Madam Speaker, that consideration be given that the First Minister of this province establish a committee of the Legislature. Yes, spend a little bit of time as legislators on this matter; set up a committee of the Legislature to look at this whole problem of child abuse throughout the province. Let's bring witnesses; let's not make it only a partisan issue. Let us not, as he indicated yesterday, let's prove to the people of Manitoba that he is a humanitarian. I could refer to some of the comments that he put in his Budget.

Madam Speaker, I think that's a positive suggestion. I think that a committee of the Legislature, of the members of this House, to have witnesses come forward and to make positive recommendations so that the government could adopt them to try — we won't eliminate it, Madam Speaker. I'm not that naive that we could eliminate this most unfortunate situation in our society, but maybe we could make it better for one of those 34 children that are identified in high-risk groups. Maybe we could make it better for two of those individuals, Madam Speaker, and if that's what we could do, then let's proceed to do it.

It is not a matter of monetary shortage, Madam Speaker. You know, we all spend our time when individuals get sick of that dreaded disease, cancer, we all get a tremendous heart-throb and really feel badly, and I do. I have lost family due to those diseases. This, I think, Madam Speaker, in the infancy of life, not to give those people an opportunity, those children an opportunity to maximize and to take advantage of this country of ours, this province of ours, is a disgrace. I think that we, the legislators of this province, should take some time through a special committee to do it.

I think it's one of again, Madam Speaker, being honest with ourselves, and I think that the government should be honest with the people of Manitoba and proceed to take the necessary action and correct the problem, one which they have been given the responsibility to do through a majority in this Legislature.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I think that abuse, be it child abuse, spouse abuse, or the abuse of the elders is probably one of the most difficult things to detect, one of the most to prove and certainly one of the most difficult to deal with.

Not too long ago, when we were talking about child abuse, we were talking about battered babies. Things have changed and we know that there's much more than that now. We know that there is an area of — The Badgley Report in 1984 stated that one in two

females had been abused, and one in three men. Now, that's a pretty tall order, that's pretty difficult, and I would not dare to think for a minute that there's one person in this House who is not interested and doesn't care about this concern that we all have.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker, C. Santos, is in the Chair)

But I think that it is completely wrong — and most of the members to their credit — I believe that they try to shy away from the partisan approach; and the Member for St. Norbert, not so much when he introduced that but when he spoke to this thing. The Members for Rhineland and Arthur, of course, were very partisan but I don't think they've been that effective. It would be folly and it would be ridiculous to think that you can take anybody, any segment of society, and say it's your fault.

Look at how difficult it is to detect when you're talking about abuse in the home with the people that are supposed to give love to that baby, the parents, or somebody very close to them, the day care, the schools, the hospitals anywhere; it could be big brother. So if there is this kind of abuse, can we say, it's you government that is responsible for that, and you must cure everything. I don't think you'll ever cure it, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't. We should never stop trying. I think we've got to redouble our efforts all the time to try to deal with this.

But if a government, any government, is foolish enough to think that they can eradicate this problem in society alone, there will be complete failure. I think centralization was exactly that to work with the community because it is a problem of the community. It is there. You must talk about identifying first of all. Somebody said awhile ago, one of the speakers — I think it was the Member for Arthur — say there's double the abuse than there was before. This is asinine, this is ridiculous. We are detecting more people and that is very important. Well, I apologize if it's not the Member for Arthur, but somebody mentioned that.

We are detecting more people. When we introduced abuse for the spouse abuse, look at what we detected when people felt that there was somebody there, people who were afraid to say anything. It is this kind of sick society that we have, and I don't think there's any different word than that. I think that you have to work with all the agencies, the government, the parents, the schools and to say that someone said that it's not time; there is no longer time to study and think about it, you've got to do something about it. You've got to know where you're going; you've got to know what you're doing; and this has been tried.

What I resent from the Member for St. Norbert is some of the accusations that he repeated today. He wrote a letter, and it's true — somebody mentioned a letter that he wrote to our Minister of Community Services — but she did answer it. I will quote a couple of paragraphs that she answered, and this was on October 30, 1985. — (Interjection) — You might have written 10 letters. I'm talking about this letter and I want to quote from this.

This is what she stated: "Last week, without taking the time to check with me or my staff, you made what amounted to a claim that five children had died because of policies which you said I had implemented. The facts show that these terrible tragedies had happened in circumstances which were accidents or in cases where

the court had already decided that neglect was not the cause of death.

"One case involved a child from Ontario. Further, all these cases occurred before the reorganization of child welfare in the City of Winnipeg. As well, the percentage of children taken to protection out of child abuse situations has doubled over the last few years."

Another paragraph — because the member said that there weren't enough resources given to this problem — "It was our government that funded the Child Protection Centre, passed new Child and Family Service Legislation which last year provided Winnipeg agencies with an additional \$600,000 in preventative grant, funded Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata, which is a Native-run family service centre in Winnipeg, and it was our government which finally decided to do something about the deteriorating child welfare in Winnipeg and reorganize the Child and Family Services system into non-profit, voluntary, community-based agencies."

And the last paragraph: "I am not prepared to ask you to review child care policy with my staff. I would, however, be glad to meet with you personally to discuss these issues in a calm and rational fashion, but I must admit that your past actions cause me to doubt that a non-partisan and non-political basis of discussion is possible."

I think, too, you can reproach a lot of things and you'll always be right when you feel that it is not perfect. There have been mistakes made. Mistakes are made by society, also.

I don't think that anybody would have the nerve to get up in this place and say that the Minister of Community Services is not interested, has no compassion for the kids. I would stake my reputation or anything — my life — on this: that she has as much, at least as much as anyone in this House.

I'm not going to say "more" but I know the person she is and I know the concern and I know the hours that she had spent on that. My friend, the Attorney-General said that it should be a non-partisan thing. I have said that before. I would hope that it is not construed as saying, oh, you're trying to get everybody on your side because you're afraid to face the music. The people that know me know that is not the case.

But in the question of health — and this is health also — I think it is the only way. I think we must unite. We can play politics if we want. We have a choice. We can maybe try to get Brownie points but if we work together, it is the only way and it's with all society. If God Almighty permits that parents treat their children like that, or friends, or schools, how can a mere mortal be perfect in dealing with all these things? I think that that is very difficult.

This is information that I'd like to share with the House: since January 1, 1986, there have been four babies who were victims of homicide, three by accident of natural parents in their home, one killed while in the care of a foster parent. The foster parent happened to be a cousin of the deceased, who was termed a suitable foster parent and placed by child care agencies.

That, again, is another example of how difficult — I am positive that the Member for River Heights is very sincere. She talked about an experience in her life when she was younger. She says you always go on the side of the child and everybody would agree with that, but is that as easily done? I said that one out of every two

females has been abused and one out of three females — can you see that we are going to have a camps of people taken away from their families? Is it that easy to prove, when doctors sometimes, even doctors are afraid to speak because of their clients. I'm not saying this is general; I think there's been a big improvement on that. That has been a concern.

Are you going to go and tell a mother, without having sufficient proof, that she is guilty, or a father? Do you think that's easy, when we're not there? That is a difficult thing.

I gave the answer today, of where those 22 kids are. They are being supervised. We talked about the kids — a doctor talked about these kids at the Children's Hospital. Darn it, any doctor — in his place, if I were a doctor, I'd make darned sure that none of those kids would ever leave the hospital unless they were sure they were going someplace where it was safe.

I think that is being done. I think that we owe a lot — we didn't understand; we had to be pushed — both parties, all the members of this House — by Dr. Ken McRae and others. They've improved the situation. There's been an awful lot of money spent. There's been an awful lot of improvement.

But we are still failing because society, as I say, is sick and we have to work with society, with the schools, with the day care, with the Big Brother organization, with the police, and so on. It is folly to think that one alone . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, please. The member's time has expired.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I am pleased to enter into the discussion and the debate on the topic that has been raised by my colleague from St. Norbert. I compliment the Speaker in seeing the wisdom of having this debate at this particular time because I think it is urgent, it is important, and it is something that is been long overdue in this Legislature between the government and the members of the Opposition.

I compliment my colleague from St. Norbert for having raised the issue on numerous occasions over the past six to eight months. I honestly believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that had the opportunity for this sort of open discussion and debate taken place earlier, had the opportunity been given by the Minister responsible and the members of the government, we may perhaps have avoided some of the tragedies that have occurred over the past number of months.

I believe that now that debate is occurring, we have an opportunity to address the concerns and perhaps to avoid a recurrence of many of the circumstances that are prevalent today in Winnipeg and perhaps even throughout the province with respect to the child welfare system, that have led to cases of abuse turning into tragedy.

I regret that the Minister responsible has chosen to be at a conference in which child abuse and child welfare are being discussed, because we are not talking about

this in some theoretical sense; we are not talking about this in an abstract opportunity to gain information. We are talking about a very real situation of crisis that pertains today in Manitoba.

It pertains today under her jurisdiction, in her department, that has been identified and drawn to public attention for many, many months. It seems to me that it is unfortunate that she has chosen as a priority to enter into discussion on the matter outside of this province and leave the crisis situation behind in Manitoba. I regret very much not only her choice of priorities but her Premier's choice of priorities in authorizing her to go at this time.

Having said all of that, I am glad that the debate is taking place even without her opportunity to participate because it has been well indicated by the Member for Arthur that many opportunities were given to her to debate the situation publicly with the Member for St. Norbert, with professionals in the child welfare field, over the past six months.

That opportunity was not only ignored but it was purposely avoided because the Minister apparently did not believe that there was a problem.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is what we are up against today because I say to you that this is not, as the Minister of Urban Affairs has indicated, just a debate on different models or systems of delivery of child welfare in this province. We are not just debating whether this should be a decentralized or a centralized system.

This is not a debate, as the Member for River Heights suggested, on more resources because I will readily acknowledge, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that any amount of money will not guarantee the elimination of abuse, child abuse, or the tragedy that we are facing today in Manitoba. So it's not just a debate on more resources and, as the Member for River Heights has said, no amount of money will ensure we avoid these tragedies in future.

This isn't just a debate on statistics, as the Minister of Health would have you believe. All of those statistics that he read about comparisons between the situation that pertained under the centralized system versus the decentralized; under the Badgley Report and all of those things are interesting and informative, but that's not the topic of the debate today, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The debate is about the recognition that we are facing a serious problem with respect to child abuse in Winnipeg and throughout Manitoba, that the recent rash of deaths and serious injuries has to be brought to a halt or the circumstances that have led to them occurring can be a function of the system and the way it responds to the system.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it isn't just a broad theoretical discussion about the subject of child abuse. What it is is recognition that once a child has been abused and that child has been identified as being in circumstances that place them at risk, they are still being returned to those circumstances, to the same circumstances that resulted in abuse taking place. That has been occurring over a period of time, has been identified over a period of time of many many months and yet it has not been dealt with in any meaningful way, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So we have to get away from all these broad theoretical discussions, and I'll accept, as the Minister

of Health has suggested, that the Minister is a very sincere individual, that she acts out of a sense of good will towards the children and to the circumstances. But I say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that she is misinformed, that she is being misdirected by the people who have been identified as her chief resources on this, one Aleda Turnbull, Assistant Deputy Minister, and many others are leading her along the wrong paths and shielding her from the reality of what is happening. Just, sir, as Peter Sellers in the movie "Being There," she comes programmed with information but no real understanding that there is a problem.

I say to you that Manitoba today has an unacceptable record on child abuse, Mr. Deputy Speaker; that we no longer have to tolerate the kind of abuse that has been taking place that has resulted in serious injury and death on a recurring basis over the last number of months and that the only way that we are going to solve the problem or ensure that we've done something concrete to ensure that it doesn't happen as often again in future is by first recognizing that there is a problem. That is something that the Minister has not done and that is something that her senior officials in her department have not done. They have steadfastly maintained that there is no problem; that by reading statistics, they can demonstrate that the problem is no worse today than it was five years ago or that it's better than, or that the Badgley Report says that these circumstances prevail throughout the provinces of Canada. All of that is irrelevant to the discussion.

We first must recognize and acknowledge that there is a problem, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and then we must address the circumstances that allow that problem to continue to exist and to be prevalent in resulting in serious injury and death through child abuse in Manitoba. Having recognized that that problem exists, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we then have to put the onus on the Minister and her administration to come up with changes in the system that allow them to address the problem and allow them to ensure that everything possible is being done to solve the problem.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Kirkfield Park.

MRS. G. HAMMOND: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker

I think one of the things that I am finding in this debate, and I don't think this was the issue when it was brought up by the Member for St. Norbert, is that the government has turned very defensive on this issue. We don't want to see that type of thing happening. We don't want to see them retrench because they think they are the best in Canada and they've done the most. We're talking about an urgent situation.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair.)

At the present time, a doctor has said that we have 34 babies at risk of dying — not just being hurt but at risk of dying. The Member for St. Norbert has been consistent in the past year or two on this issue. He hasn't changed his position in any way. He has tried to inform the Minister of what he sees has been a problem in the department and for some reason I think that the Minister unfortunately has been getting the wrong advice because members on this side of the

House, and I'm sure members on the government side, have got to have been hearing from the people involved, doctors. That's why these things are being made public today, because they can't get anywhere with the Minister. They can't get anywhere from the head of the department. So what we have now are doctors, social workers, foster parents, all pleading for something to be done.

This debate is not done to embarrass the government. The debate was brought about to try and save 34 babies who are at risk. We want to bring it to the attention and I'm sorry that the Minister — I can't say that — did not look after the problem before she went to her conference. Because just to leave it in the hands of the department saying, we'll look into it is not enough, and as much as I appreciate what the Minister of Health, the report that someone gave him, I don't for one minute believe that those babies are being as closely watched as is indicated. There is nothing that should make us think that because deaths have happened and whether it's one or two or three doesn't matter. The fact of the matter is that it has happened and that it can happen again.

That is something that we can't allow and, as a government, they can't allow. I'm not blaming the social workers by any means because they are just run off their feet. They are working overtime. The only thing, when you talk to a social worker who is working in the child welfare, who are dealing and working in these agencies, the only thing they can deal with is crisis situations and that's just at the moment and then they're on to the next. They don't have time to monitor the family. They don't have time to see if the foster home is working out. I mean, the child is just put there, that's about the end of it and they can hope for the best. They want more than what they are able to do and it is up to this government to provide it.

Now decentralization may or may not be the right way to go. We've had a lot of questions about it. It obviously is not working in abuse cases and there isn't time to test the system any more. We need to centralize the abuse system. Police, doctors, they need to know at any given moment who to contact. We have 34 babies at risk of death.

We had a two-year old baby who was killed, placed by one agency, not known to the region that the child was placed. You just have to look at past estimates to realize that these were the questions that members of the opposition had about the system because people that are in low economic circumstances are often on the move and they are moving from one area to the other. They can be inside the boundary today and they are outside of it tomorrow — and where are their children? and where are the agencies? Obviously the communication isn't good or this type of thing could not have happened, where they didn't even know the child was in the home. I mean, that alone points up to the deficiency in the system.

I can't plead with the government more that they get on with the business of looking at this, and they must. I think it has to lay at the Premier's door, that if the Minister is not going to take charge of this issue, then he'd better get onto it and get something done because as members of the human race, which we all want to be good people in our community, we can't let this issue just lie and we can't let it go just now that the

debate is going to be over. We've got to have something done, and I plead with the government that they try and do something immediately on this terrible issue.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

HON. J. STORIE: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm pleased to be able to join this important debate, and a debate, I think which many perhaps today would acknowledge, perhaps should have occurred sooner. It is a debate which I believe reflects an ongoing problem which some of us in this Chamber are more familiar with than others.

Madam Speaker, I was, at one point, a school counsellor, and I, like some other members, have had opportunity to witness the very real carnage which can occur in families. It is something which has been with us for some time, Madam Speaker, and, unfortunately, given the current state of the human condition, it is likely to continue with us into the future. That does not mean that we collectively should not be striving to improve the human condition and to eliminate to the extent possible these kinds of incidences.

While I've said I have enjoyed the debate and I think it has been, by and large, a rational debate with some excellent points made in terms of how one might want to come to grips with this very serious problem, I think a couple of underlying currents in the comments have to be addressed.

Clearly, Madam Speaker, when the Member for Arthur refers to the fact that it's unfortunate that all members of the House cannot address this issue at this time, I think it's important to recognize that this is not an issue which occurred; it is an issue which is occurring and has occurred and will occur. It is a continuum. The question that we have to address is what needs to be done into the future to make sure that those occurrences are fewer and the impacts are less severe. That's what we should be addressing.

Madam Speaker, I don't believe that the addresses of my colleagues have been unduly defensive. Clearly, Madam Speaker, we have a record of achievement in the area of child and family welfare which I believe needs no defence; it speaks for itself. Whether you're talking about the new Child and Family Services Act which replaced the old Child Welfare Act, which was an archaic and outdated act, whether you talk about the introduction of a range of services to deal with family violence and family decay, this government has a record which needs no defence. The fact is that there is a continuing problem and this debate, of course, will do a great deal to highlight that issue in the minds of the public and, obviously, in the minds of legislators. So there is a purpose to this debate.

What I wanted to do, Madam Speaker, was inform members opposite that this government has approached the problem of not only child abuse and sexual abuse but the problems inherent in family life in our society from many different fronts. The Attorney-General mentioned the fact that in 1984 protocols were introduced into the educational system for the detection, the early detection, the reporting of suspected abuse cases. Now, clearly, that's something that perhaps we could argue should have been done earlier.

Certainly, as a counsellor in a junior high school, I was aware of those kinds of problems, and the cooperation that I received at that time with community services personnel, with mental health personnel, and a whole range of social services personnel was useful. The fact is that we have gone a step further. We have taken steps to inform the teaching profession not only of the facts that these kinds of abuses occur but giving them some assistance in defining it, in identifying it early, and establishing some reporting mechanism which is understandable. Madam Speaker, we have established in the province crisis centres and crisis information centres for victims of family violence.

So, Madam Speaker, while we're dealing with a tragic incident, it cannot be ignored that this incident has antecedents which go much beyond the single issue, the tragedy that sparked this debate. The antecedents lie in all different areas of the social family. They lie in the breakdown of the marriage, they lie in the trauma of separation and divorce, they lie in the difficulties experienced by single parents. So it's a problem which has to be addressed on many fronts, and it has been addressed on many different fronts.

Manitoba has some of the most comprehensive and progressive family law legislation in this country, if not the world. It is recognized as such and the Attorney-General made reference to that fact. So progress has been made. However much it fell short of the ideal, progress is being made, and I think the debate highlights the fact that we want to proceed to accomplish and to achieve as much as we can in this area over the coming months and years.

In terms of the specific crisis as it has been described — I don't like the word "crisis" because crisis implies short-term — what we have had is an acute, chronic crisis, or a chronic crisis, over the past number of decades as we have seen an increasing number of cases of sexual abuse reported, as families continue to break down, and we can only apply resources to deal with specific problems as the needs arise and as the needs are defined.

Madam Speaker, in response to what was obviously a deteriorating situation in terms of the caseload of child care workers in the city, the Minister responsible for Community Services announced in January that some 33 additional staff would be added to assume the caseload. And one of the members referred to the fact that the child care workers are overburdened, that individuals in the system are carrying heavy caseloads and working overtime. It is true. Thirty-three additional staff were added in January and that commitment has continued through 1986-87. So, clearly, some effort, some serious substantial financial support has been given which was intended to address a problem; a problem that the Minister of the Day recognized and moved to correct. On each of the other areas that I've discussed, movement was made.

So, Madam Speaker, I think it would be fair to say that the government could be criticized, perhaps, for not moving fast enough or far enough. But, Madam Speaker, it would be incorrect to suggest that the government (a) was not aware of the problem, or (b) had not proposed solutions in the many areas which affect a family situation.

Madam Speaker, the debate will not only prove useful for enlightening people, it may prove useful for

continuing discussions for the allocation of resources into the future because, clearly, we have identified an issue which is of mutual concern, and I don't know that that's necessarily a first, but it is an important recognition on the part of the Legislature.

Madam Speaker, I know that the Minister responsible for Community Services will be addressing, in a very concrete way, the concerns that have been raised, and obviously she will be successful to the extent that those agencies that are in place, those support services that are in place are funded and can contribute in a comprehensive and a cooperative way with the objective that we all have. That is to see the elimination of these kinds of incidents.

So, Madam Speaker, the debate has been worthwhile, and I think the objectives of the debate have been worthwhile as well.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. H. ENNS: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Let me firstly acknowledge and compliment your decision to allow this debate to proceed. It indicates to us that you recognize the validity of the motion put forward by the Member for St. Norbert. It also recognizes and tells us that you, even though in that position as the referee, if you like, somewhat removed from the day-to-day partisanship of this House, but nonetheless are a member. You read the newspapers; you see what's happening. Indeed it is that very fact that prompted the motion that we are now debating under, the fact that this has just about been an ongoing continuing story, not just raised by members in the House, most notably of course our own colleague, the Member for St. Norbert, but by outside professionals, by doctors, by people involved in the area that is under discussion. They are raising it day-by-day in a very serious way. That, to me, certainly provided a great deal of the basis for the urgency of the debate, the need for the debate. I appreciate very much that we are having this debate at this time.

Madam Speaker, in the few moments that I have or the few minutes that I have that the rules provide for talking to the discussion, let me say that I don't take issue with anything that has been said on this subject by any and all members. Regrettably, members, particularly members opposite, have chosen to share with us their concerns, their views about some of the difficulties. The Member for St. Boniface, the Minister of Health, talks about a sick society. The member that just spoke speaks about the fact that this is a chronic problem that society today has to face. Those are, of course, all statements that one cannot take issue with.

Madam Speaker, the issue that I want to take and place before the House and use this occasion to, particularly perhaps for some of the new Ministers on the Treasury Bench, indicate that this particular discussion affords us an opportunity to graphically and dramatically cite the different responsibilities that we have in this Chamber, namely, the difference between the responsibilities of a person that sits on the Treasury Bench, a person who has the responsibility of a Minister as versus all other members.

We've had, and some have described it as such, a relatively non-partisan discussion about the issue. We

have all expressed the heartfelt concern, sorrow that lives of youngsters in Manitoba are at risk. That is all fine and good. But, Madam Speaker, a Cabinet Minister takes a different responsibility, swears a different oath. He is the chief executive officer of that department.

Madam Speaker, what the Member for St. Norbert has been raising time and time again, there is something wrong in that department. He has gone one step further. He has identified a particular person that is possibly part of the reason why something is wrong in that department.

Madam Speaker, the chief responsibility of a Cabinet Minister as chief executive officer of a large operation, sometimes numbering in the thousands of employees, is to act. Madam Speaker, under our system, under the parliamentary system, we come into this House with different skills. It is not given to the Premier to always have at his hand perhaps the ideal person to choose for a Cabinet spot of a particular description. He may not have a child psychologist to be put in charge of this department. He has to make his Cabinet from the timber that is provided him in an election, and we come to this Chamber as lay people. Some of you, 20 of you, many of you, more than ever in the history of the record of the Province of Manitoba have been appointed to the onerous responsibilities of Cabinet duties.

That really is the issue that is before us, Madam Speaker. That is the issue that calls for the urgent attention by the Minister involved, by the government involved. Madam Speaker, that should not be interpreted as a partisan approach to this issue. Of course, it's not a partisan issue, the question of child abuse, the question of concerning ourselves with the welfare of young children in the Province of Manitoba.

But what is at issue is that it has become apparent for some time now that there is something drastically wrong in that department. Madam Speaker, again some of it may be laid at the doorsteps of reorganization within the department, and that could lead into a partisan debate as to the merits of a more centralized or decentralized form of delivery of this badly needed service. But again, certainly the member who introduced the motion, I thought, was extremely fair and generous in not entering into that debate, even though history and the record shows that there are some very serious questions that can be raised about whether or not we have improved the system, whether or not going to the regionalized system has brought about a better delivery of service.

But as I said, Madam Speaker, that's not the issue, and that is not my purpose to debate that particular question. What is in question is that the service that the department is attempting to deliver is not being delivered in an appropriate way, and it's putting children at risk. That can be dealt with, Madam Speaker, and ought to be dealt with, with dispatch. The Minister has a very specific responsibility in that regard.

Madam Speaker, it is not always even up to the Minister to find all the reasons why something isn't working. All he or she has to know is that something is not working in their department, and then you effect the necessary changes. Madam Speaker, I would hope that the Minister would be informed of this debate, even while she is attending the conference that admittedly is dealing with the overall questions and

long-term planning approach to child welfare, but that she should be informed of this debate taking place right now. She should be sensitive enough and concerned enough to effect some immediate changes.

The question of urgency is putting children that have been identified by all the processes that different members have talked about — the professionals, the social workers have identified and the system has caught or has been alerted to the fact that a child has been abused. What we are talking about is not how we are going to solve the chronic problem of child abuse. That's worthy of a much longer debate. That is worthy of discussions that we can have when we consider the departmental Estimates. That is worthy of debates that we may have when different bills are put before this Chamber.

But we are talking about a very specific, narrow situation, a child that has been abused, has been alerted to, has been brought to the attention of the system, of the department, and then is placed right back into that high-risk position. Now surely, that can be stopped, that can be stopped at 5:30. That can be stopped right now, or is there a philosophical argument going on within the department that, in effect, pits the willfulness of a senior administrator, one Aleda Turnbull, against the expressions of concern that are being expressed in this Chamber and not permitting the Minister to act of her own volition in correcting what obviously is not working?

Madam Speaker, I don't have the resources and I don't have the experience and I don't have the background to tell honourable members opposite or indeed to tell the Minister what to do in terms of resolving the issue, but I read the newspapers. I hear the issue being brought up time and time and again. I know that there is turmoil in the department, that these workers charged with the sensitive responsibility of caring for our children are in open rebellion in the department? They have taken a strike vote; they're talking about going on strike at a time when we have 20, 34 — and the numbers don't really matter — but we have children not being properly looked after.

Madam Speaker, I would hope that the Minister would react to this afternoon's discussion dealing with her department in a way that is open to her and in a way that would resolve at least one aspect of the problem and change the direction that the department is taking

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Burrows.

MR. C. SANTOS: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Member for Lakeside asked whether there is a philosophical dimension to this issue. I would like to dwell on that angle and argue that there is a broader moral and philosophical dimension to this issue.

If we are looking for causes of malaise in our society, I think it lies right in the very foundation of the nature of man and the nature of society itself. There are two views as to the nature of man. One view, in simple terms, is that he is a . . . ; the other view is that he is a fallen angel. Whichever view you take, there is a mixture of good and bad in each and every one of us. The only question is which aspect of us comes first.

The other question is the nature of the social arrangement of our society. Is our society a truly moral

society or is it a truly, inherently, by the nature of the activities in our society, an immoral one?

It cannot be denied that across the centuries there has been a gradual tendency in all societies for decadence and moral degradation. There is a moral pattern that can be discerned. At the height, even of the greatest of empires, like the Roman Empire, they indulged in excesses as a result of human nature and as a result of societal arrangement; and because of these excesses of passions and desires, we always find ourselves in the midst of problems, whether individual problems in the form of mental health or societal problems in the form of crimes, delinquency and abuses.

I will argue that this is all due to the nature of our changing society. I will argue that this is due to the creeping materialism in our society and the gradual punishment of the finer, higher moral values in our society.

There is in everyone of us now a measuring stick as to the worth of human beings. We look upon human beings in terms of the kind of house he has, the kind of car he drives, the kind of job he has, the kind of income he possesses and these are all valued in terms of the dollar; he receives higher income than he's afforded greater respect and greater prestige and greater status in our society.

Even in the arrangement of our society there are certain questionable activities that we encourage because of material benefits or advantage. How can we explain governmental sponsorship and licensing of gambling, of lotteries and casinos? The only explanation is because it yields money and profit.

How can we explain governmental monopoly and sponsorship of selling of the spirited liquors, drinks and alcohol, which is the cause of drunken driving and the cause of all other social causes. The only explanation is because it yields money, it yields profit to the government.

Yet the so-called professionals in our society are not themselves without any vested interests in all of these things, because if society should ever succeed in abolishing crime and abolishing criminals, what would the prison guards do? What would the judges do? What would the lawyers do?

If we ever succeeded in abolishing poverty, what would the social workers do? Do they have a vested interest in maintaining a system of poverty? I do not know. All I am saying is that it is because of the struggle within human beings and the struggle among groups of people for certain values, and the only struggle is whether these are material values or spiritual values.

I think the solution lies in our refocusing the role of government. I think, for example, that in our system of education, ethics should be a compulsory subject, right from the very start of school children when they go to school, up to the very time that they graduate in any professional school. There is no point in creating people who are efficient who are morally bankrupt, because if there is any dangerous group of people, those are the most efficient people, technically proficient, but who has no sense of moral values. — (Interjection) — I'm not talking about any other group, I'm talking about the nature of our society and the cause of our trouble.

If we are looking for a solution for a more harmonious solution of all the social problems that we can not avoid,

such as the loss, for example, of sense of community spirit that we have observed, sense of alienation in people, there is no more neighbourhood relationship in urban centres any more. You don't even know your neighbours.

In the country there is still vestiges of that sense of community spirit that inhibits people from doing some things which are morally questionable, because they will be the talk of the town if they do anything that is against the existing moralist shared system of values of the people in that small community.

I think that really we should start encouraging and training our people in terms of uprightness of what is proper and moral conduct. If we entirely neglect the teaching of ethics, for example, in the school system, in the training and upbringing of our children, they will be the very problem that we are rearing in our society.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Brandon West.

MR. J. McCRAE: Madam Speaker, I too would like to commend the Chair for recognizing the importance of this debate. I'm glad too to see that honourable members opposite have seen the value of having this debate.

The Government House Leader initially may not have understood the importance of it, but I believe he does now, considering the thoughtful and constructive speeches we've heard from honourable members opposite, as well as from speeches on this side of the House.

I believe, as other honourable members have said, that the only way to approach problems like this would be in a non-partisan way. When you're six feet under water you don't ask who's helping, you just need help, and that's the situation we're in now.

Madam Speaker, the debate today is all about the safety of the children of our province and I say that if this debate should somehow result in the saving of even one life or the health of even one individual, I think it will have been worthwhile.

I have gained considerable experience in the last 15 or 16 years in one way or another, working in the court system. I've been exposed to family problems, criminal problems and all kinds of problems, many of them involving children. The reason I feel so strongly about the importance of the debate is that we see in the courts the cases of burns, the broken bones and internal injuries and a lot of these things can happen when families break up and I believe it's our job, here in this place, to do what we can to protect the children of this province.

It's very hard to tell which parents in our society are abusive to their children. Even some of the best qualified people in the field have made mistakes, and perhaps these things have happened in this province, too. The Minister of Health told us that we shouldn't blame the government when these things happen, and I agree with him, because no matter which government is in office, isolated incidents will happen. He also told us that what we are doing now is detecting more cases. Madam Speaker, that is very good. If we can detect more cases, then there are more cases that we can do something about.

But if we are detecting those more cases, what are we doing about them? Well, my experience in court has been that the child welfare worker comes to the judge, asking for permission to apprehend a child in an abusive or neglectful atmosphere, and the first question the judge has is, well, what is your plan for the child and the child welfare workers, in so many cases, begin, just the very first thing they do is to set out how they plan to get those children back to their parents.

Madam Speaker, that's probably a laudable goal in many, many cases but perhaps this is where the expertise of certain social workers, of disciplines which are specialized, come into play. Perhaps the resources of this province have not been distributed properly so that these people are in place and can provide that type of assistance to families and the court system, that kind of advice that is needed.

When we return children, if it is the plan to return children to their families, which no one would disagree with except in cases of abusive families, then we have to know which families are abusive. That's where we seem to have had a breakdown in the distribution of the resources of the province in being able to identify which families are families that would be a risk to children.

Madam Speaker, we also have heard that staff are overburdened in some areas. I just wonder, Madam Speaker; it's a very important place to be having a problem of a strike looming. It seems to me that every effort should be taken to see that such a strike would not take place, especially now when the focus of this issue is so much in the public eye.

Madam Speaker, also, what comes to my mind is the question of training of our welfare workers who deal with children. In the future, maybe this debate will help the department in making a decision that specialized training for welfare officers is going to be something we are going to have to do in the future, and the same goes for special units to deal with problems of this nature.

Madam Speaker, I think, besides the problem of returning children to abusive homes, the problem of neglect of children is almost akin to abuse because in so many cases abuse is the result of neglect. That neglect can come in many, many forms. The Honourable Member for River Heights referred to the mental type of abuse. Well, there is also the abuse of neglect.

Just last night, Madam Speaker, as I was standing here addressing this House, a member of my own family was involved in an accident. I'm glad to say that my daughter was not hurt too seriously, but she did end up at the hospital. Here I was in Winnipeg, and I thought, well, what am I doing here when my daughter is in Brandon. Well, of course, she was in good hands, Madam Speaker, and, as it turns out, I didn't need to feel that way. But if we could somehow imbue in the minds of the parents of this province that they should be more concerned about where their children are, what their children are doing, we would run into far fewer problems that result from that kind of neglect. I believe that very definitely certain kinds of neglect can be interpreted as abuse.

Another thing that we might be looking at in a bigger way in the future is the education of our population respecting child abuse, Madam Speaker. It seems to

me that there are many times in this House that honourable members on this side are critical of the government when it comes to the spending of the government's money. It seems to me that a lot of the money has been spent by this particular government on questionable programs and in questionable ways. I think immediately of advertising. This government spends many, many millions of dollars to tell the province about certain programs and, of course, those things are necessary; but when it comes to telling the province about how good its government is, and using the taxpayers' own money to do so, it seems to me that those dollars could be used to educate the population about the dangers and about how to prevent the abuse of our children.

Madam Speaker, that's the three ways that I would be looking at this problem as someone new to this place. But I have to say that certainly it has to be a matter of concern to all honourable members in this Chamber and to all Manitobans.

Just as I close, Madam Speaker, I would like to remind the House that last November the Honourable Member for St. Norbert brought this to the attention — perhaps it was even before that — but he certainly, by way of a letter to the Minister of Community Services last November, brought forward a number of concerns. It seems to me that if action had been taken on the concerns raised by the Honourable Member for St. Norbert at that time, we might not be standing here today talking about child abuse in this province and we might have far fewer cases to be dealing with in the province.

No one is going to say that there never will be any child abuse in this province again. That would be asking for too much; I tend to agree with the Minister of Health when he says that, too. But it seems to me that where we can take steps, and where we don't, then we should be sharing in some of the blame for some of the abuse that takes place in this province.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

MR. M. DOLIN: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like to congratulate the Opposition House Leader for bringing the subject up for emergency debate and to congratulate you, Madam Speaker, for having the good judgment to allow the debate to take place.

I think there are some very important issues here, and I think a term which was coined by the Minister of Education is probably the most appropriate term to be used. I think he referred to chronic crisis. I think if we are talking about anything here, we are not talking about an immediate matter that is happening just at this point in time; we are talking about a chronic crisis that has not only existed for some considerable length of time but, unfortunately, no matter what actions are taken, will continue to exist, hopefully in lesser dimensions, but certainly will continue.

I would like to give you some information from the Government of Canada publication, it's called "Poverty on the Increase," and just some statistics which I think are relevant to this particular point. In 1980, single parent females under the poverty line, the percentage

was 48.5 percent. In 1983, it had gone up to 49.1 percent. Female heads of households, 1979, 43.9 percent were poverty-stricken; in 1981, 47.1 percent. The number of children under 16, living in low-income families, rose by more than one-quarter from just 1980 to 1983. In 1983, more than one million children, 1.131 million, or one child in five lived in poverty.

Another thing — I don't have the specific statistics in front of me — but it is my understanding that in the Winnipeg court system last year there were 3,000 or more cases of family violence, domestic abuse, that came through the courts of the City of Winnipeg.

Two things I think we can read in from these statistics: One is poverty, particularly in female-led households, has been seen to be linked with social disintegration, social disorganization, with ill health, with a high incidence of crime, a high incidence of family violence. The incidents that we are seeing in family violence lead to a cyclical kind of pattern of continuing family violence. Where somebody has been abused, they are much more likely to abuse their own children.

I was somewhat disappointed with the Leader of the Opposition because, as I pointed out, and I think as the Minister of Education pointed out, this is a chronic crisis. Somehow the Leader of the Opposition seems to link this with the absence or presence of the Minister of Community Services. I do not particularly think, from the statistics I have quoted, and I'm sure all honourable members will understand and have read articles that show that the linkages between child abuse and poverty, and child abuse and family violence are very strong, very obviously, and statistically valid. I have never seen any statistics to show any linkage between the absence or presence of any given Minister in this building and child abuse.

I think some of the things that were said — there are no quick fixes, unfortunately — some of the generalities that were made, for example, the Honourable Member for Lakeside talked about high-risk children being returned to the home in situations of high risk. Now I don't know whether he was implying that this was a situation where it should never happen.

I am concerned that professional case workers and the kind of social workers and specialized people that the Honourable Member for Brandon West referred to, when they make an assessment, look at the individual situation in that individual household. In some cases, it is the appropriate thing to return the child to the home with proper supervision; in other cases, it is not. I think to make a generality that you either always return the child to the home or you never return the child to the home is not good social work; it's not good for the benefit of the child. I think what was said earlier is the primary thing — and I think every member of this House would agree — is what is in the best interest of the child. I certainly think that probably the primary motivator from the Member for St. Norbert for initiating this debate is because we are all concerned about the well-being of the child.

I would like to point out something else. There are some initiatives that this government has taken and I fully recognize that, as members of the Opposition, and I recognize without hyperbole and without condemnation, the fact that we are not perfect. But this government has taken some considerable initiatives and I think would appreciate specific recommendations

on further initiatives rather than generalities of "always do this or always do that."

I think I've already pointed out that presence or absence of a particular Minister will not save one child in this province. I think what may save some of the children in this province is the fact that this province is the only province in all of Canada that has guidelines for identifying or reporting child abuse. We are the only province in Canada.

I'd like to read you the introduction because I think it's very important and it states very clearly what our motivations are for doing this. "Child abuse is a grave, growing, and often self-perpetuating problem which knows no social barriers. Violence in the family is often physically and always emotionally devastating, not only to the child, but to the entire family. Its identification, treatment and prevention require the close collaboration of child caring agencies, law enforcement units, health care workers, educators, and all whose concerns, whether professional or non-professional, touch upon and affect the lives of children." There are then definitions; there are then descriptions of how to report; whom to report to, etc.

I have been involved — and last Friday I was at the opening of a program called "Evolve." Evolve is a program started by the agency that I used to work for, Klinik, to deal with perpetrators of family violence and victims of family violence; the victims being the spouse, usually the female or the children. To do this is maybe to break into the cycle of family violence and maybe to do something to stop this from repeating itself from generation to generation.

The setting up of Native child and family service agencies, this has never been done; we have done that. Having workshops, educational programs, having theatre groups go to the schools and the Feeling Yes, Feeling No Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Program I think is a great initiative on the part of this government. This government has done a great many things, but I agree with the honourable members in the Opposition, there is more to be done. I think we have to do it on a cooperative basis. We have to get more specific recommendations than just the presence or absence of a Minister in the House, or just that you guys are not doing well enough and not allocating enough money to specialized workers.

I do not think the issue of centralization or decentralization is the priority issue. I think that an issue still to be examined and determined by both sides of the House is whether centralized services are more effective than decentralized services. I, personally, from my experience of 25 years in the social service field, feel that decentralization is superior because it identifies the people delivering the service more closely with the community which they serve, than does a centralized service.

Now there may be drawbacks to that. Some of the drawbacks may be that you may not be able to get the kind of specialized services you require. The fact is, I think these things are to be evaluated; they are to be looked at and critically examined by all members of this House and the public. I think to just say, you guys aren't doing anything, we have the answers, but the answers are general, vague, and just to say you haven't done enough, is not an adequate form of opposition. I think the fact is that we request

constructive criticism of the kind of initiatives we have taken.

I have here a two-page mimeographed sheet, each line lists initiatives taken by this government dealing with family violence, child abuse, child sexual abuse, and we have started programs which are being imitated across Canada. I was in this business for some time and I tell you, in the matter of incest and incest treatment and incest identification, Manitoba has a proud record of leading the country in treatment. We ran a major international conference here. People came from all over the United States and Canada to attend this conference. I think the reality is we need more of this; there's always got to be more, but we realize there are finite dollars as well as the members of the Opposition do. We have to allocate those dollars wisely and not just criticize blindly and blandly.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

You're to be complimented for the decision that you made today, although the Government House Leader did not believe that this was an emergency debate, you, in your wisdom, after watching the debate in this House, reading the papers, and I might say, being in the House previously while this subject has been brought up, made a very wise decision. My colleague, the Member for St. Norbert, has been working on this situation for at least four years and we finally have a debate in the House.

My time is short, Madam Speaker, because 5:30 is coming fast and I'd like to say that the previous speaker said there's nothing immediate. I would refer to what was in the paper today where Dr. Charles Ferguson says there was a baby in very dire straits. He says there are 34 of them that have been abused and he doesn't know whether they will be returned to their homes or not, or where they were before when they were abused. He doesn't know that, and it says, "Dr. Ferguson predicted more children on the list would die unless practices in the child welfare system were changed."

You just read out all of the lists of what this government has done and the practices that they have put forward and as my colleague from Woodlands says, it's not working. We're not talking here about being critical of one side or another. There has been debate brought forward today as to what the problems are, what to do to solve the problems. Maybe we have to look at the system, etc. And we also know that child abuse is something that is not going to go away overnight in this province or in this country or in the world. That's a drastic thing to have to say, but unfortunately it is.

At the immediate time in the Province of Manitoba — and that I believe is why the Speaker allowed this debate today — is that there are 34 known children at risk who could be returned to the situation where they were abused. We talked of 20 earlier, two days ago; today, we're talking of 34. Heavens, that is indication, Madam Speaker, that the problem is getting worse, and it's immediate right now.

Now, the bureaucracy that has been struck, the letter that my colleague from St. Norbert sent to the Minister November 22, it has 12 suggestions but, you know, the first two: "What facilities are available for abused children, for example, foster homes, group homes, Level 4 beds, homemaker services?" — very simple question. "What has been the increase in caseload for workers? Has the stress of excessive caseloads resulted in the workers leaving their jobs?" — another question.

If these questions had been answered or had been worked on when that letter was received, as my other colleague said, we would not be standing here today at the present time.

But you know, we are the Legislature here. It is unfortunate the Minister isn't here, so I would have to refer — she's out of town — to the First Minister. As a matter of fact, if we accomplish nothing more with this debate today than to have the First Minister walk out of here and instruct the agencies that no child which has been identified by the professionals as being at risk if they return to that home will not be returned. Now, he can do that. You're the government, and you have the power to do that. You can carry on with all the studies you like, but you can do that today.

Madam Speaker, if we had the First Minister today instruct that all of the children that are known to be in risk homes at the present time, or identified by the professionals that are in risk homes at the present time, will be taken out of those circumstances today or tomorrow or as soon as humanly possible for the benefit of those children and to save the lives of those children — the First Minister can do that.

You know, he's going to a conference with other First Ministers and they're going to say to him — because I have been — and one of the first things they say, what's going on in your House today? Well, we had a debate on the safety of 34 children in our province who are in high-risk situations, infants under 15 months. They're going to look at him and say, well, what did you do about it? I would like to know what the First Minister's answer to that question is. What did he do about it?

You know, I would like to ask all of you when you go home tonight and your wives and children say to you, what happened in the House today, and you say we discussed the high risk of 34 children in this province that could be at risk if they are returned to the positions they were in before, and they say to you, what did you do about it? I want to know your answers to that. What do you want to do about it? That is the issue that's at hand here.

We can talk forever. We can debate for a week and it would be a beneficial debate for a week as to how we will solve the problem. If this House did that, this House would have been doing more than any other Legislature in Manitoba if we put our minds to it for a week to solve it. But right now we have a crucial situation that is immediate; and I think that this Legislature or I think that this government are the people in government.

The Minister is away and it's too bad, because she could give that order today because her system is not working right. She is not woman enough, I guess — I used to say, man enough — to admit it. She is not woman enough to admit it. She keeps fighting it; her colleagues keep fighting it. The proof is in the pudding,

that we have 34 children right now. Those 34 children should not be put back in the situation they were in previously, and you do have the power to do something about that now. You have the power to take children that are at risk out of those homes now, and this government has to move to do it.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

NON-POLITICAL STATEMENT

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Kirkfield Park.

MRS. G. HAMMOND: Madam Speaker, I ask leave of the House to make a non-political statement.

MADAM SPEAKER: Does the honourable member have leave? (Agreed)

MRS. G. HAMMOND: Thank you.

I would like to draw attention to the members of the Legislature that today one of the professional bodies in the Province of Manitoba, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Manitoba, is celebrating its 100th anniversary of serving the people of Manitoba.

Bill No. 33 of the Fourth Session, Fifth Legislature, 1886 incorporating the C.A. Association received Royal Assent on May 28, 1886. The membership at that time totalled 15 chartered accountants. Today there are over 2,200 chartered accountants of the Manitoba Institute; about 1,500 are resident and employed in this province.

As the Charter states, and I quote: "The Association has been formed for the purpose of raising the standard of accountancy within the province, the securing to the public a guarantee of efficiency and reliability as regards services performed and certification issued by those parties as public accountants, and the protection of the interest of the members of the said association."

Chartered accountants are now not only employed in public practice, but also in industry, education and

government in this province. Over the last 100 years, C.A.'s strove to maintain the standards envisaged by the founders. I am certain that Manitoba chartered accountants will endeavour to meet the challenges of the next century with the same resolve and fortitude as their predecessors. We salute them.

MADAM SPEAKER: Before I adjourn the House, for the information of all honourable members, it is . . .
The Honourable Minister of Labour.

HON. A. MACKLING: Thank you, Madam Speaker.
Last night, when I was speaking, I hadn't completed my remarks, and I intend now to continue, Madam Speaker, unless members want to call it 5:30.

MADAM SPEAKER: Well, it is 5:30.

HON. A. MACKLING: All right, I'll finish my remarks tomorrow then.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, order please.

Before I adjourn the House, for the information of all honourable members, I wanted to bring to honourable members' attention that it is the Speaker's role to determine whether or not a motion is in order. The House has decided today that the debate should proceed. If there is thanks to be given for the debate proceeding, honourable members should be thanking each other and not the Speaker.

The House, by its own decision today, did not continue the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the Minister of Finance. Therefore, tomorrow will again be shown on the Order Paper as the fifth day of that debate. Consequently, the eighth day of debate referred to in Rule 23(5) will now be Tuesday, June 3.

The hour being 5:30, the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 2:00 p.m. tomorrow (Thursday).