

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, December 19, 1989.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Mrs. Iva Yeo (Acting Chairman of Committees): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that the report of the committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

* (1335)

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): I am pleased to table the Annual Report for Government Services for the year 1988-89.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

BILL NO. 92

THE MANITOBA ENERGY FOUNDATION REPEAL ACT

Hon. Harold Neufeld (Minister of Energy and Mines) introduced, by leave, Bill No. 92, The Manitoba Energy Foundation Repeal Act; Loi abrogeant la Loi sur la Fondation manitobaine de l'aenergie.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct Honourable Members' attention to the gallery where we have from the Lockport School twenty-five Grade 9 students and they are under the direction of Sheila White. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles).

Also, this afternoon from the Munroe Jr. High School, we have fifty Grade 9 students, and they are under the direction of Mr. Ron Munroe. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway).

On behalf of all Honourable Members, I welcome you here this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Goods and Services Tax Premier's Position

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, with six days left until Christmas we were expecting to hear some good news from the federal Government. Finally, it would have been the first piece of good news since the November '88 election; unfortunately, that did not happen.

We have the federal Minister's final position. It will be a 7 percent consumption tax which will relate to a reduction in tax credits, the elimination of 1 percent cut in personal income taxes, higher surtaxes, the removal of \$600 million worth of help for small business. Mr. Speaker, once again the federal Government has lashed out at lower- and middle-income Canadians and small business. This grab will now cost the middle-income Manitoban and seniors some \$1,300 more in taxes each year.

My question to the Premier (Mr. Filmon), now that we have Michael Wilson's final position on the GST, could we have the First Minister's in the Province of Manitoba?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I will answer the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) very willingly and very gladly that we have always, as a Government, been opposed to the GST as it had been presented to us.

I have not seen the detail of the new proposal by the Minister of Finance, but I assume that it does not address a number of the issues which we had indicated were of serious concern to us; one, the fact that there were two different taxes at the retail level applying on two different sets of goods and services, and so we would have duplication of collection. We would have confusion and a great deal of additional administrative work on the part of small businesses so it would be devastating to small businesses.

Secondly, that it would be revenue neutral. We will do our analysis to find out just exactly what that does. Thirdly, that it would have some negative effects on tourism industries and other industries in our province.

Under those circumstances, I would assume we continue to have grave concerns about it. We will look at the detail of it to see whether or not any of those concerns that we have previously expressed have been addressed in the new proposal, but the position has remained consistent despite what the Leader of the Opposition attempted to allege. This Government has opposed the GST as had been presented by the Government of Canada.

* (1340)

Ministerial Support

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition):

Mr. Speaker, Michael Wilson in his comments in presentation of the 7 percent GST said that he was pleased with the support and co-operation he had received from the provinces. Will he tell us today what kind of support either he as the First Minister, or the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), has given to Michael Wilson for what he announced today?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, again the Leader of the Opposition is attempting to allege something that does not exist. We have consistently told the federal Government publicly and privately exactly the same thing, and that is that we oppose the GST.

The only direct communication that we have had with the First Minister on it was through my participation in the development of a communique of all the Premiers. That communique said that we were opposed to the GST and that the federal Government ought to remove the proposal, get back to the Table, and enter further discussions with the provinces on a different proposal or on some other way of achieving their objectives.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, but in the Finance Minister's comments today he said, in this regard I am encouraged by the spirit of co-operation that emerged from my meeting this month with provincial Finance Ministers.

Would the First Minister tell us exactly what the Province of Manitoba is co-operating in, in Michael Wilson's 7 percent GST?

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable First Minister. Order, please. Order.

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition was in Ottawa. She may not have been paying attention to the comments that I made at the First Minister's Conference when I was there, but I will read to her what I said with respect to the GST proposal. It is contained in my comments which I know her Finance Critic has, because he read from them after I returned from Ottawa at the First Minister's.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Filmon: I quote, Mr. Speaker, ". . . and finally this Premier does not support this proposal not today, not tomorrow, not in public, and not in secret. I trust, Prime Minister, that there is no misunderstanding about this issue with respect to Manitoba."

Mrs. Carstairs: There is now a new proposal, and we have the assurances of the federal Finance Minister that there is co-operation from the provinces on this new proposal. Why is the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) unwilling to tell this House just what the Finance Minister

(Mr. Manness) of the Province of Manitoba is co-operating in?

Mr. Filmon: I had absolutely no discussions with either the Minister of Finance or the Prime Minister regarding a new proposal, Mr. Speaker. We have not indicated that we had approval of this proposal; we had not seen this proposal before this morning. That is the case and regardless of what the Leader of the Opposition wants to allege, that is the fact.

Seven Percent Tax Alternative

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition):

In August, the Premier of the Province of Manitoba (Mr. Filmon) acknowledged that a reduction in the GST would be an option the federal Government and the provincial Government could work together on. He said that a cut in the rate was among the options Ottawa should consider before implementing the tax.

Can the First Minister now tell us if he believes a cut from 9 percent to 7 percent makes this tax now acceptable to the Government of the Province of Manitoba?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I will quote for the Leader of the Opposition, a comment that was made by Dick Johnson, the Provincial Treasurer of Alberta, a comment that I happen to agree with. It was that a reduction from nine to seven was like having a horse stand on your foot rather than an elephant; the problems still remain with the tax.

* (1345)

Indexing

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition):

Mr. Speaker, since the federal Conservatives took power in Ottawa in 1984, Canadians are paying 30 percent more in tax. This latest change will take \$1.2 billion away from lower income Canadians. Will the Province of Manitoba, through the Premier, now commit to insisting that this tax proposal of Michael Wilson is absolutely unacceptable in that it does not provide indexing for low income Canadians?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I just want to remind the Leader of the Opposition that we in Manitoba have control over taxation of the people in this province as well, and that when this Government put forth in its recent budget a reduction in taxes for every taxpaying Manitoban, a reduction of 2 percent on their income tax, a reduction that amounted to approximately \$450 for every family in Manitoba, she and her Liberal colleagues voted against that tax reduction. She ought not to stand up as the saviour and the supporter of the taxpayers of Manitoba, when she and her colleagues voted against that tax reduction that we were providing, that was within our control, and that she wanted to have nothing with.

Goods and Services Tax Seniors Boycott

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): It is regrettable that the Premier has not read the details of probably one of the most important documents ever tabled by the federal Government, the proposed legislation on the GST, and is not aware, as he said this afternoon, of the details of the—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable First Minister, on a point of order.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): The Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) may want to take his cheap shots, but I can tell him that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and I, as Vice-Chair and Chair of the Treasury Board, were in Treasury Board all morning until one o'clock today until we had an opportunity for a few—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. There is no point of order. A dispute over the facts. Order, please. Order. The Honourable Member for Concordia.

Seven Percent Tax Analysis

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): It is regrettable the Premier could not take 15 minutes to read the federal Finance Minister's shafting of all Manitobans and all Canadians with the GST that was tabled in this House.

Mr. Speaker, the GST in moving down to 7 percent will still cost all people in Canada \$20 billion, and the adjustments that were made by the Minister of Finance will cost people, the Canadian public, \$4.3 billion, and the Minister of Finance has tinkered and added \$700 million for corporations.

Obviously the Tory-to-Tory diplomacy, the Government-to-Government diplomacy has failed. Would the Premier now have his Government join with all Manitobans, and join with the seniors, in demonstrating our opposition to this tax by joining the seniors with their boycott on January 18 and 19 of this year?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the New Democratic Party and his colleagues have achieved absolutely nothing in all of their wind and rabbit tracks on the GST.

Mr. Speaker, the federal Government, as a result of the entreaties of the provinces, of this Premier and the Finance Minister, have reduced their tax from nine to seven. We do not think that they have gone far enough, but at least we have had some impact on it, unlike the Leader of the New Democratic Party who has had absolutely no impact.

Mr. Doer: Maybe the Premier should read the Minister of Finance's statement because on the one hand he reduced the tax to 7 percent, and on the other hand he added \$4.3 billion on Manitobans. If he had a brain

in his head, he would not even state that in this Chamber.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

* (1350)

Mr. Doer: Check the facts. My question to the Premier is this: why will he not join with seniors and other Manitobans in demonstrating that he is not just another Tory Premier? He is willing to stand up for Manitobans against Ottawa, and against his Tory counterparts, against this new proposed tax.

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I will be interested to read that evaluation, and see if indeed 4.3 billion has been added to Manitobans because that would be devastating.

I suspect that is the kind of misinformation, that deliberate misleading, normally put forward by the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) that we will have to deal with, but I will take a look at the information.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would ask the Honourable First Minister (Mr. Filmon) to withdraw the remarks, "deliberately misleading." Order, please; order, please. I have already asked the Honourable First Minister to withdraw those remarks, the "deliberately misleading," from the record. Order.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I will be glad to withdraw the reference to "deliberately misleading," and suggest that the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) check his facts because they do not appear to be very credible.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would like to thank the Honourable First Minister. The Honourable Member for Concordia.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): If I said the 20 billion or the 4.3 billion was on Manitobans, I meant Canadians, and I am willing to be honest about it, Mr. Speaker, because I think honesty is very important in this tax debate. It is for all Canadians and -(interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Anybody that calls doctors liars should keep his mouth shut in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker.

My question is to the Premier. Michael Wilson has misled Canadians throughout this debate on the GST, and has said this tax will be revenue neutral. Given the fact that Michael Wilson today has stated that the tax would only increase inflation by 1.25 percent and not increase interest rates, does the Premier in his analysis agree with Michael Wilson, or does he agree with the rest of us in Manitoba who say that is another

sham perpetrated on Canadians by the federal Tory Government?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) already indicated that I had not had an opportunity to review the proposal. So when he says "does the Premier in his analysis," he is assuming something that he already knows has not happened. I have not read the proposal that has been put forward.

The fact of the matter is that we consistently said we were opposed to the GST because of its potential inflationary effects. We were opposed to the GST because it would have damaging long-term effects on the economy because inflation leads to higher interest rates. Higher interest rates create a problem for the economy in general, for small business in particular, and for the regions such as Manitoba, that are regions that have to depend upon Ottawa for their fiscal policy. We are concerned for all of those reasons. Certainly we will remain opposed to the GST because of many of the aspects of it that have not been addressed by Mr. Wilson's proposal.

Goods and Services Tax Seven Percent Tax Analysis

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, given the fact that the Blenkarn Commission, the federal Tory majority report, had already recommended a 7 percent, could the Premier (Mr. Filmon) please tell us what his Government's analysis would be of a contingency of a 7 percent proposal which was reaffirmed today, on the thousands of jobs that will be lost in Manitoba, the amount of money that will be lost per family, the increase in interest rates, the increase in inflation and the net effect on a Manitoba economy, an economy that is going downhill under Tory Government?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the NDP (Mr. Doer), of course, is all over the map on this particular issue and has been from Day One.

Let me say with respect to the analysis, we, within the department, basically did an analysis around the 9 percent coming in. We support those that say the inflationary impact at 7 percent will be over 1 percent, and of course with that there will be a reduction in employment for a period of two years.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): I will come back to the Finance Minister on that.

Goods and Services Tax Impact Low-Income Families

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): The Premier, Mr. Speaker, a few minutes ago just said that it was a result of his efforts that the tax was changed from 9 percent to 7 percent. I am absolutely astounded, on an issue of this magnitude, that the Premier has not taken the time to make himself aware of what has just occurred in Ottawa.

I would ask him, is it also a result of his efforts, Mr. Speaker, that the low-income Canadians will lose \$1.1

billion in credits and small business will lose \$600 million in support?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please. The Honourable First Minister.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I repeat that I said it was as a result of our efforts that it was reduced from nine to seven. We did not think that was enough, and we still opposed the proposal. That is the entire quote I made, Mr. Speaker.

I might also say that the Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) ought to be as embarrassed as his Leader about the fact that when he had an opportunity to lower the tax impact on Manitobans he voted against it, Mr. Speaker. Every single Manitoban receiving a break of 2 percent on their income tax was attempted to be denied by the Liberal Party, all the families of Manitoba receiving a break of \$450 per year reduction in taxes denied by the Liberal Party, are the kinds of embarrassments that the Liberal Party in Manitoba ought to be concerned about, because whenever they have an opportunity to try and reduce taxes they vote against it.

* (1355)

Implementation

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Osborne, with a supplementary question.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, whenever I have an opportunity to vote against this Government I do, and I am proud of it. I am not embarrassed about it at all.

This question is to the Premier.- (interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Alcock: Will the Premier and his Government be working with the Minister of Finance to implement this new tax?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the response of the Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) recognizes the kind of blind self-serving policies of the Liberal Party where they will vote against the Government without knowing what the issue is, without knowing how it impacts upon families, upon tax paying people, just to vote against the Government.

Mr. Speaker, they have no other purpose in life but to come here and blindly vote against the Government. That is an interesting observation and an interesting confession being made to us by the Member for Osborne.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, 19 months of experience is 18 months too long.

I have a very simple question for the Premier. Will his Government be working with the federal Government to implement this tax?

Mr. Filmon: Nineteen months of experience still is not enough to make the Member for Osborne or any of his colleagues competent to be here.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Goods and Services Tax Implementation

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): I noticed that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) was prepared to actually offer an answer to a question in this House, and perhaps I could direct a question to him. Will he be meeting with the federal Government to work on the implementation—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. On a new question?

Mr. Alcock: New question.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Osborne on a new question. The Honourable Minister of Finance.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): The question was out of order, I take it?

Mr. Speaker: The question was asked. The Honourable Minister of Finance.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, we have always said from Day One, one of the major concerns that this province had with respect to the implementation of the goods and services tax was the fact that there would be two general sales taxes working alongside each other. We said from Day One that redundancy and the building of bureaucracy was the most vicious attack on our small businesses that could possibly exist.

We, as indeed all other Governments, are trying any way possible to reduce and minimize the vicious attack that two sales tax systems would have on our businesses were they side by side. To the extent that we and other provinces can try and find some way of minimizing redundancy, you can bet that we will try and provide that safeguard to our businesses. I challenge the Members opposite to say that we are wrong in doing that.

Cascading

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, the Finance Minister (Mr. Manness) is indicating that he will indeed be working with Ottawa. Will he be carrying to Ottawa a message on cascading? Will he be asking Ottawa to adjust the tax so that cascading does not occur?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Finance Critic would believe anything that we have said in this House, and I say for his own political reason he chooses not to. We have said over and over again, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) has said over and over again that this province will not engage itself in

cascading. I have said that to the federal Minister of Finance, Mr. Wilson, that the Province of Manitoba will not apply tax on tax. Again, I would expect there will not be another question coming on this because we have said it over and over again.

* (1400)

Indexing

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Osborne, with his final supplementary question.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): They must be saying it in their own offices, does that mean, Mr. Speaker, to the Finance Minister (Mr. Manness), one final time then. In these negotiations he is now going to get into, has he worked to support the federal Government in implementing this tax? Will he be raising the issue of fully indexing the tax credits finally?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, how can the Member have the gall to stand in this place and say we are supporting the tax? There is only one Party in this House that today should be standing in their place and supporting what Michael Wilson is doing because what he is doing today by changing from what he had proposed earlier is, one, increasing taxes, removing the tax benefit that was provided to Canadians and indeed putting it forward an increase in surtaxes. There is only one Party in this Legislature today that would tend to support that type of tax increases to Canadians, and that is the Liberal Party of Manitoba.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Repap Manitoba Inc. Swan River Project

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please. The Honourable Member for Dauphin has the floor.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): A couple of weeks ago, I raised with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), the Minister responsible for the sale of Manfor, the concerns that we had as a result of the plummeting stock shares for Repap, as well as the drop and collapse in pulp prices, and the increase in the long-term debt to nearly \$1 billion, skyrocketing debt that was taking place at Repap, and its impact that it might have on development and the obligations that the company had.

I ask the Minister today, in light of that fact, what the status is of the chipping facility at Swan River which was part of the commitment in terms of the stage of development that chipping facility is at, at this time?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I can remember that question well. At the time I said that the market probably would respond in a fashion that Repap's share would increase. The Member did not see fit to put that in his question because of course Repap shares have now moved into the ten-and-a-half dollar range, increasing over \$2.00.

Obviously, somebody in the market has confidence in the long-run viability of that major corporation.

Let me say also with respect to pulp—because their main product is not pulp but indeed it is finished, processed white paper—that market has held up extremely well and their profits are still there.

Specifically to the question, the Member is probably well aware that Repap last week caused to be placed in the Swan River paper a request for venturists to come forward and begin to enter into negotiations for a guarantee from the company, a revenue guarantee, whereby a chipping facility could be built in the Swan River area.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, here is that ad and it talks about private sector development—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member for Dauphin.

Mr. Plohman: I asked the Minister—how could a company who cannot even afford to build a \$2 million chipping facility at Swan River, afford to build a billion dollar mill at The Pas, if it cannot even afford to do a chipping facility, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The question has been put. The Honourable Minister of Finance.

Mr. Manness: Not to denigrate the representative of any people, but it is that type of mentality that tells you exactly why we have difficulties in this province today. It is that type of mentality that served around the Cabinet Table for six years and has caused some of the major problems.

At no time, when we were engaging in a discussion working towards an agreement with Repap, they would guarantee that their own money was going to go into a chipping facility in Swan River. We never imposed that upon them. Indeed, this Government, which supports small business to the degree that we do, were very, very responsive to the fact that Repap, rather than owning a facility, would guarantee the revenue streams such that any independent-minded entrepreneur could come forward. On the basis of those revenue guarantees, they could go and borrow money and ensure that there would be a return on investment, but they themselves would be providing that investment and making their decisions respective of the contract.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, I asked the Minister what teeth does he have in the agreement he signed with Repap that will ensure the environment is protected, that the reforestation agreement will take place as it was if this is going to be farmed off, and that Repap will not be ripping off the small operators and divorcing themselves from this project by making them bear the burden of low costs in this industry at this particular time?

Mr. Manness: Inasmuch as Repap is the proponent, inasmuch as Repap is to be guaranteed the chips when they are there, they are the ones that are ultimately going to have to ensure that the environmental process, as associated with the southern wood-cutting area, indeed is in place.

Robert H. Smith School Child Care Spaces

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I took a question as notice from the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs), the official Opposition, with regard to construction of a day care facility at Robert H. Smith School.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to indicate today for the information of the Leader of the Opposition that the Robert H. Smith School was approved last summer. In late October the board forwarded a copy of a letter received from the R. H. Smith Day Care Incorporated for a day care facility at Robert H. Smith.

The Leader of the Opposition alleged that we are now reaching a deadline point of some two weeks and she asked whether we would make a decision. Mr. Speaker, the plans of this school are only at a sketch stage. There is still plenty of time for incorporation of a day care facility into the school if the assessment is one which warrants it. At the present time the day care—incorporated—run a day care across the street in a church, and Family Services is presently doing an assessment of the entire situation.

High School Review Recommendations

Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek): Last week the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) agreed that the committee to review the High School Review was in difficulty. Absolutely no one could disagree that their task was a very difficult one indeed. The problems in high schools throughout the province are enormous. All the more reason for action.

Review No.1 was initiated in February of '86. The appointment of the committee to review the first review took place in May with the unrealistic reporting time of July. Now the Minister says January 1990.

My question to the Minister of Education is: can the Minister give us some inkling as to his time guidelines for some definite direction to those involved in high school education in Manitoba?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to answer that question. First of all, as always the Liberals again have their information correct. The High School Implementation Committee—(interjection)—or incorrect, I should say. The information is incorrect, erroneous.

Mr. Speaker, to begin with, the high school recommendations are not in jeopardy, and secondly, the implementation committee is not in disarray. As a matter of fact, they have been meeting regularly and will be in a position to make their recommendations to me in early January. I am looking forward to implementing many of those recommendations as soon as we possibly can after that.

Mrs. Yeo: Mr. Speaker, my first supplementary to the same Minister. What about the time anticipated for the

Minister's department to study the review, plus the review's review and subsequently to issue directives to the school divisions throughout the province? What time is it going to take him to do all of those things?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, there has not been any major analysis done of our high school program—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order. The Honourable Minister.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, there has not been an analysis of our high school programs done in this province over the last number of years. Finally, in the last two years there has been a review done whereby many of the organizations involved in education have had something to say about what high school education in this province is, and what it should look like in the future.

When we sent out the Challenges and Changes to all the various organizations in this province, they did have something to say about the 69 recommendations. We in fact received 230 responses to the recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, it is not a minor task to be able to go through those recommendations and ensure that in fact the proper implementation procedure is embarked on. As soon as the committee makes its implementation recommendations to me, we will be in a position to move ahead.

* (1410)

Department of Education Review Releases

Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek): Mr. Speaker, can the people of Manitoba be informed as to the dates for anticipated direction coming forward from the committee to study the administrative organizations of the community colleges or from the Illiteracy Task Force or from the Education Finance Advisory Committee or from the Skills Training Advisory Committee, to name only but a few of the reviews implemented by this Minister?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, let us begin with the Illiteracy Task Force. First of all, some very interesting recommendations have come out of the Illiteracy Task Force which have already been implemented. Several of the recommendations have been implemented. In fact, we have embarked on many new initiatives in terms of illiteracy programming throughout the province.

The Skills Advisory Committee—in the last while we have heard from the Opposition about questions about whether or not there is a skills strategy for this province. The Skills Advisory Committee has indeed embarked on a very important process and that is determining the kind of skills training that this province needs, and they will be reporting to me in mid-February.

Mr. Speaker, with regard to the community colleges, the Government—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order.

Ducks Unlimited Canada Corporate Headquarters

Mr. Harry Harapiak (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings). Recently, the Department of Natural Resources offered Ducks Unlimited a 99 year lease on property in the Oak Hammock Marsh for corporate headquarters and an interpretative centre. This plan has caused considerable controversy especially since Ducks Unlimited's goal is preserving wetlands and not destroying them.

Now that there are questions about the role of the federal and provincial funding on this subject, will the Minister give us assurance today that an independent environmental impact study will be done, and if the impact is harmful in that marsh, that project will not go ahead?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to respond to that question and indicate very clearly that, firstly, this initiative has come not from this Government or indeed from any other Government agency, but as the Member is well aware, from Ducks Unlimited.

They have certainly been made aware that they would have to satisfy all environmental concerns and particularly to their own constituents, I might say. This of all organizations would have to be totally satisfy the environmental concerns that have been raised in this manner and at this point the project development is very premature in any announcements.

Mr. Harapiak: Mr. Speaker, my second question is also to the Minister of Environment. The Government of Manitoba is providing \$900,000 to this project along with cheap land and also the Western Diversification Fund is providing \$1.8 million. Will the Minister agree today to the completely independent study of the environmental effects of this fragile marsh, especially in light of the Government's monetary involvement in the project and also because of the independence of the firm that has been hired by Ducks Unlimited to do the study on this very fragile project?

Mr. Enns: The Government of Manitoba is not, I repeat, is not providing \$900,000 for this project. As to what independent or consulting firms Ducks Unlimited is hiring, the Honourable Member would have to make inquiries of that organization.

Ducks Unlimited Canada Funding

Mr. Harry Harapiak (The Pas): My next question is to the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson). What

was the position of the Minister of Family Services in a project of this sort when problems within her department dealing with the handicapped people in the community, funds are being cut? How can she be supporting a project of this sort?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member's question seeks an opinion and is therefore out of order. Would the Honourable Member kindly rephrase his question, please.

Mr. Harapiak: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Family Services. Does she support a program of this sort when projects in her own department are being cut, dealing with the mentally handicapped and self-help programs in this province? -(interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member's question does seek an opinion and is therefore out of order. The Honourable Member from The Pas, would you kindly rephrase your question, please.

Mr. Harapiak: Mr. Speaker, is it the policy of this Government to support ducks before people?

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, no, it definitely is not.

Head Injuries Services Provided

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order please. The Honourable Member for Kildonan has the floor.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, during this year this is the third time I am raising this issue in this House. The head injuries patients suffer about five persons per day, 2,000 per year. One third of them suffer physical and emotional impairment. Can the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) tell this House what specific services and programs he has initiated for the last 19 months to serve these patients of head injuries?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend indicates certain difficulties surrounding the issue of head injuries and uses the global statistic of 2,000 head injured per year. I understand the genesis of that number is derived from primarily emergency services and the head injured can range from minor abrasions to the very seriously injured. The figure of 2,000 would give a magnitude to the situation that in fact is not what my Honourable friend wants to communicate.

There are approximately 40 Manitobans who are classified as head-injured and are in either institutional care receiving physiotherapy, occupational therapy and other support services, or are living in the community receiving similar support services on an out-patient basis.

Report Release

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, patients continue to wait for personal care home placement and head-injury patients have no place to go. The Minister promised the long-term care report in May, then in June followed by September and then October, and then mid-November. It is now past mid-December. Can the Minister finally tell this House when can we expect this long-term report?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I guess my honourable friend, the Liberal Health Critic, has gone through his file and has pulled out questions that he has answered previously, but in dusting off those questions maybe my honourable friend, the Liberal Health Critic ought to understand that the head-injured Manitobans are receiving care at the -(interjection)- my honourable friend, the Liberal Health Critic says, absolutely not, and he is not accurate in that statement from his seat. He is slamming the professionals, the physicians, the nurses, those people that are delivering quality care to those individuals.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member for Kildonan, on a point of order.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, I am not slamming the profession. This Minister has called doctors liars. He has called the other professionals liars. He is insulting all the physicians and all the people in Manitoba. He is not doing his job properly.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

Time for Oral Questions has expired.

NON-POLITICAL STATEMENTS

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern and Native Affairs): I wonder if I may have leave for a non-political statement, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Minister of Northern and Native Affairs have leave to make a non-political statement? (Agreed) The Honourable Minister of Northern and Native Affairs.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, as Minister responsible for Seniors for the Province of Manitoba, I would just like the Members of the House to know and to join with me in thanking Merrill Lynch who, on Saturday morning, opened their phones and donated their time to allow the seniors of Manitoba, Winnipeg particularly, to go and use their phones to phone friends and family throughout the world.

Mr. Speaker, never have I been touched so much as to see elderly people communicating with a friend or

a loved one that they may not have spoken to for many years, and I want to, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly, thank Merrill Lynch for that outreach and that very worthwhile project.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you be so kind as to call the Bills in the following order: Bills 12, 38, 71 and 90. If we should complete consideration of Bill 90, I have a whole other list for later on if that should happen.

I understand there is a wish amongst Members of the House to waive Private Members' Hour today.

I will go over the list again, Mr. Speaker. Bills 12, 38, 71 and 90.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to waive Private Members' Hour? (Agreed)

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

BILL NO. 12—THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable First Minister (Mr. Filmon), Bill No. 12, The Legislative Assembly Management Commission Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Commission de régie de l'Assemblée législative, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans). Stand.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, I will be the final speaker from our caucus on this Bill, by leave. If I could speak I would just like to indicate we would be willing to pass this verdict to committee afterwards.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave that this matter remain standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans)? No? Okay. The Honourable Member for Thompson. The Honourable Member for Brandon East has lost his right to speak.

Mr. Ashton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to just make a very few comments on this Bill. This is a housekeeping measure essentially; it essentially attempts to correct a number of section notations and accordingly we see no difficulty in passing it through. I did want to make a couple of comments, though. First of all, that our agreement today to pass this through is part of our overall approach to the Government co-operative approach, where we see those that can be passed prior to our adjournment later on this week. The fact is I have indicated in debate, we have not only agreed to a number of the Bills that the Government has asked be passed, but we have countered by offering to pass a number of Bills, in fact we have listed 10 Bills in a number of important areas in terms of the environment, consumer protection, protection for working people—that we feel can also be passed by the end of this week.

Those are important areas for Manitobans. We feel it is incumbent on us as legislators, where we do have

agreement, particularly in those type of areas, to support passage of those Bills. This once again is part of our efforts to, wherever possible, make the minority Government situation work in Manitoba.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that it is not always easy, and it will not be easy, perhaps, in the remainder of the Session when we deal with such Bills as Bill 31, which is clearly a slap in the face to the working people of this province, the people of Manitoba.

We will fight the Government and we will fight them as strongly as possible, in every way possible, on issues such as that, matters of principle where I believe the Government is not listening to the people of Manitoba. The Government is not making an effort on Bills such as that to make the minority Government situation work. We will fight on those type of Bills. We will fight long and we will fight hard, Mr. Speaker, and we will speak up for Manitobans.

That is, I think, what Manitobans expect out of us as an Opposition Party. They expect us to be fighting the Government when it brings in measures such as that, a measure that I believe is totally unfair. They also, on the other hand, I think expect us, in terms of the more routine business or in terms of other priority areas where there is some potential for agreement, to proceed.

This is one such Bill. As I said, it is a housekeeping Bill, we want to see it pass through. I just want to state briefly, Mr. Speaker, a couple of items I think should be noted. This is the Bill that deals with The Legislative Assembly Management Commission Amendment Act. One item that I did want to highlight, and it is something I would hope that we would consider at the LAMC and as Members of the Legislature—(interjection)—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member for Thompson has the floor. The Honourable Member for Thompson.

Mr. Ashton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps if the Conservative Members could conduct their caucus meeting in their own caucus room I think it would be appreciated and perhaps some other Members as well. I do think it is important that we listen to some of these comments.

What I wanted to raise today is the fact that I think one area we should be looking at, in terms of LAMC and as Members of the Legislature, is in terms of the situation that people are going to be faced with now following the recent redistribution, the changes in political boundaries in this province that reduce the number of seats in northern Manitoba from five to four.

I raise that because I look, for example, at the Member for Rupertsland's (Mr. Harper) situation. The Member for Rupertsland currently has a constituency that is virtually impossible, Mr. Speaker, to represent to the extent that one would like.

* (1420)

We have the same resources put in place for the Member for Rupertsland, incidentally, as we do for a

Member representing a City of Winnipeg riding. I want to raise that, because I believe if you look at a constituency that now is going to go from the 60th parallel right down to the Fort Alexander Reserve, the bottom line is one has to recognize that the Legislative Assembly Management Commission perhaps has to rethink some of the areas it has provided in terms of support for Members.

That is why as I speak today on Bill No. 12, which relates very specifically to the Legislative Assembly Management Commission, I would hope there would be consideration by all Members of the Legislature of the particular needs of northern Members, such as the Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper), or the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie), if one looks at that constituency.

The Flin Flon constituency is going to go, once again, from the 60th parallel right down to Cranberry Portage, and there will be a great deal of difficulty.

I am not suggesting, Mr. Speaker, that we bring in amendments to deal with that as part of this Bill. That could be done. I am not suggesting that, because such items are normally done through agreement of all Parties. What I am doing is raising this as a matter of concern in this form, because I believe it is not a matter that should even be raised by the individual Members affected.

I am speaking as a Member who is from northern Manitoba, yes, who has a constituency that will be expanding, but as one who is not in the same difficulty as a number of Members are in terms of their constituencies and certainly as they will be under the redistribution.

I am raising that, not to say that we will be bringing amendments, Mr. Speaker, necessarily, but to say that this is something I think all Members of the Legislature should be looking at. I will be raising it at the LAMC, at the meetings, and I would hope other Members would look at that.

I believe we may want to look not just at northern Members but some of the more isolated and larger rural constituencies. I look at the constituency of Swan River, for example, which is not necessarily classified as a northern riding but it is certainly isolated, it certainly has large distances involved both to get there and distances within there.

Even some of the ridings a bit closer once again to Winnipeg, the Dauphin riding, the costs associated with representing a riding such as that are substantially higher, in my mind, to provide the same type of service as would be the case for a City of Winnipeg Member. We do not have that distinction in our resources, Mr.—

An Honourable Member: Why do you not change it?

Mr. Ashton: For the Member for Emerson (Mr. Albert Driedger), changes are made through the agreement of all three Parties. He will remember that there was a considerable amount of flak at one time when we increased the constituency allowance from \$1,500 to \$2,500.00. There was a fair amount of controversy. I remember a number of the Members of his caucus who

got up and spoke against that. I think that is ironic when one looks at what has happened since.

We really have brought Manitoba Legislature into the 1980s—I do not know if we are quite into the 1990s yet—in terms of comparable resources to serve constituents because I think if one looks at the situation across Canada, Manitoba is still in the lower half in terms of the type of resources that are available, even in comparison for example to the Province of Saskatchewan. It was not the Government, Mr. Speaker, for the Member for Emerson (Mr. Albert Driedger) who perhaps his memory has failed him on this particular matter.

At that particular time there was not all-Party agreement to proceed further than was done. In fact, I do believe that the main Opposition was from the Conservative Party at the time. I number of Members did not feel at the time that we should have constituency offices functioning. That has since changed.

I believe that all Members of the Legislature have recognized two fundamental things. One is that essentially Members of the Legislature are now full-time Members for all intents and purposes. The days of the 1950s when the sessions were eight or ten weeks long and when Members of the Legislature could carry on other professions on a full-time basis and had to because of the fact that it was only a part-time position have changed.

Concurrent with that I think there has been a shift in the sense that people expect more of the Members of the Legislature. I know I have a fully functioning constituency office. Thanks to the recent changes, I have now been able to hire a staff person on a half-time basis who does an excellent job in terms of helping me serve my constituents better. I hold regular office hours in that office; it is an important part of the constituency. It is not a political office in any way, shape, or form.

What it is is a contact for people who have to have an approach to Government, who want to get information out of Government, or assistance, if they have problems with a Government department or a policy of Government. I receive many calls from people and that is a public service. I would say, Mr. Speaker, that that is important for us to have, and I do think there may be areas in which we can further improve the situation in terms of our ability to serve as Members of the Legislature to serve the public and I am sure the Member for Emerson would realize that as well.

I am sure that he in his constituency makes every effort to provide the level of service that people have come to expect from Members of the Legislature. I believe the Member when he says he does his best. I believe that he has obviously by his experience in this House, by his re-election and apart from our political differences, obviously has served his constituents, otherwise he would not be here. I think if he would perhaps support some of the things I have been saying whether it be in terms of improving northern and rural services, looking at travel allowances for example has been one obvious example of how we really did not have anything in place except the fact that Rupertsland

or the new Flin Flon constituency or other northern constituencies are in a different circumstance than other constituencies. I did want to put those remarks on the record.

I want to indicate once again that we are willing to see this Bill passed through to second reading and that we are quite willing to pass through a number of other Bills in a spirit of co-operation. I do not think that spirit of co-operation is always there unfortunately on the part of the difference Parties in the House. I do believe that after the Christmas and New Year adjournment we are going to be back in here and we are going to see the Government increasingly in a number of areas is not willing to co-operate with the Opposition, is bringing in items that are clearly unacceptable. I have mentioned a number of items, but we will get to that in January and February and as we continue this session. I do believe we will have a lengthy debate on a number of Bills in January and February. We are going to be here for quite some time.

I notice today the Government just brought in another Bill which I find rather amazing for a Session that we have been in, where we are well past the 90-day limit, which is the normal, average period of time.—(interjection)—

* (1430)

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Emerson (Mr. Albert Driedger) was saying something in regard to the Conservative strategy on this. I missed it, I was thinking about slapping? Okay, sit year-round, I thought he was talking about slapping us around. My apologies to the Member for Emerson. We are going to sit year-round. I do not believe that we will be sitting year-round on a permanent basis, but if the Government insists on bringing in Bills on this, just a few days before we adjourn for the holidays, maybe that is what their strategy is, maybe they enjoy sitting in this Legislature so much that they want to sit year-round. I suppose some could question whether they might not spend their time better out in terms of the constituency. If they insist on bringing in Bills that deserve full and complete debate—and they brought in a number that will—if they insist on bringing in Bills at this point in time, when we are past 90 days in terms of sitting time, then I would say the bottom line is that we will be here for a considerable period of time.

I do not want to speak at length on this Bill. I just want to indicate once again that we are willing to pass this through to second reading today, as the case with two other Bills that we will consider prior to going into Interim Supply.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all Honourable Members for their—

Mr. Speaker: We will be closing debate.

Mr. McCrae: I would like to thank all Honourable Members who have participated in this debate for their extremely constructive and helpful comments, made, I am sure, in a spirit of co-operation as is usual for

Members of this House. Mr. Speaker, I commend the Bill to the attention of Honourable Members in the committee, and I would appreciate the Honourable Members' support at this stage so that we can get the Bill into committee for further examination.

QUESTION put, MOTION carried.

BILL NO. 38—THE STATUTE RE-ENACTMENT AND BY-LAW VALIDATION (WINNIPEG) ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), Bill No. 38, The Statute Re-enactment and By-law Validation (Winnipeg) Act; Loi sur la réadoption de lois et la validation d'arrêtés concernant la Ville de Winnipeg, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for the Interlake (Mr. Uruski). Stand.

Is there leave that this matter remain standing? (Agreed)

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, I just want to indicate that we are willing to pass this through to committee, so by leave I would be the last speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave that this matter remain standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Interlake (Mr. Uruski)? No? The Honourable Member for Interlake has lost his right to speak on second reading on Bill No. 38. The Honourable Member for Thompson.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I just want to indicate once again that in the spirit of co-operation we are willing to see this Act passed. This is a continuation of the process of statute re-enactment and, in this case, by-law validation that affects the City of Winnipeg. We have gone through the Act. We see no difficulty in accommodating the Government's request that this be passed before the break.

Once again I just want to indicate that the Member for Interlake would have spoken on this Bill, but as part of this agreement on our part, part of our intent to be co-operative, the Member for Interlake has agreed not to speak at this point in time on the Bill and allow it to go through to second reading.

I would just like to indicate that it is a fairly straight forward Act and that we do not see any great difficulty, certainly at this time. We will be reviewing it further in case anything further develops in terms of the committee hearings. We are quite pleased to see this pass through second reading, and unless the Attorney General (Mr. McCrae) has some closing comments on second reading—I do not know if the Attorney General has anything further to indicate on this, perhaps not.

I would just like to indicate that we are quite willing to pass this through to second reading today and deal with it in committee perhaps early in the new year.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Justice will be closing debate.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, in closing debate I would like to thank Honourable Members for their extremely helpful and constructive speeches with regard to this Bill. I appreciate their bringing it to the point we see it at today, and look forward to further discussion at the committee stage.

QUESTION put, MOTION carried.

BILL NO. 71—THE LAW SOCIETY AMENDMENT ACT (2)

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), Bill No. 71, The Law Society Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur la Société du barreau, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards). Stand.

Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Agreed. The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, I rise at this time to support the passage of this Bill into committee. I wonder why the Liberals would want to hold the Bill at this particular stage. This was announced as an initiative by the Minister away back in July and the Liberal Critic, the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) a couple of weeks later came out with a similar suggestion that this was a good idea, that non-lawyers be allowed to act as agents in traffic court.

I wonder why there would be such a problem here on the Liberal side after all these months where they would not be in a position to speak to this Bill and to encourage it to be passed into committee.

This Government has been very, very slow to move in a whole range of areas, in the consumer protection area, but this is no different. POINTTS as an organization, I believe, is operating legally now in Alberta, it is operating legally in another province, and it is contesting the right to operate in other Canadian jurisdictions.

It seems to me that the major opponents to this type of initiative would come from the Law Society of Manitoba, because after all they are the people who have the exclusive right to operate in this area. Time and again it has been shown that the lawyers do not find this a very financially rewarding area, the area of traffic offences, but when it comes to the question of whether or not they should be allowed competition, that is when they fight, very hard.

We found with the Bill we brought in last year allowing legal advice and legal assistance to be provided at Land Titles Office for people doing their own land transfers, the Law Society president did not like that one bit. He went on CBC, and I thought he was going to be a patient in some hospital when he left that CBC station, because I thought he was going to drop right there during the interview. He lambasted the idea. He gave all sorts of erroneous reasons why we should not allow a lawyer to assist at Land Titles.

The monetary aspect here was not a big one for lawyers, but perhaps he saw that this was just simply

the thin edge of the wedge. If the Government moved and allowed a lawyer to be transferred from the Attorney-General's Department into Land Titles to assist people in the transfer of their titles, if it was proven really popular which it probably would in the long run, the Government, a future Government, would then bring in a second lawyer.

Where do you draw the line? Then a second lawyer, and the next thing you know the lawyers of Manitoba would be losing perhaps, through competition, a very lucrative part of their practice, because people know that in the legal business that transferring land and doing house transfers and so on, are a very important part of lawyers' income.

This situation is no different. The lawyers will fight for every inch of their turf, and that is what they did in this situation too. One wonders how and why the Minister was able to convince his Government to move in this fashion. In the other jurisdictions I believe the POINTTS organization took the Government to court and won, and thereby were allowed to operate.

* (1440)

In this case, the Minister either has a sense that he is going to lose in court or wants to be pro-active—knows it is a populist issue, knows that there are some votes here and is willing to defy the Law Society. I give him credit for that. My disappointment is that he was not prepared to do this earlier.

In terms of the Liberal position on this matter, I am very surprised—and I do not have the copy of the press release here—but I know their critic, the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), came out with a press release within a couple of weeks of the Government's press release in the summer, urging the Government to do the same thing. Normally I would suggest they are quite captivated by the Law Society and the people who run it, but in this case they too were prepared to break and support a populist idea. Then we find today that now they are not prepared to speak to the Bill at this time, so we wonder what they are up to.

(Mr. Parker Burrell, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

The Attorney General and I disagree with what his press release intended because the way I read it earlier this summer, I understood he was to introduce legislation to allow POINTTS to operate on a paralegal basis in this province. I further understood that he was to set up a committee which was to explore and examine ways of expanding paralegal activities in Manitoba, a further incursion in the lawyers' area. I encouraged him at that time to do it and I encourage him now to do it.

That is my understanding of what his press release said, and we would expect nothing less and accept nothing less than for him to pass this legislation and to set up the committee to look at further areas of involvement for paralegals, and in fact with the proper protection.

I would not want to see us pass this Bill and then have him then set up a committee to look at the feasibility of allowing POINTTS to operate freely in this

province. It is with those comments that I urge the passage of the Bill to the committee. I—

An Honourable Member: I will go along with that.

Mr. Maloway: The Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) actually has a history in this House of supporting our ideas because it is not so long ago, in fact a couple of years ago, that he broke with his caucus—very smart thing for him to do at the time—and supported us in the aborted takeover of the gas system. Maybe we will have to reconstitute ourselves in this House at some point, those of us for the takeover and those of us against, regardless of Party lines and take another whack at this issue somewhere in the future because I believe we missed an opportunity there.

We probably have lived to regret it with the 25 percent increases which Brandon residents are about to find in their gas bills. Mr. Acting Speaker, I would encourage the passage of this Bill, and I think we may have some further comments to it at the committee stage. Thank you.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Mr. Harry Harapiak (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, I would like to also stand and put a few comments on the record for Bill No. 71. I also want to urge the House to stand and pass this Bill. I think it is an extremely important Bill, and I guess the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) who has been holding this Bill has been quite outspoken on issues of this sort, but I guess maybe he is gathering some information on how he can be protecting his colleagues in the law profession. I think that it is important that we move on this Bill very quickly because I think it is moving into a direction that we want to be moving in in many other areas. I think it becomes very expensive for people to be dealing with issues like traffic offenses when you are continuously using lawyers.

I guess we had a good example, I had the opportunity last night of watching the film on the Thatcher story in Saskatchewan and I guess there we have a good example of how lawyers can get involved in a case and keep bringing it forward and dragging it out where they are masters at this trade and they can carry it on for many years. I think it is important that we can move into some areas where we can help people who are non-lawyers moving to support people.

I think one of the areas is when you are dealing with real estate. I think it adds to varied costs of buying or selling a home to a very large degree by using lawyers, and I think that is one area that we can look at because people within that office staff are the ones that quite often do the work. It is important work and it all has to be documented, but I think that we could be moving in the same direction as they are suggesting here for use of agents in traffic courts. I think that, as the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) said, it is a step in the right direction, that any offence that would fall under The Highway Traffic Act and involved in a provincial court, that there is no need for having lawyers acting in that area.

I think when the accident is not serious, there has been no personal involvement in the accident, I think

it is very appropriate that we could be moving in there and acting. I think that judges hearing the case would be able to bar agents whom they think are incompetent and who do not understand their responsibilities. Agents will also have to meet bonding and insurance requirements which would be set by regulations.

The Member for Elmwood and the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) pointed out that there are over 175 offences under The Highway Traffic Act for which non-lawyer representatives will be allowed. This includes issues or charges like speeding, disobeying traffic signals, driving without a licence, careless driving, failure to wear a seat belt and driving with faulty equipment. I think it is an issue that we need to move more in this direction of using non-lawyers.

It was just pointed out to me that the Liberals sent out a press release during this past summer supporting this, and I know it is in the hands now of the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards). I would hope that the Member for St. James would come forward and tell us very clearly where the Liberal Party stands on this, and I think it is important that we move on this quickly. I hope that they would come forward and let us know where the Liberal Party stands on this particular issue. I would urge the House, Mr. Speaker, to pass this as soon as possible.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, I also have a few brief comments on this and I want to echo the statements of the previous two speakers indicating some disappointment that the Liberals are not wishing to pass this here today. I thought this was basically a very non-partisan piece of legislation.

They have sent out a press release in the summer supporting it. I am surprised, quite frankly. I do not know if they have changed their mind at all, I suspect they have not. If they have suggestions of changing the Bill the appropriate stage in the legislative process to deal with that is at committee stage, and that is what we are dealing with here. We are dealing with debate on second reading, the principle of the Bill. I believe that we should be sending it to the committee stage; not necessarily this week, I do not believe we have time to deal with it before the break, but I do believe that it would be appropriate to send it after the break, perhaps when we come back, even within the first week. I was a bit surprised with that.

* (1450)

We have indicated in the New Democratic Party that we are quite willing to see this go through to committee. We have discussed the principle of the Bill. I believe it is the type of legislation which can be passed by all three Parties through to committee and can be considered at a very early opportunity. In fact, I believe that is what is going to be happening over the next period of time, Mr. Speaker, in terms of other Bills. I see us moving some legislation through, where there is some common ground, but ending up with a logjam facing us ahead with some very contentious pieces of legislation.

In fact, just today the Government not only brought in a Bill, it brought in a very contentious Bill which is

going to be debated at length today in terms of the repeal Act brought in by the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld). I do believe at that point we are going to have some long debates on issues, but on items such as this I do believe we could end up this Session by having such items passed. It is not going to have a dramatic impact on the people of Manitoba, but I do believe there is some improvement which will take place because of this item of legislation to a certain extent.

I believe some very good points were just made by the Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak) and the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) in terms of giving greater access to the legal system. That is really what this Bill does. It is giving greater access to people. It is about time we viewed the legal system in that way. You know, the interesting thing is—I watched with interest the debate we have had in this Legislature over the years about the official languages of this province, about having statutes in both official languages.

I sometimes wish we had translated the statutes even further and translated some of them into English, plain English, the people's everyday English. While my French is not sophisticated enough to be able to comment on the style of French which is used, I would say it is probably the same thing there as well. For too long, we have written laws for lawyers and for judges.

An Honourable Minister: Legalese.

Mr. Ashton: We have had legalese, as the Minister of Family Services pointed out. One of the problems is that people are increasingly wanting access to the legal system at the statutes themselves. We have taken some moves. Yes, we have taken some moves in terms of the small claims court system. I have spoken on that.

I have spoken on Bills which were brought in to improve that access which takes place, and I support that. But the problem we still have if anyone goes through the statutes, is that they are not accessible to anyone other than a lawyer or a judge in a lot of cases. Even to those of us in this Legislature, I suppose, do have access to the Bills, those who have been here some period of time as I have, those who have been here even longer than I have—I point to the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Albert Driedger), the Member for Emerson, who has been here longer than I have, a senior Member of the Legislature—and the bottom line—

An Honourable Member: He will be here a lot longer than you.

Mr. Ashton: Well, then the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), as he always does, seems to throw in some comment, and I was pointing to the seniority of the Member for Emerson. Actually the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) has been here for a considerable period of time, and we will be interested to see if he will be here longer and in what capacity. If he would just screw up the courage to run against those of us in the north who are just waiting for him to put his money where his mouth is, but, oh, pardon

me, that was yesterday, Mr. Speaker. I have not noticed any announcement from the Minister of Northern Affairs. I am not holding my breath right now—

An Honourable Member: A word of caution, do not get cocky.

Mr. Ashton: Well, I am not getting cocky. Mr. Speaker, for the Member for Emerson, I came into this Legislature with a victory margin of 72 votes.

Mr. Downey: Landslide.

Mr. Ashton: Well, landslide, as the Minister of Northern Affairs reminded me. One thing I have known ever since I was first elected, and that is you never take anything for granted, particularly the support of your constituents. You have to earn it, not just at election time, but in between election time. I believe those who forget that, Mr. Speaker, they may be Members of this Legislature for a period of time, but their tenure here is shortened by each and every day in which they take the attitude that there is any other reason why they are here than the support of their constituents, not just at election time but the continuous support. So I certainly acknowledge that. That is what I am saying, we are talking about an issue of common sense.

I do believe we should be translating our statutes into more understandable English. I believe the Attorney General, the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae)—pardon me, or Attorney General, I am sure there is no real problem if we refer to him with that title—who is not a lawyer himself, although he has a great deal of experience in terms of having seen the court procedure as a court reporter. I believe he must have had some frustrations when he was in the courts to the extent at which the whole legal process was almost kept under a lock and key, and the lock and key being the language in which the statutes are written which is not accessible to average people. Part of the problem is that a lot of our laws are actually not really even statute driven; they are determined not just by statute but by a tradition of common law that goes back centuries.

I do believe that part of the problem is that if you do write statutes in easily-understandable English, judges are liable to turn around and say, you did not use this word which was set in a precedent in the 19th century. Unless you use this word we will determine what has been written as being different from what you intended. The emphasis has to be—when we draft legislation—on having it being acceptable to the judges and lawyers. That is why it is there and that is why, obviously, the system has not changed.

I do believe sometimes that we could bring ourselves into the 1990s in terms of language in this Legislature, in terms of statutes. I raise that because this is analogous to what this Bill is attempting to do. This Bill essentially is trying to make the legal process more accessible.

I wait for the Liberal response on this, the response of their Justice Critic. I would hope that the Justice Critic would support that, Mr. Speaker.

An Honourable Member: That would be a conflict of interest.

Mr. Ashton: My understanding is that he had, and while apart from any suggestion whether there be a conflict of interest, I am not sure technically whether that would be the case.

I am sure the Member for Emerson (Mr. Albert Driedger) does not mean to suggest the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) would be in a conflict of interest as determined by our legislation, because we often—unless there is a direct pecuniary interest we do not have to declare conflicts of interest. I suppose one could make the argument that having a Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) who is a teacher, discussing how it affects teachers or teachers' pensions, will be a conflict of interest, but I believe that goes far beyond the intention which is really to eliminate pecuniary interests.

I am not suggesting that is the rationale behind the fact that the Liberals do not want to pass this to committee today. I suspect it is perhaps that their Justice Critic just has not had the opportunity to prepare his statement on this, Mr. Speaker.

An Honourable Member: He has had it since July.

Mr. Ashton: He has had it since July, but I suspect that is it. I will be generous to the Liberal Justice Critic. I do not mean this as being overly critical, but I just would say that we are quite willing to see this pass through to committee.- (interjection)-

The Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) is talking about continuing to lie about it, and I hope he would withdraw that suggestion. I do not think that is in keeping with the decorum of the House. I was quite clear. I said I would like an explanation as to what is going to happen in terms of the passage of this Bill. I think it is incumbent on the Liberals to provide that.

I just finished defending his critic against some suggestion there might be a conflict of interest. I do not know what the Member for Osborne is attempting to suggest apart from the fact it is certainly not - (interjection)- If you want to put the statements you put on the record, I think you do so at your own peril. I do not believe it is appropriate. It is certainly not parliamentary. It is surprising.

Perhaps the Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) has not been listening to the comments that I made or the comments made by the two previous speakers in the House. We were not critical of the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) in a personal sense. We were just suggesting that perhaps this Bill could pass through to committee this week, and that we are trying to expedite it, and we would suggest that would be appropriate for the Liberals as well.- (interjection)-

That is something that could be accommodated. I do not understand the sensitivity of the Liberals on this. I am told I will soon enough. We will see if they wish to address this Bill; I hope they will and I look forward to their comments. We have no qualms in passing this Bill through to second reading today.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I just want to put a few words on the record. I had not

intended on speaking on this Bill today, but the third Party of this Chamber has given me the impression that maybe it is time that I do put a few facts on the record and it is in regard to not passing this Bill today.

I find it unbelievable that the Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak), the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), would stand up in this Chamber today and say that the official Opposition is delaying passage of Bills. If we take a look at who has been speaking on what Bills, I believe that you will find if there is any obstruction in this Chamber that it is being provided by the third Party of this Chamber. We could go through the Bills—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

* (1500)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. I am interrupting the Honourable Member and our Rule states that "debate must be directly relevant to the question under consideration," and the question under consideration is the principle of Bill No. 71, The Law Society Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur la Société du barreau. Therefore, I am calling on the Honourable Member for Inkster to direct his remarks to that matter. The Honourable Member for Inkster.

Mr. Lamoureux: Yes, Mr. Speaker. This particular Bill does address a need for change, and what I am referring to is no more than what the third Party had been debating on this principle of this Bill in their three previous speakers. The principle of this Bill really looks at the legal process and the need to ensure that all Manitobans have access to our court system because it can be expensive. But this particular Bill, like many other Bills in this Chamber, does deserve to go to committee and I do take exception to some of the remarks regarding the passage of this particular Bill that the NDP have put on record.- (interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for Inkster has the floor. The Honourable Member for Inkster.

Mr. Lamoureux: The Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) will put his comments on the record and no doubt he will enlighten all of the Members of the third Party.

An Honourable Member: Why do you not speak on final offer selection?

Mr. Lamoureux: The Leader of the third Party suggests I speak on final offer selection, Mr. Speaker. Had he been here one minute ago, he would have heard the Speaker make a ruling that we are not on that particular Bill, but when the opportunity does prevail I will no doubt give some comments regarding Bill No. 31.

Many Manitobans get into traffic incidents, whether it is speeding, traffic accidents, in which they are trying to keep their record and their payments down as low as possible, and the POINTT system and the service which they are attempting to offer is a valid one. We

have to be somewhat cautious as we move into this particular area, but we also have to be very conscious of the fact that this is a service many Manitobans would benefit from. Ultimately what we would like to be able to see is all Manitobans to be able to take issue, to be able to go to court, or have their day in court and be able to afford it just as much as the next person. If this Bill is going to assist in moving into that general direction, Mr. Speaker, I personally feel that is the way we should be moving toward.

To conclude, Mr. Speaker, I would say that the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) will speak on this Bill and enlighten the third Party in terms of what his position and the Liberal Party's position is on it. I would just suggest to him that they be patient. We in the official Opposition and the Members of the Government have been extremely patient when it comes to standing and filibustering from the NDP, or the third Party, in this Chamber, and on that note I will conclude.

Mr. Speaker: As previously agreed, this matter will remain standing in the name of the Honourable Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards).

BILL NO. 90—THE INTERIM APPROPRIATION ACT, 1989 (2)

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), Bill No. 90, The Interim Appropriation Act, 1989 (2); Loi no 2 de 1989 portant affectation anticipée de crédits, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock).

Is there leave that this matter remain standing?

HOUSE BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for Inkster on House business.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, on House business. The Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema) was going to speak to this particular Bill. When the Member for Osborne gets here, he will have the opportunity to speak on the Bill. The Liberal Party is not trying to hold up this particular Bill.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave that this matter remain standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock)?

The Honourable Government House Leader on House business.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): I note Bill No. 90 stands in the name of the Honourable Member for Osborne and that it may be only moments before the Honourable Member for Osborne will be participating in this debate. It may just be only moments, so Mr. Speaker, I suggest perhaps if the Honourable Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema) would like to be involved, I do not know that we should allow the thing to stand necessarily in the name of the Honourable Member for Osborne, because I truly believe it may

be just a very short period of time before the Honourable Member for Osborne will be wanting to take part in the debate.

I do not know exactly where that leaves us, in terms of the status of the Bill, but if the Honourable Member for Osborne were in a position that he would like to rise in his place and take part in the debate I am sure that would be a satisfactory resolution to the whole issue of what should happen today with respect to Bill 90. So, Mr. Speaker, on the point of order that I raise, I raise it perhaps in a way that will twig the imagination of the Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) that might encourage him somehow to—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please.

Mr. Speaker: . . . standing in the Honourable Member for Osborne, the Honourable Member for Osborne.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate whatever the Government House Leader was attempting to do in order to give me the opportunity to speak on this.— (interjection)— I should not be appreciating that? Well, whatever occurred in the Chamber, while I was otherwise occupied, that made it possible for me to speak on this Bill, I am pleased.

I do wish to comment on a couple of things that I am not pleased about. The first is what has gone on as we approach Christmas in the management of this House. I am particularly displeased frankly, Mr. Speaker, with the NDP House Leader and their Members who just spoke on that Bill, the POINTTS Bill, because they asked to have that debate today. Our position has been on the record on that since last July when they were silent on it and now they stand up and excoriate the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards).

An Honourable Member: Shame.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member for Thompson, on a point of order.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Leader of the Second Opposition): A point of order, Mr. Speaker. If the Member is wishing to debate 71, the appropriate time to do that is on debate in 71. We have a number of Rules in Beachesne's which prohibit reviving previous debates. We have a number of Rules related to relevancy, and I would suggest that since Bill 71 is still on the Order Paper, if the Member wishes to address that Bill he can do so when we next reach it on the Order Paper, but it is not appropriate at the present time to revive the debate.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Osborne, on the same point of order.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Opposition House Leader): I am not attempting to debate 71 at all. I am attempting to debate

Interim Supply which has to do with the business before this House and is being brought before this House because we are approaching the Christmas break and the current Supply Bill is running out. The timeliness of how things get before the House is very much an issue in the debate on this Bill. That is what I am trying to address despite the Member's own judgment.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised and commented on by the Honourable Member for Osborne, they are both quite correct. The Honourable for Osborne is debating Bill No. 90, Interim Appropriation Act, 1989 (2), and I would ask the Honourable Member to direct his remarks to that matter.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, passing strange to me when Members stand up in this House and talk about principles and then act in the most unprincipled manner I have seen yet around here. It is absolutely astounding to me that people can ask to have a Bill debated, negotiate for leave to have that Bill debated, and then criticize the Member who said he was unable to be here to speak to that Bill. I think that is absolutely unacceptable.

I want to talk a little bit about the Interim Supply Bill. It comes before us, I believe, unnecessarily. We have had an opportunity had there been some appropriate management of the affairs of this province to have disposed with the business before this House long before Christmas. But because of, I believe, the incompetence with which the Government has acted, the way in which they have organized their affairs and the way in which they have brought legislation before this House, we have a Bill read today, Bill 92.

It is absolutely unbelievable that the Government would bring forward legislation at this point in the Session, and sit in their seats and quack about how things are being delayed in this House.

* (15:10)

We have Ministers who stand in Estimates and filibuster the Estimates process, using hour after hour so that Members are not able to get legitimate questions before the House. We are going to be sitting here, it looks like for a very long time, as we go through department by department, the Estimates of this Government.

What this Minister has done today is come forward and asked for authority to operate on an Interim Supply Bill, as opposed to the actual budget in the Estimates of this province, because they are unable to get the business of this House done.

I want to talk just a little bit about what occurred today, because I think it is going to have a very serious impact on the ability of this province to meet its responsibilities financially and the ability of people in this province to meet their own personal needs over these next few years.

This province is in trouble. It has been in trouble for a while, but the trouble that it is in is getting worse,

and it is getting worse every day since this Government has assumed office. There is virtually no indicator that suggests that this province is doing well relative to the rest of Canada.

Year over year, month by month, we see our share of the labour force declining. We see retail sales, a proportion of national retail sales, declining. We see average weekly earnings, average hourly earnings, housing stock, you name the indicator, and it is headed in the wrong direction. Yet day after day we see no action taken by this Government to recognize, much less address, any of the issues that come to the minds of, I think, all Manitobans when we see this.

Today we see a decision by the federal Government, an extremely important decision, one that we have been awaiting, we have been warned of, we have known about, for months, an issue that we have debated in this House, that we had an emergency debate about in this House, and yet the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) cannot take the time to prepare themselves to come into the House to deal with the issues that are raised by the actions of the federal Government.

This Bill is going to damage us. This Bill is going to cause job losses. The decisions taken by the federal Government on the goods and services tax are going to harm this province. They are going to impact on the revenues of this province. The increase in inflation that will be caused by this Bill even at a 7 percent level is going to drive costs in this province to the point that the Estimates this Minister is making will become increasingly irrelevant. They were irrelevant to begin with, Mr. Speaker. We are going to want to talk, by the way, at some length with this Minister once we get this Bill into committee, about his Estimates, his recent Supplementary Estimates of Expenditure.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps much of the concerns that we have are about the actions of this Government and in particular of this Minister as he has cosied up to the federal Government to help them implement their goods and services tax, as he has worked with them to deprive Manitoba small businesses of some \$600 million in benefits that were offered, as he works with them to deprive middle-income Canadians of some \$700 million in tax relief. He talks about being in favour of tax relief and yet he works with the Finance Minister who is taking some \$700 million out of the pockets of middle-income Canadians, taking \$1.1 billion out of family allowances and indexes that were offered in the previous Bill, that takes \$1.2 billion away from pensioners, and he stands up in the House and talks about his rather minor actions to return money to people in this province.

I think this debate will be better held in committee where we can maybe get some answers from this Minister, where we can get some response to the important issues that confront this province if we are going to have to adjust to the impact of this. I also think, Mr. Speaker, that we are going to want some answers from the Minister on the economic conditions in this province as they exist before this Bill hits, because we are in trouble. We are losing ground every day.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to see this Bill moved to committee as soon as a few Members have

had an opportunity to put some comments on the record.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition):

I do not want to comment on the tussle or sort of intercedent disagreement on the House Bills here this afternoon.— (interjection)— Yes, it is usually demeaning to get into that stuff. Stick to the high road, I think is the—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Doer: Like the Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey), I always try to stick to the high road, Mr. Speaker, and it is going to be very difficult to do this on this Interim Supply Bill, I must say, Mr. Speaker. It is going to be impossible I think, but I am going to do everything I can to stick on the high road, because Interim Supply is an opportunity to speak about not only the debits and credits in departments, and expenditures and revenues in the Government operation as a whole, but it is also an opportunity to reflect and speak up on behalf of the effect of a Government on the people, the people who elect us, and the people to whom we all serve. Therefore my comments will not be on the sort of linear accounting which is inherent in an Interim Supply Bill, but rather will be on the economic situation as we see it in the Province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, we have some serious economic problems in this province, and I am not a “negative” person. I am a very positive person. I am very proud to be a Manitoban and a very proud Manitoban. I believe strongly in the ability of Manitobans to work together, no matter what their political Party. I believe in the ability of Manitobans, no matter what their station in life. I believe in Manitobans, no matter what community they come from. They work together—that is the heritage, that is the tradition, that is the pride of our province.

So when I make some negative comments today, and raise some issues that could be portrayed as negative, Mr. Speaker, I am doing so because I am really worried about this province. I do not think any alarm bells are ringing in the ears of the Treasury Benches across the way, in terms of where this province is going. We do not know whether we should believe the rural development decentralization speech, or whether we should believe the First Minister’s speech to the First Ministers’ meeting.

We do not know whether we should believe, or the Government believes, in the economic realism contained in the Minister of Health’s (Mr. Orchard) speech to the MMA, or in the economic puffery we hear from his colleague, the Member for Morris, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), and the First Minister (Mr. Filmon).

Mr. Speaker, I think the comments made by the First Minister on rural decentralization are worth noting. It is not visionary when the Premier is taking a shrinking pie and distributing it across Manitoba. It is visionary when we take an expanding pie and expand it across Manitoba. So when the Premier says to his own supporters and to many other Manitobans, in a speech

he made recently, that he is going to deal with the staggering and faltering provincial rural economy by moving jobs out of the province, that is a tremendous admission. That is an admission of what we have been saying, in the Opposition, has been true.

What we have, Mr. Speaker, is a situation, rather than having a vision of expanding the pie, expanding the opportunities for our youth, for our communities, for our province, for our wealth and for our collective quality of life, we have a Government opposite who is moving around a shrinking situation. That is why we are worried—that is why we are worried.

Mr. Speaker, we heard the speech of the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) to the MMA, and I think the Minister of Health, while he was declaring war on our doctors—

An Honourable Member: He called them liars.

Mr. Doer: He certainly did call them liars. It is one thing to be in tough bargaining, Mr. Speaker, and it is one thing to get mad—

An Honourable Member: Do not call them liars.

Mr. Doer: Okay, the Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) defends his little colleague friend for Pembina (Mr. Orchard), but—

An Honourable Member: Read the article.

Mr. Doer: Well, I read the headline and I read the article. Unlike the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), I read both the headlines and the articles. Mr. Speaker, I know the Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) would defend his colleague friend, and I understand that.

* (1520)

Mr. Speaker, it is tough enough to bargain in a tough economic situation without using words that emote emotion and develop emotion in collective bargaining. We have had posters put up about us before and we will have it some time in the future again. We will have people fighting with us strongly, that is part of being a Government. I understand that. You do not just back up a Brink’s truck, you do not just sign the blank cheques, you bargain on behalf of the taxpayers. But you try to reduce your insults to each other, you try to keep them at a minimum, because some day you are going to have to come to an agreement, you are going to have to stick your hand across the table, you are going to have to shake your hand with the person you insult.

I have always believed—no matter who I am dealing with and as rough as it gets, and I like rough fights—that as rough as it gets you always have to know that you have to put your hand across the table at the end of the day, look them in the eyes, and shake their hand, and say, that is a deal and I respect you. I could shake your hand and we do not even have to sign the paper, because when I say it is a deal, it is a deal. It is pretty hard to do that, I suggest, for the Member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) when you are on a war footing with them,

and you are insulting not only the disagreement but the integrity. You are insulting their integrity.

We would fight with the Members opposite to hold salaries down for higher paid people like doctors, and we will fight with the Members opposite to try to get more money into shortages and specialists. We will do that, and we will disagree with the Government on the capping proposal, the capitation of our health care proposal that has been proposed by the Conservatives. We will have a public policy debate with the Conservatives in the most honourable way in terms of the patients' right of access to the universal Medicare system, the system that the NDP pioneered in this country.

We will have that philosophical disagreement, but—well, the Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) disagrees. I know he will look back in the history of the Conservative Party, and the Liberal Party, and the debate in Saskatchewan where Medicare was introduced. I know he will find what side the Conservatives were on, and I say to my friend from Kildonan (Mr. Cheema) that his first instincts of his political preference were correct. He will find what side the Liberals were on in that debate—(interjection)—Well, Mr. Speaker, you can check my card right back to the early '70s.

The real issue here is the war footing the Minister of Health has put on with the doctors. You do not insult people, you do not question their integrity when they disagree with you. You do disagree in the most vigorous way possible, and Cabinet Ministers on a daily basis have to say no to people, have to say no again to people, and I respect that. That is the job; it goes with the territory. That is why they pay you the high amount of money and put Honourable in front of your name for a couple of weeks.

Mr. Speaker, we all went through the little joy of having Honourable in front of our name for a couple days, and then it fades away if somebody attacks you the next day in the media. That just goes with the territory. That is the nature of the beast. It is a tremendous honour to be in Cabinet or to be in the Government Bench in any capacity in terms of the citizens of the province, but you do not declare war on people whose hands you have to shake at the end of the day. You just do not do that. It is not good business, it is not good politics, and it is not good Government.

I hope some of the Members opposite who are friends and allies of the Member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) find a way of getting him out of this little corner he has painted himself in, because he is painting all of us as Manitobans into that same corner. What happens in these kinds of insults, especially with doctors—my God, does the Minister of Health want to call doctors liars? Mr. Speaker, he stood by his words when questioned in this Chamber, and I have read Hansard again. My relatives, your relatives, all of us have to go to doctors on a daily basis. I may disagree with what their diagnosis is and I may want to disagree with what they diagnose. I may want to go get a second opinion, I may want to listen to my neighbourhood nurse or other health care professionals, but I want to believe that they are telling me the truth.

I want to believe that the doctor I am dealing with today is telling me the truth.

For the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) to call the doctors liars, and again say he stands by his words in this Chamber, I think you can deny and deny and deny, but I bet you if you walked down Broadway Avenue and asked a few citizens what the Minister of Health said about the doctors they probably would know what he said, and it would not be what the Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) is saying.—(interjection)—

Well, Mr. Speaker, it is very easy—just stand up in the House and say I did not mean that about those doctors. I did not mean that at all. So we have a real cavalry charger at the head of the Department of Health, kind of a roughrider approach to Government, whether it is nurses and pay equity, or health care support workers and pay equity, or doctors or any other group.

The first instinct of the Minister of Health is not to find a partnership and a way to agree or have a tough fight on the merit of the case, but is to insult and create a much more difficult situation. Getting back to the Minister of Health's (Mr. Orchard) speeches on the economy, the Minister of Health is echoing to some degree what the Members of the Opposition have been saying about the economy, and I am trying to ask the questions in the House and all of us are trying to ask the questions in the House. Has anybody got the alarm bells going off over there?

Mr. Speaker, we have been averaging an increase in population of 10,000 people per year since 1982; 11,000, '82-83; 10,000, '83-84; 9,000 the year after; 6,000 one year, more the next year. We could talk out-migration and the Premier says 26 out of 28 years. Let us talk bottom line. The bottom line of out-migration, in-migration, birth and immigration is population. This Government is averaging about 200 extra people a year, which is down 9,800 which we average in the 1980s. Now you can talk out-migration, in-migration, birth rate, immigration, but the bottom line is population. Mr. Speaker, we are perilously close to having a negative population factor by the year-end 1989.

This first envelope approach is not working any more, Mr. Speaker. Blame the former Government—it is not working any more. The irony of course is when we left office we had a lower deficit. We had to fiddle around with the fiscal stabilization fund, a philosophical decision we supported, but let the record show that the first year the Minister of Finance completed a budget it was the old budget of the NDP, and it was a surplus. When we see the numbers March 31, 1990, there will not be a surplus there. There is going to be a deficit. I do not expect the Conservatives to acknowledge that, but perhaps the auditor will when he writes the report.

Mr. Speaker, this Legislature reports to the people of Manitoba. The auditor reports to this Legislature. We have no problem reporting to our public in our debate on our Bills and the timing of those Bills. I have never believed accountants should run Government, I never will believe accountants should run Government. I believe people that are elected to run Government should run Government. No offence to the Member for Rossmere (Mr. Neufeld). I believe the people should

run Government and sometimes I will disagree with accountants. I do agree that sometimes sound fiscal policy to deal with unemployment is to have a job creation strategy that may well go across fiscal years, because fiscal years are not necessarily the finite period of time to define when the economy should be stimulated and when it should not be stimulated.

* (1530)

There are 10,000 fewer full-time jobs in this province than there were a year ago and this Government has a McDonald's Restaurant strategy to economic development: part-time, low paid jobs in the service sector as opposed to full-time high paid jobs in the productive sectors of our economy.

Now, again, Mr. Speaker, you look at those figures and the Government across the way, the Treasury Benches across the way, like to think that they are not enjoying the honeymoon because of the federal Government. I would suggest that they look at their own fiscal policies. People out there know what is going on. We will trade statistics in this House, but people in this Chamber who have friends outside of this Chamber and have contacts outside of this Chamber see the "For Sale" signs. People outside of this Chamber see the value of their houses going down under a Tory Government; people outside of this Chamber know that the job opportunities are shrinking in this province; people outside of this Chamber know that the foreclosures are increasing in this province; people outside of this Chamber know that the bankruptcies are going up and up in the Province of Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, we will go back and forth with shots across the bow on the statistics.

But, Mr. Speaker, the Members of the Treasury Bench are getting a plush velvet brain sitting in their plush velvet chairs in their plush velvet offices because they are losing touch with the people of Manitoba. They are losing touch with the economic realities that are going on in this province, and they are losing touch with the economic desires, the aspirations, the ambitions, the kind of quality that can come to a Manitoba economy when a Government says, yes, we care about the economy; yes, we will do something about the economy and we will do it together with all Manitobans. You are losing that touch and it has only taken 18 months.

Governments do lose touch after a period of time. The Liberal Government was way out of touch when it was defeated in '84. Obviously we have lost some things with the people when we were defeated in '88, obviously the ultimate accountability of an election. Mr. Speaker, we accept that responsibility, we accept that accountability, we did make mistakes and it is important to recognize that, you cannot take stock when you do not recognize that you have made mistakes.

So I am pleading to this Government -(interjection)- Well, Mr. Speaker, I bet you they said that around the old Cabinet room between '77 and '81, how great thou art. I bet you the Member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) was probably leading the Minister of Health.

An Honourable Member: He was not there.

Mr. Doer: Yes, he was, he was the Minister of Highways between '77-81.

An Honourable Member: And a good one.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, you do not even remember the Member for Pembina between '77 and '81, he was Sterling's hero, he was Sterling's little protege, the Member for Pembina.

Mr. Speaker, I will bet you they were sitting around the Cabinet Table, maybe the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) was there, the Member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) was there, the Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) was there, the Minister of Agriculture.

An Honourable Member: We were all there.

Mr. Doer: They were there, they were all there, they were all saying the same things. We are not making any mistakes, everything is just perfect, "don't worry, be happy."

I am saying to this Government, they better come up with an economic strategy. Now you have tried the tried and true Tory-Liberal philosophy of economic philosophy. You have taken all your hands off the economic levers and said, we will let the private sector deal with this economy.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that does not work in Manitoba because the Government must work in partnership with the private sector. The world will not come to Manitoba, Manitoba has to develop the opportunities throughout our economic strategy. When we are speaking on Interim Supply -(interjection)- Well, the Member for Pembina

An Honourable Member: Let us drink a toast to Jim Walding.

Mr. Doer: Make sure it is only half a glass of wine, only half a glass of wine.

An Honourable Member: Socialist white wine. You and Bernie Christophe, the tandem team at the NDP Leadership.

Mr. Doer: Maybe the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) should walk out of this House and apologize to the doctors instead of ranting and raving and foaming at the mouth in this Chamber, maybe he should stand up on behalf of all of us who have to go see a doctor in the next year. I wonder what the Premier (Mr. Filmon) says to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). I wonder if the Premier has enough nerve to stand up to the Minister of Health in a Cabinet meeting and say, Minister of Health, Minister Orchard, why did you call the doctors liars, do you think that really helped? I will bet you the Premier joked about it in Cabinet, sort of dealt with it indirectly. I bet you he did not say, item 1 on the agenda is the Minister of Health's behaviour with the doctors.

An Honourable Member: You will never know.

Mr. Doer: Yes, that is right. I can tell by your look, I can tell by your look, and your look, and your look,

that the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) did not go eyeball to eyeball with the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) in Cabinet.— (interjection)— I do know.

I know the Member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon), the Premier of this province, would not take the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) on. That is the problem. He is strong and I know that, but sometimes strength is a virtue and sometimes strength is a liability. When you call the doctors of the province liars, it is a liability. I can tell you—I can tell from every look across the way—the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) has already nodded, the Premier would not stand up to the Member for Pembina in the Cabinet room and take him on head on; would not do it; too scared of the Minister of Health.

All I am asking for is a couple of things in the Interim Supply Bill. Be firm, be resolved on negotiations with any group in our society, particularly the higher paid groups. Do not capitate our health care system with this capping proposal. Do not deny patients access to doctors. Secondly, do not insult the integrity of people who—

An Honourable Member: You froze hospital beds, you froze health care facilities.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) mentions freezing hospital beds. There are 85 vacant beds at Deer Lodge Hospital. Now what happened? Did they come down from the sky, beds from heaven? Did they just roll up in a moving van truck from somewhere else? I am starting to believe that the doctors are telling the truth and not the Member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard), because the Member for Pembina has his own Benches convinced that we froze things when there are 85 vacant beds at Deer Lodge Hospital.

An Honourable Member: How did they get there?

Mr. Doer: How did they get there?

An Honourable Member: It is a good point, hey Jimmy.

Mr. Doer: They just appeared—poof!

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) is well recognized by the members of his community as putting \$22 million back into the health care system of Dauphin. If it was not for the fact that the Member for Dauphin wrestled the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) to his knees, pounding him and pounding him and pounding him; resolutions, press releases, thrust, parry, back and forth, the people from Dauphin would have nothing to show for themselves without the Member for Dauphin.

The people from Dauphin know who was on the front page of the Dauphin Herald. Was it the Member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard)? No. Was it the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman)? Yes.

The people know. So I ask the Members opposite, take the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) into the woodshed, your own little group, even as a subgroup of Cabinet. Somebody have the backbone to say to

the Minister of Health, it is really not a good idea to negotiate with somebody, call them a liar, and expect to shake their hands at the end of the day. It is just not good business. It is not good health. It is not good Government. Somebody do that for me please. I will rest a little easier around Christmastime.

Secondly, would somebody over there say hold it, we do have a problem in our economy. We have a problem of people leaving. We have a problem of people not finding full-time jobs; 10,000 full-time jobs less is not a blip in the economic figures. That is serious. We do not want an economy for our children and for our grandchildren which only provides jobs at Burger King and McDonald's. We want for our children the kind of opportunities we had for ourselves. We want for our children meaningful careers.

Now, I have no problem with some part-time summer jobs. We want meaningful careers. We want opportunity. We want an economy that is expanding not contracting. We want a future for Manitobans and that is why the bells have got to go off in the Government's ears before it is too late.

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order. The Honourable Member for Kildonan has the floor.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, I would like to put in a few comments on this Bill No. 90, the Interim Supply Bill. I think it is extremely important to discuss how the health care in Manitoba is approaching right now. We spend one-third of the provincial budget on health care.

* (1540)

This is extremely crucial because as we have seen for the last 10 years, the health care costs have gone up by 178 percent and the population has gone up by only 6 percent in Manitoba.

There are a number of factors. As the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) has outlined, one of them is the aging population, but second is the mismanagement over a period of years. In some areas I have to disagree with the Member for Concordia. We can talk here every day, we can ask questions, we can bring all the proposals, but how are you going to deliver the health care system when the economy is not going to do its job? As it is right now, we have a problem with the economy.

The Member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs), the Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) and the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) have outlined a number of areas of concern—how the out-migration from Manitoba is happening, and how, when you do not have people, are you going to create economy? People bring economy; the Government does not bring economy. That is the important point this Government is missing.

Today, with the 7 percent GST, it is not going to be helpful. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) knows very well that he and his counterpart in the federal Government said that the GST will not affect the health care. That is untrue. It is proven that is wrong, because

any services, either directly by the hospital or an indirect cost, are going to be taxed, because all the services are going to be 7 percent taxed. A number of areas of concern have been raised. At all the private clinics where the x-ray equipment is, everything is going to be 7 percent taxed, and many people will not be able to afford that type of work.

(Mr. Harold Gilleshammer, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Mr. Acting Speaker, I do not want to divert from the main purpose of this Bill. During the Estimates process of 49 hours we did discuss a large section of area, and I have put on the record several times that the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) has done a reasonably good job in some areas. One area where this House has to be proud for a good achievement is the mental health area, where the Minister of Health has taken a lead. With the support from both Opposition Parties, we are moving in the right direction.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I think people of Manitoba will appreciate in a few years time how much money we are going to save for them. That money can be diverted for other programs where it is badly needed. That is just one example.

I have pleaded a number of times that health care should not be dealt with on a political basis only. It must be approached in a reasonable way, and at times that is missing. It has been more than 19 months since this Government came into power. The Minister of Health was a critic and he was very critical of the Government. He used to bring a lot of issues into this House. When I became a critic, I thought maybe a few times we brought some issues—and personal issues you can bring in this House almost every day, but then I decided against that because that is not the right way of doing things.

We thought, let us bring in some of the policies this year, in this House, so that we can save money for the taxpayers, because they are paying 33 percent—\$1,500 per person, per Manitoban. That is a lot of money. Can the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) afford it next year? I think it is going to be a very difficult question as the costs are increasing.

That is the one area, I think, rather than attacking one aspect of health care, as a doctor, you have to approach in a global way: the hospital, the practice versus the deinstitutional practice, the home care versus the community care. You have to balance all those aspects.

I was really distressed on Monday when we were discussing the Health Estimates. That night the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), as we were progressing very well, did put on the record that the negotiations with the MMA were proceeding in the best way possible. We took him for granted. The next day, after the Minister of Health's salary was passed, the news came that there were some problems. The information was given to us through the media, indirectly, that there was some information given by the Minister of Health and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) to the MMA, indicating that we are entering into a bad economic

stage, so that we cannot afford the offer they were given by the MMA.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we are not asking for the Government to throw money away. We are just asking for a reasonable negotiation, but in good faith. You do not stab people in the back. I think that is one aspect, and I did discuss it with the Minister of Health in private. I asked him what happened, why he gave us the wrong information—or, probably the other point, did he know about the whole process then? According to MMA they had the agreement in principle. That was in the first week of November. We are extremely disappointed that this thing has happened—(interjection)—well, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns)—I have a great respect for all the Members. As a Member who brings a lot of experience into this House, I think he must have seen for the last 26 years how the health care costs have gone. He must have heard complaints almost every day.

What I am asking, from my point of view, is that we have to have a reasonable approach, and a reasonable approach can only come from good faith. Like all other Manitobans, doctors are in the same category, and they will accept the responsibility. Just to go after one aspect of health care, because it is a politically popular thing to do before election, is unacceptable to us, and we will not stand for that, Mr. Acting Speaker. I think that is an irrational approach.

If the Premier (Mr. Filmon) or the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) thinks that David Peterson won the war against doctors, that was a different issue. Here we are dealing with the issue of capping the services which will be definitely affected if you go with the 2 percent cap. That is the bottom line, Mr. Acting Speaker. That has to be addressed.

Mr. Acting Speaker, let us deal with some of the issues we were not able to discuss during Estimates. One question has been raised in this House almost on a weekly basis, and the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) has been given at least nine months. I think he needed some time initially to come up with the plans. Maybe the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) can justify that you have in one space 90 beds ready to be occupied, and in the other hospital you have people that should not be there. They should be at that hospital. How much is it costing? Each bed multiplied by \$250 minimum, multiplied by 365 days, is a lot of money. A lot of services cannot be delivered. Simple management, and that is not being delivered.

If, as the Opposition, we have to come and scream and shout and then get the message across, I do not think that is the reasonable way. We have done, in the best possible way, by communicating through letters, through other ways possible, but the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) has failed to come up with a recommendation then. I did convey to him that this was maybe his idea, that they are entering into a pre-election period. He does not have to come up with this sort of plan. But no, with the recent poll, I think they have to wait.

The Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) is saying "hmm." Mr. Acting Speaker, that is the way it is, that

is the reality of life.- (interjection)- Well, I am sure, for the last one, you were going by polls. You have seen a bashing in this House on an almost daily basis.

Mr. Acting Speaker, let me deal with the other issue of how the money is being wasted. That was just one example. The other day the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) brought the issue for the Health Sciences Centre. We have brought this similar issue, but the issue has not been addressed by the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). What is the problem there? A simple communication, because two hospitals have a different waiting list. Why? Somebody has to just sit back for five minutes and think. There is a public perception that the Minister of Health is not communicating very well with those two hospitals to solve the problem.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the other very well publicized Health Advisory Network is the framework for the Minister, which we initially supported and still support as long as that advisory network is bringing forward proposals. So far we have not seen a single proposal coming out of that Health Advisory Network, and that is unacceptable. That is costing \$500,000 per year, and \$500,000 is a lot of money.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we can point to a number of definitions here, but I just want to end up my remarks by saying that if we have to preserve the health care in Manitoba for the next decade, management is the key to how you deliver the services, how you take the services from the hospitals to the community, and how you balance both. The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), any Minister of Health, has to balance the services, and that can only be done with the consultation, with the bargaining in good faith with all the health care professionals, and taking advice from the consumer group.

* (1550)

I think the Minister of Health should learn a lesson from the mental health reforms. He should apply that kind of mechanism to proceed in the 1990s, and with that I will end my remarks. Thank you.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Acting Speaker, I have a few comments before we move into committee stage on this Bill. What I want to do is say to the Government Members that to a certain extent they have my sympathy right now. It has not been the best of years for them. After having not a particularly good year as a Party in 1988, the New Democratic Party had a tough year. I think if anybody is going to look at the winners and losers of this year, politically, it is going to be the Conservatives because, you know, they came into 1989 -(interjection)- Mr. Acting Speaker, the bottom line being that I think they were waiting for this honeymoon to develop as a newly-elected Government, and most Governments normally get some sort of a honeymoon.

If they did have a honeymoon this year, we must have blinked, because I think it passed very quickly. Because by the time people were willing to give them any sort of a gracious welcome as a Government, they were starting to see just how thin the gruel that the people

of Manitoba were getting from the Conservatives actually was. Thin gruel indeed, Mr. Acting Speaker, a lot of reworked and recycled phrases, with not much action on the real concerns that are growing in Manitoba at the current time.

I just want to identify them because in the months ahead in this Session the bottom line is going to be that we are going to see an increasing amount of concern. For the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) I count 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 of his Members, but anyway, Mr. Acting Speaker, if the Minister of Northern Affairs would perhaps listen to my comments, perhaps there would be some improvement on the part of this Government.

I do not expect—because what I see and what I think we are hoping to see chartered out in the next few months in this Legislature are a number of issues. Number one, the economy: the economy is declining in Manitoba. That is not, Mr. Acting Speaker, what the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) said to the Prime Minister. He went down to Ottawa and said, everything is coming up roses, we are doing tremendously well in Manitoba. He tried to pick a few statistics here and there and suggest that we were doing well in Manitoba. Well, I do not know where the Premier has been. This was in November.

By November of this year it was increasingly apparent that Manitoba's economy was headed for a slowdown. Unemployment is continuing to be a problem. In fact, we saw with the recent statistics that we have 10,000 fewer jobs in Manitoba than we had previously. What was the First Minister saying to the Prime Minister? Oh, what a great job this Government was doing. Well, everybody knew that was not true, and it has become increasingly apparent.

I mentioned the unemployment statistics. I would like to look at the recent figures in terms of out-migration. We are 9 out of 10, Mr. Acting Speaker, and what we are seeing is that we are reinventing the Sterling Lyon era once again. We are going through that period in our history, between 1977 and 1981, in which the Conservatives came into power and their first and foremost priority was to bring in their Conservative ideology, which they did. They brought it in particularly in terms of economic development.

I remember well the former Member for Swan River, Mr. Doug Gourley, whom I respect for his service to the Legislature, but at the time said that welfare was better than job creation. That is what he said, it was cheaper than job creation. That was typical of the attitude of the Conservative Government.

They were willing to tell people, we are not going to have job creation because it is cheaper to have you on welfare. That is Conservative ideology; I recognize that. It is an ideology that I reject as being totally alien to the 1980s and the 1990s. I reject that out of hand, Mr. Acting Speaker, but what we are seeing is that the same sort of ideology is creeping into the Manitoba Legislature once again. Just analyze what the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) have said on unemployment. Have they got up and said, we are concerned about unemployment in

this province; we are concerned about the need for stimulation of the economy, the need for job creation? No, Mr. Acting Speaker, we have the First Minister arguing against one of the most successful policies of the previous New Democratic Party Government, and that being in terms of job creation.

You know that if you talk to anyone in this province, I think the one thing they will give the NDP credit for is in terms of job creation, particularly when we are into a recession. They know that when times are tough they will get from the New Democratic Party an economic program.

An Honourable Member: More taxes.

Mr. Ashton: Well, more taxes, Mr. Acting Speaker. The Minister of Finance comes in and talks about more taxes and so he should, on a day in which the federal Conservative Government, the same Party that he supported in the 1988 election and continues to be a card-carrying Member of, and supports, has brought in the 7 percent solution which is no solution.

They brought in—it was an incredible spectacle this morning. The Minister of Finance, the Conservative Minister of Finance, getting up in the House of Commons in Ottawa and he was pleased with himself. He was pleased with himself. What a great guy he was. We are now going to have a 7 percent GST. What he forgot, Mr. Acting Speaker, is that up until now we had zero percent. But here he is trying to say to Canadians that he can go from a 9 percent down to a 7 percent tax, bring in a few small little measures such as tax increases that are going to hit Canadians. He may be taking less out of one pocket, but he is taking more out of the other. He has brought in other measures.

The small businesses of this province are going to love the GST. He has brought in a credit so they can buy new cash registers. Well, is that not nice of him? Is that not nice, Mr. Acting Speaker? What he has done is he has taken out the provisions in place before, to give the small businesses of Canada at least some compensation for the bookkeeping, the time and effort for collecting and remitting the sales tax.

In the Province of Manitoba we have a system which provides some support to small business. He took that out and what is he going to do? He is going to give them a thousand bucks towards a new cash register. Well, that is an insult to the small businesses who are not just saying that it is going to create bookkeeping difficulties for them. Small businesses, whether it be in the retail sector, whether it be other sectors in this country are saying, it is going to be devastating. It is going to have a devastating impact on their businesses, on their sales, and on their bottom line.

So if the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) wants to come and talk about what happens in tough times, I can tell the Minister of Finance what happens when we have Conservative Governments. One only has to look in Ottawa today to see what is exactly happening this day, Mr. Acting Speaker. One only even has to look at Manitoba, because as I was saying—well, on the surface they are saying we are not in such a bad situation economically.

What did they tell the doctors in a private meeting? What did the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) one and a half hours after he finished his Health Estimates, one and a half hours after he tried to paint a glowing picture of the situation of the health care system in this province, what did he do? He went to the Board of the Manitoba Medical Association and he stunned them. He stunned them, because you know what he said? Did he trot out the same statistics that the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) used at the First Ministers' Conference? Did he say, well, things are going well in Manitoba? We are on your side, the physicians here. We want to have fair negotiations with you and things are going well and you will share in this great progress. What did he say, Mr. Acting Speaker?

What he said was that the economy is taking a slide. It is going down. It is going down and that is why he came out with his second statement and that is there will be a cap on Medicare billings in this province, not through negotiation with the MMA, but unilaterally, unilaterally he said that. This was the Minister of Health the same week, apparently, and this is verified by the Members of the Manitoba Medical Association. They also had a meeting with the Minister of Finance and the First Minister to discuss the situation affecting doctors, discuss the economic situation.

What did the First Minister and the Minister of Finance say? Did they say, well, we are in great shape economically. Did they say that? No, Mr. Acting Speaker, they painted a dark picture about declines in terms of transfer payments. Well, is that not interesting? We in the New Democratic Party have been fighting that for years. We have been pointing out in this very same Legislature, Mr. Acting Speaker, there is going to be a problem.

Now all of a sudden, after the First Ministers' Conference they never once mentioned it. Not once did they—when they had a face-to-face meeting with Brian Mulroney did they say we are losing on transfer payments? Now all of a sudden we are losing on transfer payments and they are saying to the doctors, well, we have to start dealing with this by cutting back on Medicare billings. That is what they did.

They said also the economy is headed for a slowdown. They said we are going to have less mining revenue and indeed they are probably correct on that. I believe that will be the case. They were painting a gloomy picture of the economy generally. It was tough times they said, tough times to the Manitoba doctors, and the health system would have to be part of dealing with those tough times.

* (1600)

It was interesting, the Manitoba Medical Association, they were stunned by this. They were stunned, because it was the first time anyone had said this. They believed what they heard from the First Minister in this Legislature. You know what they asked? They asked one very basic thing. They said could we have a copy of the speech. They asked the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) for a copy of his speech. I think they were so stunned they wanted to see it in print to believe it.

You know what, Mr. Acting Speaker, the Minister of Health refused to provide a copy of that speech to the doctors. Not only that, when I raised this in the Manitoba Legislature a few days later, I asked the Premier (Mr. Filmon) directly if he would release a copy of that speech, and Members of this Legislature recall his answer. There was no answer. He refused to release a copy of that. I am going to be getting a copy of that speech. I am filing a Freedom of Information request on that. I will file an Address for Papers.

This Government, Mr. Acting Speaker, I believe if it has any integrity at all will provide the copy of that speech, not just to myself as a Member of this Legislature, but to the people of Manitoba. They cannot go around publicly trying to pretend that we are in a good situation economically when they are in fact telling the truth to the doctors privately. They cannot have it both ways. It is about time that they came out and were honest with the people of Manitoba, and pointed to the reality. By the way, I am not saying that is any reason to cut back on the health care system. Far from it. I argue that the Medicare system is paramount and that whether we are in good times or bad times, we should support that system and maintain its universality.

That is one of the differences in policy and approach and philosophy between the Conservatives and the New Democratic Party, because the Conservatives, Mr. Acting Speaker, have not only opposed Medicare—they were dragged kicking and screaming in the 1960s in terms of its implementation in provincial Governments across this country, but even when it was introduced, what they have consistently said is that the economy is good, we can support a Medicare system, but if times are tough, we have to make sacrifices—short-term pain for long-term gain to quote Mr. John Crosbie from those famous words from 1979. That really summed up the approach.

Once again, I think he probably summed up the approach of the Conservatives even better. Does anybody remember the comments he made prior to the previous election where he said, if he told people exactly what the Conservatives were going to do prior to the election, they would not get elected? Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, that was probably the most brilliant political analysis I have seen from anyone in this country because, lo and behold, we are seeing the proof in the pudding federally.

Who would have voted for the Conservative Party with their statements? Well, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) would have voted for the Conservative Party even if they said -(interjection)- always supported the -(interjection)- well, now they start. Now they start coming out, Mr. Acting Speaker. They start coming out, supporters of Brian Mulroney, the GST. We are starting to see where they really stand on the issue. Let the record show that the Minister of Finance was the first one to say he will always vote Conservative. You will always vote Conservative.

Yes, in Manitoba he will always vote Conservative, including for his federal counterparts who went around campaigning last time on this sort of peace and prosperity platform. You would have thought there were going to be these tremendous advantages from free

trade—one year, we have seen just how phony that was. Mr. Acting Speaker, they campaigned—did they mention the GST, 9 or 7 percent in the last federal election?—did they mention it once? Did the Member for Emerson (Mr. Albert Driedger), when he was campaigning for the Conservatives, did he ever once say this is all part of the agenda, we cannot tell you what is going to happen, but if the Conservatives get in, we are going to have the GST and it is going to be rampant? -(interjection)- Good Government, he says. Well, the Member for Emerson thinks that the Conservatives provide good Government.

Mr. Acting Speaker, they are going to find, and I will be interested to see how much the loyalty—and for the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) the die-hard loyalist of the Conservative Party. I will—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gilleshammer): Order, please; order, please, The Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) has the floor.

Mr. Ashton: I will see how this loyalty of the Conservative Party continues. Will it be the same type of loyalty that the Attorney General had a few years ago when he wanted to change the name of the provincial Conservative Party? Will the right-wing Members of the Conservative caucus all of a sudden join the reform party to save their political skins, because they are going to get it from both sides, Mr. Acting Speaker? They are going to get it from their right-wing friends in their own constituencies who are going to demand to know whether they support Brian Mulroney or not, whether they support the GST or not.

There is going to be some accounting, and particularly from some of the more vocal right-wing Members of the Conservative—well yes, the Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey)—I want to see who he is going to support in the next federal election in the Arthur constituency, whether it is going to be the Conservatives, whether he is going to be there arm in arm with Brian Mulroney, his friend and his colleague, whether he is going to be fighting for the Conservatives, or whether he will turn around and say, well, I do not know if I can vote for the Conservatives.

Perhaps he will join the Reform Party, that right wing protest party, because they are going to get a vote from the right, from the centre, from the left, from all westerners and all Canadians, because this Government, this federal Government in Ottawa is going down and they are going to drag down their namesakes, their kindred spirits, their political cousins, their ideological twins across this country including Manitoba.

Because people, I think, are beginning to ask the very real question, let us look at this Conservative Party in Manitoba. We know they are in a minority situation here. We know they have to kind of hide their ideology in the back room. We know they have to do that, but you know they are not even doing a good job at it. Look at the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). I just outlined what he said, he said the economy is going down the tubes, so we have to start cutting back in

terms of Medicare, that is what he said to the doctors of this province.

We have seen him call doctors liars who disagree with that approach. Boy, that is a real moderate approach for you, that is pretty moderate. This is the same Minister who just a week ago said in a series of articles on drug abuse that he only read the headlines. He only read the headlines but he did not need to read the stories anyway because he knew what was happening.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we are seeing day after day this Government—the further it gets in the swamp created by the Conservative Party, created by the Conservative Party's ideology in this country, the more the moderation starts to strip away. We start saying it is the same Conservative Party we are seeing in Ottawa that we have seen in Manitoba. The moderation is nothing more than a tactic, it is a tactic driven only by the need for political survival in a minority Government situation.

What people are going to be saying, in fact, I know they are saying it already, and that is, thank God this Conservative Government does not have a majority and the power to ram through its agenda on health care and the economy and the many other concerns of Manitobans. Thank God, Mr. Acting Speaker, that is what they are saying. Thank God this Conservative Party does not have a majority.

I ask myself, what would they do if they had a majority? Just look at Ottawa because they do not even want to begin to verbalize what would happen, because following the advice of John Crosbie I am sure they would be the first to realize it. If they outlined their real agenda for Manitobans that they kept hidden while they have been in a minority Government situation, it would be a political disaster for them. They realize that. People are beginning—in droves, Mr. Acting Speaker, even their die-hard supporters are beginning to desert, because they know that is the problem with the Conservatives.

We are seeing it, the economy is taking a slide. They are having to make difficult decisions. They are making decisions which include cutting back in terms of Medicare billings, cutting back in terms of the medical system of this province, the health care system of this province. That is incredible, that is absolutely incredible.

They are already saying they do not want job creation. They do not have an alternate job creation strategy. They do not want job creation. Shades of welfare, it is cheaper than job creation, the statement by the Member for Swan River in the -(interjection)- Exactly. But why is that taking place? It is taking place because there is one fundamental bottom line in Canadian politics, Mr. Acting Speaker, and that is if you look throughout history, Tory times are tough times.

They have been tough times for Canadians when the Conservatives are in power because their ideology says, you have a recession; what do you do, stimulate the economy, get people back to work? No, you cut back on job creation. You cut back on the health care system. You cut back on social services. That is their ideology. It is the same type of ideology which drove us into

depression in the 1930s, it is the same type of ideology which drove us into recessions, whether it be in the 1950s across Canada, whether it be in Manitoba between 1977. We led the country in only one thing, and that was leading the country into a recession under the previous Conservative Government.

* (1610)

What do we find now, Mr. Acting Speaker? We find that history is repeating itself. The same pattern in terms of out-migration which was there in the Sterling Lyon period is now coming back in Manitoba. The same development, in terms of unemployment, is now coming back again with a Conservative Government in power. We are seeing history repeat itself here in Manitoba and it is a shame. It really is a shame because if people are not going to learn from history, as the saying goes, they are condemned to repeat it. That is what is happening in Manitoba.

We are beginning to see the Conservatives, Mr. Acting Speaker, reveal once again they have learned nothing. Instead of saying yes, we will have job creation to deal with the growing crisis in the economy, what are they saying? They are saying, no job creation instead of saying yes, we are going to support the health care system no matter what, it is a priority. They are saying, well, no, we are going to have to make cuts, it is going to be tough. We are starting to see that Tory times are tough times.

Perhaps I missed one other fundamental characteristic of Canadian politics that I think deserves repeating as it relates to the Conservative Party. Mr. Acting Speaker, that is what we have already said in the New Democratic Party, and that is that a Tory is a Tory is a Tory.

An Honourable Member: And a Liberal is a Tory.

Mr. Ashton: Hear, hear, says the Minister of Finance. The Minister of Finance in Ottawa is a Tory with a majority. The Minister of Finance in Manitoba is a Tory with a minority, that is the only difference. They are both Tories, they share the same ideology, Mr. Acting Speaker. Given the chance this Minister of Finance would be there toe to toe with his federal counterpart. We know that, we know exactly where that ideology drives him and it must be embarrassing for him to have to get up here and criticize his Conservative counterparts in Ottawa.

I notice today the Premier immediately leaped to his feet a number of times in Question Period to cut off the Minister of Finance when he answered questions. Well, that is his right as Premier, I am not questioning that. He can answer questions that are directed to the Government as a whole, but I suspect part of it was I think the Premier is afraid that the Minister of Finance, who I would say this to the Minister of Finance that he is a truthful person, that I do respect having sat in this Legislature for eight years.

It is not a respect out of any common ideas or policies, Mr. Acting Speaker. I respect him and I do believe that he represents the small "c" conservative, the right-

wing economic position very well. Right wing, I am sure the Finance Minister would not reject that label, I am sure he would be the first to say he is a right-wing Conservative Member, a traditional Conservative and I respect that. As I say, it must be embarrassing for the Finance Minister to be in the position today because we have a minority Government situation of not being able to get up on his feet and say what he really feels about what is happening and what is happening in Ottawa. I really believe that the Minister of Finance in his heart agrees with Michael Wilson, that man he respects, his friend, his colleague in Ottawa. I do not say that in this case out of any political baiting. I am not suggesting he is going to leap to his feet and say yes or no or anything.

I am just saying, I realize the difficulty he is in, because the Premier I do not believe is as straightforward in his politics as the Member for Morris (Mr. Manness) is. I believe the Premier is someone that can change his political label according to the circumstances. I remember before he ran for the Leadership of the Conservative Party, he said he was in the centre of the political spectrum. When he ran for the Leadership of the Conservative Party, he said he was in the centre of the Conservative Party. Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, being in the centre of a right-wing party is not the same as being in the centre of the political spectrum.

The First Minister changed. Does he realize if he said he was in the centre of the political spectrum he would not get support? He would not have gotten support from Conservative Members. I believe, Mr. Acting Speaker, he represents the Joe Clark philosophy of Conservatism in this province, the Joe Clark version of conservatism which is really to say, well, I am not right-wing, but I am not necessarily anything else. That really gets me back to what I just said. I just got back to what I said a few minutes ago. A Tory is a Tory is a Tory. That is the message that I think Manitobans are getting increasingly on health care, on the economy, on social services, on issues affecting the working people of this province. They are saying that the Tory Party that really is there, the real agenda that is not necessarily a visible agenda, it is not crowded out by the Government's public relations people and for good reason. It is kept in the background. They would not even release the speech to the doctors because my goodness people might realize we have a Conservative Government and they are going to act like Conservative when it comes to Medicare.

They have that agenda there. I am going to tell them that from our position in the Opposition, we are going to be not only asking, we are going to be demanding that they outline their agenda for Manitoba. What I think is going to happen in the new year is if we get into an economic situation where we are sliding economically, it is going to get worse, it is going to be a tough winter. One only has to look at some of the indicators. We have an increasing number of bankruptcies. We have a decline in the number of full-time jobs, and for the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), a few minutes ago—what is saying with Burger King and McDonald's? No one is saying anything is wrong with Burger King and McDonald's.

The young people of this province want permanent, full-time jobs at a decent wage, Mr. Acting Speaker.

They do not want to be working for minimum wage because this Conservative Government does not care about their future. That is what is wrong. That is what is wrong with the mentality of the Conservative Party.

What is wrong with a job at McDonald's, they say. I want the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) to be campaigning on that in the next election. I think that is the Conservative platform, we give you, we offer you jobs at McDonald's or welfare. That is what their bottom line is for the young people of this province, jobs at McDonald's or welfare.

They will not even have the decency to raise the minimum wage in this province. They do not care about the people on low and middle incomes who are trying to get by. They do not care about the young people of this province. I think that is clear. I digress—from the next few months, which I believe are going to become increasingly difficult.—(interjection)—

For the Member for Emerson (Mr. Albert Driedger), my apologies if I am attempting to project myself above the yelling and screaming from some of the Members in his caucus.

I just want to say, Mr. Acting Speaker, that this is a very serious situation we are in. The economy is going to be taking a downward slide; I think there is no doubt about that. It started, as the Member for Transcona (Mr. Kozak) points out, a number of months ago. Anybody who reads the lead indicators—you do not have to be an economist, just read the lead indicators, just read the papers, just talk to small business people.

I talked to an accountant six months ago. You know what he said—this is not in the papers—but he said, I have a lot of clients, we have been in a recession since the beginning of 1989 as far as my clients are involved. This is an accountant in the City of Winnipeg. That is what is happening.

You get out and talk to the people; they will tell you times are tough. I want to say they are going to become increasingly tough. I believe that the carefully crafted strategy of the Conservative Government is beginning to come apart at the seams.

What was that strategy? Well, first and foremost we dealt with the fact that they did not want to have right wing ideology as being their guide. They wanted to try and bury that in the background as much as possible. Beyond that, they inherited a financial situation—they ended up with a surplus in their first year, not because of actions they took, but because of increased revenues from taxes, because of increased revenue from mining revenues, a number of factors. The exchange rate worked favourably for them.

So what they did is they said, well we have a surplus this year, we will use the Fiscal Stabilization Fund to shift it into the next year, which they knew was going to be somewhat worse than this year. That was the financial situation. So they are trying to craft it politically.

What has happened? What is happening is, the slide is taking the bottom out of their whole fiscal strategy. What is going to happen, Mr. Acting Speaker, is they are not going to meet their projections this year. I do

not even know, given the Second Quarterly Report—in fact I suspect they are absolutely not going to hit even the surplus that we are talking about, so they end up in a difficult situation going into next year.

You know, this Government that inherited a surplus is going to end up bringing in a deficit. Their whole fiscal strategy is beginning to bottom out. I believe their fiscal strategy also had another factor. It was sort of a political, economic strategy.

They, I think, felt that the economy was going to continue at least on a stable level and if it was going to decline it would be manageable. They felt that even if there was a decline in the economy they would have the fiscal room to maneuver, the room to provide funds for programs, the ability to provide perhaps further tax breaks. They thought they really were in a good political situation.

Because of the decline in revenue, they have a real problem. Because of the fact they will not bring in a job creation strategy, they have a double problem. They are into a slide. It is like a toboggan slide; they have no brakes. They are in it to the bottom economically. They are going to be following through on that, because there essentially is no attempt on their part to bring in a job creation strategy. That is what is happening. They are in a slide with no control, and that is why you have even noticed in the House the change in the attitude of the Conservative Members. They have become increasingly arrogant and agitated. It is not just myself who is saying this; it has been noticed by observers in the press gallery, people who come in and watch the debates.

(Mr. Edward Helwer, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

They have been increasingly frustrated, and that is because it is beginning to disintegrate on them. Their whole political economic strategy is disintegrating. What is happening is that the more it disintegrates the more their real ideology, their real parties, become evident to people in terms of health care, economy and social services, in terms of where they stand, whose side they are on, Mr. Acting Speaker. That is what we are going to be raising in January and February and throughout 1989.

It is frustrating because as I mentioned earlier in debate today, we are trying to make the minority Government situation in this province work. So long as the Conservatives can put aside their right wing ideology we can actually get progress in some areas.

I am finding it increasingly difficult as a Member of this Legislature, as a New Democratic Party Member, sitting here as this Government becomes increasingly arrogant, in fact even worse. I actually do not care if they want to heap abuse on Opposition Members daily. That really does not bother me. I have heard a lot worse, Mr. Acting Speaker, from these Members in the past, and they can continue to do it.

If the Premier (Mr. Filmon) does not want to take the high road there is nothing much we can do. If he wants to get into the gutter that is something that really he is going have to live with in terms of the consequences.

The bottom line is, I am concerned about the people who are vulnerable in our society because of the policies of the Government. I am concerned, Mr. Acting Speaker, about the people who are unemployed, the people whose job security is currently threatened because of that slide in the economy. I am concerned about the situation in our health care system, the people who are growing increasingly concerned about the fact that we have a Government -(interjection)- The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), he is the only person in this province who does not know there is a crisis in the health care system. He says, well I have read the headlines, everything is fine. That is not what is happening out there. There is a crisis in the health care system, and I believe the Conservatives are fundamentally unable to deal with it because of their insensitivity on health care issues.

I believe it is going to be the same thing, Mr. Acting Speaker, in terms of areas affecting the family, in terms of family services, the many groups they have turned a deaf ear to, a blind eye to. I believe that is going to be a very unfortunate system, because once again, the vulnerable in our society will be hurt.

It is the same thing, Mr. Acting Speaker, on issues which we are going to be dealing with in the next year. We are dealing with a situation facing injured workers, and they are going to be ignored by this Government. We are facing the situation with working people, where this Government is trying to roll back labour legislation which provides an alternative to strikes and the conflict we have in our society.

We are seeing increasingly that the people in our society who require someone to stand up for them, the low and middle income earners of this province, whether they be working or unemployed, male or female, from whatever region of the province, they are finding this Government does not speak for their interests. This Government is not on their side during the tough times.

We, Mr. Acting Speaker, increasingly in the next part of the Session of the Legislature, in January and in February and whatever months we have to sit here to bring this Government to its senses, will be speaking up on their behalf.

The political lines in this province are being drawn daily. They are being drawn, Mr. Acting Speaker, around this Conservative Government. It is being drawn, partly, thanks to the federal Conservative Government, because they are showing people what Conservatives are really like.

It is not just the connection of the same name. I think the Conservatives misunderstand it. It is because people are seeing Conservatives in Ottawa and they are saying, it would be the same in Manitoba if they had a majority Government. I think that is logical, because that has been the case.

The political lines are being drawn. The Conservatives are going to have to look at their options. If they continue on the course they have been at, we are going to see more confrontation; we are going to see a lot of fights in this Legislature. More than that, we are going to start seeing the people of this province saying,

well, perhaps the Conservatives have had their chance. I would say we have surely given them their chance.

I think the evidence on the economy and health care and family service issues, on all the critical issues which are facing us as we head into some pretty tough times, show the Conservatives have had their chance, Mr. Acting Speaker, and they are rapidly blowing that chance in Manitoba.

I believe the people will speak in the next election, based on having giving them the chance. I believe increasingly they are saying they are getting tired of the Government.

They had the chance, Mr. Acting Speaker. They are the Government. They can shift their agenda. They can come back in January. They can acknowledge the error of their ways. They can say they have listened to the people of Manitoba, and they will now go back on the course which they have embarked on in those areas I mentioned earlier. They can do that.

An Honourable Member: Never.

Mr. Ashton: Never, says the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). Well, that shows you the sensitivity of this Government. Never, he says. He is not willing to look at any change in the course of action.

Be that as it may, in the next few months, Mr. Acting Speaker, I believe the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and his Conservative colleagues are going to regret the statement just made by the Minister of Finance—his insensitivity. They are refusing to listen. 1990 is going to be a very significant year for Manitoba politically, and I will say for the record, that I believe if it has not been a good year in 1989 for the Conservatives, it is going to be a worse year in 1990. They will be the big losers politically, but the advantage of that is the more the Conservatives lose politically the better off the people of Manitoba are. Thank you.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): Mr. Acting Speaker, I rise with reluctance to speak on this particular Bill. However, one cannot leave on the record, from the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), the kind of philosophic diatribe of inaccuracies of really what is going on in the Province of Manitoba.

Let me first of all—and I have held back to use this in the Legislature. I have tried, Mr. Acting Speaker, but I today have to use this on that great defender of social democracy, on that great defender of the North, on that great Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) who continually challenges me to run in Thompson.

Mr. Acting Speaker, let me tell you, if I were to run in Thompson the first speech I would give in Thompson, in the city centre—do you know what that would be? I do not normally run down my Opposition, but I do have to tell the truth about him. I do have to tell the truth about the Opposition even though I am not running him down, I want the people to know what really the mettle of that person is.

We happen to know the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) is a big investor. He is a private enterpriser.

That is right. The Member for Thompson is a great private enterpriser.—(interjection)— The Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak) says, what is wrong with that. There is nothing wrong with that.

In fact it is he, the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), who is working on a hidden agenda. It is he who is working on the hidden agenda, not only on one hidden agenda, but on two, on two hidden agendas. Let us go through them. I do not want this to be taken personally by the Member but some research would point out, the first hidden agenda is that he is a free enterpriser and invests in business. We have to congratulate him for that.

The second hidden agenda is far more serious politically for the Member for Thompson. He did not have the confidence of the community of Thompson to invest in a restaurant because of the instability; he said he would sooner invest in Winnipeg in a restaurant. Substitute, that is the more hidden agenda. Let it be said of the Member for Thompson that he has two hidden agendas. That he has —(interjection)— The Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak) says that I am sick. No, I am not sick.

Even another third point that one has to make. He stands here and he runs down McDonald's, and he runs down Burger King. What business has this man invested in? He hires people in a restaurant so he is degrading the very people who work for him in a restaurant to say it is a miniscule job, that it is not important. What kind of a person do we have here?

* (1630)

Mr. Ashton: I have seen Members of the Legislature stoop to low levels, the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) included. I do not believe it is appropriate for the Minister of Northern Affairs to be getting into these personal attacks. First of all, the restaurant that I am involved with is my brother-in-law's restaurant, who lives in Winnipeg. Second of all, for the information of the Minister of Northern Affairs —(interjection)— he is the active member of the business, he does not pay a single member of the staff minimum wage.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Helwer): Order, please. Order.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Steve Ashton (Second Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, further to that, Mr. Acting Speaker, it really is not appropriate for any Member of the Legislature to rise and use the time of this Legislature in terms of raising—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Helwer): Order, please; order, please. The Member for Thompson does not have a point of order. The Minister of Northern and Native Affairs.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Acting Speaker, I think I have made my point as it relates to the attack of the New Democratic Party on people who would work in a McDonald's or a Burger King restaurant. That is a good job. The management of those operations are big business. One of the biggest corporations in this country is McDonald's, and they need not only food servers and fast food people, they need management. They need construction people to build their restaurants. That is the kind of narrow vision that we have seen governing the Province of Manitoba for far too long. I could not sit here and listen to the kind of attacks made by individuals, who are making a good honest living, whether they be a waiter, a waitress, whether they worked in a McDonald's or a Burger King. I think it is a good honest job and I want the public of Manitoba to know it, that they cannot be and should not be degraded by any Party in this House.

Let us deal with a few other matters of fact, something that we did not hear come from the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). Let us deal with what the history of this province is as it relates to tax increases. Who put the burden of taxation on the people of Manitoba's backs greater than NDP?

An Honourable Member: Brian Mulroney.

Mr. Downey: No, not Brian Mulroney.

An Honourable Member: Brian Mulroney.

Mr. Downey: Not Brian Mulroney. We went from a budget, from an expenditure, an Estimate expenditure in this province in 1981 from under \$2 billion to an expenditure in Estimates of \$4.5 billion of which was money borrowed from the banks in Zurich, from the banks in New York. Our annual interest charges went from \$80 million in 1981 to \$500 million-plus for interest charges in 1988 budget of the last administration.-(interjection)- That is right, Mr. Acting Speaker, as my colleague from Lac du Bonnet said, right out of the mouths of those working people.

What did we do, Mr. Acting Speaker? Yes, those people who worked at McDonald's and Burger King. What else did we do? We have moved toward reducing the deficit in this province. That is what we have to do to get the economy of this province going: take the cost of big Government off the backs of the people. At the same time, we have to maintain essential services and we have, unlike the previous administration which froze the capital expenditure in hospitals, which closed hospital beds.

What were their priorities? Their priorities were building bridges north of Selkirk, Mr. Acting Speaker, at \$30 million without a road to them. They were spending \$27 million in Saudi Arabia developing a telephone system, and not one nickel returned to the taxpayers of Manitoba.

I want to deal with, for a minute, the comments that were made as it relates to my colleague, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). I think the Minister of Health

has done a commendable job in his direction of the health affairs in the Province of Manitoba. I heard, just a few minutes ago, the Liberal Health Critic (Mr. Cheema) complimenting my colleague, the Minister of Health, for the job that he was doing.

We have seen in this budget and this expenditure year the greatest number of capital dollars expended in the health care capital field that this province has ever seen, Mr. Acting Speaker, and I think the Minister should have credit for that. We do not want to see the perpetuation of misinformation as it relates to doctors and the relationship between the Minister of Health perpetuated in an unfair way. It has to be spelled out very clearly, and at no time have I ever heard or seen any article that the Minister of Health in the Province of Manitoba called the doctors a liar. Not one comment have I seen or heard that the Minister called the doctors liars.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

If you want to take out of context and mislead what is being said in the Legislature, or mislead the people of Manitoba, you could actually do that, but that is not in the best interest of the best health and medical system that this country has. Only if you want to destroy it would you take that on as a political issue for your own political benefit. I think that the NDP are doing a disservice, as are the Liberals, if they continue to perpetuate what is misinformation in the relationship between a Minister of Health who has done a tremendous job and the health profession in this province that I believe can do, and has done, a tremendous job in providing health care services.

Let us make it clear, Mr. Speaker, and again I have to say how shocked I was today when I heard the Member for Dauphin's (Mr. Plohman) question as it related to investment in Swan River. I think that said volumes. It spoke volumes as to the kind of philosophical governorship we had in the province in the last administration. I do not think one has to say a lot more about it, but I think people have to read that, and read it carefully, as to where the Member for Dauphin is coming from.

Mr. Speaker, what is the philosophy of the Conservative Party? The philosophy of the Conservative Party is very straightforward. It is our responsibility to provide essential services, and we have increased expenditures for essential services. We have maintained and increased the education opportunities, health and education.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have provided the essential services during tough times. At the same time, we have made major tax reductions for individuals, and some 25,000 taxpayers will benefit tremendously from that tax saving which in the new year I am sure you will hear a lot more about, and the people of the province will know that.

I believe it is essential that we provide essential services and police protection. Mr. Speaker, this great Government that we hear about, or this former NDP Government, thought it was easy to save money so they could spend it in their experiments in Saudi Arabia

and other places in the world, and cut out the RCMP stations in a couple or three communities in rural Manitoba. That was their priority, so one cannot sit here and take any longer the whole issue of their care and concern for the people of Manitoba.

* (1640)

Hospital bed freezing was theirs—capital freezing in the health care field. I just want to go back again and reiterate the comments I made, particularly for the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), whom I may have to challenge in Thompson at some point if he continues on with his rhetoric. I am not going to attack, or I am not going to challenge the credibility of him as a person, because as a person I do respect the individual, but I think he should stop and look at what is going on in the economic activities in Thompson.

We went to Thompson the other night to open the first senior citizens lodge and drop-in centre. The Member was with me. Well, it so happened that it was so cold we could not leave Thompson by air that night. We had to wait over. Do you know what is happening to the economy of Thompson, Mr. Speaker? It is booming. You are hard pressed to get a hotel room, in fact I almost had to go and bunk in with the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). The vacancy rate in the apartment blocks and rental accommodation is zero. You cannot get a restaurant meal on a Friday or Saturday night unless you have a reservation in those facilities.

An Honourable Member: Come up on a Saturday night.

Mr. Downey: Yes, I have been there. I was in Thompson on Saturday night two weeks ago. You could not get a place to eat, it was that busy. Zero percent vacancy rate in apartments, no rental housing. Yes, the economy of Thompson is booming.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, many people from the more depressed areas of rural and agricultural Manitoba are looking for employment in those communities.—(interjection)— Yes, it is depressed in agriculture because we had several years of drought, and I am not so sure that it was not the NDP who caused the drought too. I am pretty sure they had something to do with the drought.

Mr. Speaker, let me make my point even further as it relates to the economy of the North.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Minister.

Mr. Downey: Take a look at what is happening in The Pas and the northwest region of the province. Yes, The Pas is booming because of the private investment of Repap, not because of Manfor and a government owned and operated facility like the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) wanted earlier. He had Manfor continuing to pollute the environment.

I ask the Members for Thompson and Dauphin to open their eyes and see what is going on around them.

Go home to your constituency and spend some time and see what is going on there. I say that to the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), pay attention to what is going on around you. I think the Member for Thompson would be well advised to put on the record publicly his appreciation for the Minister of Health's (Mr. Orchard) putting in Thompson the kidney dialysis machine. But no, instead he writes a great philosophical newspaper which takes the credit for putting in the dialysis machine in Thompson.

The Member for Thompson had the nerve to put a paper out saying that it was he who got the dialysis.—(interjection)— Five years ago the seniors started working on the seniors home and it finally took the Conservatives to deliver in Thompson for the seniors home. Some day, Mr. Speaker, I will get that newspaper the Member for Thompson sent out, so I can have more material to speak from.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order. The Honourable Minister of Northern and Native Affairs.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, I would be hard pressed not to put on the record, as I am going this way today, about one of the main failures of the former New Democratic Government and their loss of their right to govern. That was their mismanagement of the Public Insurance Corporation and Autopac, where we saw skyrocketing rates that drove those average Manitobans and those common Manitobans, and those people like me, who are common people, drove them to their knees with Autopac rates.

I would like to conclude on a positive comment, Mr. Speaker. We have seen, some two weeks ago, one of the largest investment announcements that this province will ever see—\$5.5 billion in the development of Conawapa, which will have all the environmental work done on it, which they did not do for Limestone. We will see the development of a bipole line and northeast hydro down the east side of Lake Winnipeg, and will work toward the development of an all-weather road which has a tremendous opportunity for that community—\$5.5 billion, 23,000 person-years of work on that project.

I do not think Manitoba is in bad shape at all. Economically I think things augur very well for the people of Manitoba under the Conservative Government and I am proud to be a Manitoba Conservative. I am proud of the people of Manitoba, I am proud of the North and the South and the city, and I will work to make sure that this province leads the nation in job opportunities, economic opportunities, and the maintenance of essential services, something that he, Mr. Speaker, was not able to deliver to the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Richard Kozak (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I rise to participate briefly in this debate on Bill 90, The Interim Appropriation Act, 1989 (2). I rise in a mood of some despondence, because today I find myself having to state to this House a view that I have formulated

personally over the last period of months. At the very outset of my remarks I would like the record of this House to show clearly that in my view, and indeed in my Party's view, the consumer sector of the economy of the Province of Manitoba entered a recession fully six months ago.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: The Chair is having a great amount of difficulty in hearing the remarks of the Honourable Member for Transcona (Mr. Kozak), who has the floor. The Honourable Member for Transcona.

* (1650)

Mr. Kozak: Thank you, once again, Mr. Speaker. I feel I owe it to my colleagues of all three Parties, once again, to place very clearly on the record my firmly held, and I believe well thought out belief, that the consumer sector of Manitoba's economy entered recession fully six months ago. I believe that the statistics placed before this House by the Government itself bear out my view. I would draw Members' attention to the Second Quarterly Financial Report of this Government, in which the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) points out to us that both individual income tax receipts of this Government and retail sales tax receipts of this Government increased at a rate lower than the rate of inflation.

Mr. Speaker, the very definition of recession is growth over a six month period below the rate of inflation, in other words negative growth. This very important point has not been alluded to before in this House and I do feel that Members of all three Parties should be well aware that the consumer sector of our economy has slipped into recession and indeed has been in recession for the last six months.

To validate my claim, I would like to point out to Honourable Members and to the people of Manitoba that individual income tax receipts rose in this six month period from \$507,207,000 in the first six months of fiscal year 1988-89 only to \$522,969,000 in the first six months of fiscal year 1989-90.

I point out to all Honourable Members, Mr. Speaker, that this growth rate in the province's income tax receipts is clearly below the rate of inflation as measured by the consumer price index or any other measure. I point out to Honourable Members that it is entirely beyond dispute based on those numbers and the percentage growth in those numbers that the consumer sector of our economy is now and has been for some months in recession.

With regard to the retail sales tax revenues of the province, I point out once again, growth below the rate of inflation, from \$253,529,000 in the first six months of 1988-89 to \$264,831,000 in the first six months of fiscal year 1989-90. These are the Government's own numbers, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) I think will acknowledge the point that I am making, the point that it is now beyond dispute that Chicken Little does not reign on the Opposition benches. The Government's own numbers demonstrate

with clarity in a totally irrefutable fashion that our province has serious economic problems, manifested particularly by a state of recession in the consumer sector.

It is not with cheer that I bring this comment to the attention of my honourable colleagues. I take it as a duty to point out to Members of the House that indeed we have our work set out for us, that we have six months of extremely depressing economic performance under our belt, particularly with reference to the consumer sector of our economy. I urge all of my colleagues of all three Parties to recognize that we bear a heavy responsibility, unfortunately not to deal with the problem before it arises, but to deal with the problem that is now six months in duration and that has been allowed to fester.

We must address the problem of negative growth, actual shrinkage, in the consumer sector of our economy before the damage that is now being done spreads throughout other sectors of our economy and causes grave problems for Manitobans of every walk of life.

I stated this point as a preamble of sorts to my comments on Bill No. 90, The Interim Appropriation Act, simply to highlight what I think is the most pressing problem that Members of this House must address. The electorate, the taxpayers of this province, will judge us and rightly so if we allow a deterioration in our economy to persist unattended to. This Government, as they persist in reminding us, have taken certain steps to stimulate the economy in 1990, in the next fiscal year.

I suggest to them that their efforts are probably too late and probably too small. Before a problem has occurred, Mr. Speaker, as we all know, it can often be forestalled by relatively small measures. Once a problem has developed, is well underway and is accelerating, much more vigorous measures must be taken in order to prevent totally unacceptable outcomes, outcomes unacceptable to the electorate, to taxpayers, and indeed to all of us as legislators, as right-thinking citizens of this province who do bear a responsibility to see that the taxpayers' interests are well served.

To proceed somewhat, Mr. Speaker, into the heart of my remarks with regard to Bill No. 90, I would like to acknowledge that I and my Party agree in full with the remarks placed on the record by the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) in introducing this Bill on December 14. The Minister of Finance did not belabour us with an unduly long speech. However, he did honestly point out that, due to the lengthy consideration of the Estimates which this House has been going through, the Government needed authorization of this House for spending in the amount of \$4,171,492,560.00.

Nothing that I say, nothing that any of my colleagues say, is in any way intended to obstruct the Government from having access to the funds which they have requested from us as legislators under the terms of Bill No. 90, The Interim Appropriation Act. We are in fact very anxious that the Government have full reign to proceed with any measure of economic stimulation

they foresee over the period of months covered by Bill No. 90, The Interim Appropriation Act.

We feel we are presently in an extremely unfortunate economic state with regard to the consumer sector of our economy. We do want this Government to have full authority through the Bill before us, to deal to the best of their ability with the negative economic situation we now face, so that this situation need not build over time into a crisis which overwhelms the capacity of all Honourable Members.

In brief, Mr. Speaker, we have to get on with the job. My Party and I will do nothing to obstruct passage of this Bill. In fact, we foresee its passage from second reading prior to adjournment this afternoon.

I would like to spend some time, for the benefit of the Members on the Government Benches, to point out a few facts to them in a somewhat disjointed, rambling way, that I feel they must deal with if the decline in our consumer sector is not to spread widely throughout our economy.

I would like to make particular reference to the second quarter financial statements tabled by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) last week. The Quarterly Financial Report, Mr. Speaker, does not make pleasant reading. The deficit for the second quarter of \$128.2 million was admittedly \$38.9 million less than the projected amount of \$167.1 million. That would normally be a heartening figure. Unfortunately, it is heartening only when considered in isolation from other information contained in the quarterly report.

The report goes on to cite a rather less cheerful year-end projection than the second quarter actuals suggest the situation to be. In fact, the projected net increase in the deficit is \$77.3 million to \$164.7 million for the full fiscal year. Mr. Speaker, this increase in the deficit projection has two components. Both of which is individually alarming and together they constitute a situation that must be addressed with all speed.

* (1700)

For the Minister of Finance informs us the he foresees a .8 percent or \$39.9 million increase in expenditures versus his earlier projections and a .8 percent or \$37.4 million decrease in revenue projections. Mr. Speaker, a .8 percent decrease in revenue projections fully \$37.4 million in shortfall cannot be viewed as cheerful news, and it certainly bears out the opening comments that I made with regard to the fact that the consumer sector of our economy has already been in a recession for six months. As demonstrated by the Government's own figures for individual income tax collections and retail sales tax collections.

Mr. Speaker, revenue growth below the rate of inflation means in the simplest terms, negative economic growth. Negative economic growth over a six month period is an open admission, a public admission by this Government that our economy has at least in the consumer sector been in full blown recession for the last six months, and my Party demands that this situation be dealt with in a more expeditious fashion than it has in the past.

The foot dragging that we have seen over the last 18 months is no longer tolerable. My Party will not tolerate it. As an individual I find it depressing to me and offensive to me as an individual with economic training. Mr. Speaker, what strategies have we seen out of this Government to deal with the situation that certain of the Ministers across the floor would admit privately exist?

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) knows that I have never questioned his intelligence and never will. I suggest to him that in the interest of realism he acknowledge in due course if he feels that he can bring himself to do so that the consumer sector of our economy is indeed in recession and that stronger measures as we have allowed this situation to go unattended in large part over the last 18 months, are required and required soon to turn around an economy that is in grave danger of overwhelming our capacity to prevent recession.

The Minister of Finance is interested in my suggestions, and I will provide them, but first I would like to outline my view of how the Government has attempted to over the last year and a half to deal with the situation of deteriorating revenues and to deal with a situation where the automatic stabilizers built into our system quite frankly have called for expenditure levels that this Government has been unwilling to provide.

Over the first six months of the current fiscal year, Mr. Speaker, as I review the province's own financial statements, which appear under the signature of the Minister of Finance, we note that virtually every department of this Government has undergone spending cuts, that the Government has not devoted to the various departments the money that this House has been authorizing.

The Department of Legislation and Executive Council came in under budget, and I would not fault the Government for bringing those two functions under budget, but I note that the Department of Agriculture, the Department responsible for the Civil Service, the Department of Culture, Heritage and Recreation, the Department of Education and Training, the Department of Energy and Mines, the Department of Family Services, the Department of Finance, the Department of Health, the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism, the Department of Justice, the Department of Labour, the Department of Northern Affairs, the Department of Rural Development, the Seniors Directorate—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Minister of Finance, on a point of order.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, no doubt you will probably rule my point out of order anyway, but I feel I have to make it. Next year, to ensure that we are not criticized for underspending, when we do forecasts of second year we will deliberately put them a little bit lower so that they are surpassed.

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

Mr. Reg Alcock (Opposition House Leader): On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker, is it not an abuse of the House for a Member to stand up on a point of order acknowledging that it is not a point of order when he starts?

An Honourable Member: He finally blinked.

An Honourable Member: I apologize.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Concordia, on the same point of order.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): I think that it is remarkable that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) blinked, and let the record show that.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Finance did not have a point of order as he so acknowledged. The Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) is quite correct, that it is an abuse of our rules. He does apologize. We thank the Honourable Minister of Finance.

Mr. Kozak: To continue with my litany of underspending, the Seniors Directorate underspent vis-a-vis projections, \$16 million. The Department responsible for the Status of Women also reported underspending. The Department of Urban Affairs reported underspending vis-a-vis projections.

Mr. Speaker, it is quite clear to me that this Government strategy in dealing with an obvious impending shrinkage of revenues has been to avoid allowing the automatic stabilizers built into our system to trigger expenditures in certain key aspect areas of our social safety net.

I note that the underexpenditure in the Department of Health was fully \$14.5 million. I note that the underexpenditure in the Department of Family Services was fully \$20,464,000.00. With the intention of keeping the books of this province in balance, we see in the quarterly financial statement of this Government a clear admission that their first strategy in dealing with a depressed economy and depressed revenues to this Government, that their first strategy was to cut and squeeze, to hack and chop.

I suggest, despite my personal commitment to fiscal responsibility, that hacking and chopping away at the social safety net of this province is not an appropriate response to declining Government revenues and to impending recession. I would suggest that in fact conventional economic theories suggest to us that we should renew our commitment to the social safety net at a time when the people of Manitoba are under pressure, at a time when their personal finances are not even keeping pace with the rate of inflation.

* (1710)

What else do we see in the quarterly financial statement, Mr. Speaker? We do in fact see looming storm clouds on the revenue side. I would repeat my

earlier reference to the fact that this province's individual income tax collections and retail sales tax collections have both been growing for the last six months at below the rate of inflation. That statistic is one that I know the Finance Minister (Mr. Manness) will take to heart because he knows that it is irrefutable evidence of a significant problem in our economy that this Government probably should have tried to forestall a year ago rather than trying to deal with in 1990. They choose to close the barn door after the horse has fled.

Now, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) explains that the source of the difficulty is not in fact in individual income tax collections and retail sales tax collections. He draws our attention particularly to mining tax collections, which in fact have been performing very well over the last 18 months and in fact have been a large part of the reason why this Government has been able to report financial performance exceeding the expectations of most Honourable Members.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) does us a courtesy in indicating to us that in the coming months we can no longer expect mining tax collections to exceed our expectations, and does us a courtesy in suggesting that the extraordinary contributions to provincial coffers from this sector are not likely to be sustained in coming months.

My Party, Mr. Speaker, has repeatedly suggested to this Government that building the essential social and community services of this province on a foundation of precarious income such as mining tax revenues was not fiscally prudent and we are certainly heartened to have the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) now acknowledge that there has been some truth in the statements that we have made with that regard.

I also note that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) has disputed a point that we have made publicly with regard to the radically decreased commitment of the federal Government of Canada to the concept of equalization.

Mr. Speaker, as we review the Quarterly Financial Report of this province I do not see how any thinking individual could dispute the point that we have made repeatedly. We see in virtually every category of federal participation in provincial programs and federal subsidies to our provincial coffers under equalization programs, decreases amounting in each and every category to a significant and alarming dollar figure. The total figure at this point in the fiscal year is \$5,222,000 in shortfall of federal Government contributions to the Province of Manitoba.

The consumer sector of our economy is in recession and has been in recession for six months. The Government, contrary to reputable economic theory, has been squeezing and cutting, hacking and chopping programs at a time when credible theories would suggest to us that a greater commitment to our social safety net is absolutely necessary to prevent suffering among our populace. Mining revenues, individual income tax revenues, retail sales tax revenues and federal transfer payments are disappointing us to the point where this Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) now is forced to acknowledge an increase in his projected

deficit of \$77.3 million. He is forced to acknowledge that hacking, cutting and chopping must necessarily come to an end to prevent serious suffering among the population of Manitoba.

I point out, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Finance now joins me in calling for selective spending increases because he is, after all, projecting that expenditures in the current fiscal year will now have to be at least \$39.9 million above what he presented in his budget earlier this year.

He also acknowledges that revenues to the provincial coffers will decline \$37.4 million vis-a-vis his revenue projections of only a few months ago. With sadness, Mr. Speaker, I note the unkindest thing one can say in politics is, I told you so. Eighteen months ago, Members of this Government are aware that I stood and suggested they address, in advance, the problem that an economy which had been growing in unabated fashion for six or seven years would inevitably be slowing. What was their response, Mr. Speaker? Their response was to delay stimulative economic policies, stimulative fiscal policy to the point that this stimulation will not take effect until early 1990.

This is the clearest case I have seen in my brief political career of an attempt to close the barn door after the horse has fled. I must make that unkind comment, Mr. Speaker—we told them so. We did tell them so and I do not think they would dispute that. The advice which we repeatedly have placed on the record over the last 18 months is advice that, I stand here with pride and say, would have cushioned the impact of deteriorating economic performance in this province. Our advice would have made it possible to eliminate or reduce unacceptable economic outcomes well before those outcomes developed into a serious situation beyond the control of us as legislators.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) has repeatedly, during my remarks, asked me to say, what would you do? It is a fair question from the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker, and I will attempt to answer it, in part now and in part later, in my remarks. The fact is, I certainly knew precisely what to do eighteen months ago. I strongly feel that what was placed on the record by myself and my colleagues repeatedly in the first year of this Legislature's existence would have prevented, in large measure, the unacceptable economic outcomes which we see today. I feel that if our call, a full 18 months ago, for a gradual reduction of the 2 percent tax in net income would have boosted consumer confidence, we would not today see the type of recession in the consumer sector of our economy which we see today.

The Minister of Finance is willing to stimulate today. We applaud him for it. We voted for the Taxation Act which provided stimulation. However, I do chastise him as someone who knows whereof I speak. I do chastise him for not having followed the advice which we in good conscience extended to him in a friendly and co-operative fashion fully 18 months ago, when the problem we now have could have been forestalled, Mr. Speaker.

To proceed somewhat with my remarks, I would like to digress for a moment to a point that the Minister

of Finance (Mr. Manness) and I particularly debated over a year ago, and which I felt I had his assurance had been cleared up as a matter of contention between us. As I refer to the province's second quarter statement once again, I note that this Government with some pride is now taking some credit, substantial credit I might add, credit amounting to \$343.3 million for success in the continuing currency speculation of this Government.

* (1720)

Now I suspect the Minister of Finance has indeed reduced the exposure of the taxpayers of Manitoba to fluctuations and currencies other than the U.S. dollar. I suspect he has made fairly dramatic progress along those lines. I suggest to the Minister that I would be grateful if he would take the earliest opportunity to detail for the record what remaining portion of speculation in currencies other than the U.S. dollar does remain on the books of the Province of Manitoba—

An Honourable Member: He says, two Japanese issues. Two large Japanese issues.

Mr. Kozak: The Minister informs me across the floor that all which remains of the disastrous legacy of the previous Government is two small loans denominated in Japanese yen. I extend to him a certain measure of compliment on that score, because as he knows, and as I know, the Japanese currency and the currencies of western Europe have been strengthening very significantly vis-a-vis the Canadian dollar over the second half of the current calendar year. I do note my pleasure that the previous Government, which ran up billions of dollars in losses on foreign currency speculation, is now no longer in office.

If the former Government of this province remained in office today, exposure to obligations denominated in Japanese yen, Swiss francs, German marks would, as of the second half of this calendar year, be continuing to drag down the financial performance of this province.

With my compliment to the Minister of Finance, I would like to chide him to a certain degree for not having reduced the speculation of the province in the strength and weakness of the U.S. dollar. I would point out to the Minister that the fluctuations of the Canadian dollar vis-a-vis the U.S. dollar have in fact been favourable in the current calendar year from the point of view of a borrower of foreign currencies. However, I suggest to him that this situation, which presently benefits the taxpayer, need not always be so, and in the opinion of credible financial forecasters will in the near future probably turn around.

At this point, I would suggest to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) that he do devote a certain amount of his effort to reducing our exposure to upward and downward fluctuations in the U.S. dollar as we enter a period where we may well find the U.S. dollar strengthening against the Canadian dollar.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here somewhat red-faced, having promised my good friend, the Minister of Finance, that

I would detail at great length the solution to the difficulty, which we now face in our economic performance in the Province of Manitoba. I find that the time remaining to me is now only one minute—(interjection)—

Oh, the Minister of Finance suggests that I have not honoured an obligation. I do pledge to him at this point that I will honour the obligation at my earliest speaking opportunity in the very near future, I hope. Mr. Speaker, thank you for your indulgence, and I believe that I will now allow other colleagues to place their valid contributions on the record in this debate.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I did want to put a few words on the record here this afternoon on Interim Supply, and the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) says he is ready for me.

I think it is about time that the Government of the Day open their eyes and see the effect that they are having on the Province of Manitoba. We have thousands of Manitobans who are leaving this province, and it is time that they take issue to this particular problem. They also have to take a look at the other problems, in the sense that we have the highest bankruptcy rate this year than years before us. We have consumer spending that is down and so forth, Mr. Speaker. One of the largest concerns I have is in regard to the goods and services tax and the impact it is going to be having on the Government of Manitoba.

Really, where my concern stems from, is when I was in the Housing Estimates, and in conversation or in questioning to the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme), it led me to believe that this Government—in particular this department, but I do not believe that this department is alone—in fact is not looking at the potential impact that the goods and services tax is going to be having on the economy in Manitoba, thereby also including the budget, of course.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to demonstrate or to quote just a couple of excerpts out of Hansard which will, I believe, prove my point. In asking the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme), I stated: Does the department have an estimate in terms of the housing starts for 1990? His response was: We figured it might be in 1990 that it might recover. We have said 1990 would be 4,400. We have not used the GST in our figures.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme) makes a projection for housing starts next year, and he did not take into account the impact the goods and services tax is going to have on the housing market. I find that very hard to believe, that this Minister would feel that the GST is not going to have an impact on the housing industry in the Province of Manitoba.

It goes on, in which I had asked: Will the GST, if implemented, affect housing starts in the province next year? The Minister's response was: If all of a sudden they are going to drop the idea of having 5 percent on used homes, what is the use of going to the research to figure out what it is going to do to affect used homes?

The Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme) gave the distinct impression during the Estimates that they have not done any research at all. The Department of Housing

has not done anything to find out what type of impact the goods and services tax is going to have on the housing industry in Manitoba. It scares me to think of what the other Ministers' departments are doing in this regard. Are they going out and finding out if the GST is going to be having an impact? Is it the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) who is doing all of the work on behalf of all the other departments? Who is doing the research? Who is finding out what impact the goods and services tax is going to have on the Province of Manitoba?

Day after day, the official Opposition brings the concerns of the goods and services tax to the Chamber, and day after day we get answers that continuously make us wonder what this Government's actual approach is, or feelings are, towards the goods and services tax.—(interjection)— Things will come in good time to the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker.

One of the things that I also have a hard time on is the NDP's particular stand on this issue. You know, in 1969 it was the New Democratic Party that came out with a policy that a provincial retail sales tax would be repealed, that they do not support a sales tax, and that if they were to ever form a Government they would in fact repeal that particular tax. I find it somewhat interesting that when you are in a position in which you feel that you are not going to be in power in any time period, or any close time period, that you can make these types of commitments.

* (1730)

(Mr. Helmut Pankratz, Acting Speaker, in the Chair.)

You can go in terms of other commitments that the NDP Party has made and you will find that they have many, many, many policy platforms such as this. To top that off, while in 1969 they made that commitment, would you believe that it was the Pawley administration that brought it up from 5 percent to 6 percent, and then from 6 percent to 7 percent. This is the Party that says that the sales tax is not a good tax. They are the ones that are saying that they are the ones fighting against the goods and services tax.

Let the record show that the Liberal Party has been very consistent on this issue. The goods and services tax, as it stands, is something that has to be opposed. The impact it is going to have on the economy is going to be tremendous. The impact it is going to have on all budgets, this budget and future budgets, has to be addressed. I go right back to the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme), and the reason why. It is completely beyond me that his department has not done any type of research whatsoever.

I am going to now encourage the Minister of Housing, along with all of his colleagues, to start going out there and finding out what type of impact the goods and services tax is going to have on all Manitobans.

Time after time the Government from its benches talks about the tax breaks, family tax breaks and how the Liberal Party opposes the tax breaks. That is not quite true, Mr. Acting Speaker. In the 1988 provincial election, it was the Liberal Party that stated that it was

time we start recognizing unfair taxes, that we start ensuring that tax money is restored to all Manitobans. The record will show that again we have been very consistent in this respect. When it came time to vote on the Bill itself that allowed Manitobans to have this tax break, we voted in favour of it because we believed that Manitobans deserved to have that family tax break because of all the taxes that have been taken away from them by both the federal and the provincial Governments over the past few years.

The question that I would ask is: why this particular Government did not bring in these tax breaks in their first budget? They will argue that they did not have the time, the opportunity and so forth, that would allow them to do that. Mr. Acting Speaker, from what I can recall, it was the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) who stated that we will give the Government time. We will let them call the recession when they are prepared to call a recession. Had they taken the time—if they believed they did not have time they could have requested it from the official Opposition, and we were very accommodating back then—they would have had the time to bring forward the legislation that is needed in order to have given all Manitobans this tax break, not for this year but for the previous year, in the first budget they had brought forward. It was the Liberal Party that argued that is the case, that they should have been able to bring forward those tax breaks.

An Honourable Member: Spend, spend.

Mr. Lamoureux: The excuses that they have been giving have been non-acceptable. The Minister of Labour (Mrs. Hammond) says spend, spend, spend. Does that mean that she does not agree with the tax break? I am referring to the tax breaks and she comments that this is a way of spending. It is not spending, it is returning money that Manitobans have to work hard for, that Manitobans deserve to have put back into their pockets after taxes have been raised over the past few years from both levels of Government.

A part that I take great pride in voting against in this budget is the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. I like to think of this Bill as the Manness Illusion, or whatever you want to call it.

In reality it is a Tory slush fund, and there is nothing that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) or any of the Government backbenchers or Government Ministers is going to be able to say to be able to change my mind on this particular Bill. This Bill needs, and should have been amended, to ensure that it would not be used as a slush fund. But rather we see that the Government forged ahead with this Bill, in which they had to borrow \$150 million in order to have that fund, which created the deficit for last year.

In reality, Mr. Acting Speaker, there should have been a surplus on the budget from last year, but instead of showing a surplus, they chose to create a fund, what they have called the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, and create a \$150 million debt.

Mr. Acting Speaker, what this Government is trying to do through smoke and mirrors is mislead all

Manitobans on the real economic situation of the Province of Manitoba. If we take a look at the reason why they were able to do that, why they were able to create that slush fund, you can thank INCO from Thompson because of the amount of mining tax that we received. We can talk about the equalization payments that we have received. We can talk about the tax grab that the NDP had put into place that the Government was benefitting from.

It was not good management that brought this Government the slush fund that they created or the extra monies that were available, but rather it was more good luck. The Government should in all honesty look at it in that respect. They should realize that it had nothing to do with their management to be able to create what they have done and, Mr. Acting Speaker, the sooner they wake up to that particular issue, I think the better off they will be. It is somewhat saddening to see that the NDP have decided to support that particular Fiscal Stabilization Fund, as they like to refer to it, but I guess it is somewhat understanding, because the NDP, while they were in Government, had their own type of a slush fund, Mr. Acting Speaker. Mind you they put a name to it, and they called it the Jobs Fund.

No Member of the Liberal Party, I believe, would oppose a fund or anything that would work towards putting Manitobans to work, but this particular Jobs Fund had people trained, and the Leader of the third Party in this Chamber said it best—that the greatest expenditure of that fund was having the people go out putting up the green signs saying this project is as a result of the Manitoba Jobs Fund. Mr. Acting Speaker, that particular fund did not bring Manitobans, or provide for Manitobans, long-term jobs, and that is a shame, but I guess when I look at that particular fund, I can see how the NDP would support a Bill of this nature.

I can assure you that the official Opposition, the Liberal Party, will never support a fund of this nature.—(interjection)—As the Opposition, as the Member for Radisson (Mr. Patterson) says, the Opposition will never support a fund of this nature.

Another issue that keeps on coming up time after time after time inside this Chamber during Question Period is something that the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) seems to take great pride in suggesting. Every time my colleague from Kildonan (Mr. Cheema), the critic for Health, or the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) stands up to ask a question regarding health care, he stands up and he says, why did the official Opposition not ask that question during the Estimates time period? Why did they only spend 30 minutes in capital expenditures in the Province of Manitoba, and it goes on and on and on.—(interjection)—The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) says, why?

Mr. Acting Speaker, there is a good reason why. In the Estimates process, there are 240 hours allocated to debate and ask questions of the Government. After that 240 hours, you have concurrent, which could be endless. We could be sitting until the end of March, asking questions of the departments. If we feel that there is good and just cause to proceed with those questions during that time period, you can count on our being there. You can count on the critic for Health

and other Members of the official Opposition to put forward more questions during concurrent, to ensure that this Government is acting.

* (1740)

If you take a look at Health, the Department of Health, last year we put in 30 hours into the Department of Health. That was more time in Health than the Conservatives as Opposition put in while they were on this side of the House. This year we put in just over 49 hours, close to 50 hours in the Department of Health.—(interjection)—The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) says, and I never asked a question. The other day he said the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) did not ask any questions. Well, the Minister of Health might find this hard to believe, and I guess I can understand it, because I understand the way the Premier (Mr. Filmon) works, the Leader of his Party works.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) has confidence in us. She believes that as the critic assigned to a portfolio, we can ask competent questions. Not only that, Mr. Acting Speaker, but if the Leader of the Opposition or if the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) has a question that we would like to field in health care, what is wrong with having the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema) ask our questions on our behalf?

The answers that the Minister of Health gives time after time do not hold water. I believe, Mr. Acting Speaker, that he is going to have to start, instead of trying to refer all of his answers to the Estimates, or instead of trying to answer all of his questions in baffle-gab, that he actually sit down and start coming up with some answers. He owes that to the province. He owes that to the people that have elected him. The sooner he takes the initiative and answers some of the questions that the Member for Kildonan put forward, the better off he will be, the better the health care system will be, and it is time that not only the Minister of Health does this, but the other Ministers.

It is time that, when we stand up during Question Period, we start hearing answers, answers that we have not been getting. It is time that, when we ask questions in Question Period, we get the same message. We have one day the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) saying one thing about the goods and services tax, then the other day we will have the Premier, the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) stand up and say something else. There is no clear message coming from the Government of the Day, Mr. Acting Speaker. It is time that this Government start coming forward with straightforward answers, answers to good, valid questions that the Official Opposition puts to this Chamber every day.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I did want to move on very briefly to the Department of Housing. Here we go, from the Minister of Health to the Department of Housing. I think the Estimates process can be well summed up in what happened in that particular department by a deal that this Government entered into last spring, the spring of 1989. I am referring to the Ladco-MHRC deal. We had discussed that at great length in the Estimates, and there is one thing that we came to agree upon, and that is that we agreed we are not going to come to

an agreement, because the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme), and I have to believe that he speaks on behalf of the Government, and that is the reason why he was appointed as the Minister of Housing, but the Minister of Housing's bottom line when it comes to the Department of Housing is that there has to be profit, that if there is no profit then do not go ahead with it.

Mr. Acting Speaker, that has been shown by this Minister in particular, in not only this particular deal, but in other aspects of the Department of Housing. The Minister of Housing had an opportunity, and I do not know if this was shared with his colleagues—and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) says, what is the solution. I am going to suggest to him that maybe that he is in Government, and one of the solutions we could have had in this particular case, a solution would have been for the Cabinet to sit down and listen to what the Minister of Housing was saying.

If you compare the deal this Government entered into with Ladco, and you compare it to the deal they could have entered into with Ladco and the consortium, I would argue, and his colleagues would also join in with me I am sure on this issue, that the Government made a bad decision. This Government and the Minister of Housing said it himself, it was profit and profit only that they entered into this deal.

We have the Department of Housing not only for profit. The Department of Housing is also there to ensure that we have adequate housing to all Manitobans, that we can make affordable housing and shelter accessible to all Manitobans, that if you are on the low-income spectrum you are able to get housing. We had an opportunity in one of the deals with the consortium that this could have happened, that this could have taken place. The Minister refused it and the reason why he refused it was because there was not enough profit in the other deal. That was the bottom line.

We could have seen the Meadows West developed along with the South St. Boniface development, and that would have assured we would have had some type of a commitment to non-profit housing.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

To top all of that off, not only would we have had the assurances of affordable shelter, we would have been succeeding in two other areas. We would have been divesting in another piece of property, MHRC property. Something this Government has said they want to do. Something that this Minister now has said will be a few years before they can sell that land, so we are going to have to carry over the raw material costs, the raw land costs of this Government not entering into that particular deal.

To top it all off, this other deal would have provided the Government profit. This other deal was not just saying that they were going to develop property, but like the Ladco they were also giving a profit to the Government.

The Minister of Housing would have had the opportunity to have his ultimate goal; he would have been able to have profit. Along with that, he would have been able to accomplish, well, not what the

Government of the Day believes in, but I can tell you what the official Opposition believes in. He would have also been able to ensure that we would have had some affordable housing for those who are less fortunate.

That is the greatest disappointment about that particular deal. We could go on, we could talk about other aspects of that deal which were just nothing but a farce. We could talk about the proposal call itself and the way the proposal call went out—through a memorandum. It circulated through the Homebuilders Association. The Homebuilders Association is a good association. I support it. I commend them on what they have contributed to the housing industry and will, no doubt, continue to contribute, but why did this Government not put out a proposal call? Why did he not want to let other Manitobans know what he was trying to do?

Mr. Speaker, revert back to the profit date on the bottom line. Both projects were offering profit and the Minister of Housing says from his seat, right on. Both developments were offering profit. The profit deal they entered into will not, or I should say, is a very high risk guarantee, or I should say, there is no guarantee. It is a very high risk profit. With housing starts the way they are, and if we look at the end of—and I will use the end of October statistics, because those are the figures I have before me.

In our five major areas, urban centres, in 1987, by the end of October there were 5,813 housing starts. In 1988 we had 3,983 housing starts. In 1989 we had 2,740 housing starts. Housing starts have plummeted since this Government has taken office.

There is no guarantee, no assurance, no direction given by this Government that is showing that the housing market is going to increase in the need, or to the demand, that is going to be necessary to ensure that profit on the Ladco-MHRC deal is going to actually occur. In the first five years is when they receive 50 percent of their profit, Mr. Speaker. I am not convinced that they are going to receive that profit in the first five years.

* (1750)

If we look at other housing issues, we can look at the two SAFER Programs, programs that we brought to the attention of this Chamber back in the fall of '88 when I raised it in Estimates. During June, May and June, I believe it was, when the Government brought forward its budgetary information, we pointed out, through grants and subsidies, that we are concerned about cutbacks to our seniors and to our low-income families. The Government of the Day, through the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme) stood up and he said, that is hogwash, Mr. Speaker, there is no way we can substantiate it, and the whole nine yards, that there was in fact no decrease in the allotments out to those two particular programs.

Then we went into recess and when August came by, through an Order-in-Council we found out that the Minister of Housing was not necessarily being as truthful maybe as he should have been, that in fact there was a cutback in the allotments to SAFER and SAFFR

Programs, Mr. Speaker. That was somewhat disappointing, because during the previous months, the official Opposition was arguing that there were cutbacks and the Government was denying the cutbacks ever existed.

Then when we went back into Session in September, we raised the question once again, and the Minister of Housing said what he was going to do was take it to a review committee. The review committee would come up with some recommendations. At that time I suggested that the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme) look at having, or compensating the allotments that have been cut as part of it, or restoring to this budget the amount that the allotment has been cut as showing his sincere attempt at trying to address a cutback that he had previously denied.

Mr. Speaker, there has been some action taken on this issue, and I believe that is as a direct result of the Opposition. I think it does not just apply to this department. I believe you can go across to other departments like health care and so forth, and you will find that the official Opposition has been very positive in many suggestions, in terms of alternatives, or providing alternatives, that the Government should be taking in direction, and trying to assist in giving direction.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue doing that where we feel the Government has made a mistake, such as the Ladco deal. We will bring that to light. Where we see they can make a positive contribution, we will suggest it, wherever possible.

On that note I will conclude my remarks—on the final note of dissatisfaction with the Department of Housing—by saying I find it personally offending that the Government of this Day has chosen to put profit in the Department of Housing over and above accessible shelters for all Manitobans. Thank you.

Mr. Gilles Roch (Springfield): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Transcona (Mr. Kozak), that debate on this Bill be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

HOUSE BUSINESS

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): On a matter of House business, I would like to announce that should it be necessary, the Municipal Affairs Committee will meet on Wednesday, December 20, 1989, at 8 p.m. to continue its consideration of Bill No. 79. This committee will meet in Room 255.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the Honourable Government House Leader for that information. The Honourable Member for Dauphin.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): On a matter of House Business, Mr. Speaker, we have not agreed to this particular meeting at this time. We think it is premature in that the committee is meeting tonight and will have an opportunity to determine whether all presentations can be accommodated or not and then can set a date.

Certainly in a mutual agreement, we believe that there should be a date in the new year set for this committee as well. So I point that out in terms of the House Leader's announcement was not done in consultation with us and in agreement with our Party.

Mr. McCrae: Just to correct the Honourable Member, he is wrong when he says there was no consultation. There was consultation. There is not always agreement in these things, and I respect that, but there was indeed consultation. The Honourable Member would also note that I used the words, "should it be necessary," so that if the committee were to finish all of its work at its next sitting then of course it would not be necessary to sit on Wednesday evening. I hear what the Honourable Member said about sittings into the new year, but as I have made known I think to anyone who is prepared to listen, Bill No. 79 is a priority Bill not only for this Government but for many other Manitobans.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, on the same point, we are prepared to sit tomorrow night. We think that this is an important and a complex Bill. We believe that people should have as much time as possible to make presentation and we need as much time as possible to consider the impact of this Bill. It may indeed entail some sittings in the break between Christmas and New Year's and into the

new year, but we would like to put in the time necessary to make sure that everybody gets a chance to speak on it.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Second Opposition House Leader): I would just like to make it clear for the record that I was informed that the Government would be calling, that we would have discussions. We did not agree with it. We believe that it would be appropriate to come back early in the new year to give ample opportunity for members of the public to make presentations and for us to consider the Bill and we are very disappointed in the course of action that the Government has taken.

COMMITTEE CHANGE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have a committee change. I move, seconded by the Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs be amended as follows: Radisson (Mr. Patterson) for Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans).

Mr. Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock? Agreed. The hour being 6 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).