



Third Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

39-40 Elizabeth II

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ALCOCK, Reg	Osborne	Liberal
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	NDP
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	Liberal
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
CHEEMA, Gulzar	The Maples	Liberal
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	NDP
CONNERY, Edward	Portage la Prairie	PC
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	Liberal
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	NDP
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	NDP
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Liberal
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
HARPER, Elijah	Rupertsland	NDP
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	NDP
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Liberal
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	NDP
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MALLOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	NDP
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	PC
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
NEUFELD, Harold	Rossmere	PC
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	PC
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
REID, Daryl	Transcona	NDP
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	PC
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	PC
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	NDP
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	PC
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, June 3, 1992

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Joyce T. Pavlin, Florencé Burdeny, Deborah Porath and others urging the government consider establishing an Office of the Children's Advocate independent of cabinet and reporting directly to this Legislative Assembly.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Sandra Friesen, Ryan Vermette, Jess Gair and others requesting the government consider restoring the former full funding of \$700,000 to fight Dutch elm disease.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Neta Bourlas, Yair Bourlas, Magali Klass and others requesting the government show its strong commitment to dealing with child abuse by considering restoring the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign.

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of John T. James, Darlene Littlejohn, Melvin Chaskey and others requesting the government show its strong commitment to aboriginal self-government by considering reversing its position on the AJI Report by supporting the recommendations within this jurisdiction and implementing a separate and parallel justice system.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). It complies with the privileges and practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

The petition of the undersigned residents of the province of Manitoba, humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS the Manitoba Heritage Federation has received and processed nearly 1,200 grant

applications and awarded and monitored almost 700 grants; and

WHEREAS 300 different organizations in 98 different communities representing every region of the province have received grants through the efforts of the Manitoba Heritage Federation; and

WHEREAS the government has taken away the granting authority of the Manitoba Heritage Federation and now plans to control the distribution of heritage grants; and

WHEREAS this action appears to represent the politicization of the heritage granting process; and

WHEREAS it is unclear as to what the government's real commitment is to funding heritage in the province; and

WHEREAS the Board of the Heritage Federation is composed of urban and rural members which represents a wealth of heritage experience from all over the province; and

WHEREAS this move will have a critical impact on the heritage community throughout the province

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba strongly urge the provincial government to reconsider its decision and return the Manitoba Heritage Federation's granting authority.

* * *

I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), and it complies with the privileges and practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT the bail review provisions in the Criminal Code of Canada currently set out that accused offenders, including those suspected of conjugal or family violence, be released unless it can be proven that the individual is a danger to society at large or it is likely that the accused person will not reappear in court; and

The problem of conjugal and family violence is a matter of grave concern for all Canadians and

requires a multifaceted approach to ensure that those at risk, particularly women and children, be protected from further harm.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) call upon the Parliament of Canada to amend the Criminal Code of Canada to permit the courts to prevent the release of individuals where it is shown that there is a substantial likelihood of further conjugal or family violence being perpetrated.

* * *

I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), and it complies with the privileges and practices of the House and complies with the rules (by leave). Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS the Dutch elm disease control program is of primary importance to the protection of the city's many elm trees; and

WHEREAS the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) himself stated that, "It is vital that we continue our active fight against Dutch elm disease in Manitoba," and

WHEREAS, despite that verbal commitment, the government of Manitoba has cut its funding to the city's DED control program by half of the 1990 level, a move that will jeopardize the survival of Winnipeg's elm trees.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the government of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) to consider restoring the full funding of the Dutch elm disease control program to the previous level of 1990.

As in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairperson 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 Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

* (1335)

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the Fifth Report of the Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Your Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources presents the following as its Fifth Report.

Your committee met on Tuesday, May 26, and on Tuesday, June 2, 1992, at 10 a.m., in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider the Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the year ended March 31, 1991.

At the June 2, 1992 meeting, your committee elected Mr. Laurendeau as its Chairperson.

Mr. John McCallum, Chairperson, Mr. Bob Brennan, President and Chief Executive Officer and Mr. Ralph Lambert, Executive Vice-President, provided such information as was requested with respect to the Annual Report and business of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board.

Your committee has considered the Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the year ended March 31, 1991, and has adopted the same as presented.

Mr. Laurendeau: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review, 1992-1993, Departmental Expenditure Estimates for both the Department of Labour and the Manitoba Civil Service Commission.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the Report on the Administration of the Rent Regulation Program for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1991.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling today the Fourth Annual Report of the Victims Assistance Committee. The report is for April 1, 1990 to March 31, 1991.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister responsible for the administration of The Crown Corporations Public Review and Accountability Act): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling the Crown Corporations Council 3rd Annual Report for the year ending December 31, 1991.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 96—The Special Operating Agencies Financing Authority Act

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that Bill 96, The Special Operating Agencies Financing Authority Act (Loi sur l'Office de financement des organismes de service spécial), be introduced and that the same now be received and read a first time.

His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, having been advised of the contents of this bill, recommends it to the House. I would like to table his message.

Motion agreed to.

* (1340)

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery, where we have with us this afternoon from the St. Gerard School thirteen Grade 5 students, and they are under the direction of Mrs. Unryn. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Doer).

Also this afternoon, from the Canadian Forces Base Winnipeg, we have ten visitors from The Language School under the direction of Mrs. Bonnie Dahmer. The base is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine).

Also this afternoon, from the Bernie Wolfe School and Parkdale School, we have eighty Grade 5 and Grade 6 students. They are under the direction of Stara Gooljarsingh and Barb Flores. These schools are located in the constituencies of the honourable members for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) and Flin Flon (Mr. Storie).

Also this afternoon, we have ten Grade 12 students from the Elmwood High School, and ten Grade 12 students with the Voyageur '92 Program from Lac Saint Louis, Québec. They are under the direction of Mr. Jim Patterson. This school is

located in the constituency of the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Doer).

On behalf of all honourable members, I would like to welcome you all here this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Conawapa Dam Project Power Projections

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, during the Public Utilities Board's presentation and pursuant to the signing of the Conawapa power sale to Ontario, the government indicated that Manitoba would need the power for the year 2001.

That prediction, Mr. Speaker, was revised after the election, based on Hydro numbers, to be 2009 last year, then up to 2011 in December of 1991. In committee this last week, it was revised again to the year 2012. Hydro has just recalculated the demand in domestic load growth predictions for the future of that utility and the Manitoba Hydro operation. Management now has the load growth predictions.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister responsible for Hydro can advise us whether he has in fact the new predictions and projections for Hydro, and whether those will in fact push back again the domestic use projections that were originally presented to the Public Utilities Board in Manitoba.

Hon. James Downey (Minister responsible for The Manitoba Hydro Act): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that the Leader of the New Democratic Party was not at committee yesterday to ask those questions. It would have been an appropriate time with the chairman of the board and also the president and chief executive officer.

As it relates to the specifics of the question, I will take it as notice, Mr. Speaker.

Sustainable Development

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I have a further question to the same minister, the Deputy Premier.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) is now attending a conference on sustainable development in Rio de Janeiro with a couple of senior members of the Premier's staff, sponsored by the taxpayers of Manitoba.

The alleged intention is to deal with sustainable development, Mr. Speaker. Sustainable

development, as defined by the Premier in the Premier's own round table, in the document that was circulated to the public last year, defined sustainable development under the Premier's name, saying that there is a strong connection between the health of people, our environment and the strength of our economy. The more we reduce the separation among environmental, health and economic decision making, the more successful we will be in implementing sustainable development.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Premier indicated that they did not want to revisit the original economic decisions and would be opposed to revisiting the original economic decisions in the environmental assessment.

Would the Deputy Premier please change the position of the government and act in a way that is consistent with the Premier's own signature and a way that is defined by the Premier in terms of sustainable development, where indeed economic decisions are dealt with with environmental decisions?

Hon. James Downey (Minister responsible for The Manitoba Hydro Act): Mr. Speaker, I did not say that I did not want to revisit the figures that were prepared and presented to the Public Utilities Board. What I believe I indicated was that I did not believe it was necessary that there was in fact a full and thorough review of the proposed sale of Manitoba Hydro product to Ontario Hydro.

That had been covered to some extent, a great extent, by the Public Utilities Board, all forms and different scenarios as it relates to demand-side management, as it relates to costs of project variances, a whole range which, if the member is prepared to, he would find in the Public Utilities Board report which is available to everyone, Mr. Speaker.

* (1345)

Mr. Doer: I have read the Public Utilities Board report. It does not deal with these sensitive environmental issues. It forwards those to the environmental assessment, and it does not deal adequately with the economic issues because it is based on a 2001 assumption, a date which is becoming eroded every time we get a new load growth prediction and projection from Manitoba Hydro, Mr. Speaker.

So my question to the Deputy Premier is: Will he make it abundantly clear to Hydro that reports to

him—which has already produced a memo with a very, very narrow scoping—that they will welcome the review of the economic and environmental impacts as part of the environmental process that is going on now, consistent with the Premier's (Mr. Filmon) own signature on sustainable development, the Premier's own signature that represents the genesis of his visit to Rio de Janeiro at the World Economic Summit that is starting today?

Let us practise in Manitoba what we are preaching in Rio de Janeiro today.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, speaking about practising what you preach, what hypocrisy are we hearing from the Leader of the New Democratic Party, that built how many generating stations in the North, strung how many power lines in the North, a part of a New Democratic government that not once either had the economics of the project looked at by anyone, let alone the third-party Public Utilities Board, and for sure, did not have an open environmental review process to the extent that this government is going under.

What hypocrisy, Mr. Speaker, and what about when he says we should be doing something different? We are doing a complete and total review of the total project.

Trucking Industry Employment Protection

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, the trucking industry has been warning this government for some time of the effects of deregulation and free trade upon this particular industry.

I want to give a quote, Mr. Speaker, from Gerald Reimer, the outgoing president of Reimer Transport in this province: The trucking industry has experienced three direct blows in recent times. The recession, deregulation and free trade have had a major impact upon the industry.

I want to ask the Minister of Highways and Transportation when this government will end its blind support for deregulation and free trade so that we can protect the rapidly decreasing trucking jobs in the province of Manitoba.

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, the gall of this member to raise that kind of a question in this House here is just mind boggling, because it was that member sitting over there, the then Minister of Highways and Transportation, who signed the

Memorandum of Understanding in terms of deregulation. I cannot believe it. I mean, if he wants that question answered on that basis, let him ask that member over there.

Employment Creation Strategy

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is to the same minister.

Since we have learned today that Reimer Transport is cutting another 20 jobs on top of the other industries like Imperial Roadways where we lost 300 jobs and other trucking industries in this province where we have lost jobs, what plans, policies or programs does this Minister of Transportation's department have in place to reverse the serious decline in trucking jobs, as we have witnessed in this province of Manitoba?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, this province, as well as the previous administration, indicated at that time that deregulation should take place over five years. It was this province that brought that forward, and it was legislated that way. Deregulation is going to be completed by the end of this year.

I will tell you something. We have raised these concerns and have asked for the further review and another year's extension in terms of allowing us to get the information forward, so we can bring forward the impact that it will have on the trucking industry in Manitoba.

* (1350)

Trucking Industry All-Party Task Force

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary is to the Deputy Premier.

In the interests of preserving the jobs in Manitoba in the transportation sector and in other sectors of the economy, will the Deputy Premier commit his government to ending their stand-aside policy and to striking an all-party task force comprised of business, labour and government to deal with the decline in the transportation jobs in our economy in the province of Manitoba?

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): Mr. Speaker, like the Minister of Highways and Transportation has indicated, he is standing here criticizing a government which was no part of signing the deregulation initiative which was brought

forward by the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), the former Minister of Highways and Transportation.

I can assure him that this government is, No. 1, concerned about the maintenance and increasing of jobs, our No. 1 priority, as well as the maintenance of the essential services of Health, Education and Family Services, Mr. Speaker. We have our priorities, and we will work to that end.

Constitutional Proposal Notwithstanding Clause

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Speaker, I welcome the support we received yesterday, qualified and tentative though it was, for a Manitoba referendum on the Constitution. The Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) indicated that he had not ruled it out, and the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) said it was a good idea, although he thinks that there needs to be spending limits, and I welcome his concrete proposals and a friendly amendment to the bill on that basis. The Leader of the Opposition has obviously come to a new understanding that the amending process which he thought was excellent on May 5 is not serving the nation well in terms of preserving a strong central government.

Well, Mr. Speaker, my question is very specific today, and it has to do with the notwithstanding clause. We are watching the negotiators apparently giving approval to the extension of Section 33, the power to override fundamental freedoms, when Manitoba's task force recommended a review of rights under the Charter with an eye to outright removal of Section 33, a move favoured by many Manitobans.

Will the minister representing us at that constitutional table tell us why the First Minister's (Mr. Filmon) representatives seem to be in on an agreement of the extension to the notwithstanding clause?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): I think the key to the question are the words, there seems to be an agreement.

Mr. Speaker, I, in making my reports to this House and at every opportunity before the media, make the point that there is no agreement to anything until there is a tentative consensus respecting a whole

package. So the honourable member ought not to be misled by anyone, certainly not by me, because I have been very clear very, very many times that we are working during this part of the process with our best efforts to narrow issues and, if possible, to arrive at some kind of consensus that we can put before First Ministers, but to this point, there is no agreement on anything.

With respect to the question related to the notwithstanding clause, Mr. Speaker, I believe all parties in this House—although the Liberal position respecting the notwithstanding clause is quite clear that the discussion of Charter issues was something that was for another round, as I recall, are discussions which form part of our task force deliberations. I think any change in the notwithstanding clause or any other charter issues that the honourable member might want to identify that would change fundamentally or alter the rights would be for a subsequent constitutional discussion.

Mrs. Carstairs: The minister is quite correct that the task force report talked about the discussions of the notwithstanding clause some time in the future, but the reality is, the notwithstanding clause is being discussed right now. It is being discussed at the table, and instead of pulling it back from the Premiers and the use of the Legislatures and the House of Commons, we are suggesting we should extend it to the aboriginal people.

I would like to know clearly: What is the position of the Province of Manitoba? Are they in favour of extending it further, or are they in favour of pulling back on it, as they were so clearly in 1988 when the Premier (Mr. Filmon) indicated that he was at first in favour of Meech, but then he was opposed to Meech because of Quebec's use of the notwithstanding clause?

*(1355)

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, the issue of the notwithstanding clause arises because of the discussions respecting aboriginal issues in this round of discussions. It is the position of the Province of Manitoba, as reflected in our task force, that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms ought to apply to every single person in this country, and that remains Manitoba's position.

That is not necessarily, however, the position of the Assembly of First Nations as it approaches the table for discussions. Grand Chief Mercredi has made it very clear that he is concerned about the

conflict that might arise with a charter of rights with respect to individual rights and collective rights.

Manitoba's position, however, on the Charter is clear. By virtue of the fact that Grand Chief Mercredi has indicated his concerns about the Charter, it seems clear that his wish to have the notwithstanding clause apply to aboriginal governments, it seems to me, that there is a signal there that such a clause might be used quite often and perhaps in the case of all aboriginal legislation, which gives us concern, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, it is very clear that the aboriginal people, if they are to be recognized as we believe they should, as having the right to self determine and to self-government, are going to want to have exactly the same powers that are recognized by the other two levels of government.

If the federal government and the provincial governments continue to have access to the notwithstanding clause, it can be well argued and logically argued that the aboriginal people should have them as well. The only way you can prevent it from being extended to the aboriginal people is to voluntarily withdraw it from the Premiers and the provinces, as well as the federal government.

Can the Minister of Justice tell this House if that is under debate at the table, that they are also prepared, instead of going the way of extension, to go the way of retrenchment and remove the use of the notwithstanding clause from the two levels of government that presently have it?

Mr. McCrae: I remind the honourable member that the Province of Manitoba has never used the notwithstanding clause. The notwithstanding clause—[interjection] The honourable Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) is saying something from his seat, but he is the one who suggested we use it to protect Bill 3. We did not use the notwithstanding clause in that case, and we have not used it in any case, so I want the honourable member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) to understand that.

The Province of Quebec, not a signatory to the 1982 arrangements under a PQ government, routinely used the notwithstanding clause, and in the case of Bill 178, the Liberal government of Quebec used it in that case.

There was quite a reaction to that particular use of the notwithstanding clause. It was the use of it and not the fact of its existence that was the problem in that case. I am very mindful of the honourable

member's concerns with respect to the notwithstanding clause. The Liberal Party of Manitoba is clear on the position it takes in that respect, but it is pretty hard for me, sitting at the constitutional table, to agree to a routine use by aboriginal governments of the notwithstanding clause.

Fisherles Branch - Brandon Closure

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): I have a question for the Minister of Natural Resources.

MGEA statistics on its membership in the Westman Region of this province show a decline in the number of civil servants since November of 1988. Now Westman appears to be about to lose more jobs. It is possible that three, perhaps four, positions in the Department of Natural Resources would be transferred out of this region.

I would like to ask the Minister of Natural Resources: Can he confirm that his fisheries office is being closed in Brandon and that the staff are being transferred to other parts of the province?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, what I can confirm for the honourable member is that under a fairly substantial reorganization with the department, a new regional director has just recently been appointed by my government who will be stationed in Brandon to look after the southwestern region.

This is in conjunction with the directorships that will be stationed in The Pas, in Lac du Bonnet, and in Gimli, but I will undertake that question as notice and provide the honourable member with specifics of that kind.

* (1400)

Mr. Leonard Evans: I thank the minister for taking it as notice. We are worried ourselves that they are about to move.

I would like to ask the minister a follow-up question. With this move, is it possible therefore that the aeration program and other fish conservation programs in the area will no longer be possible and that Pelican Lake, Rock Lake, Bower Lake and Oak Lake will be at risk, and they could lose most of their fish because of the removal of this technical staff? [interjection] The member from Virden should be very concerned about it.

Mr. Enns: I can say with some pleasure that with the recently completed diversion of some waters

from the Pembina into Pelican Lake, my office has been receiving a number of calls expressing their appreciation as to improvements that this is making to the water which will ensure the future success of aeration programs and fish stocking programs in those lakes.

Now, it is my hope that I can count on at least the honourable member for Brandon East's (Mr. Leonard Evans) support when we make similar improvements to Rock Lake which have been long in waiting, some 10, 12 years, and indeed look at the trilakes as honourable members are aware of in that area, that are of deep concern to the honourable members.

Little Saskatchewan River Habitat Enhancement Program

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Well, I am afraid that conservation is not people interested in fishing, and Westman does not share the minister's confidence because the aeration program is being threatened.

My supplementary question, Mr. Speaker is: What will be the fate of the Little Saskatchewan River habitat enhancement project, now that the technical staff will no longer be available in the Westman area to work on this? Are we witnessing a downgrading of habitat enhancement in the Westman area?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, what the Westman area is witnessing is an exciting \$30-million commitment on the part of habitat improvement carried out by the North American Waterfowl Management Plan with officers stationed in Virden, in Shoal Lake, in Killarney.

It is one of the most exciting programs we are targeting, a half-a-million acres of private acreage. It is a coming together of a host of organizations involving the federal government, the provincial government, Canadian Wildlife Service, Canadian Habitat Wildlife, Ducks Unlimited, that famous organization—[interjection], with staffings of 7 or 12 new people in each of these offices.

Mr. Speaker, it is one of the most exciting programs that is happening with respect to habitat rehabilitation in the province, and one that I look forward to debating with the honourable member during the course of my Estimates.

Grand Rapids Forebay Environmental Monitoring

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed today to the Minister of Environment.

Grand Rapids fishermen were relieved yesterday that after over three months of requests from them and their leadership and questions in this Chamber, this government agreed to compensate the fishermen co-op for some \$100,000 for damages caused to their nets, which is a complete reversal for the Minister of Environment who consistently claimed that environmental damages were going to be minimal at best and that we had nothing to worry about.

Mr. Speaker, can I ask the Minister of Environment to tell this House today what program he is putting in place to monitor the full impact of the pollution in the river system at Grand Rapids and also into the lake system?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if the member had appreciated the answers that I gave previously or not. Apparently, he misunderstood my comment in terms of whether or not Manitoba Hydro would be looking at compensation for the result of the use of the previously unused spillway.

The fact is, in recognizing that damage, there were also a number of local residents who were employed. The concerns that I was addressing prior to that were in connection with the oil spill. That was contained and was separate and apart from the garbage that got washed into the water, and Manitoba Hydro has always undertaken to make sure that they have not caused undue hardship as a result of having to spill that water.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Speaker, my second question to the same minister is to ask him whether he can tell the House exactly what the situation is today with respect to safe drinking water at Grand Rapids, and what plans he has to remedy any adverse impact that this forebay water may have caused to the wells in that community.

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, that concern was raised and has been dealt with on an ongoing basis to make sure that no contaminated water would be inadvertently allowed to be consumed by residents of the area. The original approach was to immediately contact and work with the local people

regarding any potential problems and continue to monitor the situation.

If the member has any advice or concerns that flow from information he has been given, I would be more than welcome to receive that information. It is my understanding that there has not been any difficulties found, and I would welcome any information if he has that.

Grand Rapids Generating Station Stability

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): My final question is to the same minister, Mr. Speaker.

Can the minister tell the House when he expects the cleanup to be completed, and what the cost of the cleanup might be? Finally, I would like to ask the minister whether that structure or that facility at Grand Rapids is structurally sound, because people are concerned that it might just wash down the river one of these days.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, certainly, the second part of the member's question, I will defer to the authorities of Manitoba Hydro. Certainly, having raised the question, I can assure him that the Minister of Hydro will ask that question of his responsible engineers.

The fact is, there are two aspects to what occurred, the initial breaking loose of one of the generators which caused a considerable problem in terms of potential release of oil into the river. That was adequately and properly contained, and demonstrated that proper planning, having been put in place because of the nature of the oil, very much reduced the risk that was associated with that.

The second aspect where large volumes of water had to be released because of the inability of the plant to handle the water, I do not think that myself or anyone else can give an accurate time frame in terms of that cleanup. It will have to be done on an as-needed basis and as a result of problems that are associated with that. There is no doubt that some concerns will be raised about netting. There are other possibilities in the future that additional spillage could occur.

Those things will all be dealt with on an ongoing basis, and it is certainly my intention—and I would encourage the member to work with us—to make sure information is provided to the local people on an ongoing basis.

Crime Prevention Program Funding

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

A year and a half ago, in November of 1990, the minister said that crime prevention programs and volunteers are helping us all to keep our neighbourhoods as crime free and as safe as possible. This past March, the minister added to those comments by saying that this government intended to continue to work with community groups and to continue to foster their activities as being the basis of successful crime prevention programs.

Yesterday, however, we learned in this House, in the Department of Justice Estimates, that the minister confirmed that crime prevention funding would be cut by 50 percent this year, from \$200,000 to \$100,000.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the minister: He told us that these cuts yesterday were because of tough economic times. Can he explain why Executive Support to his office received an 11.5 percent increase in the past year, one of the largest increases in the department, while crime prevention funding was cut by 50 percent?

* (1410)

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I am sure even the honourable member can agree that adequate policing in our communities is a very important component of crime prevention. If the budget of my office is up, I suggest it will have a lot to do with the significant increase in travel that was associated with this province's participation in the successful conclusion of a new 20-year historic RCMP contract which will guarantee that we have policing for the next 20 years.

An important component of the work of the RCMP, the work of the Winnipeg city police, the Brandon city police and other police authorities is crime prevention. So the honourable member ought not to conclude that \$200,000 or \$100,000 is the sum total of this government's commitment to crime prevention.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, proof that good policing is not sufficient in terms of crime prevention initiatives is that crime prevention has its own line in the Estimates, and it is there for a reason.

Can the minister explain why administrative support to his office, as well as administrative support in every appropriation in his department except two, 28 out of 30 administrative support lines, went up this year by a departmental total of \$965,000, and yet he cannot find \$100,000 to put some credibility to his words about crime prevention in this province?

Mr. McCrae: This is an Estimates question, but the honourable member is, I suppose, quite welcome to ask it here, too.

That line in the Estimates is designed, certainly by this government, for special projects that come along that might not otherwise find a place in the budget; projects like the Citizens for Crime Awareness that we have supported in the past through that particular appropriation; projects like buying, for the Brandon city police, a telephone dialing machine that allows them to contact thousands of people in neighbourhoods in the city of Brandon at short notice to bring them together for Block Parents meetings or Neighbourhood Watch meetings.

That line in the budget is used to buy things like the computer link that the city of Winnipeg police now have in their automobiles so they can quickly gather information about a driving record or the registration records on vehicles driven by suspended drivers. That line is used to support things like the John Howard Society in southwestern Manitoba, which is teaching children in schools about vandalism and shoplifting.

Those are all very good uses for the dollars. We have found that \$100,000 was about sufficient last year, and therefore it was felt to be about sufficient this year for those kinds of special projects that come along.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, the crime rates continue to climb in this province.

My final question for the minister is: Why are the appropriations to parts of the department that deal with after the crime has occurred going up—Corrections up by 7.4 percent, Prosecutions up by 6 percent, Correctional Youth Centres up by 5 percent, Courts up by 3 percent.

Whatever happened to the minister's statement that a crime prevented is a victim safe? Whatever happened to that statement? Whatever—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. McCrae: Of all the members in this House, the honourable member for St. James, in his approach, has to be the most inconsistent in this whole place, Mr. Speaker.

If we were not increasing by such significant amounts the budgets of the various parts of my department, who do you think would be the first person to scream? The honourable member for St. James would be screaming for more, more, more. So we are spending more, more, more, trying to do something about aboriginal justice, trying to do something about domestic violence and crime prevention and all the areas of justice.

We do spend more this year, and so the honourable member is screaming about that in one question and screaming about a little bit less on a particular line for crime prevention on the other. The honourable member has no credibility.

Lindenview Residence Funding

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I took as notice a question dealing with the funding relationship between government and the Salvation Army Lindenview Residence. We are currently working with the Lindenview Residence on a funding formula. I would like to just provide the House with a little bit of history on this issue.

During the 1980s, there was no grant to Lindenview; instead there was a per diem. During the course of our relationship, the per diem was always volume sensitive and did create a deficit at Lindenview Residence, and there would be deficit support to write that off.

We have changed that formula now to a grant plus a per diem which stabilizes the funding. We did this in conjunction with the Lindenview people and the Salvation Army. This stabilization has been well received. There are still some aspects of the funding that have to be addressed. The current per diem for 1992-93 has not yet been finalized.

At-Risk Pregnancies Prevention Programs

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): That is an incredible response from the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) following the release of a report by the Minister of Health, the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation, documenting quite

clearly that the incidence of low birth weight babies is serious and growing among poor, urban, unmarried young women.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of Health how he is responding to his own report—which he has had now, I believe, since November 1991—which recommends that this government redirect resources towards prevention programs for at-risk mothers, which could in turn end up saving taxpayers up to \$1.3 million.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Naturally, Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend would not exactly preambule the question either fully or necessarily accurately, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, maybe my honourable friend, the critic, might perchance recognize that the incidence of low birth weight babies amongst rural mothers is probably at the minimum achievable under any kind of intervention, individually or personally. In other words, we are doing the best we can do according to the experts. Surely, that would deserve some mention, Sir.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as we suspected, there are high-risk groups, young, single mothers, core-area mothers, who are on low income, who are still susceptible but not at the kind of increased rates my honourable friend says, but are still susceptible. There is an opportunity to lower that low incidence birth weight babies.

This report allows us, Sir, to focus our intervention, our prevention strategies on those risk groups, because young mothers outside the city of Winnipeg are at the best achievable level of low birth weight babies according to the experts.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Speaker, this report makes a very serious recommendation about the high incidence of low birth weight babies among urban, poor women. I want to ask the Minister of Health: What steps has he taken, since receiving this report, to address the recommendation for prevention programs for at-risk mothers which could in fact, and in turn, save this government up to \$1.3 million?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly why the issue was put to the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation, to establish across the province where we might be able to make reallocation of scarce resources to focus on target groups of young mothers who are susceptible to higher rates of low birth weight babies.

Mr. Speaker, within the ministry, in the area of Healthy Public Policy, of which the Women's Directorate is part, we are proceeding to implement strategies to target from a nutritional standpoint, from an additional counselling standpoint, to reinforce and to enhance a level of programming which has been in place, and we believe now we can accurately refocus program and resources within the department to target a high-need group.

* (1420)

Lindenvlew Residence Funding

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Would the Minister of Health not agree that it would be important to restore the per diems for young, poor, unmarried teenage mothers and their babies at Lindenvlew Residence in order to meet the recommendations and the findings of this report, showing the highest risk of low birth weight among poor, urban, young, unmarried women.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, the objective of this report is to allow the department to guide its intervention programs, which is underway, Sir.

The larger agenda and the larger issue that challenges government and was referred to in the health reform document is in terms of the determinants of health status, one of the indicators being low birth weight babies. That is a growing economy which provides to those young mothers an economic opportunity which has been denied to them by governments in the past that have decided on deficit finance, borrow this province and tax this province into poverty.

Manitoba Blue Cross Percentage Increase

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): My first two questions are directed to the Minister of Finance, and my final question is to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard).

This government, Mr. Speaker, said: Read my political lips; no new taxes for Manitobans. Yet what this government would not do directly, it has been doing indirectly. It has discontinued income tax services for low-income Manitobans. It has raised Pharmacare deductible above the rate of inflation. It has scuttled the funding for the Seniors Directorate by almost 13 percent.

Can the Minister of Finance confirm to this House and to Manitobans that he is now imposing a new 2 percent tax on the Manitoba Blue Cross?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Well, I do not have to confirm it now. I said so in the budget which was duly passed by the people's representatives who were elected to this House. So I do not have to reconfirm anything. Anybody who was here when I read the Budget Address will see exactly that this was the intention of this government.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Nonpolitical Statement

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Do I have leave, Mr. Speaker, to make a nonpolitical statement? [Agreed] [interjection] No, I am not going to ride my bicycle today.

Mr. Speaker, in March, approximately 4,500 to 5,000 Grade 6 students wrote the Canadian Mathematics League exam set by the University of Windsor. Bannatyne School's—a school in my constituency—scores were outstanding. Their school team consisting of Danielle Betteridge, Donavon Le Nabat, Paula McLeod, Phillip Pawluk, Ken Phillips, Kelly Temple and Jodi Lee Tighe placed second in Manitoba and fourth in Canada.

Outstanding individual placements were achieved by: Paula McLeod, second in Manitoba, third in Canada; Kelly Temple, fourth in Manitoba, 15th in Canada; Danielle Betteridge, sixth in Manitoba, 22nd in Canada; Donavan Le Nabat, 7th in Manitoba; Phillip Pawluk, 9th in Manitoba.

Credit is given, Mr. Speaker, to Mme. Greban of St. Germain for offering this academic challenge to the Grade 6 students of Bannatyne School and also to all the teachers and students for participating in this opportunity.

Also, Mr. Speaker, on the 24th of April of this year, five students from Silver Heights Collegiate—Geoff King, Robert Dick, John Clark, Rick Moore and John Pattie—wrote the Canadian Association of Physics prize examination for high schools in Manitoba. Two hundred and sixty students wrote this exam, and all five Silver Heights students finished in the superior effort category with the following results: Geoff King and Rick Moore tied for fourth place; John Clark and John Pattie tied for 29th place and Robert Moore placed 59th. The students were honoured at the University of Winnipeg on Friday,

May 29, 1992, where Geoff King and Rick Moore received awards.

Compliments, Mr. Speaker, are extended to these students. Mr. George Daniels, their physics teacher, should also be recognized for his effort in working with these students and for his continuous encouragement of their search for excellence at Silver Heights Collegiate, also in the constituency of Sturgeon Creek. Thank you.

Committee Changes

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): I move, seconded by the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Agriculture be amended as follows: the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) for the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey); the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose) for the member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings); the member for Roblin-Russell (Mr. Derkach) for the member for Steinbach (Mr. Driedger); the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) for the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer). [Agreed]

I move, seconded by the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments be amended as follows: the member for Steinbach (Mr. Driedger) for the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns); the member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh) for the member for Brandon West (Mr. McCrae); the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render) for the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson). [Agreed]

Mr. George Hickey (Point Douglas): I move, seconded by the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments be amended as follows: St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak); Point Douglas (Mr. Hickey) for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) for Thursday, June 4, 1992, for 10 a.m. [Agreed]

I move, seconded by the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: Thompson (Mr. Ashton) for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) for Tuesday, June 9, 1992, 10 a.m. [Agreed]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I move, seconded by the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Agriculture be amended as follows: St. Boniface

(Mr. Gaudry) for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs). [Agreed]

Also, I move, seconded by the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments be amended as follows: The Maples (Mr. Cheema) for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry). [Agreed]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if there is a desire to waive private members' hour.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to waive private members' hour? Is it agreed? No. There is no agreement.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, would you call bills in the following order: first of all, Second Readings, Bills 92, 93, 86, 87 and then 84, and then adjourned Debate on Second Readings, Bills 20, 21, 47, 76, 82, 34, 64, 70.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 92—The Provincial Auditor's Amendment Act

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that Bill 92, The Provincial Auditor's Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur le vérificateur provincial) be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Manness: My comments with respect to this bill are going to be short. The Provincial Auditor in his capacity as a servant of the Legislature is asking for basically two changes to The Provincial Auditor's Act. First of all, he is asking that the present section that deals with the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council shall appoint a Provincial Auditor for the Province of Manitoba. There is a change sought which will amend this section to read, and I quote: and on appointment, the Provincial Auditor shall be an officer of the Legislature. Mr. Speaker, end of quote.

This amendment is by way of clarification and conforms with the general understanding of the office. We are introducing a new section which will read as follows, and I quote: No action or other proceeding may be brought against the Provincial Auditor and the Assistant Provincial Auditor or any

person employed under the Provincial Auditor for anything done or admitted in good faith in the exercise or intended exercise of a power or in the performance and intended performance of a duty or function under this or any other act or regulation, or for any neglect or default in the exercise or performance in good faith of such power, duty or function. End of quote.

Mr. Speaker, this section provides immunity to the Provincial Auditor against court action for activities carried on in the performance of prescribed duties. In the interests of the Legislative Assembly, the Provincial Auditor is requested to undertake and report on special audits. These audits are wide-ranging in scope and require comment on matters involving possibly conflict of interest, imprudence, inappropriate management practices, fraudulent activities and bad judgment.

* (1430)

Legislators have come to expect the opinion of the Provincial Auditor in such matters in that the Provincial Auditor and his staff are acting to obtain information on behalf of the Legislature. Legal counsel is advised that it would be prudent to afford the Provincial Auditor and his staff similar immunity to that provided to members of the Assembly, Manitoba's Ombudsman and other legislative auditors. Similar protection is provided in the audit acts for the provinces of Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario and Saskatchewan. B.C. is in the process of making similar changes to its audit legislation.

The provincial institutes of chartered accountants in Canada have adopted mandatory public liability insurance. The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Manitoba has recently passed by-laws which will require practising offices to maintain public liability insurance unless there are circumstances which negate this need. Immunity through legislation is considered such a circumstance.

Mr. Speaker, I commend these changes to The Provincial Auditor's Act. I commend them for the consideration of the members of the House, and, hopefully, they will move expeditiously in the consideration of this bill. Thank you.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 93—The Mental Health Amendment Act

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), that Bill 93, The Mental Health Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé mentale, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, the amendments in this bill result from two recent events.

About one year ago, as the House may remember, the Supreme Court ruled unconstitutional the Criminal Code provisions that allowed the Lieutenant-Governor to order indeterminate detentions in jails. As a result, Parliament has amended the Criminal Code to remove the Lieutenant-Governor's warrants, to strengthen the role of provincial review boards, and to require detention of persons found not criminally responsible in a hospital setting instead of a jail. Because of these changes to the Criminal Code, we have to change The Mental Health Act to make our legislation consistent.

The changes in this bill cover the requirements both of Manitoba Health respecting forensic services and of Manitoba Justice concerning review boards. In addition, this legislation is intended to be retroactive to February 4, 1992, so that its effect coincides with that of the changes to the Criminal Code.

Generally speaking, the amendments consist of substantive changes to The Mental Health Act arising from the Criminal Code amendments plus a few protective consequential changes recommended by our legal advisors. One new provision concerning the detention of mentally disordered offenders prescribes the creation and operation of an additional review board. The former Board of Review in Manitoba Justice remains under the name of the Criminal Code Review Board. In addition, there will be a Mental Health Review Board covering The Mental Health Act, and both are defined in this bill.

Provisions concerning the involuntary admission of mentally disordered offenders to a hospital have been changed to ensure a consistency with the new Criminal Code provisions, which no longer include reference to Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council

warrants. The new provisions permit treatment for these offenders. At the same time, Sir, they prevent them from appealing to the Mental Health Review Board for a change in status and from being discharged without authorization of the Criminal Code Review Board.

In order to protect both the offenders and the public, the bill provides for reassessment of offenders when their term of hospital detention is about to expire. This procedure will determine if an offender should continue to be detained under The Mental Health Act.

Earlier, Mr. Speaker, I mentioned the retroactive nature of this bill. In addition to this, all decisions taken by the Mental Health Review Board up to the passage of this bill will be deemed to be valid under The Mental Health Act.

We have had to amend our mental health legislation because of the Supreme Court decision and the need for consistency with federal legislation. Through this bill, we are fulfilling our obligation to public safety and to mentally disordered persons, and we are doing our part to ensure consistency in the laws for handling mentally disordered offenders. However, we have some cause to regret that our efforts have not received more support from the federal government, particularly with respect to the care of these offenders.

Until recently our planning for a long-term forensic facility at Selkirk was proceeding on the basis of federal cost-sharing for both construction and operating costs. We now have confirmation and fairly solid indication from the federal government that such support will not be forthcoming. We regret the change in the federal position since the necessary facilities and services are extremely costly for a province of our size to construct and to operate. We hope, however, that we will be able to implement our original plans, but we will proceed with the facilities in the programming that are within our means.

Sir, with those brief comments I commend Bill 93 to the House for rapid passage since we are required to make these amendments because of Supreme Court decisions which have made current legislative capability inappropriate and subject to further challenges.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member

for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 86—The Provincial Police Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that Bill 86, The Provincial Police Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Sûreté du Manitoba et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois), be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, the intent of the amendments to The Provincial Police Act is to enhance government's response to policing issues at the levels of both appeals and investigation on the one hand and administrative matters on the other. With these amendments the Manitoba Police Commission will be discontinued as a separate body and its responsibilities transferred elsewhere.

The Minister of Justice will assume direct responsibility for promoting crime prevention, ensuring efficiency of policing services and compliance with proper standards, and promoting good police-community relations. These matters will be administered by the Law Enforcement Services Branch of Manitoba Justice. The responsibility for hearing appeals from decisions of the Commissioner of the Law Enforcement Review Agency will be vested in provincial court judges. In other words, the judicial functions of the commission will be placed with the judges and the administrative side with Law Enforcement Services. We believe that we will achieve more administrative efficiency as a result of these legislative changes as well as service that is better suited to our available resources.

The expertise and experience of the Law Enforcement Services staff as well as their accessibility to police and public will ensure better service to both the general community and the policing community. As with companion legislation covering the Law Enforcement Review Agency, we believe, as well, that it makes more sense to have a Provincial Court judge, experienced in the law and

adjudication, handling judicial issues raised by the appeals now heard by the Police Commission.

Appeals from the judge's decisions will be filed with the Court of Queen's Bench.

Just before I conclude, I would like to thank those members of the Manitoba Police Commission, who, with such distinction over the years, have served the people of this province, served them well with respect to law enforcement issues.

Mr. Speaker, this bill and its companion bill will enable my department to reorganize our law enforcement resources to make more effective use of skills and experience and improve our response to community policing needs in Manitoba. With these brief comments I commend the bill's consideration by this House.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 87—The Law Enforcement Review Amendment Act

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for the Environment (Mr. Cummings), that Bill 87, The Law Enforcement Review Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les enquêtes relatives à l'application de la loi, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

* (1440)

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, together with its companion bill on policing, the Law Enforcement Review Amendment Act is intended to reorganize our resources to make more effective use of available skills and experience in the justice and policing communities.

In this bill we are also introducing some procedural changes to the process of review and appeals concerning police conduct. Up to now, the Law Enforcement Review Agency has had both investigative and appeal responsibility. In this bill we are retaining LERA's responsibility for investigating complaints against police conduct. However, if an investigation proceeds to a formal hearing, a Provincial Court judge will hear and adjudicate the case. Appeals can go to Court of

Queen's Bench if filed within 30 days of the judge's decision. Provincial Court judges will also hear appeals from decisions of the LERA Commissioner instead of the Manitoba Police Commission.

We believe it makes more sense to have matters of law raised in or through the Law Enforcement Review process handled by judges. Our judges are trained not just in the law but in the impartial adjudication of disputes. Changes will produce sound decisions and enhance service to the public.

I will briefly outline the other changes contained in the bill. The application of the act will be expanded to include all police forces over which Manitoba has jurisdiction. Any police officer who is a respondent in a complaint can be compelled to appear as a witness at a hearing. This will increase police accountability to the public. At hearings the onus will be changed from the present "beyond a reasonable doubt" to a balance of probabilities. Since the hearing does not affect the liberty of the respondent police officer and is not criminal in nature, the onus should be based on civil law standards. This will ensure a more positive public perception of the review system.

Where Provincial Court judges hold formal or disposition hearings, they will be able to impose any penalty available under the act. This will enable them to impose a disposition they believe warranted by the facts. The bill will remove grounds for disputing whether or not police officers' notes can be inspected during a LERA investigation.

(Mr. Bob Rose, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

It will give a judge the right to decide whether or not a respondent officer can be named. Finally, it will enable a judge to impose restitution as a disposition and give complainants the right to enforce a judge's order through the Court of Queen's Bench.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

With this brief outline, Mr. Speaker, I commend this bill to the House.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): I move, seconded by the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 84—The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (2)

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I move, seconded by the Attorney General, the member for Brandon West (Mr. McCrae), that Bill 84, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (2), Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur la location à l'usage d'habitation, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mrs. McIntosh: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. [interjection] Thanks, as well, to the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns).

(Mr. Bob Rose, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

I wish to put just a few comments on the record, Mr. Acting Speaker, regarding this amendment. I believe this amendment is necessary prior to the proclamation of the act in that the full intent of the act can be more properly carried out upon proclamation. The intent of this particular section is, at the end of a tenancy, when it is time for the tenant to reclaim the security deposit, to ensure that the money for that deposit is there for returning purposes. The way the act is currently worded, it insists that this money be held in trust, in a trust account or with the Director of Residential Tenancies.

There are two problems with the way the wording is put down in the current act, Mr. Acting Speaker. One is that there is nothing in there that will guarantee that the monies will be there for the tenant at the end of the tenancy. There is nothing to prevent the landlord from simply drawing the money out of the trust account and going to places unknown. While the money must be held in trust, it can be withdrawn and not necessarily a guarantee that it will return to the tenant.

The majority of our disputes on security deposits, Mr. Acting Speaker, arise over which individual should have the money returned to them, the landlord or the tenant. In terms of having the monies available, it is felt, at the end of a tenancy, it is felt that new wording that is outlined in the Bill 84 amendment would enable more security in terms of a guarantee to be in place.

We are proposing that in addition to a trust account, that the landlord provide to the director a bond, a financial instrument or other security for the

payment of security deposits' interests in a form and amount and under such terms and conditions as could be prescribed by regulation, that all of this would be under the control of the director.

The other concern we had with this particular wording, the wording in the original bill, in the bill soon to be proclaimed, is that for as far as the landlords' perspective is concerned, putting the money in a trust account does not necessarily recoup for the landlord, for example, the amount of interest that he might be required to pay out to a tenant. The interest required to be paid out by a tenant, of course, is set by the minister and is equivalent to what could be raised in a savings account.

This amendment, it is felt, would be more fair to landlords, providing them more flexibility as well in that they will have a variety of options in which to hold the money, and can hold the money without losing interest, that, at the same time, it will guarantee that the money will be in place for the tenant in a stronger way than simply putting it into an account, which the landlord can draw from at his liking, will do.

I have, in the preparation of this amendment, discussed this particular topic with a wide variety of people. I have talked to individual tenants, those known to me in my constituency, those known to friends of mine from other constituencies. I have talked to young tenants who are just starting out living on their own. I have talked to senior citizens who are tenants completing—and I even talked to the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) after I had talked to all the tenants and landlords.

As well, I have spoken to a tenant advocacy organization that had originally approached me some months back asking to be kept abreast of any changes we might be bringing in. I have talked as well to individual landlords and to at least one landlord organization or one property managers' organization. They have expressed, from their perspective, the concerns that they felt, they did not have the flexibility to move in how they retained this money for their tenants.

* (1450)

In summary, Mr. Acting Speaker, I believe that it is necessary to make this slight amendment to the act to better reflect its intent, because in all cases in consulting with people I asked, what did you believe the intent of this to be when it was originally passed?

I believe that the intent will be more properly met. Indeed, without this amendment prior to proclamation I believe that it would be difficult to meet the intent.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

As well, we would have a section of the act which would be cumbersome and awkward for the landlord component of the marketplace. The amendment creates flexibility and provides the same or better protection for tenants' deposits by providing a guarantee for the deposits in either the form of a bond or other financial instruments.

I look forward to seeing this debated and passed to committee for further input, and look forward to and ask for the support of all members so that we can continue our movement towards proclamation.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): I move, seconded by the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

House Business

Hon. Darren Praznik (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, for debate on second reading, the government House leader has asked me to make one small change. I believe he called as the fourth bill for debate on second reading, Bill 76. His intention was to call Bill 74, so if the change could be made in your order for the fourth bill on debate for second reading.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the honourable deputy government House leader for that information.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 20—The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), Bill 20, The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'évaluation municipale, standing in the name of the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen). Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. Is there leave?

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): I am adjourning it for the member for Selkirk, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Okay.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): I rise today to make a few brief comments on Bill 20; it is a municipal assessment bill. We feel on this side of the House it is a very small bill, but it is an important one to rural Manitoba and to the rural economy. It is an important bill to the residents of my constituency.

It was a bill brought in to correct flaws in Bill 79, which was passed in this Chamber in 1989. Obviously, there were some flaws in the original bill, so they brought in Bill 20. We see some problems with this one as well.

Two major ones are: delaying the assessment from 1993 to 1994 is one of the problems; the other one is the inability of rural Manitobans and farmers to appeal their assessment based on current market prices.

The current assessment is based on 1985 levels, which is now eight years ago. Things have changed since then. We are seeing this throughout rural Manitoba, and we are basing on 1985 levels an assessment which we feel now should be redone.

The government promised in Bill 79 to do an assessment this next year. Now we are finding they are delaying us; what they are doing is delaying a bad system. They have the opportunity to correct it, but no, they decided to just perpetuate the errors and wait for another year. Rural Manitobans and farmers, unfortunately, have to put up with this government's delay.

An Honourable Member: No reason to do it either.

Mr. Dewar: That is right, there is no reason. We realize the assessment is a complicated procedure in this province but delaying it will only make the matter far worse.

As we were stating, we had hoped that this government would have, instead of delaying the assessment from '93 to '94, acted on it now. We could have the assessment next year and a lot of inequities in the system could have been dealt with, then corrected.

We know that the Keystone Agricultural Producers are one of the many groups that have expressed directly to the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) their concerns dealing with Bill 20. They stated, in some of the correspondence to them, their concerns about the

delay and the right of homeowners in rural Manitoba to appeal. They know that agricultural producers are facing low-commodity prices now and this has not declined the number of their—their property values have declined because of external factors.

External factors I said, low-commodity prices, free trade, rail line abandonment, chemical spills perhaps, water contamination in my own constituency. There are very real concerns about land values with the contamination by the Bristol Aerospace plant near Stony Mountain, West St. Paul area.

We are finding that those individuals there have real concerns. They feel that their value is worth zero. Property or any commodity is only worth what people are willing to pay. They are concerned that their property is worth zero. Here is a chance, of course, for the government to do a reassessment to determine the actual value of such properties.

Another concern, of course, is commercial properties. We have seen that in Selkirk so often now. We have had at least a dozen businesses close there in the past number of years mostly due to the government's economic policies. We are finding that we have abandoned buildings throughout the area, and the assessments of these commercial properties are based upon '85 rates, values.

(Mrs. Louise Dacquay, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

Now they are abandoned, they are empty buildings. Now, if the government could do a reassessment of their value, probably, perhaps, taxes would be lowered and who knows, someone may be interested in picking up these buildings, and we can have a few more jobs in Selkirk directly related to a lot of the Conservative economic policies in Selkirk.

They closed the School of Nursing, they closed the training plant in Selkirk, and now we have the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) trying to take some 25 highway jobs from Selkirk to Beausejour, only further going to hurt the local economy—Bill 70. I remember in the debate on Bill 70, I mentioned to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) how Bill 70 was going impact upon Selkirk. We are seeing that with businesses closing, individuals leaving the community.

Who knows, this could be an opportunity for the government to maybe turn some of the events

around there, if they would have taken this back, maybe accept a few amendments to the legislation which would allow an assessment of the property next year, instead of waiting and putting it off until 1994. Again, one of the concerns we have is commercial property; the other concern, of course, is farms, agricultural land.

There are a number of external factors, which they do not take into consideration in their assessment. They cannot appeal their assessment based on external factors. They are allowed on physical changes but not on external factors. We are seeing a number of those in the local area as the rural economy deteriorates. So we feel that there should be an amendment perhaps that would allow that.

* (1500)

So, as we were saying, the postponement of the assessment will once again just continue the unfair burden on farmers, on our rural economy, will add again to the inability of farmers or producers to appeal on current market prices. That appeal now is based on its assessed value—the problem that is going to create for a number of commercial properties in the rural economy.

So we are obviously very disappointed with this particular piece of legislation. I know that several of our rural members have spoken on it. I know that the member for the Interlake (Mr. Cliff Evans) is anxious to speak on it as well. He has prepared a very detailed and informative discussion for this afternoon. So, with those few comments, I would like to pass the floor on to the member for the Interlake, and I am sure he will enlighten us this afternoon.

Mr. Cliff Evans (Interlake): I would just like to open by thanking my colleague for that tremendous introduction and opening, the straight-man here.

An Honourable Member: You are pleased to be here today—

Mr. Cliff Evans: I am pleased to be here. My colleague, the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), has indicated that I have prepared myself at length to speak on The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I would like to put some comments on record regarding the amendment act, Bill 20.

Madam Deputy Speaker, some years ago, when Bill 79 was introduced and passed here in the

Legislature, I was, of course, not a part of the process at that time.

An Honourable Member: The good old days, Clif.

Mr. Clif Evans: The good old days; they might have been.

But Madam Deputy Speaker, I had a chance, being within a municipal government at that time, as mayor, to attend meetings and to have the government at that time indicate the changes and what Bill 79 was going to be bringing in to the people of Manitoba under the reassessment.

Madam Deputy Speaker, Bill 79 has been in the works for many, many years, as we are all aware. At that time, when we were listening to the then Minister of Rural Development and his staff as to the implications and implementation of Bill 79, we were concerned. There was some concern even though we all felt that it was a time to go and reassess the whole act and make things more on an equal basis. But we had reservations to it. We had our reservations in council at that time, and speaking with reeves and councilmen from within my area there were certain concerns as to how Bill 79 was going to affect the tax basis of the farmers, the residents and of the small business people within rural Manitoba. Now we see, after meetings and discussions, that again there is something wrong within Bill 79.

We were told back in 1989-1990, Madam Deputy Speaker, that this Bill 79 was going to be the bill. There was not going to be any other and further process to change things. These were the promises of the government at the time. We were going to leave Bill 79 intact. We were going to begin assessment in 1990, and every three years after. Well, now here we go, lo and behold, the now Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) has decided that there are some flaws and that he has to make amendments to Bill 79 to, as he puts it, help the people of Manitoba understand the system.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I do not know whom he is talking about that does not understand the system in place. The system has been put and worked on for over many, many years before the act was introduced, and I thought that the bill was rather clear to the people of Manitoba, to the municipal people, to the mayors and to the reeves and to the administrators who were, in fact, preparing themselves for this new assessment.

An Honourable Member: Clif, I do not think you have done your homework on this one.

Mr. Clif Evans: The Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) says, I have not done my homework. I have done more than my homework, Madam Deputy Speaker; I have been involved right from the implementation of Bill 79. So the Minister of Northern Affairs sits there and—listen. Listen for a change. Listen to the people of Manitoba.

Madam Deputy Speaker, getting back to the bill. We were told that Bill 79 was not going to be altered. We were told that in 1993 the reassessment would be put in place. We were told at that time, even though there were concerns within the municipalities, within rural Manitoba, and I am sure throughout the province, that assessment on 1985 values were going to create a problem within the communities and create a problem within the farm communities, small business communities, and, of course, some residential areas within the small communities.

Well, lo and behold, we see that Bill 79 had in fact brought in some policies as bringing the residential rates down somewhat, which I am sure was accepted by many of the people throughout the province. We see that farmland was taken off for education tax levy. That was accepted, and it had been lobbied for for many, many years. However, on the agriculture side, on the base side, farmers were told in this province that they were going to be assessed on their homes on their property—not the land values, but on the homes, the homes that they live in. Again, what do we see after the act has been passed and reassessment has been in place? We see that farmers are being taxed on buildings within their property, buildings that have no value or use of an income, of a strategy of any kind, but they are being taxed. Why? Through a special levy.

I was part of that process at the time, seeing first-hand what was going on, and felt, in my discussions with my constituents and my local village people and surrounding farmers, that there was something within this bill that was going to create a hazard, a problem for the farmers of Manitoba.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we know that over the process of bringing in Bill 79 and now in bringing in Bill 20, there has been a fair amount of concern within the municipalities from certain organizations that have appealed to the Minister of Rural

Development (Mr. Derkach) to look at certain situations.

We talk about the assessment on a 1985 value; 1985 compared to 1990, the values were much different. The values in 1985 compared to 1990 were much higher. Land value was higher, property was higher, residences were higher, small community businesses were higher. There was influx of economic build in 1985.

You have to pick a number and 1985 was chosen, but between 1985 and 1990 when the assessment was implemented, throughout rural Manitoba, in most rural Manitoba areas, values had decreased for one reason or another. External factors—not physical—external factors. So now we say the present government is going to push back the assessment from 1993, as they had so promised and adamantly said that that would be the way it was going to work, to 1994. Now we have people paying a 1985 assessment on their property in 1993 and 1994.

* (1510)

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is going to put a burden on many small businesses and on many farmers within the province of Manitoba. We cannot expect the tax burden on the people of Manitoba and rural Manitoba to continue on a basis of a value that eight years and seven years ago perhaps had some merit to it. But 1990, 1993 I feel that it does not. We on this side say, why? What is this government doing besides the fact that they feel that this is a bill, an act that will make people more aware of how legislation on your property tax assessment is going to work.

I notice in reading Hansard that the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) has tried, to members of the House, to make it perfectly clear, as clear as muddied water, clear that it will allow people who own these types of properties to actually understand the reassessment act much more clearly, enhance the understanding amongst these ratepayers as to why their tax bills are changing, again, to get a firm understanding of each of these very important and very complex issues.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, this minister seems to think that the process that was put in place with an all-party co-operation and all the work that was done with previous administrations leading up to this act, Bill 79, that you would think that the government in place would have everything

perfectly clear to the people of Manitoba. Now he is saying things are not perfectly clear to the people of Manitoba. We have to re-educate the people of Manitoba and municipalities.

Madam Deputy Speaker, who is this government kidding as far as re-educating? Perhaps there is more of a reason, a hidden reason. Well, we are not, at any time, implying that there may be some behind-the-scenes attitude as to the change of Bill 79 with Bill 20. We are not implying that there are other reasons that this government in place is trying to change the format of the reassessment of the tax system.

No, we are saying, why is this government, after making all those promises for years, now saying we have to change it? We cannot do it in 1993. Nobody understands it. Everybody is absolutely and totally unaware of what is going on. We have to do it in 1994. Then we hear from the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), well, we are changing the education funding formula. We have to use that as an excuse, too. I think that some of the reasoning and rationale of this minister and this government is beyond comprehension.

I would like to wonder why all of a sudden we have these reasons of the education formula, people do not understand the system, we have to be teachers and educators in making them realize just what the problem is. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, I know that 1993, farmers, business people, small business owners, residences, from 1985 especially and 1990 when the first assessment was put through, we are saying, well, 1993 is not going to be so bad if it is done in 1993. I know that if I am perhaps not taxed too much or the assessment was not right, I can appeal.

Certain parties can appeal, not everyone and not in every case and in every situation and not for any particular reason. There are reasons as in the act. There are reasons how you can appeal and certain levels which you can go to appeal. Well, lo and behold, we have Bill 20 and now we are saying, we want to say, well, you can and you cannot. You can appeal on this and you cannot appeal on that. Farmers who in 1985 were perhaps making a decent living are now being taxed not only on their homes as I mentioned earlier, but on buildings. The buildings that are on farm property have nothing to do with an income for the farmer. Now this amendment will make it more difficult for the farmers

in Manitoba to appeal on certain conditions and on certain tax assessments on their property.

As mentioned earlier, nobody, when Bill 79 was brought in, had any question as to the fact that taxing the homeowner, the home of the farmer for education purposes. No one was against that, but in the back door and after the act was brought in, here they go, they slide in this extra little tax.

Reading through Hansard, the minister calls it the special levy. Yes, special levy, and we on this side know, and some of us through our participation in council know, that the special levy was introduced on the farmers, on the small business people, and on certain homeowners because the assessment had been changed so much that there was no funding available for the municipalities. There were no tax dollars brought in. They had to get the tax dollars somehow in. There was no funding for the education programs, so they slip in the special levy.

We realize, of course, that the money had to come from somewhere, so we had to, in fact, introduce and implement a special levy on certain properties, farmers and small business people. That with the current amendment is going to create even a greater problem.

Now we have farmers paying on a 1985 assessment value, 1993, 1994, 1995; they are going to be paying, and continuing to be paying special levies, special and extra taxes on a value that has dropped drastically—I see that we woke up the Minister of Natural Resources, Madam Deputy Speaker, on that one.

Here we have an assessment base from 1985 that is going to create a tax burden on the farmers and the businessmen who are paying. Now we are going 1993, 1994. In the years past there was much debate on the fact that the assessment had to be changed, that the year of the assessment had to be changed because 1975 at that time again was as different as 1985. That may be true. Now this government is working towards the same idea.

On one hand, they are saying, well, we have waited too long on the values; here we go, we are regressing. We are going back to 1994, and who knows whether or not they decide 1994—they promised in 1990 that there were going to be no changes. How do we know next Legislature that this minister or this government has not found another so-called flaw, or has found somebody within the woodwork of the province of Manitoba

who does not understand the tax assessment package? We will just keep going and going and going, just keep putting the taxes more and more and more on these people.

* (1520)

Madam Deputy Speaker, the right of appeal. Now we all know, as I mentioned earlier, that homeowners and others may appeal. Small businesses and homeowners may appeal their tax assessment based on certain factors. According to the Municipal Board and the Manitoba Court of Appeal, this was confirmed just lately that certain homeowners and certain business people, small business people, would be able to appeal, but not farmers.

Within Bill 79 and within the amendment act 20, the 1985 market value—now there is not really anything mentioned about market value, but value. Market value 1990, 1993, compared to 1985, there is a tremendous difference, a tremendous inequity of the tax burden on property owners in those years. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, I must say the factors that are being brought in that are going to affect the farmers and all taxpayers within the system, the external factors—not physical—but the external factors have since 1985 caused a great deal of difficulty within the system and within the province of Manitoba. Free trade—we can call, on one hand, the GST; we can call it on the other hand.

Now we say—Madam Deputy Speaker, as usual, they are not listening. We say that 1985 values should not come in to play now. They should be changed and the assessment should be done as promised by the government in 1993. Market values on properties are affected by many factors, external and physical. To give you an example and give this House certain examples, within certain areas we have the loss due to, in some ways, the Free Trade Agreement, but the loss of rail line, loss of elevators. All that has got some factor on the market value of the properties within communities.

I can give you two good examples, Madam Deputy Speaker, within my constituency that the effect of the loss of the grain elevator and the loss of rail line to their communities has greatly affected the true market value and the value that their property is at. Ten years ago, 8 years ago, when communities had rail lines coming getting grain, we had elevators, businesses were flourishing, farmers were getting value for their dollar. Now what do we

get? We get a loss in actual value. We do not have that value that they had in 1985. The value has been lost, and yet this government wants to say we must continue to tax at the 1985 level, and we must continue to leave in place what is so greatly affecting the well-being of the people of Manitoba in the small communities.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we have had the opportunity to meet with certain groups and individuals on this. I myself have met with some of my reeves, mayors, council members and farmers within the area. Their question to me is, why? Why did the government go back on its word for the reassessment being from 1993 to 1994? Why? It is going to hurt each individual farmer out there, each individual small businessman. It is going to hurt the communities.

They want their assessment now as was promised so they can re-evaluate their situations, so that they can re-evaluate the idea of where and how they are going to proceed. [interjection]

That is right, Madam Deputy Speaker, as the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) states, nothing more is going to make them aware of the fact that the people need the assessment, had been promised the assessment and require the assessment to get on with their lives and to either continue to farm as such, or to continue to be in small business, or to continue to live in the small community.

Some of these factors that have been put into place, external factors that have come into being since 1985 and since 1990 have brought values down that people, Madam Deputy Speaker, who perhaps have to, for some reason, leave the area of the community or cannot continue to farm anymore, are never going to get the value, the real true value when they ask a certain price for their building or for their business.

Potential buyers are going to look at the assessment of the tax base, the taxes that are being paid on this property. They are going to say, well, there is no way that we are going to be able to afford the taxes that you are paying on this business that has devalued so greatly, or this farm land and property that has devalued so greatly in the last couple of years, Madam Deputy Speaker. The chance and the opportunity to be able to resell, to improve your situation, to improve your conditions are gone.

I would just like to finish up my comments and say that we here are very, very disappointed. As a past municipal official who sat at meetings, who was listening to the government at the time that the tax assessment was going to be put through and was going to be kept, I am disappointed. We are disappointed, very disappointed with the indication of the government having something that, I guess, they are hiding, and we do not want to see that, Madam Deputy Speaker. We want to see the government be up-front with the people of Manitoba as far as the tax assessment and as far as the taxes in this province, and to work with the communities and to work with organizations in assessing the proper values of this province and assisting them in encouraging the economic growth within the province of Manitoba.

We are looking at this amendment with great anticipation as to really what is the hidden agenda of this government when it comes to tax assessment.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as I mentioned, I will be the last speaker of our party on this bill. I want to thank you for the opportunity.

Madam Deputy Speaker: As previously agreed, this bill will remain standing in the name of the honourable—

Some Honourable Members: No. Pass it on.

Madam Deputy Speaker: No? Okay.

Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading of Bill 20. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: On division?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: No. All those in favour, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Deputy Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Madam Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Yeas and Nays, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: A recorded vote has been requested. Call in the members.

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(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 20, The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'évaluation municipale. All those in favour of the motion will please rise.

A STANDING VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas

Cummings, Dacquay, Derkach, Downey, Driedger, Ducharme, Enns, Ernst, Findlay, Gilleshammer, Helwer, Laurendeau, Manness, McAlpine, McCrae, McIntosh, Mitchelson, Neufeld, Orchard, Penner, Praznik, Reimer, Render, Rose, Sveinson, Vodrey.

Nays

Alcock, Ashton, Barrett, Carstairs, Cerilli, Chomiak, Dewar (Selkirk), Doer (Concordia), Evans (Brandon East), Evans (Interlake), Friesen, Gaudry, Hickes, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Maloway, Martindale, Plohan, Reid, Santos, Storie, Wasylcia-Leis, Wowchuk.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Yeas 26, Nays 23.

Mr. Speaker: The motion is accordingly carried.

Bill 21—The Provincial Park Lands Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), Bill 21, The Provincial Park Lands Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les parcs provinciaux, standing in the name of the honourable member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans). Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. Leave is denied.

Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to be able to debate Bill 21, The Provincial Park Lands Amendment Act. We have, since the minister introduced the bill, had an opportunity to meet with many, many cottage owners, received much correspondence from cottage owners across the province. I personally had the opportunity to meet with presidents of different associations regarding the different complications that this bill has brought in for the cottage owners across

Manitoba. The cottage owners have a great many concerns as to Bill 21 that has been introduced.

We have, and I have, as I mentioned, spoken with many members of the cottage associations throughout Manitoba, Whiteshell and Clearwater and others. We have correspondence relating to Bill 21 that find the minister's actions with this bill are ones that the people and the cottage owners have a great amount of concern about.

Mr. Speaker, we had the owners and cottage association people displaying their dissatisfaction with the way the government has handled the bill, the way this government has introduced the bill. The concern of the cottage owners, and from my consultations with them and the letters that I have received there is no real concern to the fact that there is going to be a levy or tax or fee put on them. Nobody is saying within the associations or the owners themselves that there is going to be any problems with that. It is how the minister did it.

Mr. Speaker, I was made aware, in consultations with the people, of the fact that this bill was going to be introduced in the mid-80s and, along with the government at present, the associations had met with the minister at the time and had been putting together a proposal, consultation. They were all prepared to sign and all prepared to dot the i's and cross the t's. However, it was set aside in 1988 with the change of government. They had indicated to me and to members of this side of the House that they were displeased with the way the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) was going about introducing this bill and saying that the province needs revenues.

* (1630)

Mr. Speaker, I do have other comments to make on it, but I would allow other bills to be discussed today so that we may continue with remarks another day, perhaps even tomorrow.

So I move, seconded by the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie), that debate be adjourned and continue with Bill 21 at a later date.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker, the member was seeking to adjourn debate and continue his comments another time so we can deal with some other bills that I know members wish to deal with today. I realize it is somewhat of an unusual situation. If it requires leave, I think there may be leave required, and all we would ask is that the member have it remain

standing in his name and be able to complete his remarks at another sitting.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Interlake (Mr. Cliff Evans) has 35 minutes remaining. Is there leave of the House to allow this bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Interlake? [Agreed]

Bill 47—The Petty Trespasses Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), Bill 47, The Petty Trespasses Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'intrusion, standing in the name of the honourable member for Kildonan.

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, I rise as our party spokesperson on Bill 47, The Petty Trespasses Amendment Act. We reviewed this act and had an opportunity to review it, and I can indicate for members of the House that I will be the only speaker from our side dealing with this particular matter. At the conclusion of my remarks, this matter can go to committee.

I believe it can go to committee, because I believe that the Liberal Party spokesperson on matters of this kind has already spoken on this matter, by leave, and indicated that the Liberal Party was not opposed to the matter going to committee as well, though the Liberal Party spokesperson indicated their party would be querying the minister on several aspects of this bill, and I can also serve notice to the minister that we, too, will be asking some questions at committee with respect to this bill.

As I understand it, the bill seeks basically to do two things, to allow a person who occupies land and who is a "religious organization," with the individuals involved in that organization, to have authority to ask someone who is trespassing upon that land to leave the property. The salient point and the salient issue with respect to that particular aspect, Mr. Speaker, and I recognize that we can deal with specifics of the bill as the designated individual, as I understand it from the bill, must be someone who has been designated via the articles of incorporation or via the formal processes adopted by that particular religious organization.

(Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

The second aspect of the bill, as pointed out by the minister in his introductory remarks, deals with

the issue of an individual to, in effect, make a private arrest of someone who is trespassing on the property. Now, as I understand it, this has been allowed in the past and as it turns out, this is simply to expand and clarify the particular aspects of The Petty Trespasses Act.

There are a number of court cases in litigation, and it is well documented. Members of this House are well aware of situations that have occurred in the past with respect to Hutterite colonies, which, I suspect, is the genesis of this bill, to deal with difficulties that have been incurred by individuals resident at Hutterite colonies, which prompted this amendment.

Certainly the present Petty Trespasses Act, as it is worded, as I understand it, does not allow for those organizations to take advantage of the law as perhaps other organizations and other individuals in our society can do. So this amendment to the rather short bill—but this rather lengthy amendment, Mr. Acting Speaker, which expands the bill considerably, seeks to expand the authority for those in authority on Hutterite colonies to have the right to expel and to take advantages of The Petty Trespasses Act as it applies to that particular colony.

We, in the New Democratic Party, in principle, when we had an opportunity to review this bill and to study sections of it, certainly questions were raised whenever one deals with rights of individuals and organizations, and those rights that can be infringed and can be imposed and the subsequent liabilities when one deals with matters of that kind. Certainly, careful scrutiny must be paid and careful attention must be paid to those aspects that are being dealt with.

There are a couple of aspects of this particular act that bear scrutiny and that bear some review, but notwithstanding that, in general, we are not opposed to this bill going to committee and allowing the public, at committee, and those who are most affected and those who are most concerned by the implications of this bill to make their cases known and to provide input as to the merits or nonmerits of extending the powers under The Petty Trespasses Act to include those religious organizations.

Mr. Acting Speaker, it is difficult to deal with some of the concerns—not some of the concerns so much. Rather I should state, it is difficult to deal with some of the questions that we have with respect to the bill

without getting to the specifics, and I am precluded from doing that. But certainly the question as to who the bill will apply to, that is, those religious communities that the bill will apply to, is of paramount importance in determining who has the authority to take action under The Petty Trespasses Act, and certainly that would be one of our questions.

Although, from my reading of the bill and the discussions that ensued, it certainly appears that is probably taken care of because of the wording of the bill that deals with providing the authority to those individuals who define the by-laws and who have the actual legal authority. So it seems to me that at least an initial glance over the bill—and again noting that we should not deal with specific sections—it appears to me that concern may be taken care of, but I think we may want to query the minister with respect to the strict application as to who the bill would apply to and the various instances when it might apply, and what specifically the government is considering by-laws, which by-laws, which incorporations, which communities and what individuals will be empowered with the authority as a result of this bill to deal with matters of trespass under The Petty Trespasses Amendment Act.

* (1640)

The other interesting point, Mr. Acting Speaker, is, of course, something which was raised by the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) and something I am also curious about in terms of the actual genesis of this bill and the genesis of this particular amendment. I would be interested to see from whom and from what direction the input came which resulted in this particular amendment being brought forward.

Generally, as I indicated at the onset, I will be the only speaker from our party on this bill and consequently those will conclude, in general, my opening remarks. As I indicated earlier, I will be—my opening and, in fact, Mr. Acting Speaker, my closing remarks.

As I indicated, this matter will be passed on to committee with no further speakers from our side.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Is the House ready for the question?

The question before the House is the second reading of Bill 47. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? [Agreed]

Bill 74—The Law Society Amendment Act

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), Bill 74, (The Law Society Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société du Barreau), standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like to indicate initially that I will be speaking on this particular bill and our Justice critic (Mr. Chomiak) will be as well. It is a fairly brief bill.

It deals with the Law Society and in particular it deals with a number of items related to the Law Society's role as a disciplinary body. In particular, it deals with the whole question of meetings, whether they should be held in camera or should be held in a form where there can be public scrutiny.

I know it is unfortunate that we need to be dealing with matters such as this, but the legal profession is not any different, Mr. Acting Speaker, than any profession. While the vast majority of lawyers never do run into potential situations where they are called before the Law Society, there are, of course, and have been a number of cases in recent years where that unfortunately has occurred. It has occurred because of a number of problems often related to misuse of trust accounts, trust funds, et cetera.

There is a real need in dealing with disciplinary actions to ensure that not only is the right thing done, Mr. Acting Speaker, that justice is done, but justice is seen to be done. I know this is an ongoing conflict within any organization, within any profession. I think that is one matter that needs to be dealt with. There are a number of sections of the bill which deal with that and also deal with contravention of the act and the fines that are involved.

As I said, it is a fairly brief bill, but it does touch on some very important issues. We will be speaking, our Justice critics will have some more detailed comments. We will look forward to any presentations that may be made on committee, Mr. Acting Speaker, and would anticipate that it will be passing later on today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is Second Reading of Bill—

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Yes, as indicated by the member for Thompson, I will be concluding

remarks by our party with respect to this particular bill, that is Bill 74, the Law Society Amendment Act. We will indicate that we will be passing the bill through to committee in order to allow for public discussion of some of the ramifications of this particular bill.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we in the New Democratic Party always welcome the opening up of closed society and closed shops for public scrutiny, for public input and for public discussion. That is why we will be allowing this bill to proceed to committee for public hearings. It is, I suppose, one might term it, self-serving and perhaps a little bit difficult for me as a member of the Law Society to comment—or as someone who is called to the bar—to comment on this particular bill, but I have long advocated personally the opening up of the process, one that is shrouded in secrecy and then what is too often a mystical to the public. We have long called for the opening of that to the public and to that end we welcome this particular amendment which has been brought forward.

That is not to say, Mr. Acting Speaker, that this amendment entirely meets with our approval. Like so much legislation there are some provisions which frankly, we think, are weak and perhaps should be improved. I could probably spend the balance of the day and indeed take considerable time to discuss some of the weaknesses of the particular bill.

I should indicate that I am not going to do that in the interests of passage, to allow the matter to go to public discussion and also because the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) had an opportunity to outline to this House some of the concerns that, I dare say, the lay public may have with this particular bill, and I guess the issues that, if I could capitulate the comments of the member for Flin Flon: basically the bill does not go far enough. That is, in fact, the difficulty, the inquiries can still be held in camera. The final decision is made by the Law Society. Frankly—and I can advise you of this—almost any topic or subject can be deemed to be subject to solicitor-client privilege which would preclude the opening up of a hearing.

Those are weaknesses in the bill that we see. In addition, although it does not necessarily deal with this aspect of the Law Society, we would certainly welcome the expansion of the Law Society to include more lay people. Certainly, I think that we have evolved far beyond simply a situation where

these organizations and groups are totally controlled by only those members of the profession, and certainly would like to see it more open to lay people, if I could term it that, with respect to the Law Society.

But, in general, we certainly, in the New Democratic Party, welcome the opening up of the process. We welcome it, it should perhaps go further, but certainly we welcome this step and look forward to public discussion at committee where the public will have an opportunity to provide their input and to provide any suggestions they may have with respect to this particular bill.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

With those comments, Mr. Speaker, I will close discussion of Bill 74. I can indicate that there will be no more speakers from this side of the House, and I presume, given the comments of the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), that the matter can now go to committee. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading of Bill 74, The Law Society Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société du Barreau.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? [Agreed]

* * *

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I think I inadvertently had you call Bill 76. That was my error. I am wondering, has that been changed?

Mr. Speaker: Yes, that has already been changed.

Mr. Manness: Okay. I had not realized it had been changed. Thank you.

Bill 82—The Farm Practices Protection and Consequential Amendments Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), Bill 82, The Farm Practices Protection and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur la protection des pratiques agricoles et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois, standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, The Farm Practices Protection and Consequential Amendments Act is something that

farmers have been talking about for a long time, legislation that would protect them in their farm practices.

I think they had been talking more along the lines of a right-to-farm bill. There are protection act bills in other provinces, and it has been something that some groups of farmers have been calling for in the province for some time.

The minister tells us that there has been discussion on this for some time and there has been a lot of input. It has been circulated amongst municipalities and farm groups, and there seems to be approval. Farmers have wanted to get protection. As things change within the rural community, we sometimes get different patterns of population, and farmers who have been practising for many years end up having people who might be moving into the area or an increase in population.

* (1650)

Although we have seen very little increase in population in the rural community lately, there are situations that may arise within the farming community where one person might not agree with what the farmer is doing and how he is carrying on this practice.

There can be complaints that can arise over odours or noise, dust. One of the complaints that we have had over the last number of years near the city of Winnipeg is smoke. Farmers have taken on the practice of burning stubble, and this has caused serious problems for many people.

These are some of the things that can be dealt with under The Farm Practices Protection Act. The bill says that farmers can carry on their practices in a normal manner. I guess the one question we have about the bill is, what is normal farm practice? What is normal farm practice for one farmer may be okay because he or she have been doing it for many years, but for other people may not be considered normal.

Again, we go back to burning of stubble. There are many farmers that used to have that practice many years ago, but they realize now that it is not the best practice you can have as far as conserving soil and nutrients in the soil.

So you have to look at what is normal, a normal practice and how it can continue. Another practice that has changed, and there was discussion about this in Estimates, is summer fallow. Continuous summer fallow, when we have dry weather

conditions, can cause lots of dust problems for neighbors down the road, particularly if they are close to a town.

Again, this will cause a problem. We have to look at, is summer fallowing a normal practice, or is it something that can be challenged to a farmer under this legislation? How can a farmer be protected from those kinds of practices?

Government departments have, over the years, worked to encourage farmers to change their practices, particularly in summer fallow. We have had farmers moving towards zero tillage and other practices which conserve the soil much better from wind erosion and from water erosion. Those are beneficial to the farmers. So we have to really consider carefully what we do mean by normal practices, and that, above all, farmers, although they are being protected by this legislation, carry on with normal practices. I think that we have to also look that farmers protect the land. The land is a natural resource that is here for us to use, for farmers to use, but we also want that resource protected for the next generation. We know that continual summer fallowing causes erosion. We know that burning of stubble depletes the soil. We know that soil can be damaged by many farmers who are not using proper practices.

By this normal practice, does it mean that if a farmer chooses to put on tonnes and tonnes of fertilizer and other chemicals to hurt the soil, is this normal practice? Will he be allowed to continue doing these kinds of things even though it might hurt the water or hurt the soil in the area.

So we wonder about where we are going, whether the legislation will not only just protect the farmers in their normal practice, but will also be legislation that will protect soil, so that it is there for other generations to use.

We talk very much about sustainable farming, and there are many practices that are not sustainable, that farmers have to have their practices changed.

An Honourable Member: Like mining the soil.

Ms. Wowchuk: Yes, as my colleague here says, mining the soil. I guess the one other area that I think about when I think about normal practices, we have a few farmers who are moving more to organic farming. There are cases when we have organic farming that you can have real weed problems.

Now that we are having less control, the weed districts are not there, the supports are not there, the

weed districts for municipalities—is it going to be considered a normal practice and will the farmer be allowed to cause weed infestation when there is organic farming? Because that is an issue that has been raised by a few people in our area who have concerns with organic farming and weeds not being properly controlled.

Now that does not mean that I am condemning organic farmers. Organic farming—there is a place for it; there is a demand for a product that is grown on organic farms, but we also have to look at how it is carried on. Is it good for everyone, and will it mean under this legislation, that should a neighbour down the road who is not happy with the weed problems have any channel to complain to deal with this weed problem? That is it.

There is legislation such as this in other provinces. What we are doing at the present time, Mr. Speaker, is looking at the legislation in other provinces. We have asked for copies of it to see that Manitoba's legislation is similar, whether there are the same kind of guidelines that are put in place in our province as there are in other provinces.

The other area that we should touch on is—this act will be implemented by a board and people will have to be—a board will be established and they will make the decisions as to whether or not these are nuisances, whether the complaints should go forward.

We would want to know what is the structure of the board. What are the guidelines that this board will follow? What is the time frame? When is the board going to be dealing with these issues? Are they going to—I guess we will want to hear more from the minister on how, I guess, again, is the board going to be appointed? Will there be an impartial body? [interjection]

The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) raises the issue of cormorant and I would love to debate the issue of cormorant. I am waiting for him to bring a position forward to deal with that matter, just as the people in Winnipegosis are waiting. In fact, the minister should know that they are having one meeting tonight in Winnipegosis to deal with this matter. I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, but it was the minister who raised it.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, there are farmers across the province who have been waiting for this legislation. In some cases they do not feel that the legislation is going far enough, but the one thing we

are pleased about the legislation is The Environmental Act and The Public Health Act still supersede this bill. There will not be great breaking of environmental regulations because that is what we should all be concerned about, is what is happening with our environment, and I very much believe that we have to use that soil as a resource.

* (1700)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House the honourable member for Swan River will have 30 minutes remaining.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 5 p.m., it is time for Private Members' Business.

ADDRESS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, I move, by leave, seconded by the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux),

THAT Address for Papers No. 2, dated June 7, 1991, requesting:

Copies of all maintenance contracts and policies governing selection of contractors for the Winnipeg Regional Housing Authority in the fiscal year 1990-91 be discharged.

Motion agreed to.

ORDER FOR RETURN NO. 1

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): I move, by leave, seconded by the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux),

THAT Order for Return No. 1, dated June 7, 1991, requesting:

Compilation of repair costs of the Housing Authority for 1990-91 and the portion of costs paid by tenants be discharged.

I thank the House for the leave.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for Osborne have leave? [Agreed]

Motion agreed to.

* * *

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, seeing as there is such a willingness for leave this afternoon I was wondering if there may be leave of the House for me to revert to second reading of Bill 83 in the private members' hour.

Mr. Speaker: To revert or to bring forward?

Mr. Laurendeau: Bring forward Bill 83, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to bring forward Bill 83? No? Leave is denied.

ADDRESS FOR PAPERS REFERRED FOR DEBATE

Mr. Speaker: On the motion of the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik). Stand. Is there leave that this matter remain standing? [Agreed]

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to add my remarks to give an Address for Papers referring to Bill 91.

Mr. Speaker, I want to start off by saying that this is an issue that I have had to live very close to in my tenure with the Swampy Cree Tribal Council, when I was working with the Swampy Cree Tribal Council as their executive director. We on regular occasions met with government officials, ministers, amongst ourselves at the Tribal Council level, and at the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs they discussed the problem of sniffing amongst young people in our communities. As I went on to be chief of my band, again, I also had to deal with this issue on a regular basis, having to go and visit homes where young people were into sniffing gasoline and solvents and so on. So I think I can say that I am quite aware of what this problem of sniffing amongst our young people can do to an individual, a young individual, to the family, to the parents and, of course, eventually the whole community itself.

Mr. Speaker, I understand this bill was introduced by my colleague the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), and as I said to this Assembly before, sometimes the way things are carried on in this Assembly puzzle me. Sometimes I find it difficult to understand how this Assembly works and what makes it work. This is one issue that I have been thinking about quite a bit lately, because I understand this bill was introduced some time ago, over two years ago now, and it is a bill that I understand was supported by all members of the Legislature at one time. As a matter of fact, when I read through Hansard, I come across remarks made by government ministers, including the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), saying that they supported the proposed

bill. Also, the Leader of the Liberal Party is on record as having supported the bill.

So, because it is a very serious problem, Mr. Speaker, I find it difficult to understand why this government is not able to see its way towards proclaiming the bill. They have supported it, they have gone on public record as supporting it, so I cannot understand why it is sitting there collecting dust while, in the meantime, more and more young people are affected in a very serious way by the problems of sniffing and using solvents and so on.

Mr. Speaker, solvent abuse is indeed an extremely serious problem. It is a growing problem, not only in Winnipeg, but in the North, where I travel around in my home community of The Pas, on the reserve and in the town, there is that problem that exists there. As I travel around the northern communities, places like Norway House, Cross Lake, the problem exists there as well. So it not only exists in Winnipeg, but it exists throughout Manitoba.

Last spring, as I was visiting Norway House, one of the band councillors, we were in a band council meeting, and because the band councillor who was in charge of the Health portfolio, I guess, wanted to bring home the point that the sniffing problem was very serious in Norway House. He literally took me out of a band council meeting, and he took me to a house about, oh, 10 minutes drive away from the council chambers. He wanted to show me very clearly the degree that the problem exists in Norway House.

In any event, he took me to a House and there was a shack nearby, a wood shed. This band councillor took me into that little shack and he said, Oscar, I want you to see something. At first, I was a bit leary and a little bit worried, I guess, of what I was going to find in the shack. I went in anyway and here was this young man about 13, 14 years old maybe, and he was in the shack just out of it. So the band councillor proceeded to take me around, showed me how the sniffing is done, the plastic bags that were there.

* (1710)

Mr. Speaker, I must say that even though I have had to deal with it in my own community as a chief and also as a staff member of the Swampy Cree Tribal Council, that was the first time that I had actually seen a person who was just right out of it, you know, from the effects of the sniffing. I must

say, that I was, maybe not shocked, but nevertheless the reality of the situation really hit home. From there I came back to The Pas and eventually to Winnipeg, you know, wondering why this government is continuing to delay the passage or the proclamation of the bill that was introduced by our party some two years ago.

The sniffing of inhalants or solvent abuse, I guess some of our people use it to escape from the harsh realities that exist out there in the communities. That is why, as I was listening to the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) during Estimates on Monday night going on and on about the good work that he, through his department, his government, is doing for the North, I had to take a little bit of time to point out the difference between what the minister saw as happening in the North and the realities that I see every time I go visiting the North.

The harsh reality, of course, is that in spite of what the minister thinks he is doing for the North or what he wants to do, the reality is that the North still is lagging very, very far behind in terms of social development, economic development and so on, Mr. Speaker.

So that is why I believe that all members of the Legislature supported this legislation, and I would urge all members of the Legislative Assembly to get on with the work that needs to be done and let us have this bill proclaimed soon rather than later.

So I ask members again, if they care about the young individuals who are being so adversely affected by this problem, if they care about the family—I know the government side always likes to talk about the family unit, the community and so on. So I challenge the government side to proclaim the bill, once and for all, so that the law enforcement agencies, the Child and Family Services agencies, band councils, the health committees that are out there trying to do their work can have something to back them up, because right now they are out there doing the best that they can to work on this problem.

Mr. Speaker, unless we, as legislators of this Assembly, can put action into words, can say to the public that we mean what we say, then the problem is going to keep on existing the way it is and probably get worse. So I ask members, if you are that caring, and if you are that concerned, let us go ahead and proclaim the bill.

The other thing that I wanted to say is, this legislation, as I read Hansard speeches that have

been made from our side, from the Liberal Party, and also from government side, it would seem to me that the government side is more worried about the business community. When I read the Minister of Justice's (Mr. McCrae) remarks, he is more concerned about, once the bill is proclaimed, that the business people out there, the retailers might be seen as being criminals because they sell the solvents that are being abused by young people.

I do not see that as being a problem, because if we discussed the legislation as has been discussed in the past, and if we notify the public—I know this government is good at issuing press releases and having press conferences—I am sure once the public has been duly notified, we would not run into the risk of unnecessarily putting the business community in the awkward situation of having to pull back and mistakenly sell these items to the young people. So I cannot help but feel, Mr. Speaker, that perhaps the biggest factor that is preventing this government from proclaiming the bill is their concern about the business community. I say to you that we should be more concerned about those young people than the business community, because the business community will continue to survive anyway but not our young people. Our young people are being affected every day and the problem is getting worse. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that we should be more concerned about the young people than the business community.

We also recognize, and members have all said, that this legislation is not perfect, but we have also said that it goes a long way. It is a big step forward to alleviating some of the problems that exist out there. It will become a very important part of the solution as I see it, Mr. Speaker, because it will help set a standard that says our community will no longer tolerate such abuse of our children by the business community. It would also tell victims that our community does care for those young people.

I think it would also encourage, as I said, those agencies who are out there working every day on their own through volunteer work, that they have the support from the Legislature. It will give those Family Services workers, those front-line workers trying to help families and those children facing this problem, it will help them tremendously, I am sure.

So I urge all members again, finally to support the bill. We recommend the immediate proclamation of this bill which was passed by our Legislature previously. We cannot afford to wait any longer.

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Res. 32—Constitutional Task Force

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose), that

WHEREAS the Manitoba Constitutional Task Force was mandated to hear and report the views of Manitobans; and

WHEREAS the members of the tri-party task force arrived at a consensus report on a wide range of constitutional reform issues facing our country; and

WHEREAS the report will hopefully provide guidance and advise the government and the Legislature of Manitoba along the difficult road of constitutional decisions.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba congratulate the members of the task force, chairperson, Professor Wally Fox-Decent; the Minister of Justice, member for Brandon West, (Mr. McCrae); the Minister of Labour, member for Lac du Bonnet, (Mr. Praznik); and the members from St. Vital (Mrs. Render); The Pas (Mr. Lathlin); Wolseley (Ms. Friesen); and Crescentwood for their hard work and good will in producing the report.

Motion presented.

* (1720)

Mr. Laurendeau: Mr. Speaker, I think it is—[interjection] I will not have the opportunity to do that for you, Mr. Minister, because the translation group is not here today, and I do not think that would be fair to the rest of the House to not have the instantaneous translation.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today and speak on this issue. The Constitution is something that I think we will be visiting for a long period of time in this country. I think that the committee has gone a long way in resolving some of the issues that have to be brought forward. I have to congratulate all the members for what they did throughout these hearings.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity of sitting in on some of the meetings when we were up in the North, I believe it was Dauphin and Thompson. I had the opportunity of seeing how a nonpartisan group can work together and work together well—well, some of the time. There was one member, I believe it was

the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), who could never be nonpartisan. He was a member of the group that day, and of course he tended to drag off and get away from it, but he did come back onside. I mean, even though he did drift at times, 95 percent of the time he came back onside.

But the rest of the members of the committee, Mr. Speaker, were very true to form and nonpartisan. I would like to congratulate all of the members. I believe that the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render) brought a lot to it, in the questions that I read throughout the meetings that were brought forward. I especially was interested in a good portion that was brought forward by the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen). She brought out some of the historical factors that I was not even aware of at the time on the native issues and also on the historical values of Manitoba. I really appreciated reading through those briefs that were brought forward.

Mr. Speaker, I guess it all comes down to what Canada means to me. When we look at it in this House, I would say 98 percent of us are immigrants to this country. We have the opportunity to have two true people who are probably not immigrants [interjection] That is what I said, Oscar. I said we are not all immigrants.

But most of us are immigrants, Mr. Speaker, and I do believe that our parents and our forefathers came to this country for a better life. I think along the road people have looked at immigrants that they were coming here for that form of a better life, but I think it is time we realize that within this country, immigrants are not only coming here for a better life, but they are coming here to increase what we have as a country. They enrich what we have as a country, as immigrants to our country.

I think it is time that we realize that the immigrants to this country are an important basis and an important factor to where we are going into the future. Mr. Speaker, without immigration, this country will not grow or expand. This country will basically stagnate because of the birth rates that are happening throughout this country, No. 1, but there are other issues along the line that will basically keep us to a nongrowth factor.

So I do believe that the immigration factor plays an important role in the constitutional talks of today, on how we bring forward new initiatives to help the immigrants throughout this country, and specifically

for us in this province, the initiatives that can see that they are bringing to us what they had within their countries.

Mr. Speaker, it enriches us as a nation more and more all the time to have the values of other nations brought forward so that we can learn. We do learn a lot when it comes down to the separate cultures and the separate lifestyles from other nations.

My family has been here since the early 1600s. I am 11th generation in this country. I guess we—I do not look that old—have been here quite some time. Eleventh generation, I see you nodding your head, but yes, Mr. Speaker, 11th generation. We have been here a long time—365 years back in Quebec. This is the first time I have ever been heckled by the Speaker, with the nods and the yeses and the nos, but that is okay.

An Honourable Member: That is a reflection on the Speaker.

Mr. Laurendeau: No. I would never reflect on the Chair. I have the greatest and utmost respect for the Chair and the Speaker of this House. [interjection] If I were the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), I would be apologizing for everything he ever said in this House, never mind just me apologizing.

But I did say the honourable member, and yes I will go back, Mr. Speaker. It is just when the honourable member for Dauphin speaks up from his chair, sometimes I do tend to drift away from where I am going because he knows he just likes to get the air up in me. I do enjoy that, but we are dealing today with a very important issue, and that is congratulating the task force that our Premier (Mr. Filmon) and this Legislature set out.

Mr. Speaker, the nonpartisanship of this committee—[interjection] and you know what? I do not think I remember the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) coming forward to speak at these constitutional hearings. [interjection] See, the honourable member would like me to speak about Bill 83, but Bill 83 has nothing to do with the Constitution. It deals with highway safety and protection.

We will not deal with the protection of the people within here. We are speaking about the Constitution which is going to protect the people of this country from a lot of varied aspects of where we are coming from. I do believe that this task force had a very difficult task, a very difficult task indeed.

Throughout their hearings they had to hear from, I believe it was 227 presenters and a number of written presentations, 80 written presentations. [interjection] Was that a question from the honourable member for Dauphin?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Laurendeau: I am sure it would not have been, because the honourable member for Dauphin has never asked a proper question in this House yet.

But, Mr. Speaker, I only hope that when they were in Dauphin, the honourable member for Dauphin took the opportunity to go and see these hearings taking place. I do not think he did make a presentation because reading through them I did not see it. I have been to Dauphin a number of times and the people from Dauphin had a lot to say about the Constitution. I believe that they were heard by this task force. Whether or not their MLA heard them was another story, but this task force did hear them. This task force was truly a nonpartisan forum. We seem to drift away from that in this House. I am probably one of the biggest patriots of—patrons of—I tend to drift a little bit myself, Mr. Speaker, and I tend to get a little bit partisan every once in a while, not too often, though, not too often. I mean, I am a very nonpartisan type of guy.

Mr. Speaker, we were elected here to do a job. We were elected to represent the people. Within the democratic system that we have today, we were given the job of listening, not only to the majority, but to the minority, the minority on how they speak on an issue. Within our Constitution we have some very difficult tasks to look into, and I understand the issues that we are going into dealing with Quebec. I am hoping that Quebec will come to the table soon.

I do believe that the people of Quebec believe as much in a strong Canada as we do. I know the honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) and myself had opportunities to speak to a number of members from Quebec, including Parti Quebecois and a Bloc Quebecois member, and even though they believed in separatism, you could see down deep in their hearts they believed in Canada.

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to the committee members, thank you for the hard work that you have put into the report that came forward. They all deserve a big thank you from the entire Legislature for the time and effort that they put into the report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Mr. Jack Penner, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I too would like to join with the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) in his resolution to the Manitoba Chamber on the committee, the all-party committee that dealt with our constitutional challenges. I want to congratulate all members of the Legislature who were on that committee and all the alternative members of the Legislature.

Having gone through the experience of the Meech Lake period, I know how long and hard it is to deal with many of these challenges. Mr. Acting Speaker, the committee, I think, discharged its duties in a very admirable way, and we too want to join in the resolution in congratulating the members of the committee.

We also want to pay tribute to the public, because the public was the key part to the constitutional package that was prepared for Manitoba. The public of Manitoba, whether it was in this Chamber, in the committee room, whether it was at Dauphin, Thompson, The Pas, or whether it was in Brandon and other communities, it was the people of this province who developed the positions, developed the vision, maintained the vision of Manitoba in a strong and united Canada, that was the articulation that was contained within the all-party report that was made public by our committee.

* (1730)

Mr. Acting Speaker, the committee heard eloquently from Manitobans from all walks of life about the vision that they shared for Manitoba. The No. 1 vision that Manitobans shared with us was the same as the No. 1 vision shared with us in the Meech Lake Task Force, and it is the same as any time before that we have had constitutional debates. It has been the same vision. It is the vision of a strong national federal government that allows Canadians from all sections of our country and individuals in Canada across our great country to enjoy the tremendous benefits of our wonderful country and to enjoy equally the programs through our national government that are so vital to our every way of life.

Mr. Acting Speaker, whether that was listening to former Conservative cabinet ministers who presented briefs in Dauphin years ago that were part of the old Roblin cabinet, or whether it was hearing young school children who were presenting briefs to this committee, there has been really a torch that

has been passed from Manitoban to Manitoban on their vision on the Constitution, and that torch has really been the necessity of a strong federal government.

Manitoba had this tradition back in the late '30s when there was a conflict at that time. There was a tremendous constitutional conflict at that time between the people of Alberta who were suffering tremendous deprivation through the Great Depression, and the people of Ontario who were benefitting from their situation in Canada and the transportation policies and the agricultural policies that were in place in the '30s in Canada.

Mr. Acting Speaker, at that point, it was Ontario saying we are not going to share our resources with those people in Alberta and the people in Alberta needing those resources to be shared in our great country. It was Manitoba that developed a compromise for a strong national government and developed the programs that eventually became entrenched in our Canadian way of life, whether it was equalization or, eventually, EPF programs that came later in medicare and post-secondary education.

It was Manitoba, the keystone province, that was always the bridge between the haves and have-nots. The haves and have-nots changed. In the early '80s, it was Alberta saying to Ontario you are not going to get this and you are not going to get that. The situation had changed, but Manitoba has not changed, Mr. Acting Speaker. It has always been the bridge between eastern Canada and western Canada. It has always been the bridge between the haves and have-nots, no matter who they are, and that vision, too, was expressed eloquently by Manitobans,

That is why that is the No. 1 priority of Manitobans in the all-party task force. It was the No. 1 consensus item, I am sure, for members of that committee. So the public again has spoken, and we have that torch now in our hands as we continue on with these constitutional discussions that are going on. Let us not drop the torch for a strong national government that was articulated in the all-party task force and which has been the tradition of this province, Mr. Acting Speaker. Let us not drop that torch. In all the hustle and bustle and scurrying and the trading off and this proposal and that proposal, let us be very, very cognizant of that tradition.

Other issues that were very important to Manitoba, Mr. Acting Speaker, and it has been reported by the press and it was articulated again by the task force, the public said: Let us finally deal with aboriginal justice; let us finally deal with our broken promises in terms of our treaties; let us finally deal with the aboriginal issues in the Constitution; let us not set them aside again; let us not set them aside for another 10 years or another 20 years or for another century. That is why, too, the task force came to a strong consensus on the need for self-government, aboriginal self-government within the Canadian constitutional context and the need for a process to articulate and entrench in the Canadian Constitution an aboriginal self-government process. We, therefore, have also that challenge that has been passed to us in this Legislature to ensure that that vision is not lost in this round of constitutional debate that is going on in our country.

The third issue, Mr. Acting Speaker, that was before us was the Canada clause. Manitobans believed not in a Canada clause that only dealt with a narrow definition of our country, but they wanted an expansive kind of a clause that dealt with all the characteristics of Canada. That, too, was consistent with Meech Lake and our report. We want to deal, in our Canada clause, with all characteristics of Canada, the equality of our provinces, the equality of our people. We want to deal with the fact that the aboriginal people were the original characteristic of this country. We want to have, also in our Constitution, the French and English dynamic that was also part of our evolution of our country with Upper and Lower Canada.

Further, Mr. Acting Speaker, we want to have a multicultural characteristic in the Constitution as the changing nature of Canada. We want to recognize that in the Constitution. We do not want the weak wording of the Beaudoin-Dobbie report. We want the strong character wording that is contained within the Manitoba report, and I applaud the committee for that recommendation.

Finally the committee had to deal with the whole issue of institutional reform. Some people call it Senate reform, but there are other institutions that people want reformed in our province. Thirty-five Manitobans wanted to have a Triple-E Senate. Thirty Manitobans wanted to abolish the Senate, and all Manitobans agreed that we should reform the Senate—or about 100 Manitobans I think it was, in terms of reforming the Senate.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we must find ways to deal with the patronage institution of the Senate. New Democrats are not in that Senate right now. There are over 50 Conservatives right now and close to 50 Liberals. So we come at this issue with some interest, because I do not know whether any New Democrat has ever been offered the Senate spot, but I do know that no New Democrat sits in the Senate.

We want to get rid of the patronage Senate, but we would want to remind all members of this Chamber—but let us remember all priorities that Manitobans stated, the strong national government, the need for aboriginal self-government, the need for a Canada clause that includes all Canadians and all Manitobans. Let us remember also the reforms of the Senate. Let us not make one of those issues so preeminent that we lose on all the other priorities in this province, because there is no such thing, I believe, as a trade-off for a strong national government with the ability to maintain a strong Canada.

Mr. Acting Speaker, in conclusion, I also want to applaud Mr. Wally Fox-Decent, because he ultimately was the chair of this committee, and he ultimately had to sit down with all members of the committee who are all honourable members and try to work in a way to develop agreement where there was agreement and develop consensus where there was no agreement. I think this Chamber should pay tribute to all members of this committee, all members of the public who have presented briefs, and also pay tribute to Wally Fox-Decent's skills as a mediator and as a consensus builder.

I believe if Professor Fox-Decent was writing the Constitution right now in Ottawa that we would have a Constitution that we would all be very proud of.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I want to applaud the committee, applaud Manitobans, and let us keep the torch, let us not fail the vision that this task force passed onto us. Let us remember what they recommended; let us remember what Manitobans said; and let us remember the tradition that Manitoba has always maintained in a strong and united Canada. Thank you very, very much.

Mr. Nell Gaudry (St. Boniface): I am pleased to rise on this resolution, the Constitutional Task Force, that was moved by the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau). It gives me great pleasure to say a few words on this resolution. I

think it is for all members of the Legislature to fight for a Constitution that will please all Canadians. I think we are all proud to say that we are first Canadians and then we are Manitobans.

* (1740)

We were out to Souris, Manitoba, with the Minister responsible for Seniors (Mr. Ducharme) the other day, and it was a pleasure to be there to hear the people and see how we are here in Manitoba, to live in a province like Manitoba. We say "friendly Manitoba." I think the word suits it very well, because when we go out together like that, no matter what party it is, I think it is nonpartisan. I think when the minister spoke yesterday, spoke very well in regard to being present there with members of the other parties.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I also would like to congratulate the task force. There were members from all parties. The force was there to listen to Manitobans.

An Honourable Member: The force be with you.

Mr. Gaudry: That is right.

An Honourable Member: Mr. Carr was there then?

Mr. Gaudry: Yes.

An Honourable Member: Where is he now?

Mr. Gaudry: It does not matter where Mr. Carr is today. He was a very good member for the Liberal Party and always will be remembered as a good member of the Legislature.

An Honourable Member: We remember him.

Mr. Gaudry: That is right, and he was part of the task force and he put in a lot of good work in there, and like all the other members who put in the time that they put in for the Manitoba and to listen to Manitobans. Like the members have said, they talk about the First Nation. They were there, and we have to fight for them and make sure that they are represented in our Constitution.

All the people who have made presentations, their interest was there to keep a united Canada, and that is what we want is a united Canada. Not having Quebec at these tables right now is very unfortunate, and we need them there. We need Quebec, like Quebec needs us. Canada was made out for the 10 provinces and two territories, and it is important that we get Quebec back at the negotiating tables.

Mr. Acting Speaker, like the members have said, Wally Fox-Decent who was the chair of the task force, a great man, he will be remembered for what he has done for Manitoba and all the other members of the Legislature. We have to work together, and we have to continue to fight for a united Canada.

We talked about the Senate. The Leader of the official opposition discussed about the Senate. We need a strong Senate. We need an elected Senate and an equal, if not an equal, an effective Senate. We have to make sure that we fight for what we want here in Manitoba. [interjection] Pardon?

He has mentioned that there are senators from the two parties, none from his party.

An Honourable Member: He used to like senators.

Mr. Gaudry: He still loves Senate and he knows he wants a reformed Senate and we will all probably want a reformed Senate, but we look forward to having a strong Canada, and a strong central government. We will continue to ask the members who represent us at these negotiations in Ottawa or Toronto or across Canada.

An Honourable Member: Are you going to run for the Senate, Neil?

Mr. Gaudry: No. I want to run for St. Boniface; they are pleased with what I am doing in St. Boniface.

An Honourable Member: You could be the senator from St. Boniface.

Mr. Gaudry: I would not mind being a senator. I mean, I would work just as hard for my constituents at that point.

Mr. Acting Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to say a few words on this resolution. I think it is very appropriate at this time, especially when we are in the middle of serious negotiations. It is very unfortunate that Meech Lake died the way it did. I think it was unfortunate that in June of 1990, it was a sad day when it was defeated in the House here, and I think we all felt it as legislators.

We have to make sure that we work together and that we achieve something for Canada, and we will continue to fight for a strong Canada and a strong central government to represent all Manitobans and all Canadians and with Quebec at the table when we decide that the negotiations are final, and not to forget our aboriginal people.

They are, I think, on the right track, and they are looking forward to being part of the negotiations. We will look forward to the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) when he returns from the negotiating table that he will be fighting again for Manitoba and for the rest of Canada so that we remain united, and we will continue to be united in Canada with the ten provinces and the two territories.

Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Mrs. Shirley Render (St. Vital): I guess I am probably the only person speaking today who was actually on the all-party task force. I feel very privileged to have been appointed to that task force. I just want to thank the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) for moving the resolution because I think the task force was a very special task force.

I think the composition of the task force as it was mandated by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) made it special right from the start. It was not a task force just of government members. It was a task force of all members of this Legislature. As the member for St. Norbert pointed out, there were three members from the government, two members from the official opposition, and one member from the third party.

I think that is very important to note because right from the start this task force was not a partisan task force. We were there in a united forum. We were there with one purpose, and that was to do our best for Manitoba and ultimately our best for Canada.

Each member of a task force—and I suspect that when the Leader of each of the parties appointed each of the members they probably thought long and hard as to who they were going to appoint. Certainly, of the members of the government task force, I think there was no doubt that two of the members should be the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), who is our constitutional minister and, of course, the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) because both of these members had been members of the Meech Lake Task Force, and I think that was an obvious choice.

I was a newcomer to government, and I was very pleased and very proud and I felt very honoured to be appointed to the task force.

Speaking about the members of the other two parties, I think all of the members brought with them different skills, different perspectives and different outlooks which were really very valuable and which were needed. There is no point in having a task force that is going to look at a problem or going to

be going out to the public and asking the public to give of their opinions, if all of us are coming to that particular commission, or task force in this instance, with the same line of thought. That is going to accomplish nothing. I think we all have to bring with us our own perspectives. I am not saying that we have to be narrow minded, but I think it is very useful for a task force to be made up of members who are bringing different points of view.

Obviously, we all try to put aside our partisan viewpoints. Obviously, that is not always possible—[interjection] Well, it was possible in most instances. But I think again it is important to remember that at various times in the discussions each of us were representing our party, and we were representing a particular value that our particular party holds.

But I have to say that for me it was a real treat to be on the task force, because I felt that 99.99 percent of the time each of the task force members did put aside their partisan feelings and did work towards the good of the task force.

Something else that has been mentioned, and I really just want to reiterate, our chairperson on the task force, and that was Wally Fox-Decent, professor out at the University of Manitoba. For any of you who have worked with Wally, you know that Wally's approach is a nonconfrontational approach. I think that was best symbolized by the fact that the very first task force meeting we had, there on the table, when I walked into the meeting, was this huge plate of honey doughnuts. I can see the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) smiling. He remembers—

* (1750)

Mr. Doer: You get more with honey than you do with vinegar.

Mrs. Render: As the Leader of the Opposition just said, and he took the words right out of my mouth, our chairperson of the task force knows that you do get more with honey than you do with vinegar, and at every single meeting of the task force there was always a plate of doughnuts. Interestingly enough, whether we were hungry or not, we always ate those doughnuts. [interjection] No, I am not going to say who ate most of them.

I think the appointment of Professor Wally Fox-Decent was a significant appointment, because again, like the members of the task force, this particular individual was not looking for a fight, he was looking to see what was best for Manitoba.

In one of our very first meetings, we did discuss how we were going to get the viewpoints of Manitobans. Again, I think this is significant. The task force was unanimous in saying, we are not just going to stay here in Winnipeg; we are going to go out into the community. That is exactly what we did. We went out to four other different areas—well, actually five areas, all told: Winnipeg, The Pas, Dauphin, Brandon and Thompson.

We met in community halls. We met in schools. We met here at the Legislature. We met in other areas. I think it is important to know that we did not expect people always to come to us, that we tried to go out and reach out to them. We advertised well in advance. We had ads on the radio. As far as I know, we had ads on TV and in the newspapers. We tried to give Manitobans the opportunity to know that this task force was going to be coming out to give them a chance to prepare their thoughts and sort of put their concerns together in a fashion that they would feel comfortable with presenting.

I know that some of the task forces across the country were in a rush position, and I do not agree with that. Canada is too important, this country is too important to be doing things improperly.

I do have to blow the horn of the task force somewhat. Really, it was our chairperson, Wally Fox-Decent, for his good organizational skills. I do not think we had a single solitary glitch in the whole task force hearings. Wherever we went, the hall was set up, Hansard was set up, the people were there, we started on time, and quite often we ran beyond the time.

Again, I think that is significant because it showed that all members of the task force were ready and willing and prepared to listen to people, even if they had not signed up. If somebody came into the room, we were there to listen. I think that is the most important thing that a task force can do. It cannot sort of shut off and say, we are not going to listen. Again, the bottom line for our task force was: This is our country, our country that has been around for 125 years and a country that we want to keep united and we want to keep strong.

That was the message that was overwhelming from the presenters that we heard. Time after time we heard: We want to keep Canada; we want Canada to remain a strong and united country; let us be flexible. Now, obviously, not everybody said

that, but I say again, that was the message that came across loud and clear most of the time.

I think it is significant in our task force report that one of the very first parts of our task force talked about the Canada clause. I think all of the other things sort of result from the Canada clause. We can talk about the Senate. We can talk about economic factors. We can talk about the institutions of government, but if we do not have a Canada, then we are not going to be talking about anything else. Our task force spent a fair bit of time talking about what we felt should be in the Canada clause.

As the Leader of the opposition (Mr. Doer) has mentioned, our Canada clause I think is a strong Canada clause, but it is not a kitchen sink full of things. Our Canada clause is tight, and I think it wraps up in a very succinct fashion just exactly what it means to be a Canadian, and that is how we started off our task force report. We recommended that there be a Canada clause in our Constitution.

I will just take a couple of minutes to just—and I will read from the document, because I want to make sure that I quote exactly—the areas that we recommended.

First, a commitment to a united Canada and recognition of the equality of the provinces; second, recognition of the aboriginal people as constituting the original people and a fundamental characteristic of Canada; third, the status of English and French as the official languages at the federal government level; fourth, the recognition of the unique place and role of the province of Quebec in Canada; fifth, recognition of the contribution to Canada of our multicultural society; and, finally, an affirmation that the rights and freedoms contained in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms apply to all Canadians.

I will just go back to that first one, a commitment to a united Canada and a recognition of the equality of the provinces. We all know that our minister responsible for the Constitution, that is one of his holding points, a united Canada, equality of all the provinces. So I think this task force brought forward a report that all Manitobans can be proud of and we can be proud of our minister who is responsible for the Constitution following this task force because it is a good basis. It is the basis of all of us in this Legislature. We have come together on it, and I think we as Manitobans can be proud, because we were the first province to come out with our task force report. It was a consensus report and I think

all of us on the task force learned something by working together. We proved that when our country is in need, we are there to help it.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? [Agreed]

Six o'clock?

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): No.

Yes, the honourable member for Inkster-Osborne. Sorry.

Point of Order

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): He is Inkster, here, Mr. Acting Speaker. I am the taller guy, I am from Osborne.

On a point of order, I believe if you were to check Hansard, whenever the House has adopted a resolution, I think the tradition has been to call it six o'clock at that point, and that would give people an opportunity to discuss the next resolution in a fulsome manner, unlike the tactic that was adopted by the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) in the previous week.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): The honourable member has no point of order.

* * *

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock? [Agreed]

The hour being six o'clock, this House will reconvene tomorrow at 1:30 p.m. (Thursday).

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Wednesday, June 3, 1992

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