



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

41 Elizabeth II

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Denis C. Rocan
Speaker*



VOL. XLII No. 36A - 1:30 p.m., MONDAY, APRIL 5, 1993

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
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
GRAY, Avis	Crescentwood	Liberal
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	NDP
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Liberal
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	NDP
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MALOWAY, 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
PALLISTER, Brian	Portage la Prairie	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	Fin Fion	NDP
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	PC
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP
<i>Vacant</i>	Rupertsland	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, April 5, 1993

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Mike Smud, Iris Smud, William Smud and others requesting the government of Manitoba consider reviewing the state of Highway 391 with a view towards improving the condition and safety of the road.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Pierre Chenier, James Russell, Connie Bauer and others requesting the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) consider holding public hearings on wide-open Sunday shopping throughout Manitoba before March 31, 1993, and press the Attorney General (Mr. McCrae) to uphold the current law concerning Sunday shopping until public hearings are held and the Legislature approves the changes to the law.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Storie). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules (by leave). Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS the provincial government has without notice or legal approval allowed wide-open Sunday shopping; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has not consulted Manitobans before implementing wide-open Sunday shopping; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has not held public hearings on wide-open Sunday shopping;

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be

pleased to request the Minister of Labour to consider holding public hearings on wide-open Sunday shopping throughout Manitoba before March 31, 1993;

BE IT FURTHER resolved that the Legislative Assembly be pleased to request the Attorney General to uphold the current law concerning Sunday shopping until public hearings are held and the Legislature approves changes to the law.

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Plohman). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules (by leave). Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

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

WHEREAS the United Nations has declared 1993 the International Year of the World's Indigenous People with the theme, "Indigenous People: a new partnership"; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has totally discontinued funding to all friendship centres; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has stated that these cuts mirror the federal cuts; and

WHEREAS the elimination of all funding to friendship centres will result in the loss of many jobs as well as the services and programs provided, such as: assistance to the elderly, the homeless, youth programming, the socially disadvantaged, families in crisis, education, recreation and cultural programming, housing relocation, fine options, counselling, court assistance, advocacy;

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Family Services minister to consider restoring funding for the friendship centres in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Ms. Wowchuk). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House

and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

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

WHEREAS the provincial government has without notice or legal approval allowed wide-open Sunday shopping; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has not consulted Manitobans before implementing wide-open Sunday shopping; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has not held public hearings on wide-open Sunday shopping;

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Labour to consider holding public hearings on wide open Sunday shopping throughout Manitoba before March 31, 1993;

BE IT FURTHER resolved that the Legislative Assembly be pleased to request the Attorney General to uphold the current law concerning Sunday shopping until public hearings are held and the Legislature approves changes to the law.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Ms. Barrett). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

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

WHEREAS there have been substantial cuts to materials in the Great Library; and

WHEREAS more cuts to materials are planned; and

WHEREAS the Department of Justice plans to lay off three staff members of the Great Library at the end of March 1993; and

WHEREAS such cuts to staffing will reduce the level of service and the hours of operation;

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) to consider adequate funding for the Great Library so that it can maintain its current level of services, hours of operation, and preserve its current collection of materials.

* * *

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

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

WHEREAS the United Nations has declared 1993 the International Year of the World's Indigenous People with the theme, "Indigenous People: a new partnership"; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has totally discontinued funding to all friendship centres; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has stated that these cuts mirror the federal cuts; and

WHEREAS the elimination of all funding to friendship centres will result in the loss of many jobs as well as the services and programs provided, such as: assistance to the elderly, the homeless, youth programming, the socially disadvantaged, families in crisis, education, recreation and cultural programming, housing relocation, fine options, counselling, court assistance, advocacy;

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Family Services minister to consider restoring funding for the friendship centres in Manitoba.

* (1335)

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Energy and Mines): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a communique from the Energy and Mines ministers' meeting held last week at the prospectors' and developers' meeting, a communique of all the stakeholders involved in the Whitehorse Mining Initiative.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 25—The Public Schools Amendment Act (4)

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), that Bill 25, The Public Schools Amendment Act (4); Loi no 4 modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques, be

introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 24—The Taxicab Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): I move, seconded by the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst), that Bill 24, The Taxicab Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les taxis et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois), be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 23—The Retail Businesses Holiday Closing Amendment, Employment Standards Amendment and Payment of Wages Amendment Act

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme), that Bill 23, The Retail Businesses Holiday Closing Amendment, Employment Standards Amendment and Payment of Wages Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les jours fériés dans le commerce de détail, la Loi sur les normes d'emploi et la Loi sur le paiement des salaires), be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Student Social Allowance Program Impact Study Tabling Request

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the First Minister.

In 1988 the Premier spoke in this House about the tragedy of a person lacking the skills necessary to compete in today's dynamic marketplace. The Premier, of course, was talking about education and training.

The Premier has continued that theme in words, if not in deeds, through to the Speech from the Throne this year, where he clearly states that education and training is the key to unlock opportunities for people in Manitoba and for businesses in Manitoba, yet we see the government

going in a totally opposite direction in terms of students on social assistance, to get the skills and education necessary to ultimately go back to the workplace and get jobs and careers and maintain residences and families in the province of Manitoba.

I would like the Premier to table any study he has indicating the long-term cost benefit to the Province of Manitoba and the people of Manitoba, of the change they have made on student social allowance, and the impact study in terms of employability between those people who get the training under social allowance today as opposed to the training cut that they have proposed in their Family Services budget and their budget, ultimately, tomorrow.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the program that the member opposite is speaking of is a program that is not provided by any other provincial government in Canada. It is a program that is there as an extra over and above opportunities that people have. I found it interesting that the Leader of the Opposition's colleague the member for Kildonan said, heaven forbid, these people may have to live at home instead of being on welfare in order to go to school.

Point of Order

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, I would hope the Premier would have better research to know that no such comment was made by the member for Kildonan. If the Premier is going to make shots like that from the House, he should have the dignity to confirm them before he does so.

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

*(1340)

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I withdraw that categorically. The fact of the matter is that it was the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) who made that statement—the other colleague. Wrong New Democrat but same philosophy.

The fact of the matter is that in other provinces, in times when this program was not available in Manitoba, people did have to rely on families. People did have to rely on part-time work and other commitments and not just welfare. The fact of the matter is, if New Democrats want to promote welfare and want to make people dependent—we do not

want people to be dependent. We want them to be independent. The education that they will pursue can be pursued if they make other arrangements vis-à-vis their living expenses.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the only one increasing welfare in this province is this Premier and his policies. Honestly, it is not all the fault of this government. There is a dynamic across Canada, but your decisions today will increase social allowance and social allowance costs in the future. It is clear, because the Premier could not table any studies today, that he will not do it. It is just ideological decisions and, quite frankly, petty and unwise decisions.

Main Street Project Funding Reduction Impact

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): A further question to the Premier on long-term costs versus short-term savings.

The government has announced a 10 percent cut in the money going to a number of social agencies, including the Main Street Project, Mr. Speaker. We are informed that the Main Street Project cut of 10 percent will mean that people now in detox centres, 80 percent of the people in detox centres for six months, will no longer have availability of that facility, which will mean that those people will go to the AFM, which has been cut, and they will end up in hospitals or potentially in more severe restrictions, in our prison system.

I would like to ask the Premier: How cost beneficial is the decision of the government to cut back 10 percent to the Main Street Project, and what will be the long-term impact on people ending up in hospitals and higher-cost institutions, let alone not getting the recovery and the treatment programs to get back on their feet?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): In response to the postamble of the Leader of the Opposition, if it is an ideological decision, why is it that New Democrats and Liberals in office in nine other provinces are not providing the same programming, Mr. Speaker? Why have they made exactly the same analysis? They do not provide this kind of support for students on welfare.

With respect to the second part of his question, that is under the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer). I will let him answer the specifics of that.

Children's Dental Program Funding Reduction Impact

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): The Premier may be able to change Sunday shopping laws, he may be able to change this law, he may be able to rip up this agreement with the Sports Federation, but he is not yet the Speaker in this House to refer questions back and forth the way he cavalierly does in this Chamber.

A final question to the Premier. Since he did not give us the study on the long-term impact on social allowance cutbacks and he did not answer the question on the long-term impacts, the Premier will be the one hopefully co-ordinating between the Department of Family Services and the Department of Health.

Another question to the Premier. Last year the government cut back access for the 13- and 14-year-olds in the Children's Dental Program across rural Manitoba. Thousands of children were affected. This program provides education; it provides prevention, and it provides vital services for children receiving dental services in rural Manitoba.

I would like to ask the Premier: Does he have any study dealing with the impact of his cutbacks last year on the Children's Dental Program, and what policy areas does he have in place for the decisions they are going to communicate to the staff tomorrow at budget time, at 1:30, running the Children's Dental Program in the province of Manitoba?

* (1345)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I was not cavalierly offering to have the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) provide information. I was wanting to do so out of a sincere desire to have the question answered. The Leader of the Opposition, as he is wont to do, offers extraneous comments on half a dozen different items as part of his preamble, most of which are inaccurate, and I have to address the inaccuracies. His lack of credibility has to be demonstrated, so I respond to him in that respect.

Mr. Speaker, I can just tell him that with respect to the Children's Dental Program, he will have an opportunity to examine any and all decisions that are made on any and all items in this budget, but I point out to him that in Saskatchewan, that program was removed for many, many of the children living in Saskatchewan. That program was found to be

either not supportable or too much of a cost to the people of Saskatchewan under Mr. Romanow's NDP government. So when he points out to these sorts of things, he has to look at reality.

I know that he has the great benefit of not looking at reality. As a member of the opposition, he can just be irresponsible day after day and, as he did today when asked by a reporter, say, I have no suggestions to offer; I have no alternatives to offer; all I want to do is criticize.

We know where he is coming from, Mr. Speaker. That kind of lack of responsibility is why he remains the Leader of the Opposition.

APM Management Consultants Travel Expenses

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health.

Another unfortunate reality today is the minister has confirmed the Department of Health has signed a \$3.9-million contract, or more, if the Canadian dollar should happen to go down, to a U.S.-based consultant who makes health care reform sound like a fast food franchise. Why, in addition to the \$3.9 million, plus more if the Canadian dollar goes down, is the government forcing St. Boniface Hospital and the Health Sciences Centre to pay the expenses which could be up to \$800,000, that is, the expenses of these consultants to fly into Winnipeg to do their work?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, let me deal with the issue of the consultant and the tabling of the contract. As I indicated, should we undertake a contract with APM, we would make full and complete information available, which was done this morning.

Mr. Speaker, a number of inaccuracies have already come to light from my honourable friend's previous questioning. I do not want to go into all of those inaccuracies, but let us not allow my honourable friend to leave the impression that this contract with APM is not supported by St. Boniface Hospital and Health Sciences Centre. Those two institutions and their respective boards urged and have been urging the government for some eight weeks to get on with completion of a contract which we announced today.

The reason why we have undertaken this contract is threefold. It represents an opportunity for those two hospitals to maintain their current level of patient

services and care delivery. Secondly, it will enable caregivers to spend more of their precious time delivering hands-on care to patients. Mr. Speaker, as a benefit, there can be significant savings to both of those institutions.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary to the minister: In addition to the \$3.9-million fee, could not St. Boniface Hospital and Health Sciences Centre use that perhaps additional \$800,000 in expenses that they are going to pay for air travel, lodging, local transportation, meals and other miscellaneous expenses, could they not use that \$800,000 potential for patient care, to deliver patient services to patients rather than expenses for U.S. consultants?

* (1350)

Mr. Orchard: Well, I take it, Mr. Speaker, although my honourable friend has not been direct enough in his preamble or his questions to say whether he agrees or disagrees with the engagement of this consultant firm—I am not certain where he stands there—let me remind my honourable friend that the two hospitals in question, St. Boniface and Health Sciences Centre, for a number of weeks now, have been very much urging this government to engage the consultant because they want to meet what they see as decreasing financial resources with the ability, Sir, to maintain the current volume of patient services, which is part and parcel of this agreement to increase the amount of opportunity and time that caregivers, nurses and other staff spend with actual patient care delivery and at the same time save precious tax resources.

The hospitals are doing that because they care about preserving patient care and medicare in the province of Manitoba. That is why we have agreed to fund this contract through casino revenues.

Tender Process

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, yes, and we saw that the two hospital presidents, no nurses, no one else from the hospitals were at that press conference this morning.

They were supposed to have a plan and now they have brought in their consultant to try—will the minister perhaps table the tender notice for all of the other consulting firms and Canadian firms that were asked to do this project?

Will he tender one scintilla of evidence that this contract was offered to other individuals, other

consulting firms, and not to the one U.S.-based firm that does not even have a Canadian base or Canadian education person on their staff, if their prospectus can be believed?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, we undertook exactly that kind of discussion with a number of our major Canadian consultant firms. Also, I regret my honourable friend does not consider the presidents of Health Sciences Centre and St. Boniface, the board chairs of those two respective institutions, and the vice-presidents of medicine of those respective institutions to be nonentities, because they were at the press conference this morning to support and to encourage government to undertake this firm and their engagement in consulting.

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian firms have had an opportunity of some four months to propose any initiative that they wish. Let me tell my honourable friend a simple fact, and this was confirmed by the CEOs of our major hospitals. There is no Canadian consulting presence which has the experience in restructuring health care that APM does. We have been told by Canadian consulting firms that should they have been engaged, they would have contracted with American expertise, quite probably the same ones we engaged directly, Sir, because such expertise does not exist in—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Student Social Allowance Program Success Rate

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has the highest poverty rate in all of Canada, higher even than Newfoundland, which is generally considered to be the poorest province in Confederation. In addition, Manitoba has the highest child poverty rate, nearly 6 percent higher than the next province, being Saskatchewan.

The Premier, earlier in this afternoon session, said that student social allowances were not provided anywhere else in Canada. That is true, but nowhere else in Canada do they have the poverty rates that we do. Nowhere else in Canada do they have the child poverty rates.

Can the Premier of this province provide this House with a breakdown of the success, or lack of success, on academic performance of those students who are on student social assistance?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the so-called statistics on poverty rates—

An Honourable Member: So-called?

Mr. Filmon: Well, Statistics Canada admits to the following information: For instance, the low-income cutoffs or poverty-line figures are arbitrary national guidelines. Because of this, the low-income estimates assume that a family of four persons living in Winnipeg needs exactly the same level of income as a similar family in Toronto or Vancouver, and as such, they totally distort the fact that the cost of living in Manitoba is eighth in the country—much lower.

In fact, if you will look further into the statistics, you will find that the average income of all Manitoba families in 1991 was fifth best amongst all of the provinces. Fifth best—that is the average income of Manitoba families. So, Mr. Speaker, there are serious flaws that are acknowledged by Statistics Canada in using that figure that she points to.

With respect to the—

An Honourable Member: Are you saying there is no poverty in Manitoba?

Mr. Filmon: I am not saying that at all—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

* (1355)

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, none of us would like to have anybody living in poverty in any province, and we certainly do not want to have people living in poverty in this province, but to use the arbitrary figures that do not paint a representative picture, that are not related to the cost of living in this province vis-à-vis other provinces, is not an accurate figure.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the student welfare program, I have said before, that is a program that has been found to be unaffordable by all the other provinces in Canada. They did not bring it in because they said it was not something they could afford or justify. Therefore, we, in looking at programs and having to make difficult choices, have to look at this and say: Why is it not able to be afforded; why is it not able to be justified in any other province in Canada? Therefore, we, in looking at scarce dollars, have to ensure that we make maximum use of those scarce dollars.

Post-Secondary Education Accessibility

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Premier makes reference to "so-called statistics," arbitrary statistics, but they are the statistics by which every single province, including Newfoundland, the poorest province in the nation, is judged, and we still come out at the bottom. In addition, we have the lowest percentage of young people who go on to post-secondary educational institutions, the lowest in Canada.

Can the Premier tell the House how we are going to encourage more people to go on to post-secondary education institutions when we are cutting young people by the thousand who would get the benefit of the education necessary to make them eligible to go into post-secondary education?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): The educational opportunities continue to be there. What is needed, of course, is for them to find alternate means of ensuring that they can support themselves. Mr. Speaker, in the past, those people have lived with their families while they continued to go to school. In the past, they have found part-time work. In the past, they have found opportunities within their circle of support, that is, the community, and that is what is done in nine other provinces today.

Student Social Allowance Program Success Rate

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, obviously the Premier does not live in the world that the rest of us live in, because we know that these very young people who are on social allowances in many cases are supporting families. They could go back to families? They are the heads of families. Many of these others, quite frankly, have not got alternative means because they lack the very education to even get a job at McDonald's.

Can the Premier tell us, other than going back to their families, what other alternate methods, policies and initiatives does he have for these people?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I cannot afford to live in the world of the Leader of the Liberal Party. I acknowledge that. The fact of the matter is that no other province in Canada has been able to justify or afford this particular program. That is the bottom line.

Social Assistance CRISP Benefit

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Conservative government of this province is heartless, uncaring, callous, unfair and rapacious. What is the proof of these statements? The proof is the cuts to foster family rates, the increase in child care rates, the elimination of the student social allowance program and the elimination of the funding to MAPO and friendship centres and many, many other programs.

How can the Minister of Family Services, in good conscience, be part of a government that today signed a contract with a consultant for \$3.9 million and at the same time has eliminated CRISP as a benefit that people on social assistance in the city of Winnipeg can keep when he knows that we have the highest child poverty rate—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has put his question.

* (1400)

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the member for Burrows to look at the comments that his Leader made in today's paper when asked what he would do if he was in government. He said: I do not know; I cannot tell you.

Yet out on the steps day after day, he tells every group, yes, we would reinstate that, we would do this, we would do everything, but he does not say how he is going to get that money.

I would also ask him to look at the governments in Saskatchewan and B.C. to see what they are doing—making a few cuts but also raising taxes. The sales tax in Saskatchewan is now up to 9 percent. The sales tax in British Columbia is now up to 7 percent. That is the alternative that the member for Burrows is putting forward, is to raise taxes.

Income Tax Refunds

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Family Services did not answer the question about why CRISP was eliminated as a benefit.

Why has the Minister of Family Services decided to claw back income tax rebates for people on city assistance when this is targeting people on social assistance who have earned income from employment? Why do they have to forego getting

this revenue when anyone else who works is entitled to these benefits? Why is he targeting city social assistance recipients?

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, the member is terribly mistaken. By standardizing the rules and regulations by which social allowances is put forth in Manitoba, CRISP has never been recognized as part of the social allowance program for provincial recipients and now will not be recognized by the City of Winnipeg.

As far as income tax, the social allowance program is the source of income of last resort. While we do exempt a number of tax credits, child tax benefits, the GST rebate, we have never exempted the income tax refund.

Mr. Martindale: Can this minister explain to social assistance recipients why this change in policy was made in the middle of the refund season so that some people who got their cheques before April 1 are allowed to keep this income and people after April 1 are going to have it deducted 100 percent from one cheque? We are talking about families, and we may be talking amounts of up to \$1,000. How can this minister make this change at this time, in the middle of the refund season?

Mr. Gillehammer: Mr. Speaker, the member was here for the debate on Bill 70. I am not surprised he did not understand it. Clearly the bill said that these changes would be brought in on April 1.

The question of the income tax rebate, the province has always regarded that as additional revenue to recipients.

Student Social Allowance Program Funding Reinstatement

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, I do not think the Premier really understands the student social allowance program.

This program makes it possible for a significant number of Manitobans to go to school, to get a better job, to get off welfare. Some of these people do not have homes to go back to. Some of these people are parents themselves, and without this program, they will be still on welfare but not getting an education.

I want to ask the Premier: Given that that is the focus of the program, will he now agree to reconsider this devastating decision and reinstate the student social allowance program?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I do not think the member for St. Johns understands that throughout nine other provinces in Canada, and in the past in this province, families took responsibility for family members. People took responsibility for their own efforts. They did not just turn to welfare. They sought alternatives, and they do seek alternatives in other provinces. That is why, regrettably, this is just one of many difficult decisions that we have had to make. We cannot afford to do everything.

Recipient Survey

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, I wish the Premier had the courage to go out on the front steps of the Legislature today and see the real face of these cutbacks.

I would like to ask the Premier then if he would make a commitment to this House and to Manitobans, if before finally cutting this program, he would survey all existing participants of the student social allowance program to see how many are parents, how many are single parents, how many have no other homes to go back to and give them the option of having the benefit of this program so that they can break the welfare cycle.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, it does not take any courage to do as the opposition members do, to go out and tell every group that comes to this Legislature, we would give you more, we would pay more, we would give you more money, and then not have the courage to face up to the taxpayer and say, we would raise your taxes, just like they did for six and a half years when they were government, increase the personal taxes, the personal income taxes 139 percent over a space of six and a half years. They do not have that kind of courage.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: It is the taxpayers of this province who support breaking the welfare cycle and putting people back to work.

The Province of Manitoba Out-Migration Statistics

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Premier: How many more young people, in addition to the 23,000 who have already left Manitoba under this government since 1988, is this government prepared to see leave Manitoba before acting to create opportunities

for young people instead of cutting them off from all available opportunities?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): As usual, the member has her facts dead wrong. That is absolutely a false statement about the 23,000. [interjection] That is right, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is well over half of the decline, in fact 61 percent of it, is the direct result of the aging of the post-war baby boom generation, so they do not appear in the statistics because they have now moved beyond the 25-year-old bracket. There is an old saying, a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, and the member for St. Johns is the best example of that.

Home Care Program Equipment/Supply Costs

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

Last week we learned that the government is going to cut programs with supplies such as walkers and crutches. These programs are very vital to keep patients in their homes.

Can the Minister of Health tell this House how, by cutting these programs, he is going to justify the community-based health care system?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, that question was posed speculatively some 10 days ago, and I indicated that with patience one should await the budget tomorrow and have an accurate assessment of what sort of program changes may be part of the budget as they impact on the Ministry of Health and across government in general. From time to time, some of the speculation is not particularly productive in terms of engendering understanding of the challenges government faces today in creating budgets which do not impose undue tax hardships on the citizens of this province, maintain a balance of services and keep our deficit down.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, can the minister then tell this House if he is saying that they are not going to cut this program? Can he say very clearly that tomorrow's budget will not cut any Home Care programs?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, what I am saying is that the budget details tomorrow will reveal the size of the Home Care budget, and I think my honourable friend might be somewhat surprised at the size of the Home Care budget.

Children's Dental Program Elimination

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Health tell this House if the provincial children's program is going to be cut tomorrow also?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, again, I would just impose upon my honourable friend for the patience to await the budget tomorrow. It will put to rest a lot of speculation around a number of initiatives that various writers and speculators have said are part of tomorrow's budget.

* (1410)

Rural Development Corporations Funding

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, this government has no respect for rural Manitobans. They promised economic development, but all they have done is drain money out. Even though municipal officers and nonprofit organizations are protesting, this government refuses to listen. The very organizations that help promote economic development are now having their funding cut.

I want to ask the Minister of Rural Development how he can justify the 10 percent cut, reduction in funding, to RDCs, the very organizations that promote economic development in rural Manitoba.

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, of course, the member knows full well that over the course of the last number of years, our government has indeed promoted economic development in rural Manitoba.

I can simply refer to several of the programs that have been initiated under this government. Whether it is the Grow Bonds program, which the opposition was not very enthused about, or the Rural Economic Development Initiative program, which the opposition was not in favour of at all, the Community Choices program, have indeed been tools that rural communities have been able to use to build upon the strength of their communities.

I have to say that even through the decentralization process, we have been able to move jobs out to rural Manitoba, a process that the opposition was indeed opposed to right from the very beginning. So we have committed an

enormous amount of energy and effort to rural Manitoba.

Continuation

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, this minister should get out and listen to what rural Manitobans think about all of his proposals.

In light of the fact that people across the province are concerned about the long-term viability of organizations geared towards economic development—in fact the previous member for Portage la Prairie was very concerned about what this government was doing—can the Minister of Rural Development assure us that RDCs will continue to operate in rural Manitoba and that we will have economic development under this government rather than just draining out money—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has put her question.

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, there is no intention to eliminate RDCs. As a matter of fact, we will still continue to fund RDCs, but like any other organization, RDCs, whether there are other organizations that function within our province, have had to live up to the reality that indeed this province is undergoing a serious financial situation, and indeed they have to commit some of their resources to the common solution, if you like, for economic renewal and revival in this province.

Funding

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask this Minister of Rural Development: When is this government going to fulfill its promise to rural Manitoba? They promised economic development, and all they are doing is draining out money. Now they are reducing the funding to the organizations that provide economic development.

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, indeed our commitment is very solid to rural Manitoba. It always has been. Once again, through the many initiatives that we have embarked on, we have been able to create many, many jobs in rural Manitoba. [interjection]

The member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohm) speaks from his seat about some of the initiatives that have been embarked on. I refer to one of the largest, and

that is the Ayerst Organics support that we were able to give through Rural Economic Development and some thousand jobs that we created as a result of that.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at the Grow Bonds initiatives that have been embarked on, again a creation of some 115 jobs in rural Manitoba—we have already approved many rural economic development initiatives through REDI which are going to create jobs in rural Manitoba. So our commitment to rural Manitoba is strong and continues to be that.

Children's Dental Program Status

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the Minister of Health who can maybe reconfirm that they have a commitment to rural Manitoba. I am advised that staff who delivered the Children's Dental Program in rural Manitoba are being called to a meeting in Winnipeg tomorrow to learn about a so-called restructuring of the program. There are 49 staff involved, mainly women, who deliver a preventative dental health program for children in rural and northern Manitoba.

Can the Minister of Health confirm that this meeting is scheduled and that an excellent program for preventative health care is about to be either eliminated or to be seriously curtailed?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, this is approximately the fourth time that I have asked honourable friends opposite to bear with some patience for the budget tomorrow. My honourable friend will have answers to any and all questions that he may wish to pose.

Let me digress slightly and reiterate to my honourable friend the member for Brandon the kind of commitment that we have made to health care outside of the city of Winnipeg. The first ever cardiac imaging equipment in Brandon General Hospital was installed there as a result of this government. It was long denied when my honourable friend had the decision-making ability to put it in the Brandon General Hospital.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, the development of the Brandon General Hospital under the NDP puts this government to shame.

My question for the Minister of Health: Why does his government even consider cutting back a

preventative program which will reduce additional costs in the future and therefore can be less costly to society in the long run? Why is the government being so shortsighted in downgrading—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has put his question.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend, I think, mentioned the word "shame." The only shame I am ever aware of that was associated with Brandon General Hospital is the shame that my honourable friend endured when he went underground when the government he sat in forced the closure of acute care beds at Brandon General Hospital without consultation, without discussion, without backup of community services. That is the kind of shame my honourable friend ought to refer to.

Mr. Leonard Evans: The minister has no answer so he speaks nonsense, absolute nonsense.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health, who is supposed to be so concerned about preventative health care in rural Manitoba. Why does this minister pick on children who benefit from this program? Why do you pick on women who are primarily involved in delivering it? Why do you pick on rural Manitoba, where this program is operating?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I do not know how to give my friend an opportunity to defend where he was in that three-month period of absence when the hospital beds were closed by the NDP in Brandon, when he was—

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, Beauchesne is very clear that ministers do not have to answer questions. We know that happens on a regular basis, but the member for Brandon East has asked a question about a very important program, the Children's Dental Program. If this minister does not have an answer, he should maybe not only sit down—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable opposition House leader does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I just wish the member for Thompson had the courage to ask me some questions about health care improvements in his city, things that he could not achieve when he was a backbencher in the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, any time my honourable friend the member for Brandon East wants to talk about provision of health care services in rural Manitoba, I will walk him through the construction of a new hospital for acute care delivery in Minnedosa, I will walk him through the construction of a new hospital for acute care health delivery in Virden. Children are served in those hospitals. Children are born in those hospitals. Children breathe their first breaths in those hospitals—there because an NDP government would not build them, and we did.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Nonpolitical Statements

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): May I have leave for a nonpolitical statement?

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable minister have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great degree of pride and pleasure to have the opportunity to rise and ask all members of this House to wish very strong, warm, hearty congratulations to Brandon and area citizens for the 85th Royal Winter Fair, which was just hosted last week.

Mr. Speaker, the citizens of Brandon did themselves very proud in a new nine-and-a-half-acre complex that was deemed by many of the American visitors as the best they have seen in all of North America. It was a success because of a thousand volunteers, a committed board of directors, world-class exhibitors from all over North America.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of this House to join with me in congratulating Brandon for a job well done over the course of many years and concluded this year with the best show ever. I know next year will be even better. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for Brandon East have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): It gives me great pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to join with the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) in congratulating everyone associated with the Royal Winter Fair held in Brandon.

As the minister indicated, it indeed is a massive volunteer co-operative effort in the community and does all of Manitoba proud.

I was particularly impressed, as I am sure the members opposite were, with the participants who came from all over North America to be involved in various things, including the famous horse show.

Mr. Speaker, I know there has been development under this government of the Keystone Centre. but I am proud of the fact that we built the Keystone Centre back in '70-71. It was the greatest thing to ever be put in the city of Brandon.

* (1420)

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for St. Boniface have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I would like to join my colleagues here in the Legislature in wishing well, again, and congratulate Brandon in putting up that 85th fair. I have had the pleasure of attending for the last five years, and I would not miss it. I met a lot of Liberals there.

The friendship that they have shown in hospitality—the hospitality is great and the friendship that they have shown over the years, and the mayor has always welcomed us there and welcomes everybody. Like I say, it was a pleasure. I will look forward to being there again next year. The volunteers, we have to congratulate, because they are the ones who are responsible for putting up such a great show and the talent that comes out of there. Again, congratulations to the people of Brandon and the surrounding areas.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you call second readings, Bills 17 and 18.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 17—The Crown Lands Amendment Act

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): I am delighted to move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Downey), that Bill 17, The Crown Lands Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les terres domaniales, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Enns: Mr. Speaker, this although not a very large bill in terms of the number of clauses involved,

but these amendments to The Crown Lands Act are truly of significance. For all those who have an ongoing concern about our natural environment, what this is, is really a ground-breaking amendment to the real property legislation of this province, will enable certain covenants—wildlife and conservation covenants—to travel with the titles. This is, at this point, confined to Crown lands.

Honourable members will be aware, former ministers will be aware, from time to time Crown lands, if they meet the criteria as set down by the different classification procedures that are in place and have been in place for many years, can and are sold to private Manitobans, but very often, there are specific physical features about the land that ought to be in place and continue to be in place; that is, land that is not suitable for breaking, land that is providing a valuable habitat for various forms of wildlife, land that forms part of a wildlife corridor. While there is no reason why this land cannot be sold to private property holders in Manitoba, there is ample reason for wildlife interest and for the natural resource interest that these special features of this land be preserved.

There has been no vehicle in place that could ensure that would take place. There was no way that a covenant could be legally attached to the title that not only bound the initial purchaser of that Crown land, but that would in fact travel with the title from purchaser to purchaser.

I might say, Mr. Speaker, other jurisdictions, particularly some in the East where there is little or no Crown land or public or federal land, as in the case of the United States, various wildlife and naturalist organizations have encouraged governments to entertain this kind of legislation to preserve remaining habitat.

I would like to—although this is not inherent in this bill, I serve notice that, in my view, it would be an appropriate amendment to make available to private lands that have similar features worthwhile preserving for natural habitat reasons and/or for specific wildlife reasons.

We have instances where people who now wish in their wills to leave land—a particular 40 acres or a particular quarter section that they in their lifetime have husbanded in such a way that the natural resources of that piece of land were retained, that the provision it provided for habitat cover for various species of wildlife be maintained—so that it be

passed on to future generations, but there is no legal way. There is no legal way that can be done.

I am suggesting to my Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) that in the future a similar amendment, a similar change to the current Real Property Act be considered so that could be done. Right now what happens all too often is that a person who has the kind of land I am describing and wishing for it to be maintained in its natural state will often come to government and say to my department, the Department of Natural Resources, will you take on ownership of this land.

Mr. Speaker, honourable members, I wish to acknowledge the former administration did indeed set up a Manitoba Habitant Heritage Corporation partially for that reason, so that under the jurisdiction of this Crown agency, Manitobans wishing to bequeath, but more importantly wishing to ensure that land that had a particular value in its natural state could continue in this way for future generations, and that the benefits to wildlife resources and our department would derive from that if the land remained undeveloped, untouched and not altered from its natural state.

Mr. Speaker, that is something I hope that perhaps I will be able to provide to the Legislature for consideration at some future date.

* (1430)

What I can do and what I am doing by this bill is addressing that area that I have immediate legislative responsibility for, and that is Crown lands. So it is not too difficult to ask members of this Legislature to consider these amendments as they relate to when the province, when the government sells Crown lands, that it is possible, when the various experts within the department make a case, that certain features of that land, the natural state of that land, be preserved for the different reasons that I have mentioned, that that in fact be so noted on the title and that that covenant then forever travels with the title. Indeed if in some future generations that land is purchased, there is a well noted caveat on the land title documents that alerts the prospective purchaser of the fact that this land, while it may be purchased, it may be repurchased many times over in the future, but the natural habitat, the natural land cover must be preserved in its natural state.

It is progressive legislation, Mr. Speaker. It is the kind of legislation that, together with other

progressive legislation I have been able to introduce in this House, such as The Endangered Species Act, worries about the well-being of those wildlife species that are threatened with ongoing development on our landscape. It forms part of the overall tools and mechanisms that government can bring to bear to halt the continuing decline and loss of habitat that is so important for the wildlife resources of this province.

I would suggest to the honourable members opposite that they acquaint themselves with these amendments. I know that organizations such as the Manitoba Naturalists' Society and others, the Wilderness Caucus groups by and large support this kind of legislation. They may not support it in its exact wording, but it is the kind of legislation that I would like to think does not have all that great deal of partisan politics attached to it. Surely in this Chamber, whether we are New Democrats or Liberals or Conservatives, we have some understanding, some hope to pass on our wildlife resources to future generations yet unborn.

I look that on this particular bill, we will have unanimous support for the bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, before adjourning debate, I just wonder if I could ask a question for clarification of the minister, if that is agreeable?

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to allow the honourable member for Thompson to ask the honourable minister a question for clarification? There is leave. [agreed]

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to ask the minister, and I appreciate his comments, if there are any restrictions on the type of covenant that can be transferred under this particular legislation, or whether it can apply to any and all covenants respecting the use of the land for wildlife or habitat purposes.

Mr. Enns: The actual legislation—I am prohibited in our rules, Mr. Speaker, to deal clause by clause with the legislation. We are dealing in second reading in the principle of the bill. The honourable member will see in the clause of the bill that it refers to an agreement that when the seller and the purchaser enter into a sale of a particular piece of property, an agreement be arrived at, and it is within that agreement that variations pertinent to that piece of

land would be noted. It is that agreement that becomes the covenant that would travel with that.

In some cases, it will be a prohibition against any breaking of the land, for instance, the taking down of any trees in that area. In another case, it may be a case of not impeding a natural drainage or natural creek to flow through the land, and the agreement may specifically refer to not being able to put a clam or some obstruction in the normal watercourse. So it is not restrictive in that sense. It will be a question of the agreement spelling out the unique resource features of that specific piece of land that the government—in this instance, the Crown agency—wishes to protect and wishes to ensure its protection in succeeding sales to future generations of prospective buyers.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 18—The Corporations Amendment Act

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson), that Bill 18, The Corporations Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les corporations, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Speaker, the suggested amendments would require all trust and loan corporations doing business in Manitoba to obtain a business authorization, file an annual business return, pay an annual fee to the province and formalize the existing quarterly financial reporting requirement. As the business authorization requirement is a new concept, all trust and loan corporations currently doing business in Manitoba would automatically be given a business authorization within a four-month deadline to file a formal application.

This legislation will not result in needless duplication of regulatory activity as we will continue to rely upon the incorporating jurisdiction to act as the primary regulator. At the present time there are some provinces which have adopted what is called the equals approach which does result in duplication of activities, particularly in regard to audits. This has

highlighted the need for harmonization which Manitoba fully endorses.

As you are aware, Mr. Speaker, over the past several years, the provinces and the federal government have been working towards a harmonized reregulation of financial institutions, and this bill is one of the first steps in this province in attaining that goal of harmonization. The enactment of this bill will not dramatically change the practices of the trust and loan division but will formalize the requirement for extraprovincial trust and loan corporations. We have always, here in Manitoba, operated on the basis that the incorporating jurisdiction is the lead jurisdiction on regulatory matters, and this principle will continue. Again, there will be no undue duplication.

The current legislation does not provide for a level playing field under which all trust and loan corporations doing business in the provinces play by. At the present time, extraprovincial corporations are not required to directly report to the trust and loan division of the department nor to pay a fee to the province. The proposed legislation will change that and provide for the equal treatment of all trust and loan corporations doing business in the province. At the present time, all companies operating in the province are required to have deposit insurance through the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation, CDIC, and this provision will not change.

Manitoba is unique among the provinces in that we use the office of the federal Superintendent of Financial Institutions to act as the auditor for the director of our trust and loan division. I might add that the Superintendent of Insurance for Manitoba has the same arrangement with the federal Superintendent of Financial Institutions. This is a very important arrangement for us in that it minimizes the cost of audit programs as well as maximizes the use of all resources in this field.

This legislation will not change this relationship, and in fact, because this legislation moves us into the direction of greater harmonization, it will probably strengthen the feasibility of maintaining this co-operative effort. This is of great benefit to Manitoba.

If we were not to change our legislation, it is entirely within the realm of possibility that we might not be able to maintain this relationship with the Federal Superintendent of Financial Institutions

because that office would be required to report under two distinctly different pieces of legislation.

In short, Mr. Speaker, the basic purpose of the bill is to require that trust and loan corporations be authorized to do business in the province, to require them to pay an annual fee, to require trust and loan corporations operating in the province to file financial and other statements as required, and is phase one of a two-step process which will ultimately result in harmonization of these procedures across the country.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to my critics' comments on this issue.

* (1440)

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable acting government House leader, what are your intentions, sir?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Acting Government House Leader): Would you please call Bill 2 and Bill 3?

Mr. Speaker: Prior to proceeding with Bill 2 and Bill 3, I just happen to notice that on the Order Paper, we have debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), which I believe is redundant at this point in time.

I am wondering, would there be leave of the House to have this motion taken off the Order Paper, or is it the will of the House to leave it on the Order Paper? [interjection] It is the motion of the honourable Minister of Finance about notwithstanding Rule 65(6.1).

Is there a willingness on the part of the members just to help clean up the Order Paper?

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I think it is redundant. Just for information, I know there may be some confusion, but we have already tabled the Estimates' order list, so it is redundant. I suggest we do, by leave, delete it from the Order Paper.

Mr. Speaker: There is a willingness on the part of members then? That is agreed? [agreed]

I would like to thank honourable members.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 2—The Endangered Species Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), Bill 2, The Endangered Species Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les espèces en voie de disparition, standing in the name of the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? [agreed]

Bill 3—The Oil and Gas and Consequential Amendments Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Downey), Bill 3, The Oil and Gas and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi concernant le pétrole et le gaz naturel et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois, standing in the name of the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway).

Some Honourable Members: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? [agreed]

Honourable acting government House leader, what are your intentions now, sir?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Acting Government House Leader): Would you call Bill 20, please.

Bill 20—The Social Allowances Regulation Validation Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), Bill 20, The Social Allowances Regulation Validation Act; Loi validant un règlement d'application de la Loi sur l'aide sociale, standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? [agreed]

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, before I delve into the purpose and intent of this bill, I would like to go back to some statements that were made by the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) in Question Period today.

In fact, I thought that this bill would probably stand in the name of the Minister of Family Services, but I

guess because it is a very technical amendment, for some reason, it is standing in the name of the Minister of Justice and Attorney General (Mr. McCrae).

However, today, in response to my question, of course, the minister did not answer my question; in fact, he gave misleading information. When I asked about the CRISP benefit being disallowed as a benefit for people on city social assistance, he referred to the policy of the provincial social assistance system. Of course, I am already familiar with the policy regarding the provincial social assistance system, and that is that people can receive the benefit, but it is deducted dollar for dollar from their cheques, so most people do not bother applying.

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

The situation with the City of Winnipeg is quite different. The reason it is different is that myself and the executive director of the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization and the staff person for Interagency Group, back about 1983 or 1984, went to a standing committee of City Council and asked for a number of improvements to social assistance benefits. We had quite a list of things that we asked for, some of which we were not successful in getting and some of which we were.

One of the substantial changes that was made was that the City of Winnipeg decided to allow people on city assistance to receive the CRISP benefit, the Child Related Income Support Program. They also allowed people to receive the SAFFR benefit, Supplementary Assistance for Family Renters. That was a significant difference between City of Winnipeg policy and Province of Manitoba policy.

Ever since that time, the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization and other groups have been lobbying the provincial government, unsuccessfully, to allow people on provincial assistance to receive the Child Related Income Support Program benefit. The province has consistently said no, because it is a program that is targeted for low-income but working people, and so they were unwilling to change that rule.

Now, because of the standardization of social assistance rates under Bill 70 in the last session, the differences in benefits have basically been eliminated, and so the people on city that were

eligible for provincial programs no longer are. That was the intent of my question.

My question was: Why has the government changed that, knowing that Manitoba has the highest child poverty rate in Canada? We are talking about people who are already very low-income families and who need this money. The money is used for basic essential items such as food and clothing, in addition to their food and clothing allowance, and probably being used for school supplies and runners and all kinds of things that they are not able to take out of their existing social assistance budget.

So I am very disappointed, first of all, that the government has made this change in policy and, secondly, that the minister did not have the decency to answer the question properly and defend this policy decision that he made.

Secondly, we asked the minister about changes to income tax refunds and what people are allowed to keep and what they are not allowed to keep. Well, I did my research before I asked this question. I always do my research before I ask questions. In fact, I always know what the answer is before I ask the question.

It is pretty hard to get a straight answer out of a minister who distorts what you say and when you ask about income tax refunds talks about the CRISP benefit, and when you know that some kinds of income are exempt and others are not and you know what the differences are, and the minister knows that I know what the differences are, why can he not just answer the question and defend his policy? I am going to be—[interjection] As my honourable friend from Dauphin says, that would be asking too much from the minister.

Tomorrow morning when I get Hansard on line, I will be checking his answer for accuracy, because I think he distorted the intent of the question in his distorted answer, because I believe that my sources of information were correct. I was talking to staff of the City of Winnipeg who said that they had no warning of this. Yet the minister referred to Bill 70 of the last session, which I believe was passed in June, one of the last bills passed in June of the third session.

If that is the case, then the City of Winnipeg should have had ample notice and workers should have known what changes were coming as a result of

changes to provincial legislation regarding standardization.

If that is the case, why did they not get six months notice? Why did they not get three months notice? Why did they not get a months notice? What I am told by the front line staff is that they do not even have the new regulations. So the front line staff are going to their supervisors and asking their supervisors, what are the new rules? The supervisors apparently have some information and that information contradicts what the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) said in the House today in response to my question.

So when we read that answer, we will be seeking clarification either in Question Period or in Estimates, if we ever get to Estimates, or in Budget Debate or in Question Period. We get another chance to try to get this minister to clarify his answers.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Check with Ecclesiastes, Chapter 10, Verse 2.

Mr. Martindale: Well, the Minister of Natural Resources wants to quote Scriptures. I happen to have read the Scripture. I am waiting for the member for Rossmere (Mr. Neufeld). I understand the member for Rossmere is going to address this in his Budget Debate, and I am waiting for that moment. I am going to consult the commentaries. You will just have to be patient and wait until after the member for Rossmere speaks, and then I will give the rebuttal to the interpretation of the member for Rossmere.

I think it is not quite as simple as the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) would like to think. I am sure that, since it is from the Book of Ecclesiastes, it has a much deeper meaning than the surface meaning that he would like to give to that passage. [interjection] There are many good things in the Bible. There are many things in the book that you probably do not agree with, Mr. Deputy Premier, but that is not the purpose of this debate today. We will get into Biblical interpretation on your Sunday shopping bills. I think it is the kind of passage that your members would like to ignore.

* (1450)

In Bill 20, The Social Allowances Regulation Validation Act, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General (Mr. McCrae) refers to kinds of income which are exempt, for example, Manitoba cost of

living and property tax credits, the federal child tax benefit and the federal goods and services tax credit. Those are the kinds of income that have been exempt and will continue to be exempt and which I was aware of when I asked my question today.

My understanding is that what I was asking the minister about today was income from employment, rebates from employment income that people are no longer eligible to receive. The Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) did not answer my question, as he usually does not, but we will read what he said in Hansard and we will go after him again.

There does appear, however, to be a change as a result of Bill 20 and a change that concerns me, because it says that amendments to the regulations will ensure that income from exempt sources will be excluded from a recipient's income when determining eligibility for social allowance benefits in the month it is received. I am waiting to see the actual regulation, because my suspicion is that it will be only for one month that it is exempted and, after that, it will be considered income.

In fact, in his remarks, the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) said that this will be at the discretion of the director of social allowance for a period not exceeding 12 months from receipt of the exempt income. So what does discretion mean? Will there be discretion in some cases and not in others? Will the discretion be up to one month, even though 12 months is allowed? I am looking forward to getting a copy of the regulations for Bill 20.

In fact, the sooner that the minister can provide that to me, the better, because I would like to study the regulations and compare those with the remarks of the Minister of Justice. I know it was introduced by the Minister of Justice, but I think it properly falls under the responsibility of the Minister of Family Services since this has to do with social allowances.

I think that the possible effect of this bill change could be that when people get income, even though it is exempt income, after a month they are going to be forced to spend it. Now why would you want to force people to spend income that is exempt? The only reason that I can think of is that if people do not spend it, you can deduct it from their next cheque. Why would you want to deduct a legitimate income that people are currently allowed to keep when—[interjection] Which side am I on? The

member for Steinbach (Mr. Driedger) asks which side am I on? I am on the side of people who are already incredibly poor, many of them constituents of mine in Burrows constituency, but many more, I am sorry to say, in the constituencies of Wolsley and Broadway and Point Douglas.

These are the people who are the most vulnerable in our society, as we keep pointing out over and over, and the ones who can least afford to lose more. And what is this government doing? It is changing the rules so that they lose income that now they are eligible for. The rates would have gone down if the City of Winnipeg had not chosen to top them up. At the same time, what is this government doing to their corporate friends? They are shifting the tax burden, as Don Campbell points out in the Free Press of April 4.

So if you look at corporation tax revenue from 1989 to 1993, it has declined from \$201 million to \$103 million, a decline of \$100 million dollars. What has happened to personal tax revenue? It has increased from \$1.3 billion to \$1.24 billion, and as a percentage it has increased from 39 percent to 46.7 percent. If you compare similarly the corporations and their percentages, the tax burden that they shared, unequitably I would say, has decreased from 8.4 percent to 4.0 percent.

So when the member for Steinbach (Mr. Driedger) asked me what side am I on, I am on the side of my constituents who believe that they are paying enough. In the case of social assistance recipients they should at least be entitled to continue to get what they are getting now without being punished and having monies taken away from them, there should be some fairness, and that corporations should be required to pay their fair share.

When the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is asked about this and is asked why they do not hire more people to go after corporations that are behind in their taxes owing to the provincial government, he says, oh, I know you want me to hire more staff to go after that, but I am not going to do it.

There are similar arguments made in the House of Commons in Ottawa if you read Hansard. I have read about this in the past. I remember reading that for every person who is hired, the federal government receives something like \$17 of revenue for every dollar paid out in salaries. Yet they are still unwilling to go after corporations at the federal level,

and I would suggest that the provincial minister has the same problem.

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

The member for Steinbach (Mr. Driedger) asked which side I am on? I would like to point out that I am not the only one who is on the side of the poor. If the minister would care to read—and I am sure he probably has read the editorial in the Saturday Free Press of April 3—the headline is, Wrong Place to Cut. It criticizes this government for their cuts to student social allowance.

I have been getting phone calls from these people, and I can tell you what the effect will be. [interjection] The minister must have an office at the front of the building. He saw me signing them up. Of course, he saw them signing petitions on my back, literally on my back. They were very eager to sign those petitions and tell this government what they think of cutting the student social allowance program.

What is going to happen to these people? The minister is unwilling to admit this in Question Period, but what is going to happen is they will no longer be able to stay in school. They will apply for city welfare because they are deemed employable, and they will not be allowed to go to school while they are on city welfare because those are the rules.

When you are on city welfare you are considered employable, and you must be available for work, and you must be searching for work. As for the cost, it is really just an offloading from the province to the city because the monthly allowance that these students are getting, I am told, is \$30 less than what they would get on social assistance.

So these are people who are motivated. These are people who want to go to school. These are people who want to get an education. These are people who want to get ahead, these are people who want a job and a career—and they are willing to take a sacrifice of \$30 a month, of less income in order to be part of the student social allowance program. Is that not correct, Mr. Minister, that the basic allowance is \$30 less on student social allowance?

I think it is much better to have young people going to school and studying to further their job possibilities and further their possibility of getting a career than to not be in the educational system and to be on municipal social assistance. Now you can

say, well, they could get a job; in fact, that is what the minister said today. How many jobs are there out there when the unemployment rate in the city of Winnipeg is something like 12 percent, especially for people who may have a Grade 9 or 10 education? They are not going to get a job when there are university graduates and high school graduates who are better qualified than they to be employed.

The minister suggested get a part-time job and put yourself through school. I would suggest that a minimum wage, which is what most of these students would be able to get, nothing more—they cannot afford to put themselves through school on minimum wage, especially if they are going to work the kind of hours they need to be self-supporting. [interjection] The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) says from her seat, some of us did it. That is true. I am one of the ones who did it because I worked part time when I was in high school. The difference is that I was living at home. I was not living on my own and providing all my own income, and when I was in university, many of us worked part time to go through university.

The difference is that these students —[interjection] The member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) points out that wages were relatively higher than what they are. It was more feasible to pay your way through than it is now and—[interjection] Well, I do not know when you went to school, 20 years ago, 30 years ago. For myself, it was in the early 1970s that I was going to university and working and putting myself through university for a number of years. I think times have changed and—[interjection]—same year as the minister, that is fine.

The difference is that these people are living in an economy at a time when unemployment is at 12 percent, when these are the least educated people and the least likely to get decent, good-paying jobs to put themselves through school. [interjection] The minister says the taxpayers are burdened as they have never been before. The difference is, I believe, the taxpayers would rather pay people to go to school, would rather pay people to be in employment and training programs than to pay them to stay at home and collect social assistance.

* (1500)

That is the choice that we have with these kinds of programs. It is either pay people to stay at home or pay them to go to school. I believe that the majority of taxpayers would rather see those young people stay in school, and certainly those young people would rather be in school than at home doing nothing if that is the alternative. I believe that realistically that is the alternative for most of them.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I am looking forward to Family Services Estimates, and I regret that we have not been into them yet.

An Honourable Member: So are we.

Mr. Martindale: The government has been looking forward to Estimates too. In fact, I think the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) miscalculated, the government House leader miscalculated, because they did not really expect that we would not be able to get into Family Services and Highways Estimates. There was a slight miscalculation there, something that was kind of beyond his control, I guess. I think it is significant that he has regretted it ever since.

I think he wishes that we were in Estimates rather than having to drag this out through Question Period for a couple of weeks and Question Period during budget time and delay getting into Family Services Estimates. Meanwhile, all those cuts are out there. We are getting the phone calls and we are getting the letters. People are rallying in front of the steps of the Legislature to protest these outrageous cuts.

An Honourable Member: You should recognize there are two sides to every issue, sometimes three or four.

Mr. Martindale: The Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey), from his seat, says that we should recognize there are difficult decisions, to paraphrase him. I would agree that there are difficult decisions to be made. In fact, our Leader has said, tough decisions need to be made. We agree with that. [interjection] The member for Concordia (Mr. Doer).

The government repeats over and over again that everyone has to share the pain. Well, tomorrow we will find out if that is really true or not. For the present time, what we see are cutbacks and reductions in funding to organizations which cannot afford and should not be eliminated.

There are some that we have not defended. I have not heard anybody, either inside this Chamber or outside in the media defending, for example, the

Manitoba Association of School Trustees and the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents. None of us have been defending those two organizations. [interjection] The minister says what about teachers? There have been people who belong to those groups who have been defending their own organizations. I would grant you that. I would say we have not been defending those particular cuts.

Out of the 56 organizations that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) withdrew all the funding from, we have been defending half a dozen. We have been defending the Foster Family Association, the Manitoba Child Care Association, the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization, and the Indian-Metis friendship centres.

In fact, there have been four organizations and kinds of organizations that have gotten most of the attention, because we believe they are the ones whose funding should have been kept on, and it would have been fair and equitable if they lost 10 percent, or whatever it is—we find out tomorrow—that all organizations are probably losing, that they should have shared the pain with everybody else but not been eliminated. If the government was looking to eliminate, they should have looked elsewhere. [interjection]

The member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) reminds me about corporations. I have said several times in Budget Debate that I would like to see this Minister of Finance go after the federal government to close some of the loopholes at the federal level. One good place to start would be the federal trust tax breaks. We know it was a former Liberal government that put in a 21-year rule so that private family trusts were not taxed for 21 years. Now the federal Conservative government is perpetuating that huge tax loophole. How much money are we talking about? Well, we do not know. The federal government either does not know or is not telling us. How many of them are there?—22,000 of them. [interjection]

Perhaps the government House leader does not want to hear about this, but the Phyllis Bronfman private family trust rose in value from \$15 million to \$70 million dollars between 1942 and 1969, and estimates of the total amount vary from \$40 billion to \$70 billion. So here is an estimate of \$40 billion to \$70 billion that is not being taxed at all.

So as these government members are saying, where are we going to get the money? How are we going to pay this? Well, I would like to hear them say just for once, well, we intend to sit down with the federal Minister of Finance and ask them to close some of these loopholes, the corporate tax loopholes and the family trust loophole and capture some of that revenue and share it with the provinces. [interjection]

Well, the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) asks a very good question. How much money is there? Well, if the Deputy Premier would like to read Linda McQuaig's excellent book *Behind Closed Doors*, he would find out what some of these tax loopholes were costing in terms of expenditures. I believe the book was published about 1986 and most of her figures are 1984, and we are talking billions of dollars. We are talking approximately \$25 billion. We are talking enough money to almost wipe out the deficit in 1984 at the federal level. So the money is there, but the willingness is not. For example, the top five tax loopholes at the federal level cost about \$6 billion. One of them is the entertainment tax deduction—\$1.1 billion.

I actually talked to a business friend about this tax gift to business people, and I said, do you use this tax? He said, well, I used to. I used to buy subscription tickets to Jets games. I used to buy four subscription seats to every Jets game, but he stopped using it. Instead, what does he do? He takes his wife out for dinner once in a while. Well, I do not think that is a legitimate use of the business entertainment deduction. [interjection] Well, the minister will always use the fact that it employs people. Well, so do the 56 organizations that you eliminated funding to employ people, lots of them.

What we are doing is, we are putting together a list of how many people those 56 organizations employed. That is quite helpful research, to know the effects of this government's policy, to know how many people are being laid off, because when people are working, surprise, surprise, they are paying income taxes. When they are not working, many of these people are going to be collecting social assistance. I know some of these people who are losing their jobs at the friendship centre and Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization, and I doubt very much that they are going to find alternative employment.

Actually, Mr. Acting Speaker, we are really quite grateful to the government for bringing in Family

Services Estimates so early, because what we are doing is, we are receiving a lot of phone calls. We are receiving a lot of letters, and very poignant letters, I must say, on a daily basis on the effects of these cutbacks. These are not people from the inner city. People from the inner city sign petitions. They phone their MLAs. People from the suburbs, in my limited experience, are much more likely to write letters. These letters are extremely eloquent.

In fact, I am going to have to look this up, because I wish I knew which constituency this letter was from. The address is Culross Bay, Winnipeg, R2C 4E2. I do not know what area of the city that is, but I am going to find out because we have an excellent letter here. [interjection] This letter is from Transcona. I will have to copy it to my colleagues from Transcona (Mr. Reid) and Radisson (Ms. Cerilli).

The letter is regarding the cut of the \$100,000 grant to the Association of Community Living Manitoba and this person writes to me, actually writes to the Minister of Family Services and sent a copy to the Leader of the Liberal Party and to myself and to the Association of Community Living. This letter is about the cut to the grant and how it affects their family and how their family has benefited because they have a son who is 11 years old and is autistic, and talks about the very helpful services being provided by the Association for Community Living.

I received another letter today regarding the same organization. I am going to be asking the minister, how did he respond to this individual, and what do you say when someone writes about the very helpful service that is being provided by the Association for Community Living? What do you say to this individual who is writing to you as the minister?

* (1510)

Mr. Acting Speaker, we are really quite grateful that the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) announced the cut in funding to 56 organizations and that the government House leader tabled the Family Services Estimates, because it means that we have had a chance to study them, and it means that organizations out there have received letters saying that their fees are going up or the rates are being cut or that there is no funding to the organization, so now people are responding.

We are getting the letters and we are getting the phone calls about the effects on people. We are not

getting phone calls from the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents, I can tell you that. I have not had any phone calls from teachers or trustees. What we are getting is people who are on student social allowance saying: What am I going to do? How am I going to stay in school? I cannot go home.

It is the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) who is suggesting that some of these young people go home, not myself, as the Premier (Mr. Filmon) indicated in Question Period today. We will get out Hansard and we will find where the Minister of Family Services said it on the record that these young people should go and live at home. [interjection]

The minister is referring to something I said on CJOB, I believe. I am sorry that I did not hear it. I know I taped it on Friday. That may be true to a very small number of people, that some of them may be able to go home. But what I am told is that the vast majority are not able to go home, that many of them cannot go home, that some of them come from abusive home situations and it would be inappropriate for them to go home. So I would hope that the minister would not be urging these young people to go home.

We know what is going to happen. We know that they are going to end up on municipal assistance in the city of Winnipeg where in order to be employable they cannot be going to school. I think it is a shame that they are no longer able to continue with their education and improve their job chances.

Everyone in this House, I believe, is waiting for the economy to recover, waiting for employment to pick up again. I believe that is the desire of all of us regardless of party and the desire of all Manitobans, that we want to see the economy recover, we want to see people employed, we want to get people off social assistance.

When that happens, when the jobs come back, we need people who are trained, we need people who are educated, and we need people who are employable. If we do not have that, then some of those jobs are not going to be filled, or they are not going to be filled with people who are as well qualified or as well trained as they should be, and that is a shame.

Many organizations have now contacted us and told us what the effects are on individuals in their organization. The foster family association, for

example, are saying that they are not going to accept any more children as part of their protest, and the minister says, well, we will find foster families for those people. I do not believe that they will be very successful in that, especially since they are giving less money to Winnipeg Child and Family Service agency, so they are going to end up in group homes.

In fact, they are going to cost the government more money because parents are now getting a per diem—I do not have the figures in front of me, but it is much less than what it would cost in a group home. A group home in Winnipeg could easily be a hundred dollars a day, and probably you could support four or five children in foster families on—[interjection] I am glad that the minister has those figures. [interjection]

Yes, the Liberal Family Services critic says, ask what it costs in St. Amant Centre, and, of course, it is much, much greater than even a group home. The child in foster care is \$16.23 a day, and the Foster Family Association says what about the children who are ending up in hotels and motels. They estimate that cost is at least \$220 a day when you add up motel, food, child care salary and caregivers' food, \$220 per day.

In fact, Mr. Acting Speaker, I do not think that the government has thought through many of these changes. I do not think that they are well thought out at all. In fact, many of the things that they are doing contradict some of the good things that the minister has said. For example, the minister said on foster parenting on October 18, 1990: "It has been said that foster parents are the backbone of the Child and Family Services system and I believe this to be true."

He also said: "This is also a time to salute the work of the Manitoba Foster Family Association which maintains a high level of excellence in the delivery of service and support to foster parents through training and education (ing) parents."

On May 9, 1992, on training, the minister said: "We'll make every effort to work with the Manitoba Foster Family Association to see that training is provided."

So what did he do? They were receiving \$18.23 a day for a child under 10 and \$19.14 for a child 10 to 18, and the minister reduced that to \$16.23 and \$17.14 a day, and the association budget of \$308,000 was wiped out. I talked to people who had been involved with the Foster Family Association,

and they said it provided a very valuable service to them.

One of the things that I was unaware of was that many, many people who volunteer to be foster parents are charged—there are allegations of abuse. Where do they turn? I mean they are being investigated by the Child and Family Services agency. They do not want to turn to the same agency for support and advice that is investigating them, and so in the past they turned to the Foster Family Association. Now that association may well be gone because of this cut.

Those parents said to me that, if it was not for the Foster Family Association, they never would have survived the allegations of abuse. The numbers are going up and up every year. It is becoming a thankless job. Why would someone want, unless they had a very big heart and they were very, very generous, to take a foster child and then to be accused of abusing a child as a result of being a foster family? I think society owes them a great debt, and at the very least we owe them enough money to provide adequately for the children that they are fostering and not to cut back on it. [interjection] The member says, they had enough.

The Foster Family Association was renegotiating a new contract, and they had a paper all ready to sign. They were waiting for the government to sign, and what happened? They did not sign the new deal. They reneged on all the negotiations and are giving the families less money.

An Honourable Member: How much is enough? How much should be given?

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Acting Speaker, I am asked, how much is enough? Well, as far as I know, many of these organizations were satisfied with the rates that they were getting or they were negotiating for new rates, and what happened was they got a reduction. They may have been saying this is not enough, but they would at least liked to have been consulted instead of which they had the rug pulled out from under them.

Mr. Acting Speaker, there are many issues in the area of social allowances that I could get into. I am sorry that I did not have Hansard, so I could go into more detail on the minister's answers in Question Period today, because I think he did not answer my questions. I will have another chance later to address that.

I would like to conclude now my remarks on Bill 20. Thank you.

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

* (1520)

* * *

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Acting Speaker, it is not my intention to disrupt the discussion and debate on Bill 20. What I am seeking now is leave of the House to speak on another bill, particularly Bill 22, which is The Public Sector Reduced Work Week and Compensation Management Act. If I were allowed to speak on it, then I would suggest we come back to Bill 20.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Would the House leader have leave to introduce second reading to Bill 22?

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): No. Leave is denied.

* * *

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Acting Speaker, we are prepared to speak on Bill 20, which has been through the Order Paper on the proper process. I think it is important that we do follow due process in this House on this bill and indeed on other bills, whether it be Bill 22, which we indeed will get to, a bill which I had the opportunity to very briefly look at earlier.

I would point out, Mr. Acting Speaker, one of the reasons that we have our processes in this House in terms of proper notice, proper order being given, is the fact that we, as legislators, have to have the ability to analyze legislation at the various different stages. We are dealing now with second reading. There are a couple of important steps that take place before second reading: first reading, which gives the opportunity to government, following having put the item on the Notice Paper, to give clear evidence of what it is doing; also the distribution of the bill, to give members of the Legislature the chance to peruse the bill.

I would note, Mr. Acting Speaker, that we had the opportunity to peruse this bill, and that is important. The same thing with Bill 22. When we have had the proper opportunity, under our rules, to have proper

consideration, we will indeed debate that particular bill. [interjection]

I appreciate the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), because I know he is a consistent protector of the rights of members of this House. [interjection] Maybe, indeed, Mr. Acting Speaker, the government House leader was trying to slip one in on me. I appreciate the minister.

I appreciated, on the previous bill today, the courtesy the minister showed to the members of the House by asking questions on second reading, something that up until recently I never assumed was anything other than the right of members. Whether it is a right or a courtesy, Mr. Acting Speaker, that is, I think, greatly appreciated. [interjection]

I appreciate the comments from the dean of the House, the most experienced member, on the importance of parliamentary procedure, which indeed is where we are at in terms of Bill 20.

An Honourable Member: Where are we at?

Mr. Ashton: Well, we are at the position of dealing with The Social Allowances Regulation Validation Act. It was introduced by the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) on March 25, and I had the opportunity to read his brief introductory comments in which the Minister of Justice said: The intent of this legislation is to clarify regulations under The Social Allowances Act, and pointed out that policies enshrined in the regulations had been adhered to in practice since the 1970s and this legislation would ensure the regulations are clearly defined and consistently interpreted.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the amendments to regulations ensure that income from exempt sources will be excluded from a recipient's income when determining eligibility for social allowances in the month that the benefits are received.

That is a direct statement from the minister. I think it is important to put on the record to understand the clear intent of this bill, the principle of this bill, which is what we are dealing with on second reading.

Indeed, the regulations also provide for an extension of the grace period at the discretion of the director of social allowances for a period not exceeding 12 months in receipt of exempt income.

The legislation has the effect of applying the amended regulations under The Social Allowances

Act retroactively. Its intent is to ensure that decisions made when administering The Social Allowances Act prior to the amendment of the regulations are validated as long as they meet the criteria of the amended regulations.

Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, it is interesting to note that once again we are dealing with retroactive legislation. I have made comments on the record on a number of other bills. The farce of Sunday shopping where we have a bill that was introduced that will not be probably dealt with for a considerable period of time that now has been subsumed by Sunday shopping—the sequel. We have got the sequel even before the original movie had a chance to run in the theatres. This is making a farce out of our democratic system.

We are going to be having hearings on bills that have retroactive impact. What rights does that give to members of the Legislature? What rights does that give to us if we decide to vote against say this bill, a retroactive bill, or bills in regard to Sunday shopping or any other retroactive matter?

We are ending up in a situation where this government on issue after issue is in the position increasingly of bringing in retroactive legislation—the retroactive government, the retrogressive-retroactive government.

Dealing again in terms of this bill, the principles very clearly outlined in terms of the introductory comments brought in by the minister himself, and I appreciated the comments of the minister. He pointed out very clearly this is a retroactive bill. I ask the question to members of this House whether it is in keeping with the role of this Legislature to determine whether a bill is passed or not; whether it is in keeping with the role of this Legislature which has, under the parliamentary tradition, the rights under first, second and third readings, the committee stage, where we have the unique distinction of being the only province in Canada which has public hearings on every bill—a public significance, every bill.

I ask, is it appropriate that we also now are dealing increasingly with retroactive legislation, the retroactive government's retrogressive-retroactive government? I raise that because that is the first principle I think that has to be raised in terms of debate.

I want to deal with the second principle. As I outlined just a few minutes ago, the Minister of

Justice (Mr. McCrae) said that the powers enshrined in these regulations has been adhered to in practice since the 1970s.

Well, let us talk about some of the practices in social allowances since the 1970s, Mr. Acting Speaker, and the fact that here, on the one hand, this government is saying that it is adhering to practices that have been in place since the 1970s. Let us look at what they are doing in terms of social allowances. Are they adhering to the practices and the principles that have been in place in this province for the last two decades? I ask that question, because the answer is no. Whether it be in terms of student social allowances, whether it be in terms of the cuts that are now taking place in terms of the City of Winnipeg recipients, any recipients in this province who are receiving more benefits, additional recognition of the hardships they face, we are now finding the true agenda of this government.

You know, let us look at the bottom line here, Mr. Acting Speaker. This government says that it is broke. It says that it does not have the funds. Indeed, they have run up a high deficit or record deficit in this province. [interjection] But it is interesting, as the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) points out, the interesting thing is it depends on who they are dealing with. Some groups are told we do not have the money. Some groups are told, well, maybe we have some money after all. There is a whole pattern that is developing in this province.

Let us look at who in this province is being hardest hit by this government. Have we seen a wholesale cut in terms of corporate grants?

* (1530)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Order, please. Could I ask the honourable member to remain a little bit relevant to the bill which is before us, and that happens to be Bill 20, The Social Allowances Regulation Validation Act.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Acting Speaker, I appreciate your putting your earphone on and I am sure you will hear me many times, as I have done up to now, make specific reference to Bill 20. I will point out the inconsistencies of this government that brings in an item of legislation that says they are being consistent with practices that have been place since the 1970s, when daily we are seeing that this government is cutting in terms of welfare and social

assistance, cutting the poorest in our society on a daily basis, and that is something that is as relevant as anything can be in this Legislature. I appreciate your comments and I would hope that members opposite will understand the relevancy of pointing out the fact that they are cutting the poorest in our society.

I ask the question again. Where, Mr. Acting Speaker, is the pain that is being felt by the corporate friends of the Conservatives? Where is the pain? Are they cutting the grants for payroll taxes—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Order, please. I would refer all honourable members to Rule 30 which states: Speeches shall be directly relevant to the question under consideration or to the motion or amendment that the member is speaking, intends to move, or the point of order.

I would appreciate the assistance of all honourable members by complying with the principles and the Rules cited. Additionally, I would wish to draw to the attention of the honourable members the provisions of Rule 39 which sets out steps which can be taken when members persist in irrelevance or repetition.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Acting Speaker, the cuts that are taking place in terms of social assistance and what this government is doing is directly relevant. I am making specific reference to comments that were made by the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae). If it was relevant for the Minister of Justice, it is relevant indeed. I appreciate your warnings, but the Minister of Justice said this government has been consistent on social assistance since the 1970s. That is not true. That is what I am proving right now in my comments.

They have not followed the principles that have been placed in terms of social assistance in this province. We have, in this province currently, the highest rates of child poverty and the highest rates of poverty of any province. That is relevant because quite frankly if anybody understands what is going on outside of this building, that is the most relevant thing the fact we have got so many people in such a difficult situation in this province right now.

I heard today the Premier (Mr. Filmon) say, well, Mr. Acting Speaker, that is all relative, the so-called statistics. We do not have a problem with poverty, quoting the Fraser Institute.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I want to deal with the question of poverty as it relates to social assistance in this particular bill because the Premier does a disservice to this House when he suggests that there is anything in the statistics that is misleading that underestimates the amount of poverty. If the Premier would care to check with Statistics Canada, he will find that the low-income cutoffs are applied in urban communities, are applied to rural communities, but not to reserves. There is no measurement of poverty on reserves in this province.

I want to transpose that with another thing that the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) should deal with in terms of the reality of this province. The recent statistics from Stats Canada census statistics, which in themselves have always underestimated the number of aboriginal people, showed a dramatic increase in the aboriginal population and the fact that we have the highest aboriginal population as a percent of population in the country.

I ask you to transpose those two figures. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) says, these are only so-called statistics. There is not the problem with poverty in this province that people think there is.

An Honourable Member: Not if you redefine it.

Mr. Ashton: He is trying to redefine poverty out of existence. Mr. Acting Speaker, that is what right-wing governments have done since they have ever been elected. There was no problem with poverty in the Middle Ages in Great Britain; it was just a matter of relative statistics.

I remember the efforts of the Ronald Reagans and the Margaret Thatchers to redefine poverty out of existence. We have had federal Conservative members of the House of Commons say, we have got to redefine poverty so it does not exist anymore on the books. Well, the fact is poverty is a reality.

I would say the current statistics in Manitoba underestimate the amount of poverty. That is because amongst the poorest in our society are aboriginal people living on reserve. The statistics do not account for poverty on reserves in Manitoba, and we have a higher percentage of aboriginal population. Therefore, if anything, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) should have gotten up today and said, you know, those statistics are bad enough, but the reality is they probably underestimate the degree of poverty. Underestimate it, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Let us not talk on cyclical, circular terms about redefining poverty out of existence. If the Premier, and if this government, does not think that poverty exists, perhaps the Premier should get out of this building. He does not seem to wish to do it when anybody is critical of his policies.

I was at a demonstration today on social allowances. I talked to the people that had been directly victimized by this government, but you know—

An Honourable Member: Did you carry a placard, too?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Acting Speaker, the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) said, did I carry a placard, too? Well, I did not carry a placard, but I support them 100 percent. I ask, when he has to talk to his people, his constituents in Brandon West, and talk to some of the students who have been cut off student allowances, whether he will say whether he supports them or opposes them. It will be interesting to see that.

The reality is the Premier (Mr. Filmon) today did not have the time to come out of his office to talk to the students on social allowance. Is it any wonder the Premier does not know what he is talking about when it comes to social allowance in this province? I am not saying that one has to have been on welfare or social assistance oneself to understand, but I think it is fairly reasonable to suggest that if one has not been through that—perhaps, the Premier has not, we can assume that—it is not too much to expect he might talk to some people who have gone through it, that are going through that now and face the people whom he was dealing with today.

I remember when Sterling Lyon was Premier, when people came to the steps of this Legislature, he had the courtesy not only to go and speak to them, but to meet with representatives of the organization in his office afterwards. I know that, because I was president of my student union at the time. When we protested against Tory policies in education, we met with Sterling Lyon, and Sterling Lyon spoke to us. I ask, Mr. Acting Speaker, is this progress? Is this the reality of the 1990s that Premiers hide behind media handlers, hide behind scripted news conferences, that they do not get out, do not talk to people, talk to the people who are being directly affected by their cuts, by their policies, by their decisions.

I do not think that is acceptable in this province to have lectures in this House from people who do not know what is going on out there and do not even have the courtesy to speak to people who have come to this Legislature, the Manitoba Legislature, to express their concerns. I realize it is a lot easier to hide in the bunker, to hide in the office. The reality is, though, people are hurting out there. They are being hurt by this government's decisions and, on social allowances, never been more obvious.

As I said, look at this statement in Bill 20, that they are just adhering in practice to what has been going on. Since the 1970s, there has only been one government the last 10, 15 years that has cut in terms of programming, in terms of social assistance. It is this government. You know, Mr. Acting Speaker, this group of Conservatives is beginning to make Sterling Lyon look like a moderate. Well, maybe I should not go quite that far. Let me rephrase that. I have heard people say Sterling Lyon was not this bad. He was bad for people in poverty, but was not this bad. This government has slashed social assistance for students, and it is slashing assistance because of its so-called standardization of welfare rates across the province for people in the city of Winnipeg and any municipality that dares to pay above the provincial average.

I want to deal with the reality of what is going on out there. You know, in my office I have received many calls from people who have had difficulty even qualifying for existing social allowance programs, particularly the student social assistance program. I can pinpoint. I can arrange for the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) to meet with some of my constituents.

I want to explain to you, Mr. Acting Speaker, the scenario that happens to young people, young adults, many of them single parents who are faced with a tough choice. I will give you an example. I have talked to one constituent, a single mother, a teen-aged mother—by the way, this government is also cutting funding for the Committee on Unplanned Pregnancy. I think that is relevant in talking about this issue.

I ask you to put yourself in her situation. She approached me and she said, I cannot go back home; there is no home for me to go back to; I cannot get any assistance from my parents; they do not want to know me; I want to go back to school. This is exactly what she said to me.

* (1540)

Mr. Acting Speaker, why did she want to go back to school?—because she wanted to break out of the welfare cycle. She wanted to be able to finish her high school education. She wanted to get training, something, anything, because she wanted to make sure that she was not permanently on welfare with a child to support, unable to enter the workforce. She came to me in terms of assistance.

I can outline dozens of cases in my own constituency where people have come and really found themselves in a twilight zone, young people, young adults, receiving no assistance whatsoever from their parents, not receiving assistance from government programs and trying to get an education, often with a child to support.

An Honourable Member: Do you want to meet some who have done it?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Acting Speaker, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) says, want to meet some who have done it. Maybe the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs would like to meet some of the ones who have done it, thanks to the student social assistance program and the support of teachers and friends. Perhaps the minister—[interjection]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Order, please. Could I ask the honourable members to keep it down just a little bit. The honourable member for Thompson has been almost relevant to this point, and I would like him to continue.

Mr. Ashton: Relevancy indeed, Mr. Acting Speaker, and I thank you.

I wish that the minister and I wish the Premier (Mr. Filmon) would take the time—[interjection] In fact, I wish the minister would participate in debate on some of these issues instead of debating from her seat. It is a lot easier to sit there. I know I debate from my seat as well, but I also debate from my feet, Mr. Acting Speaker, something the minister might want to learn from.

I am more than willing to listen to what the minister says in terms of social assistance in this province, the same minister who is quite happy to see antipoverty groups, friendship centres and the Flin Flon crisis centre cut but not the Consumers' Association because that is different. [interjection] Well, the minister says that is different.

If she can explain to me how fair it is for them to be so selective in cutting some and not the others, I wait for those comments. She will have the chance. On this bill she will have the chance to debate.

Indeed, one may wonder that perhaps this is a message to groups in this province that they better have their executive directors run for the Conservatives in elections. That is their one way of ensuring that funding is not cut, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Point of Order

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Acting Speaker, on a point of order, I believe it is against the rules of the House to put inaccurate information on the record. With that, I would like to ask the honourable member to remove his false statement from the record.

No executive director of any association, the Consumers' Association does not have any executive director running for office for any political party that I am aware of.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Order, please. The honourable minister did not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Ashton: Indeed, I would be more than willing to let the minister speak at any time. I am anxious to hear where she stands on the gross unfairness of this government and the way it has slashed antipoverty groups, aboriginal friendship centres, has slashed welfare assistance for the poor, the student social assistance program. I look forward to her comments, and comments of Conservative members, because there is a reality out there.

You can try and redefine it anyway you want, Mr. Acting Speaker, but there are increasingly people in this province who are falling into the welfare trap, not because they do not want to work, not because they are not trying their best, and I found it quite frankly offensive earlier today when the Premier (Mr. Filmon) was talking about people should go back to their families and go work at McDonald's.

This is not the province of Tuxedo. Everybody does not go to a nice, well-adjusted family every night and go work at McDonald's and make the money and be able to work their way through university. There are families who have broken up. There are people who cannot go back to their parents. There are people who do not have

parents. Those are the people who are being cut in terms of the student social assistance program. The reality is—if you talk to those people—they are actually getting less money under the student social assistance program than if they were on social assistance, so talk about incentives and talk about disincentives and talk about people who are motivated.

Some of the most motivated individuals I have ever seen have been students that I have talked to who have said, Mr. Acting Speaker, they do not want to be on social assistance. They want to get training. They want to get a job. They want a future for their families.

I quite frankly find it offensive when the Premier gets up and suggests that they should somehow be able to go back to families that in many cases are not functional, in many cases families that do not exist. You are talking about children as well because you are dealing with single parents, expecting them to be able to do that, expecting single parents who are penalized by the current welfare structure if they do get a part-time job, if they are on social assistance, single parents that if they have been working cannot collect unemployment insurance because if they are taking school they are not eligible for unemployment insurance. Do they not understand the system that is out there? Do they not understand the system? [interjection]

You know, quite frankly, I am just amazed that a minister such as the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) could be saying the kinds of things she is saying from her seat, Mr. Acting Speaker, not dealing with the reality that is facing those people. The shame is from this minister who from her seat goes on repeating the line given by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) in terms of social assistance—[interjection] Perhaps the member would care sometime to put her views on the record about where she stands in terms of social assistance and the fairness of a government that penalizes young people who are trying to get ahead and get off the welfare trap. See if she has the courtesy to stand on her feet and say whether she supports that particular policy. In fact, she can speak right after I complete my comments. I look forward to it.

I look forward to the comments of others, as well, because I suspect that when it gets down to actually standing in their place many of them will not do so. I have been in this House for 11 years. I have never

seen government members so reluctant to speak in support of their own initiatives as members of this government.

Now, that may be understandable, Mr. Acting Speaker, but it is frustrating when we are dealing with shadow members of the government. They hide in the bunker. They hide behind the media handlers in terms of social assistance cuts, but we do not hear a debate in this House. We do not hear them say why they think that social assistance cuts should take place, why student social assistance programs should be cut.

Why are they so afraid to debate their policies? Well, indeed we look forward to seeing their comments on these particular actions, because the bottom line is they do not make sense. They do not make sense. What sense does it make to cut a program that is providing an incentive for students to continue their studies, many of whom would not be able to do so otherwise? What kind of more incentive do they want? By being under the student social assistance program they are receiving less than they would if they were sitting at home on social assistance.

Mr. Acting Speaker, why is this government which has in place these millions of dollars in terms of payroll tax rebates which have ended up in companies such as Tuxedo Taxi, that fiasco, why is it this government does not see fit to look at those particular grants, the Stadium Fords, the Tuxedo Taxis? Why is it that everybody has to feel the pain except there are a few significant exceptions? How come whenever we hear from the Tory Finance minister, we all have to share the pain, we look around and we see some people doing quite well out of this government, doing quite well, whether it be in terms of the new introduction by the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard)?

* (1550)

It is interesting, he is talking about having casino funding now going to an American consultant for \$3.9 million. Compare that, the lotto we have now \$3.9-million jackpot for an American consultant, with how that money could have been spent in terms of social assistance programs that put people to work, Mr. Acting Speaker, that give them an incentive for training, \$3.9 million out of the casino. That is okay to write a cheque for \$3.9 million to an American consultant but, on the other hand, we are looking at

cuts in terms of social assistance in this province. I mean, is that fairness?

We are seeing there is a new kind of oxymoron being developed in this House. We have seen all the ones before. The ultimate is always Progressive Conservative. We are seeing it in, well, industrial part is probably another one, but now we are seeing a new oxymoron. It is called Tory fairness. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) gets up and says everybody is going to share the pain. Everybody is feeling the pain. This is only fair.

Well, how come social assistance recipients feel the pain? How come this program in terms of social assistance has been cut? How come, Mr. Acting Speaker, that the CRISP payments for City of Winnipeg social assistance recipients, that is being cut, but how come there are so many that just happen to be friends of this government that are not feeling the pain? Well, the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) probably has more friends than most in the Conservative caucus, being the practitioner of the art of patronage that he is. I know that the Minister of Northern Affairs is hoping to get his place in patronage heaven, the Senate, so I do not think even he would criticize me for making that description.

Mr. Acting Speaker, how can the Conservative government justify what it is doing in terms of those so-called fairness policies when it is cutting social assistance? Well, let us look at the reality. The reality is very clear. The reality is that we need incentives. We need more incentives for students and social assistance. The student social assistance program is probably the best incentive that was put in place. [interjection]

Well, the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) talks about incentives. Has he really taken the time to sit down with people and talk to them in terms of what the situation is in their communities? [interjection] Well, indeed, we have other so-called Tory incentives, Tory fairness here, but perhaps the Minister of Northern Affairs would like to talk to some of the northern students who did not have the opportunity to come down here today and protest at the Legislature. Perhaps when the minister comes to Thompson next time he will do more than go speak to a Tory fundraiser or a Tory constituency association meeting.

I realize that maybe some of my fellow residents of Thompson or supporters of the Conservative Party may not have experienced the pain of having their training allowance, their student social assistance, cut, but perhaps if the minister would do more than just go to those fundraisers, Mr. Acting Speaker, the bottom line is perhaps the minister might learn something from the situation those people are going through.

The students in my community, in northern communities who are going through tough decisions, a lot of times single parents themselves who are making, I think, what we should be encouraging in terms of a decision. They are saying yes to education, or at least they have been with the student social assistance program. Perhaps he would like to talk to the teachers and the principal at R.D. Parker Collegiate because it is interesting how priorities have a way of being communicated to people.

I got a call today from a teacher in a high school. She received a letter from the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) that apparently has been sent to every teacher across the province. Mr. Acting Speaker, she calculated that was a \$6,000 expenditure. She was incensed by the fact that this government that talks about shortage of revenues had the money to send out a \$6,000 propaganda letter to all the teachers in this province.

She asked the question—she said in the R.D. Parker Collegiate in Thompson for the last three weeks handicapped students have been unable to attend classes because there is an elevator broken down because of a lack of maintenance budgets. It would cost \$6,000 to get a chair lift that would go up the stairs as a backup.

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

Six thousand dollars is exactly the amount that this minister has spent on sending out a letter of propaganda after the fact in terms of the cuts that are taking place saying that they want feedback from the government. I will tell you what the feedback was from that teacher. The feedback was: Do not send out propaganda letters; use that money, the \$6,000, for the education system. [interjection] Mr. Acting Speaker, the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) talks from his seat about how much increase that teacher wants.

I will tell you what the minister should understand. The teacher wants that money, the \$6,000 and

whatever other PR dollars the government has budgeted to try and sell its policies. She wants that to go toward education and not the kind of propaganda we are seeing coming out of the Minister of Education's office. That is why I speak in terms of this.

The bottom line is this government does not have a sense of fairness. This government is cutting those who do not traditionally support it either geographically or socioeconomically. Mr. Acting Speaker, the fact is with this government I do not think it is any accident that in so many of the constituencies the members represent, they have analyzed—well, friendship centres, 10 out of the 11 of them are in NDP constituencies. I guess the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister) got left out of that equation. In fact, I wonder if he was even involved in the decision.

I do not think it is any accident that most of the poor in this province are not exactly represented by Conservative MLAs. I think even they would find, and I bet you even in the Premier's (Mr. Filmon) own constituency, he would probably find social assistance recipients and students who are being affected by his cuts. You know, if he was not quite so blind, even in his own constituency he would find them.

We are finding that increasingly, Mr. Acting Speaker. I think the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) actually is the inspiration for this government. You know, we remember when he was honest enough to say a few years ago that he felt that northerners did not know how to vote right. I think the entire Conservative government has adopted that philosophy. If people do not "know how to vote right", they get cut off.

I think they probably sat down and figured out that some of the targets do not vote, period. The visa students were an easy target; they do not vote. I think they probably sat down and calculated that 10 out of the 11 friendship centres are in NDP seats so they are an easy target. MAPO represents a lot of the poor in this province, many of whom live in the north end of Winnipeg, not exactly a stronghold for the Conservatives, so they are being cut, and social assistance recipients, well, we all know that the Conservatives have traditionally had difficulty in terms of the concerns expressed by people, the poor, so they are an easy target as well.

You know, Mr. Acting Speaker, I guess what I found interesting was the reaction today from some of the young people, the young people I spoke to on the steps of the Legislature. What I think is going to happen is this. If this government expects to be able to make the cut, retreat back into the bunker after the budget process is all done and then have those people go away, they are wrong. Those young people today, young adults, courageous young adults who want to continue their education, I believe will become politicized by this, not strictly in a partisan sense, but you know I talked to a lot of people in the last couple of weeks who are saying they are going to remember this, and they are going to remember it not just in the next few months but the next time they have the opportunity to tell this government what they think of its actions.

I will predict, Mr. Acting Speaker, that out of the ashes of some of the programs that have been cut, out of the ashes of some of the organizations that have been decimated by this government, there will arise a newly politicized group of Manitobans who are, like the people today, saying they are not going to take it from this government anymore, and that is the key when we are dealing with the realities of this province.

* (1600)

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

People are facing tough times and social assistance recipients are facing the toughest and it is about time this government understood that it cannot define poverty away. Poverty exists, people are hurting, and either they change their policies, Mr. Acting Speaker, or those very same people that they will not talk to when they come to the steps of this Legislature will change this government.

Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): Mr. Acting Speaker, I am pleased to be able to join in this debate and discussion on Bill 20, The Social Allowance Regulation Validation Act. I would like to speak about social allowances. I would also like to speak about validation, validation of the goals, aspirations, dreams, objectives of many people in our society today.

Listening today to some of the catcalls, some of the heckling, some of the interjections from across the way from members of the Conservative Party, I become very worried about the future for

Manitobans. I become very worried about what this government may have up its sleeve with respect to social allowances in general.

What I heard today were clear signs of a government so ideologically blinded that it is not able to understand the roots of poverty, the sources of people being on social assistance, the reasons for unemployment and their desires to be not on social assistance, not on unemployment insurance, not living in poverty, but living lives where they are able to use their talents, able to make a contribution to society, able to make ends meet for themselves and their children.

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

Mr. Acting Speaker, I heard today hints of the suggestion that people on social assistance are there because they have no ambition, because they have no goals, because they have no desire to work in the labour force, because they want to be freeloaders. That is so out of touch with reality that it makes me wonder just how reasoned this government can be when it comes to public policy in the areas of social policy and economic policy.

I do not get too many constituents calling me and suggesting they want to stay on social welfare. I do not get too many constituents calling me and saying they are happy being on social assistance. I get in fact the opposite—people feeling isolated, people feeling stigmatized, people feeling helpless, people feeling hopeless, because they had no choice but to turn to social assistance in order to survive, in order to ensure that they could provide for their families.

Mr. Acting Speaker, a little while ago in this House I recounted the story of a middle-aged man who had worked for many, many years in the trades for a company that closed down. A man in his late 40s or early 50s, married, with a couple of kids, tried every possibility for a job, searched out every avenue, applied for every possible job imaginable in the province of Manitoba, but to no avail. That constituent, that individual was so worried and too proud to turn to social assistance that he looked at the only other alternative available to him and that was to leave his family, leave his home and go to another province in search of a job.

I tried to persuade that person that it was not his fault that he was out of a job after contributing so much to this society. I tried to suggest to him that his priority should be to meet the needs of his family,

and if that meant being on social assistance for a time, then so be it. But because of the kind of propaganda and negative statements as we have heard today in the House, this person could not bring himself to apply for social assistance and instead chose to leave his family in search of a job. Follow the rainbow even if there was no job at the end of the rainbow.

Surely members of this government can understand the roots of unemployment and reliance on social assistance. Surely they are capable of not lumping all individuals together and suggesting that people are generally lazy and freeloaders. Surely they can understand that people do not want to be on social assistance, do not choose to be on social assistance, but find themselves with no other alternative but to turn to social assistance for a period in their life.

I heard some comments today that astounded me and many others across the way on this side of the Chamber, comments that suggested to me members across the way are caught in a time war or locked into a mindset where they cannot see the reality of today's society, where they cannot understand the complexity of human life today, where they cannot imagine situations that differ from their own upbringing. The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) suggested that because she was raised in a one-room house with no running water and was still able to get all the education she needed and find a job that everyone else in this society should be able to do the same.

Mr. Acting Speaker, it does not make sense to develop public policy on the basis of personal idiosyncratic background. It makes sense to look at the reality of society today and the root causes of poverty and unemployment and reliance on social assistance and to plan accordingly. All of us, every one of us can stand up in this house and talk about our own personal experience and how we made it, because let us face it, we have all made it. We have all had the good fortune in life to be able to get an education, to be able to go to school, to be able to get university, to be able to pursue a political career. Well, to make the conclusion that others should be able to do the same regardless of their background, regardless of their circumstances in life, is so astounding as to just cause incredulity on the part of Manitobans.

Mr. Acting Speaker, by making those kind of generalizations, by suggesting that if people just

work hard they can make it, this government is doing a great disservice to the people of Manitoba and is destroying the hope of any kind of a prosperous future for this province.

* (1610)

I wish members across the way, members of the Conservative government, had been outside today to look into the faces of students who rely on student social allowance. I wish they had seen the look on those faces, on the faces of students who are not slacking off, who are not lazy, but are trying for a second chance in life, who have come to the realization that they need a basic education in order to get off welfare in order to get a better job.

I wish members across the way had seen the diversity of that crowd outside on the front steps of the Legislature today, had seen the number of new Canadians, had seen the ethnic diversity of the crowd outside, had seen the range of age groups among those students and realized the kind of drive that these people have, the kind of determination they have to correct mistakes they made in the past and are giving it everything they have got now. All they are asking for is a little backing. They are not asking for a handout. They are prepared to sacrifice. They are prepared to work hard. They are all fighting for top grades. They all have dreams to go on to university or get a good job, but they need a little backing, a little support from the government to make it possible, and just about every one of the cases of the people outside the steps of the Legislature today, they will not be able to fulfill those dreams because of this government's callous and cruel cutback and the elimination of the student social allowance program.

Mr. Acting Speaker, one of those individuals, Shirley Neufeld, who took a great deal of responsibility in this regard and initiated activities to try to focus this government, to try to bring to this government's attention to the seriousness of its cutback, approached the Premier (Mr. Filmon) after Question Period and explained her situation. She said, she is 23, she is married, her husband is 24. They have a one-and-a-half-year-old daughter. They have made the decision to go back to school to get educated, so they could get good jobs, so they can provide for their daughter, so their daughter has a future. And they said to the Premier, what are we now to do? What are our chances now of fulfilling this dream?

What did the Premier say? He said, one of them should stay at home, and one should go to work or go to school. I first asked the Premier and this government how they can impose their value system on others and make those kinds of judgment calls and take away the dream and aspirations of one of those individuals. I also asked the Premier and this government how they can justify promoting a solution that in fact guarantees a family to live in poverty for the rest of its life.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the facts speak for themselves on that matter. It is absolutely clear and unquestionable that that family is doomed to poverty if it follows the advice of the Premier and this government. [interjection] The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) says not true. I ask him to consider some of the more recent statistics about poverty and families and look, for example, at the statistics. I am not going to talk now about single-earner families, because we know that single-parent families have a much higher rate of living below the poverty line than two-earner families.

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

I want to just start with two-earner families and point the Minister of Natural Resources to a very recent report by the National Council of Welfare produced in the fall of 1992 entitled Poverty Profile, where it provides the poverty rates for families with two spouses under the age of 65. I point the minister to the statistics for Manitoba where, according to this report, the percentage of families with two spouses under the age of 65 living below the poverty line was 11.5 percent. When they calculated what it would mean, what kind of poverty rate we would see if one of those two earners in that two-earner family was not working, what would the poverty rate be? It doubles—over 50 percent increase.

Mr. Acting Speaker, Manitoba in that kind of situation would really have a poverty rate of about 23 percent. So for anyone to suggest, to impose their value system on a family and say, one of you should stay home, is to relegate that family to poverty with very little chance of breaking that cycle of poverty. Not to mention that based on the ideology of this government, they would no doubt be suggesting that if we had to make a choice in terms of who should stay at home, they would suggest the woman should stay at home, thereby perpetuating again their idea of a woman's place in our society

today and promoting stereotypical notions of women and undermining their sense of worth, of dignity, of ability to make a contribution.

I know that members across the way come from areas where they may not see and hear from the numbers of constituents as we are hearing from around the issue of student social allowance.

I know and realize and appreciate that there is a higher concentration of people who live below the poverty line who rely on social assistance, who are on unemployment insurance, living in the inner city of Winnipeg, in the north part of Winnipeg, and that some of the members across the way may not come in contact on a face-to-face basis with the feelings of these individuals.

I do not know how to impress upon members across the way what it feels like to not have any answers when those constituents come knocking at our doors. These days, Mr. Acting Speaker, it is very hard for MLAs, at least on this side of the House, to be able to offer solutions and point constituents in a certain direction, to deal with the fact that they have just been laid off, to deal with the fact that they have just had their student social allowance eliminated, to deal with the fact that they cannot find housing, to deal with the fact that they cannot provide for their families, to deal with the fact that they are in such a state of despair that one is not sure what they are capable of doing to themselves.

Mr. Acting Speaker, if we feel helpless as MLAs who have resources to draw on, who know to some extent the ins and outs of government and we cannot help these individuals, can anyone imagine what those individuals themselves feel, just how hopeless they feel, just how vulnerable they feel, just how powerless they feel?

* (1620)

It is to the point now where we are hearing from constituents who not only do not have hope for the future, more and more, especially young people, do not have any concept of future. That was something that became very apparent in the recent Church and Community Inquiry into Unemployment where, after three days of presentations, panelists could not believe the depth of despair that people were feeling, that in fact some people have no concept of future because of the current situation facing them and their families.

The people who depend on student social allowance had some idea of how to break through those feelings of despair and hopelessness. They had some idea about what it would take to get off welfare, to end dependency, to end poverty. They had a pretty good idea of what it would take, how much work they would have to do, what kind of sacrifices were involved, and they were prepared to take those steps; when along comes this government, pulls the rug right out from under them, cuts them off at the pass, only ensuring people's dependency on welfare.

Today, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) tried to suggest in fact that he was concerned about people working and that we could not in these difficult times sustain, as he put it, this welfare program.

This government is doing just the opposite of what it says it wants to do. It is ensuring people stay on welfare without going to school, without getting any training, without any prospects down the road of being able to get off of welfare and break that cycle of dependency.

So we have been trying to make the case to this government that it makes good economic sense, it makes perfect sense if one is concerned about the future viability of this province and getting people back to work to allow this program to continue, make it possible for these hard-working, dedicated students with a dream to be able to pursue that dream, get off welfare, get a job.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we had many calls, letters, petitions on this issue. We have not heard the end of it yet. I hope in the coming days that we will be able to somehow convey the sense from these individuals, what they are feeling, and convince the government to change its mind.

I want to put a few of those messages on record today in the hope that this government may be able to see that it makes good economic policy and it is only right from a human perspective to reverse its decision on the student social allowance program.

Let me add that this government has yet to tell us what in fact it hopes to save by cutting the student social allowance program and whether there will not be a much bigger cost down the road. I am not talking about a cost to society because of a generation of people who have not been able to break out of welfare or get a job, I am talking about the more immediate cost of what it will mean to transfer these people, for these people to be

transferred to city assistance and to put in place employment readiness programs. There are some estimates that this move of cutting off these 1,000 recipients of student social allowance is going to end up costing all three levels of government some \$8 million.

I hope that the government has done its research. I hope that the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) has informed his colleagues of the economic ramifications of this decision, and I hope they do some quick looking at those numbers and that research, if it has been done, in the next 24 hours to try and save this program before it is too late.

Mr. Acting Speaker, if the economic reasons do not make a difference to this government, let me try with the words of some of these students to see if that will make a difference.

I want to read them one letter. Quoting from one part of that letter, it says the following: I am a student at the Winnipeg Adult Education Centre. I have been in Canada for seven years. I feel that student social assistance is very important for us. It gives us hope, opportunities and chances to have a better job. Please do not hurt us. Do not cut our only lifesaver. After school we are sure we will pay it back so you can help other people. Please listen to us.

That is one letter, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Here is an excerpt from another: If the government is going to cut back on student social allowance, I am one person who will be most definitely and deeply affected. I would not be able to continue my education, and that would be a great disappointment. I left my home, my family and my friends just to come to the city and fulfill my dream, and with one stroke of the pen the government has destroyed the chance of living my dream, and I do not know what I will do if I cannot finish my education. I cannot help thinking, hoping and praying that some way, somehow I did not come all this way just for it to end here.

From another letter, Mr. Acting Speaker: Student social allowance is my only means of support. I have been trying to improve my education so I can get a better job so I can get off welfare. I still have to go for at least one more term to finish my Grade 12. It always seems when something really good is happening the government is always screwing it up. Cutting student social allowance is really a stupid

move. Also, shutting places like the Winnipeg Human Resources Opportunity Centre is also another stupid thing, because places like this is where most students coming out of school get training and work experience of various jobs.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Mr. Speaker, let me read just a couple more excerpts: This is like a backwards Robin Hood story. Take from the poor, give to the rich. First you want to take the libraries away and now you want to discourage adults to better themselves. I am absolutely disgusted in the way our situation is being handled. I am 23 years old. I have been out of school for seven years. Now I finally get up the courage to go back, and now you are turning your back on all of us.

Another, Mr. Speaker: I attend Winnipeg Adult Education Centre and I get support from the student allowance program to do so. I am single and basically depend 100 percent on myself. My parents are retired seniors and I do not get any support financially from them. I am very concerned about the cuts that will be effective this coming fall regarding the student allowance program. The cut will no longer provide me with the financial ability that helps me to continue my education.

Another, Mr. Speaker: A lot of single parents are going to suffer because they will not be able to afford daycare, will not be able to finish their grades, so they could have a better future for their children.

* (1630)

Another, Mr. Speaker: I disagree with the government cutting back on student assistance. This will affect us greatly. It is hard enough to work part time and attend school full time. We are expected to work full time and carry a full course load. It would affect our grades and stress levels. If you cut student social allowances, less students would attend school.

What happens? More people out of work. More people on welfare. We are beginning a vicious circle. We have to stop this somewhere.

Yet another, Mr. Speaker: The slashing of funding to the student social allowances affects a lot of people in situations similar to myself. I am a single parent who has been waitressing for the last 13 years to support my children. Now I would like a career, and slashing these funds may make this impossible, so now I have not much to look forward to toward ensuring a comfortable future for myself

and my children. It is unfair that education is only going to be for the wealthy and elite.

There are more, Mr. Speaker, more examples of the kinds of students who benefit from the student social allowance program and are living testimony of just how wrong this government is when it suggests there are other options for these students to turn to.

I do not know if members were listening to how many of these students are not able to go back to their home, to the families where they were raised. How many? Not one in this bunch that I read. Not one. They are all in this situation because they have had a difficult background. They have had problems. They admit they have had problems. They are trying to get a second chance in life.

They either have aging parents who live in one-room apartments or houses and have no room to take in another whole family with children and pets, or they are not allowed, they are not welcome back in their families, because they have been turned away, because they have been shut aside.

I have heard a lot of recitations of the Bible this afternoon from members across the way. I hope, if they remember anything, maybe they will remember the prodigal son and maybe they will show some humaneness around this issue and the seriousness of the elimination of the student allowance program.

In just about every one of these letters I have read, these students show that they either cannot go back to their home or they are parents themselves, many of them single parents, some of them part of two-earner families. They have no other choices. They have no other options.

The Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) kept saying, there are other options. We tried to find out. We tried to check with his department. What options? Could we get an answer? No. What did we get? First of all, by checking into the department, we get nowhere of course, because with the policy of this government everything goes through the minister's office, no one can provide basic information.

So we get a call back from the minister's office. Do we get any information? Oh, yes, we get one suggestion. We get told that some of these individuals could get help through the Student Loan Program. Well, incredible. This government, their offices are not even familiar enough with those programs to realize that people trying to get their

grade school education, their Grade 12 education, are not eligible for student loan assistance.

Mr. Speaker, there are no other options except sacrificing a family or throwing away dreams and aspirations. Those are the options. There are no other programs to turn to. There are no other options. I tell the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), the options for the family of Shirley Neufeld and her husband are to try to go to school and get jobs, which means they have no time left for their one-and-a-half-year-old daughter, or their options are for one of them to give up their dreams and aspirations and to ensure that that family has a lifetime of poverty.

I thought this government cared about family. I thought I have heard this government talk over and over again about keeping the family together. All they have suggested through these and other measures are programs to bring the family to the brink, to break up families, to cause difficulties, to create such enormous problems that there is no way around them except for breakup and inadequate time and support and resources for their children. Those are the options that are available for the students on student social allowance without such a program.

So what this government has said, it is prepared—it condones two things. No. 1, it is better for people to be on welfare and doing nothing to prepare for a better day. It is better to be on welfare, just collecting welfare and not going to school, not taking training and not seeking employment. That is what this government is saying. Stay on welfare. Sit around and do not do anything else. Do not better yourself. Do not educate yourself. Do not try for a better day when you can make a difference to the economy and you can pay back the little that this program means in terms of the overall government budget. That is one thing it is condoning.

The other thing it is condoning is that families—more stress, pressure, difficulties for families are acceptable. Do not try to reduce the pressures and stress. Do not try to eliminate unnecessary obstacles and barriers, but heap it on them. Make them pay, because as they all say, they got themselves into this predicament. They decided to have children; they can figure it out. Government has no role to play in terms of making it more possible to be responsible parents and pursue other objectives like going to school or contributing to the labour force, contributing to the

economy. So that is where we end up with this government. Some choices, some economic plan.

It sounds to me, Mr. Speaker, like a big waste of taxpayers' dollars. I believe, as I said earlier in Question Period, taxpayers of this province would be delighted to know that their money, their hard-earned dollars were going to programs that actually help people break the cycle of dependency, get off welfare, get an education, get a job. I do not get too many taxpayers calling me and saying, that is a waste of money. In fact, the citizens in our communities have a broader outlook than this government has itself. They have a much greater sense of justice and fairness than members of the Conservative Party. They have an appreciation for sharing resources if it is going to make a difference, for acting co-operatively, for showing some fairness and justice to all citizens, and that, I think, is the message that this Conservative government should start listening to and listening to today.

* (1640)

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this legislation because it is a change in this particular piece of legislation which gives the authority to this government to make some decisions and make some changes which are fundamentally wrong, which will fundamentally hurt those who are already among the most vulnerable citizens of the province of Manitoba.

We have watched with interest the announcements of this government over the past few weeks. Each time we look at an announcement and we analyze it, we find that the criterion of the government seems to be, how can we take and remove dignity from members of the public? We see it very specifically in student social allowances, and I think it is important for the government to examine who these people are who are collecting student social allowance. If one were to do a profile of them, who are they?

Well, they are often in their young twenties. They are frequently not white. They often, for a variety of reasons, have been school dropouts, and we know that statistically in Canada the dropout rate is as high as 30 percent, young people who have, for some reason or other, decided that they cannot complete their education in the normal kindergarten to Grade 12 process that most young people go through.

I think it is important to examine what are some of those reasons. Some of those young people were abused sexually or physically. They were removed from their family. That in turn often led to enormous pressures psychologically for them. They found themselves being moved to foster homes or group homes, often with one, two or three or four or five sometimes, schools. They lost contact with friends, their peer group. They lost contact with teachers who might have had a special affection or warmth or found that young person particularly challenging and therefore interesting. As a result, they found themselves after weeks and months falling further and further behind.

So they then decide that the only option open to them since they are no longer in a group with somewhat a reflection of their age—maybe they are now 18 but their classmates would be in Grade 9 or Grade 10 and would only be 15 or 16 years of age. So they drop out.

They try desperately to find employment. If they get any it is minimum wage, frequently very insecure. They work for a few weeks and find themselves laid off. They work for a few more weeks; they find themselves laid off. They are usually, as a result, ineligible for UIC because they never worked enough weeks in order to qualify. They turn to social assistance.

Then one day they wake up and they say, there has got to be a better way. There has got to be a better life for me somewhere in this province and in this country. So they make the decision that they will go back to school, because they look at television ads, very expensive television ads, which say you have got to have a high school education.

So they make that critical decision. They go back to school and they find themselves in this province on a program which is unique, no question about that, called the student social allowance.

Now there are many members of the government side that seem to be of the opinion that these young people get more money for being on student social allowance than they would get by being on regular social allowance, and that is not true. They in fact get less money by being on student social allowance, but they decide that rather than be on welfare, regular social assistance, they will bite the bullet. They will take a little bit less, but they will avail themselves of the opportunity to go back to school.

So they go back, often at the Adult Education Centre. They gradually upgrade from Grade 9 to Grade 10, from Grade 10 to Grade 11, from Grade 11 to Grade 12. They are not eligible for student loans because they do not have a high school diploma.

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

They know that their alternative is not a job. They have tried that route, and when they tried that route they found themselves unable to become employed. So being unable to be employed they have found the one avenue of hope, and they have gone on student social allowance.

It is interesting to talk to those who are involved in instructing these young people, because they are often very excited about the quality of the student that they have. Many of the instructors have come from high school environments in which a great percentage of the students care and want to succeed, but there is always that 20 or 30 percent who quite frankly are putting in time within the high school structure.

All of a sudden, they find themselves with this group of students who are extremely keen. They are there not because their parents say they have to go to school, they are there not because they are under the age of 16 so the law requires them to go to school, they are in school because they want to be there. They want to go to school. They have made that choice within themselves that they will be there because they desire to be there and they will try as hard as they possibly can to achieve that high school diploma so that new avenues of opportunities open up to them.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it does not matter what statistical evidence you examine these days with regard to our changing world. It quickly becomes apparent that there are few jobs for those who do not have a high school education and that that will become not less but more as the years progress. It is estimated that there will be no jobs for those without a high school education by the turn of the century. Some estimates indicate that even now fewer than 20 percent of the jobs will accept those who have less than a high school education.

So what we are doing with these people when we tell them to go back on social allowance, because that is what we are indeed telling them, is that not only will they go back on social allowance now, but

they may be on social allowance in perpetuity, that this may become a new class of people, those who will go from cradle to grave living on the social assistance system.

That is not good for any of us. It is not good for them, because I am firmly convinced that every one of us in our society needs work to give structure to our lives, but it is also not of value to whichever party forms government, because people who live on social assistance cannot make a contribution to the government. They do not earn enough money through social assistance to pay income taxes, so there is no revenue generation, other than through sales taxes, for a provincial government from someone who spends their lifetime living on social assistance.

* (1650)

All political philosophies, no matter what they are, on the right or the left or in between, have to accept that it is essential when and wherever possible to put people to work because, if they are not at work, they simply cannot make an economic contribution to society, i.e., the government.

When we decide that individuals can no longer get student social allowance, we are in fact I think saying to those young people, we do not ever want you to make that contribution. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) would suggest it is not that way. The Premier would suggest that they can continue with their schooling, that there are alternatives out there for them.

Well, that alternative is not social assistance because if they are on city welfare they cannot go to school because they have to be willing, ready and able to look for a job, provided that they are in fact employable, as designated by the city welfare. The only reason they would have social welfare from the city would be if they are employable. So that is a conundrum. They cannot go to school while on social allowance, so they are supposed to stay home and do nothing.

The Premier suggested they could go back and live with their families. Well, for some that might be a possibility, but it is not a realistic possibility for many of them because if, in living with that parent, they have been in an abusive relationship, surely as a society and as a government we are not suggesting that they would move back into an abusive situation.

They were removed from that abusive situation by the same government that is now suggesting they go back to that abusive situation. It hardly makes much logical sense.

So for those who have been physically and sexually assaulted that is not an option, but it is also not an option for a lot of young people who have turned 18, because in order to go back home there has to be an agreement on the part of the parents that they will take them back home, and regrettably, there are lots of parents out there who do not want their children back home and who will not allow them to move back in.

Since the youngster is over the age of 18 and there is no parental responsibility to protect that child economically or any other way, there is no way you can compel that family to take that young person back home. So if the parent says, no, I am sorry, Johnny, Mary or Sally, I do not want you back home, that is that option gone.

Another option perhaps is to find employment. Well, there is a lot of unemployment out there. There are a lot of people desperate to find work. There are a lot of people with skills and training far beyond those who are presently trying to upgrade their high school education who cannot find jobs. How is it anticipated by this government that these people will find jobs?

In speaking with Tom Denton, who is the head of the International Centre and a well-known member of the government's party, his concern is for those people who come to this country as refugees whose qualifications are not recognized, who have to provide upgrading for themselves because otherwise they simply will not be able to find employment. Who do they turn to? They do not have families in the country. They do not have those who can provide them with financial supports. They are refugees. They have come from Laos and Cambodia or from Poland.

They come to this country without speaking English. They come to this country with nothing going for them except their desire to succeed. One of the things that they do first off is to try and enhance their education, to get a Canadian-recognized high school diploma so that they can become active participating members of the Canadian and Manitoba workforce.

If you were out looking at the rally today, there were individuals there from Ethiopia. There were

individuals there from Africa, from Somalia. These were a group of people who have only one hope and no alternatives. Their only hope was to get that piece of paper that says, I have a high school diploma from a Canadian institution and I now am job material. I can now either upgrade, go to university, perhaps work part time, perhaps get a student loan and a bursary, if they are still in existence after tomorrow, and push my way through the system until I can achieve some success and begin to make a contribution back to the country that I have adopted.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Unfortunately, with the cuts in student social allowance, that has all been eliminated, and for what purpose? If all of these people turn on social assistance, it will not have cost the government any less money. Indeed, it will have ended up costing them more money because they get more money on social assistance. So you have saved not one penny of money, but what you have done is to have eliminated hope. You have chosen to take away people's dreams. You have taken away their aspirations.

You know it was interesting, Mr. Speaker, because the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) was out on the steps of the Legislature today and he was briefly talking about his own experiences. He talked about how he worked part time and how he put himself through university. He did not talk about the fact, however, that he came from a family that was supportive of what it was he was trying to do.

Like most students, like most people I assume in this Chamber, I worked as I went through university. I think we all did, but I always had that rock-bottom knowledge that my parents were going to be there to support me if everything else failed, if the bottom went out from my ability to earn money that I was not going to have to starve. I was fortunate. I was able to live at home and go to university that way. Much tougher on many of our members who were educated in rural communities and had to leave their home in order to come into the city to get that education.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This matter will stand in the name of the honourable member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) and also, as previously agreed, stand in the name of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett).

* (1700)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

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

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Res. 14—Emerson Visitor Centre

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): I move, Mr. Speaker, seconded by the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson),

WHEREAS tourism is an integral part of Manitoba's economy; and

WHEREAS many visitors to Manitoba are our southern neighbours and enter Manitoba at the Emerson crossing; and

WHEREAS a new visitor centre was opened in Emerson this year; and

WHEREAS this \$640,000 was spent on a tourism information centre will make a lasting impression on visitors entering our province as the facility features a bold, colourful design, with a 5 metre high wagon wheel symbolizing Manitoba's pioneer heritage; and

WHEREAS the participation and enthusiasm of the people of Emerson was an important factor in making the visitor centre a reality; and

WHEREAS partnerships between government and the community help make our province more attractive to visitors and help promote our tourism industry.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba welcome the opening of the Emerson Visitor Centre and commend the people of Emerson on their contribution in this very prominent tourist attraction.

Motion presented.

Mr. Penner: Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure today to rise and commend the people of Emerson and all of the people in Manitoba for contributing to the co-operation that was needed to establish a visitor centre in co-operation with the federal government in building an attractive centre, such as the building that was built at Emerson, Manitoba.

Tourism, after all, is one of the largest industries of this province as well as the rest of Canada. This centre, with the visibility that has been created for it, will certainly attract and prompt most travellers who

come from the south to visit us to stop at this centre and first of all see the beautiful centre that was built there for them, and secondly to ask for information and direction. It is evidence that has clearly been created on numerous occasions by visitor centres similar to this in other provinces that those people who are attracted to a centre such as this and stop and are given directions stay within the boundaries of the respective provinces that they enter and visit Canada for a longer period of time.

Having visited this specific centre, I am convinced that the many tourism attractions that we have in the southern part of this province are seldom ever visited by tourists as such, especially those who come to Manitoba from the south, can now stop here and receive direction and the information required that will cause them to want to visit many of our smaller communities.

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

We have a tremendous resource in many of our rural parts of Manitoba as well as the city of Winnipeg, resources that other people from other countries, Madam Deputy Speaker, simply do not know about or would even ask about. If these kinds of things, such as our Museum of Man and Nature in the city of Winnipeg, our cultural affairs and those kinds of things that are happening in the city, if we did not bring them to the attention of the traveller, they simply would ignore them, not because they would not want to visit it, but because they do not know where to go. So it is to the credit of this province, the federal government, the people in the Emerson area, that this tourism information centre will be staffed with the kind of knowledgeable people who are able to redirect this traffic.

In my view, it will do two things. It will create a much greater awareness of the cultural ethnic backgrounds and the nature of this province and a realization that the huge diversity of peoples who have stopped here in Manitoba, when this province was first settled, adds to not only our lives, but adds to all other people who want to stop here and visit.

That reflects largely upon the diversity of industry and the nature of many of the industries that we have in this province, and the diversity of the industries that we have in this province, because it is people who have migrated here or immigrated here from other parts of the world who cause different views and perspectives to be brought and

different needs to be identified, that other people in the world might use our resources, be they manufactured or otherwise, that we can in fact encourage industrial diversification, that we can encourage exports of things that we produce and that we are better at producing than most others are and that we can encourage people to travel here to see what we have and what we can build and how we can enhance the productivity of our people.

The hospitality industry is an industry that has been in the doldrums over the last number of years. We did something that other governments had simply refused to take a look at. We provided some incentives for the rural hospitality industry to stay there and increase their revenues by such things as allowing the entertainment industry to be expanded in that area, which, of course, stopped some people from travelling south to visit such places as the Shooting Star Casino and those kinds of things. I think it has done that. It has enhanced many of the small hotels and motels in rural Manitoba to remain viable, and I have talked to many of the small hotel operators. The one thing they do need, however, is a greater influx of people coming to this province that are willing to and wanting to stay in their places overnight and eat their foods and all those kinds of things.

I think the tourism centre that has been built at the border crossing at Emerson will certainly enhance that opportunity, because we are going to be able to tell people that we have towns such as Gardenton, Vassar, Vita, Sprague, Plum Coulee, Horndean, Manitou, Pilot Mound and all those kinds of small communities that we have in southern Manitoba bordering the U.S. that many a traveller might not know exist.

The ethnic foods that these people make—these Ukrainian, Mennonite, Anglo-Saxon people who have settled there—will lend to the enjoyment of the traveller. If we have people who staff these tourism centres who are able to tell people about the huge diversity that we have in our ethnic background, it will certainly enhance those travellers' enjoyment.

There are other things that we have that I think the centre will direct attention to, and that is of course the new Forks centre that has been built in the city of Winnipeg and the tremendous entertainment resources that we have in the city of Winnipeg. The member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) is absolutely correct, it is largely local entertainment. I say to you that it is largely

produced by a group of people that were born and raised here and that are better entertainers than many other areas in the world have. Again, that can be identified clearly by those people operating this centre.

When you travel beyond the city of Winnipeg to the northern parts, whether it be the Interlake or whether it be the western part of our province, the Riding Mountain area, or even beyond that into the northern parts of this province into the Churchill area or anywhere in between, Flin Flon, The Pas, we have tremendous, tremendous resources that few people ever are directed to and pointed to and say, you know, visit that part of our province. We should as a province do more to advertise and enhance than we have up until now. It is this kind of recognition of the previous tourism agreement that we had with the federal government that will enhance our ability to generate that traffic, I believe, and that will allow us to expand our tourism industry, whether they are fishing lodges in northern Manitoba, whether they are ski hills in the Riding Mountain area or whether they are in fact just leisurely drive throughs by people that have never seen Manitoba.

* (1710)

Therefore, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would ask that the members of this Legislature join me—I am not sure how much time I have left—but join me in congratulating specifically the federal government for having the resources to share with us to put together the kind of agreements we need, and to start redirecting the emphasis towards co-operation and negotiate more of these kinds of agreements that we can jointly fund to create more of these kinds of tourism interest-type ventures in this province as well as some of the other western provinces.

We know that the agricultural community in this province has come through some very, very serious times. We know that things are getting better because of the emphasis that has been placed on the need to keep on producing food in this province as well as the rest of the province. We must congratulate our Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) for the tremendous effort that he has put in to ensure that our agricultural community will survive until the turnaround comes, and it is coming. We have all seen that the commodity prices are changing. It is being redirected, and the prices of our commodities are increasing. Therefore, it will enhance our ability for those rural communities to survive.

However, diversification of the rural communities is something that we can continually keep on adding to, and the tourism sector I think has some tremendous opportunities. Many of our rural farm families are looking at how they can join with some of their neighbours and friends in developing the bed and breakfast type places whereby you could encourage people that have never seen a farm operation to stay on farms and enjoy a week or two with them to work on farms, and therefore it might even help to offset some of the costs and labour on the farm during those times. But there are some members in this place that would not know anything about that.

I would encourage even members of this Legislature that have probably never been on a farm or near a farm to do that, to travel out to rural Manitoba and to spend some time with their country cousins, and to get some dirt under their nails and help us increase the tourism traffic. Maybe they could even spend a few dollars in some of our rural communities to enjoy some of the theatre. There is some excellent live theatre in some of these small communities. That might interest some of these members. If that does not satisfy them, I would suggest that they go out there and ride the horses, milk the cows, feed the goats and truly enjoy a great time vacationing in rural Manitoba. Then when you come home, spend some time being entertained by those great entertainers in the city of Winnipeg.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to join with my colleague in speaking to this resolution. The mover of the resolution has certainly put forward a resolution that we can support and, I think, amend and improve upon as well. I would propose to do that. However, before I do so I would like to take this opportunity to speak about some of the tourism agreements that have made possible projects such as this \$640,000 tourist information centre that the member for Emerson has discussed in his opening remarks. [interjection] Steinbach? The member for Steinbach is also responsible for Emerson, and he has brought forward a resolution that actually just taps the government on the back a little bit.

Of course, that is about the extent of the resolutions that we get from the members opposite, and I have to indicate that they have done that on a number of occasions. They are also providing some accolades to some of their constituents, and

that is certainly an acceptable practice, I guess, in this Legislature and one that many of us as MLAs do at various times.

I want to say, though, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is unfortunate that this government and this federal government have been unable to renew the ERDA agreements that were established under the previous New Democratic government, along with the, at the time, Liberal federal government that was in place in Canada.

The ERDA agreements were an excellent format which provided economic and regional development in the province of Manitoba. We were talking there of \$500 million total in those agreements which provided a significant boost to the Manitoba economy. It is one of the reasons why we came out of the recession of the late 1980s in this province. Certainly, it stimulated the economy. It provided jobs to a great extent and opened up opportunities in Manitoba in a wide variety of economic development areas.

Tourism was one of them. The agreement was for over \$30 million for tourism development in the province over a five-year period. That ERDA agreement was for major projects in Manitoba in conjunction with the private sector. There were a number of categories under that agreement where the private sector could be involved, but it did stimulate proposals on various areas in areas of the province where tourism was thought to be one of the strengths and one of the major opportunities for development, one of the areas that Manitoba could develop for economic development, for jobs into the future.

It was identified as a major area as a result of tourism destination studies that were undertaken in the late '70s and early '80s. As a matter of fact, the studies were undertaken under the previous Conservative government. I give them credit for undertaking those studies and the establishment of Destination Manitoba.

It was following that that the New Democratic government negotiated these agreements with the federal Trudeau government of the day. As a result, it was not just tourism that was identified, it was forestry, it was transportation. We had the Churchill agreement, the transportation development agreement and the new technology—the bus agreement that was put in place, a \$50-million agreement. There were a large number of

agreements, the information technology agreement, telecommunications agreement.

We did have a large number of agreements in place that made possible the expenditure of federal dollars in a cost-sharing way in this province of Manitoba in an unprecedented way, as a matter of fact, Madam Deputy Speaker, I have to say. It meant that the federal government was investing in the province of Manitoba with partners being the provincial government and being other levels of government or the private sector.

I think clearly this government has failed. I think it is not a matter of whether I believe it or think it, it is a matter of historical fact. This government has failed over its five years in office to work constructively with the federal government to achieve anything close to what was achieved by the former New Democratic government in this province.

It is ironic, because it was the Conservatives who said, oh, well, you need to have a Conservative government in Manitoba so you have somebody who can work with the federal Conservative government in Ottawa. The Premier at that time was indicating during discussions that he had, debates on television and in campaign sessions, public meetings, we heard his indications that all he had to do was pick up the phone, and he would be able to talk with the Prime Minister. They would work things out very easily and would not be like the former Premier of this province, always fighting with Ottawa, like the CF-18 thing and all of those other fiascos where the federal government was cutting back on Manitoba. It would be completely different once the Conservatives were in office.

* (1720)

When they did come into office, we saw very poor communication between the federal and provincial governments. It deteriorated over the years to the point where the Premier (Mr. Filmon) did not even show up for dinner with the Prime Minister at a fundraising dinner last fall.

We have to think that this was a contrived situation, because the Premier did not want to be seen dining next to the Prime Minister and certainly did not want his picture taken with the Prime Minister as he did so enthusiastically a few years previous.

The situation is, and it is a matter of fact, that the deterioration that took place with the relations between the federal and provincial governments

was unprecedented. That is why this Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) was unable to negotiate any federal-provincial agreements in his area or any of his colleagues were unable to negotiate agreements to follow upon the ERDA agreements that were put in place, those ERDA agreements which gave rise to such needed projects as the tourism information centre that is located at Emerson. [interjection]

See, the minister forgets what we are talking about here. It was precisely because of the great working relationship that the previous New Democratic government put in place that we were able to negotiate these agreements that provided these kinds of benefits prior to the Mulroney government coming into office.

We have to say that during our experience with Mulroney and the CF-18 fiasco we had a great deal of difficulty working with him, because he was only interested in servicing his constituents in Quebec and along the St. Lawrence in his riding. He was not too interested in what was happening in Manitoba.

Of course, as I said earlier, Madam Deputy Speaker, when I was interrupted by the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), clearly this government has failed to deal constructively with the federal government to make Manitoba a priority on the national scene, failed in every conceivable way.

We can look at each of those categories where those agreements were in place, identified as strengths for Manitoba, where the federal and provincial governments should be working together to invest to develop those areas in Manitoba. We found that they were unable to accomplish anything close.

We had a matter of a \$5 million tourism agreement, for example. That is the extent of their tourism agreement, to follow on a \$30 million agreement that was in place by the previous government. So you can see that this government has been unable to follow through.

Therefore, I believe they should be including that kind of reference in their resolution that they brought forward, to make this completely contextual. To put things in the proper context, it is necessary to make reference to the fact that the government has been unable to continue on that constructive, working relationship with the federal government to develop Manitoba.

Tourism is only one of the areas, but it is the one that is being focused on in this resolution; therefore, we believe that it is necessary to also include a reference to that when we discuss this resolution.

I want to indicate, before I move that amendment, Madam Deputy Speaker, that I do applaud the people of Emerson for taking the initiative to put forward the proposal for a tourism information centre. I think it is important that Manitoba has a major centre at a border with our neighbours to the south, and it is also important to leave a lasting impression on visitors who come to Manitoba, a first impression being a very important one. So I think that it is a positive development and one that we want to indicate our support of to the people of Emerson when and if this resolution is passed.

I think that it is a major oversight if the government, in making reference to this centre and this development, neglects to point out that they have been unable to provide the kind of leadership in tourism in this province since that time. Not only have they not provided leadership in terms of federal-provincial agreements, they have cut back on Tourism Manitoba, on the funding that was provided to regional organizations throughout, for TIAM throughout Manitoba, disbanded that whole organization. There are no longer regional tourism organizations throughout this province. One of their first acts when they came into government was to disband this organization, to discontinue the funding, and that is what has happened to the support for local initiative in tourism.

It is a dismal failure under this government and I think that the numbers would indicate a substantial drop-off in tourism in this province over the years this Conservative government has been in place. We believe that the tourism figures would indicate the worst figures in over 30 years, and I think it is a direct result of the lack of attention and priority placed on tourism by this government. It has become worse every year since this government came into office, so we think it is important that this resolution be placed in that context, and that this is a result, this tourism initiative, this information centre, of the agreements put in place by the previous government, and there should be recognition of the negotiation that did take place.

So I want to move, Madam Deputy Speaker, that Resolution 14 be amended by adding after the last WHEREAS:

and WHEREAS the previous Manitoba-Canada Tourism Agreement under ERDA provided over \$30 million for tourism projects in Manitoba, substantially more than the current agreement; and

WHEREAS it is unfortunate the government of Manitoba has been unable to renegotiate a tourism agreement with the federal government at the same level as previous governments have done; and after the BE IT RESOLVED

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Legislature request the federal and provincial governments to negotiate a tourism agreement at a similar level to the the ERDA tourism agreement which expired in 1990.

Seconded by the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

Point of Order

Mr. Plohman: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker.

An Honourable Member: You cannot have a point of order on an amendment.

Mr. Plohman: No, just a point of clarification. I want to just point out that I added—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Plohman: Madam Deputy Speaker, I have added in handwriting some clarification to the printed one so that you can see that it follows the first BE IT RESOLVED.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I have reviewed the amendment, and the amendment appears to be in order.

* * *

* (1730)

Madam Deputy Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), seconded by the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid),

THAT Resolution 14 be amended by adding after the last WHEREAS

and WHEREAS the previous Manitoba-Canada Tourism Agreement under ERDA provided over \$30 million for tourism projects in Manitoba, substantially more than the current agreement; and

WHEREAS it is unfortunate the government of Manitoba has been unable to renegotiate a tourism agreement with the federal government at the same

level as previous governments have done; and after the BE IT RESOLVED

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Legislature request the federal and provincial governments to negotiate a tourism agreement at a similar level to the ERDA Tourism Agreement which expired in 1990.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Madam Deputy Speaker, it is really unfortunate, I think, that we cannot use private members' hour in a more positive way. I find it amusing that members of the government are going yea, yea, since they are the ones who are most likely to abuse private members' hour, but never mind.

In this particular case it seems to me that it was a very simple resolution put forward by the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner). Obviously he has had a tourist centre that has been built in his constituency, and I do not think in this case it was because it was his constituency. It happens to be the most frequent access from the United States into Canada in the province of Manitoba. So it is a reasonable place to build that kind of information centre. Having built this kind of an information centre, I think it is a remarkably, because I do not agree with many of the things this government has done, good achievement on their part.

I think it is a reasonable thing, and I think it is also true that some of the plans and some of the ideas were in place before they became the government. So you know everybody can congratulate themselves for having put this wonderful deal together and have left it at that. No, we now have a straightforward resolution from the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) and we have the politics involved by the New Democratic Party in order to, I would suggest, unfortunately negate the purpose and function of private members' hour, and that is my point. Not that it is not the Liberal Party that does not make these things into political things on occasion as well, and it is not—the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) would like to promote this as being holier than thou. It is not the point. The point is, should we not as a group of 57 legislators decide that private members' hour has a little bit better purpose than what it is we usually denigrate it into, and I do not exclude the Liberal Party from the denigration, just to keep the honourable member for Dauphin happy.

It is a positive achievement. It has been an unfortunate thing that Manitoba has not in the past been clear in its welcoming, if I can put it that way, of visitors into this province. I remember when I first moved to Manitoba, and I came across the border from Saskatchewan and then I went the other way into Ontario, that I was disturbed that there was not more fanfare made, not just in crossing a border from a country, but even between provinces.

When I was a child in Nova Scotia I remember coming across the border between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and there is a big square which is always beautifully planted, and there is always a piper in the summertime piping people across the border from New Brunswick to Nova Scotia, and there is a sense of participation. There is a sense of genuine welcome for people who do that, and I think and I hope that this new tourist centre which has been opened will provide the same kind of opportunity. I have to suggest to the member that I have not been there yet and it is probably unlikely that I will be, because I try to avoid crossing the border between Canada and the United States as much as I possibly can, and I do that by choice. I do it by choice because I have a desire to remain in this country, to shop in this country and to spend my money in this country. I am not particularly interested in spending it south of the border.

So I have never been to the border crossing at Emerson. Although I have been in the community of Emerson, I have not been to the border crossing. I have never crossed the border there, but I think it is important that tourists feel welcome when they come into this province and, if this new tourism centre is going to provide that opportunity for them to feel welcome and is also, as the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) indicated, going to provide them with very valuable information about the wonderful opportunities for the enjoyment of this province, then it will be all that it is hoped it will be.

If we can make information available to them on museums, on cultural activities, on restaurants and hotels and the beauty of this province from north to south, from east to west, if we can keep tourists in the province, rather than just being an entry and then a very quick exit as they go to another province, then the tourism centre will be of great value.

I hope that it turns out to be everything that the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) wants it to be, because all of us in this Chamber should be very supportive of any initiative which enhances our

economic viability. Tourism is a very important part of that. We only have to look at the Atlantic provinces, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia in particular, who have invested in tourism in a very major way so that in Nova Scotia it is now considered their No. 1 industry.

I do not know what it is statistically for P.E.I., but I suspect it would be very, very close to No. 1 or No. 2, because they have seen the value of attracting people from outside of this country, as well as from other provinces in this country, to spend their money in those provinces. If this is a first step forward so that we are going to also do that in Manitoba, then I am perfectly prepared to support the resolution. I will even support it in its amended form, if we can bring it to a vote, even though I think it is unfortunate that all of us engage in that kind of pettiness in private members' hour.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

* (1740)

Mr. Ben Svelnson (La Verendrye): Madam Deputy Speaker, members of the Assembly, I would like to join with the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) in congratulating—[interjection] That would be a very commendable thing for any person to put their name forward to run for—[interjection] Even that. Yes, for the federal nomination in any party, I would commend those people for that too.

However, right now, I am into commending those people of Emerson and indeed the federal and provincial governments for the work that has gone into creating this Emerson tourist information centre.

I think that we will all agree that it does not matter whether you are applying for a job or if you are trying—that first impression of people wanting to sell you something or in fact you selling yourself is something that is very, very important. So, in fact, this tourism centre at Emerson is indeed—I am told, although I have not seen it, I have talked to a number of people who have—it is that first impression, a symbol if you will, to people coming into this country as to what is here.

The warmth that is shown by the people of Emerson is very similar to a tourism centre that I have out just on this side of the Ontario border at Falcon and West Hawk in the West Hawk area. The people there again are shining examples of our front-line people, there with a smile and a helpful hand to people coming into this province as to where they can go to enjoy themselves.

Now the enjoyment can come in many different ways from fishing to skiing which you can indeed do in my beautiful little constituency of La Verendrye in and around West Hawk-Falcon area, to the ballet and the symphony within Winnipeg to shopping. In fact, we have people coming into this province from northern Ontario who indeed come to Winnipeg starting off with a thing of doing their shopping. Now there are many other things within the city of Winnipeg and within Manitoba that the people can indeed spend their money on.

We have in the northern part of Manitoba of course the whales, the polar bears in Churchill. Again, back in my area we have anything from cross-country skiing to downhill skiing. It is not the largest hill in the province. However, I am out there many times. I have many times been out at the ski hill and seen many, many young people. This is a very interesting thing. I have said that it is not the highest hill, but we have schools that come out to Falcon Lake and believe me, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is really a treat to see a child that might be no taller than about two feet tall coming down the hill and handling those skis and the ski poles with such expertise that I was absolutely astounded.

Now I never had the opportunity, Madam Deputy Speaker, when I was a kid to do a lot of skiing. In fact, no, I will not even tell you the kind of skiing that I did, but at any rate—[interjection] Pardon. When I was a kid we did a little bit of skiing and a lot of people might, well, what the heck, they will kid me about it anyway. We did some skiing, would you believe, behind horses. [interjection] Yes, we did. Yes. It was fun.

It was absolutely a fantastic amount of fun behind horses, a nice riding horse and going down the road and you can go in and out of the ditches and so on. It was fun. We did graduate to some things that were a little bit faster after that, but we did not have that many hills in the area I grew up in, and, indeed, we had to go into other things.

However, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would just like to touch on a number of other things within my area. We have fish hatcheries out in the West Hawk-Falcon area. We had out in our area a Natural Resources officer who actually had been stationed up in the Ashern-Gypsumville area and he captured a small beaver. The mother had been killed in removing some of the dams that they make, and he captured this little beaver. He brought it back to the West Hawk-Falcon area, and you should

see this beaver. I mean it is huge. When I put my arms out like that, that beaver would really fill that. It is huge. This Natural Resources officer has taken this beaver to schools—and I am trying to remember the spot that it is at now. He has visited many, many schools within the province of Manitoba and brought many, many hours of absolute delight to young people. This beaver, although born in the wild, would not bite anything or hurt anybody. You can pet the beaver and handle the beaver to the children's delight. It is absolutely something fantastic.

So there are many things within our province, and just to touch on a number of other things, we have of course the Whiteshell, which falls within my constituency. We have many lakes. You have heard about the 100,000 lakes, Madam Deputy Speaker, I am sure I have a good part of them in my constituency. We can go from West Hawk-Falcon, Indian Bay, Star Lake, Caddy Lake, Cross Lake, Nora Lake, War Eagle, Turtle Lake, Brereton Lake, Eleanor, Nutimik, Numao, Margaret, Horseshoe, Crowduck, many, many different lakes of which there is camping at some. There are boating and swimming areas. You can stop in at West Hawk or in the Big Whiteshell. There is swimming and fishing. It is incredible the tourism draw that we have in this province, incredible.

When we talk about this tourism centre, and I would ask the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) to join us in that. When we are the first line or when we are working with the people who are the first line to the people coming into this province to make a good impression, to shake a hand, to give a smile, it is nice to be able to point out a number of these things. I am sure the member for Dauphin was listening closely to a number of the things that I was mentioning.

There is another centre at West Hawk-Falcon that is very similar to the one at Emerson, but I think that we all have to take a part in this. We all have to—and as a people, they are our strength in Manitoba. With any of the centres, not just tourism centres, but the tourist attractions from ski hill to beaches to the polar bears in Churchill or the whales, many of these things are the things that will make Manitoba the No. 1 attraction to the people of the world. I would definitely ask the opposition members to join with us in making Manitoba the No. 1 tourist attraction in the world. I know that we can do it—

* (1750)

Mr. Plohman: Put your money where your mouth is.

Mr. Sveinson: Well, see, the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) kind of put his finger on something here, and again it is money. It seems always to be that from the opposition benches, where, in fact, they are always—money, money, money, spend it.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as I said, our people in this province are the No. 1 people of the world in putting forward their wares. It was mentioned by the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) the different foods throughout our different ethnic groups throughout the province. It is absolutely fantastic. In my rounds in my constituency, again out in the East Braintree area, usually when I go through, I stop in, and I pick up a couple of dozen perogies, just fantastic, potato and cheese. It is just fantastic. You know, I will never leave any part of my constituency—after having stopped at some of their homes, I will never leave there hungry, never.

An Honourable Member: And it looks like it, too.

Mr. Sveinson: I should do up my coat? I am not blaming the couple of pounds that I put on, Madam Deputy Speaker, on my constituents. I ate those perogies and fish, pickerel filets—oh, just something else. Those you can get in my constituency and also in a lot of other parts of Manitoba. As I said, Manitobans are our strength. Indeed, they will, without government spending countless or endless amounts of money on those so-called tourism attractions that our opposition members have mentioned, invest their monies in these different tourist attractions. They indeed will do it, and they will indeed make Manitoba No. 1.

Madam Deputy Speaker, do I have much more time left? Two minutes.

The beaver was a very, very fun-filled thing. Actually, I do come from up north, around Ashern, Moosehorn. In fact, the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) and I did go to school in Moosehorn. We actually went to the same school. Many of the friends of the member for Dauphin are indeed also my friends, and although we do kid across the way the odd time, we do come from the same area.

At any rate, this beaver that this Natural Resources officer did capture came from the Gypsumville area. [interjection] No. He brought him from northern Manitoba into the West Hawk-Falcon area, where in fact, after that, he travelled to many schools in the province, and indeed was really an

education to all our children in Manitoba. Bucky the beaver is still around, by the way. He is still around and will keep our children in our schools for a number of years to come. [interjection] It will be, I am sure.

Madam Deputy Speaker, thanks for this time.

Mr. Jack Reimer (Niakwa): Madam Deputy Speaker, before I talk too long on the amendment that was brought forth by the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), I have to relate that I, too, in my constituency—even though I do have an urban area and an urban riding, one of the concerns in my riding was beavers, believe it or not, on the Seine River.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Reimer: Yes, honest, the amount of beavers have increased in Winnipeg because of the Seine River along the Niakwa Golf Course and are bringing forth a lot of havoc to a lot of my constituents.

They are cutting down trees in my area. In fact, one of my constituents lives right on the Seine River there, and the beavers were coming up and they were actually eating at the pilings on their decking in the back yard. So we had to call upon Natural Resources here in Manitoba. They were very kind to come out, and they trapped the beavers that were in Niakwa. We did not shoot them or skin them as has been mentioned by some of the members here. These were beavers that were trapped and brought back into the wilds in Manitoba so that they could go on in their happy ways.

Just to get back to the amendment that was brought forth by the member for Emerson regarding the Emerson tourist booth. Indeed, it is a great pleasure and an honour to talk on this because tourism, as everybody knows, is a very, very vital and a very important part of Manitoba's economy. The amount of monies that are spent on tourism and all related efforts and endeavours are a great benefit and a boost to the Manitoba economy.

I am not sure of the exact numbers, but I know that it is in the hundreds of millions of dollars that are

spent here annually in Manitoba because of people coming to Manitoba. More and more people from within and also outside of Manitoba come to Manitoba to take part in some of the fairs and some of the events. In rural Manitoba, they are very fortunate that a lot of the towns, a lot of the villages and the townships come forth with summer fairs.

We are all very familiar with the Morden Corn and Apple Festival, the Threshermen's Reunion, the Morris Stampede. Indeed, the Morris Stampede brings in an awful lot of people. The Dauphin Ukrainian Festival is recognized as one of the strongest tourist attractions in Canada. In fact, in Dauphin with the Dauphin festival, they go through hundreds and hundreds of dozens of perogies there at the Dauphin festival because of the strong ethnic group there. The frog festivals at St. Pierre are very, very important, very, very well attended.

In fact, I remember at Dugald there is the Wellington boot contest. Altona, the Sunflower Festival, a very big event attended by people from all over Manitoba. The mosquito capital of Komarno, I believe it is called, for the mosquito festival. We have all kinds of festivals going on all during the summer. At Gimli, they have the Islendingadagurinn. That is the one that is always big, big. They have a big following there. The snake festival at Narcisse for the garter snakes—in fact, people come from all over North America for the garter snakes. The turtle races at—Boissevain has the big turtle races there.

So there are summer festivals that just go on and on here in Manitoba, and these are all tourist—the Nickel Days at Thompson, big, big event. Flin Flon, they have the Trout Festival—the Beef and Barley Festival at—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is next before the House, the honourable member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer) will have 10 minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., I am leaving the Chair and will return at 8 p.m. this evening.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, April 5, 1993

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Presenting Petitions

Improvement of Highway 391 Ashton	1415
Sunday Shopping Storie	1415

Reading and Receiving Petitions

Sunday Shopping Storie	1415
Restoration of Friendship Centre Funding Plohman	1415
Funding for the Great Library Barrett	1416
Restoration of Friendship Centre Funding Hickes	1416

Tabling of Reports

Whitehorse Mining Initiative Communique Downey	1416
---	------

Introduction of Bills

Bill 25, Public Schools Amendment Act (4) Vodrey	1416
Bill 24, Taxicab Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act Driedger	1417
Bill 23, Retail Businesses Holiday Closing Amendment, Employment Standards Amendment and Payment of Wages Amendment Act Stefanson	1417

Oral Questions

Student Social Allowance Program Doer; Filmon	1417
Main Street Project Doer; Filmon	1418
Children's Dental Program Doer; Filmon	1418
APM Management Consultants Chomiak; Orchard	1419
Student Social Allowance Program Carstairs; Filmon	1420

Post-Secondary Education Carstairs; Filmon	1421
Student Social Allowance Program Carstairs; Filmon	1421
Social Assistance Martindale; Gilleshammer	1421
Student Social Allowance Program Wasylycia-Leis; Filmon	1422
The Province of Manitoba Wasylycia-Leis; Filmon	1422
Home Care Program Cheema; Orchard	1423
Children's Dental Program Cheema; Orchard	1423
Rural Development Corporations Wowchuk; Derkach	1423
Children's Dental Program L. Evans; Orchard	1424

Nonpolitical Statements

85th Royal Winter Fair Findlay L. Evans Gaudry	1425 1425 1426
---	----------------------

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Second Readings

Bill 17, Crown Lands Amendment Act Enns Ashton	1426 1427
Bill 18, Corporations Amendment Act McIntosh	1428

Debate on Proposed Motions

Consideration of the Estimates Withdrawn	1429
---	------

Debate on Second Readings

Bill 20, Social Allowances Regulation Validation Act Martindale Ashton Wasylycia-Leis Carstairs	1429 1437 1444 1450
--	------------------------------

**Private Members' Business
Proposed Resolutions**

Res. 14, Emerson Visitor Centre

Penner	1453
Amendment	
Plohman	1455
Carstairs	1458
Sveinson	1459
Reimer	1461