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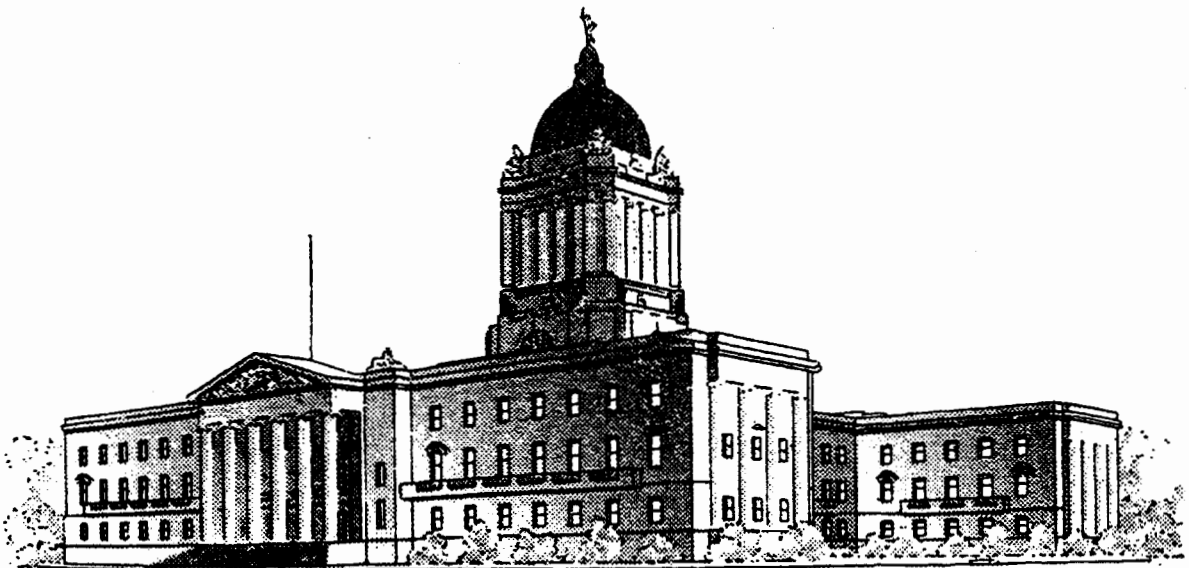
First Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(Hansard)**

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

<u>Name</u>	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Party</u>
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise, Hon.	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary	Concordia	N.D.P.
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DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
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EVANS, Clif	Interlake	N.D.P.
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GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSON, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	N.D.P.
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McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	P.C.
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MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	P.C.
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TOEWS, Vic, Hon.	Rossmere	P.C.
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VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, September 22, 1995

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): I beg to present the First Report of the Committee on Public Accounts.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Broadway was recognized for Reading and Receiving Petitions. I believe the papers got mixed up and you did the standing committee report.

* * *

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Santos), and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: Dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Federal Immigration Policies

WHEREAS Manitoba has been immeasurably enriched socially, economically and culturally by immigrants and their families, and;

WHEREAS it was for this reason that successive provincial and federal governments have encouraged immigration to Manitoba, and;

WHEREAS since 1993, the current federal Liberal government has reversed these policies by instituting a series of changes making immigration more difficult; and

WHEREAS the 1994 changes in quotas for family reunification class of immigrants were unfair and punitive; and

WHEREAS the fee increases for immigrants instituted in the 1995 federal Liberal budget are neither fair nor justifiable and border on racism, and;

WHEREAS the new \$975 fee being imposed on adult immigrants is more than many immigrants make in their home country in an entire year, and will make it even more difficult for people from these countries to immigrate to Canada;

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the Government of Canada cancel these fee increases and instead institute policies that will encourage immigration to Manitoba.

* (1005)

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts
First Report**

Mr. Conrad Santos (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the First Report of the Committee on Public Accounts.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Your Standing Committee on Public Accounts presents the following as its First Report.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your committee met on Thursday, September 21, 1995, at 10 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider the Public Accounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1993, Volumes 1, 2 and 3, the Public Accounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1994, Volumes 1, 2 and 3, the Provincial Auditor's Report for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1993, the Provincial Auditor's Report for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1994, and the Provincial Auditor's Report for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1995, Volumes 1 and 2.

At that meeting your committee elected Mr. Santos as chairperson and Mr. Helwer as vice-chairperson.

Also at that meeting your committee passed the following motion on a counted vote:

THAT the committee pass the 1992-1993 reports at the end of the meeting and allow for a crossover of discussion on issues pertaining to the previous years and further debate.

Your committee received all information desired by any member at the meeting from the Minister of Finance and from Ms. Carol Bellringer, Provincial Auditor. Information was provided with respect to the receipts, expenditures and other matters pertaining to the business of the province.

Your committee finds that the receipts and expenditures of the monies have been carefully set forth and all monies properly accounted for.

Your committee has considered the Public Accounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1993, Volumes 1, 2 and 3 and the Provincial Auditor's report for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1993, and has adopted the same as presented.

Mr. Santos: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 201—The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), that leave be given to introduce Bill 201, The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-maladie, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, this particular private member's bill takes into account what members

from the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), the NDP critic talked about, and that was the five fundamental principles of health care. That is already incorporated in Canadian law, if you like, through the Canada Health Act. What we are saying is we are going to reinforce it by bringing it and making it a part of legislation here in the province of Manitoba to reinforce how important it is to have a health care system that is one tier and is here to serve all Manitobans.

I request all members to support this piece of legislation and look forward to it going into second reading and ultimately to committee. Thank you for the opportunity to say a few words.

Motion agreed to.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Winnipeg Jets/Arena MEC Proposal

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

In a document we tabled two days ago, the submission from MEC to the Securities Commission on April 11, it speaks to the fact that this financial plan is consistent with the terms and conditions and matters that have been agreed upon or are anticipated to be agreed upon in terms of the proposal.

Madam Speaker, of course this proposal goes way beyond the Premier's promise of \$10 million during that same period of time, during that period of time in the election campaign, and in light of the fact that the Manitoba Securities Act makes it an offence for a person or persons to have a financial statement or document or proposal that is misleading or false with respect to any material fact or omits to state any material fact, the omission of which makes the statement false or misleading, I would like to ask the Premier, did the MEC group breach The Securities Act in terms of having a proposal that was well beyond the Premier's alleged promise on April 11?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, my reading of the proposal indicates that in several places they talk about it as being preliminary and they talk

about the fact that it is not possible at this time to present the proposal in its final form. They say changes are expected and all sorts of things, so I would not know the legal position of the Manitoba Securities Commission.

I do know that the proposal that was put forth under the Thompson Dorfman Sweatman firm's heading is put forth by an individual who used to be the legal counsel for the Securities Commission. So I would leave that in the matter of the hands of those who have to administer The Securities Act and the commission itself to make that judgment.

* (1010)

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is to the Premier.

Given the fact that the document in no way contains the statement of the Premier on April 11 that they are capping the provincial donation to \$10 million—in no part of this document does it contain the alleged promise of the Premier; in fact they state that they are anticipating that the numbers in this document will come true—and given the fact that the anticipation of the MEC group to have funds well beyond \$10 million actually is more accurate than the promise that the Premier made which he broke after April 26, how would the MEC group be able to anticipate that the Premier would break his promise in a submission that he made on April 11 when in fact we did not have that confirmed until April 26 when the Premier in fact did break his promise?

Mr. Filmon: In fact, Madam Speaker, if you read the proposal you see that at no time do they specify what they are anticipating from the provincial government. They lump together expectations from the provincial and federal governments. You also can refer to an article that was in the news media months before this in which Mr. Osler, who is the spokesperson and president of MEC, was anticipating significantly more funds from the federal government.

At the very least, they were talking about—I read in the paper even just yesterday that they were talking about \$15 million from the federal government from

infrastructure. There was then \$2 million that they put on the table from the Pan Am Games and there was additional money which they were expecting to get from Human Resources Canada for various winter works and other labour subsidies. So it may well have been their anticipation that they were getting a great deal more from the federal government.

But at no time do they state individually what they anticipated from the provincial government because they knew categorically, and they have confirmed it, that they were only getting \$10 million committed from us.

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, obviously their anticipation that the Premier would break his promise contained within this document, including shares being transferred from public ownership provincially and other matters, was much more accurate. Their anticipation of your word was much more accurate, unfortunately, than the Premier's word on this capping the donation to \$10 million. I guess it is a very big coincidence that they knew the Premier would break his word and submitted it in a legal document on April 11, two weeks prior to the election.

I would like to ask the Premier, in light of the fact that the Premier was involved with the MEC group from June of 1994 and in light of the fact that the deadline, the so-called deadline was May 1 and was extended to the long weekend in May for us to cancel the operating losses of the hockey team, is the condition of keeping these matters secret and away from the public which is contained again within the submission of MEC, has that contributed to the fact that the Premier is now again breaking another promise and we are responsible for paying for the losses of this hockey team because you kept everything secret before the May 1 date, Madam Speaker?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, all of those surmisions, all of those dreams and hopes and political manipulations in the mind of the Leader of the Opposition are absolutely false, absolutely false. It may well be that the Leader of the Opposition knew more than I did about all of these issues. The fact of the matter is that, like I did, he met with MEC officials, as did his various different representatives. That is the extent of the information.

I repeat the same facts as have been stated by all of the people who have been asked within MEC, whether it be Mr. Cam Osler, whether it be Mr. Charlie Spiring, whether it be Mr. John Loewen, whether it be the legal counsel for MEC, every one of them has confirmed that our only commitment prior to the election was \$10 million, and there is absolutely nothing he can say that would overcome the weight of that evidence.

Winnipeg Jets/Arena MEC Proposal

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, the Premier has just said in his response to the Leader of the Opposition that there was no place in the document at which there was a specific expectation of the province taking some action. The Province of Manitoba and WEC will each transfer their limited partnership units of Jets L.P. to facility company in consideration of facility company, et cetera, et cetera.

Can the Premier explain his words in his previous answer in relation to these words which clearly indicate that there is a commitment to transfer the shares of the Jets to the new entity?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I tell the members opposite to read yesterday's Winnipeg Sun in which the individual who was responsible and whom they interviewed, the individual who was responsible for raising the capital, Mr. Charlie Spiring, and he said this was a wish list.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Crescentwood, with a supplementary question.

Mr. Sale: Will the Premier indicate what in-principle commitments were made by the Province of Manitoba in support of the project during the period of time from January 1 to April 11 when this document was filed? What were the in-principle commitments made by this government?

Mr. Filmon: \$10 million, Madam Speaker.

* (1015)

Mr. Sale: In the hubbub from the other side, I did not hear the Premier's response to my question.

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, maybe he could have his own side just calm down a little bit while he is asking his questions. Their anticipation of his glee is obviously overwhelming. My response was \$10 million.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, would the Premier then describe to the House how it is possible that this document has so much detail in it and references on page 6 of Appendix A that MEC had numerous discussions with and received certain in-principle commitments from the provincial government? Can the Premier indicate how it is possible that all these details emerged after all those numerous meetings, and yet there was nothing more than \$10 million on the table and the \$10 million never shows up in this document?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, he would have to ask MEC that.

Tobacco Advertising Supreme Court Ruling

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, the recent ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada striking down the act and legislation concerning tobacco advertising is a serious blow to all those interested in public health in Canada. It is particularly serious as it affects the health and the future health of the children of Canada.

My question to the minister is: Recently at the provincial ministers' health conference, did the ministers, in light of the fact that a ruling was anticipated, have an opportunity to discuss this issue and a possible response to an issue of this kind and to the ruling that occurred by the Supreme Court of Canada?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, there have been discussions over the past year and a half about issues of this nature. Of course, it is a setback for all of those who are engaged in efforts to try to curtail the consumption of tobacco products.

The federal government started off on the wrong foot, however, some time ago when they so drastically succumbed to the smugglers of our country and allowed the smugglers to set the tobacco tax policy for

our country. That was a mistake. We told the federal government that then. I think even some of our Liberal colleagues in this House agreed with that position. At that time the federal government put forward all of these plans that they were going to spend all of these dollars to engage in activities that would lead to cessation of tobacco consumption.

Madam Speaker, we are very disappointed in that ruling, and we are also very disappointed in the federal government because all of the tax dollars they have forgone could be used to reduce the impact of the cuts, the very drastic cuts that we are all going to be experiencing in health care and social services in our country. The federal government has a very serious problem on its hands, and we would urge the federal government to look seriously at the problem.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, given the minister's comments and the very strong position taken by all members of this Chamber on numerous occasions concerning tobacco advertising, I am wondering if the minister would undertake on behalf of either the government and/or together with all members of this Chamber to write today to the Minister of Health in Ottawa in the strongest possible terms suggesting that legislation be brought in immediately to bring back restrictions on tobacco advertising, that legislation be drafted to do that immediately.

* (1020)

Mr. McCrae: I think that might well be a good suggestion, Madam Speaker.

I think that governments are in the habit of reviewing very carefully judgments written by the courts. The courts can sometimes be very helpful even when they are striking down legislation in terms of advice that can be taken in the drafting of other legislation. We have learned that lesson ourselves here in the province and I am sure other jurisdictions have as well.

So I would be urging the federal minister to look carefully at that judgment to see if there is room or any guidance given by the Supreme Court as to whether the legislation is simply faulty or if it is faulty from the start in terms of the principles behind it. If that is the

case, we have a bigger problem, but if that kind of legislation is possible, of course we would urge the federal government and I would invite other honourable members to do the same, to correct legislation or bring in alternative legislation if that indeed is possible.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for the response.

My final supplementary is, therefore, will the minister, given the serious health consequences that tobacco advertising and the use of tobacco can have on Canadians' health in general and particularly those relating to children, consider also asking the minister if legislation is not possible to consider utilizing the notwithstanding clause in the Charter to override the decision of the Supreme Court in this regard given the serious effect that this issue could have on the health of Canadians?

Mr. McCrae: It is probably best to have a look at the judgment before we go stampeding to conclusions like that, Madam Speaker.

Agricultural Legislation Consultations

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, this government has introduced legislation which will affect farmers across the province and they have done it with very little consultation, and, in fact, farmers are unaware of the changes that this will make and the effect it will have on them. The legislation is coming at a time when farmers are trying to bring in their harvest.

I want to ask the Minister of Agriculture if it is his government's policy to pass legislation that will affect farmers across the province without first consulting with farmers.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): I am somewhat nonplussed by the question. Manitoba Agriculture Keystone Producers organization, which is the umbrella farm organization, holds, as part of its normal business, regional meetings throughout the province of Manitoba. The issue and the principle of

this bill I am personally well aware, because I attended some of those meetings, was discussed at each and every one of those regional meetings.

Furthermore, in terms of notice, this bill was presented to this Chamber. Earlier on in the spring session we agreed, because of the co-operation with members opposite to a particular schedule of sittings, that we would hold it over and not proceed with it until the fall, again, Madam Speaker, giving the farm community full summer, you know, notice that this bill is in fact on the Order Paper and will be dealt with. I know that the honourable member herself has been petitioned by various farm organization groups, notably the canola growers, urgently requesting this legislation.

I suspect it is very seldom that a bill should have such universal appeal by all members of this House in the interest of the farming community.

Public Hearings

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, because this legislation affects farmers across the province and the majority are not aware of the changes that this legislation will make to their pocketbooks, I want to ask the Minister of Agriculture if he will make commitments to hold hearings on this bill and on both Bill 15 and Bill 27 across the province so that farmers can have a chance to have input. Small farmers do not have the ability to come into Winnipeg to these hearings.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): I, along with everybody else in this Chamber, held the most significant public hearing last April when we consulted with all Manitobans as to the future of this particular bill. I say this not as an exaggeration, because this bill was very much part of the electoral platform of the group that I am associated with, so, Madam Speaker, I think it is time for action.

We are deeply concerned that some of the groups, particularly the canola growers, whom we take some particular pride in having developed that Cinderella crop that is so important to agriculture today right here out of our research facilities on the campus of the University of Manitoba, that we are falling behind in being able to support the ongoing research that crop

requires to provinces like Saskatchewan and Alberta where they have this kind of legislation.

We are just catching up with the rest of the agricultural community in Canada with this legislation, Madam Speaker, and it would be my hope that the honourable member for Swan River would want to, with some eagerness, support this bill.

* (1025)

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Speaker, since we, too, are concerned about farmers, and we, too, are concerned about farmers having a voice and we want farmers to have input, I want to ask the minister again if he will commit to hold hearings on Bill 15 and Bill 27 across the province so that farmers will have the ability to have their say on this bill.

If they choose to have their money go to commodity groups, we would support that, but what we want the government to commit to is—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The question has been put.

Mr. Enns: Madam Speaker, one of the unique practices of this House, and a practice that I think all of us can share some pride in, is that before any legislation is passed, we are one of the few, if not the only Chamber that has public hearings at committee stage of all legislation presented to this Chamber. I am sure we will have presentations and hear from various farm communities when this bill goes to committee.

One more final point, Madam Speaker. I am not, and this bill does not, force any farmer to participate in these organizations if he chooses not to. This is a voluntary checkoff, and any producer that does not wish to participate, unlike some of the labour legislation that we have, can get his full refund by simply sending a little notice to the organization indicating the same.

Balanced Budget Legislation Provincial Auditor's Role

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

Given this government's past record, one has to call into question its credibility on the government's proposed balanced budget legislation. Yesterday, the Provincial Auditor confirmed that the '92-93 deficit was over \$200 million more than the Filmon government had claimed it was. Manitoba's financial picture does not necessarily mesh with reality on numerous occasions.

Sometimes we have underestimated the losses of the Jets. We overestimate the value of shares for Repap. Unless they get their accounting right, this proposed balanced budget legislation is nothing more than a sham.

Will the government amend its balanced budget legislation to ensure that the Provincial Auditor's office will be the final word on the deficit?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, we have already acknowledged that the Provincial Auditor's office will be the final say in terms of the publication of the Volume 1 document that is produced in the fall after the particular fiscal year, so we have acknowledged that they will audit Volume 1.

I think what the member is being confused with—and I am sure that that is easy to happen in light of discussions yesterday—is we have Volume 1, which is the deficit, and the budget that is produced every year that is the tax-supported budget. It is the budget that is ultimately funded through the taxes that Manitobans pay. Volume 3 rolls in all of the performances of our Crown corporations—Manitoba Hydro, Manitoba Telephone, the Fiscal Stabilization Fund and so on.

Over the course of six years that we have public accounts available during our term in office, in one year the rolling in of that information created a higher deficit. That happened to be 1992-93 where it created a higher deficit by \$100 million, but if one were to look at it over the performance of our government over the other years, it actually decreased accumulated deficits by some \$583 million.

Our performance on deficits is the best performance in all of Canada since 1988. Our deficits have averaged 1.3 percent of our gross domestic product.

The best performance under the NDP, unfortunately they averaged 3 percent of gross domestic product. In fact, under the NDP the real test is what happens to the debt in Manitoba, and I will refer to that in my next answer, Madam Speaker.

* (1030)

Mr. Lamoureux: Will the Minister of Finance define the role in the legislation of balanced budget for the Provincial Auditor because, quite frankly, we do not trust this government's accounting procedures?

An Honourable Member: The public of Manitoba does.

An Honourable Member: The Provincial Auditor does not.

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, the public of Manitoba certainly trusts our accounting and our performance when it comes to financial matters in this province. We have taken the accounting and the budget process under the previous government and significantly improved it in terms of moving to a full accrual system in most areas of accounting.

One need look no further than yesterday's release again from Standard and Poor's, and I know everybody is interested in terms of what the bond rating agencies say about Manitoba. Once again, Standard and Poor's affirmed Manitoba's rating at an A plus long-term rating, and they go on to talk about: Manitoba's outlook reflects Manitoba's improving fiscal situation, a stronger own-source revenue growth and continuing tight expenditure management should allow the government to achieve its goal of a fully balanced budget in the current fiscal year.

The real test, Madam Speaker, is what happens to the tax-supported debt in Manitoba, and under six short budgets under the NDP the tax-supported debt, the debt that has to be supported by Manitoba taxpayers, increased from \$1 billion to \$5 billion, a 485 percent increase during six short budgets under that government. Under seven budgets under our government, that same debt has increased by 42 percent compared to 485 percent—seven budgets, \$2 billion; six budgets, \$4 billion.

They can laugh all they want. You can laugh all you want, but the tax-supported debt is where it really tells the truth, and you should be ashamed of your performance under six years—ashamed.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, will the Minister of Finance concede the real story is when it came to the 1992-93 budget that you underestimated, you misled Manitobans by more than \$200 million? Why should we trust you now when you misled us in the past?

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would ask the honourable member to rephrase his question and remind him that "misled" has been ruled unparliamentary. The honourable member for Inkster, to quickly rephrase his question.

Mr. Lamoureux: Yes, Madam Speaker, and my apologies for using the word "misled." Maybe the Minister of Finance then can explain the \$200 million the Provincial Auditor says this government had in addition to the debt that he had reported.

Mr. Stefanson: It is unfortunate the member was not able to be there for the whole time in Public Accounts because I would gladly sit down with him and give him an accounting lesson so that he can understand the different—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Stefanson: And the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) certainly needs an accounting lesson; we all know that.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Finance, to quickly complete his response.

Mr. Stefanson: That offer stands for both the member for Inkster and the member for Thompson any time to sit down and give them a detailed accounting lesson. They should take the time to look at the various volumes that are produced. I have explained to the member for Inkster that there are three volumes.

Volume 1 is the tax-supported performance of government. Volume 3 includes all of the performance of the Crowns, of the Fiscal Stabilization Fund and so on. There is no misleading.

The numbers speak for themselves in terms of what happened in 1992-93, and in 1992-93 the deficit was higher than budget, if the member recalls, because of the significant reduction in transfer payments from Ottawa in excess of \$200 million that year.

If you look at the performance of our government over eight budgets to date, it is the best performance in all of Canada. We now have the first balanced budget in Manitoba in 23 years, and we have significantly improved the fiscal situation in our province. That is why we are seeing job growth of 22,000 more jobs in Manitoba year over year, the lowest unemployment rate in Canada, the largest increase in exports, and I could go on and on.

Independent Schools Funding Formula

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Education confirmed that the funding for private schools was not the result of a court order but was a political agreement reached between her government and the private schools.

I would like to ask the minister today to tell us whether that agreement reached in 1990, and which we have tabled before in this House, that agreement to reach 80 percent funding to private schools by 1998 still stands. Will the government be honouring that stage plan?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): I would like to indicate to the member that she once again is leaving an implication that we never said we had an agreement. Of course we have an agreement. It is an out-of-court settlement, a very logical, pragmatic, common-sense agreement that saves the taxpayers of Manitoba \$8 million, that provides part funding to those schools that are independent.

Madam Speaker, we intend to honour our letter of comfort, our letter of agreement, our out-of-court settlement as we are legally bound to do.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister confirm then that honouring that political agreement or letter of comfort or Filmon buy-out plan or whatever you want to call it will require, at current levels of enrollment, at a very minimum, \$1 million per year until 1998 to the private selective schools of Manitoba?

Mrs. McIntosh: I object to the terminology that is used: private selective schools. The member knows full well that the independent schools—

An Honourable Member: Equal opportunity.

Mrs. McIntosh: Equal opportunity and choice, yes.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

* (1040)

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I respect the fact, all honourable members, that today is Friday, but we will complete Question Period. Once again I would remind all honourable members that it is your time, and the clock is running.

The honourable Minister of Education and Training, to complete her response.

Mrs. McIntosh: We have several categories of school in Manitoba, as the member maybe knows. We have nonfunded schools, those truly selective schools that receive no government funding whatsoever. We have partly funded schools, and those partly funded schools are independent schools who must abide by Manitoba curricula, Manitoba standards testing, higher Manitoba-qualified teachers. They are also able to have a faith-based system in their schools, or whatever their particular added-on feature is. For that they pay a user fee, and because of that they are only partly funded.

We also have the fully funded schools which have total accountability to the public. The member knows that. The member also knows, if she has the letter of agreement and our out-of-court settlement, which is going to be saving the taxpayers from having to have a court-imposed settlement of 100 percent funding for denominational schools, that the terms of the letter of agreement indicate that we will ultimately achieve 80

percent of the operating costs, not capital costs, not other costs, of public schools.

Ms. Friesen: All private schools may select and reject students. That is the difference between private schools and public schools, and I am interested that the minister is so discomforted by that.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would remind the honourable member for Wolseley, this is the final supplementary question. There is to be no postamble nor preamble.

The honourable member for Wolseley, to pose her question now.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Speaker, my apologies. Could the minister explain why, before the 1995 election, Manitobans were assured the private school funds had been frozen. Now, within a short five months after the election, we have an 11 percent increase to private schools?

Mrs. McIntosh: I would like, first of all, to correct some incorrect information which is put, I am quite sure, totally unknowingly on her behalf by the member for Wolseley, onto the record.

First of all, the funding to independent schools was frozen for a period of years, with the consent of the independent schools during that same period of time. We needed their consent because we had a legal binding agreement at the same time that we froze or reduced in other areas right through government in order to contain costs. That was something that happened throughout government, and it was always known that ultimately at some point that agreement would be resumed, and that of course has happened.

I also want to indicate the member is absolutely incorrect when she says private schools have total and absolute choice in their schools. Independent schools cannot hire staff, for example, if they are partly funded schools. The nonfunded schools, those schools that receive no government money, can take a choice on teacher hiring, for example. Partly funded independent schools cannot hire teachers on the basis of race or religion or that type of thing. They can take special

needs students, Madam Speaker. The member should do a little more research into the K to 12 section of public education.

**University of Manitoba
Geological Engineering Program**

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education.

Last night at the Canadian Institute of Mining meeting here in Winnipeg, concerns were expressed over the shelving of the geological engineering program at the University of Manitoba. Actually several people in attendance noted that mining was actually the second largest industry in the province of Manitoba, not VLTs as some would believe.

To the minister: Did the government make any representations to the U of M, to the University of Manitoba, concerning the closure of the geological engineering program?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by indicating that I am pleased that the NDP has finally recognized the importance of the mining industry to the province of Manitoba, and that they acknowledge all of the initiatives put in place by the former Minister of Energy and Mines and the current Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Praznik) to ensure that industry grows and flourishes, that there are mining incentives in place because of this government, not because of that government, and pleased she finally acknowledged what we have been trying to tell them for quite a number of years.

I should indicate as well that in terms of the—

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Beauchesne Citation 417 is quite clear that answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate.

In the spirit of your earlier ruling in terms of one of our members, I would ask that you call the Minister of Education to order because she is clearly engaging in debate, and has not even begun to attempt to answer the

question put forward by our member. We would appreciate an answer to the question, rather than the irrelevant debate we are hearing from the minister right now.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I am going to be ruling on the point of order.

The honourable Minister of Education, on the same point of order.

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, the member, in her question, clearly made reference to the mining industry and I am responding to that point that she raised in her preamble. My preamble responded to her preamble and, as I said before, if they do not want the preamble responded to, they should not make one.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) did have a point of order. I would remind all honourable members that responses to questions should indeed not provoke debate and should address the question concerned.

The point of order by the honourable Minister of Education was not a point of order. It was clearly a dispute over the content of a question posed.

* * *

Ms. Mihychuk: My second question to the Minister of Education—and as a geologist I can assure you that my concern for mining is clear. My question: Since the program has a success rate for employment of students of 100 percent most years, and since it was recognized by the Roblin commission, why did this Minister of Education not speak out for this program?

Mrs. McIntosh: The member makes an assumption, and I will not provoke debate by further commenting on that. The University of Manitoba, the Faculty of Engineering will make decisions on programs. They will make decisions for a variety of reasons as to which programs will be continued, which programs will not be continued.

The geological engineering program is one that the Faculty of Engineering is taking a serious look at, and

the member should address her concerns to those people who are the decision makers in that area. I know that the University of Manitoba Engineering department also has expressed concern that perhaps the geological engineering should remain.

Ms. Mihychuk: My final supplementary question is to the Minister of Education.

Given that there have been over a thousand mining jobs lost during the tenure of this government and we have seen the closing of Lynn Lake, Snow Lake and Flin Flon—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Will the honourable member for St. James please pose her question now.

Ms. Mihychuk: Given that the program closed without approval of the senate and the board of governors, will the Minister of Education investigate the legality of the closure?

Mrs. McIntosh: I will take the first part of the question as notice for the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Praznik), and I will indicate to the member that the decision on geological engineering is a decision the University of Manitoba has already indicated that they are considering.

It is not a done fact. The member is making assumptions again, and I would urge her to be fully accurate when she puts her facts forward. I will take, as I say, the information on Energy and Mines for the minister.

Madam Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Committee Changes

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): I move, seconded by the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: the member for Springfield (Mr. Findlay) for the member for Charleswood (Mr. Ernst); the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) for the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik). [agreed]

* (1050)

NONPOLITICAL STATEMENTS

Legion Week

Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake): Madam Speaker, leave for a nonpolitical statement.

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable member for Interlake have leave for a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Clif Evans: On Saturday, September 23, 1995, I will have the honour of attending the 50th anniversary of the Hodgson Legion Branch 158. The branch received its charter on August 14, 1945, and officially opened their club room in 1964.

Since this is Legion Week, Madam Speaker, I wish to acknowledge all the community and legion members who worked effortlessly in sustaining the supports and services offered by the local branch and who organized this celebration.

I wish to also recognize and commend all the members who contribute unconditionally in supporting and strengthening the sense of the community for the people in the area. While it is important to celebrate the labours of our veteran soldiers, it is particularly important that Hodgson Legion 158 is also honouring those who lost their lives to protect our country.

Madam Speaker, I know that all members of this House join me in extending congratulations to Hodgson Legion Branch 158 on this very special day.

Council for Learning Disabilities Award

Mr. Frank Pitura (Morris): Madam Speaker, I beg the House for leave to make a nonpolitical statement.

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable member for Morris have leave? [agreed]

Mr. Pitura: Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to pay special tribute on behalf of all members in the House here today to a teacher in the Morris-MacDonald School Division, Ms. Marnie Erb.

Ms. Erb is being awarded the Council for Learning Disabilities Award for outstanding teaching in learning disabilities. She is one of only 10 teachers in the U.S. and Canada to receive this award.

She will be presented with this award on October 28 in Chicago, Illinois, at the Conference on Learning Disabilities. This award is granted in recognition of outstanding professional performance in the service of individuals with learning disabilities.

This is a most prestigious award for Ms. Erb and we heartily congratulate her. Manitoba is indeed fortunate to have teachers like Ms. Erb in our public school system. Thank you.

Legion Week

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Madam Speaker, do I have leave for a nonpolitical statement?

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave for a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. McAlpine: Madam Speaker, I join the member for Interlake in congratulating the legion members from Hodgson for their 50th anniversary. I also want to pay tribute to all legion members from this side of the House in celebrating Legion Week.

We all know what our veterans have contributed to forming this country and shaping the future of the country over the many, many years that they have provided in serving the future of Canada.

Madam Speaker, I will be attending a function on behalf of the government tomorrow in celebration of Legion Week in St. James and I, along with all members of the House, congratulate all legion members in their efforts in working in their communities. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, would you call Bills 2, 5, 31 and then the balance of the bills as they are listed in the Order Paper.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 2—The Balanced Budget, Debt Repayment and Taxpayer Protection and Consequential Amendments Act

Madam Speaker: Bill 2, on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), The Balanced Budget, Debt Repayment and Taxpayer Protection and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi sur l'équilibre budgétaire, le remboursement de la dette et la protection des contribuables et apportant des modifications corrélatives), standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett). Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? [agreed]

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): I am pleased to rise today and to speak to the so-called balanced budget legislation, Bill 2. I am pleased, as well, to add my voice to that of my colleagues, and at the same time to explain my personal concerns and my personal anathema to the legislation before the House.

Madam Speaker, I note in passing or before beginning that balanced budget legislation is trendy. The phrase is part in parcel of the new right economics, a movement embracing characters like Ralph Klein, a man who has made sure that Alberta is not a land of milk and honey, at least not for the poor and the disadvantaged, not for seniors on fixed incomes, not for single-parent families, certainly not for the grassroots working people.

Speaking of milk and honey, I am reminded that the new economics includes as well such exemplars of humane principles as the Iron Lady, Margaret Thatcher, immortalized by British school children as Maggie Thatcher the milk snatcher. You see, Madam Speaker, Margaret Thatcher in her zeal for economic prudence, cancelled free milk for school children in Britain. I suppose her solution was let them drink water. Why not? It rains a lot in Britain.

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker, to this company we can add the name Roger Douglas, former finance minister of New

Zealand, and I understand currently doing the rubber chicken circuit as a guest speaker propounding new right economic theory and experiment and, of course, making a tidy sum of money for himself. Mr. Douglas is turning up to advise politicians like the aforementioned Mr. Ralph Klein and no doubt he is being handsomely paid, while funding to kindergarten programs in Alberta has been cut by 50 percent which means, of course, that children in Alberta can attend kindergarten only if their parents can pay the 50 percent of the costs that the government is not paying. We know who goes without kindergarten, and that is not the children of the crowd that supports Klein.

Klein's financial mean spiritedness is legendary by now. So I really do not need to dwell on the misery of Alberta's social assistance recipients, although I do hear that some of them are living in cars, some of them go to bed early as electricity is expensive and they simply cannot afford the rates. A fine state of affairs in the province of Alberta.

Back to New Zealand with Roger Douglas, the economic policies of this champion of the right have resulted in balanced budgets, it is true. I understand New Zealand even has a surplus, but the costs are consequential and even staggering. For example, let us consider this. New Zealand has had up to 15 percent unemployment. New Zealand features increasing disparities in income so that although New Zealand is one of the richest countries in the world among developed countries, it has the third widest difference in incomes between the rich and poor.

New Zealand has a youth suicide rate which is the highest in the industrialized world, linked no doubt to the scaling back of mental health services in a country where mental health services were already extremely rare. As well, in New Zealand there is 50 percent foreign ownership. Members opposite may not object to situations like this, but nationally minded Canadians do not want to have the same thing happen here.

Some of the people working in New Zealand are working for \$2 and \$3 an hour, which, by my calculations, would be \$80 to \$120 a week, which would not even cover the food bill in my house, and we only have one child living at home. In New Zealand,

too, there are 25 percent cuts to unemployment and welfare. Eligibility has been tightened of course. No doubt, food banks are doing a great business. Food banks are one of the few things still owned in New Zealand by New Zealanders.

In New Zealand we have the virtual privatization of education, and I am not even mentioning here the kind of radical changes in health care and social services which have taken place in New Zealand. Of course I have not really made reference to the current state of social justice, which is undoubtedly appalling.

Yet despite this grim picture for the citizens of New Zealand, the Finance minister of New Zealand, a certain Mr. Bill Birch, says, and here I quote Bill Birch. He says: There is no end to this. There is no final destination in the pursuit of excellence. We have got the fundamentals in place but there is room for enhancement.

Clearly, to Mr. Birch excellence should be equated with economic restructuring and economic surpluses rather than to the quality of human life, rather than to social justice, rather than to economic justice, rather than to the protection of the environment, rather than to principles or integrity.

Last in my rogue's gallery of right-wingers is Newt Gingrich, a man whose thirst for less government and the proverbial balanced budget is so extreme, so out of whack with the golden mean of balance and sound judgment that one almost expects him to begin advocating selling both the White House and the presidency, leaving government and the public interest entirely in the hands of big business and the mercy of the fluctuations of the market.

* (1100)

My point here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in mentioning people like Klein, Douglas, Thatcher and Gingrich is that ideas and people are often weighed and measured by the company they keep. Proponents of the new right economic experiments, which often include tough balanced budgets and sometimes balanced budget legislation, have as their real agenda, so it seems to me, the transformation of government and the fabric and

face of society, have as the real agenda a determination to bring government and society into line with their economic and political ideology, that is, privatization and less government. Of course, we all know this.

While these transformations proceed, little attention is paid to the effects—[interjection] I will be coming to Saskatchewan. I thank the honourable member opposite for mentioning it. I will be coming to Saskatchewan. Thank you very much.

While these transformations proceed, little attention is paid to the effects of less government and to the effects of privatization, that is, little attention is paid to the effects of less government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and to the effects of privatization, that is, little attention is paid to the devastating human and social deficits. It seems to me that this balanced budget legislation before this House is cut from the same cloth as much of Mrs. Thatcher's legislation or the legislation inspired by Roger Douglas in New Zealand and the legislation that is subsequently rearing its head in Alberta.

I suggest that what Bill 2 really is, first of all, Bill 2 is an ideological crusade masking a sound economics. It is an attempt to downsize government. It is another slide down the slippery slope to privatization. I submit that Bill 2, under the guise of fiscal responsibility is an attempt to map out the agenda for governing during the next four years, that is, grind down the system by stealth, more property tax, cuts to public education, downsizing health care and slashing social services and, of course, pretend that nothing is changing because there are no income tax increases.

I would like to turn to the question of financial management. I want to state here that my caucus unequivocally believes in financial management. I want to state, as well, unequivocally and to point out the deficiencies of new right economics and this particular piece of legislation.

My caucus does not damn financial management. We are in favour of it. We are in favour. We may be in favour of some forms of balanced budget Legislation. Financial management in the home and in government, we know, are absolutely essential. My caucus believes and knows this. For this reason, we are

appalled by the Tory economic record, most especially by the incredible deficits incurred by the Tory government while they masquerade as sound financial managers.

I point out that the 1988-1989 budget, the one inherited from the New Democratic government, resulted in a modest budget surplus of \$58 million, but since then it has been a romp down deficit-budget hill. For example, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is common knowledge on both sides of the House that, in 1992-1993, the Tory government, an earlier incarnation of this particular Filmon team, incurred the highest deficit in Manitoba's history, reported at one time at \$742 million. We understand since yesterday that it is over \$800 million. I believe the correct figure is \$819 million. I call this a staggering deficit and certainly the epitome of gross mismanagement.

My colleagues are appalled, too, at Tory financial accounting practices. For example, selling McKenzie Seeds, which was, of course, a money-making Crown corporation, and manipulating the sale of McKenzie Seeds so that proceeds will be put against the 1995-96 government expenditures. This seems like a quixotic practice to me, but I am going to leave the niceties of this matter to colleagues who will no doubt delineate them and make management suggestions to the honourable members opposite, particularly to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson). The members opposite can always count on our advice.

Balanced budget legislation, as I said earlier, can make sense, especially it can make sense when it puts Manitobans first, when it puts the citizens of Manitoba before foreign banks, before foreign investment houses, when it considers the need for sound health care, humane social services, solid education and training. Balanced budget legislation can work if it puts people first, if it offers humane, realistic and flexible alternatives.

Here, as was suggested by the member opposite, I come to the province of Saskatchewan, our sister province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Saskatchewan's legislation defines expenditure as expenses of the general revenue fund exempting capital spending, unlike Manitoba's legislation. In other words,

Saskatchewan has a kind of legislation so that you do not have to pay for a floodway in one year, so that these expenditures can be paid for over a course of several years just as, of course, a family cannot pay for a house in one year.

Saskatchewan's legislation is based on a four-year financial plan and debt-management plan, and, clearly, Saskatchewan's government considers Keynesian economic theory and the cycle and nature of the economic climate. This method, of course, contrasts to Manitoba's yearly balancing budget act.

Saskatchewan's legislation proposes not only a four-year balancing plan, but a more general exception clause, one that allows that, and here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I quote from the Saskatchewan legislation: If a major, unanticipated, identifiable event or set of circumstances has had a dramatic effect on revenues in a fiscal year, then the bill will not be breached by attending to these circumstances. In other words, the bill will not be breached in that set of circumstances by incurring a deficit. The Manitoba legislation, it seems to me, could use a dose of this kind of common sense and flexibility.

Last, Saskatchewan has no prohibition on tax increases and no requirement for referendums. In Saskatchewan, the elected members of the Legislature are responsible for governing, just as they were elected to do. They take responsibility for government. I remind the members opposite that they were elected to govern and not to abdicate responsibility for governing. Clearly, Saskatchewan legislation reflects the common sense, farsightedness, flexibility and human decency that mark sound financial management and intelligent family budgeting practices. For example, in families—and I know that the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) has already made an attempt to educate the House on this issue—mortgages are carried for many years. Citizens can buy houses or cottages by taking out mortgages.

As the honourable member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) pointed out a few days ago, families can hardly be expected to live in the street while they accumulate the wealth to pay for a home. Mortgages are necessary. I suppose we could all live in tents or join the honourable member for Rossmere (Mr. Toews) at Grand Beach.

Saskatchewan's legislation reflects sound family financial practices where families nearly always need to take a loan to pay for a car, to build a garage, to prop up the aging foundations of their home. I know a couple of years ago my family had to do major expenditures on the foundations of our home. We did not have the cash. We had to take a loan to pay for this. We will soon perhaps take a loan to build a family room. These are the normal kinds of things that families do.

* (1110)

The Saskatchewan legislation reflects the sound family budgeting practices where families may have to borrow money to educate their children, to educate their post-secondary education. Indeed, families may need to take loans to retrain the parents in the family. We do, after all, live in an age where I think it is stated that people are expected to change their careers at least three times, which may mean three different kinds of education. Where are we going to get the money to pay for that? Sound family budgeting. Families respond to financial crises by borrowing one year and paying back the loan over several years.

Obviously, if Bill 2 were to govern the lives of Manitoban families, few of us would be educated, few of us would be retrained, few of us would own cars or houses, let alone cottages, which is almost a tradition in the province of Manitoba. If the restrictions that are set out in this bill were applied to our families, only the very richest of Manitoba families could function. Woe to the rest of us. Life would indeed be grim.

Now these circumstances may be more acceptable to the members opposite, to the Tory party and their supporters but to we New Democrats and our supporters, they are not. We speak for the working people, and we speak for the grassroots folks, the kind of people who cannot go out and pay cash for a car, cash for a house, cash for any repairs, cash for education. We do not have that kind of cash on hand.

I think that the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) made the point that if families were governed by Bill 2, families would sell their houses and cars to buy food just whenever their incomes fell short of their expenditures.

With the declines in the median family incomes, and I will refer more specifically to the declines in median family incomes later but with this decline expenditures will undoubtedly supersede incomes in more and more families. Quite frankly, with this kind of legislation, any real recovery, any real job creation strategies or job creation programs would be next to impossible. But the relentless drift to an even greater disparity between the haves and have-nots would certainly be inevitable with this kind of legislation.

Now, I suppose there is another creative or innovative strategy to paying the mortgage. One way of paying the mortgage would be to save on other expenses. For example, people could pay their mortgage by not clothing their children, by not feeding their children, by not sending them to daycare, by not buying kids eyeglasses when they need them, by not sending their children to the dentist, by not helping with post-secondary education and, certainly, never any frills like music lessons or swimming lessons or the odd movie.

In this Legislature, we have talked about maintenance enforcement and we have talked about deadbeat parents. If we were to turn our backs on our children, if we were to pay our mortgage and risk everything else, if we were to give our children stones when they ask for bread, if we were to become deadbeat parents then we could run home and hearth in accordance with the provisions of Bill 2.

My colleagues and I choose not to be deadbeat parents either in the way we run our homes and families nor in the way we would run government or in the way we will run government when we are elected. But you see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think the Procrustean straitjacketed legislation before this House will make a deadbeat parent of our provincial government, the province as deadbeat dad, not, I suggest, a desirable reputation.

The services in this province will simply not be able to withstand the fluctuations in the economy, and programs will be cancelled. For example, drops in metal prices accompanied by reductions in equalization payments could reduce revenues and programs would be cut. Government would then assume the mantle of

the deadbeat dad, depriving citizens of necessary education, services and training. This would lead to prolonged unemployment, leading in turn to increased numbers on welfare and higher costs and lower tax revenues and, once again, the imprisoning cycle of poverty, desperation, deprivation and despair.

This legislation promises, and I want to continue with the deadbeat parent theme, that regardless of the effect on health care, these services will continue to be cut and may not be there when we need them. Just think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this province and our Premier could compete with Mike Harris and Ralph Klein in the race to the bottom and the prize for meanspiritedness.

On the other hand, services will undoubtedly be there for those who can pay for them, for those who can send their kids to private schools, and, of course, we have been discussing in this House the recent \$100 per child, per annum boost while the public school system received nothing.

So there will be services for those who can pay for them, for those who can send their kids to private schools. Health services would be there for those who can purchase them. The rest of us could get in line and take the leftovers. They do, I understand, in the U.S. Let us make no mistake, let us look with both eyes open. This legislation will push us along the slippery slope to the privatization of health care, a course on which this government has already sent us.

I can hardly imagine, or I suppose to amend that, I can unfortunately imagine what hospitals will be like with the introduction of the legislation in Bill 2.

* (1120)

Let me share a story with you. Last weekend I visited a friend in hospital. This woman was sharing a room in hospital with another woman and the other woman had just undergone a radical mastectomy. She had been back in her room for something like three hours and she needed a bedpan. She rang for the bedpan and a voice over the speaker said, I am sorry, everybody is busy. This woman waited and waited and started to whimper in her bed. We are talking about a woman who has just had a radical mastectomy and is

suffering intense pain. Finally, I went and got her a bedpan and went to the desk and informed people there that this woman had a bedpan. Then my lady phoned the desk and asked if someone could come and take this bedpan.

Again, let me be graphic. Here is a woman with a radical mastectomy lying in bed on top of this bedpan and again, the answer was, well, I am sorry, everybody is busy. This is a woman of a certain age with a certain kind of privacy who did not want me to take her bedpan. I am sure the members opposite can understand what I am talking about. That woman waited and waited and waited and again was whimpering in pain. Finally, somebody came, a young nurse, I do not know what the status of this person was, with a look of bewilderment and she said, I am sorry, we are understaffed.

I do not know what will happen to hospitals with this balanced budget legislation, but I think it will not be safe to enter hospital without (a) a human rights advocate, and (b) without a medical advocate. Both will be essential.

I know during the election several nurses told me not to send members of my family to St. Boniface Hospital unless I was prepared to spend 24 hours a day with them. I do not know what the effects of this legislation will be on people in hospital.

I was talking, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about the protections that will be in place for those who do not need Manitoba health care because they can pay for themselves. Those who do not need social services or social assistance will certainly survive the balanced budget legislation. Why not? They have the money.

I want to talk about the others, the 25 percent of our children who live in poverty. I want to talk about our single-parent families, and here I want to bring up the Stats Canada statistic that tells us that from 1992 to 1993 income declined by 5 percent in single-parent families, moving from \$19,200 in 1992 to \$18,300 in 1993. These children and their families will be the ones to suffer. Crime will increase, and the members opposite will yell about it, advocate boot camps as if they had nothing to do with the social circumstances that caused crime.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, 86 percent of single-family parents are headed by women who earn roughly, and this is optimistic, this is the high end of things, 72 cents for every \$1 which their male counterparts earn. Clearly, women do not make as much money as men. Furthermore, women require more social services. Remember that one in four Canadian women is sexually assaulted, one in five Canadian women is the victim of domestic assault. Women need daycare for their children; women need training and jobs to keep their families together.

Obviously we can only conclude that Bill 2, with its implications of cutting the services that women require, will in fact enshrine the growing feminization of poverty. When we throw into the mix the evidence that women require special services because of the kinds of crimes that are committed against them and that women, because of their poverty, cannot—and in a just society simply should not have to—pay for the services they require as a result of crime, I conclude that Bill 2 will almost legislate the feminization of poverty. This means, of course, growing poverty for Manitoba's children and especially the disadvantaged. I mean children in single-parent families, families in which, as Stats Canada tells us, income is already declining. Bill 2, by indirection and by implication, discriminates against Manitoba's women.

Of course, this applies in spades to other minority groups: the poor, the disabled, aboriginal people, seniors on fixed income, refugees, the sick. I am referring here to the marginalized people, those who usually hover outside the sources of power, those whose disempowerment often makes them outcasts, though they usually survive through their own courage and tenacity, not because of the kinds of services this government has ever provided them. One of the tests of sound legislation is encapsulated in the Latin phrase *qui bono*, translated as, to whose benefit, in whose interests.

Let me ask you this: Can arguments regarding the positive aspects of this legislation truly stand careful scrutiny? Is this bill really about belief, about ideology and not about economics? Is that why new right economists and politicians tout balanced budgets and balanced budget legislation with the same fervour

as they tout privatization? Is it because these are aspects of a theology, not because they in themselves reflect financial soundness or sound financial management? Frankly, I sense a whiff of fanaticism in this legislation.

Let me turn quickly to the question of cabinet ministers' salaries. My understanding is that after the 31st of March, 1995, if the third-quarter financial report projects that expenditures will exceed revenue in a manner not authorized by the bill, then the salary of a cabinet minister will be reduced by 20 percent.

A cabinet salary in 1995 is \$22,800, up \$2,200 from the '94-95 salary of \$20,600. An MLA's salary is \$56,500, so that the yearly salary of a cabinet minister is \$79,300. Twenty percent of a cabinet minister's salary is \$4,500, which, in that income tax bracket, is a net loss of about \$2,200, an amount equal to this year's raise in pay. If the budget is not balanced, there is no great financial loss to the cabinet ministers. In fact, the whole clause sounds like grandstanding to me.

I return to the question of, *qui bono*? Who benefits for whose good?

Certainly not women or members of other minority groups—I am surprised that the Minister for the Status of Women (Mrs. Vodrey) was not whispering in the ear of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) and defending the rights of women in this province. Certainly not middle-class Manitobans or the chronically ill—where was the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae)? Certainly not students or children living in poverty—where was the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh)? Where was the minister of social services? Certainly not seniors living on fixed income—where was the Minister responsible for Seniors (Mr. Reimer)? He may have been there, but he was not talking.

Who is left? I suggest those associations and lobbies who advocate for less government, who promote privatization and zealously advocate the new right economic agenda, those same people who promoted NAFTA.

If this government wishes to shake hands with these forces and abandon the people of Manitoba to the free

market, if this government wishes to advocate responsibility for governing, if this government does not have the moral courage to govern, then they should close for business, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Let me close with a domestic metaphor. The domestic metaphor is work. I advise this government that if it is too hot, they should get out of the kitchen. My caucus and our leader, our head chef, will be pleased to do the cooking. Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: As previously agreed, this matter will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett).

On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh), standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Shall this matter remain standing? [agreed] Leave has been granted.

Also standing in the name of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), who has 16 minutes remaining. Stand? Transcona? I am sorry. No. Standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid). Stand? Still doing Bill 2.

It is standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona. We are on Bill 5, but it is standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona, who has 16 minutes remaining. Stand?

An Honourable Member: Stand.

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

* (1130)

Bill 5—The Education Administration Amendment Act

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): On to Bill 5. Bill 5 is this government's amendment to The Education Administration Act. It is a very short bill. It is only

really one page, but the ramifications for schools are greater than it would suggest by the shortness of the bill.

I want to deal with some concerns we have about the bill. I want to deal with the reasons why I think this government has brought this bill forward. I want to deal with the incongruences in the bill and the proposed new law for administration in schools. I also want to deal with some general concepts about what is happening in our public school system under the current Conservative government.

To begin with outlining what this bill does, it is going to allow the minister to create regulations in a few areas, regulations with respect to advisory councils. Whether they be parent-teacher advisory councils, community advisory councils, parent-student-teacher advisory councils, we have yet to see because one of the weaknesses in the bill in this area is it does not give very much specifics on guidelines for these councils.

The second thing it is going to do is it is going to provide the minister to develop regulations concerning the duties of principals of schools. This is an area that is of concern. We have got comments from a number of principals in Manitoba that are concerned about this section because one of the things that it is going to do is mean that now principals are directly accountable to the minister not just to their school board. So it is going to split the accountability of principals, and there is going to be some concerns about that and problems with that.

The final thing that the bill will do is allow regulations with regard to the authorization of suspension of students. This is an area where the government has waded into in the past. They had tried to give teachers the authority to suspend students from the school and have backtracked on that. I think that is the kind of approach that is behind this whole bill. What they are trying to do with this bill, when we ask ourselves why they would be bringing this forward, is that they are trying to appeal to the sense that schools are not tough enough. They are trying to do something in the public schools' administration that will make it seem like this government is getting tough with all these students and problems in the schools. That is why they are bringing in these provisions.

It is interesting when you look at the provisions because some of them are quite redundant. They are redundant because there already are advisory councils operating throughout Manitoba. They are doing quite well in a number of divisions in a number of schools. So it seems in that way they are trying to make it look like they are doing something new when the government is really not. They are just putting into legislation something that already exists and has been operating quite well. In divisions like Transcona, where I represent, they already have a policy on parent advisory councils and they are revising that policy. So here we have a government moving into an area where I think they are looking for something that is going to make them look like they are doing something positive when in fact they are being quite redundant.

Similarly, in the area of suspension, we can have a debate about the value of suspensions as a way of dealing with discipline problems in our schools; but, regardless of that, at this point I just want to say that schools have been suspending students for a long time. This bill is redundant there again. It is not doing much new.

One of the other things that I find concerning about the legislation is again similar to what they are doing with the balanced budget legislation; they are talking the talk, but not walking the walk. Over and over again, we have seen the government use school boards as an excuse for their funding cuts. They will cut the funding to school boards, and then they will turn around and they will say, oh, it is the school board that makes the decision on those program cuts.

I remember that, when they were trying to eliminate physical education from the core curriculum for high school, they did this rather well. They said, oh, it is going to be up to the school boards. Do you not trust the local school boards? They are trying to make it seem like they are the champions of local community government, and there is going to be all this authority passed on and decision making passed on to the local communities, but it is not so, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This bill is actually going the other direction.

They are centralizing control in the minister's office. They are taking away local authority because they are

going to be the ones who stipulate how community councils, advisory councils to schools should function, not the local level. They are going to be the ones that provide direction for principals, not the local level, and they are going to be the ones determining discipline policy for schools in Manitoba, not the local authorities. So, while they are trying to say that they are the ones who are moving towards more decentralized decision making in education, it is just not so, and this bill proves it. What they are actually doing is centralizing much more decision making and authority with the minister's office, even though when it comes to being accountable for the cuts in funding to education, they will try to say that it is the school boards that are responsible for those budget decisions.

The biggest example of how this government has interfered and limited the ability for local decision making in education with democratically elected school boards was when for two years they capped the ability of those democratically elected bodies to raise their own revenue, which they had to do, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because this government was hacking and slashing away at every budget line item in the public schools area in the funding for education generally. So we have a number of examples there where the government is trying to say one thing and make it appear to the public that they are allowing more ability for local decision making in schools when they are actually not.

I want to go to some of the more specific concerns we have with respect to each of the provisions in the bill. With respect to the provisions for school advisory councils, now we have had the government be forced to back down and change during the election one of the provisions in this area, but I think the people of Manitoba convinced the government was just plain goofy. It was just plain goofy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to say that parents who were employees of the school division were not allowed to sit on Parent Advisory Councils.

It came to be, I think, recognized that this was not very fair to parents who, in the case of one woman I know, is an employee who is paid a very small amount of money to function as a crossing guard in the school division. She is very active in her parent council. She

is very active as a volunteer in her school and she was going to be prohibited from participating in that capacity because she also functioned for the school division as a paid part-time crossing guard. These kinds of provisions have proven to be ridiculous and the government has been forced to back down on that recommendation that came from the blueprint on parent advisory councils.

It is interesting, too, that this government is following up on consultations they did. The consultations where they went throughout the province to hear recommendations on changes for legislation respecting education had specific recommendations with respect to school councils, and they said that they should be responsible to the local school division. Now, is the government listening to that? No. They are ignoring what was said loud and clear throughout the province that these community-based, volunteer advisory bodies should be responsible to the local school board. No, this government wants them to be directed by the Department of Education.

* (1140)

The member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), our critic in Education, has described how this sets the stage for something that is happening in Alberta with the charter schools. This sets the stage for more of a boutique or pay-as-you-go kind of system in education where we are going to see the establishment of charter schools, and I want to speak a little later on about the implications of that for communities in Manitoba, because I think in the past the school has been a central focus for the development of a sense of community. With some of the moves that we have seen in education, that has been jeopardized.

With respect to the provisions for advisory councils, there are a number of other things that are a great concern. The Manitoba Teachers' Society has issued a statement where they are in support of the development of parent involvement in advisory councils, and I guess I want to take a moment, too, to mention that I would really believe and support that these councils should attempt to involve students as well. I would think that as we try to develop regulations and procedures for these councils we must, particularly at the high school

level, ensure that students are going to be able to participate in a meaningful way and that there must be some link between student councils and the support that they deserve and, acknowledging the benefit that they can provide, that there should be some involvement of not only students, but a link with student councils.

That is one of the other recommendations that I would make. But back to some of the recommendations from The Manitoba Teachers' Society. They are recommending that the councils' operation and composition should be governed democratically and that raises a number of questions about who is going to be able to vote in electing these advisory bodies. Are only citizens going to be able to vote, and is that going to limit the number of refugees and other people living in Canada who are not citizens but have children in the school system? Are they going to be limited from ensuring that their concerns and interests are going to be represented in the governance of the school and to have their voice directly participate in that? Are certain people in our community going to be limited?

Also, is it going to be determined by residency? Are the voters for these advisory bodies only going to be people who live in and around the catchment area and designation of the school? If that is the case, we are again going to run into problems because one of the things that has been happening in our public school system as we go away from the community school and move to more and more mobility from school to school and ignoring this community school, we have people attending from all over the city. We have people attending one school from all over the city, and that is going to pose problems for them having a voice in the representation from the advisory councils. So those are some of the concerns that we have with respect to councils operating in a democratic way.

Following then other suggestions from The Teachers' Society, the majority of the council members, they suggest, should be parents of children in school, but I think there is also consideration that there should be the opportunity for anyone who lives in the area to have a say in what goes on in the school. I believe that schools should be used as a community resource for other groups to meet in in the evening and conduct

activities, and, considering that also, I often say that, even if you do not have students in the school, you still benefit from having well-educated citizens and young people. I often say that everyone benefits from having their tax dollars go to quality public schools, so it makes sense then that they should, if they are interested, be able to participate in any advisory bodies with regard to those schools.

Further to that, The Manitoba Teachers' Society is recommending that teachers who are also parents should have the right to be elected to these bodies. I have dealt with that already, that employees of the board should not have their right to participate and advising on their child's education or in the education and activities of their community school just because they are employees. The Teachers' Society are suggesting that teachers should be representatives elected by the teachers in the school, and they should be voting members of the council. I think this also deals with the reversal of the position this government was taking earlier with respect to limiting the participation of teachers.

They are also recommending that principals be members of the council. That seems reasonable as well. The council's role should be advisory only, and this is where we get into some of the confusion, I think, the government has led to by taking forward this proposal. There already exist, as I said earlier, a number of advisory councils in the province. With the recommendations that they are making, it is unclear to a number of these groups what will be their fate if there are new parents in the school who want to start one of the government-authorized advisory bodies. So this is also creating some confusion about what the role of these new bodies will be in terms of hiring and firing of teachers and budget making for the school, decisions with regard to other matters that have been under the authority of the administration of the school.

So I think that the government is creating more confusion in that area, again, partially because they have not given any specifics in this area in the bill itself. They are leaving that all up to the authority of cabinet and the minister to decide in regulation. So we are still waiting to see what the role will be of these councils really. We do not know. We do not know if

people are going to understand if they are going to be advisory only and that their expectations could be quite out of reality or out of whack, I guess you could say, with what they are going to be able to do in these advisory bodies.

Further to that, the MTS is recommending that the school board must maintain local responsibility for matters of personnel, and that speaks to what I was just talking about in terms of dealing with provisions in collective agreements and the hiring and firing of teachers and even with respect to the discipline of teachers.

I want to pause and ask the Deputy Speaker to inform me of my time, please—22 remaining, thank you.

Further to the provisions for school advisory councils, the school board, MTS suggests, must remain financially responsible for student placement in schools subject to prior consultation with the teaching staff and the school of concern. This again I think speaks to the whole issue of the role of the council if these bodies are going to have reasonable expectations of what as a volunteer group they can do in terms of the management of the school.

Finally, the advisory councils must be legislated or regulated to act in a fair and reasonable manner at all times. As the panel and consultation to this government suggested, that regulation should have been maintained at the local level because there may be some regional differences on how communities want to empower these advisory bodies.

I think we can see that there are a number of questions that need to be answered with respect to these Parent Advisory Councils. I find it disconcerting that the government has not been willing to put clearly, while we are voting on this legislation, before the public what that role and procedures are going to be. They have simply empowered the government to do that through regulations that are to be announced, the regulations and the role of these.

* (1150)

That is contrary to what has happened in other jurisdictions in Canada where very clearly in the legislation it has specified the responsibilities and the

accountability, the provisions for voting and elections for these bodies. One of the things that I think has been a problem with this government in terms of its dealings with the public education system has been the fact that they have had so many ministers of Education and all of them have gone off in different directions. Here we have again a new minister going off in another direction with respect to education.

An Honourable Member: No, no, we are staying the course.

Ms. Cerilli: Oh, I remember quite well the first minister, the member for Roblin-Russell (Mr. Derkach) being in the chair as the Minister of Education and had recommendations that were quite contrary to some of the things that this government is now doing. The publication that was produced under that minister went against some of the things that are happening now, but I think because there have been such unrealistic time lines attached to some of the changes being proposed, and so many changes happening at the same time, there has been a real instability created in the public school system.

(Mr. Peter Dyck, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

When we combine that with the cuts that have been occurring in the public school system, this government has set up the system for a lot of chaos. There is a lot of chaos occurring because of this government's treatment of the public education system. I have heard that moral in schools has never been lower than under the tenure of this Conservative government. I think that contributes to what their agenda is in terms of education. We have seen clearly that they have been transferring money from the public system to the private system.

What happens when you have all of this confusion because of the budget cuts, because of all these changes being thrown at teachers and parents and students and staff in schools, is you get people saying maybe private schools is an option, where they would not have said that before. I think that is part of the agenda, that is part of the intended agenda of this government—

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): It is not the agenda. It is called the grand strategy.

Ms. Cerilli: –and I think as the Minister for Agriculture (Mr. Enns) is saying, it may be the grand strategy to privatize more and more the responsibility for education from the public system because, as we are seeing now, more and more things in schools are going to have to be paid for by parents if they want to have those services. We have seen this in the provision of special needs services, in the provision of school busing, in the provision of a lot of resource assistance. More and more parents are having to turn to private tutors, for example, because all of those supports in the school have been taken away.

So I guess I am bringing all of that up because I see that this bill fits into that with how it is restructuring the accountability for principals in taking away some of the authority of local school boards and making principals more accountable to the provincial government. I think this is going to add to problems.

I want to look at the provision for principals in the legislation. There are principals who have said that they do not agree with some of the proposals in this bill. This principal who is from—what division are they from?—the Interlake. They are from the Interlake School Division. This principal—I am just trying to find a place in the document I am reading where they are saying that they are not quite sure what the proposed amendments actually include because the press release has not detailed what they are, and in some cases, like the suspension of a student, the policy is not changing. It also goes on to talk about how the principals are concerned about the other bill that is recommended by the government with respect to trespassing on school grounds, and again that is changing the responsibilities of principals.

Principals are saying they do not want to take on any new duties in the government's attempt to have them deal directly through the Department of Education. There is some concern that there is not a clear explanation of what these new duties would be and of trying to have the government understand that principals right now are extremely busy. They are there to administer the business of the school, deal with the staffing and provide general leadership in the school, and they are concerned that the government is perhaps not really, it seems, understanding what the role of principals is.

One of the other things that the bill does is deal with the suspension of students, and I want to talk a little bit about that because this is something that is of great concern when I look at the government's attitudes. I was gravely concerned when the government was taking the attitude that the way to deal with problems in the school is simply to throw students out and that any teacher should be allowed to do that. I think that that is a rather irresponsible way of dealing with problems, particularly problems of young people.

It does not seem like the government is really understanding the pressures that their funding cuts have put onto schools. On the one hand, what they have done is eliminated funding to the extent that school classrooms have increased in size. They have cut funds so that school divisions have been forced to lay off all the supports to keep students in school and help schools deal with the problems that students bring to the school, such as a need for language training for students who do not speak English as their first language. So a lot of ESL supports have been taken away. A lot of the resource teacher and child guidance support has been eliminated. Counsellors have been eliminated. A lot of the other paraprofessionals have been eliminated in schools.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair)

So all of this has gone on while the governments are changing the demands on schools, and then to deal with the problems in classrooms when they are bound to occur because there is decreased support to the classroom teacher to deal with all the problems the student is having, they are saying to the teacher, oh, just throw them out, just allow the teacher to expel the student. What, in a sense, this government has done is compounded the problems for schools and for teachers, and then their way of dealing with that is to just say, well, just suspend the student and remove him from the school. I find that incredibly irresponsible.

I would think that, even though they have backed down on allowing the teacher to suspend students from the school and have changed that to just suspend students from the school and have changed that to just suspend students from the classroom because of their attention to this area without looking at all the other

things they could be doing in public schools to make them better, I think that they are still in that mindset.

They still think that the only way to deal with problems with students, whether it is because of violent conflicts, whether it is because they are causing other disturbances in the class, whether it is because they have misbehaved in some way, to think that the only way to deal with that is to remove the student, that seems to be the approach of this government. That is why they are focusing on this section of suspension of students.

But I would suggest that if they would really take responsibility for meeting the needs of all students in the community, this is what public school are there for. We have really increased our expectation of them too, because we now want to mainstream more and more students in public schools, we want to keep more students from dropping out. There are programs to do that in some cases.

* (1200)

So we have increased our expectation that all young people in our community should graduate from high school, and I think that that is good. We have to realize that when they do not fit the mold that we have intended we cannot just think that the only way to deal with that is to have them leave the school.

So I think what this government should be looking at, rather than focusing its attention on simply this simplistic approach of suspending students, is to look at reintroducing all of the supports that they have had there for schools so that classroom teachers would not need to suspend students, so that they could focus on teaching, because all of these other supports and personnel in the school system would be there to assist them to deal with problems that students bring to the school.

If this government was really interested in improving the quality of education they would realize that children cannot learn science and mathematics and language and music and all those other things that they learn in school if they are hungry, if they are coming from a violent home, if they are coming from a home where there is so much worry and concern and stress about

unemployment that they need some extra support in the school.

They cannot learn as well if they have disabilities where they need additional support. It is like the government does not want to deal with the reality of all those problems. What they are in a sense saying is, if those students are in the school and they are causing problems, we will just make it the policy where we can expel them or suspend them. I find that incredibly irresponsible.

I know that this is in response to the growing concern that there is more youth violence, there is a growing concern that there is more maybe challenging of authority among young people, disrespect, that kind of thing. But I think we have to look at where that is coming from.

I think if you look at those young people that behave that way, we can trace back and see that there is a problem that they do not know how to solve as young people, that they need assistance from supportive adults like teachers to be able to solve.

We often hear complaints from people that the kids who are misbehaving in a school get all the attention and that we need to make sure that all these average kids that are going to go to school and do their best and they do not cause a lot of problem get more attention. Well, then what we need to do is make sure that they are not just suspended and they spend all their time in the hallway or at home or in the time-out room but that there are going to be people in the school system that are going to be able to support that child to solve the problem that is causing them to misbehave, to be violent or whatever.

I think that is something that this government is sorely lacking in understanding, that the school cannot function in isolation, the classroom teacher cannot function in isolation.

They need the support of all these other partners in education as well as in the other areas of youth services so that every child in Manitoba is going to have the supports that they need to learn to the best of their ability.

This is the government that has been taking those supports away. They have taken the attitude that if you do not fit in exactly to the mold, then forget it, you are going to be suspended even if you have problems that need an adult to help with in finding a solution. It is a very, I think, cold and callous way to deal with young people.

I know that a lot of people feel that young people have gotten more disrespectful and young people have gotten more violent. I think, though, that we have to realize that these are all young people who are part of our community and that we have to make a commitment to find ways to solve the problems that are causing young people to behave in that way and to not just think that we can then separate them out which, I think, in a lot of cases, in most cases, will make them misbehave more.

I have had constituents come to me who are greatly concerned that their student spends more time out of the class than in the class learning. It may be the responsibility for that parent to get involved in problem solving. It is, but it is also the responsibility, I think, of the community to ensure that there are going to be staff there who are not so taxed in terms of their time demands or have so many students that they have to deal with that they have to ignore the real problems that many students are bringing to the classroom. It is a reality in education today that we have those higher expectations that everyone can graduate, but at the same time there are much more pressures and demands on families.

I want to conclude then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by urging the government to listen seriously to the presentations that are going to be made at the committee on this bill and to listen to what people are saying about their concerns for the public school system. I think that having two bills in the Legislature at this time with the government giving \$100 per student more to private schools while they cut funding to public schools is going to give a good opportunity for this government to hear loud and clear what people think of this government's education policy.

When they come forward and talk about volunteer advisory bodies, they do not want to see volunteers

entering schools as parents to take on responsibilities that should be done by paid staff and teachers and other resources in the school system. That is another concern that I have about this push for advisory and volunteer parents in the schools; more and more we are going to see this happening where there is an expectation that things would otherwise be done in the school. In the library, perhaps, we have seen the government eliminate the teacher-librarian consultant position in the Department of Education, and we will have schools thinking, well, maybe we should get more and more parents in to cover some of the duties in libraries, for example, that otherwise would have been done by this kind of person. So that is another concern that I have.

I think we will see a lot of interest at the committee hearings in these bills, and we will have a lot of parents making some very good recommendations to this provincial government. I hope they will listen, and I hope that they will take them into consideration when making amendments to this bill to strengthen the bill so their true intention is known in the legislation and is not simply going to be left up to the whim of the cabinet, the minister through regulation, where there will not be the opportunity for the public to make their thoughts known and their opinions known on the regulations.

So maybe that is where I conclude as well. When they do come forward with the regulations on this bill that will give the detail, are they going to give the public an opportunity to comment and will they listen to those comments? On so many other examples, this government has not listened on regulation development. They have not consulted the public.

So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I end my debate, and I look forward to the committee hearings on this bill.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: As previously agreed, this matter will remain standing in the name of the honourable members for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) and for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

Bill 31—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (2)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We will now move on to Bill 31.

On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Highways (Mr. Findlay), standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid). Stand?

An Honourable Member: Stand.

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

* (1210)

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I am very pleased to make a few comments on this bill, Bill 31, which interestingly enough was brought in, introduced for first reading just a few days before the new highway inspection program took effect in this province, and it deals with some changes on medical standards for drivers, changes to rules on registering used cars. These changes could have been foreseen and dealt with on the first piece of legislation that we dealt with, and this is just an example of the government, an example of I guess the government bungling its own legislation. It could not plan its affairs well enough in order to deal with this problem on one bill instead of taking us through a two-bill process here.

Now, this particular type of legislation or this particular program that comes out of this legislation involving vehicle inspections has been kicking around in this Legislature for 15 years. The Sterling Lyon government when it was in power debated in this Legislature car safety legislation, passed the legislation and did not proclaim the legislation because it was too close to the '81 election.

Finally, 15 years later, this government succumbed to the pressure of the car dealers that it represents and brought in a program which we said at the time would ultimately lead to the law of the jungle governing car inspections. What we are seeing since July 1, since this program came into effect, is exactly what we said would happen all along. We said that this legislation would allow private shops, car repair shops and car dealers to take advantage of people who did not know better. We said all along that the old program of used vehicles being inspected by a government-sponsored program was a program that people would trust, that people would be willing to take their car, their used car,

to an independent source that cost them nothing and that they would respect the opinion of the government person.

Instead, this government succumbed to pressure, and that is what it was, it was an organized lobby effort on the part of the car dealers. The Liberals, when they were here in larger numbers, were very much a part of this whole effort involved in making sure that the inspection program was turned over as a reward for support from the car dealers, and that is what we have seen happen with this program. Now the program, we are finding lots of people who are being taken advantage of by the dealers. In fact, since July 1—

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): What is the solution?

Mr. Maloway: Well, the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) asked what the solution is, and I am going to tell him what the solution is in a few minutes.

The census program was set up on July 1. Already, we have had two inspection stations lose their certification. One station lost its certification for suggesting that repairs were needed when they were not, and another station lost its certification for saying that the car was safe when in fact it was not.

This, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is just the tip of the iceberg. We expect that in the next few months, as this program unfolds, to uncover numerous more horror stories of this type. In fact the CBC I-Team did an investigation a few weeks ago which uncovered similar examples of a person taking a car in to I believe it was a Canadian Tire outlet and being given quotes of \$600 in one case. The person took it to another car repair place and was told it was \$150.

We have another example where a person had took a car into where the car dealer told him that he needed a new \$300 brake job and would not give him the certificate unless he agreed to the repairs, and he went to five other garages who certified that the vehicle was safe.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, every time the car is taken in for inspection, it attracts a \$40 inspection fee.

So you have a situation here where you have an obvious conflict where the repair station, where the garage, if times are tough, may in fact have an interest in recommending more repairs than are necessary. We may have a situation, and this story was detailed in the paper, where the one inspection station detailed that a person required a bunch of repairs. In fact they went to another station who had told them that they needed a different set of repairs, and the comeback from the first one was that the second station was simply running down the first and attempting to sell them a car. So as long as you have a situation where the people doing the inspection are also selling the cars, basically the person becomes a human pinball being bounced around, at their own expense, from dealer to dealer.

Surely the members opposite can understand that while the majority of these station operators are probably operating aboveboard, there will be a tremendous number of them who will succumb to pressure and will take advantage of the public. I really do believe that this government will regret its holus-bolus turnover of this program to the car industry.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we on this side of the House certainly agree with safe cars. We want to see safe cars on the program. You know I am anticipating the response from the government members here because we said all along that all this government had to do was expand the existing program, that at this point in time the government had its own inspectors inspecting cars. We said expand that, simply expand that, and inspect all of the cars that are being registered, and that the people would be willing to take the opinion of the government inspector over that of a mechanic at a garage who had an interest in perhaps not certifying that vehicle as safe.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a key element to car safety—and the members seem to have missed it—is with the manufacturers themselves, which is why 45 of the 50 states in the United States have brought in laws known as "lemon laws," to force the manufacturers to build cars that are safer in the beginning. It is common.

I think the members opposite would agree and would agree with consumer reports when they have stated over the years that during the '80s the Japanese as a

group were building far better cars, more reliable cars than the American auto makers. Today, that is changing somewhat, and the American auto makers are coming on a lot stronger. For example, Ford has a fairly good number of products out there now. Part of the reason for this improvement is the pressure, the pressure from consumer groups, pressure from the public to produce safer cars. Lemon law legislation has certainly had its effect. It has certainly had its effect in forcing the manufacturers to produce safer vehicles.

* (1220)

For the last 20 years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the manufacturers have known that air bags would save lives and for a very small amount of money could have been putting them in the cars. But did they do it? No. They went crying to President Reagan in 1980-81 and got him to hold off the implementations of this program. So what has happened is the car manufacturers themselves could be making safer cars, could have been making safer cars for many years, but have chosen not to to save a few dollars here and there.

When the manufacturer makes unsafe cars to start with, cars that have built-in obsolescence are falling apart a year on the road, then no wonder you have a situation where you have all this junk on the roads. In the area of safety and antitheft devices, did you know that the auto manufacturers at this stage can build into cars for \$100 or so a fuel line cutoff system whereby if the car is stolen, if the vehicle is stolen, the fuel line disconnects? This is available evidently at this point in some of the higher-end cars.

But the public of Manitoba, the people across Canada are paying higher insurance premiums because the manufacturers will not put an extra \$100 into a safety device that will stop auto theft. So they save their original \$100. People buy these cars, and then people go to these after-market expenses of buying car alarms which do not work, which do not really discourage or even slow the thieves down, at enormous cost to themselves.

So we have to look at elements here and initiatives that will force the auto manufacturers to pay more attention to safety. I can tell you that there is a new

program involved in with some of the insurance companies whereby they will be attaching higher premiums to the higher theft or higher cost to repair cars.

Without making a comment as to whether we support or do not support that particular program, I can tell you that, as a general rule, if a car such as a Mustang attracts a very high insurance premium because it is a high-theft vehicle or because of its high cost to repair, then what will happen is the public will cease to buy that particular model of car. The manufacturers will be forced then to put in those antitheft devices that they can do for the \$100 so that they can sell their Mustangs, because I can tell you other people will not be able to afford to buy them the way things are going at this point.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I really believe that we have tremendous confusion in the public right now about this inspection program. I want to ask the members opposite what they are going to do a year from now or six months from now when this program gets out of hand, because that is what it is. It is a boondoggle in the making. There is no question about that. This is the true law of the jungle. This is part and parcel of the Tory economic theories that throw everything out to the wild jungle out there and let people scrap over.

What you have is confusion, and you have the public being hurt. And the government will pay for it because I can tell the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) at this juncture that every time I get a phone call from a constituent of mine who complains that they cannot sell their car without putting an excessive amount of money into it, I know who to blame for this.

I can tell you that we have been consistent over the last few years on this program in opposing what this government has done, and we are going to let the public know. We are going to let the public know, and indeed we have been, on a case-by-case basis, as to who is responsible for this mess that this government has created.

Now, you know the government's argument for this legislation. I want to throw out some of the arguments that they have used in the past because they are

arguments that we would use as well. I mean, once again we are not arguing about the idea of having safe cars on the road. That is not the argument. The argument is about who and what method. Who is going to do it, and what method are we going to use? That is the argument that we are dealing with here.

We have said all along that having cars mandatorily inspected will make certain that we cut down on the number of chop shops that are operating, that will cut down on the number of cars that are being brought into the province and being sold as low-mileage cars when in fact they are high-mileage cars. We have said all along that this is a major problem with not having some sort of a program in effect. So we have made that very clear.

While the current system does pay attention to the question of odometer tampering and the control of the mileage and so on, and it does do some positive things to keep those out-of-province cars from coming in here that are basically in bad shape, it is the wrong delivery system. So you have the right idea. You just have the wrong people delivering the product.

You made a decision. You chose to cave in, cave in to the Motor Dealers Association, and do not tell me—[interjection] The member for Rossmere (Mr. Toews), I am not certain what he is saying from his seat, but the member for Rossmere was not here when all this was going on, so how would he know? The member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) has been here a long, long, time and he knows what is going on. The member for Lakeside sat in his caucus when the motor dealers rolled into town and dictated to them what was going to happen and when it was going to happen.

You know, to their credit, they showed some independence. They showed a little bit of independence, and they said no for a few months, but then the Motor Dealers Association corralled them, corralled the Deputy Speaker at the time—I remember running and chasing him through the halls here on that issue, corralled the Deputy Speaker, and he said, oh, you know, the devil made me do it. I am going to bring it in as a private member's resolution. You know, the Deputy Speaker knows of which I speak. They gave the Motor Dealers Association what they wanted.

Now, the Liberals, who were sitting there in greater numbers than they have now, the motor dealers rolled out of the Tory caucus and rolled over to the Liberals. They just walked right over the Liberals. The Liberals did not have the good sense to even hold off for a little while. The Liberals just rolled over and said, Big Bob, whatever you want, I am yours.

It was the NDP, it was the NDP caucus who said no. We know what the game is here. We know what the story is, and we will do our best to point out what is going on here, and we did. We delayed it and we delayed it for another couple of years, as the member for Lakeside—we delayed it. [interjection]

Well, the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), I think, is generally confused. We are not saying at any point that we should have unsafe cars. We are saying to the member for Inkster for the third or fourth time, we are saying, inspect all the cars, just have the government do it and do not charge \$40 an inspection. That is what we are saying. We are saying, do not turn it over to your car dealer friends. Do not turn it over to the people who fund your election campaigns, because

that is throwing the fox in with the chickens, that is what it is doing.

All they have done, all they have done is make the car dealers happy. I submit overall the car dealers will not be so happy about this either, because now we are going to have to sort this mess out when we form the government next time. The people will be so mad at these guys after two or three years that they are going to throw them out. Ironically, they will be thrown out over one of their own initiatives, and we are going to have to come in here and unscramble the omelette and restore sanity to this situation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I recognize that I have another 20 minutes to deal with this issue next time around. I believe it is now 12:30.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have 20 minutes remaining. The hour now being 12:30, this House now stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. Monday.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, September 22, 1995

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