



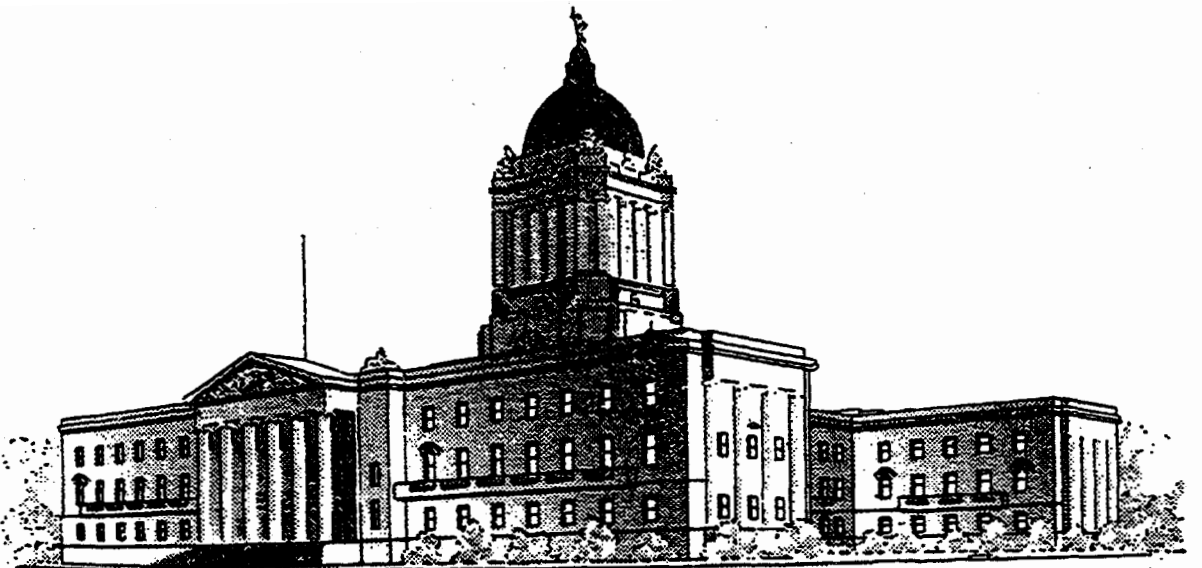
First Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

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

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CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
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KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	N.D.P.
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WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, October 23, 1995

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

**Emergency Health Care Services—
Seven Oaks General Hospital**

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Sheila Black, Evelyn Livingston and Alice Puloski requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care at Seven Oaks Hospital as was promised in the 1995 general election.

**Emergency Health Care Services—
Community Hospitals**

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of R. Ludwick, Carl J. Havixbeck, Carl R. Havixbeck and others requesting the Legislative Assembly urge the Minister responsible for Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider making a commitment to the people of Manitoba that emergency health care services in Winnipeg's five community hospitals will remain open seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

**Emergency Health Care Services—
Seven Oaks General Hospital**

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), 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: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

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

THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election the Premier promised not to cut health care services; and

THAT following the election the Minister of Health promised that emergency services would not be reduced at community hospitals in Winnipeg; and

THAT the Minister of Health on October 6 announced that emergency services at these hospitals would be cut back immediately; and

THAT residents of the Seven Oaks Hospital vicinity depend upon emergency service at this hospital.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record requesting the Premier to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care at Seven Oaks Hospital as was promised in the 1995 general election.

**Emergency Health Care Services—
Community Hospitals**

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

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Madam Speaker: The Clerk will read.

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

THAT emergency health care services are the core of Manitoba's health care system;

THAT Manitobans deserve the greatest possible access to this care;

That the government is considering reducing access to emergency services.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly urge the Minister responsible for Health consider making a commitment to the people of Manitoba that emergency health care services in Winnipeg's five community hospitals will remain open seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

* (1335)

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. James Downey (Minister charged with the administration of The Development Corporation Act): I am pleased to table the report of the Manitoba Development Corporation for the year ended March 31, 1995.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw all honourable members' attention to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us today the Most Reverend Colin Bazley, Archbishop of the Southern Cone, South America, and Bishop of Chile.

Also with us in the Speaker's Gallery are six South African provincial parliamentarians: the Honourable J. Thibedi, the Honourable M.M.A. Nyama, the Honourable Ke Nong, Mr. L. Dantjie, Mr. G. Gasebuse and Mr. Re Kutama.

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you today.

Also seated in the public gallery this afternoon, we have forty-six Grade 11 students from Fort Richmond Collegiate under the direction of Miss Dawn Manby. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau).

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Winnipeg Police Services Additional Officers

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

Madam Speaker, on March 24, we promised to spend \$2 million and hire additional police officers for the city of Winnipeg, and on March 27, the government also announced a similar promise to hire more police officers to work in our community in light of the rising crime rate and the public concern about police action.

Madam Speaker, on six occasions, we have asked this government to implement what they called a top priority last May and June. We asked the government on a number of occasions to bring those police officers on staff to deal with the rising crime rate that was taking place in the city of Winnipeg.

I would like to ask the Deputy Premier, why have they delayed the announcement of hiring those police officers, which was a priority of the government? Why have they delayed this announcement for some six months now?

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): Madam Speaker, I would refer the question to the Minister of Justice to deal with the specifics of it, but I can tell the Leader of the Opposition that this Premier (Mr. Filmon) and this Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) and this government have done more to stand up to protect the victims, to make sure that police officers are on the streets.

It is a commitment, Madam Speaker, this government has made. Too bad the member opposite has not supported it when it comes to budgetary issues.

Mr. Doer: We look forward to Manitoba not being the only province in Canada with an increasing crime rate over the last two years. We look forward to some results, Madam Speaker, not rhetoric from the Deputy Premier.

I would like to ask the acting Premier why the government waited six months to implement a so-called top priority item to hire 40 more police officers in the city of Winnipeg, and what has been the impact of waiting since last June to make this announcement?

What has been the impact on the crime rates in Winnipeg by this delay from the government? What has been the impact on what has been typified by many citizens to be a very, very tough year for crime in the city of Winnipeg, with gang issues and other issues that really concern the public? What has been the impact of the delay in this hiring, Madam Speaker?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, this government has been working with the City of Winnipeg to flow the \$2 million. The chief of police was asked to forward a plan of implementation for the new officers and the training of the new officers, and that occurred during the summer.

There was a draft agreement. The formalized agreement then had to pass at City Council at the end of September. Then the signed agreement had to be signed by the mayor and then had to come forward to this province. I am very happy to tell the member that the agreement reached my office last Tuesday. I signed it and we expect to be flowing that money today.

* (1340)

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, on many occasions, governments have been very careful about getting involved in other election campaigns. The minister indicated that they were meeting with the City of Winnipeg chief of police on a number of occasions to develop the plan that has taken over six or seven months to implement.

I would like to ask the acting Premier, does he not think it is more appropriate for the Minister of Justice to be handing this cheque over to the chief of police, rather than being so close to an election campaign in terms of an announcement with one of the people whom the government may have to deal with after the civic election campaign on Wednesday?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Speaker, the signatory to the agreement was the mayor. The city is the employing authority.

Madam Speaker, if the member is suggesting that we wait, now that City Council has, in fact, passed this agreement from City Council, now that it has been signed by both sides, is the member somehow suggesting that we not flow this money immediately?

Madam Speaker, this is a law and order—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, I asked that the minister flow the money to the chief of police, not delay the money. She should answer the question I posed to her directly.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Leader of the official opposition does not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Justice, to quickly complete her response.

Mrs. Vodrey: Of course, invitations were issued, I understand, to the chief from the city, other members, and they will bring whom they desire to bring, but the two signatories to the agreement were the mayor on behalf of the City of Winnipeg, who is the employing authority, Madam Speaker, and the Minister of Justice.

We look forward to those 40 new police officers being on the street. We believe that in the interest of public safety, this is a very important initiative.

Maintenance Enforcement Credit Bureau Reporting

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice.

Four weeks ago, the minister told this Legislature that although she had not proclaimed all the new maintenance enforcement legislation, her new power to report defaulting parents to the credit bureau—and I quote from her: "That, in case it has escaped the notice of members opposite, has really a great effect."

We were dismayed to then discover, contrary to those words, that not one defaulter had actually been reported, although the minister had that power for months.

Would the minister now explain to the custodial parents who are here in the gallery today, the families who have suffered from years of government inaction and whose expectations were raised by the minister this last spring, why she has only now reported a mere 100 defaulters to the credit bureau, preserving the credit rating of thousands of defaulters owing as much as \$30 million to our children?

Does this indicate the seriousness of this government in dealing with debts to children?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, as the member knows, but I think it is important to mention again, this government brought forward the strongest legislation available, and that legislation dealt with two important issues.

It dealt with enforcement measures, and it also dealt with resource measures, because all of the enforcement in the world does not assist if you cannot get at the resources, so the important part of our legislation dealt with both.

Madam Speaker, the reporting to the credit bureau we believe is a very important tool within the Maintenance Enforcement Program. The maintenance enforcement officers, I believe, will be using it where they believe it will have the greatest effect. It is one of several tools.

I am not sure whether the honourable member is suggesting everyone should be reported and no other maintenance enforcement measures be brought forward. It is really not clear to me.

However, where it will be useful and where it will have a significant effect—and, Madam Speaker, we believe that it will—that reporting certainly is occurring.

* (1345)

Mr. Mackintosh: Would the minister who should understand that each and every defaulter, whether owing \$3,000 or \$300,000, whether three weeks late or three months late—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Would the honourable member for St. Johns please pose his question.

Mr. Mackintosh: Madam Speaker, I am posing my question now.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Mackintosh: Would the minister confirm information from the credit bureau that the minister plans to report only 100 defaulters a month, meaning that even current defaulters will not all be reported until February of the next millennium?

Mrs. Vodrey: No, Madam Speaker, that is quite wrong, and the member asked that question at one other time in the House. The answer is the same.

I understand that the basis of his information was a phone call to Maintenance Enforcement in asking how many might be referred in the first month. It in no way indicated that that was going to be a limit on reporting or, in fact, the number reported at all times.

So it was the credit bureau asking for a forecast as this got underway, but there was absolutely no limit ever placed on the number of people who would be referred to the credit bureau. He is, again, quite wrong.

Maintenance Enforcement Act Proclamation

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Well, would the minister, after refusing to tell this Legislature when asked when she is going to bring into force the new provisions affecting garnishing joint assets, accessing

pension benefits or suspending drivers' licences, will she now admit what the vice-president of Autopac services tells us, that even though the legislation was touted by her nine months ago, the bill will not be proclaimed until next year, and, if so, this time would she at least make sure that her department can use the new powers once they come into force?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): We could very well have held up the whole bill if that would have been of interest to the member. We could have held up all provisions of the bill until every system was in place, but, Madam Speaker, this government saw maintenance enforcement as a very urgent and important matter, therefore with the bill, on Royal Assent, those parts of the bill which were able to come into force immediately, immediately did come into force.

Those which require a systems development will come into force, I am told, by the end of this year, so, Madam Speaker, the member seems to indicate he would have rather had the whole bill held up, to be dealt with upon proclamation, or perhaps not even brought forward until bills are dealt with in this session.

Madam Speaker, we did not feel that way. It is just more important than that.

**Dennis Roy Frank
Dangerous Offender Status**

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Madam Speaker, my questions are also for the Minister of Justice.

This past August, Dennis Roy Frank was released from prison after serving eight years for sexually assaulting a woman in Brandon and abducting a Winnipeg woman. This past Friday night, Selkirk RCMP found him in a car with a badly beaten Selkirk woman, and he was charged with eight criminal counts, including sexual assault with a weapon and uttering threats to cause death.

Given that after repeated crimes, a person convicted can be judged a dangerous offender and held in prison for an indeterminate period, my question is to the minister. Why did this minister not instruct her Crown

attorney to pursue dangerous offender status for Dennis Roy Frank?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): The member knows very well that I am not able to speak about any cases which are currently before the court and will not do so since that certainly puts into jeopardy the whole process.

Madam Speaker, before I answer, I prefer to seek advice on whether or not I am able to speak about a conviction which occurred several years ago. I think that is in the interest of fairness.

In a general sense, Madam Speaker, though, let me tell the people of Manitoba this. We have been very concerned, again in a general sense and unrelated to any particular issue before the public now, about the release of individuals from our penitentiaries and institutions where they continue to pose a threat to the community.

I have at the ministers of Justice meeting proposed to the federal Minister of Justice and the federal Solicitor General a system which will acknowledge at the back end people who continue to pose a threat.

At the moment, Madam Speaker, the system is a front-end system. One has to look at someone as a dangerous offender at the sentencing or the front end, but we want a mechanism to deal with people who have gone through the Corrections process who have not shown any remorse and can be dealt with at the back end, and I have made that presentation to the federal Minister of Justice.

* (1350)

**Sexual Offenders
Public Notification**

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Madam Speaker, my next question is also for the Minister of Justice.

Given that the public notification program was inadequate in this situation, what other measures will this minister take to improve the effectiveness of the community notification advisory committee?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, let me address the question in two ways.

First of all, let us speak about, in a general sense, the work of the community notification committee, as I do not want any of my remarks attributed to any case which is currently before the courts or under investigation.

The community notification committee is the only one of its kind in Canada. It was developed at the request of chiefs of police and also the people of Manitoba. People across Canada, Madam Speaker, have said, please let us know when there is someone being released who is going to be a danger to the community. We are the only province in Canada who, in fact, does this.

I am prepared to table a letter from the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police which comments on the very progressive response of this government in dealing with community notification, the only one in Canada.

I also believe that we have to deal with the release of individuals who have not had remorse, those individuals who continue to pose a danger. We have to be able to deal within our Corrections system at what is called the back end. That, Madam Speaker, is why I have put forward a solution to the federal Solicitor General and Minister of Justice to look at long-term supervision.

Health Care System Emergency Services Evaluation

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, last December, the Minister of Health made a \$1.5-million commitment to the STEP program, a series of pilot projects which he said would ensure the most effective use of hospital emergency departments.

The minister also said he would try to ensure that our emergency rooms are run very smoothly, so that when emergency cases present, when there is no alternative available, those services, they darn well are needed and should be there.

My question to the Minister of Health, Madam Speaker, is, will the minister table the results of those evaluation projects, because clearly they must have been utilized in the minister's decision to close five of the seven emergency hospitals during the 24-hour period?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I will take the honourable member's question under advisement.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, is the minister saying he did not have the results of those evaluation projects dealing with emergency hospitals which he said would be darn well ready, that he did not have those when he made the decision to close the emergency wards?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, we also asked the emergency physicians not to leave their posts and leave us in a position where we had to put together a contingency plan, which we have done.

Health Sciences Centre/St. Boniface Hospitals Emergency Resources

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, will the Minister of Health tell the House today what additional resources have been provided specifically to the Health Sciences Centre and St. Boniface Hospital to take on the additional patients in the overload that has occurred as a result of the minister's wrong-headed decision to close emergency wards at the community hospitals?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, whatever resources the Health Sciences Centre has required have been provided. We have maintained very close contact with the head of the Health Sciences Centre program, and while the emergency room there is at times hectic, as it has always been at times, I am advised that the emergency room there has been able to cope.

Emergency Services Review Committee Membership

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

It is becoming more and more abundantly clear that this government has made a wrong and bad decision dealing with emergency services in our community hospitals, Madam Speaker. We have the yellow ribbon campaign, we have petitions, we have professionals out in the many different health care fields that are condemning the actions of this government.

My question to the Minister of Health, Madam Speaker, is, he is relying on the Emergency Services Committee to come up with recommendations. The other day when I posed a question I asked, who is sitting on that particular committee? My question to him today is, will he table the list of people who are actually sitting on this particular committee?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, the committee met again on Friday, and there are a very large number of people involved with the committee, including many, many nursing professionals, many medical professionals, hospital administrators and departmental personnel.

Health Care System Emergency Services

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, given the high calibre of individuals whom the Minister of Health refers to, will the minister then revisit the decision that this government has made and reopen emergency services until this committee comes down with a recommendation?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, the honourable member, I have told him and others that the plan that is in effect today is an interim plan as we work towards the development of an integrated, city-wide emergency services program by January 1 of 1996. The fact that it is an interim program does allow us the kind of flexibility that is needed, should the need for flexibility arise.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, a very clear question to the Minister of Health: Why will he not acknowledge that there is a need to reopen our community hospitals' emergency services and, at the very least, wait until the recommendations come

forward from this committee? Why do you have the cart before the horse?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, the honourable member would substitute his judgment for that of all of the people on the Emergency Services Committee. I will not be doing that. I will be consulting regularly with that committee and getting advice from them.

* (1355)

University of Manitoba Administration Salaries

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Speaker, public accountability at Manitoba universities has been an important unresolved issue for some time. The Premier (Mr. Filmon), while openly taking sides with his politically appointed U of M board of governors, freely talks of professors' salaries but never once talks of the University of Manitoba's senior administration salaries or benefits.

My question is for the Minister of Education. In the interest of fairness, will the Minister of Education table for the benefit of taxpayers a list showing the salaries and benefits paid to each of the senior administrative staff at the University of Manitoba for the last three years? [interjection]

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) asks how the Tory hacks are on the board of governors. I indicate to the member that on the board of governors, first of all, we have 10 appointees. We are also the ones who passed the O/Cs for the two student representatives, and the bulk of the other people who are senate, alumni, president, chancellor, we do not hold, quote, the balance of power.

Secondly, we do not give instructions to the board of governors. Just the other day, the opposition House leader was complaining that the only communication we have had with the board of governors was through a letter from my deputy minister. So you cannot say one thing and say something else and have them equate when they are completely opposite statements.

But I would indicate, Madam Speaker, that part of the problem that the Leader has just identified—and I am very glad he raised the issue—is that the UMFA group, the professors who asked for public accountability, will not let their salaries go out to the public. We have professors whose salaries are not allowed to be revealed, in the way that our salaries are revealed, through the by-laws of the university.

If the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) wishes to have individual professors' salaries listed and benefits made public, and I would think there are many, many people in the public who would totally agree with him, then I say use his considerable influence with the union to ask them to release their salaries, because the by-laws of the university right now do not permit it. If that is what they want, let them ask for it.

Mr. Reid: We are in favour of opening up all of the salaries for public viewing. Can the Minister of Education confirm whether or not the academic vice-president, the administrative vice-president and the chief librarian have received substantial salary increases in the last year, some of whom, coincidentally, are on the U of M negotiating team?

Mrs. McIntosh: I cannot confirm those salaries. I can confirm, however, that there are many professors at the university making, in terms of wages and benefits, far more than the president of the university. I can also indicate that of the \$285 million that the university spends on program expenditures, \$230 million of that is for wages and benefits for professors on the University of Manitoba campus, many of whom earn far in excess of the \$104,000 base salary when you add in the benefits and the wages.

The access to those figures we are not permitted to have by virtue of the university by-laws, which protect the professors from having their salaries known at the same time that they demand public accountability for the finances spent by the people of Manitoba to pay those salaries they will not release.

Labour Dispute

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): My final supplementary question to the Minister of Education

(Mrs. McIntosh): On October 19, the Minister of Education stated that she will listen to the students of the university.

Will this Minister of Education now listen to the U of M graduate students and St. Paul's College students, whose petition is endorsed by UMSU, calling on the minister to appoint an independent arbitrator to resolve this dispute so students can return to the classrooms, Madam Speaker?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Labour): Madam Speaker, we have made our position very clear in the House. Our primary interest in this matter is that the students receive their education.

Arbitration is bad news for the future of the university as an institution for exactly some of the reasons that the honourable members opposite have been discussing.

This is a much more complicated issue. The best way to ensure that the students get their education is by the professors going back to the bargaining table with the administration, by bringing back their services, so that classes continue, so that the long-term problems of that institution can be resolved.

Binding arbitration will do nothing but tinker with this problem.

* (1400)

Mr. Reid: Madam Speaker, I have a new question to the Minister of Labour.

The Minister of Labour just moments ago said that he is closing the door to the arbitration process, yet this same minister and the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) said that the door would always be open for all of the parties to come forward to try and resolve this issue.

Parents and students want to know from the Minister of Labour, Madam Speaker, since it appeared on Friday last that both sides of the U of M dispute were prepared to return to the bargaining table, why the minister personally waited until today, this evening, to convene

an informal meeting, wasting the weekend and costing the students more lost classroom days.

Why is the minister wasting these days, wasting the weekend and closing the door to the arbitration process?

Mr. Toews: I look forward to listening to the presentations of the Faculty Association. I look forward to listening to the presentations of the administration in my office.

The fact of the matter is, and the member knows, if the parties want to go to binding arbitration, they do not need this government or the Minister of Labour to make any order in that respect. They know that there is no legislative authority for me to do that, so they come here, play games in the House and then ask what I have been doing.

Rural Stress Line Funding

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, the rural stress line which is a preventative service has unanimous support from all farm organizations—the Women's Institute, National Farmers Union, Keystone Agricultural Producers. In fact, I have letters from all of them here showing their support.

Today, I spoke to the representatives of the executive of the Association of Women's Shelters, who have said they are not opposed to the stress line as the minister has indicated. Rather, they have concerns with referrals and want these addressed.

I want to ask the minister, since his concerns about duplication of services have been removed and all organizations are supporting the stress line, when can we expect an announcement from the minister that we will see funding in place for this preventative service?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I would like to correct the honourable member. I had never indicated a position by the women's shelter association that they were opposed. I

did say they had concerns. Those concerns are being addressed.

I am meeting with the Canadian Mental Health Association tomorrow, and I expect to hear a report from them on how they are addressing the concerns of the women's shelter association. I understand that the Mental Health Council has found favour with the proposals, but I have yet to hear the final report from the Canadian Mental Health Association on its consultations. I expect to hear that tomorrow.

Report Tabling Request

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, since the Department of Family Services was asked to do an evaluation on all line services, will the minister table that report to clear up all the misconceptions that seem to be out there that the rural stress line is duplicating services? When can we see that report?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, if there were misconceptions, they were certainly genuinely held by organizations such as the Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters. The whole idea is to bring as much help to bear on agricultural and rural problems as possible and to do it in the right way.

The honourable member knows, from having travelled with me and seeing first-hand the opening of new mental health services in this province, that we are on the right track in that regard. The rural stress line is part of a network of services, and we just want to make sure that it fits properly in that network, and as I said, I will be meeting with the Canadian Mental Health Association tomorrow about that.

Funding

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Can the minister then give the House his assurance, since there is no duplication of services and all his misconceptions about the line have been removed, that he will be telling the people tomorrow that he will be putting funding in place so that the line will not shut down on Friday?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): I do not know how many people experience this problem, Madam Speaker, but I do not like the honourable member putting words in my mouth with respect to misconceptions and so on.

There have been genuine concerns raised. If the honourable member does not think the concerns raised by the women's shelter association—if she thinks they should be ignored, let her say that, Madam Speaker.

Bill 22

Provincial Auditor Input

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance.

Earlier today in the Economic Development committee hearing briefs on Bill 2, the Minister of Finance and the government rejected the proposal of the opposition that the Provincial Auditor be invited to the committee to present her views on the technical aspects of this ground-breaking legislation affecting the nature of future budgets in this province.

Madam Speaker, why would the Minister of Finance deny the Legislature the benefit of the Auditor's views? What is the government afraid of?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): The government is certainly not afraid of anything when it comes to Bill 2 and the balanced budget legislation.

The member for Brandon East has been in this Legislature, in this building, for many years, and I think he certainly knows process as well as most. I believe he sat through many public hearings and many committees, Madam Speaker, and certainly it was extremely unusual to hear the request today for input from a statutory officer, the Provincial Auditor, at a committee level, recognizing that we often hear from members opposite about the importance of the independence of the Provincial Auditor.

This is the same individual who once this legislation is in place, Madam Speaker, will be reporting on it through Public Accounts, through her own Annual Report and on the basis that she prepares the audited

Financial Statements of the government of Manitoba, Volumes 1, 2 and 3.

So from our point of view, Madam Speaker, it is not a case of having anything to hide. There will be all kinds of opportunity for the Provincial Auditor. In fact, the Provincial Auditor, herself, I believe, acknowledges that she will have all kinds of opportunity for input through her Annual Report, through the Public Accounts committee, through the audited Financial Statements.

I believe that this motion today was putting her in a very unreasonable position, Madam Speaker.

Debt Repayment Schedule

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): By way of supplementary, I would like to ask the minister, is he concerned that the Provincial Auditor will point out that the government's deficit is substantially higher than is reported in the last budget and that its proposed debt-repayment schedule, as outlined in the budget document, is totally inadequate because it excludes hundreds of millions of dollars of unfunded liabilities?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): I do not expect that for a minute. If the member is referring to the 1994-95 budget of Manitoba—he said the most recent budget—we will be receiving Volume 3 fairly shortly, and I anticipate, as has been the case every year other than one, that Volume 3 will show that the deficit is actually lower, Madam Speaker.

So I do not accept for a minute the suggestions from the member for Brandon East. I have explained to him the process of committee. He has been through it on many occasions. The committee is the opportunity to deal with legislation put forward by the government, and you discuss the policy of that legislation and so on, and the Provincial Auditor, Madam Speaker, will have all kinds of opportunities for input in the months and years ahead.

Provincial Auditor Input

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Madam Speaker, is this minister trying to keep the Provincial

Auditor away from the legislative committee on this matter since she may repeat some of the observations of the Canada-West Foundation, that the last budget was disturbing and confusing and that it did not have a surplus; rather it showed an increase in our tax-supported debt of \$141 million?

* (1410)

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I find this very interesting, and I encourage the member to read all of that document he just referenced because they do an assessment of balanced budget legislation. When they do their assessment, they say that the Province of Manitoba's budget legislation deserves an A-plus. That is certainly not the case—I think they give New Brunswick an F. I think they give Saskatchewan a C, I believe.

I see the member is looking at it. I certainly encourage him to read all of those grades into the record, and if he reads that document, they speak very highly of the balanced budget. One of the things they point to, one of the reasons—[interjection]

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

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, to quickly conclude, one of the reasons for the A-plus grade was because of the fact that there are controls around the accounting policies here in Manitoba and that you cannot make any adjustments around accounting policies in any way affect your bottom-line surplus or deficit.

**Dwayne Archie Johnston
Parole**

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, a question was taken as notice on Friday, on my behalf, regarding any intervention that I might be able to make to the National Parole Board regarding the parole of Mr. Dwayne Archie Johnston.

I am very happy to table for the members' interest today the letter which I have written to the National

Parole Board, a federal board. I have put forward Manitoba's position, urging that the Parole Board deny release to Mr. Johnston on any and all grounds.

However, just to complete an answer to that question, this is one way to deal with this, but in addition, I would look for support from members opposite in dealing with offenders, that when they do complete their sentences, there, in fact, be a national tracking system put into place to deal with those individuals.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Fisher Branch Personal Care Home
Status Report**

Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

Madam Speaker, prior to the recent election, this government, after years of delays, finally committed itself to proceeding with the Fisher Branch personal care home, a project that should have started this fall.

What is the current status of this promised project from the minister's department? Where is this project in his department?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): The project would be in one of the schedules of the capital budget, Madam Speaker, which if the honourable member is correct, and he may well be, the project has reached the stage where now a decision has to be made as to whether tenders should be let for construction. That is where it would be today.

Mr. Clif Evans: Madam Speaker, the community and the committee are waiting to hear whether the minister's department and this government will confirm that they will receive the funds for the personal care home.

Will the minister commit the funds to the personal care home, so that the project can get on its way?

Mr. McCrae: Word on that will be forthcoming in due course, Madam Speaker.

**Language Arts Examination
Teacher Markers**

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education.

Madam Speaker, Lakeshore School Division is refusing to comply with the provincial Department of Education's directions to supply teachers for marking the Grade 12 English language arts exam, because in Eriksdale it will mean the loss of all senior language arts teachers for 12 days, while in Ashern, where there is an innovative timetable program in effect, students will be without regular teachers for one-sixth of their program, and as the minister knows, these are not the only concerns.

I want to ask the minister to tell us precisely what the legislative basis is for her directions to school boards to provide teacher markers—which act, what sections?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, there is no legislative requirement for teachers to have to come forward and mark papers.

I could, if the member wished, make a regulation. That is easily done. A simple stroke of the pen, I could write a regulation to force this, but, Madam Speaker, I do not believe that that would be a necessary thing to have to do because we are—[interjection] The members opposite ask, who is in charge, and I think that should be quite evident to them, who is in charge, because we had quite a long period of weeks where we went out to the people and asked them their opinion on these things, were given a very solid opinion which resulted in the number of members here versus the number of members there.

Madam Speaker, we are putting out requests to divisions to ask to have teachers released. Some divisions are able to provide the total number. Others are not able to provide the total number for the very reasons the member mentioned.

We have other teachers whom we can hire, retired teachers, et cetera, but, Madam Speaker, I do believe we will have the full component of required markers.

We will have the exams. We will have the marks. We will have the markers, and students will not lose instructional time.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Wolseley, with one very short supplementary question.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Speaker, could the minister confirm that one of the options her department is considering as the result of these and similar types of concerns is the option of closing Manitoba schools in early January and the extension of the school year in the spring or summer?

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Education, with a very short response.

Mrs. McIntosh: I will give the shortest response possible, Madam Speaker. No.

Madam Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Committee Changes

Mr. George Hicke (Point Douglas): I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development be amended as follows: Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans) for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale); St. James (Ms. Mihychuk) for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli), for Tuesday, October 24, 1995, for 10 a.m.

I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments be amended as follows: Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), for Tuesday, October 24, 1995, for 7 p.m.

Motions agreed to.

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development, this is for Monday morning, October 23, the 9 a.m. session: the member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck) for the member for

Emerson (Mr. Penner); the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer) for the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed).

Madam Speaker, these changes were moved by leave at committee this morning, and I am now moving the same changes in the House to have the official records updated.

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Community Works Loan Program

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Madam Speaker, I seek leave to revert to Ministerial Statements.

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable Minister of Rural Development have leave to revert to Ministerial Statements? [agreed]

Mr. Derkach: Madam Speaker, I have copies for the House.

Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I announce today, to members of the Legislature, the formation of an exciting new community economic initiative to help in the creation and expansion of small businesses in rural Manitoba. The initiative is Community Works, a loan program that will enable rural communities to rely on their local leadership and ingenuity to create more than 3,500 full-time jobs throughout every town, village and city in Manitoba.

The program is community based, a point I emphasize because it has been demonstrated time and again that when local residents take an interest in their community everyone in the community benefits. The program is also about partnerships, about listening to Manitobans and working with them to help them achieve their goals and objectives. We have drawn from Community Round Tables that heard consistently that one of the greatest areas of need is the ability for decision making by local community leaders.

* (1420)

Using a model that has worked successfully in Winkler, the Community Works Program is tailor-made with communities and small business in mind, a program that will remain in their hands from administering the funds right down to deciding who will receive loans. To assist communities, the program will be supported through the Department of Rural Development's Rural Economic Development Initiatives.

Here is how the program will work. Local community development corporations or CDCs will raise \$25,000 locally which the province will then match with a \$50,000 contribution. This pool of money will be made available to local businesses that will be eligible to receive loans of up to \$10,000 at competitive interest rates.

Once again, I have to stress that the decision about who will receive loans will be made at the local level. Once the CDC successfully places the \$75,000 initial pool of money, it will be eligible for a second loan of \$50,000, with the local CDC matching this amount on a one-to-one basis.

During the next five years, the Community Works Loan Program will make at least \$12.5 million available to entrepreneurs. For the government's part, it will provide up to \$7 million. The remainder will be raised in participating communities that are investing in themselves. The Province of Manitoba will not receive any of the interest from the loans, choosing instead to have it go to the CDCs to cover their administrative costs.

The Community Works Loan Program will meet a number of specific goals. First, it provides the business capital necessary to fill the gap in loan funding for start-up expansions, particularly for home-based entrepreneurs and small business. This is particularly important for youth and young adults who are trying to create jobs for themselves.

By taking this grassroots approach, the Community Works Loan Program will help keep families closer together by providing jobs for young adults who would otherwise have to leave their communities to find work. The program also helps implement new business

opportunities identified through Manitoba's 62 round tables which are focused on local development priorities in need, and it enables communities to take a direct role in sustaining their economic future by creating jobs and diversifying their local economies.

This program gives them another opportunity to remain in their home towns, to launch their own careers and raise their families. The Community Works Loan Program speaks to a need and a void that has been identified by Manitobans and will work to support small business.

The program is also the fulfillment of a promise we made to the people of Manitoba during the provincial election last spring when we first announced the framework for the Community Works Loan Program.

The Community Works Loan Program is really about the future of Manitoba, a future of diversified business interests and opportunities for all Manitobans. I encourage members of this Legislature to contact officials in my department for more information about how the Community Works Loan Program may be able to benefit their communities. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I find it interesting the minister is bringing this statement in, referencing the area of community economic development because this is one area that I and our caucus have been calling for action on.

This government has not learned from the experience of many other jurisdictions. I will use the example of next door in Saskatchewan where that province has more than 250 loan circles. It deals in terms of community-based groups providing loans for microventures.

There are many examples across Canada in terms of community economic development, whether it be coming out of the co-op tradition in Nova Scotia or some of the things that have developed in the province of Quebec. I point to the example of Ontario where the NDP government made community economic development a major platform and worked with community groups, whether they be geographically-

based, worked with women's groups to promote community economic development.

I find it interesting that members opposite, when one mentions the experience of other provinces, do not want to listen. If they had listened when those experiences were there, and these are governments with many different political stripes, if perhaps they had spent a little less money on advertising before the provincial election and a little bit more money on community economic development, we might see far more of the kinds of jobs that they are talking about in this particular proposal than anything else.

What I would suggest, Madam Speaker, as well, is that the minister might also consider the scope of the program, because this government was the same government that brought in VLTs into rural Manitoba. I still remember those signs that said, proceeds from the VLTs will go to rural economic development.

We all know that this government has siphoned off the vast majority of the funds from rural and northern communities into the coffers of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson). If this government is really serious about community economic development, what it will do is do far more than this particular program.

I am quite willing, quite frankly, to sit down with the minister and show the minister and this government the experience of other provinces and other jurisdictions in community economic development, and I say that that starts with keeping money in rural and northern communities. That starts by stopping the drainage from rural and northern Manitoba communities of VLTs.

Let us see the government put far more money back into rural and northern economic development than we are seeing in this announcement. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

NONPOLITICAL STATEMENT

Winkler Community Foundation Inc.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Madam Speaker, I would ask for leave to make a nonpolitical statement.

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

Mr. Dyck: On Friday, October 20, my wife and I were privileged to attend the kick-off banquet to raise funds for the Winkler Community Foundation Inc., which was formed on April 25, 1995.

The Winkler Community Foundation has entered into an agreement with the Thomas Sill Foundation which will result in a matching of capital donations on the basis of one for two. I am confident that the foundation will prove to be an important aspect of Winkler and surrounding area by supporting social services, arts and culture, education and recreation, in the local area, Madam Speaker.

The foundation will also build a permanent endowment fund, co-operate and network with other charities of the area, provide a vehicle for the donor preferences, improve the quality of life in the community, provide funding which otherwise may not be available, put local dollars to use in the local community, organize philanthropy and increase philanthropy throughout the community, focus resources to the greatest needs areas, and, most importantly, will help to increase our sense of community.

The guest speaker at this event was former Winnipeg Mayor Bill Norrie, and I am pleased to say that over \$150,000 was raised. Much of the success of this event was due to the board members' hard work and commitment, and I would like to take this opportunity to extend my congratulations to the following: President and Mayor John Krahn; Vice-President Frank Wiebe; Treasurer H.F. Wiebe; and the secretary, Adeline Braun.

It is wonderful that the community of Winkler has taken this important step in supporting the local community. There are many in the community of Winkler and surrounding area who will benefit from the Winkler Community Foundation, and I am proud to be a supporter of this important undertaking. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

House Business

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, on a couple of matters of House business, by leave of the House, I would like to have the Committee on Economic Development sit tomorrow afternoon concurrent with the House at 2:30 p.m. in order to continue consideration of Bill 2.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave of the House to have the Committee on Economic Development sit tomorrow afternoon concurrently with the House at 2:30 p.m.? [agreed]

Mr. Ernst: Madam Speaker, similarly, I would like to move the Committee for Municipal Affairs, currently scheduled for Wednesday, October 25, at 7 p.m., by leave to 2:30 p.m. concurrent with the House on Thursday, October 26, to consider the bills referred thereto.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave? [agreed]

Mr. Ernst: Madam Speaker, then at 2:30 p.m. tomorrow will be Economic Development for Bill 2; and on Thursday at 2:30 p.m. concurrent with the House, the Municipal Affairs committee to consider Bills 5, 6, 17, 21 and 22.

Madam Speaker: Bills 5, 6, 17, 21 and 22, in Municipal Affairs, Thursday afternoon concurrently with the House at 2:30 p.m. [agreed]

Mr. Ernst: Madam Speaker, would you please call the bills as listed in the Order Paper.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 13—The Split Lake Cree Northern Flood Implementation Agreement, Water Power, Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Madam Speaker: To resume debate on second readings on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Praznik), Bill 13, The Split Lake Cree Northern Flood

Implementation Agreement, Water Power, Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi concernant l'accord de règlement de la première nation crie de Split Lake relatif à l'application de la convention sur la submersion de terres du Nord manitobain, modifiant la Loi sur l'énergie hydraulique et apportant des modifications corrélatives), standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?
[agreed]

* (1430)

Bill 14—The Mines and Minerals Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: Bill 14, (The Mines and Minerals Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les mines et les minéraux) on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Praznik), standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?
Leave? [agreed]

Bill 15—The Agricultural Producers' Organization Funding Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: Bill 15, (The Agricultural Producers' Organization Funding Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le financement d'organismes de producteurs agricoles) on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, I wish to speak on this bill because I think it is rather an interesting bill and it raises some very serious questions about the ability of this government to listen to the people of this province, particularly those who are part of our agricultural economy.

Because, Madam Speaker, the interesting thing with this particular bill is, and some of us might suggest there is some element of hypocrisy, but the bottom line

is this government is not applying even the most basic standards of democracy, of democratic choice towards this particular bill.

Now let us take the comparison of this bill, say, to The Labour Relations Act. This is a bill that I certainly know well. I know the government brought in changes itself a number of years ago to that particular bill. I ask you to compare the situation facing labour unions in this province with a situation facing agriculture producers' organizations under this particular bill. I would say that anyone comparing these two bills would be struck by a rather significant difference.

Now there are various procedures in The Labour Relations Act in terms of the signing of cards. There are various triggers put in place in terms of automatic certification. The government changed that just a number of years ago, but you know you cannot just go and say, I represent the workers of this particular industry and then have this particular type of legislation state that, well, yes, that is true unless people disagree, in which case they can get their dues refunded on an individual basis. Because that is the interesting thing about this bill; it does not even apply the same standard of democratic proof.

I know the member for Riel (Mr. Newman), who has raised his concern about democratic process, must find this very interesting because this does not even bear any resemblance to the kind of standards that we apply in The Labour Relations Act.

I ask, Madam Speaker, why? Why, on the one hand, do we have a fine balance in labour relations? We can argue back and forth. Obviously, we have different perspectives—I think that is an understatement—between the New Democratic Party and the Conservative government on labour relations, and we have had many fights in this House. But, you know, I would say that everyone agrees that there has to be a certain democratic process involved, basically, that we would have a situation that we have currently. We can argue about the percentages and exact mechanisms and the language in that act, but the bottom line is that in The Labour Relations Act if a union wishes to organize a plan, it has to get a majority of the people in the plant to support that union, first of all by signing a card and

then, depending on the number of people who have signed the card, potentially in a vote by secret ballot as well.

What is unreasonable about that? I do not think anyone has questioned that. Certainly no one in the labour movement has questioned that, because that is part of the organizing principle. If you cannot persuade people to support you, then really you should not even think about attempting to represent someone in the labour relations environment.

Now does that standard apply for this particular bill, Madam Speaker? Not even close. This particular bill has no trigger of that mechanism. There is no plebiscite of the producers. This is, by statute, a mandatory check-off bill. There is no Rand Formula here. This is the great formula that developed in the 1940s, which basically is based on the principle, if you have got majority support, then you have the compulsory checkoff, but note the requirement of the majority support.

Is there any Rand Formula in this particular provision? No. So I ask the question, why is it okay on the labour relations side to have requirements put in place that there be a democratic vote, that there be certain basic principles before a labour organization represents those workers that is entitled to receive dues? Why is that the case in terms of labour relations, but why in this particular bill does the same principle not apply?

I will be interested to see what happens in committee because I think if you were to take this bill to most people in the agricultural economy right now, most farm producers, you will find one thing. You ask them. Give them a very straightforward question. Do you think that you have the right to decide? I have no doubt that every single farm producer in this province would say, most definitely. This is a democratic country.

I take it one step further since this principle is not in this bill. What is going to be the reaction of the many people out there when they see this particular bill? Because I dare say that a lot of people in rural Manitoba have not seen the bill, have not seen the

import of this particular bill. What are they then going to say about a government that is going to bring in a bill that essentially says, without a vote there is a mandatory check-off? What is democratic about that process, Madam Speaker? I find it ironic because I mentioned The Labour Relations Act.

This Legislature itself is based on the principle, the very fundamental democratic principle that is enshrined in fact in the British parliamentary system. Our very system is based—in fact, many of the fights, Madam Speaker, over the hundreds of years of the development of this system were over taxation, the right of people not to be subject to arbitrary taxation. Indeed, if you look at the origins of the Magna Carta, if you look at the development of much of the modern-day parliamentary system in the 17th Century, much of it was a struggle between the elected House of Commons and the aristocracy, the kings of the day, who felt they had the ability to bring in mandatory taxation without the approval of the elected representatives of the people, by limited suffrage in those days, but of the House of Commons.

Madam Speaker, that is a fundamental principle of this Legislature, that we the elected representatives of the people of Manitoba sit in this Chamber and we approve each and every budgetary measure and each and every taxation. I find it interesting that we have this principle enshrined in the parliamentary system. We have it enshrined in labour legislation, but when it comes to Bill 15, The Agricultural Producers' Organization Funding Amendment Act, there is no such principle in place.

Now, Madam Speaker, our argument is not with the principle of agricultural organizations any more than—and I would hope this is the case—any member of the Conservative Party in debating either internally or externally The Labour Relations Act would say I am sure that the debate is not over the existence or the right to existence of labour organizations that represent the working people of this country. That is not the issue. The key issue is very basic, and that is the democratic process or lack thereof in this particular bill.

Our message, Madam Speaker, is very clear. We think the same principle should apply in this case as I

referenced in terms of The Labour Relations Act. Let the people, the agricultural producers, decide themselves if an organization is going to represent them and let that process of mandatory check-off be based on that fundamental decision, not a reverse opt-out provision. That simply is not good enough.

In terms of labour relations, I wonder if United Steelworkers, United Food & Commercial Workers, any number of unions, I wonder what their response would be if they were given the opportunity to go into a workplace and say, well, you are a member of this union by government legislation, but you can opt out.

That is not the process we have, because we believe in the democratic process and, in particular, the decision by individuals through their representatives—or directly as the case in terms of The Labour Relations Act—the decision that they make as to who represents them and as to whether any organization—and in the case of agricultural organizations it is the same thing—which organization will get those particular funds.

* (1440)

So when we oppose this bill, it is very simple. It is on the whole question of democracy. Let me say very clearly that I think that members opposite, who have an open mind on this particular issue, perhaps during the internal discussions had not realized how different this bill is from other bills, might want to consider that fact, that this bill does not even apply the same basic standards as we apply to The Labour Relations Act, let alone the same standards that we apply in this particular Chamber.

So we are opposing this bill, and we are doing it on behalf of the grassroots agricultural producers of this province. We are going to provide them the voice that they will be denied under this particular bill. I wonder if members opposite—and I am not just going to even reference rural members, because there are urban members, too, I am sure, who have a concern about this as well. This is not something that is defined by geography. I mean, who in this House is not concerned about democratic process? Who is not concerned?

I ask members opposite, as we go into a vote on Bill 2, Bill 14, Bill 15, all the bills throughout this session, if there is one bill in this particular agenda that I can appeal to you beyond the normal partisan boundaries, surely it is this particular bill, because our appeal is one of democratic process.

What is wrong with applying the democratic process to agricultural producers in this particular province? I say that. We are prepared to have this go to vote on second reading. We fundamentally oppose the principle of this bill, and if members opposite refuse to stand up for the democratic process, we will.

While probably a lot of people in rural communities right now are not aware of this particular bill, I want to make one commitment. That is, if the government uses its majority, it puts the Whip on in this particular bill, as I am sure it will, if it pushes through this fundamentally undemocratic bill, although it flies in the face of every other principle that we have in legislation in this particular Chamber and flies in the face of the very development of the system that we hold so dearly itself, if they will not stand up for farmers, for farm producers, we will.

I just remind members opposite, because this is not the first evidence that we have seen of this type of mentality that is developing, but, you know, they do not speak for anybody in Manitoba. To use the words of the former Premier of this province, who I did not agree with on a lot of things but who I think probably summed it up best when he referred to all governments as being temporary governments, one Sterling Lyon. No one speaks to the people of this province beyond the particular mandate they have at any given time.

This government, I can say, Madam Speaker, if it forces through this bill, will not be speaking for grassroots farmers and farm producers in this province. They will not be speaking for democracy. That is why we will be continuing this fight across Manitoba, across rural Manitoba, because our fight is nothing less than a fight for the basic principle of democratic process for everyone in this province and on this particular bill for farm producers. Thank you.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): It is certainly a pleasure to be able to rise and speak to Bill 15, the so-called check-off legislation for farm organizations of all kinds in the province.

I think it is extremely important to note that, under the current economic conditions, the farm community finds itself in in this province. Specifically, I am referring to after the death of the Crow. I should say to you, Madam Speaker, that the feathers have still not all landed after the Crow being shot out of the sky, and the economic impact of what we are seeing is just the very beginning of the impact to Manitoba farmers in general.

It is my firm belief that had farm organizations had adequate funding to solicit the kind of expertise that should have been had, and had they had the ability to take a true look at how Manitoba farmers would be impacted compared to their Saskatchewan, Alberta, Ontario, yes, and even Quebec counterparts, I believe they would have made a very, very strong lobby. I am totally amazed that the farm community in general has not already demonstrated a huge backlash and mounted a huge lobby toward the federal government in respect to the payment schedule to the farm community on the Crow benefit.

I am utterly, utterly astounded that I hear members opposite constantly criticize the legislation that is before the House today, because this legislation will provide adequate funding, which is badly needed, to all organizations in this province. I think it is noteworthy that the farm community across this province, including many, many of the organizations that currently exist, some eight, nine years ago decided that they needed an umbrella organization, and they joined forces. All of the farm organizations joined forces and put together a small pool of money that put together a group of people who toured this province and asked farmers whether they, in fact, needed a general farm organization, and the answer was a resounding yes. The fact of the matter is that 9,400 people became members of that organization.

I have constantly heard members opposite criticize that the general farm organization, which represents by a very significant number the vast majority of farm

producers in this province, should not be recognized by the province as the farm organization. Let us remember one thing: This farm organization was organized, is being funded and is being operated by farmers.

I want to say to you, Madam Speaker, that the other organizations that we speak of sometimes, the other organizations that are member organizations of the KAP organization are the Keystone Vegetable Producers, the Manitoba Beekeepers' Association, the Cattle Producers Association, the Manitoba Chicken Board, the Corn Growers Association, the Manitoba Egg Board, the Forage Seed growers association, the Manitoba Milk Producers Association, Manitoba Pork, the PMU association, the Pulse Growers association, the Seed Growers' Association, yes, and even the Sugar Beet Growers' Association, the Turkey Marketing Board and the Vegetable Growers' association.

An Honourable Member: Now you wonder why we are not worried about your opposition. You want to go against all them, go right ahead.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) has the floor, and I would request the common courtesy of all members to listen intently to what he is putting on the record regarding Bill 15.

Mr. Penner: Madam Speaker, I appreciate your intervention in the debate that was ongoing and nattering that was coming from the opposition benches. It certainly—

Point of Order

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) just put on the record that it was nattering coming from this side of the House. I would like him to correct that. It was in fact the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) who was trying to create a disruption in the House.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order, indeed I did hear disruption coming from both sides of the House. I heard a very hot debate between two members, one on each side of the House.

* * *

Mr. Penner: Madam Speaker, I certainly appreciate the kind intervention, and hopefully the honourable members will be able to have their minute or 15 minutes to address this bill.

* (1450)

As I was saying, these organizations have joined forces, and finally, as the farm community had for decades said, that there should be some vehicle established as an umbrella organization that would be the spokesperson on the major issues presenting themselves in a general forum on agriculture, this organization represents some almost 10,000 farmers in the province. This organization was designated by a group of people that government appointed to select a farm organization as the general farm organization representing the farm community on matters.

They, of course, appear before government periodically, not only the provincial government but the federal government, to deal with such issues as the Crow benefit, to deal with such issues as grain marketing, to deal with such issues as grain transportation and fuel pricing and fertilizer pricing, and you can name a whole raft of issues including the egg marketing ability, the quota setting for the national quota setting under supply management and all those kinds of issues. They have been very, very influential in securing the support of the secondary processing industry in their efforts to provide a better economic climate for the farm community in this province.

I say to you, Madam Speaker, had we had this kind of legislation in place, had we had this kind of monetary support for that general farm organization and all the other umbrella organizations under it, they would have had a stronger voice in Ottawa when we negotiated a Crow settlement. I think the \$180-million loss that Manitoba farmers should have had, in their negotiation, is due to the fact that other provinces had a stronger voice in Ottawa.

I believe fully that under the new rules that have been established by the economic decisions and the policy decisions of the federal Liberal government in Ottawa make it imperative that the farmers themselves have an organization, and a strong one, and that it be

economically funded well enough through this kind of legislation. Madam Speaker, then and only then will the farm community develop a strong enough voice to impact Ottawa and future legislators in this House.

I think it is extremely important that when the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) attempts to put in place programs or policies that affect our largest industry in this province, that when he goes to bat for the farm community, that he knows what the wishes of the farm community are. Secondly, I think it is important to note that there be a vehicle established that will allow farmers to contribute out of their own funds to such things as research, new crop development, economic support for new industries and all those kinds of things, and this legislation allows for that.

It does not force anybody to. If somebody has some real reservations about being a member and contributing in this manner to an organization, they can make two choices. They can write a letter simply saying I want my money back. It is as simple as that, Madam Speaker, and they no longer then contribute. Or they could make the choice and say we want this money to go to some charitable organization. This is not the kind of compulsory legislation that the socialists in the opposite benches support for labour, forcing people to contribute to union coffers without having any benefit of them or having a voice in whether they should or should not, as individuals, contribute. This is not foisting the Rand Formula on the farm community. This is simply giving farmers a choice and a vehicle that will allow them to contribute to research, industrial, economic and social development of their industries on their farms.

I say to you, Madam Speaker, that those people who speak against this legislation and the members who write letters to all the farmers in this province, the members who write letters questioning and indicating that this is a mandatory type of legislation, are wrong. The member is simply misrepresenting the legislation to those farmers, and I think it speaks rather poorly of that kind of misrepresentation.

I would not stand here and speak in support of this kind of legislation had I not been involved in the organization that truly represents farmers. We have in

this province an organization that I am extremely proud of, Madam Speaker—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I am experiencing great difficulty hearing the honourable member for Emerson.

Mr. Penner: It is probably, Madam Speaker, one of the most democratic organizations that I have ever participated in or been a member of, inasmuch as it maintains a membership-based, a district structure organization which elects board members to their district board which debates issues, brings the issues to a general council, a 45-member general council elected from across the province, which includes all the organizations that want to belong to it, bar none, and allows for proper debate and policy establishment on a province-wide basis.

I have yet to see an organization that is structured in a better manner, giving better representation, by two individual farmers through the organization in the establishment of policy. It is truly, truly an exercise in democracy.

So I beg my members opposite, reconsider your position, soften your hearts, be sympathetic to the farm community, because these farmers want to help themselves. They need a vehicle, a self-help vehicle, to allow them to do it.

But they also need one thing. They need a vehicle to put funds into their coffers to allow them to hire the kind of expertise that is needed on an ongoing basis to give them the ability to develop proper representation on such important matters as a transportation policy, our agrifood development policy, our marketing policies.

* (1500)

Madam Speaker, we think that the plebiscite being held in Alberta today on whether the Wheat Board should be in the marketing industry or not is only a start. It is only a start in the debate of how agriculture will look 20 years down the road in this Canada.

So I think, Madam Speaker, in order to facilitate properly the progression of this piece of legislation in this House, I would ask my honourable members opposite to very carefully scrutinize what they are opposed to because, if they do not support this piece of legislation, it demonstrates to me clearly that they are simply of two voices on organized representation towards the general public, whether it be the farm community or the labour community. It speaks very loudly in some quarters, it speaks very loudly to some people in this province.

Mark my word, what they say in opposition to this legislation will be remembered when other pieces of legislation dealing with this kind of legislation come before this House at some future date.

So I would ask my honourable members to kindly reconsider their position. I ask them to have a change of heart, and I ask them to strongly support this legislation, because we could do this today in this House, we could pass a unanimous adoption of this piece of legislation and send it to committee and pass it into third reading and give it Royal Assent and, that way, this legislation would be in place for this coming year. It needs to be, because these farmers, in an organized manner, need to have that kind of voice and they need to have it quickly to represent themselves properly before the federal House of Commons and the agriculture debate that is going to be ongoing for a number of years to come.

So, Madam Speaker, I thank you kindly for giving me the opportunity to rise for a few minutes and voice my support of this legislation.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, it is with pleasure that I can speak to Bill 15. The agricultural community is very important to the Liberal Party as it is to all members of this Chamber. It is important, from our perspective, that Manitobans are very clear in terms of where it is that the Liberal Party is coming from on what we believe is a very important issue and a very important group.

We have many different forms of interest groups, lobby groups and so forth that are out there. Some of them are publicly financed; some are privately

financed; some of them are jointly. They serve a very valid purpose in today's society. They act as advisory in many cases. They are an advocacy group, and they quite often will assist in the development of policies that will have significant impact on different levels of government along with different political parties. The Keystone Agricultural Producers group has been extremely successful on all three of those fronts, and, Madam Speaker, my hat is off to the organization in the efforts that it has put forward over its relatively short existence but, no doubt, what will be a very prosperous future.

When we look at Bill 15, it appears to be giving the Keystone Agricultural Producers that much more ability into the future. It is interesting, when I listen to the debate coming from both sides of the House and, in particular, the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) and others who have made reference to this as the Rand Formula or the union debate and how undemocratic this particular process is. I think that in most part, Madam Speaker, what they are doing is they are comparing apples to oranges, that in fact this is significantly different, and there is the opportunity for any producer to be able to opt out of this program. I think that is fairly significantly different than what is within the union movement.

The union movement, of course, Madam Speaker, is quite different and needs to be quite different, and that is a very positive difference. There is a need to have both forms, if you like. I, for one, do not see how the producer ultimately is going to be hurt by this. I think that there are many benefits. I think the Keystone Agricultural Producers and its membership are entering into a very unknown world, to a certain degree, in terms of, as the world economy continues to develop, competition is going to be there. There are changes that are being made virtually on a daily basis, some of them imposed, others not imposed. So it is very important that we do have a very strong, healthy organization such as Keystone which provides that umbrella group ensuring that in most part the concerns of the producers are in fact being met.

For those producers—because there are always going to be some producers that might take exception to what Keystone could be doing or suggesting—ultimately, they

do have the option to opt out and get their money back. I respect that and look forward to the bill going to committee. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to add my comments to Bill 15, The Agricultural Producers' Organization Funding Amendment Act.

This legislation, as we have had several speakers talk about the principle of the bill here not only today but in prior days, I think is important to the producers of this province, but I want to point out that there are many pitfalls with this legislation, in fact, some very negative consequences that are going to impact upon the producers of this province.

I do not profess for a minute to be an expert on farm operations or productions although I have had some experience working on farms throughout my life, but I will confine my comments to the principle of the legislation itself.

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Everything, he is an expert on everything.

Mr. Reid: Well, that may be. As the Minister of Natural Resources points out that other members may be expert but I cannot comment on that, not having lived their lives or experienced their experiences.

This legislation, I believe, deals with the principle of freedom of choice which many members across the way like to say that they are supportive of, but if you take a look at the contents of this legislation in Bill 15, it takes away that freedom of choice of the individual producers in this province to belong to the organizations to which they wish to belong to on a voluntary basis.

Now, I look at some legislation discussion that has been taking place, Madam Speaker, with an issue that is very near and dear, I believe, to the hearts of the members opposite, to the Conservative Party members, dealing with the right-to-work legislation. There has been some discussion in other jurisdictions of this country dealing with that particular issue.

I want to quote from a document that I have read where it relates to the issue, and I think that a lot of these comments are very directly pertinent to the bill under discussion here today under Bill 15. The discussion document comes from the Fraser Institute which is, I believe, a think-tank that the Conservative Party subscribes to and, in fact, takes a lot of their policies from. One of the things that I found interesting in that discussion paper—and it is directly applicable to Bill 15 and the impact that it is going to have by way of not allowing the producers the opportunity to choose—and I quote from this document: Every worker is forced to accept the representation services of the exclusive bargaining agent.

That is one of the problems that the Conservative Party has with the rights of unions and one of the things they would like to see removed. Well, the same could be said of this legislation in Bill 15. Bill 15 will take away the producers' right to accept the representation services of an exclusive bargaining agent, because it is a negative option that is put before them. The farmers will have to be a member of that organization and have fees deducted at the elevator point, and the producer may not wish to be a part of that organization or to have their fees contributed to that organization by way of automatic checkoff.

I know the members opposite have said time in and time out in this House, not only in this session but other sessions, that they are opposed to that principle and yet they are going ahead with the same principle, on the producers of this province, which is wrong. It is a wrong decision. There is no freedom of choice for the producers of this province to belong to this organization so what the government is saying here to the producers of this province, this is a negative option. You have to be in it before you can get out of it. We think that is a wrong decision.

We saw what happened with the public in British Columbia, for example, when Rogers Cable tried to tell the people who are subscribing to Rogers Cable network in British Columbia that they had to take on the extra channels, just this year, Madam Speaker, had to take on the extra channels and pay the extra cost without any decision or any involvement in the decision.

* (1510)

We are seeing the same thing happening here today with Bill 15. The producers have to be involved in the organization to which the government will certify that the producers have to pay their \$100-plus membership fee to that organization and the producers have no up-front say on whether or not they want to be in that organization. We think that is wrong. That is contrary to the principles of free choice, which this government says they subscribe to but we have not seen demonstrated in this House to this point either now or under this legislation of Bill 15.

Now it is interesting here that the minister raises that, because he said that union dues have to be checked off.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): And then a portion of it goes to you guys automatically.

Mr. Reid: Well, I do not know where the minister gets that information. Perhaps he has something that he wishes to bring to the floor of this Chamber that I am not aware of, but I can tell you, Madam Speaker, that in my years in the workforce—some of it within a unionized workforce, some of it outside—it has never been my experience that any of those monies, unless it was an expressed decision by the body of that organization, that union organization, that the monies would then go to a political purpose of their choosing—of their choosing. So that is the expressed will of the membership themselves.

Madam Speaker, if you look at the labour legislation in this province, when we go through the certification process, something this government has not done on Bill 15, the labour legislation in this province is very clear. If you have, I believe, 45 percent of the company to which the union is attempting to have certification in, then the company can request a vote. If you have 50 percent of the cards signed for employees of that company wishing to join a union of their choosing, then the union can request a vote be taken. If it is 60 percent—I believe is the number from labour legislation in this province, and I am recalling from memory here—then it is an automatic certification process. I have not seen any of these steps take place from this government.

They have not gone to the producers of this province and said do you want to belong to the organization. Let us do a survey of them, let us send out cards to them and say, okay, do you wish to belong to—as the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) I believe said, when he said that he was very proud to stand up here and say he was the founding member of KAP, has this member for Emerson, has this government gone out to any of the producers in this province and said do you wish to belong to KAP? Do you wish to belong to the National Farmers Union? Do you wish to belong to some other organization? They have been silent on this, Madam Speaker, never once going to the producers of this province asking them which organization, if any, they want to belong to. We think that is wrong, and it is an infringement of the democratic rights of the producers of this province to force this bill upon them.

I believe, Madam Speaker, when the member for Emerson raised the issue here today, since he has indicated here himself that he was one of the founding members if not the founding member of the KAP organization, that he may be in a conflict here today, and that perhaps he should not have been commenting on this piece of legislation, or is this another one of the special interest groups that the government often refers to that should not be listened to? If it is the case, as the members opposite often refer to, why are you listening to this organization if you think special interest groups are wrong?

Madam Speaker, the fees, I believe, in this legislation are \$100, or unless set by regulation. What is to stop this fee from being increased without any input from the producers of this province not only to the \$100 fee as the initial setting point, or the baseline for the fee, but also any increases in the future? How can producers of this province access any of those decisions?

How many producers of this province—because I believe it is the government's intent to have KAP as one of the certified organizations—belong to the KAP organization in this province? I ask the members opposite, out of the thousands of producers, I believe, in this province, 3,000 producers in this province—[interjection] 20,000 producers in this province, 3,000 belong to KAP. What happened to the other 17,000

producers? What say do they have in the right to join or not join the certified organizations that this Bill 15 will foist upon them, the other 17,000 producers of this province? Why are they not being given the democratic right to choose their organization?

That is something that the members opposite say. Current labour legislation in this province says that all members of a company which is going to be certified or wishing to be certified as a union have the right to have some say. That is not something that this government is putting in place by way of Bill 15. There are no rights for those producers, those 17,000 producers.

I believe, Madam Speaker, that the principle of this legislation is the principle of freedom of choice, and that is something that this government is not giving those 17,000 producers of this province. I say that this legislation is wrong and that I ask the government to withdraw this legislation at this time.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

The question before the House is second reading, Bill 15, The Agricultural Producers' Organization Funding Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le financement d'organismes de producteurs agricoles. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 16—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Highways (Mr. Findlay), Bill 16 (The Highway Traffic Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Code de la route), standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?
Leave? [agreed]

Committee Changes

Madam Speaker: Before I recognize the honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), do I have leave

to recognize the honourable member for Gimli for more committee changes? [agreed]

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development, this is for the 10 a.m., October 24, sitting: the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) for the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer); the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render) for the member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Stefanson).

I move, seconded by the member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development, this is for the 2:30 p.m. session, Tuesday, October 24: the honourable member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Stefanson) for the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik).

Motions agreed to.

* * *

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to put some words on record regarding Bill 16, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act. This act amends The Highway Traffic Act to eliminate the economic regulation of intraprovincial trucking. The bill phases in economic deregulation of intraprovincial trucking as was agreed to under the agreement on internal trade signed by all 10 provinces.

These changes are to come fully into effect on January 1, 1998. According to the spreadsheet supplied by the minister, there are four specific regulatory provisions that are to be amended and I would like to talk briefly about each of those four sections.

Firstly, the for-hire trucking industry within the province is regulated by the Motor Transport Board, that is, an applicant would be granted a certificate from the Motor Transport Board if the applicant could meet two of the board's criteria, economic entry and fitness.

The economic entry test refers to the applicant's satisfying the board that the proposed service of the

public service vehicle would indeed promote the public interest. Promoting the public interest was once deemed to be of great importance.

The board's second criterion was related to fitness, that is, safety and insurance requirements.

The first amendment asked that the economic entry test be dropped completely. Only the fitness criterion will apply to an applicant for a public service vehicle certificate authorizing the transportation of property. In other words, intraprovincial carriers will no longer have to prove to the board that the public interest is promoted. However the economic entry test and the fitness test will still remain for public service vehicles such as intercity buses and intermunicipal taxis.

* (1520)

Secondly, in the past, the Motor Transport Board restricted competition in the for-hire trucking industry within the province by attaching geographic conditions or restrictions to public service vehicles. Thus, service of a particular carrier was restricted to a defined territory or group of communities. The rationale for such geographic restrictions was that rural and remote communities would have better access to passenger and freight services at reasonable rates. Excessive destructive or predatory competition was deemed not to be in the public interest.

The second amendment proposes that effective January 1, 1996, (a) all existing geographic conditions attached to certificates shall cease to have effect, and (b) the board may not thereafter attach a geographic condition or restriction to a certificate issued to a motor carrier for the transportation of property—in other words, no protection for smaller carriers in rural and remote areas.

Thirdly, the third amendment deals with the phasing out of the board's power to regulate tolls, truck rates. The first part of this amendment provides that at the end of 1995 the board's existing truck rates cease to have effect, and any remaining power to regulate truck rates will be eliminated as of January 1, 1998. The marketplace will set the rates thereafter.

Fourthly, the fourth amendment is congruent with allowing the market to determine the adequacy and quality of service provided by freight motor carriers. It is proposed that a number of provisions in Part 8 of The Highway Traffic Act should no longer apply to public service vehicles operated for the transportation of property, except insofar as they relate to the safe condition of the vehicles and their equipment or their safe operation. This is to come into effect January 1, 1998.

The changes proposed by this fourth amendment are sweeping, affecting eight clauses and two subsections of Part 8 of The Highway Traffic Act. What is being dropped? What will the board no longer require? Well, for one thing, requiring a carrier to provide adequate, safe, sanitary and proper service. That is Clause 281, Part 1(b). So in effect the first part of the fourth amendment is saying that the traffic board will no longer have the right to revoke a carrier's license if the service is inadequate, unsafe, unsanitary, and improper.

This certainly staggers the imagination. There is either some contradiction or lack of clarity about this fourth amendment because, if Clause 281 Part 1(b) is dropped, meaning that the board will no longer require a carrier to provide safe service, why then is safety made an issue in the postamble to the fourth amendment? You drop a clause dealing with safety, sanitation, adequacy and proper service, and you replace it with a vague statement at the end about safety. Is proper service, adequate service, sanitary service not important?

Madam Speaker, allow me to chronicle the clauses and subsections of The Highway Traffic Act that will be dropped as of January 1, 1998.

Also dropped will be Clause 281(1)(c) the board may specify the routes and districts to be served by carriers and the number of vehicles allowed to serve each district or route. I have no idea what the impact will be on remote or northern communities, isolated communities. Does that mean that carriers can by-pass certain routes? Does that mean, because the roads are bad, that the service does not have to happen as often as it did in the past?

Another clause that is being dropped is Clause 281(1)(f) the board may regulate the operating schedules and services of carriers. This seems to be only in the interests of the carriers. There does not seem to be anything in the public interest or the shippers interest. It is only at the convenience of the carrier. It is their operating schedule.

Another clause that is dropped is 281(1)(g) the board may hear and adjust complaints against carriers. I am not sure who shippers are to complain to or the public is to complain to or consumers are to complain to if there is a dishonest carrier, if there is cheating, if there is fraud. Are they expected to go to the Ombudsman? Are they expected to launch legal suits?

Another clause that is dropped is Clause 281(1)(h) the board may regulate equipment, maintenance and operating methods. That clause is dropped.

Another clause that is dropped is Clause 281(1)(i) the board may prescribe load capacities, the maximum weights and kinds of freight and the sizes and weights of packages. That has been dropped. I presume that inspectors will have to cover that portion of it, but smaller carriers are already in strong competition with buses and courier services with regard to the small package trade, so I think this could be a further problem.

Another clause that is dropped is Clause 281(1)(j) the board may regulate specified matters relating to freight terminals. That is gone.

Another clause that is dropped is Clause 281(1)(m) the board may co-ordinate motor carrier services with railway services. I think that will lead to inflexibility, because apparently now the carrier does not have to co-ordinate with other modes of service, such as railroads. I think that will be very inconvenient for their suppliers. I guess that regulation is left to the marketplace.

Also two subsections are dropped, subsection 294(2) the board may refuse to renew the certificate of a carrier if it is dissatisfied with the service rendered by the carrier.

Point of Order

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Madam Speaker, I am trying to listen to the member for Flin Flon, and I think he is going through the bill clause by clause? I think we do that in committee, do we not?

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): On the same point of order, Madam Speaker, I think it is a precedent here in this House, where the members are commenting on the principle of the second reading of the bill, and there are certain documents that, as the minister well knows, when he was a minister of Transportation, he would supply to the critics to facilitate some knowledge or understanding of why the legislation was brought in.

So I do not think it is unusual for the member to reference the document that the minister would not even provide to this House.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order, I would remind the honourable member for Flin Flon that he is supposed to be speaking to the principles of the bill. It is preferable that no reference be made to the clause or the specific section.

* * *

Mr. Jennissen: I will make only one last reference to a subsection that is dropped and that is the one, the board may revoke the certificate of a carrier that does not give convenient, efficient and sufficient service. That concerns me, because it seems to me that the dissatisfaction, inconvenience and inefficiency and insufficiency of service are no longer punishable. It is strictly left up to the marketplace to make those decisions and that gives me some grave concern, Madam Speaker.

Market forces alone will be able to determine then the future of the trucking firms within Manitoba. The market will determine the adequacy of service and the quality of service. Over all of this looms the federal government whose deadline of January 1, 1998, for total deregulation is fast approaching.

It is reminiscent of a bad western movie. High noon is approaching, the showdown on Main Street is about to happen, but in this particular kind of high noon no six-guns are being fired, just employees in our transportation sectors.

Now the champions of unfettered free market economics and free market forces are quick to point out that new challenges and new opportunities will result from deregulation, but I ask you, Madam Speaker, where exactly has this ever taken place? Where has this really materialized? Where have ordinary working-class men and women improved their lot because of laissez faire, let the market do it kind of forces?

In Ronald Reagan's USA, it certainly did not happen. In Maggie Thatcher's Britain, it certainly did not happen. In Chretien's Canada, I doubt it.

This province is the geographic centre of Canada. It is the keystone province. If trade and commerce is its lifeblood, then that lifeblood is carried by our transportation sector. It is not just the roads, the railroads and the airports that are important. It is not just trucks, trains and airplanes. It is the people who operate these trucks, these trains and airplanes that are very important, as well as the people they serve, Madam Speaker.

Does deregulation serve them? Let us look at just one sector for now, the intraprovincial trucking. In 1972, there were 152 intraprovincial trucking companies in Manitoba, and you do not have to take my word for that. That is what Barry Prentice said in his study, in his report in the early 1990s, 153 intraprovincial trucking companies in 1972, in Manitoba. By the early 1990s, that had dropped to 84. By 1993, that number had dropped to 50.

I wondered if this trend was still continuing, and therefore I telephoned the Manitoba Association of Rural Carriers. I believe they call themselves RCM now or Rural Carriers of Manitoba. The people I talked to thought that the number of rural carriers may be below 30 today. In fact, several mentioned the number 28. Others thought that it might be as high as 35, but let us take a rough average.

Let us assume there are about 30 intraprovincial carriers in this province right now. There were 152 intraprovincial carriers in 1972, and now there are 30. Only one out of five have survived and deregulation will further erode that number, at least that is what some of the members of the Rural Carriers of Manitoba told me.

There are already major consolidations occurring of trucking firms and reduction of competition in many communities, both of which will be directly increased as a result of this bill. What happens to those small rural carriers that once were an intrinsic part of the small rural communities? Do these men and women lose their livelihood? Do we simply stick them on the welfare rolls and say, that is the price of progress?

* (1530)

Here is what some of the owners of small rural-based intraprovincial trucking companies told me. They said, we are an integral part of the community. We live here, we work here, we are a part of small-town economy. Some of us have put in 20 or 30 years of hard work into our trucking company. In one case a father and some of his sons formed a team and had serviced a short-line haul for 65 years continuously. The father had started a small rural trucking firm in the 1930s, and the sons are carrying it on. These small trucking firms felt that since the late 1980s they were being squeezed very hard financially. Many of them had sold out to larger carriers at reasonable prices, but now the larger carriers felt that they were winning by default. They did not need to buy out the smaller outfits at a fair price. The larger carriers would just wait it out and get the business for next to nothing.

There is a lot of frustration and anger among the small intraprovincial carriers. It is increasingly difficult for them to survive in a deregulated environment. The rural carriers attempted to band together to form a kind of co-op or pool and two or so years ago met with the Minister of Highways and Transportation, I believe, government officials, and representatives from Rural Development Corporation to set up an all-points authority. They felt it was a last chance to save their companies. They felt well received and were even given an I, T and T grant to pursue their dream, and

legal documentation was initiated. Then the government backed away from it, and the rural carriers felt betrayed. Some suggested or hinted that the larger trucking companies might have been doing some behind-the-scenes lobbying and arm-twisting.

The small, rural, intraprovincial carriers felt that Bill 16 does nothing to protect them. They are having a difficult time surviving right now, and they felt that it could get even worse after 1998. They believe that it is just a matter of time before large American trucking firms will become part of the equation, firms whose costs are much lower in the United States than they are in Canada. The Americans have better tax write-offs, taxation levels, cheaper gasoline, more aggressive marketing. At least that is what the small carriers felt. Canadian players are at a serious disadvantage because of sparser population densities as well.

The small rural carriers felt that there is little they can do to address this serious disadvantage. The larger carriers can squeeze them out, but the larger carriers will not necessarily give the same level of service. A small carrier would do a daily short-line haul, whereas a large carrier might decide to move the freight only once every two or three days. This could seriously hamper the efficiency of a farmer waiting for spare parts, or it could hamper a store or a restaurant that needed fresh produce, fresh food every day.

An Honourable Member: Who wrote this for you?

Mr. Jennissen: I wrote this for myself, thank you. I think the honourable member is detecting some amateurishness from this. [interjection] Well, perhaps. I doubt it, but anyway.

The small carrier was part and parcel—is part of the fabric of the community, whereas the large carrier just puts a depot into town, is in it strictly for the buck, and has only a minor stake in whether or not a small community survives. That was the argument of the small carriers.

We all know of dozens of small prairie communities consisting of one store and half a dozen houses. These communities are not helped by deregulation, by Bill 16. Further, the small rural carriers feel that as the

transportation sector's deregulation and rationalization continues at breakneck pace, the situation becomes so fluid and unpredictable that the number of unscrupulous operators is increasing.

As a spokesman for the rural carriers of Manitoba stated, and I will quote this person: People are taking advantage of the situation. You can expect all kinds of irregularities when there is scrimping, when you are going for the cheapest. People will go around the law. Safety will be compromised. Before we had a regulatory board that kept an eye on things, but now that is not the case, and it splits up the market, and service is hampered—unquote.

The small rural carriers were also angry at what they call T-plated trucks that are hauling freight out of their Winnipeg jurisdiction, according to them, and they are hauling this freight to rural points, Madam Speaker. These trucks would somehow by-pass inspection points and take business away from the small carriers whose licensing and insurance costs were sometimes as much as four times higher than the T-plated trucks.

Another major concern that the small intraprovincial trucking firms had was that their hauling of beer and liquor might be in jeopardy. Since hauling beer and products from the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission forms a large portion of the freight hauled by smaller carriers, they were anxious that the status quo not change, and they felt that breweries or the government might work out back-room deals with large carriers that would effectively remove the smaller carriers from the scene.

Finally, the smaller carriers realized that they were facing enormously difficult times and that many of them might not survive, and requested that I ask the government and the minister that, if some hardworking smaller carriers could no longer survive despite years of dedicated service, the government and the minister might at least consider some form of compensation and retraining for the affected truckers. They felt that, if deregulation was inevitable and the impact of Bill 16 was inevitable, at least some effort should be made to help those who, through no fault of their own, were negatively impacted by Bill 16.

Many of the small intraprovincial truckers were bitter. They felt the positive spin that Liberal and Tory governments put on deregulation is not consistent with what is happening and will continue to happen. The big companies drive out the little companies. Prices are low and cutthroat for a while, but when the bigger companies have finally established their monopoly, prices will soar and the service will be of the impersonal take-it-or-leave-it variety. The large trucking companies have very little stake in rural and northern Manitoba apart from making a buck. The owners of the small rural carriers live in these small towns. They offer daily service in many cases. They are part and parcel of small-town life.

An Honourable Member: Gerard, are you for or against it?

Mr. Jennissen: Against. I will get to it.

I do not know, Madam Speaker, why we have swallowed the notion that bigger is necessarily better, that only the bottom line counts, that it is okay to remove a post office from a small town or to remove the only elevator or to kill the only store or trucking company. It is not okay. The kind of thinking that underpins Bill 16 is the kind of thinking that is destroying the Canada we once knew. It assumes deregulation is not only inevitable but is even desirable. It assumes that Canadians secretly want to be Americans. It is the same kind of thinking that ignores the potential danger of such draconian deregulation measures: the enormous job losses, the inferior service that will inevitably result, the issue of safety, public safety and accountability. It is a ruthless model, an American model, and both governments, federal and provincial, are abdicating their responsibility to govern when they follow that model.

* (1540)

They are confusing their responsibility to the people who elected them with the influence and lobbying of the rich powerbrokers who fund much of their election campaigns. It is high time these governments levelled with the people and stood up for ordinary Manitobans and Canadians. I know the minister and his government will argue that the deregulation measures

proposed in Bill 16 are inevitable, absolutely inevitable. They will argue that the federal government made them do it. The feds made me do it; it is just another version of the devil-made-me-do-it argument.

The Bill 16 deregulation is phased in, but it could have been held off until at least January 1, 1998. By that time, there is a probability, a high probability, that there will be a new government in Ottawa, perhaps one that will take another good look at deregulation. I have no illusions on that score, however. But Bill 16 makes no pretence of even trying to fight deregulation. Ask the small intraprovincial trucker what deregulation has done for him or her or the small community when their business cannot survive.

Ask the prairie farmer what deregulating the grain transportation system has done for him or her. Killing the Crow rate has put more stresses on our road systems and on our farmers. Ask the unemployed jet pilot who is now driving a taxi in Flin Flon what deregulating the air industry has done for him. We used to have five large Canadian airlines; now we have a couple locked in a survival struggle. Ask the CN worker at Transcona what privatizing has done to his job, his family. Ask the people of Churchill what privatizing squabbles about railroads do to their town as well as their railroad.

Ask the trucker whose margin of profit in a deregulated industry is so small that he or she cannot make a living and there is a temptation to cheat and drive longer hours or to skimp on repairs and safety. Again, ask the owner of a small intraprovincial trucking firm who has worked for 20 years at the business and is now being squeezed out. Ask him or her how it feels to see all their work go down the tubes and how it feels to join the welfare lines.

Remember there were 153 intraprovincial trucking companies in Manitoba in 1972, and now we probably have less than 30. How many will there be left by January 1, 1998, when total deregulation takes effect? Perhaps 20, 10, six. How can this possibly be good for Manitoba?

Bill 16 is merely rubber-stamping what Ottawa wants: total abdication of its responsibility for

transportation regulation in this country. It does nothing to protect ordinary citizens. It does not even make a pretence of mildly protesting deregulation, as if there were no connection between job losses on the agenda of the new right whose mistaken belief is that governments exist to serve only the needs of big business and big corporations. In that agenda, governments do not govern; they merely rule to safeguard the special interests of the rich and the powerful. Debts, deficits and deregulation all become smoke screens to attack social programs and the living standards of ordinary Canadians. In that kind of agenda, progress is always measured by a relative standing, a daily report card that allegedly indicates how we stack up against other countries in the ruthlessly competitive global marketplace.

Frankly, Madam Speaker, Canadians, Manitobans are puzzled. Their governments are telling them how well they are doing if they just hang in there and fight the national debt. All will be wonderful, just balance the budget. Just keep right on deregulating until we reach Utopia. Forget the child poverty; forget the lack of housing in parts of northern Manitoba; forget that food banks are our most thriving industry; forget that the country itself is on the verge of a possible split as we face the Quebec referendum.

Bill 16 is an admission that deregulating intraprovincial trucking is fully acceptable to this government and even considered desirable by this government because they are in such a hurry to implement it. They could have waited until 1998. Once we protected the smaller trucking firms, the local truckers in rural areas. No longer so. We used to have requirements imposed to ensure that trucking firms entering the market had suitable financing to operate in Manitoba—no longer so, not under Bill 16.

Once there were existing geographic restrictions and conditions to protect rural and remote areas and give them consistent, fair and reliable access to passenger and freight services at reasonable rates. That is no longer to be the case under Bill 16. The entire transportation system in this country is in an upheaval, and it is not just restricted to small local carriers, although one could argue that they have taken and continue to take the brunt of the attack, but even big

trucking companies, interprovincial trucking companies, are not immune. Winnipeg used to have nine large interprovincial trucking companies headquartered here. There are far fewer now. I do not know the exact number, but far fewer than nine.

Trucking, like the rail industry, is extremely important to this province. Deregulation is costing us a lot of jobs. The Motor Transport Board via Bill 16 is asked to give up significant portions of its regulatory powers. Those powers were there to protect both the trucking industry and the public. The Motor Transport Board will, however, continue to be responsible for monitoring safety of the trucking industry. At least Bill 16 did not remove that responsibility. We have serious concerns about truck safety now. I shudder to think what could happen in the cut-throat environment of total deregulation.

Road Check '95 held on June 20 of this year across the country found that 36.6 percent of Manitoba trucks tested were unsafe and pulled off the road. The Manitoba Trucking Association itself confirmed this in their September issue of Manitoba Highway in an article entitled One in three trucks unsafe. The very size of the new transports and the fact that truckdrivers will be tempted to drive further and longer than 10 hours per day will increase stress and further compromise safety. Big trucks, tired drivers, bad roads, especially in the North, could be a lethal combination. In the deregulated environment, safety will become a primary issue.

Some argue that the province's truck inspection system is haphazard and lax. Others argue that the inspectors tend to be young and inexperienced and nit-picking. All inspectors are burdened with too much paper work and do not have enough on-task time inspecting trucks. Saskatchewan has twice as many inspectors as Manitoba does. Saskatchewan inspectors are not sidelined by Filmon Fridays.

Bill 16 does not address the truck safety concerns arising out of deregulation. Even now, it is a fact that every third truck on the road is unsafe, as I stated before, and that Manitoba has the third worst record in Canada. Deregulation, bad roads, the impact of the

loss of the Crow on our roads, all affect or have the potential to affect truck safety.

Now, the proponents of Bill 16 will undoubtedly flog its merits even if those merits are largely imaginary. They will argue that the cost of shipping commodities will drop, thus benefiting the consumer ultimately. The same arguments were used for air travel deregulation, that it would lower the price. Well, judge for yourself. I still pay over \$600, between \$600 and \$700 to fly to Flin Flon and back from Winnipeg. I pay between \$800 and \$900 to fly from Winnipeg to Lynn Lake and back. Deregulation of the air industry has not done us any favours, and I will not elaborate on the cutbacks to security at northern airports, the cuts to funding of northern airports, the increased cost of shipping goods and food to northern Manitoba.

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

This bill, Bill 16, is ideologically driven. It follows the same path of deregulation of the transportation industry begun under Lloyd Axworthy in the mid-'80s when he was federal transport minister. Axworthy was only bringing to fruition the Mulroney legacy, a legacy that many in this Chamber would rather forget. It has cost this province thousands of jobs. Axworthy's deregulation of the transportation industry was a failure. The deregulation of intraprovincial trucking, as per Bill 16, will head in the same direction. It will cost us jobs. We will see the loss of many small family trucking firms and a few giants will dominate and are already dominating the market.

Currently there is a shortage of truckdrivers in Manitoba, but one effect of this bill will be an increase in out-of-province drivers bringing goods here. The future number of Manitoba jobs may well be compromised.

This Bill 16 represents several steps backwards for the trucking industry, rural and northern Manitoba and will have negative effects upon the safety of our roads and the viability of Manitoba trucking firms, the viability of their future.

Many of the negative effects are already clearly visible in Manitoba and across this country, but this bill, like the balanced budget legislation, is so ideologically driven no amount of hard fact, of reality is likely to sway its proponents. Their selective vision can only see the bill's good points, few as they are, and cannot see the mountain of evidence that clearly shows that deregulation has been a dismal failure in almost every instance.

But because it is publicly correct in some quarters to attribute nonexistent virtues to deregulation because, after all, that is what big business wants, total deregulation, it is assumed that deregulation must be good for all.

* (1550)

It is the old General Bull Moose theory: What is good for me must be good for everyone. Well, this bill and deregulation is not good for everyone. If there are savings for the consumer, they will be short term and marginal, and job security for truckers and overall highway safety will both be placed in jeopardy.

The future of many Manitoba trucking firms is on the line. Bill 16 accurately reflects old-think, laissez faire economics which run counter to the history of this province and this country. We have serious concerns over the long-term implication of this legislation for the trucking industry, for safety and for rural and northern communities.

The minister, in bringing the bill forward for second reading on June 23, 1995, commented on the wide level of consultation that had occurred before the bill was drafted. He stated that other provinces were taking similar actions and all of this was necessary because of what the federal government had done.

The end result of Bill 16 deregulation amendments would facilitate here and across this country and in fact this part of the northern hemisphere the level playing field that will supposedly lead to prosperity for all North Americans.

Some people indeed share that optimism, but I am not one of them. The rural carriers certainly do not

share that optimism. I did speak with a spokesman for the larger carriers, the Manitoba Trucking Association, and this person did indeed support deregulation, and I believe the association does as well.

That spokesman suggested that since deregulation is upon us nationally we may as well get on with the job. He hoped that provinces would deregulate, what he said, in sync. According to that spokesperson, Alberta was never regulated very much in the first place, Manitoba is rapidly deregulating, but Saskatchewan is still holding out and, until the province is forced to deregulate by January 1, 1998, will continue to hold out. That was the feeling I got.

This spokesperson said there had been many casualties among the large interprovincial carriers as well. It was not just restricted to the smaller intraprovincial carriers, it affected the big trucking companies as well.

I had the feeling the member that spoke for the truckers association, that they were resigned to their fate, I guess is what I am trying to say. They just wanted to get on with business, they were tired of fighting deregulation, it was there to stay. They had enough of the uncertainties, enough of the changes, the fluidity, the unpredictability of the transportation industry in the last decade. I guess it was sort of a feeling of, we are almost down and out, but let us give it our best shot; we are not going to fight anymore.

In closing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would point out that there are divided opinions about deregulating the transportation industry and also about this Bill 16. In many ways, of course, it is purely an academic argument because deregulation is descending upon us whether we like it or not. I am not sure if resignation and fatalism, though, are consistent with governing responsibly. We could fight it. Those of us who are sceptical of the level playing field theory, and I am one of those, and those who indeed support the concept will soon discover the further effects of deregulation. Time will tell us who was correct.

If you believe in leanness and meanness at all cost, then you may be proven correct, but, if you believe in a nation-wide transportation system that binds this

country called Canada together, you may not be so cheerful about the outcome of deregulation.

Sections of this country and this province will suffer in a user-pay transportation system. Transportation systems in highly populated areas may do quite well in a deregulated environment, but this is not eastern Canada. I do not know for sure, but is that what we want, a regionalized, balkanized two-tier system in transportation as well as in health and education? How are the smaller airports to survive in northern Manitoba? What will be the fate of the Churchill railroad in this privatized, deregulated world? How is service to Canadians in the North and elsewhere enhanced by privatizing the Port of Churchill and other ports?

We will have the full answer to these questions soon, and I believe there will be a lot of disgruntled and angry Canadians when we do get those answers. Bill 16 neatly reflects what the new robber barons in Ottawa want it to reflect. It throws wide open the intraprovincial trucking industry to the marketplace. The most established, the most ruthless, the most powerful, the meanest will win. Jobs will be lost. Service and safety will be jeopardized, and the small carriers and the small communities will suffer the consequences.

Those least able to protect themselves will be the first to be hurt. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we cannot support this bill. We are, however, prepared to pass this bill to the committee stage, and we hope that the public will have some large input to Bill 16.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to rise and speak on Bill 16, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act. I listened very closely to the comments by my colleague the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) in the arguments that he put forward about the—[interjection] I am not quite sure why the former minister of Transportation raises this issue, but I only have a few comments that I would like to put on the record and to reiterate what I said a moment ago. I listened very closely to the comments of my colleague the member for Flin Flon when he referenced several

issues that are facing the transportation industry in this province, not only dealing with intraprovincial trucking but also other areas such as airlines and railways and the impact that deregulation has had, in particular, on those segments of the transportation industry as well.

The member for Flin Flon referenced that there has been a significant loss of jobs. We are seeing now that it seems to be a race to the bottom between the carriers that are left within the marketplace, the race to the bottom trying to—[interjection] Well, the former minister of Transportation references 350 truckdrivers. I guess one needs to ask the question, why there has been a significant increase in people that are dropping out of the labour force from the trucking industry. That is the question that needs to be asked. I think that one has not been answered to this point in time, and I know the former minister of Transport did not deal with it during his time in government and maybe should have been dealing with it at that time.

I know there is a need, Mr. Deputy Speaker, right now in the marketplace for truckdrivers and that there is some money coming from this government to specific interests within this province to train those drivers to fill the industry needs. I do not have a problem with that. I hope that the industry is able to meet the needs and employ Manitobans that are currently on the unemployment rolls. That seems to be a reasonable position to take for what may or may not be a minimal investment on the part of government.

While I do not know for sure, I hope that the industry players themselves are making some financial investment or contribution to this training. I hope that is the case, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The former minister of Transport seems to reference that that is the case, and I hope that the industry needs will be met shortly.

This particular piece of legislation, as the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) has referenced, is going to have—[interjection] The pinch hitter is here.

Bill 16 is going to have some impact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the intraprovincial carriers within the province of Manitoba. I know I had the chance to talk with some of the intraprovincial carriers association, oh, about a year and a half, two years ago. They were

quite concerned at the time that the government was going to be moving forward with deregulation of the industry for those particular carriers and it was going to be impacting upon them in a negative way and could quite possibly put them out of business. Now, I hope that was not the intent of the government at the time.

I thought that they were interested in having competition in the marketplace, or at least that is what they tell us on the face of the issues as they come forward. Perhaps that is not their intent. Maybe they do not want to have wide open competition. Maybe that is just a front for them and their party. But anyway, the deregulation, as the industry members have said to us, was going to have some impact on the rural carriers. Our concern here is that those rural carriers may not have been widely enough consulted on the government's intention with respect to deregulation.

Now, the member for Flin Flon referenced the fact that the government is still going to continue with the safety inspections but, indeed, is going to take away the opportunity of the government, through the Motor Transport Board, to limit or to restrict those wishing to enter the trucking transport market in that, before, there used to be a requirement to have a demonstrated need in the marketplace before a carrier would be given authorities to operate as an intraprovincial trucking business. Now, I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what is going to take place is there only needs to be a demonstrated financial ability and that there was supposed to be safe, reliable equipment on the roads, which is a difference between what it was before, that you would have to demonstrate a need in various parts of the province regionalized, that those communities would need it, so there is a significant change.

There is going to be pressure on small carriers who, as the member for Flin Flon has referenced, have been an integral part of many of the communities, probably for several generations, providing probably the lifeline to outside communities and that there is a potential for these jobs to be lost. So I hope the minister takes those comments into consideration, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when this committee goes to committee hearings, and I hope members of the public come out and comment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading of Bill 16, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Code de la route. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Committee Changes

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): I move, seconded by the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments be amended as follows: The member for Charleswood (Mr. Ernst) for the member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon); the member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey) for the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner); the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey) for the member for Morris (Mr. Pitura); and

I move, seconded by the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs be amended as follows: the member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh) for the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer); the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) for the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe).

Motions agreed to.

* (1600)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hour being 4 p.m., time for the first private members' hour.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Res. 33—Rural Physicians

Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak),

WHEREAS many communities in rural and northern Manitoba have lost their doctors and are now faced with a situation where they have no physician practising in the community; and

WHEREAS medicare cuts and the lure of American jobs are making the situation even worse, causing some experts to call the shortage of rural doctors a looming crisis; and

WHEREAS hospitals in some communities are being forced to close because they have no doctor; and

WHEREAS smaller communities often have a difficult time attracting physicians because they do not have the financial resources; and

WHEREAS some communities are finding that their recruitment efforts have been hampered due to recent changes in licensing requirements and the fact that local Manitoba graduates are not encouraged or required to seek employment in rural communities as part of their training; and

WHEREAS the loss of physicians in rural areas has a serious negative impact on the provision of quality health services to all Manitobans, regardless of where they live.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Health to bring together physicians, representatives of municipal governments and rural hospital administrators to discuss reasonable measures, including approval of the conditional registry, to attract and retain physicians in rural and northern communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly urge the minister to consider taking immediate action to deal with the crisis facing rural and northern communities which have lost their doctors.

Motion presented.

Mr. Clif Evans: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it certainly is a pleasure to bring this resolution to the Assembly this afternoon. I know that all members on our side and

opposite will certainly agree with the situation that there is a crisis out there in rural and northern communities when it comes to the availability of doctors at our hospitals and community health centres.

Over the past year or two, we have brought to the attention of the now-Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) the fact that the crisis is out there and that the communities are seeking whatever possible way to bring doctors to rural Manitoba and rural health centres. Over the past few years, many communities have lost rural doctors, for whatever reason that we have, to the point where we have had to shut down, literally shut down, emergency times and hospital beds due to the lack of physicians and doctors in rural communities.

I know that in communities not only in my constituency but in northern and rural Manitoba the situation has become the same and has become, as we have said, a crisis. The fact that rural doctors in rural Manitoba have left without the opportunity for rural communities to bring the doctors out, come out to practise in the local hospitals, health centres, has been a situation and a problem that we fear will not be resolved, will not be satisfied, will not be provided for these communities to be able to get doctors to come and practise in rural Manitoba.

Over the past six months hospitals have been put in a situation that they have been closing on weekends. They have been closing at times that are vital to an area. We are talking about hospitals having to close that serve not only the small community that they are in but the area and the region around them.

These hospitals have been placed in situations that have put the onus on if there are any doctors left. If a hospital has been providing the community with three doctors, they have been put into a situation where one or two doctors have had to carry the load seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

We are seeing burnout in doctors in rural Manitoba. We are seeing signs having to be put on emergency doors and hospital doors that a doctor is not available in, let us say, Arborg, and has to go to Gimli for a doctor. Mr. Deputy Speaker, someone who lives two

miles from Arborg needs a doctor on a weekend, some sort of an emergency has occurred for either themselves or their family, has to drive another 40 minutes to see a doctor.

The situation that we have—and we have asked the minister to intervene—is that we are, unfortunately, seeing people suffering longer, seeing people not get the immediate attention that is needed for their situation, their medical problem.

Unfortunately, we have seen some deaths because of a medical situation that has occurred near a hospital that has no doctor in place. A hospital that needs at least two or three doctors to survive within the service side of hospitals for the community cannot do it. There are no doctors at all. So why can we not as a province, as a government, be able to take the kind of action that we need immediately? We have brought this to the attention of the now-minister. We have requested his assistance in this.

Now, we know that certain things have been done. I say that when the ministers made the announcements about some of the things that they are going to do to try and assist getting doctors out to rural Manitoba, I think the point mostly that we hear is the fact that it has been too long without a doctor now and that we are going to have to wait to see exactly what can be done and how it can be done with the co-operation of everyone to get doctors to rural Manitoba.

We need that support. Yes, we need support. Yes, we need co-operation of hospital administrators. We need co-operation of the local communities. We need co-operation of the Manitoba Medical Association, the doctors in this province. Yes, we need all those things, but the point that we are trying to make now, that I am trying to make today is the fact that the action not only should have been taken quite awhile ago, but the action itself should be done now, some sort of an interim situation being able to provide doctors to have the ability to go to rural areas now.

* (1610)

I say that in support, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of even a resolution by UMM, and I will quote from it. The

UMM appreciates that the province has put incentives in place but that these measures appear to be insufficient, and the UMM encourages the province to take further steps to resolve this issue, to resolve this issue that has now gone beyond the realm of being able to provide people with any kind of service, not only a cutback of the services because of three doctors practising in a local community going down to two, but where the situation that we have in certain areas there are no doctors; there are hospitals, there are nursing community-based stations, but there are no doctors. We are taking away something that is vital to rural communities, that is vital to the people of rural Manitoba. I know that members opposite and rural members opposite who come from rural communities can support and will support this resolution.

This resolution does not say that it is specifically this minister's fault or specifically this government's. It is a situation that has been put in place, that has happened over the past number of years, that has made rural doctors unavailable to rural Manitobans, made that service unavailable. [interjection] Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there have been comments from different areas, comments from different people who say the minister has done this and done that and blamed the minister or the government, but I think the situation that has come into play should be and should have been addressed much sooner by this minister and by this government, much sooner.

You know, we have a situation that I am sure, over the period of time, doctors come and go. I want to comment on and compliment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, certain doctors that I know in rural Manitoba, in my community, for example, who have been in their community, who have come to our communities, and have stayed for 10 or more years, some 20.

So I think, if these doctors have made themselves available and have come to the rural communities and have stayed this long, I think and I feel that we should do whatever we can to expedite the situation and expedite providing a basis so that doctors can go to rural Manitoba today.

Fifty to 60 less doctors are in areas of rural Manitoba. That many, I am sure, can be appreciated by members

here that something has to be done and done quickly. We see letters. We see requests of this minister to help do away with that very grave problem, and that is the shortage of doctors. We need the minister's lead in providing some sort of consensus and some sort of a decision when it comes to the registry, when it comes to who can and will be available for rural Manitoba hospitals. We need the minister's support and lead role.

Now, the minister may get up and say, well, we have done this and we have done that and we have provided support programs and we have provided a committee, but we have not heard anything back from what this minister has done since July and since May of this year. We have not heard anything. The problems lies with the fact that we now need the doctors. We do not have the time nor availability to wait for a report to come back, to wait for recommendations to come back.

I think that all members here should be encouraging the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) and supporting this resolution in saying to the minister, we need to resolve the problem, and we need to resolve it yesterday, not tomorrow. We need to get doctors to come out to rural Manitoba to have the need and the reason to come out to rural Manitoba. Now, the solution could come from any different ways, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

An Honourable Member: What is your solution, Clif?

Mr. Clif Evans: My solution, I feel, is that it is important to be able to give a basis for doctors and find the best solution for them to be able to come to the community and be able to provide the hospitals with resources to be able to get the doctors to come out to rural Manitoba. [interjection]

The Minister of Highways (Mr. Findlay) says, now it is dollars. Well, not necessarily is it always the dollars, but it does help when you do have a certain amount of resource and support in providing the resources for the community hospitals to be able to attract the doctors.

When we asked the minister to at least assist the Arborg General Hospital with the situation that was in

Arborg, where they had to close down on weekends and people had to go to other hospitals, we asked the minister then would he support the community hospital in providing a basis, providing resources so that doctors from other centres where there are more doctors than what the Arborg community has, to get these doctors to take over on off days when they had to shut down, where they had to take time off? Nothing happened.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a resolution looking for that support, looking for that solution and assisting the people of rural Manitoba, the community hospitals in rural Manitoba in getting doctors out there as quickly as possible, providing some basis for the Manitoba Medical Association, for government to work with it, deal with it, get people out there, get doctors out there, and providing something that we can keep the doctors once they are out there, keep them in the local communities and not have to go through the crisis that we are and have been going through in the past while.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I close hoping that we will get that further encouragement from this minister and also understanding that the crisis is there. We need support. We need our doctors in rural Manitoba. Thank you.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased today to rise and take part in the discussion on the resolution brought before us by the honourable member for Interlake who, quite rightly, raises an issue of importance to underserved areas right across our country. It certainly is not exclusive to Manitoba that we have this problem and it certainly is not exclusive to the present time.

We have for many years had problems at one time or another in one community or another maintaining the services of physicians in rural and northern Manitoba particularly, usually referred to as underserved areas when we do have a doctor shortage. There are even times when in the city of Winnipeg or the city of Brandon there are shortages of certain specialists in medicine which arise from time to time.

It does not help to characterize every single problem that comes before this Legislature as a crisis. After a little while, honourable members opposite when they

refer to every single thing, almost every day—I think if you checked Hansard you would find a reference to a crisis every single day that the House has been sitting since this government came to office—where the word "crisis" is not used by honourable members in the New Democratic Party. It tends to give the word "crisis" a new meaning, one that the word was never defined for in the first place.

So you have to take honourable members opposite and their comments with a grain of salt sometimes. I take a pretty good dose of it every single day, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to make sure I am appropriately inoculated from the attacks of honourable members opposite.

But in this particular case the honourable member is quite right and proper to raise the issue of rural physician resources, rural and northern physician resources, because we do have that problem in Manitoba, and not to acknowledge it would be a problem in itself. So I just say that it is problem shared by all jurisdictions where there are rural and remote areas. So we have taken steps to address that issue.

* (1620)

But I see in the honourable member's resolution, he says in one case, WHEREAS hospitals in some communities are being forced to close because they have no doctor. I was listening to most of the honourable member's comments, I think, and I do not remember him saying which communities had lost their hospitals in Manitoba, as his resolution suggests, due to a physician shortage. I wonder if maybe the honourable member will avail himself of an opportunity to give us a list of those communities that have lost their hospitals because of this particular physician shortage, because it says right here very clearly, WHEREAS hospitals in some communities are being forced to close because they have no doctor.

I just want the honourable member to put on the record—maybe he can table a list for us of the communities that have lost their hospitals because of a lack of physician resources. I did not hear the honourable member mention which communities those were, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I wonder, was he thinking

maybe of the province of Saskatchewan where under their New Democratic Party government they have closed 52 hospitals. Fifty-two in Saskatchewan, and yet the honourable member cannot name one here in Manitoba, yet he does not mind putting in his resolution that hospitals in some communities are being forced to close because they have no doctors. That is somewhat outrageous when you think of it in its real implications, when the province right next to us, to the west, which has had an NDP government now for four and a half or so years, has closed 52 rural hospitals.

An Honourable Member: Fifty-two.

Mr. McCrae: Fifty-two of them.

An Honourable Member: What about B.C., what did they do?

Mr. McCrae: Well, I have lost count on the number of rural hospitals closed in NDP B.C., so I will not get into that.

It does not help garner support from me and my colleagues for an opposition resolution for a real problem that exists when you put in there that all these communities are being forced to close their hospitals because they have no doctor, and the honourable member cannot name one. It kind of stretches one's credibility I suggest, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the point where there is not any left.

An Honourable Member: But, you know, Clif is not bad.

Mr. McCrae: As my honourable colleague, the honourable Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), suggests, the member for Interlake is not all that bad. We all know that. We find that he presents—[interjection] For the most part he is a gentleman, but as the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) points out, it is the socialism in him that makes him say those dastardly things. If it is not in him, we know it is in his seatmates, and that may be where some of the problem arises.

Well, the honourable member should know, quite seriously, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about the potential for

that conditional register. I will talk very briefly about the conditional register and the positive effect we hope it will have, is already having, I should suggest too, and will have in the future, but I do not put the conditional register across as some kind of panacea. Indeed, I do not think there is such a thing when it comes to rural physician resources and northern physician resources because we have learned that what might work in one community might not in any number of other communities. So, over the years, if you look back, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you will see a collection of responses to this particular problem that have been tried here, there and everywhere, and have worked here, there and everywhere, but not in all the places where problems have developed.

We have to keep on top of this problem, and all of this against the backdrop of very, very aggressive recruiting activities on the part of the United States of America. In the United States, they have developed their health care system based on a large number of specialists operating in the United States and a much smaller ratio of family practitioners than what we have here in Canada.

In fact, if looked at on the basis of need, we have more family practitioners practising in the province of Manitoba than we need. That does not mean that they are properly distributed because they are not, but we do have operating, in the city of Winnipeg, city of Brandon and a few other places, more family practitioners than population, health outcomes, requirements would dictate. We wish they were better distributed, and, through things like the conditional register, we are doing that, but we are doing that against this pressure being exerted on us by speeded-up recruitment exercises going on by various jurisdictions in the United States.

I guess members in the New Democratic Party are sometimes critical because we will see a doctor go to the United States, but they are not there to remind us when doctors return. Right in my own community of Brandon, a couple of years back, a noted radiologist left—and that was the subject of quite a lot of public comment—for the United States. Well, what the newspapers do not say today is that he is back, and he is practising radiology in the city of Brandon. What we

do not read about quite so much is that the head of our cardiac program in the province of Manitoba, Dr. Bill Lindsay, is another who has returned to Manitoba, to Winnipeg, from, in his case, Minneapolis. We are glad to have him, and we are glad to have any returnees who are back to assist their fellow Canadians to healthy lives.

I want to tell the honourable member that the conditional register that has been mentioned will provide rural and northern communities with greater opportunities to recruit both Canadian and foreign medical graduates who do not meet all the current requirements for licensure but have been deemed adequately competent by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba. We must not forget that while we all want to have physicians in our communities, we also want physicians who are properly qualified to practise medicine and to provide service to Manitobans.

The conditional register will provide a route to full licence for these physicians and will allow communities to retain the services of these physicians for at least five years as opposed to the current one year under the temporary registration provision. That is the significant part about this because, as the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) and others will know, you have to do more than simply introduce somebody to one of our communities in rural Manitoba. You have to be there a little while to fully appreciate the quality of life that can be sustained in our rural communities, the quality of the people who live in those communities, the sense of community spirit, the sense of caring for each other.

Once a physician finds himself or herself in that sort of environment, not for six months or not for a year but for five years, the likelihood of keeping them around and providing services for many years is greatly enhanced. That is the strength of the conditional register. I would not want to blame the honourable member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans) if he expressed a little bit of doubt here and there about this, that or the other thing because nothing is a fantasy, as I said. But this is a very good reason for us to be hopeful about not only attracting but also keeping physicians in rural Manitoba and underserved areas of Manitoba.

* (1630)

Provisions for the conditional register have been prepared with a view to striking the proper balance between improving the supply of physicians available for practice in rural and northern Manitoba without compromising the quality of care that would be made available to residents of those areas.

That statement needs to be taken in the light of other things that are happening, the rural physician program that we have developed and which is working well. When taking into account the telecommunications links that we now make available, technology has improved so much that we can share vital information almost on an absolutely simultaneous basis now.

I was over at the University of Manitoba just last week having a look at the new video links between, in this case, Health Sciences Centre and Dauphin General Hospital, which was the first of a number of sites that are going to be involved in this. The clarity of the message, the clarity of the picture on the screen and the capabilities of that sort of conferencing for medical and other purposes is absolutely mind boggling.

It is wonderful that we have these advances in technology in the '90s now that we can share and thus enhance the ability of rural physicians to access the best possible consultative arrangements that technology now makes possible. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is a definite advance and a definite improvement for rural practice.

You see, it is not always just money. I know that honourable members opposite would just say, well, spend more money and you can solve all the problems in the world, as they have done. You know, we could probably spend more money if we were not saddled with \$600-million worth of interest payments we have to pay because of honourable members opposite and their profligacy during the '80s.

If it were not for that, we would have a far better sense of flexibility as we deal with our responsibilities in government today, but, alas, we cannot cry about that forever as honourable members would be happy to tell us; you know, that was then, this is now. It is a

problem they created for us, and the magnitude of the problem ought not to go unnoticed.

I mean, \$600 million, do you realize what you can buy with \$600 million? You could have two more Health Sciences Centres operating in this province every year and then still have money left over to build a few more personal care homes, for example, like the honourable member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans) was asking me about earlier today. That is what \$600 million is all about.

These people on the opposite side of this House, they just grin as if they were not responsible for such a dastardly requirement for us to pay all those interest charges, thanks to them and their profligacy. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is absolutely a horrible legacy for them to be leaving to their children and grandchildren. You know, they sit there smugly smiling. Their own grandchildren are in the same boat as mine, and they are going to have the same kinds of problems imposed on them by the people opposite.

Nonetheless, I thank the member for his interest. I wish he would address the question about the closing of hospitals in Manitoba, though, because I did not hear it yet.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister's time has expired.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to put a few comments on the record regarding this important issue that my colleague from the Interlake has brought forward, namely the lack of doctors in rural Manitoba.

It is indeed a very serious problem, and the minister indicated that there have been no hospitals in rural Manitoba that have been closed, but there have been hospitals that have had a real shortage and have been operating at times without a doctor.

In fact, I believe, in the eastern part of the province, the emergency wards have had to be closed, and garbage bags were put over the signs to ensure that people would not go to those hospitals because there was no emergency service there. So let the minister not

say that there is not a problem with doctors not being available to provide services in rural Manitoba.

I guess we have to look at what is the cause of the problem and how it should be addressed. I think that we should be doing much more to promote rural Manitoba and the North as well. It is a very beautiful part of the country, and the members from across the way who are from rural Manitoba, I am sure, cannot disagree with that, but we have to do much more. When we are doing our tourism advertising in the States, we should be doing more. When we are going to shows to try to attract professionals to this province, we should be telling them about the riches of rural and northern Manitoba, and that is one way that we could encourage people to perhaps come.

I think that one of the problems in having doctors stay in rural Manitoba is the fact that, in many cases, these are very small hospitals, a small number of doctors. As a result of some cutbacks, there are not as many services that are being provided in those hospitals, and doctors do not have the ability to practise with the skills that they have. Certainly, they do not have the communication with other doctors, and that is, in many cases, discouraging. The minister talked about the telecommunication that is available now, and certainly that will be a benefit for doctors. We hope that it will help to keep them in rural Manitoba.

I also think that we have to do more to get students from rural Manitoba to enter into the doctor profession in rural and northern Manitoba. I know just last week there was a banquet honouring aboriginal students, and one student who was in that program being honoured was hoping to get into the medical profession. Her hopes were to go back to her community and serve that community as a doctor. But, for people in the North or rural Manitoba to participate, they have to also have some supports from this government. We have seen, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that cutbacks to programs such as Access have had a negative effect on those people who want to pursue their post-secondary education.

If this government is at all committed to increasing the number of physicians in rural Manitoba, which I hope they are, considering the number of people from rural Manitoba who are on that side of the House, I

think they have to make every effort possible to ensure that we get more people from the North and in rural Manitoba into the programs and that we offer them the support and encouragement that they need, that they have the support that they need to complete their education and then go back to their communities. It is a known fact that a very high number of students who come out from the North or rural Manitoba to get a medical degree quite often go back to their own communities, and that is very important.

I think one of the good programs that we do have is the training program, the intern program that is now in Dauphin and I would like to see expanded to other hospitals, where doctors, instead of taking all of their intern program in Winnipeg or in one of the teaching hospitals go to the smaller hospitals and get exposure to that kind of practice.

Talking to people in Dauphin, they have said that that has resulted in people who took the training, took their internship, many of them staying in smaller centres. I know in Dauphin there is one doctor in particular who has decided to stay, a very highly qualified doctor, and it will be of benefit to the people of that community to have them stay.

In discussions with young doctors, we hear many of them say that they are quite prepared to work on a salary rather than fee-for-service and that would be one of the things that they would like to see. I think this government should look at that possibility. I think there is a good example in southern Manitoba, and the name of the community escapes me at the moment, where they do have a hospital and a community clinic where the doctors are all on salary rather than fee-for-service, and it is quite successful. That is another option that the government should be looking at as to how they can get more doctors to stay and provide services in rural Manitoba.

* (1640)

Certainly the cutbacks that we have seen by the federal government are going to be passed on to the smaller hospitals and we are going to see reduced services again because this government again is passing it off onto the local administration and telling them that

they have to make the cuts. If we see programs cut, the number of services that can be provided reduced, then it will again make it more difficult for doctors to continue to practise in those areas.

The minister talked about what were some of the other solutions. I wonder whether the minister has ever considered restricting the number of billing numbers for doctors? I compare doctors to teachers. They both get an education, but a teacher has to go out and find a school and, whether it is in northern Manitoba, rural Manitoba, urban, wherever, or outside the province, they have to find a school to teach at before they can start to practise, but doctors, on graduation, can apply for a billing number and set up a practice wherever they want. We know that there are a disproportionate number of doctors in urban centres versus rural centres, and I really believe that that is an issue that has to be addressed, how we can have a better distribution of doctors throughout the province.

People in rural Manitoba require services at the same level as people in urban centres. I would look for the government to do a better distribution of the doctors than we have now. But certainly, if we are not going to get doctors out to rural Manitoba, we have to look at alternatives, and we have to look more at preventative medicine and providing services to keep people healthier so that they do not need the services of a doctor all the time.

We have nurse practitioners in northern communities. I really believe that we should be expanding that service. We should be having more nurse practitioners throughout the province, in rural communities, in urban centres. That would certainly help. But we have to also look at how we can keep our population healthier.

I think about the one service that I see as a preventative service is certainly the rural stress line, a very cheap service in comparison to other services that are provided but one that could work and has been working as a preventative service and in the long run will save the government lots of money. I think the other one is the rural dental program. Services that keep children healthier instead of having them get to the point where they have to end up going to the doctor.

This government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, blames the NDP for spending money, but this government has not been very proactive in addressing preventative health care. Those are the issues that are really important. We have to start looking at keeping our people healthier.

Yes, we need doctors in rural Manitoba. We will always need doctors. It is unfortunate that the proportion of doctors between urban and rural centres has decreased to the point that it has. I urge the government to take steps to get more doctors to rural Manitoba, get more people from rural Manitoba into the health care system so that they can go back to their communities. But I urge this government to also start taking action on preventative health to ensure that our population is healthy, because a healthy population is a population that in the end saves the whole medical system, health care system, a lot of money. That is what has to be promoted as well as encouraging more doctors.

Also, this government has to look at alternatives on how we can address those areas where there are no doctors, because there are certain areas where we will not get a doctor into, and we have to look at alternatives. I would really hope—[interjection] I am really surprised that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) would make so light of the rural stress line, which is supported by the Keystone Agricultural Producers, the Women's Institute, the National Farmers Union and many, many other people in rural Manitoba. The Minister of Agriculture seems to make light of that issue, which is a very good preventative service. I would hope that that comment that we heard from him is not a feeling from his government that will result in lack of support for the line.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with respect to doctors, certainly there is much more that this government can be doing. They should be encouraging more people from rural and northern Manitoba. They should be promoting, offering the financial support that those people from those communities need. We do not only need children of rich parents to become doctors; we need people from all areas. The action that this government has taken has restricted many people from

entering university and getting the education that would be beneficial to their communities.

I hope that this government will look at those things, get more people from rural Manitoba, but now address the urgent problem that my colleague has put forward in this resolution in the short term, that we do get doctors to all communities that have hospital facilities so that they will not have to shut down their emergency wards at night as we saw in eastern Manitoba this year, so that we do not run the risk of some hospitals being very close to closing, as we saw in the Parkland. There was one hospital, I believe, Grandview or Gilbert Plains, that was very close to closing because there was a doctor shortage.

We have to be sure that in the hospitals that these doctors are practising in, there is the necessary equipment, and the doctors can provide the service, they have the ability to communicate with other doctors. That is not happening under this government.

Certainly, we will hope that this government will let this resolution pass because it is a good resolution, and it addresses a concern that is very important to rural Manitobans. I look forward to hearing this government put forward their support for it. Thank you.

Mr. Frank Pitura (Morris): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would just like to put a few points down in regard to this resolution on the record. I noted that in the resolution the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) corrected the WHEREAS that some hospitals are being forced to close and admitted that under this government no hospitals have been forced to close.

So that was very nice to hear that. Also, I think that in the last two RESOLVEDS of this resolution, in fact, in regard to this resolution, our government has indeed started to act on both of their RESOLVEDS. But I would like to spend a bit more time just doing the background on the RESOLVEDS to prove and show where we are taking some action.

During the spring election campaign—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the member across the way said that I said no hospitals were closed. What I did say was that because of a shortage of doctors, emergency wards in rural Manitoba did have to close. That was my comment.

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

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Morris, to continue.

Mr. Pitura: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would just like to start out by telling you when we were in the election campaign this spring talking to some doctors on the door-to-door visits, doctors at that time had concerns. They had concerns about the fact that they were not getting out to rural Manitoba, were not being enticed to get out to rural Manitoba. They did not know of any program that was going to be put in place to get them out to Manitoba.

* (1650)

So I am happy to hear and happy to see that the regulation which provides for the establishment of a conditional register was approved and became effective July 31 of this year, and that this conditional register provides rural and northern communities with greater opportunity to recruit both Canadian and foreign medical graduates who do not meet all the requirements for licensure at the present time but have been deemed adequately competent by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba. This applies to graduates who are approved from the Faculty of Medicine in Canada, U.S.A., Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Ireland and the U.K.

So it does permit doctors from other countries to enter Manitoba who do not have the full licensing requirements to go into a contractual arrangement. They have to show that they are going to be out in the rural area or have a contract with the rural area for five

years, and thereby they can then go through and get their examinations of passing for either the part one or part two of the qualifying exam. So from that standpoint, the situation of addressing the location or getting doctors to locate in rural Manitoba is being addressed. They are starting to move into rural Manitoba. The program is beginning to work. [interjection] I will give the honourable member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans) an example in a couple of minutes of an area that does work.

This conditional register, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will provide Canadian and some foreign medical graduates the requirements with a route to receiving a full-time medical licence. So with these amendments also, northern and rural communities will now be able to recruit physicians with the assurance of at least a five-year term. Physicians applying for this conditional registration will be required to obtain a certificate from the Minister of Health attesting that their services are required in a specific geographic area or practice setting for a minimum of five years. They will be allowed to practise medicine under the supervision of a licensed medical practitioner in that prescribed area while preparing for and writing the qualifying examinations of the Medical Council of Canada.

I would like to share with the members opposite how doctors are at a shortage in Manitoba, and government is being asked to bring about a program that will bring doctors out to rural Manitoba. The thing that happens here is that governments cannot do it without the communities wanting to get involved.

I would like to share with you a situation that occurred out in the community in my constituency in the town of Carman. Carman was just like any other rural town. It is medium-sized, about 3,500 people. They were down to one surgeon and one family physician. Ordinarily, Carman has four doctors that they can have there full time. So what happened with the town of Carman was, it said, well, we cannot let this situation go on any longer. We have to do something about it. They put together a steering committee and devised a strategy of their own. It recognized from the outset that competition was formidable, about doctor-short communities and, above all, dazzling offers from medical groups in the United

States. They knew that it was very difficult to compete but they decided that as a group within a community, within the town of Carman, that they could address the issue and recruit doctors.

The overall strategy was based on three fundamental factors, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The recruiting drive had to be a unified, community-wide effort that involved Carman's surrounding villages and rural municipalities, and a high level of open communications had to be maintained. They did this. They brought together not only the local doctor from Carman, but they also brought in the other community leaders as well, the economic development officer, the mayor, members of the Town Council, members of the rural municipal council and surrounding communities to participate in this recruitment program.

The second thing they had was that the recruiters should be able to offer prospects, a competitive income package in terms of competing with Manitoba. It had to be flexible to meet special circumstances.

The third thing they decided to do was that the community at large had to undertake building or renovating the existing medical clinic, because doctors operate out of the medical clinic. This is their home away from home. You have to give them decent facilities to operate in. The thing is that the community could afford to do the medical clinic because the doctors in turn would rent that medical clinic back from the community, so thereby they would recover their cost over time.

With that all agreed to, Carman started advertising, but when doctors responded to their requests in terms of the recruitment through the papers, when doctors came to visit Carman, they made sure that they not only saw the medical facilities that were present at Carman, they also took them around to the town, showed them the schools, showed them the recreation centre, showed them the golf course, the curling club, and told them all about the great things that Carman had to offer in terms of the community lifestyle and the things that they were very interested in for themselves and for their families.

Especially if they have young children, they want to know what kind of recreation programs their children

can participate in. They want to know what kind of recreation programs they can participate in, because often doctors are on call and they have to be close enough to the medical facility. Carman gave them that, showed them that, so when they came and had a look, they were very happy with what they saw. In fact they have recruited one doctor from Minneapolis who moved to Minneapolis and now is moving back home.

When the good prospects were uncovered, they contacted them personally, and the prospect was invited to Carman. They paid their expenses—that is another key thing—to travel back and forth to Carman, and they were given a very hospitable reception by community leaders. They also showed them the personal care home near the hospital, and Carman has a very impressive golf course and curling club, which they are very proud of, but the key element in this story, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the teamwork by the community and the medical staff in the medical centre to go out and recruit a physician. The people of the community of Carman were so sure—

An Honourable Member: Took responsibility.

Mr. Pitura: Yes, they took responsibility, but they were so sure that once a doctor showed up in their community, that once they stayed there for at least four seasons of the year, they would probably be there for a long time to come, because it was a community that they loved and enjoyed to be in.

Doctors there in Carman would enjoy the working conditions that they had. Because there was a group of doctors now working, they would be able to cover for each other and so on, so they would have their leisure time. They would have their recreational activities. They would have their opportunities. They could do the walking program, curling, golfing, skiing or snowmobiling program, or cross-country skiing.

They also had the educational opportunities there for their children. The children could walk to the schools by themselves. They would not have to be driven to school, and that is so important. A feature of a small community in rural Manitoba is the safety of the children—this is true in most rural communities—and the

many organizations and youth groups that were available for doctors with young families.

The doctors could participate not only in the areas of the medical area, but they could also take enjoyment in participating on a recreation board or on a seniors board or any number of organizations that they could participate in, they were also there as well.

An Honourable Member: The PC association.

Mr. Pitura: The PC Association, as my honourable colleague from Lakeside (Mr. Enns) has indicated. Things like this they could participate in. Their children could participate in programs such as 4-H, church youth groups or even other local groups that were there for the youth in that town. They could feel a love and belonging to the community.

But the community went out and saw the doctors, attracted the doctors and gave them the necessary, you could call it, marketing shot of what the community was like, but made them feel at home. The bottom line is that it was an all-community effort.

We can talk here about the crisis and shortage of doctors throughout Manitoba, but the communities that are in these crises have also got to do some action and re-establishing themselves, determining what their weaknesses and strengths are in their community to be able to go out and recruit the necessary physicians for their community.

* (1700)

In summary, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with the conditional register, and if the communities can put them together with strategies like Carman, I think that any communities, and I would entertain that any rural member in this House if they would like to, can approach the community of Carman, and they would be glad to sit down with them and tell them what approach they went through to recruit rural physicians.

But, if we take strategies as the Town of Carman developed, we would have a better chance at addressing the acute shortage of doctors in some areas

of Manitoba, and this situation would not be as serious as it once was.

Therefore, we have addressed the concerns in the resolution in terms of the conditional registry which it promotes and asks us to do. We also have addressed the prospect of taking immediate action because that has been done with that conditional approval in July of this year.

In conclusion, I would like to leave with you the concluding paragraph in the Manitoba Health annual report for '94-95. It talks about the quality health for Manitobans. It says in the Conclusion: "The progress achieved to date in implementing 'Quality Health for Manitobans—the Action Plan' is one important step in achieving better health services and better actual health for Manitobans. And in the next few months . . . and in the years to come . . . the on-going partnership for health system renewal will see further progress.

"But the vision and the challenge remain. Evidence from the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation and from other sources points to the need for further action on a broad front to address the factors influencing the health of Manitobans which lie outside the health care system . . . factors such as the environment, adequate housing and jobs.

"In a very real sense the future health of Manitoba depends on the continued prosperity of the province. We all share the goal of healthy communities everywhere in Manitoba. In the months and years to come, achieving that goal will be our greatest challenge. The progress achieved to date by the partnership for quality health demonstrates that we can succeed." Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hour being 5:02 p.m., time for the second private members' hour. When this matter is again before the House, the matter will remain standing.

Res. 34—Improving Rural Child Care

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Monsieur le vice-président, il me fait plaisir de proposer, appuyé par le

député de The Maples (Mr. Kowalski), l'amélioration des services de garderie en milieu rural.

Attendu:

qu'il est essentiel d'améliorer l'accessibilité et la qualité des services de garderie pour éliminer la pauvreté chez les enfants;

que de plus en plus d'exploitants agricoles consacrent un nombre croissant d'heures à un travail à l'extérieur de la ferme;

qu'un bon nombre de fermières doivent s'occuper de leurs enfants en plus de travailler à l'extérieur de la ferme et de se charger de responsabilités reliées à la ferme;

qu'un bon nombre de fermières considèrent que les coûts élevés et le manque d'accessibilité des services de garderie les empêchent de se trouver un emploi;

que les besoins en matière de garderie dans les milieux ruraux sont différents et que le taux de population peu élevé et les plus longues distances à parcourir sont des facteurs dont il faut tenir compte;

que l'éloignement, les périodes de pointe saisonnières et les heures de travail irrégulières sont également des facteurs influençant les besoins, en matière de garderie, des personnes travaillant à la ferme;

que, chaque année, deux enfants en moyenne meurent et que de 20 à 30 autres sont hospitalisés en raison d'accidents survenant à la ferme;

que la question de la sécurité augmente l'importance des services de garderie pour les familles agricoles;

que l'initiative stimulant le développement économique rural (REDI) dispose de fonds pour améliorer la situation économique des Manitobains vivant en milieu rural,

il est proposé que l'Assemblée législative du Manitoba exhorte le ministre du Développement rural (Mr. Derkach) à étudier la possibilité de consulter, de concert avec le ministre des Services à la famille (Mrs.

Mitchelson), la population rurale afin d'évaluer ses besoins en matière de garderie et d'utiliser les fonds de REDI pour mettre sur pied un programme de garderie abordable, flexible et accessible pour les Manitobains en milieu rural.

[Translation]

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is my pleasure to propose, seconded by the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski), the improvement of rural child care.

WHEREAS accessible quality child care is an essential ingredient in eliminating child poverty; and

WHEREAS off-farm employment is increasing both in terms of the number of people employed and the hours of employment; and

WHEREAS many farm women juggle child care responsibilities with an off-farm job and farm responsibilities; and

WHEREAS the child care needs of those living in rural areas are unique and are affected by sparse population and longer travelling distances; and

WHEREAS on average two children per year die and 20 to 30 more are hospitalized in farm-related accidents each year; and

WHEREAS safety concerns add to the importance of child care for farm families; and

WHEREAS the Rural Economic Development Initiative has funds available to improve the economic situation of rural Manitobans.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) to consider working with the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) to consult with rural Manitobans to assess their child care needs and to use REDI funds to implement an affordable, flexible and accessible child care program for rural Manitobans.

Motion presented.

Mr. Gaudry: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it gives me pleasure to present this resolution, No. 34. [interjection] No, I knew they could all understand if I spoke slowly enough and I did. The Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), being a teacher, I know he has listened.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Liberal Party has traditionally advocated support for any measure that addresses the problem of child poverty, quality child health care, as an essential ingredient in preventing child poverty. Even as the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) defines it, access to this care is no less important in rural areas.

Increasing of off-farm employment, coupled with farm responsibility, has made it necessary for rural parents to balance child care responsibilities. A smaller population and longer travelling distances also place unique demands on rural parents forcing them to make serious choices concerning the quality of child care that urban parents under different conditions are not forced to make.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, safety also adds to my concern over child care in rural areas. On average, two children die every year in farm-related accidents and 20 to 30 or more are hospitalized. If we can prevent just one death by improving child care, I believe no one in this House would argue we wasted the public's money.

There has already been a good pilot program in place that has addressed the issue of child care in rural Manitoba. The Rural Child Care Safety Registry was an innovative pilot project which was established through collaboration between the Manitoba Women's Institute and the provincial departments of the Status of Women, Family Services and Agriculture. We need to expand this work and provide rural Manitobans with affordable, flexible and accessible child care.

In conclusion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to emphasize that quality child care is an essential ingredient in preventing child poverty and it is a key to eliminating child poverty. Providing these services means we care about children.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I hope the members will feel that we should support this resolution. Thank you very much.

*(1710)

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to stand in the House today and speak to this resolution regarding child care, specifically in rural Manitoba, and agree with some of the comments that my honourable friend has already made when he says that the circumstances in rural Manitoba are unique and somewhat different from the very populated centre of the city of Winnipeg.

We need to be looking at different solutions for different communities, trying to ensure that children are protected and well-cared for at times when both parents need to be away from the home. I also agree that we want to try to ensure wherever possible that children are not left in an unsafe circumstance. None of us in this House can be very happy with any child being left at risk or any child being harmed or indeed killed as a result of a farm accident.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is critical, I think, that we try our very best to put in place programs right throughout the width and the breadth of this province that indeed do put children first and try to ensure their safety and security while parents are working. I think we can talk with some sense of satisfaction about the child care system that has been developed in the province of Manitoba, and we are a province that does spend much on child care, one of the highest per capita expenditures on child care right across the country.

The salaries for child care workers are the second highest right across the country. We have increased spending on child care considerably since we took over as government in 1988, \$47.2 million in the budget for child care for the province of Manitoba and for Manitoba families and, yet, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we do not seem to have a solution to all of the issues surrounding all of the families and their unique circumstances depending on where they are and what opportunities they have for entering the workforce or for training and, indeed, for those in rural Manitoba

who have the special circumstances of having to travel distances and needing much more flexibility in the kind of system to meet the needs of their children and their family circumstances.

We had the opportunity during the last election campaign to partake, the three political parties in this House, in the child care forum that was arranged and I have to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I did not fare terribly well with the crowd that was in the room. Nonetheless, we did win the election, and we will be the government for the next four years in the province of Manitoba, and my comments at that forum are comments that I will repeat in the House today, and that is that we have no more money.

We are seeing in the province of Manitoba a circumstance where the federal government will be offloading or not providing to our province \$147 million next year and \$220 million the year after. There will be less money, not more, for our social safety net, for health, for post-secondary education and for family services. That is a reality, so we are going to have to in our province—and provinces right across the country are going to have to—look to better ways of delivering services to try to meet the needs of Manitobans and Canadians.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it will be a major challenge for us to try to spend smarter and do things differently, but along with that challenge comes an opportunity and an opportunity to examine how we can best try to meet the needs of Manitobans with the resources that we will have available, and if we had a perfect system in place, we would not see the cries from the opposition and from other Manitobans who say spend more, do more.

We are already spending \$47.2 million in our province today on child care, and it is not meeting the needs of all children throughout our Manitoba community, so how do we do a better job? It is not just the same programs that will have to exist with less money, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It will have to be new programs that look at direction of the dollars and the resources that we have to find a better solution.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I concur with some of the comments made by my honourable friend who

introduced this resolution that says we need flexibility. We need accessibility. There are unique circumstances and situations in rural Manitoba that require more families to be off the farm and into other work opportunities. We have had dialogue and discussion, my colleagues and I from rural Manitoba; specifically, the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) and I have had many discussions, many meetings.

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

We meet on a yearly basis with the Women's Institute, and we have undertaken some initiatives with them to look at a child care registry where people could put their names on a registry if they were available to provide care for children, and families that needed that kind of care could access that registry. It has had some success, but there is more to be done. I know that we as a government are committed to work with rural Manitoba families to try to understand the unique needs.

We cannot look at a program that is going to meet the needs of all rural or northern communities. Each community is different. Each municipality, each local government district, I think, out in rural Manitoba would say that what might work for them might not work for another community. I do not think it is one approach that is going to be able to deal with the issues.

What we have to do is deal neighbourhood by neighbourhood, community by community, with the issues that face us. If, in fact, we can provide more opportunity for the safe care of children while parents are in the workforce or in training, we will try to find those solutions, and we will work with communities and with families that need that service in order to try to find out what the best solution is. I will repeat again, as I said during the election campaign, there is no more money. There is going to be less money to deliver services for health, for post-secondary education and for all the services that we provide in the Department of Family Services next year and even less the year after.

We are going to have to find new methods and new ways of delivering those services, working with the families and with the care providers. I have had some good meetings with the Child Care Association and

individual child care directors over the last month or so, and they have made a commitment to try to work with government to find the solutions. We have talked in great length and great detail about the education and the experience that early childhood educators have and how they might fit into the whole new way of delivering services to children right across this province.

We are looking at new ways of doing early intervention, early child development, and the skills and the expertise that early childhood educators have certainly indicate that they would be well qualified to fit into the broader picture of the delivery of service to children and to families who need that service, Mr. Acting Speaker. There are all kinds of innovative and creative thinking going on in our Manitoba community around how we can do things better.

Any of the programs that will need to be changed or reworked will have to take the issue of finances into account, and I do not think there is any program in government that we want to maintain or keep just the same at a lower cost. What we want to do is to be able to find a new way of delivering service. Child care will be no different from any other service in my department that is going to be looked at very carefully over the next year to see how we can spend smarter, deliver programs more effectively and more efficiently, and serve the people that need to be served.

* (1720)

If we were doing a great job and everything, if all the programs that are in place today were working, Mr. Acting Speaker, we would not see the number of children in care. We would not see the number of children that need to be in our child care spaces that have special social needs. We would not see the increase in the number of people on social allowance. We would not see any of those things. We would see reductions. We would see better service. The programs today, even with the major amount of money that is being provided, are not working.

So we do, as a government, have a major commitment to children and to families. We have put in place the Children and Youth Secretariat that is

looking at co-ordination of services between the departments of Health, Family Services, Education and Justice. Mr. Acting Speaker, they are coming up with new ideas, dialoguing with the community, working internally to see whether in fact we cannot look at delivering programs in a more co-ordinated fashion within government, so less money can be spent on bureaucracy and more money can go into the hands of children and families that need that support. That is the kind of thing we will be looking at as we develop a new plan for child care.

We are going to have to look very carefully at what the needs of neighbourhoods in rural Manitoba require. We will see major changes in many of our programs, but those changes will have the ultimate—the ultimate goal of my department will be that the changes will have a positive impact on families and children first. Our services will be co-ordinated. We will dialogue with those people that need the service and plan our programs around putting people first.

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, I thank my honourable friend for bringing this resolution forward so we would have the opportunity to debate and to discuss the issue of child care. I want to indicate to him that we are not standing still, we are moving ahead. We will be exploring new and innovative ways of trying to do more with less, and that is the reality today.

We may hear members of the New Democratic Party, members of the opposition saying spend more, do more, all you need to do is put more money into the system and we will have better service for children. Well, if that were the answer, we would have all of the problems of the province solved. More money does not necessarily mean better service to children and families. We will be taking a very proactive approach in dealing with all of the issues in Family Services including child care and care for children in rural Manitoba. Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

An Honourable Member: En français.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Merci, monsieur.

It is a pleasure to speak on this resolution as the Family Services critic for my party. I would like to

commend the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), at least for the WHEREASes. I think having read all of the WHEREASes, we in this party agree with the WHEREASes; however, where we disagree is in the THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED. Instead of trying to find money, I guess in the budget of the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) from REDI funds, we think that the funding should come from the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) and be a budget line, like child care, delivered through child care centres. For once I am supporting this Minister of Family Services over against her colleagues. It does not happen very often.

Someone asked where would they get the money. Well, I would suggest the money could come from VLT revenue which was promised to be returned to rural Manitoba at a certain percentage, and far less money than was promised is actually going back to rural Manitoba. If this government wants to live up to one of their promises to many of their constituents in rural Manitoba, they could do it by returning some of that VLT money, which is considerable, by providing some kind of child care in rural Manitoba.

There are a number of organizations which are on record as supporting child care in rural Manitoba. Certainly one of those people would be Jane Wilson [phonetic] of the Lakeview Children's Centre at Langruth, who I believe is president of the national child care association. I believe that the Manitoba Child Care Association is in favour of extending child care into rural Manitoba, and I think that our Leader at the Manitoba Child Care Association forum during the election promised that if we were elected government we would extend child care to rural Manitoba.

The document that I would like to talk about today is one prepared by the Rural Development Institute called Child Care and Child Safety for Farm Children in Manitoba. Now, I think that we need to start off here with the position that people in rural Manitoba should not be treated differently than people in Winnipeg or large urban centres, such as Portage and Brandon and Thompson. Since urban Manitobans have access to child care, this should be extended to rural Manitobans as well. So we think that the principles of a child care system that has high quality, that is fully accessible,

that is affordable, that is nonprofit and that is delivered by qualified early childhood educators, are what should guide us, whether it is for child care in urban centres or child care in rural Manitoba.

The Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) referred to the child care forum during the election, and during that day there were ballot boxes at the back of the room. There were several hundred early childhood educators there, and they were able to vote on the election platform of the three parties. I am proud to say that the NDP received an A, and I believe the Conservative platform on child care received an F. If I am wrong, the minister can correct me, but I think they got an F. [interjection] Well, I am talking about a particular poll that was of great interest to early childhood educators.

You know, the minister is talking about budget decisions which are being made during this fall and during the winter, and she is saying some very interesting things on the record, such as that we have to spend smarter, that there will be a new plan for child care, that we have to deliver programs in a more co-ordinated way, and that we are trying to do more with less. In spite of that, she promises to look at rural Manitoba.

So I think that child care in Manitoba is actually quite vulnerable. I think that, because of cuts from the federal government, this minister, like her colleagues in all departments, is going to be forced to make some very hard decisions about where they are going to cut. What I would really like to see from this minister is if she would stand up more to Ottawa and say the reason we are having to make these decisions is because we have less money. I believe it is about \$140 million less next year for three major departments—Health, post-secondary education, and Family Services—and \$220 million the year after, according to this minister's briefing paper, for those same three departments. So some of them are quite vulnerable.

In fact, I think this minister's programs are more vulnerable than other ministers' because health is a very volatile issue in Manitoba. I think this government would be very reluctant to make more cuts in health care. I think that they want to take a crack at university

funding. So I think, you know, they might try and save some money there in post-secondary education; but, when it comes to welfare and child care, I have been telling people in the child care community, I think you are very vulnerable. I know what is coming in terms of welfare, but I think the child care community should be alerted that there could possibly be cuts in that department.

I think the minister is preparing the ground with her speech today. This is the first time I have heard this minister talk about child care, and I am very concerned about some of the comments that she is putting on the record.

But did she stand up to the federal Liberal government? Did she go to Ottawa when the budget was introduced and protest? We know that the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) went and protested against the gun control legislation, but the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) did not go to Ottawa, the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) did not go to Ottawa, the minister for post-secondary education (Mrs. McIntosh) did not go to Ottawa, in spite of the fact that their departments are going to experience huge budgetary cuts next year and the year after. So they have not done a very good job of standing up for Manitobans or defending the programs that we have even now.

I cannot imagine how this government is going to find money to extend child care to rural Manitoba when they are under severe budgetary pressure when it comes to existing programs such as child care in urban centres. [interjection]

The members opposite are trying to bait me, but I am not going to fall for it, Mr. Acting Speaker. What I want to do is to refer to a second document before I refer to the Rural Development Institute document in detail.

* (1730)

But we received a very interesting brief that was presented to the government of Manitoba by the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba on June 22, 1995. They met with our caucus more recently. This

organization represents thousands of women all over Manitoba. In fact, they have federated organizations and Winnipeg-federated organizations. The list goes to three pages of women's organizations in Manitoba that support them. They recommend that the government of Manitoba support the goals of a fully accessible, nonprofit system of comprehensive, flexible and high-quality child care, worthy wages and good working conditions funded jointly by government and parents.

That is what we are in favour of. We think that if that kind of system is available to residents of urban centres, it should be available to people in rural Manitoba as well.

The document from the Rural Development Institute is very interesting because it is based on research. I know that the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) is anxious to take part in this debate, and he has the same document on his desk. It was very well done. The research was carried out by Lois Brockman of the Department of Family Studies, Faculty of Human Ecology, University of Manitoba, also the research associate of the Rural Development Institute, and was prepared for and funded by Manitoba Rural Development in co-operation with the Manitoba Women's Institute.

They surveyed farm families. They sent out questionnaires, and then they tabulated the results. Without trying to read too much of this, I would like to summarize it.

Of course, one of their main concerns, and one of the things they were surveying, was either children on farms not being supervised at all or children that were actually accompanying their parents while they did work either in the field or around the farm. Of course, that exposes children to a great many risks, and one of the reasons for it, which is entirely understandable, is that the alternatives are not there. If people do not have parents who live in the same yard or parents that live nearby in town or on a nearby farm then grandparents frequently are not available to look after grandchildren.

The other problem, and I am sure that the minister will refer to this, I know it is common knowledge amongst all people in rural Manitoba that a great many

farm families are forced to pursue off-farm jobs in order to supplement their income. That means that quite often a spouse is not there to look after the children, because they are involved in full-time or part-time work off the farm.

In the executive summary in this document, it says that alternatives to child care services for 64 percent of farm families are either to take children along or to leave them on their own while parents work on the farm. The more hours the wife works on the farm the more frequently children are either taken along or left on their own. I do not think that they mean the wife working on the farm in the kitchen or in the house. I think they mean the wife doing chores and doing field work. In fact, I am sure that that is what they mean.

Most of the respondents who indicated child care services were not available or accessible, 84 percent, either take children with them or leave them on their own while working on the farm. Then it talks about some of the hazards of the farm. In general, the greatest concerns for childrens' safety on farms relate to augers, power take-off equipment, farm chemicals and to children playing around large machinery.

We know the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) refers in his resolution to the fact that as a result of children being unattended and children helping with farm chores or being with their parents when farm work is being done that, according to the member for St. Boniface, on average two children per year die and 20 to 30 more are hospitalized. I can tell you about, and I am sure that members from rural Manitoba can tell you about some terrible tragedies that have happened on farms.

I know of an example where a grandfather was mowing grass around a farmyard and he was driving a small tractor with a mower on it, and I cannot remember whether the grandchild, who was about five years old, was on the tractor and fell off or playing in long grass, but the child was killed by the mower. This accident is too terrible to even describe, what a mower would do to a five-year-old child, but those of you who know what a mower is can just imagine what a terrible death that was and the grief of the grandfather and the whole family.

I know of another example where a child drowned in a dugout, and that family has never recovered from the shock of that accident. The mother of that child for many years was the recipient of psychiatric help, and I think it was because of that accident.

I know of a child who ingested a chemical in the farmhouse and was taken by ambulance and they had to do an emergency tracheotomy on the child on the way to hospital, and that was a terrible experience for that family.

So there are many very legitimate concerns about children being unattended around machinery or being with their parents around machinery because, especially where machinery is hooked up to the power takeoff, those of you who are familiar with this kind of equipment will know that, if you do not shut something off immediately, there is going to be injuries that result. Frequently, people get clothing caught in power takeoff and in augers and—[interjection]

Well, the minister, I heard the word "expert." I am not an expert, but I have worked on farms. I have lived on a farm. I know what a power takeoff is. I know what an auger is. I know what a grain auger is, and all the members from rural Manitoba know what this equipment is. Many of them have worked with it, and they know how dangerous it is and they know how dangerous it is for children to be around this kind of equipment. We need to provide alternatives.

This document is quite interesting because they asked parents what kind of alternatives they would like, and I know that this government has promoted or endorsed one of those alternatives which is the child care registry. But the child care registry was not very helpful in finding suitable child care for farm families.

In the executive summary it says, the type of child care support preferred by farm families is either a caregiver in the farm home who cares for the children and prepares the meals or hired help to free the wife to care for the children. Recommendations for a suitable model of rural child care services are presented, and so there are more later on in this document in the conclusions and recommendations. I think one of the things that is quite obvious is that it has to be flexible

because frequently it is not needed year round. Frequently, it is needed at springtime and harvest, the busy times on a farm, and it is not always needed all day. It may be needed part of the day. There may be a need for before-and-after-school child care, so there is a need to make it flexible.

In conclusion, Mr. Acting Speaker, this is a resolution that needs to be considered by this government and when they do, I hope that they would make it a line spending in the Department of Family Services and that the model, whatever is decided on, would be suitable for rural Manitoba and be delivered in a flexible manner. Thank you.

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Merci. C'est mon plaisir, Monsieur le président par intérim, d'adresser cette résolution très importante.

[Translation]

Thank you. It is my pleasure, Mr. Acting Speaker, to address this very important resolution.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Acting Speaker, it is certainly a pleasure for me to rise and speak to this very important resolution because I do think it does address and hit on some very important issues with regard to child care in rural Manitoba.

As I read through the resolution, I guess I have to think that in some instances this resolution does not really hit the mark because from the experiences that I have had in terms of discussing this issue with the Women's Institute and indeed in partnering with the Rural Development Institute and the Women's Institute on the study, it seems to me that child care in rural Manitoba is not centred on the issue of child poverty, Mr. Acting Speaker. Rather, it is centred and focused on the issue of providing an alternative form of child care for rural families.

* (1740)

Mr. Acting Speaker, I was quite interested in the comments that were made this afternoon by the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) because, in his

remarks, he did not reference the fact that in Manitoba we currently spend something in the neighbourhood of \$47 million per year on child care, while his friends in Saskatchewan, which is a province that is almost equal in population to Manitoba, only spend \$14 million on child care. [interjection] He says, we are expanding in Saskatchewan.

Well, would it not make sense to at least acknowledge that this province is leagues ahead of where our sister province is in terms of providing child care for our residents of Manitoba? So we are miles ahead of where our friends in Saskatchewan are. However, I am not going to talk about just simply throwing more money at the problem, as my honourable friend for Burrows is suggesting, because that is the simplistic approach that has been taken by the New Democrats on each and every issue. That is the only way to solve a problem according to them, to keep throwing more and more money at the problem.

Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, the Women's Institute did not focus their attention, as the NDP does, simply on throwing more money at the problem. Instead, they talk about the issues that are out there with regard to child care in rural Manitoba.

My honourable friend from St. Boniface did in fact hit on some key issues as they relate to rural child care. I do not think it matters on what side of the House you are today. There are some real issues with regard to rural child care.

I come off a farm where child care was an issue to our family when our children were growing up, as it is in many families who occupy themselves with the occupation of farming, because there are times of the year when every hand is required on the farm in order to complete the tasks that are before us.

Mr. Acting Speaker, if we look at the traditional approach that was taken not by our government but, indeed, by the former administration with regard to child care, those differences between urban and rural municipalities, urban and rural lifestyles were not considered and the needs were not considered when the legislation with regard to child care was introduced and passed in this House.

So today we have a report that is before us and is being considered internally with regard to how we can better address the needs of child care in rural Manitoba, and I have to say that my friend the member for St. Boniface does reference some very important issues, and one of those issues is the number of child deaths that occur in rural Manitoba as a result of accidents that occur because there perhaps is not the attention given to proper child care, perhaps by the family, the community and by all of us, that should be, Mr. Acting Speaker. Those are tragic because not a single person in this Chamber wants to see that kind of statistic. One death is far too many as far as I am concerned. Let us be honest, those of us who live in rural communities have been touched by this tragedy. I do not care which community you live in, and it has touched my community as well.

The question becomes how do we address this issue in a practical way? Farm families, rural families are not asking for us to simply throw more money at the problem, because we have seen time and time again that that is not the solution to the problem. What they are asking us to do is to continue with the registry so that there can be accessible people who will take care of their children at those very important times of the year. That is usually in the spring and in the fall.

The needs of child care are quite different in rural Manitoba than they are in urban Manitoba because, as you know, when harvest season rolls around in rural Manitoba, you do not work eight hours a day and then spend quality time with your family after that eight-hour day. During that two-month period of time when the harvest is coming off, farm families are working late hours. They are starting very early in the morning. Therefore, they need that assistance for that period of time when they are out in the fields bringing in their crops.

What is the solution? Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, I think the Women's Institute, in their report, has surveyed rural Manitoba and has indeed presented in this report some of the possible ways that we can address those situations. I have to tell you that this report, which was funded in conjunction with my department and the Rural Development Institute, was conducted in a very positive way.

I have to congratulate the Women's Institute for taking the initiative because the solutions are not in government, and maybe we have to come up with this realization sometimes or other. The solution itself is not in this Chamber. The solution is a partnership approach in looking at the problem, coming up with positive solutions and then addressing them as a partnership approach with the people who are affected by the issues—[interjection]

The member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) says, should we let the ag reps get involved? Well, that is part of the recommendation, but the Women's Institute is not saying that that is the only resolution to this problem. They are saying that is maybe one of the approaches that can be taken. However, let us talk to the people out there in the agricultural offices, and let us see whether or not that is a role that is practical for them to undertake, or is there a better approach that can be undertaken by the community itself with a little bit of assistance, perhaps a little bit of partnering with government and with the families? So it is a partnership approach.

Now, no one is going to argue with the safety concerns for children in rural Manitoba. No one is going to argue with that. Mr. Acting Speaker, the Women's Institute did talk about the safety issues. They did focus on that because we can talk about poverty all we like; but, when you have 16 deaths in rural Manitoba attributed directly to farm accidents, then together with communities we have to find a solution so that we do not repeat that horrible tragedy and that horrible statistic again and again. That is exactly the approach that this government is taking.

It is not merely taking money from REDI or money from VLT or money from General Revenue or wherever it is and dumping it in and saying, hey, we have done our part. We spend \$47 million on child care. Compare that with \$14 million in Saskatchewan, and yet in Manitoba we still have a problem.

I think that should be indication enough that it is not money that necessarily solves the problem, but rather it is an approach that can be taken in partnership with our communities and with the families out there in rural Manitoba. That is the way that we are going to

approach and address the issue. We are going to allow groups like the Rural Development Institute to work with the Women's Institute in Manitoba.

An Honourable Member: Partnership with no money, right?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Acting Speaker, the member for Burrows says, partnership but no money. Again, that is a simplistic approach to a problem. I did not hear the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson), the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) or anybody else on this side of the House, nor the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), say that you can solve this problem without any money. However, let us look at the problem, and let us determine what the solutions are. Then let us approach it rather than simply throw the money and keep making the same mistakes we have always made time and time again.

It is interesting, but today we made an important announcement, an announcement that actually grew from the grassroots of Manitoba. Then the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) stood up on his side of the House and said, this initiative does not go far enough. It does not throw enough money at the problem. Again, the simplistic solution of the NDP to everything: throw more money at it. That is the only approach they understand or know.

Maybe that is why on the 25th of April, the people of Manitoba realized who could govern this province in an appropriate and respectable fashion, rather than a bunch that will simply throw money at solutions and drive this province into poverty because of the approach they take. Mr. Acting Speaker, I think for far too long we have put up with that kind of approach, where the citizens of this province are burdened with a debt—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): I am hearing as much noise from the opposition benches as from the government benches, and the government benches actually are supposed to be having the speaker, so could I please ask that all honourable members refrain from exercising their vocabulary, except the designated speaker.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Acting Speaker, my point is this, that for too long the solutions of simply throwing money in an attempt to solve a problem have not worked, and it takes a combination. It takes a partnership approach. It takes working with Manitobans at the grassroots level to resolve some of these problems, and that is exactly what the Women's Institute is telling all of us. [interjection] I will hold it the right way up for you so that you can read it.

* (1750)

I have to tell the members opposite that, indeed, the Department of Rural Development is very interested in this situation, because we want to maintain the populations of rural Manitoba. We want to revitalize our community. We want to make sure that families feel that rural Manitoba is a safe place to live and to raise their families.

We want our youth to come back to rural Manitoba where they can feel comfortable and safe in raising their families, where they can feel that there is a place for them in these communities, where they can raise their children in safety without having the kind of statistics that we have seen over the past year.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) talked about the equipment that is out there on farms that is dangerous, and it is. There is no question about that. I acknowledge that. I know that personally, but in order for us to be able to ensure that families who live and work in this kind of environment are not necessarily out there on their own, that indeed they have a partner with them to help them when they need the help. Not that a solution is imposed on them, rather that they are part of the solution, so that when the time comes for them to access affordable and proper child care that fits the need of their community, they indeed have the access and the ability to do that.

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

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can tell you that members on this side of the House are going to be working with our rural farm families and our rural families to make sure that down the road we find solutions to the

challenges that are before us with regard to rural child care. I know that my colleague the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson), who is more than eager to try and address some of these issues, is working with the farm families, with the rural families, with the rural organizations, to find appropriate solutions to address this problem, not in a band-aid solution way but rather for the long term, so that families in rural Manitoba will know that their needs are being met in an appropriate and in an affordable way so that the taxpayers of Manitoba are simply not burdened with a cost that does not meet the solutions. Thank you very much.

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I, too, am pleased to rise today in this Chamber to speak on this resolution.

I do have one statement that I would like to, I guess, either get a clarification on later or at least make the point that one of the WHEREASes reads: WHEREAS many farm women juggle child care responsibilities with an off-farm job and farm responsibilities.

I think that the record has to be clearly put that it is not just farm women who are working off the farm and who are responsible for child care in rural Manitoba. I think, in making the WHEREAS, it probably could state "men and women" just for the simple fact that both are heavily involved.

An Honourable Member: Persons.

Mr. Tweed: Persons.

I would like to start by saying that the care of children in today's child care facilities is a high priority of the government, and it is illustrated by the fact that children and families of Manitoba enjoy a superior level of child care. When we compare Manitoba to the other provinces, it certainly can be proven that Manitoba's child care system is one of the best developed anywhere in Canada. Our legislated child care standards are among the highest in North America, and they require a majority of staff in child care centres to have degrees or diplomas ensuring that Manitoba's children benefit from the educational training and theories.

Manitoba's standards stipulate child-to-staff ratios, adequate space and natural light, nutritional regulations and stimulating activity for children. Manitoba's level of per capita child care spending is among the highest of any province in Canada. The number of child care spaces is also among the highest in Canada on a per capita basis. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would suggest that those two statements right there would probably suggest that Manitoba is on the leading edge of child care and child care provision.

I would also like to point out that the salaries for child care workers are second highest among the provinces in Canada. Manitoba's average hourly wage is \$9.85. This exceeds the national average by 25 cents. Administrative directors in Manitoba's child care centres are the highest paid in the country. This opposition resolution calls for REDI funds to implement a child care program in rural Manitoba, and I wonder if some members opposite are aware of the financial resources that have been devoted to the child care system in the province since 1987-88.

I am sure you will be interested in hearing some of the following statistics.

We have increased child care spending by 73 percent to \$47.2 million since 1987.

An Honourable Member: Was that 73?

Mr. Tweed: Seventy-three percent. Also, since 1987, the Manitoba government has increased total licensed spaces by 18 percent to almost 19,000 spaces. The number of subsidized cases has increased by 4,530 or 84 percent since 1988. The number of subsidized children increased by 2,630 or 49 percent to approximately 8,000. Funding for the Children with Disabilities program increased by 27 percent since 1990-91. Grant funding was offered to all licensed nonprofit centres, homes and nursery schools operational in '91-92. In '94-95 there were 519 daycare centres and 521 family daycare homes operating in the province of Manitoba. It offers a standard of child care higher than almost every other province in Canada.

We have also undertaken other proactive initiatives, and I will give you a few examples. The Department of Family Services provides funding to Lakeview Children's Centre in Langruth. This is a child care facility which provides flexible off-hour child care for those parents requiring the service. As many in this Chamber are aware, many families in Manitoba, especially rural farm families, do not work a standard nine-to-five work schedule. The Lakeview Children's Centre in Langruth is an excellent example of this government's identifying a need in a community and responding to that need.

The Department of Family Services also participated in the Child Care Safety Registry pilot, which was coordinated by the Manitoba Women's Institute, which matched caregivers with families needing care during peak periods of farm operations. Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a perfect example of this government being responsive to the needs of rural farm families.

The government is currently in the process of reviewing an evaluation of this exciting pilot project. Clearly, we have established that one of our priorities is to meet the increasing demand by all Manitobans and all Manitoba families for more flexible child care services. We have consistently made child care a high priority, and it is demonstrated by continually increasing funding to support expanded licensed spaces and subsidies for low- and middle-income families.

Further, the government continues to examine and study more flexible, more innovative ways to provide child care which will meet the different needs of Manitoba families. This is certainly in sharp contrast to the approach taken by the federal government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) will have nine minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., I am leaving the Chair with the understanding that I will return at 8 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, October 23, 1995

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