



Fourth Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
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BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise, Hon.	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	P.C.
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FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
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FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	P.C.
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GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSON, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
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MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
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MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn	St. James	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	P.C.
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PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank, Hon.	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
RADCLIFFE, Mike, Hon.	River Heights	P.C.
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REIMER, Jack, Hon.	Niakwa	P.C.
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ROBINSON, Eric	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Gladstone	P.C.
SALE, Tim	Crescentwood	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	N.D.P.
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STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin	N.D.P.
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TOEWS, Vic, Hon.	Rossmere	P.C.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.
Vacant	Charleswood	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, March 25, 1998

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Women's Resource Centres

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Nora McDermid, Yvonne Dola, Chantal Chudd and others requesting that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Filmon government to consider providing long-term, adequate and stable funding for Evergreen Women's Resource Centre and other women's resource centres in the province to ensure that the vital services provided by these organizations are continued.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Winnipeg Hospitals Food Service—Privatization

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen). It complies with the rules and practices of the House (by leave). Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT the Urban Shared Services Corporation (USSC) has announced plans to privatize laundry, food services and purchasing for the Winnipeg hospitals; and

THAT it is estimated that more than 1,000 health care jobs will be lost over the next year as a result, with many more privatized in the next two or three years; and

THAT under the terms of the contract, Ontario businesses will profit at the expense of Manitoba's health care system; and

THAT after construction of a food assembly warehouse in Winnipeg, chilled, prepared food will be shipped in from Ontario, then assembled and heated before being shipped to the hospitals; and

THAT people who are in the hospital require nutritious and appetizing food; and

THAT the announced savings as a result of the contract have been disputed, and one study by Wintemute Randle Kilimnik indicated that, "A considerable number of studies have compared costs of service delivery in health care between self-operation (public sector) and privatization. Invariably, privatization is more expensive."; and

THAT no one in Manitoba seems to benefit from this contract, especially patients.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Health to put an end to the centralization and privatization of Winnipeg hospital food services.

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

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT the Urban Shared Services Corporation (USSC) has announced plans to privatize laundry, food services and purchasing for the Winnipeg hospitals; and

THAT it is estimated that more than 1,000 health care jobs will be lost over the next year as a result, with many more privatized in the next two or three years; and

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THAT no one in Manitoba seems to benefit from this contract, especially patients.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Health to put an end to the centralization and privatization of Winnipeg hospital food services.

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

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

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THAT it is estimated that more than 1,000 health care jobs will be lost over the next year as a result, with many more privatized in the next two or three years; and

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WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Health to put an end to the centralization and privatization of Winnipeg hospital food services.

* (1335)

TABLE OF REPORTS

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister charged with the administration of The Civil Service Act): Madam Speaker, today I would like to table the Supplementary Information for Departmental Expenditure Estimates for the Civil Service Commission and the Employee Benefits and Other Payments.

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to table the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review for the 1998-99 Expenditure Estimates for the Department of Family Services.

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table, first of all, the Third-Quarter Report for Manitoba Lotteries Corporation, as well as Supplementary Information for Legislative Review, 1998-99 for Manitoba Community Support Programs, and the same information for 1998-99 for Manitoba Sport.

Madam Speaker: I am pleased to table this afternoon, the Statutory Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the Portage la Prairie By-Election September 30, 1997.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 27—The Manitoba Employee Ownership Fund Corporation Amendment Act

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), that leave be given to introduce Bill 27, The Manitoba Employee Ownership Fund Corporation Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation le Fonds de participation des travailleurs du Manitoba), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, having been advised of the contents of this bill, recommends it to the House, and I am extremely pleased to table his message.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 25—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), that leave be given to introduce Bill 25, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Loi modifiant le Code de la route), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 26—The Teachers' Society Amendment Act

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), that leave be given to introduce Bill 26, The Teachers' Society Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Association des enseignants du Manitoba, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have this afternoon seventeen Grades 6 to 11 students from Riverbend Colony School under the direction of Mr. Robert Dyck. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Gladstone (Mr. Rocan).

Also, we have twenty Grade 9 students from Westdale Junior High School under the direction of Mr. Michael Greenaway. This school is located in the constituency of Charleswood.

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

* (1340)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Misericordia General Hospital Long-Term Care Facility

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, when the Minister of Health was making media statements about the closure of the Misericordia Hospital and the conversion to long-term beds, and when the government released the press release on March 9, 1998, they failed to inform the public and the people of the province that this proposal was conditional and subject to a 20 percent requirement of the hospital to raise 20 percent of the capital for the project to go forward.

I would like to ask the minister: why did he mislead the public in his press release, first of all, and secondly, what impact will this have on beds? [interjection] Well, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) can answer this if he would ever answer a health care question. What impact will this have on beds and the conversion project?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, first of all, the community contribution policy has been a matter of public record. It has been discussed in this House. I would expect the Leader of

the Opposition to recall that debate. I can tell the member as well that, in all of our discussions with the board of directors of Misericordia Hospital, including the preliminary discussions that I had with the bishop and the sisters of Misericordia, the community contribution policy was discussed. I can tell the member as well that there are sponsors available for the first hundred-bed project to get underway this year, groups that I have met with that are involved with the Misericordia and want to be part co-sponsor with them. That should manage to meet that 20 percent requirement.

Breast Care Services

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, a further question to the minister. The minister in his releases and in his statements to the public failed to mention the full dimensions of the closure of Misericordia and its impact on patients who require breast care treatment programs here in the province of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, the closure of the breast surgery program at the Misericordia will have very serious damage to the comprehensive breast care program located at the Misericordia Hospital. Did the minister consult with people and patients and women who are living with breast cancer here in the city of Winnipeg?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, taken in the context of only the Misericordia announcement, there may be some credence to the Leader of the Opposition's comments. However, in the context of the changes that are going on with the Winnipeg Hospital Authority—and I can tell the member that there were great discussions with the people in charge of this area at the Winnipeg Hospital Authority. There is still a fair bit of planning and work to take place. If the member looks at some of the stories that have emerged on the treatment and detection of breast cancer, one of the issues that we have to deal with is how we organize and reorganize this particular area of very important health care service to operate in a more efficient manner with a greater continuum of care, and that certainly will be part of the planning for the whole overall program for the Winnipeg hospital system, not just one facility in isolation.

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon): you have developed, over the last four years, the comprehensive breast care programs at the Misericordia Hospital, programs that rely on a number of facets, including surgery. You are closing that down as you close down the Misericordia Hospital.

There were 4,000 patients and women affected by breast cancer and treated at the Misericordia Hospital. I would like to ask the Premier to order his Minister of Health to put these plans on hold until the government of Manitoba consults with patients who are dealing with cancer, breast cancer—put this program on hold. Those people should have been consulted before the government made their decision to close down this comprehensive program.

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, for one thing, think of the impossibility of what the Leader of the Opposition is proposing. Because we have provided a great deal of time in which to work out the details with Misericordia—we are not shutting down Misericordia Hospital next month—this process is going to take a number of years to rework these programs. That is why it was very important that we have the flexibility on labour relations that the member opposes so that we can give stability to the staff who are there.

Madam Speaker, by the time all of these changes are worked through and take place, the people that the member wishes—

Point of Order

Mr. Doer: On a point of order, Madam Speaker, this is the second question I have raised about consulting patients, and the Minister of Health is talking about labour relations and other matters. I would ask him to deal with the issues of dealing with patients who are affected, and I would ask you to call him to order.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Health, on the same point of order.

Mr. Praznik: Yes, Madam Speaker, I was just in the process of specifically answering the question when the member jumped from his seat to interrupt me.

* (1345)

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

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, the point of the matter is anyone who is in the system today is being treated on that system. Because of the time frames involved, the people that the member opposite wants me to consult with do not even know they are going to be in that program today.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I neglected to rule on the point of order by the honourable Leader of the official opposition. The honourable Leader of the official opposition did not have a point of order. The minister clarified that he was partially through and about to address the specifics of the question.

Misericordia General Hospital Breast Care Services

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Breast cancer is a women's issue and this is why women like Dr. Virginia Fraser, for example, among others, envisioned, fought for, built and refined Misericordia Breast Care Clinic, a centre which offers nationally recognized comprehensive services and supports to women living with breast cancer. I would like to ask the minister why women with breast cancer, those now or in the future, are to be the victims of health care politics. That is to say, why is this government forcing the fragmentation of breast care services in order to respond to the personal care bed crisis, which this government has of course created? Why, Madam Speaker, are women and their families—

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

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, this government in its period of time in office has expanded breast cancer care, breast care in our province more than any other government in the history of Manitoba. We have put screening centres in a number of locations. We will be funding the two mobile screening programs as the next advancement. Just yesterday, specifically to the member's question, I read in the Winnipeg Free Press a story by Alexandra Paul who talks about some of the difficulties in the way the system is currently structured that fragment some of

those services. Surely to goodness, the member for Osborne does not want to stand in the road of improving our programming for breast care for the entire city.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Osborne, with a supplementary question.

Ms. McGifford: Madam Speaker, I am of course on the side of the Misericordia Breast Care Clinic, in response to the minister.

Why, when the minister well knows that the breast care centre at Misericordia, built up over a period of years, serving 4,000 women a year, offers comprehensive services and supports, including diagnosis, surgery, reconstruction, physiotherapy, oncology, pastoral care, and I could go on—but the point is, why, when the minister knows that this kind of comprehensive service is essential to well-being and recovery, is he fragmenting these services, services which can save the lives of women? Why are Manitoba women not more important than that?

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, do not let the member for Osborne, for one moment, think that members of this side of the House are not concerned about breast cancer. This government has put a great deal of additional resources into breast cancer issues over the years in which we have been in administration. This is an issue that concerns all Manitobans, not just those of one political stripe. I can tell the member, she made a very telling point. She said she is in support of one program in the city of Winnipeg. This is about delivering programs for an entire city, for a province. It is about co-ordinating our resources to be able to deliver good programs throughout the system, not just in one isolated facility. I can tell the member that the best of the Misericordia program, certainly we want to preserve that, and certainly in the planning that will go on, we will want to be able to keep that whole holistic continuum of care together and ensure that we have an excellent program, and that is what I believe the Winnipeg Hospital Authority will be able to build for the entire city.

Ms. McGifford: Madam Speaker, the changes the Minister of Health is suggesting are about saving his political—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would remind the honourable member for Osborne, she was recognized for a second supplementary question, to which there is to be no postamble or preamble. The honourable member for Osborne, please pose your question now.

Ms. McGifford: Since the minister refuses to answer my questions, I want to ask the minister to consider a letter from a local breast advocacy group, from which I now quote: The recent announcements by the Winnipeg Hospital Authority to remove inpatient breast surgery as well as treatment and some support services from the Misericordia Hospital concerns all of us, as it is a direct contradiction to previously demonstrated commitments by the provincial government to women's health.

I would like to table this, Madam Speaker, and I would like to ask the minister if he will reconsider his rash decisions, meet with advocacy groups and perhaps even Virginia Fraser and her group of surgeons and promise Manitoba women to protect fully and in its entirety the Misericordia breast care program.

Mr. Praznik: The member talks about rash decisions. I can tell the member, from speaking to those who have been involved in health care for over two decades, governments of which the member has been a part, as well on this side, that changing the function and role of the Misericordia in the overall system of Winnipeg is something that has been talked about as a need in our system going back over 20 years.

So this is not a rash change in the function of Misericordia; if anything, it is one that is long overdue. I can tell the member that the team with the Winnipeg Hospital Authority, working with the Misericordia program, including the physicians who are part of that program, have the responsibility, and I have great confidence in them. I have great confidence in them, and they have the ability to make the decisions to put together and design those programs. I will not be standing over them and second-guessing their decisions.

So those people that are planning for the overall good of the system will carry on to ensure that the program is delivered well for the citizens of the entire city and province of Manitoba.

* (1350)

Misericordia General Hospital Breast Care Services

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): The breast care program at the Misericordia Hospital is a nationally known program. As one patient said, it is the only fully integrated, comprehensive breast care program offering diagnosis, treatment, education and counselling for patients and their partners in western Canada and one of only a few across the country.

This is something that Manitobans—they built it, they are proud of it. It is, in fact, the continuum of care, the holistic service that the minister talks about. I want to ask the minister, who claims that this is the end result of four years of study, who is prepared to break this program, to shatter it, to lay on the table the cost-benefit analysis, the analysis that says: this will benefit patients in Manitoba. Put that analysis on the table and let us see it.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): The member refers to four years. I was referring to over 20—[interjection] No, Madam Speaker, I was referring to over 20 years of discussion within the Ministry of Health and amongst Winnipeg hospitals about a changing role for the Misericordia. The member is asking that we make decisions with the WHA for the future role of the facility, for the overall system, on the basis entirely of one program.

The breast program was considered in the discussions that took place in the planning for this change in function for Misericordia. It has to be done in the context of the changes that are going on over the overall system. This is not a matter of financial cost-benefit analysis. It is about getting the best use for health care for the patients across our entire system.

It is a far larger issue, and I believe very much that breast care will continue to be well served in our city.

Ms. Friesen: Will the minister, who cannot table anything, has not a single study that he is prepared to table in this Legislature and who wants us to believe that the sisters of Misericordia agreed to this change, will he now tell us how long he gave the sisters of

Misericordia to agree to this decision? Was it 12 hours; was it 24 hours; was it any longer?

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, the proposal that was put to the sisters of Misericordia was made in the middle of October when the chair of the WHA, Mr. Neil Fast, and myself met at the Catholic Centre on Pembina Highway with the chief sister in Manitoba and with the archbishop. We talked about a change of function for the Misericordia Hospital that would give it three focuses: long-term care, a 24-hour urgency centre for the Woleseley community, which she serves, and thirdly, as a host for a number of ambulatory programs within the city of Winnipeg and some for the province of Manitoba. The detail of that, wanting to maximize the space and ability of that facility, would be worked out with the Winnipeg Hospital Authority. That was the concept that was put of course to the bishop and to the sisters of Misericordia, and the details around the third component, of course, would have to be worked out in the planning with the Winnipeg Hospital Authority.

Ms. Friesen: Would the minister, I think, account to this House, will he make a guarantee to the patients of Manitoba that they are not, under his plan, going to be sent from institution to institution, to be sent from pillar to post trying to find the kind of holistic care, the continuum of care that they had at the Misericordia? Will he make that guarantee now?

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, what I find intriguing about the member's comments is that yesterday in the Free Press there was a story that talks about patients who are being diagnosed with breast cancer having to travel with wires from one facility to another because that continuum is not there. What we are trying to address is not one particular program—and I agree wholeheartedly, they have a very good program at the Misericordia, and we want to be able to preserve that within the system—but it is important to make the whole program work for all Manitoba women right across the system, and that is what we support.

Point of Order

Ms. Friesen: Madam Speaker, my question was very clear; it was very simple, and it asked the minister to make a guarantee to the patients of Manitoba that they

will not have to go from institution to institution. It was clear and it was simple. Answer the question.

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, I was explaining to the member that, under the current system that she defends, patients are going from one place to another and that is what we want to improve.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Woleseley did not have a point of order.

Misericordia General Hospital Breast Care Services

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, after Misericordia Hospital was forced to close its labour and delivery unit, it converted some of the operating space and adjacent space for plastic surgery. Seven of the 11 plastic surgeons in Winnipeg operate out of that space, and one of the major services they provide is breast reconstructive surgery. These two units go together. The plastic surgeons have been told that they cannot stay at Misericordia Hospital. They put a new unit in, they modified operating rooms in the last six months, now they are going to shut it down. What kind of planning is that for the women and for those who need plastic surgery in this city?

* (1355)

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, we have within the city of Winnipeg seven acute care facilities. Many of those facilities that are much more modern and much better state-of-the-art facilities have underutilized operating space. We are attempting through the Winnipeg Hospital Authority to get the best use out of our best space, and the member—and I am sure he has toured the Misericordia—would know that one of the problems facing the Misericordia Hospital is that it requires a very significant capital upgrade. So one of the difficulties facing the overall system is do you invest the money in rebuilding a significantly older building in its entirety when you have underutilized capacity in other facilities. Well, that does not make any common sense, and so that looks at, if you are going to spend money, what functions do you need to perform. We have worked on a plan that I think is long in coming, that gives the Misericordia a role that fills unmet needs in our system.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, will the minister simply sit down with Dr. Virginia Fraser, who will tell him that it is not feasible in terms of good quality medical care to fragment the surgery for those needing breast care away from diagnosis, follow-up support, plastic surgery reconstruction and any other services they and their families may need in order to enjoy comprehensive, effective, quality medical care? Will he at least sit down with this surgeon who has recruited four other doctors at great time and expense to put together the best breast care program that we have, and now he is taking apart—will he meet with that doctor and talk with her?

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, I can tell the member for Crescentwood that Dr. Brian Postl and his team at the Winnipeg Hospital Authority, who have the responsibility to make decisions on how programming will be put together and who do this work, will be meeting, will be wanting to work with those physicians. One has to appreciate that the change in function at the Misericordia, as members have identified, is that it will no longer be an acute facility. It will host a number of programs; it will be part of programs, but it allows the overall system to get the best use out of our—and meet our acute care needs.

I would just hope that, for one moment, members opposite would be able to rise above a specific within that system and look at what is good for the overall system.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, will this minister at least have the integrity to confirm today that Dr. Brian Postl told the board of Misericordia Hospital that there is no long-term plan, that he does not know and has no idea how to accommodate the breast care program, that Dr. Fraser raised the questions in that meeting 12 hours before this minister required an answer from that board? Will he at least have the courage to acknowledge that Dr. Brian Postl says there is no plan, they have no idea how to keep this program together?

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, time and time again we have seen members of the opposition, particularly the member for Crescentwood, exaggerate and take out of context remarks. So I do not believe the way in which he brings any statements, whether they are—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, the words of the minister which he is attempting to put on the record impute some kind of motive to me as a member of this Legislature. I was simply quoting Dr. Fraser, Dr. Murray, members of the board of Misericordia Hospital who told me that the meeting with Dr. Postl involved a 12-hour deadline. They wanted the answer tonight or tomorrow morning because it was in the budget and they wanted to announce it. He should not impute motives.

Madam Speaker: I will take the point of order raised by the honourable member for Crescentwood under advisement so I can very quickly and very carefully review the comments put on record by the honourable Minister of Health.

* * *

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, again in proper context, which the member for Crescentwood would not be aware of because he was not part of all those discussions, we met in October, we spoke with the owners of the facility, we provided a letter to them confirming our discussions, my deputy had been meeting with them. Now if their board—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Praznik: If members would please do me the courtesy of answering, I would very much appreciate that opportunity. [interjection]

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

Mr. Praznik: Thank you, Madam Speaker. There were lots of discussions going on between the management and board and Dr. Postl and the Winnipeg Hospital Authority. Now it is my understanding that Misericordia did not involve their own physician groups until the latter stages, but, yes, there was some pressure to come to a decision, because we have sponsors who are waiting for decisions on the commitment of personal care home beds. If

Misericordia was not prepared to accept that new role, I have to get on with finding new sponsors for particularly the first hundred beds to get in the ground, which I am sure the honourable member would want to see happen.

* (1400)

Personal Care Homes Capital Funding

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Given that the minister has announced in his budget that he would be building nursing homes in our province, could the minister indicate to this House if he is considering borrowing some money from the Stabilization Fund to build these new nursing homes?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, the majority of the contributions for our health capital come from borrowings, but some of the health capital is done through our annual operating expenditures, and in this budget we also did set aside a \$50-million draw from our stabilization account to go towards one-time capital initiatives. I outlined all of them very clearly in the budget; \$5 million is going to highways, \$5 million to residential streets. Out of that there is a contribution being made towards some additional health care capital equipment, most likely in the area of CT scans, MRI equipment, and so on. In fact, it is going to be a \$5-million contribution this year and an additional \$5-million contribution in the '98-99 budget for a total of \$10 million of additional capital dedicated for equipment required in our health care system.

Education System Budget

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): My first supplementary question to the same minister: how does the per capita education budget compare with the province's accumulated debt?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I think the member for St. Boniface can certainly do those calculations. He can take our total debt—our tax-supported debt in Manitoba is

approximately \$6.8 billion. He can certainly take that and divide it by the population of Manitoba and end up with our per capita tax-supported debt. You can look at our budget and look at our total spending. If he is looking at our total spending on education, he can look at the total allocation to education in our 1998 budget and again divide that by our population, if that is the information that he is looking for.

If he requires any additional specifics and he gives me the request, I am more than prepared to provide that for him.

Mr. Gaudry: Can the minister tell us how this compares with other provinces?

Mr. Stefanson: When it comes to issues like, first of all, our debt, when we look at issues like our per capita debt, percentage of our revenue or the percentage of our expenditures that go to service debt, we fare amongst the best in all of Canada. We are usually second or third lowest in those areas, and again, that is a recognition of our lower levels of debt and the numerous things that have been done to address the issue of debt here in Manitoba. So we stack up very well.

When you look at our total expenditures on education, particularly public school education—now that is our total expenditures—I believe, again, that we rank consistently either third or fourth most in all of Canada. So again, in terms of total government commitment, that is a combination of direct support from the provincial government and the funding that comes from the property tax base. Our total public spending on education stacks up very well on a comparative basis within Canada.

Justice System Child Abuse Case Processing Time

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): To the Minister of Justice. It was in May of 1994 that Statistics Canada, in a report authored by Professor Jane Ursel, revealed the shocking statistic that the processing time for child abuse cases in Manitoba frequently extended beyond 18 months. The then Justice minister rose in this House

and promised to prioritize child abuse cases within the court system.

I ask the minister: will he tell the families and victims of child abuse in Manitoba, whether it is the minister's perception that the processing time for such cases has now improved some four years later?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, as I have stated before, my department and the judiciary in Manitoba have undertaken to do what is needed to ensure that child sexual abuse cases in Manitoba are adjudicated and fully prosecuted before the court in a manner which is sensitive to the needs of the child abuse victim.

I know that the figure—I cannot quote the accuracy of the figure given by the member for St. Johns, but certainly the figures that I have, in respect of the trial dates available, are not what the member for St. Johns indicates.

Mr. Mackintosh: Could the minister explain why he oversees a justice system where child molesters and child rapists do not face justice for up to two years and more, Madam Speaker, while other children are put at risk by the offender on bail while the case weakens with memory as it fades, but there is no counselling and the case hangs over the victimized child? I ask the minister: will he now support a child victim court for Manitoba and fast-track trials for child victim cases?

Mr. Toews: Madam Speaker, the Crown attorney's office and the courts are in frequent contact in respect of what is the best way of delivering services. For example, in response to the Lavoie inquiry, there were certain recommendations made by a judge of the Queen's Bench who stated that there should be a separate domestic violence bail court, and my department was very, very supportive of that. Unfortunately, the judges, who are independent, turned down that recommendation of the other judge.

So what we need to do is work together with the judges. I want to assure the people of Manitoba that I will respect the independence of the judges, but I am concerned about the timeliness of any trial. I know that the Crown attorneys are constantly endeavouring to

ensure that time-sensitive trials are brought to trial as quickly as possible.

Manitoba Telecom Services Layoffs

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, when this government sold off MTS just over a year ago with no mandate from the people of the province, they stated, and I would like to indicate on May 7, 1996, the Premier said that the sale would not lead to layoffs. This is repeated by Tom Stefanson, the chair of MTS. Of course, this is the same Premier who also said that we would end up with a Manitoba-owned company. We now have 80 percent of the shares owned outside of this province.

I would like to ask the Premier if he can confirm that MTS has just announced further permanent layoffs today as part of its workforce reduction of 350 positions they announced in January, a complete contradiction of the Premier's words.

* (1410)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, without accepting the voracity of any of the preamble of the member for Thompson—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Filmon: My response to the question is that consistently throughout the debate what we said was that MTS would not take actions in private ownership that were different from the actions they were taking in public ownership with respect to rate setting, with respect to analysis of work distribution or anything else. In fact, I pointed out consistently that in public ownership, they had removed and reduced some 1,700 positions, and that as long as they continued to be in a competitive environment they would have to be operated economically, efficiently and cost-effectively, and that their actions as a corporation would have to be to ensure that they continued to be competitive, regardless of whether they were publicly owned or privately owned.

I point out to him that Saskatchewan telephone system is also in the process and has over the recent years been reducing its workforce in order to remain competitive, and this is a continuation of the policies that the telephone company has to pursue in order to be competitive in a competitive environment.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, I would like to table a copy of the press release from MTS that was issued today, also a copy of the news report when the Premier said that the sale of MTS would not lead to layoffs.

I would like to ask the Premier if he can confirm that, as a result of the policies of the newly privatized company, despite the representation on the board of government appointees, we are seeing closures of MTS functions in Portage, Steinbach, Morden. We are seeing SaskTel now recruiting our highly skilled telephone personnel, that in fact once again we have seen that the Premier not only did not tell the truth to the people in the election about MTS but what he said during the sale of MTS is not true. There are layoffs. It is owned outside of the province. He was wrong.

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, I will compare our record of protecting the public interest versus that of the member opposite any time. When the member opposite and his colleagues were responsible for running the telephone system, they poured \$27 million out on the sands of Saudi Arabia without one benefit to the people of Manitoba, and that is the way they conduct a business.

Cross Lake, Manitoba Northern Flood Agreement

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Madam Speaker, in 1977 Manitoba Hydro, with Canada's and Manitoba's governments, entered into a treaty with the Crees to address the effects of the flooding of their community in Cross Lake. The Crees in Cross Lake were promised fair and equitable treatment, programs that would eradicate mass poverty and unemployment and also to replace the land that was to be flooded. I would like to table a letter to the Chamber this afternoon, a letter that was written by the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Newman) to the people of Cross Lake, and at the same time ask the minister to see if this type of a letter, the

tone of this letter will go towards the resolution of the issue in Cross Lake.

Hon. David Newman (Minister responsible for Native Affairs): Madam Speaker, yes.

Mr. Lathlin: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the Premier again what he has to say to a release that was made by Dr. Ted Moses in Geneva yesterday, when he appeared before the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, where he said: I have visited more than once with my Cree brothers in Manitoba. This is a blatant example of governmental breach of treaty and human rights obligations. It is shocking that in a country like Canada indigenous people should have to resort to blockades to vindicate their fundamental human rights.

I would like to table that release today and ask the Premier: in the context that this Minister of Northern Affairs has continually admonished the chief and council of Cross Lake, telling them they should be ashamed of what they are doing—I would like to ask the Premier if he is ashamed of what he is doing and also to respond to Ted Moses' press release.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I can tell the member for The Pas that since this government has been in office it has negotiated in good faith to resolve issues that had been outstanding for two and three decades vis-a-vis our relationship as a province and a government with our aboriginal brothers and sisters, particularly in northern Manitoba. I can think of us reopening, voluntarily, settlements that had been completed with respect to South Indian Lake, with respect to Grand Rapids, where we put more than \$30 million into claims that had already been settled and signed off legally.

In particular, the Northern Flood Agreement that had languished without any progress whatsoever for six and a half years under New Democratic administration, four of the five First Nations have settled through negotiations, with hundreds of millions of dollars being poured into those First Nations. I can say that we have operated in negotiating in good faith to resolve outstanding treaty land entitlements to almost 30 First Nations in this province through the process of negotiation that has taken place during our term in

office, things that were never able to be resolved under New Democrats.

This government has operated in good faith, has negotiated to try and arrive at fair and reasonable settlements, and I might say four of the five First Nations involved in the Northern Flood Agreement have resolved their issues and have settled with hundreds of millions of dollars being flowed to those First Nations. I think that is a record of which we can be very, very proud. I say to the member opposite, rather than stir up discontent and conflict, he ought to get involved in attempting to ensure that the people of Cross Lake come to the table to complete the negotiations for the benefit of all of the people of Cross Lake.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Agriculture Industry—Diversification

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): It was not too long ago that a farmer would grow a single crop in Manitoba, harvest it and continue the same process the following year. Over the last few years, however, that has all changed. Today our farmers recognize that diversification is crucial to their ongoing success.

* (1420)

During the Working for Value Task Force we heard of many rural Manitobans who expressed a keen interest in further diversifying their operations. We were told about the need for innovative and creative approaches for creating new investment incentives for funding local value-added ventures within rural Manitoba.

The Filmon government continues its approach of consulting with Manitobans and acting upon their ideas. Now Manitoba farmers looking at diversifying their operations will have great opportunities to receive loan guarantees. This follows enhancement of the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation Diversification Loan Guarantee Program. A significant portion of rural Manitobans participating in the task force noted the

potential of nontraditional livestock as an area of great opportunity.

As the number of farmers investing in bison continues to grow, so does our commitment to assist their efforts. Demand for breeding stock has increased significantly since MACC introduced the bison lending program as a diversification opportunity in 1995. In an effort to provide Manitoba bison farmers with access to higher levels of financing, our government also made changes to MACC's loan program for female bison breeding stock.

The Filmon government continues to work with farmers to develop and implement new programs and help build a stronger, more stable provincial economy. As more farmers diversify their operations, I am confident that our goal of expanding the range of Manitoba's value-added exports by \$1 billion over the next decade will truly be realized. Thank you.

Ambulance Service—Gilbert Plains

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): I rise on a member's statement on behalf of the citizens of the community of Gilbert Plains and their surrounding rural municipality of Gilbert Plains.

Madam Speaker, on Monday, in a response to a question from my colleague from Swan River, the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) implied that people signing petitions are not connected with reality. Well, I have on a petition here, from the citizens of Gilbert Plains, 880 names of real people who are concerned that they are going to lose their ambulance service in that community. Gilbert Plains has worked long and hard, despite this government, to build up an ambulance service that does a very good job for the citizens of its community.

Madam Speaker, these people who have signed this petition are worried now that they are going to lose this ambulance service that has served their area so well. The reason the ambulance service is in jeopardy is because of decisions that are made by this Health minister and this provincial government.

Every year that the Parklands Regional Health Authority has been the decision maker locally in health services, they have received a cut in money from this

government. What the government does is give a pot of money to the Parklands Regional Health Authority, which is less than the pot of money that it gave it the year before, and simply tells the local folks to find where the cuts can take place.

Madam Speaker, because of those decisions made by this provincial government to underfund health care in the Parklands, we have yet another community that is in jeopardy of losing ambulance service. We have citizens in Gilbert Plains who live half an hour and 45 minutes from any kind of service, so this is something that is very important to these people, and I wish to present the 880 names here today to the Legislature.

BabyFirst Program

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): I am pleased to rise today to make all members aware of an innovative program announced. BabyFirst is a program which works with parents to prevent at-risk situations and promote positive parenting. Through funding of \$1.6 million this year and \$2 million in the following years, our government in partnership with public health nurses will ensure BabyFirst meets its six objectives, and that is promote positive parenting, enhance parent-child relationships, improve child health and development, reduce child abuse and neglect by providing parenting skills, link families to a primary health care provider and improve use of community resources.

BabyFirst will provide in-home assistance and education through a home visitor to ensure infants receive the care and the stimulation so crucial to the long-term well-being and healthy development of the child. The assistance will also support the parent in adapting to life with an infant and learning the necessary skills to care for the child. It is anticipated that the program will require 10 additional health care nurses and approximately 30 home visitors throughout the province.

Madam Speaker, by basing this program on the very successful Hawaii Health Start model, which showed that early intervention can provide long-term benefits for families, I am confident Manitoba children and their families will be happier and healthier. So I congratulate the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) and the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) for

their commitment to our most precious resource, our children. Thank you.

AECL-Layoffs

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Today is indeed a black day for the province of Manitoba when we hear that we are losing 250 Whiteshell workers from the AECL location in Pinawa. Highly professional technical people are being laid off.

Madam Speaker, we are all extremely upset about this, and particularly upsetting is this government's bungling of handling the situation of the AECL change in ownership. This government 10 years ago—when they took over, there were 850 jobs. We now are losing 250, with the remainder of 325 having an uncertain future. The province, in response, is to make photo-opportunity events after the job is gone. The province has never really, all through the past few years, been involved in any negotiations. I happen to be one member of the province's so-called Manitoba task force that actually went to meet the federal minister involved. There has been no follow-up by the province of that committee. There has never been any type of consultation, and obviously that was basically another photo opportunity for the MLA who represents that area and nothing more meaningful than that by the province.

The province has been noticeably lacking in the negotiations over the past two years. There has been a series of deadlines, all of which have gone by without any response of either the federal or provincial governments. Now we lose so many significant jobs, 250 jobs in Manitoba, a black day for this province when we lose so many high-tech jobs without even a fight by this Tory government.

Valley Gardens Crime Prevention Program

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Madam Speaker, I want to recognize the good work of a project entitled Together for Change: Crime Prevention through Social Development. This is a Youth Service Canada Project at Valley Gardens Junior High, and it is made possible by a \$140,000 grant.

The co-ordinators of the program are Elana Sokolov and Julie Penhall, and they have worked to hire 14

youth workers or participants who will be employed for eight months doing a variety of projects in the Valley Gardens community. The participants are: Samantha Baird, Brandy Cook, Gary Goulette, Chris McIvor, Krista Ramsey, Jeromy Swan, Shana Wolochatiuk, Kristy Brandstrom, Nhat Doan, Janet Hymers, Shannon Patenaude, Kanwall Saran, Naomo Litman-Targownik and Warren Yerex.

* (1430)

These participants are doing a whole variety of projects, everything from providing positive peer support to 14 at-risk youth from the community. They are running a job-finding club that has already identified over 12 businesses to employ students from the Kildonan East high school in summer jobs. They have solicited support from a variety of other businesses which are too numerous, unfortunately, to read into the record. They are having education forums at various other schools. They have held antiracism seminars and assemblies to celebrate March 21. They are organizing a drop-in centre at the community club, basketball tournaments, crime prevention symposiums, and a unique program called Teen Talk to encourage kids to ask for help with difficult issues like peer pressure, drug use, et cetera.

It is a lot of activity for one year. It is an excellent model for a program. I want to also recognize the support of the River East School Division board, as well as the principal at Valley Gardens, Ron Hildebrand, staff at the schools involved in the catchment area.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. Cerilli: As well as—Madam Speaker, if I might—members of the advisory board from Citizens for Crime Awareness, the parent committees, the community police, links with Child and Family Services, and Parks and Recreation.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

OPPOSITION DAY MOTIONS

Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI)

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers), that

“WHEREAS the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) would eliminate all hiring objectives or performance requirements of all types, thereby sharply reducing the ability of the Province of Manitoba to take economic initiatives in our best interest as a province; and

“WHEREAS under the MAI, the development of the Limestone Project with its northern hiring preferences would have been illegal; and

“WHEREAS even the minimal measures regarding investment in the Manitoba Telecom Services to initially sell the company to Manitobans and to require a certain number of Manitoba directors would have been illegal under MAI; and

“WHEREAS under the MAI any preferential grant or loan to any company such as AT&T or Faneuil would have to be made available to any other company requesting such treatment under national treatment criteria, and could not in any case contain any performance criteria; and

“WHEREAS it is unclear under constitutional and international law whether or not one level of government can bind another in areas in which the latter has sovereign power; and

“WHEREAS other provinces, such as British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan have expressed grave concerns about the MAI, with Saskatchewan urging the federal government “not to agree to an MAI which applies to sub-national measures in Canada without our explicit consent”; and

“WHEREAS any treaty on investment should contain in the body of the treaty articles on environmental standards and labour standards; and

“WHEREAS legal opinions from respected scholars such as Dr. Brian Schwartz and Barry Appleton have raised serious doubt as to the effectiveness of Canada's proposed reservations under the draft treaty to protect our Medicare and our social service systems and our culture.

“THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this Legislative Assembly is opposed to the MAI in its current form; and

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba insist that any MAI include an explicit, detailed unbound reservation protecting Health, Education and Social Services, Culture and Crown Corporations and the right to take affirmative action measures, including performance requirements in any undertaking designed to improve the situation of Aboriginal and other under-represented citizens; and

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Manitoba insist that signatories to the treaty at the national and sub-national levels have the unbound right to take measures in environmental and labour matters for the protection and betterment of all citizens; and

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Legislative Assembly urge the Manitoba and Federal governments to consider holding public hearings on the proposed final draft of the MAI to discern Manitobans' views on the treaty prior to any agreement by Manitoba to the conditions of the treaty.”

Motion presented.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, freely elected legislative assemblies everywhere were conceived in hope and born in struggle. Simply put, our forebearers who fought this struggle hoped for freedom from tyranny and freedom to order our lives and society for the greater good of all citizens. The struggle was always against tyranny, tyranny of kings and princes, tyranny of despots who, in the imagery of the Bible, oppressed the poor and the widow, who grind the poor into the dust and who do not do justice in the gate.

Slowly and with many reversals, democratically elected legislatures have gained increasing freedom to offer this hope to their people, but privilege never gives up its struggle to regain what it has lost, namely the right to dominate, the right to have excessive privilege against the needs of people and their hard-won rights to order their affairs and to use their resources to create and maintain a decent, industrious, sustainable and safe civil society.

Last week in this House we debated one of our precious privileges, namely the making of the budget of the government. Whatever we may think of any given budget, the right of people to elect a government which

will in turn tell people what it believes is needed to be done and where it will find the resources to do it in open debate with disclosure and accountability, that right is precious, Madam Speaker.

Last week in the House we debated the Calgary declaration, again a free expression of the will of Canadians to continue to struggle for unity and national purpose, for justice and generosity in our national House.

This debate today about the Multilateral Agreement on Investment is also fundamental to our reason for being in this place as elected representatives of all Manitobans, for in its present form it threatens directly the ability of this Legislative Assembly and all other such bodies in our country to order our society for the greater good. It directly threatens our ability to preserve and protect our health care system, the ability to make new environmental laws to enhance sustainability of our world for our children and their children. It must be defeated and not simply delayed.

In late 1996, when I first went looking for information about this elusive treaty, which was in secret negotiation among the OECD nations at the time—secret because they knew that if citizens understood what was happening, they would rise in opposition, as has indeed happened since—the first hit I got on the Net, Madam Speaker, was a group I had never heard of before, the Transatlantic Business Dialogue. The reference in their minutes to the MAI was the reference to a meeting in Seville, Spain, in November of 1995, and it was only one of four sections of the minutes of that meeting, but it was chilling to read.

Quite simply, what these men wanted was a charter of rights for capital, rights to move their money and their plants wherever, whenever, with whatever stuff they wanted to be free from new environmental regulations, to be free from labour laws, to be free from any requirements to hire local people, or to give back any benefit to the state in which they were doing business.

* (1440)

They even wanted to define investment to include speculative money, the hot money that washes around

the globe every day battering currencies, sometimes including our own, and currencies have people behind them. These washers of money batter people as well. They wanted the right to inflict capital punishment, a very apt term for what they wanted, on any nation which dared to assert the rights of its citizens over against the rights of corporate capital power. In short, they wanted power with no accountability which is simply the definition of tyranny.

Perhaps it was the list of the co-chairs of the meeting that drove home what was happening at this meeting. Let me read them to you. The world chief executive officers of the Ford Motor Company, of Xerox, of BASF—a German multinational tool; many different dimensions in that company—and of the huge bond trader, Goldman Sachs, and two politicians, Sir Leon Brittan of the European community and the Secretary of Commerce for the United States, as well as, Martin Bangemann. I will table this document so that all members have a chance to read it at their leisure.

Madam Speaker, when I saw the initial draft of the MAI treaty in early 1997, I realized with some horror that the table of contents of the draft treaty was essentially the table of contents of the Transatlantic Business Dialogue report on what they wanted to protect their investments, virtually the same chapter headings and the same detail.

The OECD negotiators were only pretending to represent their nations; in fact, they were representing the corporations who had assembled in Spain in November of 1995. This was driven home in a somewhat sad but comic way in Toronto recently in which a debate on the MAI was being held downtown in Toronto between its opponents and its supporters. The federal government was supposed to send someone from Sergio Marchi's office. They could not find anybody, I guess, so they sent someone from IBM instead. That was a comic but sad moment.

It has given us great hope in our democratic processes that as the sheer effrontery of this treaty becomes known, responsible governments of every stripe have risen to defend their people's rights. The Yukon, Territories, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island, all have taken strong stands on the current treaty. Madam Speaker, I will table the resolutions and letters from these

legislatures. Cities and towns, the small town of Woodstock in Ontario, the city of Montreal, 32 cities in British Columbia and Alberta, have all taken stands against the treaty in its current form.

The Manitoba Provincial Council of Women have passed an exceptionally strong motion. This council does valuable work on behalf of all women and citizens of Manitoba, and I will also table this document. The churches of Canada acting on behalf of their members have issued a valuable document—to their member churches which include the Mennonite, Anglican, Lutheran, United, Catholic, Baptist, and others—called Ethical Reflections on the MAI. The bottom line of these articles is the MAI is not ethical.

Sadly, Canada has not said no formally to this treaty as yet. France has. United States effectively has. Canada has not. This Legislature has not said no either, but I hope it will with the passage of this resolution later this afternoon.

The essence of this treaty can be discerned by looking at a legal battle now being waged under the guise of NAFTA by the Ethyl Corporation of the United States. The Ethyl Corporation makes a gasoline additive, MMT, which has a long chemical name, but it is a manganese additive which is not used by any of the formula gasoline manufacturers in the United States, by any of the formula refineries. It is illegal in California; it is a banned substance. It is not used in Canada, and car manufacturers have told American regulators that MMT destroys the effectiveness of the pollution control devices on cars.

So the Canadian government banned its import, and the Ethyl Corporation has taken us to court under NAFTA, not under the MAI which goes much further than NAFTA, but under NAFTA. They are suing us for \$350 million. They have no staff here, they have no plants here, they have no investment in Canada, but they want \$350 million from our people for taking away what they claim to be future profits. How in the world can we know what future profits would be, in any case, Madam Speaker, and who should have the right to sue for future profit loss?

Will Ethyl sue in an open court in Canada? No, they will not. They will bring their case before a closed and

secret tribunal with one arbitrator they name, one arbitrator we name, and a third one chosen by the two. They will hold their meetings in secret. Their papers will be in secret. There will be no release of the files, and their finding will be binding on this country though they never stand up once in a court of law of this country. This is the tyranny of a Star Chamber court. It must not be allowed to continue.

In closing, let us all join together, all members, as we did last week, to offer vision and hope for our country and asserting our rights to order our economy to benefit our people and not to so tie our hands that when we are approached by those among our citizens who need fairness or justice, who need employment and a secure future, we do not look at them and say with shame, we cannot, I am sorry. We tied our hands. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Madam Speaker, given limited time, I will move right into my comments, and I will ask consideration at the outset. I will be introducing some, what I would call, friendly amendments to the resolution that probably could, in fact, help the outcome of it.

The resolution before us speaks to issues being raised by Manitobans, Canadians and their governments with regard to negotiations and the organization for economic co-operation and development. The OECD, aimed at concluding a multilateral agreement on investment, the MAI, the federal government is responsible for negotiating international agreements in this area.

Let me start by indicating that I believe all governments in Canada support the overall objective in ensuring that Canada remains attractive to foreign investors. Indeed, the government of British Columbia recently indicated, and I quote: favours the development of multilateral rules that enhance security and stability for foreign investors, including both foreign-owned companies in Canada and the Canadian-owned companies investing abroad, end of quote.

It would be appropriate if the resolution reflected what I hope would be a shared goal for these negotiations. The resolution also notes that the current

draft of the MAI contains a number of provisions which pose concerns for the governments in Canada. I should stress that these concerns relate to a draft text that continues to contain numerous areas where OECD governments involved in the negotiations, including the Government of Canada, continue to disagree with various provisions.

Recent announcements from federal Trade Minister Marchi and the U.S. government have now made it clear that negotiators are not expected to resolve these issues in the near future. In fact, I understand that the Dutch chair of these negotiations, Frans Engering, has recently indicated that he would not be recommending that governments sign any MAI at the upcoming OECD ministerial meeting at the end of April. It is very unclear at this stage when or even if these negotiations will be concluded.

Given the incomplete and draft nature of the agreement and the remaining differences among governments negotiating it, I think it would be more appropriate for the resolution to outline concerns with the MAI on the basis of restrictions which it could entail rather than which it would entail. More specifically, the resolution should outline that there are provisions in the current draft of MAI which go beyond the investment provisions of the NAFTA and could restrict hiring objectives or performance requirements and could limit the adoption of northern hiring preferences for hydro developments and could limit the adoption of northern hiring preferences for hydro developments and could impose limitations on adoption of special share agreements or requirements for Manitoba directors where government agencies are privatized and could extend the national treatment provisions for the provision of investment incentives.

I would be prepared to support a resolution that outlines that there remain provisions within the draft text that could have such implications. This said, the resolution goes on to indicate that other provinces have taken issue with some elements of the draft MAI. As I have indicated to this House, I have written to the federal Trade minister indicating that the Manitoba government supports an agreement which reflects Canada's existing obligations as provided under NAFTA. Furthermore, I have met personally with Trade Minister Marchi to stress that Manitoba is not

willing to accept an agreement which goes beyond the investment provisions of NAFTA.

I believe it is very important that the resolution reflect the position Manitoba has taken on this issue. The potential concerns outlined in this resolution are focused on elements within the current draft text that go beyond those in NAFTA. It is in that context that I would be prepared to support a resolution that the Legislative Assembly is opposed to the MAI in its current form.

* (1450)

The resolution notes that the need for provisions relating to environmental labour standards are a part of the MAI negotiations. Manitoba has consistently supported efforts to develop provisions reflecting the commitment of countries to the protection and promotion of high standards related to labour and environment. Indeed, Manitoba has taken a leadership role in this regard by calling for such provisions as part of the NAFTA negotiations, and we have demonstrated our commitment in this area by formally joining the NAFTA side agreements on labour and environmental co-operation.

The resolution notes that legal opinions have suggested that the wording adopted in Canada's reservation to protect Canada's medicare and social service system is open to interpretation and thus does not provide the full and unquestioned protection which Manitobans and Canadians require.

Minister Marchi has indicated the federal government would not sign an MAI without ironclad reservations at the national and subnational level that completely preserve our freedom of action in key areas, including all of the following: health care, social programs, education, culture and programs for aboriginal peoples and minority groups. The Manitoba government is in full support of a resolution calling for the federal government to ensure that the MAI include all explicit, detailed, unbound reservations protecting these key areas.

I am also in full support of calling on the federal government to show that the MAI preserves the rights of government to take measures in environmental,

labour matters for the betterment of all citizens. Manitoba could not support any agreement that would call into question our ability to positively influence these areas in the public interest.

Finally, the resolution urges public hearings on a final draft of MAI. As I have indicated, it is unclear at this stage when or if there will be any final draft MAI. Nevertheless, I am in full support of the need for a full public discussion on this issue across Canada and would support a resolution urging the federal government, which is negotiating this agreement, to conduct full public hearings on any proposed final agreement within Manitoba. My discussions with Minister Marchi last month suggested that he would be prepared to have public consultations in all province areas.

So, Madam Speaker, I therefore move, seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. McCrae),

THAT the motion be amended by:

"1. Adding the following prior to the first WHEREAS clause:

'WHEREAS Manitoba, as a trading province, is dependent on trade and investment and an agreement which mirrors the investment provisions of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is potentially of great interest; and

'WHEREAS Manitoba favours the development of a set of multilateral rules to enhance security and stability for investments; and

'WHEREAS the Manitoba Government has indicated that it is not prepared to support a Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) which goes beyond the investment protection obligation contained in the NAFTA; and

'WHEREAS the current draft text of the MAI contains a number of provisions which go beyond Canada's NAFTA obligations; and'

"2. By deleting all the words after WHEREAS in the first WHEREAS clause and substituting the following 'the current draft text of the MAI could eliminate hiring

objectives or performance requirements of all types, thereby sharply reducing the ability of the Province of Manitoba to take economic initiatives in our best interest as a province; and'

"3. By deleting all the words after WHEREAS in the second WHEREAS clause and substituting the following 'under the current draft text of the MAI, the development of the Limestone Project with its northern hiring practices could have been illegal; and'

"4. By deleting all the words after WHEREAS in the third WHEREAS clause and substituting the following 'the measures regarding investment in Manitoba Telecom Services to initially sell the company to Manitobans and to require a certain number of Manitoba directors could have been illegal under the current draft of the MAI; and'

"5. By deleting all the words after WHEREAS in the fourth WHEREAS clause and substituting the following 'under the current draft text of the MAI, the national treatment criteria could be extended to the provision of any preferential grants or loans to companies investing in Manitoba and could restrict performance criteria associated with such financial assistance; and'

"6. By deleting all the words after WHEREAS in the sixth WHEREAS clause and substituting the following 'Canadian provinces have expressed concerns about provisions in the MAI which go beyond those contained in NAFTA and have urged the federal government not to agree to an MAI which applies to sub-national measures in Canada without explicit consent of the provinces; and'

"7. By deleting the word 'serious' in the second line of the eighth WHEREAS clause.

"8. By deleting all the words after the word 'Manitoba' in the first BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED clause and substituting the following 'urge the federal government to ensure that any MAI include an explicit detailed unbound reservation protecting Health, Education and Social Services, Culture and Crown Corporations and the right to take affirmative action measures in any undertaking designed to improve the situation of Aboriginal and other under-represented citizens; and'

"9. By deleting all the words after the words 'Manitoba' in the second BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED clause and substituting the following 'insists that the federal government ensure the MAI protects the sovereign right of governments to take measures in environmental and labour matters for the protection and betterment of all citizens; and'

"10. By deleting all the words after the words 'urge' in the final BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED clause and substituting the following 'the federal government to consider holding public hearings prior to any decision regarding Canadian signature to the MAI and that public consultations provide Manitobans with an adequate opportunity to express their views on MAI.'"

I would appreciate support, Madam Speaker.

Point of Order

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): On a point of order, you will know that this is the first actual debate on an Opposition Day resolution since the rules were amended. The other previous motion that we had forward in the temporary rules was, of course, never called by the government dealing with calling for a plebiscite prior to the sale of the Manitoba Telephone System. I believe the minister is totally abusing the intent of an Opposition Day to bring up a matter of public importance with a specific vote on the motion that is before the Chamber.

Madam Speaker, you will recall last week in the debate on the flags in Parliament that it was an Opposition Day, namely, the Reform Party that moved a motion on the debate and had their motion proceed to the House of Commons. It is never the intent of having the majority, i.e., the government, come forward with amendments to the minority, i.e., the opposition, changing the substance and the vote that is going to be put before the Chamber. I draw your attention to an amendment on the issue of public hearings that the minister is now suggesting or amending to say, conducted by the federal government. We do not have jurisdiction over the federal government calling public hearings. We do have jurisdiction over this government having public hearings, so this is a clear breach of the spirit and the words and the jurisdiction under which we serve.

This is not a private member's resolution. This is an Opposition Day resolution, and we will not have Opposition Days and votes if you rule these amendments in order, because the government majority will then rule all the opposition resolutions, the government majority will amend the substance of an opposition resolution. So it will not be Opposition Day anymore. It will be government amendment of Opposition Day to be Government Day, so if you rule this in order, then the whole issues—[interjection] Well, I am saying it is Opposition Day. I know the members opposite are not used to having democracy; I know they are not used to having debate; I know they are not used to having dissent. I know they do not like having that kind of a government; they just like to do what they want.

I say to the Speaker today, and I think this is a huge issue, that this is not a private member's resolution. This is an Opposition Day resolution; and, if you rule these amendments in order, you have destroyed, in my view, the intent of this resolution to have the public hear from this Legislature on initiatives that are taken by opposition and having a finite vote.

Madam Speaker, this is very important, and I am quite surprised that the government has moved amendments to this Opposition Day resolution. They have the choice of voting down our resolution; they have the choice of voting for this resolution. But, to take the whole Opposition Day resolution and make all these numbers of amendments, and I mentioned one substantive amendment, I mean, to have public hearings, this Legislature call on public hearings for the federal government when we cannot call on the federal government, we do not have the jurisdiction to require the federal government to have it, but this Legislature could in fact have the jurisdiction for the provincial government to have public hearings.

That is just one of many reasons why I believe these amendments are out of order, and if you rule today that these amendments are in order, you have, in essence, in my view, taken away the whole intent of having opposition days. I am quite worried about that, because I think the opposition, which is by definition a minority, has to from time to time have a chance to put matters of public importance on the record in an unfiltered way, an unfiltered way from the government majority. If you

rule today that these amendments are in order, it means that the government majority will continue to control all the legislative business of this Chamber and the words "Opposition Day resolution" have, in effect, been violated by any ruling that allows these amendments in order.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, on the same point of order, the moving of this complex series of amendments creates a number of difficulties in the case of an Opposition Day. We have run into similar problems in private members' hour. In fact, you have been as a matter of course in private members' hour taking amendments under advisement. The intent I think in that case is partly to look at whether the amendments are technically in order but also recognizing the fact that it is indeed private members' hour and that you run into a very difficult situation with the government, which has the majority of the day, being able to tie up Private Members' Business with a series of amendments. We have seen what that can result in.

* (1500)

In the case of this being an Opposition Day, I would point out that the government does have the option of moving a motion on the Multilateral Agreement on Investment as a government motion. That is their right. They can schedule that at any point in time, Madam Speaker. I would have suggested that if they are that concerned about the MAI, they could have done that prior to our taking the initiative as an opposition to have an Opposition Day called.

The difficulty, if you run through the process that will be adopted, is that if we do have amendments now routinely moved on Opposition Day motions, they will no longer be in effect Opposition Day motions, because the government will use its majority to vote on the amendment, which indeed I assume if the Whip is on will pass. We will not have the opportunity of voting on the original motion that we moved, the original intent of the motion.

I also point again to the complexity, because even if one, for argument's sake, accepts the ability to move an amendment on Opposition Day, which as I said does raise some questions, I think there are some questions

in this particular case whether the amendments will meet the tests that we have in terms of admissibility of amendments, particularly Beauchesne, and I would cite 567 through 579, the various prohibitions that we have in place. The unfortunate part in this case is, while some of the amendments might, some part of the amendment might in fact be something that would be acceptable to us, having moved this motion, some of the other aspects of the amendment do change quite significantly the substance, particularly the reference to public hearings at the federal level.

The intent of this motion is to see action taking place by the government at the recommendation of the Manitoba Legislature. We are trying to make sure that we take action here in Manitoba. I would submit, Madam Speaker, that therefore that part of the amendment would not be in keeping with the original intent of the motion and does not meet the test of Beauchesne Citation 567 which states: "The object of an amendment may be either to modify a question in such a way as to increase its acceptability . . ." It certainly does not meet that test of Beauchesne, which in fact is quoted from Erskine May.

I would urge you to take this matter under advisement. I would suggest that probably the appropriate thing to do would be to deal with the Opposition Day motion perhaps later at the scheduled time at 5:30 and for the government perhaps if it feels that our motion does not deal adequately with the matter in their opinion, they can vote on our motion, accept it or oppose it, and then schedule another day where they can call it government business. We will co-operate in any way, shape, or form it requires to have that accepted as government business, but we feel strongly enough on the MAI that we want to see a clear statement from the Manitoba Legislature. We would like to see that today, and we would like to see it based on a vote on our original motion, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, on the same point of order, the minister, in introducing this, indicated a wish that these be friendly amendments, and I take him at his word, and there are a number of amendments that he has proposed which we would not find objectionable.

But, Madam Speaker, this motion was printed on the Order Paper two days ago. This was available. If the

minister really wished to put forward constructive changes and to put forward a resolution that would have his support as well as the support of the opposition whose day this is, he had options of contacting us and proposing changes which would make the resolution acceptable to both sides of the House, and he chose not to do that, and I am sorry he did not.

Madam Speaker, my second problem with what is being proposed is that the very complex amendments which he has proposed are such that our members have no real idea now of what it is we will be debating, because it is a complex motion and a complex subject.

So, Madam Speaker, I hope you will take their motion under advisement, and it may be possible during the course of the debate that we will agree on some changes which we might be able to make prior to voting on the motion later this afternoon. I would be prepared to meet with the minister and see if there is some accommodation, but we cannot accommodate on the question of public hearings. We simply must have this Legislature's support to have those hearings, so that all Manitobans will have a chance, whenever this thing is finalized, to make their views known.

So, Madam Speaker, I hope you will take the matter under advisement for all of the reasons given by the three speakers to this point of order.

Madam Speaker: The honourable government House leader, on the same point of order.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Yes, Madam Speaker, on the point of order raised by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer), he has claimed some surprise here, and I do not know who is more surprised, he or I, because I am fairly surprised he would raise this point of order respecting an allegation of the abuse of the intent behind Opposition Days.

Madam Speaker, I read to you one of our new rules. It is House Rule 22(13): "Debate on an Opposition Day Motion shall be limited to one sitting day; thirty minutes before the ordinary time of daily adjournment the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and forthwith put every question necessary to dispose of the motion and any amendments thereto."

Now, Madam Speaker, these rules are quite new. Did the Leader of the Opposition not talk to his House leader before he decided to rise on a point of order this afternoon? I mean, it was only last year that the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) and my predecessor, Jim Ernst, negotiated these rules to alter the proceedings of this House. How can the Leader of the Opposition, today, talk about the intent? The intent is laid out in the rules as negotiated between the parties as recently as last year. The honourable Leader of the Opposition simply cannot stand in his place today and claim to be surprised or claim that there is any suggestion of the abuse of the intent.

Now, I do not know what his House leader's intent was when it came to negotiating the rules as they are. I was not part of those negotiations. I was part of bringing them into the House, and I was quite pleased to have done so, but I think we are all missing the point here in this point of order. This is not about political one-upmanship. This is an extremely important matter. It has to do with the kinds of issues raised by the honourable member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) in the motion and addressed by the honourable Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) in the amendment.

We want to get something done in this Legislature that meets with the approval of the majority of the members of this Legislature, and the amendment does not change, in substance, the concerns raised by the honourable member for Crescentwood. We on this side of the House, as should be demonstrated over the last 10 years, Madam Speaker, are very committed to the principles of what it is that makes this such a great country. Our social programs need to be protected, and we want that to happen, and the issues addressed in the honourable member for Crescentwood's motion today and dealt with by the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) deal with those issues and express our concerns.

When it comes to the issue of public hearings, the honourable Deputy Premier has already pointed out that Mr. Marchi, the federal Minister for International Trade, has committed his government to public hearings with respect to these matters. So when you strip everything else away, honourable members are a little bit red-faced. They feel that they have been somehow upstaged or something because they cannot have everything their way. Well, it may be that their

plan would be to put a motion before the House, have it defeated and go out to the people and say, oh, those awful Tories. They have defeated our motion that has concern about all these things.

Well, if you read the amendment, you will see that it is indeed, by any definition, a so-called friendly and supportive amendment, like the kind we sometimes see in this place in private members' hour where we actually get business done. Do honourable members opposite want to get some business done or do they want to do their political posturing? This is too important to play around with things like that, and in my respectful submission, the amendment is indeed in order.

Madam Speaker: On the point of order raised by—[interjection] The honourable Minister of Northern and Native Affairs, to quickly summarize his views on the point of order.

Hon. David Newman (Minister of Northern Affairs): And I will do it quickly. I just wanted to make the point, Madam Speaker, that having heard the remarks made by the honourable member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) at the outset about dictatorial behaviour and commenting, quite correctly, negatively about it, what the honourable member for Crescentwood seems to be seeking here is almost like mayor for a day or model parliament for a day without an opposition. The role that we are playing here is simply straight up, right at the beginning, indicate where we stand, and what better way to begin a debate, what better way to join issue than to in effect set out where we stand.

You as the opposition party playing mayor for a day or government for the day have put forward a position, and we, unlike the official opposition and the way they conduct themselves, have put forward our position straight up. You have something now to talk to. You have something to attack, if you so wish.

The rules of the House which have been cited by the honourable opposition House leader (Mr. Ashton) indicate: does it enhance acceptability? Well, I would submit patently this enhances acceptability. Patently what has been done to amend this does enhance the quality of the resolution and certainly would make it

generally acceptable without offending its fundamental intent. Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker: On the point of order raised by the opposition Leader, the government House leader did indeed identify the rule that was discussed, agreed to in Rules committee by all parties and passed by this House. I will repeat the rule. Rule 22.(13) "Debate on an Opposition Day Motion shall be limited to one sitting day; thirty minutes before the ordinary time of daily adjournment the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and forthwith put every question necessary to dispose of the motion and any amendments thereto."

I can only assume that there must have been some debate regarding those rules and that amendments would have been anticipated. Therefore, proposing amendments is most definitely in accordance with our rules.

The actual amendment that has been presented, I have not yet had an opportunity to quickly review it, and I think in the interests of all parties, with the willingness of the House, if we take five minutes while additional copies are run off so that those most concerned about the amendment may have an opportunity to review it, but at this conjecture, I cannot understand—the rule then is you debate the amendment, you vote on each of them. I would find it very difficult to have this carried over because the rule explicitly states that the vote must take place at 5:30, so I hope you appreciate that, while there may be some difference of opinion, I am in the dilemma because my role is to enforce and comply and ensure the House complies with the rules that have been previously agreed to.

The only other suggestion I can make at this time is that if perhaps the House leaders want to have a quick meeting and entertain a five-minute recess to see if we can come to some agreement on the result.

Point of Order

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I recognize the issue that you are putting before us. May I make a suggestion for the consideration of the House that debate proceed on the amendment as moved, which is the same subject matter as the main motion—

An Honourable Member: On the motion, Jim.

Mr. McCrae: —or indeed the debate could be on the motion as suggested by the opposition House leader that you, Your Honour, take whatever time is necessary to review the matter and have the seat occupied by your deputy, and that debate could proceed, and when you return, you could offer your ruling.

Madam Speaker: Is there agreement then? [agreed]

I will have copies distributed immediately to the opposition House leader and the opposition Leader and the mover of the motion, and I will report back whether the amendment is in order.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Mr. Doer: I want to speak to the motion, and I will obviously refer to the substance of the motion, which, of course, will be in order even in consideration of the amendments.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it is appropriate that our first Opposition Day is dealing with a matter that I consider to be probably one of the most patriotic issues that we will face in this House. There is a lot of debate on flags and other symbols of patriotism. I believe there is no greater love of country than allowing the people in your country to have rights, to have duties, to have responsibilities and to have those rights clearly enshrined in the Constitution, the laws of Canada and in the legislatures of this country.

This resolution before us today really speaks to the whole principle of power to the people and power to the people in Canada and power to the people in this province versus the attempt to subvert that power and override that power with a constitutional international agreement providing rights for corporations here in our trading world. I very clearly support the resolution put forward by the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) and all the substance of his words in terms of why we have to take a strong stand in this Legislature and take a strong stand in this province.

I think we also, as part of that strong stand, have to say to the federal government—and the member for Crescentwood has already alluded to the Honourable

Sergio Marchi. We have to say to the federal government: You are not going to sign a secret deal dealing with public rights and public responsibilities and legislative rights in this Chamber. You are not going to sign that with the consent of this Province of Manitoba without public hearings that this Legislature is going to call upon through passing of this motion to have public hearings in this province.

I think it is absolutely essential that when we pass on our strong objections on the proposed MAI and we talk about the substance of why we are opposed to the proposed Multilateral Agreement on Investment, that we also provide rights for the public in this province to stand up and be heard, to have a chance to be educated, and for all of us to participate in our democracy before our democracy is lost with this proposed agreement.

Now, the provincial government has moved a number of amendments, and I find that the substance of our resolution is much more in keeping with the real goal of having democracy protected through a democratic process in this province. We quite frankly do not trust the federal government to have proper democratic processes in Canada. This is a government that campaigned and had in the red book a promise that they would not sign NAFTA unless the provisions of NAFTA dealing with energy and environment and labour were amended.

In fact, the red book went further to say that we will abrogate NAFTA unless energy is amended to give Canada the same rights as Mexico, so how can we then say that we are going to give the federal government the responsibility of holding public meetings? They broke their word on NAFTA. They misled the Canadian people on NAFTA, and for us to now put our trust in the federal Liberal government on this issue is absolutely unconscionable, and that is why this Legislature has the right, it has the responsibility and it has the duty to call on public hearings here in Manitoba.

We can do it. There is no requirement for the federal government to amend the Constitution with public hearings across Canada, but there is here in Manitoba, and it has provided our public and our citizens the right to participate and to be involved in a participatory process. So I strongly urge the minister and our critic

and members opposite to not lose both the leverage that public hearings would provide here in Manitoba against the federal government and not lose the principle of public hearings in terms of our democracy and our province.

Let me tell you the strategic reasons why public hearings are important. This agreement we had to get off the Internet, the proposed draft agreement. There are a lot of Canadians and a lot of Manitobans that do not know what is in it. Every time they kick it, it smells a little bit more in terms of what it means to their health care systems, to the sovereignty of their social services, to their Crown corporations, to issues that deal with the substance of their culture and with the future of their children.

* (1520)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the minister says that this must mirror NAFTA, an agreement that does not deal with the government's own objections on environment and labour, I say there is one major flaw in this already in dealing with NAFTA. You can get out of NAFTA within six months. This agreement is proposed to bind Canada for 20 years, so how can we possibly say in this Legislature that we are not willing to have public hearings on a matter that can bind our province and our people to something that overrides our rights and gives corporations those rights for 20 years? Why are we afraid to have public hearings in this province?

The honourable federal Minister of External Affairs resides in this community, resides in this province. Perhaps we would give ourselves more strength on health care, on education, on social services, on culture, on issues of energy, on environment, on labour, by letting the federal government know that we are not going to just pass a resolution in this Chamber, but we believe so strongly in this issue that we are willing to go out and discuss this issue with the public of Manitoba.

Now, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) may not want to do that because he, of course, is already on the path of destruction for the Canadian Wheat Board as an orderly marketing institution, another body that would be subject to the whims of corporate power if this MAI proceeds as proposed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would ask the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), the Minister of Agriculture, and other members across the way to join with the church groups, the Mennonite groups, the Catholic groups, the United Church, the Anglican Church, other organizations that say we should have public hearings in Manitoba. I would ask members across the way to join with the Manitoba Women's Institute that says that our people should be educated, and if the draft agreement proceeds in its present form, this province should absolutely, in no uncertain terms, oppose it.

I strongly believe that passing resolutions in this Chamber are very important dealing with the MAI agreement, and much of the substance we have could or should be between the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) and the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale)—I mean, we should look at the substance of these amendments if the Speaker does not rule in our favour, and I think she will not. But I think also that we should not lose our power, we should not deny our children and our grandchildren the opportunity to participate in a matter of urgent public importance. It is something that will bind all of us for 20 years.

That is the principle under which the former House leader of the Conservative Party, Mr. Mercier, and our House leader proceeded to change the rules on constitutional amendments. It is one thing to have a law that you pass that can be changed or amended when the government changes after the next election, but it is another matter to bind people for long periods of time either through constitutional amendments or trade agreements that are proposed to be for 20 years.

We strongly think that what we are saying in terms of substance in terms of opposition to MAI is very, very important, and it sounds like there are some of the same concerns, albeit not the same from the government with the amendments that they proposed today. We think we have lost some sovereignty in NAFTA. We have no difficulty in trading goods and services with other jurisdictions and with other countries; but, when you start determining issues of labour, we actually think of the original letter that was put out by the former Minister of I, T and T that talked about they would not agree to NAFTA unless labour standards were articulated in NAFTA, unless environmental floors were placed in NAFTA.

I mean, some of the kinds of trade agreements we see with Maastricht and other trade agreements where there is a sharing of the wealth in European trading countries, where there is a bottom line in terms of child labour, environmental protection, labour laws, where there is an ability to look at the sovereignty of health and education programs and beyond that there are actually plebiscites and referendums before countries join that trade agreement—they are much more in keeping with the democratic and people-oriented trade agreements as opposed to the corporate trade agreement that we see proposed in the MAI agreement.

The member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) has articulated a number of reasons why this Chamber should be opposed. We believe strongly that the more people that are educated on this agreement, the more they will be opposed to it, and we believe that Manitoba could take a true leadership position if the minister amends his proposal for federal hearings. Let us do it the Manitoba way. Let us involve the public and let us do it in this Legislature. Thank you very much.

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to speak on this motion, and I think that it is important to step back and look at what is the Multilateral Agreement on Investment. I will just read into the record very concisely that the Multilateral Agreement on Investment is being negotiated by the 29 member countries of the OECD to provide a comprehensive framework, including a set of multilateral rules and a process for dispute settlements to govern international investment.

The basic element of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment is nondiscrimination, that is, national treatment or equal treatment to be provided for foreign and domestic investors with some exceptions granted to protect sensitive sectors—and I think this is very important— which, in Canada's case, include health, culture and social services. I think we all can agree, I hope, and recognize that we are very much in a global economy today, that Canada is certainly very much of a trading nation, that we as a province are very much of a trading province. If you look back over the course of the last several years, when you look at Manitoba's exports as a result of agreements like the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA, and so on, we are

doing extremely well in terms of exports and, as a result of that, the growth in our economy. In fact, our exports to our largest trading partner, the United States, have roughly tripled since 1990, and we are certainly seeing the benefits of that here in Manitoba through jobs, investment and other activities taking place.

What I just read into the record about the objective of the multilateral agreement, I would think, would be something that the end objective we can agree to. I think we all would agree to principles like predictability, certainty, protection, security and stability for investment. Those kinds of principles I think for people investing in our province and our country are important principles, and they are certainly important protection for any Canadians that are investing elsewhere in the world.

I am going to stick to the original resolution, but I had a chance to go through it basically clause by clause, and I do not have the time to walk through each and every clause, but looking at the first few WHEREASes where the mover of the motion uses the word "would," I think there still is an awful lot of gray area, and that is a cause for concern, but to say it absolutely unequivocally that things would do this, would do that, from my point of view and the information I have, are not accurate statements.

Using the word "could" is certainly an appropriate way to describe many of those issues, and running through each of them, the reference in the second one, an example used, the Limestone project is used in the second WHEREAS. Again, the analysis is it is not at all clear that Manitoba Hydro's northern hiring preferences in connection with contracts for the construction of the Limestone dam would be affected by the MAI. So we are into many of these WHEREASes where, as I say, the use of the word "would" is not an appropriate choice of wording. The use of the word "could" is certainly a much more appropriate word, and I think that would be a more appropriate way to describe the WHEREASes.

I think that would be the kind of changes, the kind of friendly amendments that would make an awful lot of sense to issues that we all agree with or all areas of concern, and we want to be sure that the various protections are in place for Manitoba and for Canada.

When I get to the substance, when I get to the RESOLVED section, which is really the section that leads to action, again I think most of what is here in the RESOLVED section are things that we can generally agree to. First of all, the very first RESOLVED that this Legislative Assembly is opposed to the MAI in its current form, I think we all agree to that. I certainly hope that we all agree to that because of some of the issues that are raised in the WHEREAS, some of the issues that the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) has addressed in his comments and others.

Even our position to date, the Manitoba government's position to date, we have indicated very clearly that we are not prepared to support any MAI that goes beyond the existing level of obligations on investment protection as contained in the NAFTA. Given that the current draft of the MAI contains a number of provisions that go beyond NAFTA, we cannot support the MAI in its current form. So again, I think that WHEREAS, we are in general agreement.

The next WHEREAS that talks very specifically about excluding and allowing unbound reservation protecting health, education, social services, culture and Crown corporations, again, as has been indicated, I believe even federal Trade Minister Marchi has stated that the federal government will not accept any MAI without what he describes—and these are his words—ironclad reservations protecting our freedom of action in these areas. While the reference to Crown corporations is somewhat unclear, again I would think certainly our government and I would think everybody in here can fully support a clause that insists that the federal government, who is participating in the negotiations, ensure that those reservations are in fact included and are in fact ironclad, as described by the federal minister himself.

When you get to the next WHEREAS that the signatories to the treaty at the national and subnational levels have unbound right to take measures in environmental and labour, again it is our understanding that MAI negotiators are working to develop a text which clarifies the continued freedom of action for governments to exercise their rights, to continue to regulate industry for legitimate public purposes. I would think our government and again all members in this House hopefully can support a kind of a clause that

insists that the federal government ensure such provisions are included in the MAI in one form or another.

When it comes to the whole issue and the importance of holding public hearings, again we certainly acknowledge the importance of that for a potential agreement of this magnitude, recognizing that the federal government at this stage certainly is the level of government that is responsible for the negotiations. They are the lead government in terms of these negotiations. It certainly is appropriate for all of us to urge the federal government to hold public hearings across our province, across Canada, to allow the public to have input into the whole issue, the whole discussion related to a potential MAI, and I think, as members in this Chamber have already indicated, that would be a very worthwhile part of the process, a very important part of the process to allow Manitobans to have input into this potential document.

So when I look at this motion moved by the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale), there obviously is a great deal in here that I think we can all agree to, and with some very friendly amendments and modifications, we can end up with a resolution that we can all agree to. I would think that should be our objective for this very important issue, that we are, by and large, in agreement with most of what is outlined in this resolution. I think that, with some wording change, with some adjustments potentially to some of the resolve clauses, we can end up with a package that still certainly meets the objective of the original resolution, meets the objective of our government and the position we have taken to date. I think it would go a long way to adding credibility to this entire initiative if we can all come together as MLAs in this Assembly and support one resolution and send a very comprehensive and totally agreed package to the federal government.

I think that some of the resolves, like the issue like the federal government holding public hearings, are certainly a very important part of that. I know some discussions are taking place. I hope they lead to an agreement that we can all support, and I think that with good will on all parts and recognition of the importance of this issue we can have a resolution by later today that we can all support.

I have appreciated the opportunity to say a few words on this very important initiative, and I encourage everybody in this Chamber to work towards that objective of finding a resolution that we can all agree to because I think at this particular point in time we are not very far apart at all in terms of our objectives with this resolution, just a matter of improving and adjusting some of the wording, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to join the debate on this extremely important topic of MAI, and find it rather odd that we are in this situation where the government has seen fit to propose an amendment to our resolutions on this major resolution on this very critical issue.

Indeed, as the Leader of this party, of our official opposition has indicated, and the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) and House leader, what it does is take away from the thrust of an Opposition Day move. Certainly, there is plenty of opportunity for the government to have come forward before by way of government resolution or indeed later by way of government resolution stating very clearly where the government wishes to position itself on this matter.

I appreciate the fact that the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey) has brought forward what he refers to as a friendly amendment, and I think we understand that on this side, but what I wonder is, if the minister really sincerely believes that this is such an important matter as we do on this side, why the minister has not weeks ago, months ago, as a minister, made statements on this matter. This government has been silent; it has been totally silent to my knowledge. I have not seen anything in the paper or heard anything in the media about the government's position on this matter. [interjection]

Well, I cannot hear the comments across the way. I do not know whether people are suggesting the government has made a position on this, has made its position known or not. But certainly other governments have, Mr. Deputy Speaker, other governments to the west of us and other organizations have made their views very well known. I sort of get the impression that the government perhaps has been too laid back on the issue. Instead of being aggressive and making its views more clearly known to the public as well as to the

Government of Canada, we are sort of missing the boat. Not only should the government and the minister in particular have made the government's position very clear on this in expressing the concerns that the government of Manitoba has, but I would go even further and suggest the Manitoba government could have taken an initiative and had public hearings, and go around the province. I mean, we have had public hearings on many issues. I believe the present Deputy Speaker himself has had this kind of experience in other areas of programs, other responsibilities, and there is nothing preventing whatsoever the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey) to organize a series of public hearings to get the views of Manitobans.

Well, there seems to be agreement on both sides of the House that there is no question that the MAI does infringe on the rights and responsibilities of democratically elected governments to protect the health system, to protect the environment, to protect the culture of the nation, to protect your social programs and so on. There is no question that there is this challenge to the right and the authority of a democratically elected body, whether it be federal or provincial.

I am glad that the Minister of Industry and others on the other side recognizes that there are problems and that there is a threat to our way of life, implicit in this MAI proposal, a threat to independence of this country and this province, and indeed a threat to democracy.

I suppose it is easy to talk, and I have heard speeches in this Legislature, I guess from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), in particular, and the Minister of Industry and Trade (Mr. Downey) about the glories and how wonderful free trade is, and we should always be moving to a freer trade situation. Well, free trade is fine in economic theory, but implicit in that theoretical model is that people trade of equal size, and if you are not of equal size or equal-sized economies, it is usually the stronger partner that gets the better of the free trade.

I might add a little bit of history. Back in the 19th Century, Germany was very much opposed to the free trade philosophy of Britain. Britain was far advanced to Germany in terms of being industrialized; Germany

was just beginning. They came up with an infant industry argument saying that we are not going to go for free trade, we are going to have tariffs, we are going to protect our industry so that German industries could rise and become as powerful and strong as the British industries.

Well, they recognized then that free trade is fine in theory, but it does not work if you have one advanced heavily industrialized country versus smaller economies or underdeveloped economies, because implicitly they are at a disadvantage. I would suggest that if we were living in a more ideal world than we are, if you had a true world government, a true government that embraced all nations and that could protect people and could have health laws and environmental protection, labour laws or whatever we want in the global village, whatever peoples want, that we would put this in place through a world government.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are very far from that and what we have had is the freeing-up of trade, now this has moved from freeing up investment, really for the benefit, specifically for large corporations, multinational, transnational corporations. They, indeed, are the ones that have been benefiting from this and you can see lots of evidence of disadvantages occurring to many areas of the world, particularly some of the developing areas of the world. Even in Canada there is evidence of us losing jobs because of a freer trade agreement through NAFTA.

I think that we should be very concerned about the secretive nature of the process. In fact, this debate or rather the negotiations have been going on for many months and years, and yet there has been very little public information given. Only now are we seeing evidence of what has been agreed to, and only now the public is becoming aware of what is being proposed.

* (1540)

There is no question, as the Leader of the official Opposition stated, we do need more public input. There should be a real, vital and meaningful set of public hearings. I would not trust the federal government to carry out the kind of hearings we want. Perhaps Mr. Marchi has stated, well, he is agreeable to public input, but I would want to know exactly how he

is going to prepare for that public input; just to what extent are the people of Canada going to be able to be heard and to make their views known. Is there going to be a forum where there will be full public access, full public attention and that the government will truly be listening?

There is nothing preventing Manitoba from taking the initiative, going out and having our own hearings and doing it in a thorough way, allowing people from all parts of this province to be involved.

I am pleased that the Minister of Industry has indicated that he has some concerns and that he realizes that it has gone beyond NAFTA and he thinks that there should be some protection in certain areas. My impression, though, is that we have taken a back seat to Sergio Marchi. I believe the federal minister has been highhanded. I believe I read at one point where the federal Minister of Trade said that he is the one who is at the table and he is the one who is going to be signing, and implying, you know, do not try to muzzle in on it; we are going to do it; the feds are going to do it; we do not need the provinces there.

I just state in conclusion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we should take a stronger position in this. This resolution is fine, however it passes, but I appeal to the Minister of Industry to get busy and get aggressive on this and do what B.C. has done. It has indicated its complete opposition to the MAI and has made its views very clearly. I am quoting from a statement made by the B.C. government: We do not need the MAI, and we want it conveyed to the federal government in the strongest terms that the B.C. government is opposed to this agreement.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

They state all kinds of basic reasons why they would be opposed to it, including giving special rights to international investors and placing restrictions on democratically elected governments which are attempting to act on behalf of their citizens at all levels of government, local, provincial and federal. They very well make the case how MAI would threaten the integrity of our existing health and social systems, our cultural industries, and generally undermine the government's ability to create jobs.

I would also refer the minister to the initiatives taken by the Saskatchewan government where they previously wrote to the federal minister outlining their very grave concern with the MAI, stating that every aspect of provincial jurisdiction over local economic and social management will be affected by the MAI.

Just in conclusion, Madam Speaker, given the comprehensive ambiguity that still surrounds the MAI contents and its impacts on Canada and Saskatchewan and indeed on Manitoba and the impossibly short time frame that remains for obtaining domestic and international consensus on the text, no such agreement should apply to Saskatchewan, and I would say Manitoba, without its explicit consent.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Before recognizing the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek, I want to put on the record my determination that the amendment indeed is in order. I reviewed it very carefully against the original motion, and under our guidelines it most definitely is an acceptable amendment.

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Madam Speaker, as legislative assistant to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey), I am certainly pleased to be able to stand and speak to this very important issue.

Madam Speaker, I think that as I represent the constituency of Sturgeon Creek, I often hear that the issues that we debate in this Legislature, although all are important, I think that we have to have our facts in place, and I think that one of the things that concerns me with this resolution—and I respect the members' thoughts and considerations with this very important issue—is that I would prefer to see that there is nothing that would mislead the public on this issue. I think that is the important aspect of it.

Although we tend to be accused of being narrow in our vision, I certainly support the investment in this country in the last number of years that has made this country and this province very profitable in terms of multilateral investments in this province. I can think of many, and I am certainly not going to go into any great detail on that, because we all know very well the

importance of these multinational companies that have come into this province and invested and brought many opportunities for employment and put us in the position as a province to be able to provide the employment to the Manitobans. I think that is really what we have to be concerned with

What I was going to say, unfortunately, has, in many respects, already been said by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) and the honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey), so I will not repeat a lot of those things. But I certainly agree with what they have said, and endorse and support the amendment to the resolution because I think the resolution, although the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) was well intentioned in terms of the resolution that he was presenting—I think that he has given the wrong message in saying that this does affect the people of Manitoba. Yes, it very well could if there was an agreement that was hard and fast and hard print, but we do not have that, we do not have that before us.

It is also interesting to note, as the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) has indicated, that we in Manitoba have the right to ratify any agreement that the federal government is going to impose on the province, the people of Manitoba. In that case, then, I feel that what we are doing is we are just blowing smoke into the wind on this issue, Madam Speaker, because we have to wait—and it is in our best interest to wait—for the federal government and Sergio Marchi to present and negotiate the best deal that is possible.

Through the remarks that have been given—and the opposition members have indicated and supported the fact that there has not been a deadline, there has not been an agreement arrived at here. I think that is the important thing, because what are we doing here, what are we arguing about? We can have public hearings. Once we have the aspect of the agreement tied down and there is a hard-and-fast rule here before us that we can debate, then have the public hearings. I believe that is in the best interests of Manitobans.

But we have to know what we are talking about. We cannot just go and say, well, if this is going to happen; we are wasting our time; we are spinning our wheels. I think it is very important—I think it would be embarrassing—the people of Manitoba would say, what

are you doing? You are wasting our time. What are we going to agree on here, because there is nothing here that we can get our teeth into? I believe that this government and the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey)—it is in the best interests of this government, and we have demonstrated that in terms of our contact and working with multinational companies to ensure that the people of Manitoba are protected and the interests of Manitobans are protected. What that has meant to us as a government is four balanced budgets. Those are important things. Certainly this government has not demonstrated, Madam Speaker, that we are going to do anything that is going to adversely affect the interests of Manitobans.

* (1550)

The member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) talked about, we are too laid back with this issue—I do not think we are laid back at all—that we should be taking the lead on this, the initiative. This is a federal issue. This is not a Manitoba issue. It is going to affect Manitobans, and we are going to address those things. This government has demonstrated that over the past 10 years. The honourable members across the way seem to believe that we as government, because of the fact that we have not led the charge, are sitting back on our laurels on this issue, and there is nothing further from the truth. [interjection] The honourable member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) talks about, well, what have you done?

An Honourable Member: No, I said it.

Mr. McAlpine: Well, okay. Maybe it was—well, it does not matter whether it is the member for Radisson or the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), they are still blowing from the same flute, Madam Speaker. They are still playing the same tune. I mean, if one says it, they all believe it.

But I just want to say, in conclusion, that I support the resolution, the amendment to the resolution, and I support a lot of the things that the honourable member who presented this resolution is talking about. I think that if it is going to affect Manitobans in an adverse way then we as a government are going to stand up and ensure that the people of Manitoba and the interests of Manitobans are protected for the long term of this

province. We have demonstrated that, and we will continue to demonstrate that. The people of Manitoba will recognize that and will, in perpetuity, re-elect this government because of that.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank you for the opportunity to put these remarks on the record. Thank you.

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): I am pleased to join in this debate on this so-called Opposition Day on the resolution on the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, and I am pleased to follow up the comments of the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine). I want to clarify for him two things. He went on at great length trying to say that our proposal to have public hearings was premature, but if he would read the final result in our resolution, it said that we would have public hearings on the proposed final draft. So the majority of his speech talking about how Manitobans would think it was silly to have public hearings prematurely is simply either out of order or just does not make sense.

The other point to make is, perhaps the member is not aware, what I have learned recently is how this is so fundamentally different from any of the agreements related to free trade which do have implications for the provinces, but because this is dealing with investment, Manitoba has to agree and sign on to this treaty and to this agreement. That, I think, is one of the major reasons why we want to see in Manitoba public hearings, because Manitoba has to agree and sign on to this even though it is being negotiated at the federal level in secret. Manitoba has an opportunity to have, like other provinces, a much stronger involvement, and that is why other provinces like British Columbia have so clearly stated outright, as they have seen the direction that this is going, that they are not interested in having their abilities to provide for environmental, labour protection, for health and education and social services infringed upon in a way that this agreement could.

So that is why I find it kind of ironic that we have seen the Minister for Industry and Trade (Mr. Downey) basically now changing his position. We have, over the last number of weeks, been asking questions about this agreement, and the government's position has been,

well, we will sort of see what our position is going to be once—it is almost like once it is too late. We are going to take a position once this agreement is sort of out there, the federal government is going off to sign it.

So I am pleased to hear the comments from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) and now the Minister of Industry and Trade which have said that they agree more with the intent in the strongly worded resolution that we put forward, the RESOLVEDs in that resolution. I do not understand then why they had to amend them in some of the cases so dramatically, but if they are now understanding that they have to sign on to this and that that is a good reason to have Manitoba's own public hearings, I think that that is progress.

So I would suggest that this is on its way to being a fairly successful Opposition Day, that we have been successful on moving towards an agreement on a resolution in this House. We have been successful in getting the member and the government opposite in putting their position on the MAI on the record, which they would not do when we raised the issue in Question Period. I think now maybe we can turn our attention to having some substantive debate on some of the other issues related to this treaty or this agreement that is going to affect the responsibilities for many of us in this Legislature, many of the departments that we are responsible for dealing with.

I would also like to say that when I listened to the Minister for Industry and Trade (Mr. Downey) initially, I was concerned about his amendment initially to take out Manitoba's responsibility or ability or authority to have public hearings, because to me that is symbolic of what this entire MAI agreement is about. That is taking away government's responsibility and authority in protecting its citizens, in having sovereignty in its nation, in having a role in terms of regulating the economy and intervening in the economy. That is what this treaty or the MAI is about.

When I see that the government was initially so willing in dealing with our resolution to throw up its hands and say, well, let us get the federal government to have these public hearings, that is exactly the kind of approach that we are concerned about with this government generally is that they would support the philosophy behind this, which is sort of this attitude

that we have governments that do not believe in governments and we have governments that do not really see a role for governments in terms of regulating and intervening in the economy for the benefit of citizens, in terms of ensuring environmental protection, in terms of ensuring labour and workplace safety and health protection, in terms of being able to provide adequate public programs in areas of health care, pensions, education, equality provisions and other social services.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) in his comments said, you know, we are all in this global economy now and I think we can all agree on that. But I think what is of the essence here is the question of what kind of global economy are we going to have? With agreements like the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, as it now stands, the kind of global economy we would have would be very unfair. It would be very much a winner-takes-all kind of global economy. There would not be protection for citizens. It would not work for people. I think even though we could go on and talk about the details of how it would affect environmental protection and labour standards and the other things I have mentioned, what is at the root of this Multilateral Agreement on Investment is the way that it cuts off at the knees government's ability to protect Canadian citizens or any citizens from other countries.

* (1600)

I have a number of ways that it would do that: the way that this is like a Charter of Rights and Freedoms for corporations or a Constitution for corporations, and how it goes against our democracy. It goes against the whole idea that citizens in any country elect a government that they expect is going to stand up and protect their rights and their interests. The MAI, what it does for corporations, it effectively frees corporations of obligations to Canadian citizens, to workers, consumers and the environment. It allows international corporations to have their political rights as investors constitutionally guaranteed and protected as if they were citizens of the host country. That is the whole issue of sovereignty.

The whole idea that you could have a treaty passed by governments that would allow corporations to sue

governments if they did not do what the corporations wanted, that is the kind of provisions in a treaty such as this. That is why we are so opposed to it because we see that is inherently antidemocratic.

One of the other areas that I think is of great concern in our globalized, technologized economy is the whole area of investment flow and further deregulating the whole area issue of investment, particularly in the area of currency speculation. This is something where it is going completely in the opposite direction.

Two more points that I wanted to make where this government's record in terms of the provisions under this agreement raised cause for concern—that is, to prevent provincial governments for requiring investors create local jobs. When we look at what has been announced recently after this government privatized MTS—and now we have lost more than 300 jobs at MTS—we look at their plans for the privatization of food services at hospitals, it seems that they are not concerned about this area either. It seems like they are not doing all that they can even now to protect Manitoba jobs, when they are willing to export jobs with the privatization of food services and the privatization of MTS.

The other area is this whole idea that we would have no sovereignty and to protect foreign ownership of farmlands, and that is another area where this government has moved in a direction which is congruent with the provisions of this agreement, and it causes me concern and suspicion.

So I am hoping that this government will see fit to support a strong resolution that would join with provisions passed in other provinces and other countries and that we would not go forward with supporting the MAI—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member's time has expired.

Ms. Cerilli: Thank you.

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Labour): I am pleased to have this opportunity to briefly comment on the resolution respecting the Multilateral Agreement on Investment.

As you are aware, the MAI was originally intended to create multilateral rules on investment. However, concerns over protecting strategic interests have resulted in considerable debate over labour and environmental standards. The primary issue is a country should not compromise labour and environmental practices to accommodate investment.

The government of Manitoba is committed to the protection and promotion of high labour standards. This was demonstrated by Manitoba's signing of the North American Agreement on Labour Cooperation last year. The labour side agreement was a product of extensive federal, provincial and international discussions, and that reflects the complexity of both the issues and that process.

As a signatory to this agreement, Manitoba demonstrated its commitment to the promotion of labour principles, co-operation in the labour field and the effect of enforcement of labour laws and regulation. In July 1991, Manitoba outlined its position that measures would be required to address labour and environmental issues before Manitoba could support the NAFTA. Manitoba's signing of the NAFTA side agreement on January 21, 1997, represents a fulfilment of our government's policy to ensure that the interest of workers and the environment are addressed in the expanding economic and trade opportunities in the Americas.

Consistent with our position on NAFTA, Manitoba fully supports efforts to ensure that the MAI reflects commitment by OECD countries to the protection and promotion of high labour standards without compromising these standards to attract investment.

My department has been actively involved in discussions with the federal government to assist with the development of a Canadian position on this matter. Because the larger share of responsibility for labour law rests with provincial jurisdictions, clearly it is important that federal-provincial consultations proceed. Manitoba supported the need for such consultations and participated in a federal-provincial conference held in Ottawa on the subject on February 27 of this year.

Manitoba is committed to continuing with its participation with other provinces, territories and the

federal government on the development of a Canadian position with respect to labour standards. We have been made aware by Ottawa that including such a provision in the MAI is complex and treads on new ground. Creative thinking is required.

In a speech by federal Trade Minister Marchi on February 13, 1998, he stressed this point and the need for consultation among the affected parties. Mr. Marchi stated the following: "In addition, there are important questions as to how the MAI will approach broader issues regarding labour and environmental standards, and whether we should call for binding or non-binding language. Even experts in non-governmental organizations agree that this is a complex issue in which it is very important to avoid unintended consequences. That's why I want to take all the time necessary for full consultation with provincial governments and other interested parties so that Canada can take the strongest and soundest position possible."

A report on the MAI by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade in December of 1997 commented on labour standards. The main concern of witnesses was the prospect of lowering of national standards. The Canadian Labour Congress argued that the draft wording in the agreement was inadequate. The CLC said that the preamble to the MAI, which is of some limited legal significance in terms of providing an interpretive context, should commit governments to protecting, enhancing, and enforcing basic workers core conventions of the International Labor Organization. Basic workers rights include the right to free collective bargaining, freedom of association, and nondiscrimination in employment. Such a declaration would commit governments to respecting a basic floor of internationally agreed labour rights.

Appearing as witnesses on the same panel as the CLC, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce stated: In the public debate around the NAFTA the business community was concerned about and fought against the inclusion of environment and labour provisions in an international trade and investment agreement. Since then our views have matured on this point. The debate now is no longer about if the MAI should include provisions on environment and labour but how. We would be happy to discuss this at great length in our

discussions with your and our partners in the labour community following these formal remarks, end of quote.

For the trade and investment liberalization agenda to proceed in a balanced fashion, labour issues will have to be addressed. We do not want to see a development which compromises national labour standards. The International Labor Organization is currently working on a declaration of principles concerning fundamental rights as requested by the World Trade Organization and is expected to submit its report on the subject in June of this year.

With respect to the general principle that labour standards should not be compromised to attract investment, there are some important related factors that need to be considered in the negotiations. There should be no incentive to countries to lower or to maintain low labour standards. The right of governments to pass legislation, make regulations, and set standards should not be affected. Governments should be obligated to effectively enforce standards. Governments should not compromise standards in an attempt to attract investment or heighten competitiveness.

In conclusion, the government of Manitoba fully supports a resolution calling for the federal government to ensure that the MAI includes protection and betterment for working people in all countries party to such international agreements. Further, we support the need for Canada to hold public hearings on a proposed final agreement in Manitoba and across Canada.

Thank you very much.

* (1610)

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Speaker, I am happy to take part in this debate today on our Opposition Day motion on the MAI, which is the Multilateral Agreement on Investment. I would like to start by asking what is the MAI and read a definition that I came across: The prime objective of the MAI is to allow the movement of money across international borders by imposing a new set of rules restricting countries from using legislation, policies, and programs seen as impediments to the free flow of capital. In

other words, it is a constitution for the largest corporations to rule the world.

Now, I think that is a very good definition, because it says in a very concise way what this debate and what MAI is really all about, and that is setting up a new set of rules for investment by multinational corporations. This means that the multinational corporations will be able to compete and invest and buy and sell, whether it is plants or production or stock or capital or whatever, under their rules which are being negotiated mostly in secret and which are not being ratified by parliaments like ours, and this has been done more or less in secret. It is only because of the hard work of some organizations like the Council of Canadians that the draft text has been published, and now we are starting to have a debate in this country; however, it may be too little and it may be too late.

We have some concerns about what the multinational corporations want to do. One of the things that they want to do is to have more power than provincial legislatures and more power than parliaments, and probably more power than the American Congress.

An Honourable Member: How about the Almighty?

Mr. Martindale: The minister responsible for I, T and T wants to get into a theological debate, and I would challenge him to do that after I put my remarks on the record, then he can talk to me in the loges. I would be happy to talk theological issues with him anytime. If I have time I would like to read some remarks into the record about what some churches have said about these kinds of negotiations.

Since I am only going to try to speak very briefly, I would like to address only one of the WHEREAS clauses which says, "WHEREAS legal opinions from respected scholars such as Dr. Brian Schwartz and Barry Appleton have raised serious doubt as to the effectiveness of Canada's proposed reservations under the draft treaty to protect our Medicare and social service systems and our culture."

As the Family Services critic for my party, I think it is only appropriate that I talk about the implications for social programs. In fact, I think one of the most serious implications of the MAI is for social programs, because

we as Canadians have many social programs that the United States do not have. Most Canadians are very proud of these social programs and would want to keep them and would not want to see them jeopardized.

I would like to use several examples; the first one being medicare, where we have a universal system. It is publicly administered and is paid for through our tax system unlike the United States where there are approximately 2,000 private sector insurance companies. In fact we spend less of our gross national product on health care in Canada than the United States. We have a more efficient system, because it is administered by government and not by the private sector. Whereas everyone is covered in Canada, in the United States 40 million Americans have no private insurance and many more millions are inadequately covered.

Now under the MAI, American for-profit companies, health companies, would probably be able to invest in Canada and would have to be treated equally, that is my understanding, with other providers of health care. I think that is the thin edge of the wedge. I think that would mean for sure we would have even more of a two-tier system when it comes to the provision of health care than we do now. [interjection] The member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) would like to debate whether our companies could go to the United States. I think we would be at a disadvantage in terms of competing with multinational corporations in providing health care in other countries.

Another example is Pharmacare where the Liberal Party in the most recent federal election made a couple of promises which have since disappeared, one is to have a national Pharmacare program and the other is to have a national home care program. Now we are hearing almost nothing about these broken promises, but one of the implications of the MAI is that our federal government may not be able to provide a national Pharmacare program, and that is also a serious concern.

Now we already have some evidence as to what has happened when we have a so-called Liberal playing field, which was part of the jargon of the Free Trade Agreement debate, and the example is in the area of unemployment insurance. Whereas before the 1988

election, 87 percent of people who were unemployed in Canada were eligible for unemployment insurance benefits, now only about 40 percent are eligible for what used to be called unemployment insurance benefits are now called employment insurance benefits. This parallels the United States, where only 52 percent of Americans are eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. So we have seen a levelling down of this very important social program in Canada of being levelled down to the American level.

The final example that I would like to use is that of child care, where one of the implications of the MAI is that American for-profit child care corporations may be allowed to compete in Canada and provide child care. My understanding of the way this works is that our publicly funded child care would be seen as a public subsidy even to nonprofit child care centres, and, therefore, the private sector would be allowed to qualify, I read somewhere, for similar subsidies from the public sector. We have always said as a party that we are opposed to making profit from our children, and that is why we have only supported publicly funded nonprofit child care centres. So we would not want to see a huge expansion of private, for-profit child care services in Canada.

I am going to conclude by reading some of the statements that have been made by churches in Canada about this debate and the Free Trade Agreement debate and tie them in with the MAI. The United Church of Canada expressed serious concern that the Free Trade Agreement would jeopardize public programs such as medicare, hospital insurance, unemployment benefits, subsidized post-secondary education, subsidized daycare and marketing boards. This was a statement of the 31st General Council of the United Church in 1986.

I think we are seeing that some of those concerns are already coming true, and the example that our member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) gave was of the fuel additive and the American company suing the Government of Canada, even though that additive is not used in the United States or in Canada, suing for alleged loss of future profits. It is a most amazing example.

Here is what the Social Affairs Commission of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops said. They

said: Responsible stewardship of the environment takes priority over unlimited industrial expansion in an economy based on justice.

So we also have many concerns about what the MAI would do for the environment, and with those two quotes, I am going to conclude so that my colleagues have an opportunity to speak.

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): I am pleased today to rise in the House and put a few comments on the record in regard to the resolution that was put forward by the opposition and also speaking more to the amendment that was put forward by the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey).

I think the initial context of the resolution was the fact that we are discussing a paper that has not been put forward as a concrete. It is merely a draft. It is a draft that, I think, probably, creates the discussion that we are having here today as it is being put out to people, to create the discussions that we are having, that members of the opposition have suggested they have associations, they have groups that are opposed to this, and by having the draft before them they are able to voice their opinions.

I think that is what it is all about in the sense that by putting the information out in draft form it creates discussion. I think governments of all political stripes are always concerned when they bring forward agreements and proposals that are going to affect us in the way that many of us believe they are.

* (1620)

It should be out there for public discussion and public debate such as we are having today, but it should also be understood that it is merely that draft, and by presenting it to the public as a draft, we have an opportunity to improve on it, to make it better, to make it more understandable to the people who are reading it, to understand the complications that are created by moving forward with this type of resolution.

But I think in the same breath, when we talk about the resolution that was put forward today and the ensuing amendment, that is exactly the idea of what we are doing with the MAI agreement. The resolution was

put forward by the members opposite. We have read it, we studied it and we felt that we could improve it, and what we have done is put forward an amendment that we think enhances the debate that we are having today by providing more open discussion on the issue.

I would like to comment, too—and some of the members opposite have put forward definitions as to what they believe the MAI agreement is. I guess it is all depending on where you come from and how you interpret it, but it is certainly out there for discussion. When I look at, I guess, my understanding of what the MAI is, from what I can gather, it is a Multilateral Agreement on Investment that is being negotiated by 29 member countries of the OECD, and the purpose is to provide a comprehensive framework, including a multilateral set of rules and a process for dispute settlement to govern international investment. I think that when we get to that level and we are discussing this with this many countries involved, every country is going to bring forward their current interests and concerns. I think the federal government representing Canada is doing that, and they are putting forward the concerns, just as they did with the NAFTA agreement and just as they will continue to work for in the MAI agreement.

The basic element of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment is nondiscrimination, that is national treatment or equal treatment to be provided for foreign and domestic investors with some exceptions granted to protect the sensitive sectors, which, in our case, as has been clearly pointed out by the opposition, would include culture, health and social services. I do not think anyone on this particular side has a lot to argue in disagreement with that particular suggestion. I think the other thing, and as I had stated earlier, is the members opposite quite often in their discussions on issues tend to forecast the future in the worst possible light.

I think where we have changed in the amendment, what we have done is rather than saying “could”—let me just make sure that this is correct, I will just confirm this—pardon me, saying “would,” it now says “could.” When you are debating a draft, those things could happen. Are we fair and reasonable when we say they would happen, being able to predict into the future things that would happen if this draft was accepted?

And I think that is the discussion that surrounds the issue of the MAI is we put it out there, or the federal government, and these countries have put this agreement out there in a draft form to create the debate that we have here today.

I think, when you do debate something like this in its draft form, it creates a better agreement in the final. I mean certainly people are going to have a lot more discussion on it. It was quite interesting, I was reading the other night of some of the organizations that are involved in the debate on the MAI, and it does include a fairly large group of people. I would suggest, although we may not be seeing the Canada-wide consultation process that the members opposite would like to see at this point in time, that the number of groups that are getting involved and voicing their opinions, for and against, obviously shows that there is a real interest out there by the public of Canadian people, and they are putting forward their opinions. Again, I think, when you are putting forward opinions strictly on a draft document, there is subject for debate on who is right, who is wrong. I think the real debate should probably or will take place once the final draft comes out, and it is put before the people of Canada to truly debate as to what is good and what is bad in the agreement.

I think that it is, for me, unacceptable if the government does not take into consideration the things that have been put forward in the amendment in regard to the health, the culture, and social services. We have come as Canadians to expect and demand that, and I think again, when I reflect back on the NAFTA agreement, that was something that was a priority as seen by all Canadians, not just certain groups or special interest groups. It was something that every Canadian felt very strongly about, and I think that that opinion was reflected in that final agreement.

Whenever you have debate on a draft, it is strictly that. It is conversation and discussion which will lead to a better and final agreement. I think that the federal government has indicated that it will provide a copy, and I understand today from discussions from the members opposite that the latest draft is now available through the Internet website. Again, I think that is what has created the discussion that we have here today.

The other thing I would like to just put on the record is that when we do things like this and resolutions are brought forward, I think it is responsible of government as well as opposition to study the resolution and try and add whatever we can on both sides. I am very proud to say that when we sit in committees with government, we listen to the members opposite, to some of their amendments, and in a lot of cases have accepted a lot of what has been put forward. I think that creates something that is more representative of the entire province.

So I think, when we get to the final stages of the agreement that will be presented to the Canadian people for final debate, we will probably find a lot of areas that we can agree on. There will be some that we disagree on, but that will always be the case, as it is in this particular House. But I think, in the final say, we will have created a document that, if it is not acceptable to all Canadians, then it is just something that will not happen. But by having the debate and the discussion amongst Canadians, we will be able to develop something that we can all accept and work in the benefit of all Canadians.

So with that, Madam Speaker, I will conclude my remarks. Thank you very much.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today on this Opposition Day to discuss a very important topic. I am pleased that we were able to bring this discussion on the MAI forward, because we really have not heard anything from this government on it, and it is far too important for it to go through without public discussion.

The gist of this treaty is that it will give corporations the power to overrule laws passed by our own government, and when you look at how this agreement has been brought forward, it has been done very secretly. For almost three years now, governments have been negotiating the MAI behind closed doors without any real public input or any consultations, and Manitobans probably would not even know about the MAI had not a draft copy of the agreement been taken off the Internet and then made public.

But what exactly will the MAI do? I want to look at a couple of areas that will have a real effect on how

business is done here in Manitoba. For example, for many years Canada has provided special advantages for Canadian investors, especially those investors wishing to start up small businesses. However, under national treatment sections of MAI, these advantages such as tax breaks and low-interest loans will effectively be banned. The national treatment section states that governments must treat foreign investors no less favourably than domestic ones, meaning that government could no longer provide aid for Canadian businesses or entrepreneurs without giving the same aid to foreign investors.

* (1630)

Madam Speaker, I wonder what would happen to Canadian farmers and the aid that they have with the Canadian Wheat Board, the support we have through supply management. Under this agreement, if it is passed, will those institutions be able to stay in place, or is MAI going to destroy the ability for us to have things like the Canadian Wheat Board and marketing boards?

Madam Speaker, as presently drafted, the MAI would effectively prohibit the government from creating any new labour or environmental laws if those laws harmed the business of a foreign or domestic corporation. This would be enforced through a new international court where investors could sue Canada for financial compensation if our government made a law that adversely affected the corporation's bottom line. For example, if our government passed a law banning high factory emissions or a law that made employers pay a living wage to their employees, corporations affected by the legislation would claim that it hurt their profit margin and could sue Canada for financial remuneration. The threat of such lawsuits would make even the most progressive government think twice before creating new environmental and labour laws, no matter how badly these laws were needed by the citizens of Canada.

Under the MAI as well, every corporation would be given the right to sue Canada for economic compensation if our government passed laws which harmed that corporate business. These suits would not be adjudicated in a Canadian court where media and

public could witness the events, rather behind closed doors at a trade tribunal in Switzerland.

So you can see that there are many things in this agreement that would have a negative impact on Canada. It is something that we should consider very, very carefully, and it is disappointing that we have heard to little of it from legislatures in this country. When you look at the comments from the House of Commons, it has only been Bill Blaikie from the New Democratic Party who has raised concerns about this agreement in the House of Commons.

But what will be the effect of this agreement, should it pass, on social programs in Canada? The MAI permits U.S.-based, profit-based health management organizations to expand into Canada and take over parts of our medicare system. This agreement would prevent the Liberal government from using the Canadian generic drug industry to fulfill its election promise to institute a national Pharmacare program. So, again, we see where there would be a negative effect on our social programs. MAI would prevent Canada Pension Plan funds from being used as a source of capital for provincial governments for things such as social benefits and public services. It would allow for foreign companies to bid equally with domestic companies for contracts for welfare-rated services and services like public transportation and garbage pickup.

There are many things under this agreement that will have a negative effect on the quality of life for people in Canada. Provinces and territories such as British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Prince Edward Island have denounced the lack of public hearings and have come forward calling for greater provincial input into the negotiations and ratification of the treaty. We have to have public hearings in this province. Manitobans deserve the opportunity to have a discussion on this and look at what the impacts on Manitobans will be.

This provincial government should show some leadership and hold hearings in Manitoba. If the federal government is not going to do it, then the province should do it and get out there and provide the information that Manitobans have the opportunity to have input, share with Manitobans what the impact of this agreement will be on their quality of life.

We have heard people around the world speak out against this agreement, and many countries have expressed their concern about it. We have not heard anything from this government, and I would encourage them. I am very pleased that today they are saying a few things about it. They keep talking about a draft agreement, Madam Speaker. It is true that it is still in the draft stage, but it is in the draft stage that you can make changes. This is the opportunity for this government to stand with New Democrats and raise their concern about the negative effects that the MAI will have on the quality of life on people in Manitoba and across the country, the negative effect that it will have on investments and people who are trying to prosper.

I have a great concern about what the impact will be on the farming community, and I look forward to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) putting his comments. I am sure that he will recognize that the changes proposed in this MAI agreement will not be in the best interests of Manitobans, and I would urge him to also support the concept of holding public hearings and providing the most possible information that we can provide to Manitobans. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Madam Speaker, I find some of the comments coming from the opposition rather interesting in this debate. It, I think, is apparent that the fear that they feel about the negotiations or discussions that are going on, on the MAI, are probably somewhat premature, because it is my understanding that the discussions are probably not nearly as far advanced and the progress on the negotiations are not nearly as far advanced as some countries might want them to be. Therefore, I think the urgency of the matter here is probably somewhat exaggerated, and I would wonder from a policy perspective where the opposition is really heading on this matter.

I find the resolution an interesting resolution, and I would agree with most of the things that are being said. However, I think we should not lose sight of the objective of the MAI in its totality. I reflect on some of the criticisms that have been extended to our neighbours to the south periodically by the opposition members. I remember not too long ago when they were talking about the Helms-Burton act and how it affected

the trade that Canada was doing with nations such as Cuba, and how some of our corporations were being prevented from negotiating agreements with countries such as Cuba. I agree that we should be concerned about these things because I think we as a country should retain the rights to negotiate, but always remembering that we as a nation in its totality, and especially we in Manitoba, are going to be affected very dramatically by equities and equalities.

We have talked many times about the inequitable position that Manitoba finds itself in the international trade area. We have heard the criticism from our opposition members from time to time about the FTA and indeed the larger agreement, the international trade agreement. Yet when I look on the historical data, our position in Manitoba has been enhanced very dramatically since we have had freer trade. Many of our companies are employing many, many more people today than they were 10 years. Many of our corporations and companies, the smaller companies have seen very dramatic growth because we negotiated a process of exchange of goods on a much more equitable basis than we did in the past.

I believe, Madam Speaker, the MAI discussions that are going on currently are healthy ones, recognizing full well that we are nowhere near an agreement. We in Manitoba do have concerns. We should have concerns, and we should voice those concerns very dramatically to our federal government, who in fact is the negotiator on the MAI.

* (1640)

I think we should not lose sight of the fact of what the MAI is. It is a Multinational Agreement on Investment which is being negotiated by 29 member countries of the OECD to provide a comprehensive framework including a set of multinational, multilateral rules and processes for dispute settlement to govern international investment.

Remember the criticism that was extended by our opposition members when the FTA was done and the dispute-settling mechanism was put in place. They said it would never work. The Americans would always get the upper hand at it. Well, Madam Speaker, I say to you that under the FTA and the dispute-settling mechanism Canada has come out ahead far, far more often than not. I go back to lumber, I go to pork, and I

go to many of the other issues that have been addressed through the dispute-settling mechanism. I think it has worked well and I think we would be doing ourselves a disservice by not entering into the discussions. I think we have to be there and debate and discuss and negotiate how we are all better able to serve each other.

I think we should not have a great deal of fear in that arena. I think we need to also be very careful that our most favoured institutions such as health care and all the other issues around that including our social services and our rights and culture and especially as well as some of the provincial measures that we hold so dear are in fact protected. We did this in NAFTA. We did it in the FTA. I think it just demonstrates that we as Canadians are very capable of holding our own position in these negotiations. I believe that we can do this as well in this round of negotiations.

However, I believe that we must be very careful to ensure that our interests to allow for growth internally in our province and in our country are in fact maintained in such a way that they are not detrimental or put in detriment by other corporations or countries in Canada. I believe that Canada has grown in stature and is able to hold its own in the international community to a much greater degree than we could a decade ago. I think that is in large part due to the fact that we have become part of the Group of Seven from a financial standpoint, that we have become part of the OECD, and we have negotiated or demonstrated our ability to negotiate and hold our own position.

I think we as Manitobans have clearly demonstrated in interprovincial conferences, and our Premier has from time to time and time and time again demonstrated his ability to negotiate on our behalf our position.

So have our ministers at the provincial conferences time and time again, Madam Speaker, demonstrated their ability to defend our own positions and I think they will be able to do that again this time. I welcome the open debate and I welcome the hearings that the opposition members are talking about. I believe that it is absolutely apparent that the federal government must hold public hearings on this whole matter. I think it is tremendously important that the public are able to voice their opinion on a matter that is as important as this.

But having said that, we should never lose sight of the fact as to who will carry the responsibility in the international negotiations and agreements and that it is our province's responsibility to see to it that the policies of our province be maintained during those negotiations. That must be done, in my view, through negotiations between the ministers and staff of the various departments to ensure that our positions are in fact protected.

I welcome the public forum that I think will happen before there is any final agreement on any part of the MAI, and, Madam Speaker, I certainly welcome this debate today, and I thank you for the opportunity.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): It is a pleasure to rise today and put a few words on the record in terms of this resolution brought forward by my colleague the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale), Madam Speaker. It is a very important resolution, and we can tell from the comments made by members on both sides of the House that they recognize that it is an important resolution, and I plead to all members that the resolution be passed.

This Legislature, we must take a strong stand to stop this agreement in its current draft form. This country and this province, we need investment for economic growth. That is recognized, and we accept that, but, also, Madam Speaker, this agreement goes far too far. It frees foreign corporations of obligations to Canadian citizens and workers, consumers and the environment, and it takes away from us as legislatures to pass laws and regulations to safeguard many of these things, and it has been mentioned of culture, health care, and, in particular, one thing I want to reference today in my brief speech, is the environment.

Madam Speaker, there has always been tension between free trade and the need to protect our environment. Corporations in this global economy, they will go to any jurisdiction that will offer them environmental laws and regulations that are very weak. This was explained to me by a president of one of the large mining companies in this province, where he tells us that capital has no political boundaries; it will go wherever. His corporation and other corporations like that will go to countries that guarantee no changes in terms of labour laws and environmental laws and so on.

It is a race to the bottom, and you are seeing this in our global economy today where corporations will seek out countries that offer the poorest and the weakest environmental protection legislation and regulation, and that is, unfortunately, where they will head.

This agreement, this draft agreement, will make our country very similar in that it will prohibit legislators like ourselves from passing legislation that will protect and enhance our environment, and, as I say, there is always that risk in free trade agreements, and we have witnessed that, Madam Speaker.

This agreement will prevent the country from imposing performance requirements on foreign companies, and I know that this is the big issue here. We are changing a lot of words—well, the government would like a number of words changed from “would” to “could,” and that, considering this is a draft, is acceptable, but it should raise a number of alarms for many members in this Chamber.

It could prevent provincial governments from requiring investors to create local jobs, and this was something that was raised regarding the hiring practice and treatment that was given to Hydro when Hydro was developing the Limestone project in northern Manitoba. This MAI could prevent countries from imposing economic sanctions on countries that fail to respect human rights or global environmental standards and restrict the operations of these corporations in their countries.

Last December in this House, I raised with the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey)—and I tabled at that time a legal opinion from an international law firm from New York, Appleton & Associates. At that time, I asked the minister to review this legal opinion, which in the legal opinion shows that the provincial government's ability to protect our health care, education, culture and environment could be undermined by the federal government's position on this treaty because in its current form Canada has not proposed any reservations to the MAI to take measures to protect or conserve the Canadian environment. In fact, the current proposed reservations that the government has proposed are inadequate, but in terms of the environment they have brought in no reservations

at all. I think, and I know that my colleagues feel as well, that this is unacceptable.

Madam Speaker, again I want to reference this legal opinion, which states that there are a number of types of environmental measures that could trigger liability on the part of the government under the MAI. I would just like to read those in: remediation orders to prevent toxic seepage; changes to existing concession licence to protect fisheries, flora and fauna; changes to land use regulations which would reduce the value of property of a foreign investor; preventative measures taken to protect public safety that cause loss or harm to foreign investors; requirements that only environmentally acceptable resource extraction techniques be used that would increase the cost of extraction. All these triggers are unacceptable.

* (1650)

As well, it would free corporations from local environmental protection, such as forest clear-cutting operations—forest clear-cutting regulations, I should say.

As well, under the MAI, foreign fishing fleets could have full access to Canadian waters. We all know the current state of our fisheries on the East and the West Coasts. We know, and it has been proven just this past week, that because of the unacceptable actions of the federal government, in fact it was the federal government that caused the depletion of the stock fisheries in eastern Canada, but even under this MAI we could not prohibit foreign fleets from fishing in those waters.

Wildlife protection plans would be jeopardized if they interfere with trade and investment interests of corporations. Well, this government has signed an agreement. They have signed on to a commitment, I should say, that this government is to protect 12 percent of Manitoba in the Endangered Spaces Campaign. Well, what would that mean? What would the MAI and some of the conditions of the MAI mean to this government's commitment? Would that mean the government would no longer be able to fulfill that commitment? I mean, we question whether they are doing it now, and I would suggest that they are not, but this would even make it harder for this government, for

any government to protect endangered spaces in this province and in this country.

It would prevent Canada from giving preferential treatment to provincial Crown agencies, provincial Crown energy and monopolies and would open energy and water resources up to foreign ownership.

These and other issues that have been raised by myself and all of my other colleagues in this House once again emphasize the importance of our resolution brought forward by my colleague the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale), and I congratulate him. I urge all members in this House to pass this resolution, to make a strong statement that we must, as a Legislature and as a country, stop this agreement, Madam Speaker. Thank you very much.

Hon. Mike Radcliffe (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, I, too, am very pleased to rise today to put a few brief words on the record with regard to the amended motion that is before this Legislature today.

At the outset, I would like to commend the intent of the honourable colleague opposite who initially raised this issue and matter of concern to us all, but I would say that the member opposite has intrinsically displayed a limitation of view on this issue. Madam Speaker, I would suggest what one should be addressing here is not the half-empty glass with which we often chide our colleagues opposite, and which is their trademark and their lingua franca; rather, this is an opportunity for Canadians, Canadians across this country, to join in the brotherhood, the global village of all civilized nations on this tiny globe of ours. We must, in fact, take this opportunity to beat down our parochial instincts, which too often, I feel, are the issues that are raised opposite, and see that there are grander principles at stake.

We can only look to some of the more monumental gatherings of our recorded history of the northern European, and North American history, the North Atlantic, and I look back, for example, to the Congress of Vienna. The Congress of Vienna, in fact, took into account some broad—[interjection] Now you see, this is where people looked beyond the boundaries of their own nations. They looked upon the continental good. They looked upon something beyond their own parish

and parochial interests and looked at what was going to be something which would give stability and order to all nations and to all peoples. We can only look, subsequent thereto after a period of debilitation and disorder of the First World War, to the League of Nations, Madam Speaker. The League of Nations was another attempt by civilized nations to reach beyond their national boundaries, to put aside their petty interests and look at what was a system of regularity, a system of broader global instincts, global interests for humankind.

Then again, Madam Speaker, the current incumbent that we have fulfilling this role in our world today is the United Nations. I would feel that by raising the issues of individual sovereignty, all of which are well meaning from members opposite—in fact, I could only look back to the debate that occurred in this very Chamber last week when we were all concerned about the importance and the significance of the Canadian sovereignty to each and every citizen in this country, when we were standing up to speak to the Calgary declaration, that this is in fact a matter of paramount importance to us. So I do not denigrate the concerns that are voiced by our members opposite, but I would invite them, and I would challenge them, that there is a broader vision to be absorbed here, to be considered. Yes, it is important that we all stand and debate this issue, and debate the fact that this place can be a kinder and gentler place, that we can leave it better than we found it. [interjection] Kinder and gentler, yes. But we can do that by not just debating with the members in this Chamber here, but there is a bigger world out there.

An Honourable Member: Citizens of the world.

Mr. Radcliffe: Citizens of the world. In fact, every time the Canadian nation has reached out beyond its boundaries, beat down protective barriers, beat down walls of paper that keep us confined to our own communities, we have been at the leading edge of the world community. We can only look right now to the example of the NAFTA agreements on our continent where Canada has excelled. This has been the impetus that has ignited our economy in the last few years. In fact, Madam Speaker, one can look to our recent past. As I said on my feet last week when I was in this Chamber, if you do not understand history, you are cursed to repeat it.

So, every time—[interjection] And be hurt by it, says the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), and I concur with his comments on this issue. Every time that we have put aside petty parochial issues and reached for a broader vision, we Canadians have succeeded and have excelled.

An Honourable Member: Stygian mud?

Mr. Radcliffe: Stygian murk, I must point out to the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), and we must not allow our vision to be clouded by stygian murk. Cerberus and the underworld must not enter into this debate. This must be out in the full light of day, and I can only—[interjection]

Now, Madam Speaker, it is not often in this honourable Chamber that I have the opportunity to quote and to quote with approval the words of our Liberal colleagues, as they style themselves, but I can only point out, to reassure honourable colleagues opposite, that the Honourable Sergio Marchi, the Minister for International Trade, when speaking to the MAI in an investment and trade dispute Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, he stated thus. So I would urge my colleagues opposite that they ought not to allow their fears to run away with them. They are a fearful people. They are a fear-filled group across there. If I held their principles, I, too, would be full of fear. I would be fearful, but, in fact, I would like to elucidate this, illuminate this issue for them.

* (1700)

The Honourable Mr. Marchi said, and I quote: “I can also tell you what the MAI is not. It is not a charter of rights for multinational companies, nor does it spell the end of Canada's sovereignty.” I would urge my colleagues opposite to listen to this because this, in fact, speaks to their fears and their angst. “We will retain the right to enact laws in all areas—social policy, health care, corporate rules, labour and the environment.”

Ah, they say they have no belief, they have no faith, and, in fact, they may well be a faithless bunch on that opposite side. To have these laws apply equally to foreign-owned and domestic companies, we will still be able to impose restrictions on foreign investment in

sectors like culture and health care and education, and, in fact, I think we all make common cause that these are issues that are near and dear to all of us, each and every member in this Chamber. In that respect, I can commend the members opposite, but it is a limitation of vision which they possess. [interjection]

Oh, now the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) says—he is deprecating the Liberals that are found in River Heights, and these days, with the travails from which the Liberal Party have been suffering, we have all gone out to hug a Liberal, but, of course, the members opposite may be having difficulty because of this limitation of vision.

Madam Speaker, the October 28 deadline—the breadth of vision that we must engage in discussing this issue, we must look back to the milestones in the history of our peoples, like the Congress of Vienna, like the League of Nations, like the United Nations. There is a braver world out there which is ours to master, and we will not be carried away by any limitations of our government sovereignty. The April 28 deadline of the OECD will, in fact, not be met by the federal government because they too are saying and Mr. Marchi was saying in this quote that this, in fact, requires further discussion.

The amendment brought forward today speaks to that, Madam Speaker, and I would concur with my honourable colleague who has presented this that the federal government consider holding public hearings prior to any decision regarding Canadian signature to the MAI and that the public consultations provide Manitobans with an adequate opportunity to express their views. If we go the way of members opposite, we will end up with more Helms-Burton.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, I would like to put a few words on record regarding MAI. I was privileged the other day to be listening to CBC, being a good CBC listener, and Michael Enright was interviewing Linda McQuaig. Perhaps you remember her as the author of *Shooting the Hippo*.

They were discussing, in rather powerful terms, the fact that governments no longer are willing to put programs in place for ordinary people. Governments in general, including the Canadian government, seem to not have a bold vision anymore to help people, they listen only to accountants. They only seem to be sensitive to figures and to numbers and to bottom line figures. There is nothing wrong with that if that is taken in a proper perspective, but the only thing they listen to is sort of the general bull moose theory that whatever is good for big business has to be good for me, and that is not necessarily true.

An Honourable Member: There are lots of bull mooses over there.

Mr. Jennissen: As my honourable Leader pointed out, there are lots of bull mooses over there.

Now, this of course leads inevitably to minimalist government, the kind of government that the Kleins and the Harrises are proud of, and perhaps there are other right-wing dinosaurs I could mention. Also, that kind of thinking that underlies MAI is the same kind of thinking that underlies the operation of the World Bank and IMF.

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

Mr. Jennissen: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will repeat again that that kind of right-wing thinking is the same type of thinking that operates with the World Bank and the IMF when they force poor Third World countries, overloaded with debts which were more or less forced on them in the first place by the First World, forced those poor Third World countries via their so-called fiscal restructuring programs into more poverty and more debt. That inevitably leads people in Africa and parts of Asia and Latin America into even deeper poverty. Their debt is never ending. It is that same kind of thinking.

Of course, that kind of thinking has been opposed by women's groups, by social justice groups, by the churches, and by our own party for sure. I guess if we need to come up with a slogan, we are very happy to

supply a slogan. I know that is simplistic, but the MAI protects corporations and it neglects people.

The Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey)—I must give the Deputy Premier credit—is trying via an amendment to come up with a document we can all agree upon, we can all work with, and hold our heads high afterwards, but we are not quite there yet. He uses NAFTA as an example, and he says: we do not want something that goes beyond NAFTA, much further than NAFTA. I think he is ignoring the fact that we are not happy with NAFTA as it is, Madam Speaker. We never were happy with NAFTA as it was.

Now, the members opposite keep telling us the wonderful jobs and the prosperity that NAFTA has brought us, but they seem to be ignoring the fact that at least half a million people in central Canada lost their jobs. There are a lot of other linings to that silver cloud that the other party does not wish to talk about. So when the Deputy Premier talks about NAFTA, he does not necessarily have my agreement that NAFTA was a great deal for Canada.

I would also like to add this point that the Prime Minister, who was going to strengthen NAFTA on labour, culture, and environmental concerns which we as Canadians had about the NAFTA treaty, that very same Prime Minister ended up not changing very much to NAFTA.

As my colleagues have pointed out, MAI would threaten medicare and social programs. It would threaten Canadian culture, job creation, labour standards, the environment. It would be a threat to affirmative action programs, programs that especially help aboriginal people or immigrants or people less fortunate than ourselves. Above all, MAI is a threat to democratic government. Canada is a sovereign nation. We do not need an agreement or a treaty which gives enormous powers to transnationals, powers which supersede those of elected, democratic institutions.

Are we under some illusion that those transnationals need more help, that they perhaps do not have enough money at the moment or enough clout or enough three-piece-suit lawyers? I doubt that. So we in this Chamber need not aid or abet that situation. We were elected for our constituents, to address the need of our

constituents, Madam Speaker, not merely the desires and sometimes the obscene desires for profit that seem to characterize multinationals.

Now, the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) pointed out that we should have a larger vision. Well, we do have a larger vision, Madam Speaker. We insist that we have public hearings in Manitoba and not foist that responsibility off on the federal government. Indeed, let us not put it on the federal government because that is a sellout. Let us listen to Manitobans, listen to the real people and not to the bankers in Zurich or in New York.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

* (1710)

Mr. Newman: Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity, honourable members, for being able to speak on this resolution.

I wanted to provide congratulations to the churches and other religious groups and numerous citizens groups such as the Provincial Council of Women and other individual concerned citizens for taking the issues raised by this resolution so seriously and for providing their best thoughts, ideas, concerns about it in a public milieu. I think it is very appropriate to have the subject matter of this resolution brought to this honourable House.

The role of the citizen in monitoring this kind of international movement is very worthwhile, and the conscientious vigilance of citizens will be the best way of ensuring that human rights and the rights of our environmental ecosystems and the rights of us as sovereign nations will be protected. It is obvious that our country and our province is in good health when we get this degree of concern and interest in what would in some cases of the past be regarded as a commercial issue, but we know it is far more than that.

I am very pleased that the rules of the House which have been agreed to by honourable members permit us the opportunity to use Opposition Day constructively and to accomplish a resolution which could be approved of by all members of the House. That means that this can be and will be a constructive use of

honourable members' time, and it certainly should not be seen by the official opposition as anything but a useful process, a useful day which has a potential to produce a meaningful result.

I also do congratulate the official opposition for initiating this resolution. This is one way our agreed upon rules do allow the official opposition to initiate policy proposals which can be debated on that very day. It is a quicker and surer way of focusing debate on a priority issue selected by the official opposition and of achieving a result beneficial to Manitobans than, indeed, a private member's resolution or even a private member's bill.

So today has been a very worthwhile sharing of views, and I will be urging all honourable members to support the amendment which refines some of the imperfections of the initial resolution and certainly enhances it, certainly improves it and makes it more generally acceptable, I submit, not only here, but to the world at large and, more specifically, to the federal government who is being urged to do many different things by this resolution in their role as representatives of Canada as a whole, performing their role as the jurisdictionally responsible government to engage in this kind of international negotiation.

I conclude my remarks by urging support of the amendment, and then, of course, the amended resolution, which we could bring to a conclusion today and all go home feeling we produced something tangible, a good day's work, I might say. Thank you very much.

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): I would like to put some points here on matters of substance, and then go to process.

In matters of substance we should understand what the effect of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment would have on the powers and rights of democratic governments like ours.

It will strip our elected democratic government of regulatory power, even powers of legislation, to protect their own people, to promote the welfare of their own people. It will render us very vulnerable in passing health, medical health, comprehensive protected

legislation. We cannot even legislate any labour standards or protection for the workers if it will be detrimental to the corporate interests, multinational interests.

Secondly, it will shift the power of government from accountable, elected democratic government like ours to nonaccountable bodies like the World Trade Organization and similar international organizations like the International Monetary Fund. They are not elected. They are accountable to no one. They are only promoting their own specific special interests.

Moreover, this Multilateral Agreement on Investment will give all the rights of citizens to the multinational corporations, to the neglect of our own citizens. We will no longer be able to pass legislation that will involve the creation of jobs for our people. Even local hiring, preferential hiring for natives will be prohibited because it will be viewed upon as discriminatory on the part of the multinational corporations.

We will not be able to do many of these things. Environmental protection will be beyond legislation, and this multinational corporation will simply say, if you will do all these regulatory things, we will just leave you your jurisdiction and go to the country receptive to our interests. In other words, it will enable multinational corporations to threaten political units, that we do what their biddings would be or else they will flee and do their business with the low-wage countries in the Third World.

The one dominant feature of the agreement that is very inequitable is that multinational corporations can sue governmental units when there is a prospect of lesser profits. And yet governments cannot sue these multinational corporations. It will be against the agreement. Therefore, it is simply not cricket. There is no level playing field here where multinational corporations can sue governments for damages, but governments cannot sue multinational corporations when they do damages to the people or to the resources of a country. That is not fair. That is not equitable at all.

This is just the culmination of the institutionalization of this global trend for corporate takeover of certain political units and political jurisdictions of the world.

This is the institutionalization of the rule of the corporations—nonelected, nonaccountable people—and replacing the discretion and judgment of those who are elected as representatives of the people of political units. Even our courts will be unable to interpret this agreement because under international law, under the provision proposed, it will be a panel of experts other than members of the national or provincial courts that will interpret this agreement and that deprives a sovereign body like Canada, or a subunit regional government like Manitoba, of basic judicial power to interpret legislations. We are there for sale. As soon as we sign this agreement, we are selling our birthright as a nation and as a province for a plate of beans.

On process, no one should be deprived of any inherent right without consent, and consent can only be given on the basis of informed consent. Without information, we do not know what is going on, neither can any political unit be deprived of its basic right to legislate for the welfare and promotion of the welfare of its own people without the knowledge and without the consent of these political units although under international law only Canada as a nation has the status and the international sphere. Provincial governments, at their own level, have jurisdictions within their own sphere of jurisdiction which they cannot constitutionally be deprived without their consent.

* (1720)

Therefore, it is our obligation to poll our own people in Manitoba whether or not they would like to surrender some of the rights and privileges as citizens and residents of this province. This the present government refused to do. They are trying to pass the buck to the national government, and we know that the national government had already imperiled the jurisdiction of this country by agreeing to other international agreements limiting the rights of government to protect their own people.

Let me conclude, Madam Speaker, by saying that people's interests must come first before profits; second, that the welfare of the communities should come first before special vested interests of corporations; thirdly, that government responsibility to protect its own people cannot be abdicated at any level of government by signing this agreement. Thank you.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Well, Madam Speaker, it was an interesting afternoon to listen to comments made on both sides of the Chamber on this issue. I am reminded of so many things that have been put on the public record when it comes to broadening our horizon and beginning to deal with the world around us. As my colleague the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Radcliffe) indicated just a few moments ago, why should we be so fearful of doing that? But we are because, of course, it implies some change.

Madam Speaker, to repeat all that was said with respect to the specific agreement would be redundant. Allow me to remind all of us about all of the fear, and indeed I think it would not be too strong a word to use, the fearmongering that was used when we, this nation, showed some maturity and some confidence and saying that yes, we could trade with the big partners and the big trading people of this world, the biggest, the United States. We talked about the free press, about the free trade agreement and the United States.

Do we remember what that evoked in the Canadian psyche? I am sure all of us—I mean if I had to put it into one symbol was—remember a Prime Minister, the honourable John Turner, trying to tear up the phone book. This is what he would do to the Free Trade Agreement if he were to have the privilege of being elected.

Madam Speaker, John Turner, I hope is well. I suspect John Turner is doing well in representing many businesses that are doing extremely well in the broadened trade agreements, in the broadened trade regime that the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the United States has brought about and its subsequent expansion under NAFTA to Mexico.

So that does not mean that we ought not to be extremely careful and cautious about what we are allowing or suggesting that we are going to sit back and watch our federal government do and undertake on our behalf. It is, of course, the jurisdiction of the federal government to do this, but let me also remind you that the current Liberal government, the current Liberal Prime Minister and many of his ministers were equally alarmist about the possible expansion of that Free Trade Agreement when it was to include Mexico. But they

have been in office now for four years, their second term, five years, six years, five years. The economic well-being of this country has never been better, so our Prime Minister tells us, and I tend to agree with Paul Martin and the federal Liberal government that they have done as we in individual provinces have begun to put our fiscal house in order.

Madam Speaker, I will tell you why, and we have some examples right here in the province of Manitoba who protested when that great Prime Minister the Honourable Brian Mulroney talked about free trade and protested vehemently against it. I can name some of them. Art DeFehr, from Palliser Furniture, the garment industry, amongst others, they forecasted doom and gloom. What has happened? Art DeFehr has closed his factory in South Carolina, moved his employees to Kildonan and tripled the job opportunities here in Manitoba, here in Winnipeg.

I can tell you from agriculture's point of view, free trade and expanded trade opportunity has never been better.

Madam Speaker, in closing, what I just wonder as I grow passingly older in this business, how is it possible that that group in our political society that used to have the title of radicalism, of new ideas, of challenging the established, challenging the order, changing, rattling the cage, doing things, how come they have become so reactionary? How have they become so conservative in everything they represent politically on the agenda? Why is it that it is a Progressive Conservative Party that is constantly looking at new horizons, constantly accepting new challenges, willing to express the true entrepreneurship of Canadians, willing to let our farmers do what they do best, produce food, willing to let our factories produce what they can do best and do it in the environment that we dictate? We will continue to dictate that environment, but what do we hear from members opposite? We hear fear, no change, old-think.

I am going to infiltrate their next convention, annual meeting, and I am going to pass a resolution onto the floor. It is actually quite easy to do, to infiltrate political parties, by the way, Madam Speaker. You just have to buy a membership. I am going to propose a resolution to the floor of their next convention that they at least be honest and strike out the word "New" from

their party name. I will grant them the name "Democrat," although that is very presumptuous on their part. It presumes that others, Conservatives or Liberals, are not democrats, but I will be fair. Keep the "Democrat," but strike out the word "New."

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, coming from a party that struck out the entire party name in the last election, I will take that advice under advisement, and I say to the member, you know, it is interesting, he was quoting fondly Brian Mulroney, embracing Brian Mulroney as a great Prime Minister. We see the Liberals now, a party of the 1950s, Louis St. Laurent. We are indeed the New Democratic Party. We have a vision for the next millennium. We are a party of the 1990s, not the 1890s, like the Conservatives.

In fact, if this government has the courage of its convictions, they can call an election, and we will form government into the next millennium. I say, Madam Speaker, we are proud to move this resolution in the Legislature. We are proud to drag this government kicking and screaming and opposing MAI, and I note for the record only the New Democratic Party has spoken out against the MAI at the federal level. Only the New Democratic Party took the initiative, the first Opposition Day motion, to bring in a motion on the MAI. We are fighting for the people of this country who do not want a corporate agenda; they want a people's agenda for the next millennium. I say to the member, I appreciate his advice. We are indeed a new party. We are indeed not an old-line party like his party, and you will see it when we speak out, fighting against the MAI for the people of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker: The hour being 5:30 p.m., pursuant to our Rule 22(13), I must interrupt the debate to put the question on the amendment proposed by the honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey).

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment? No?

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: All those in favour, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

An Honourable Member: On division.

Madam Speaker: On division.

The motion now before the House is the motion of the honourable member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) as amended.

All those in favour of the motion, please—oh, is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed? [agreed]

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House to call six o'clock?

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, March 25, 1998

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