



Fourth Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**

**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report  
(Hansard)**

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Sixth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
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BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	N.D.P.
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LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, December 3, 1997

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

*PRAYERS*

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**TABLING OF REPORTS**

**Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services):** Madam Speaker, I have the pleasure of tabling the annual report for 1996-97 for the Children and Youth Secretariat and the annual report for '96-97 of Manitoba Family Services.

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill 7—The Public Utilities Board  
Amendment Act**

**Hon. Mike Radcliffe (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Government Services (Mr. Pitura), that leave be given to introduce Bill 7, The Public Utilities Board Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Régie des services publics, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Bill 8—The Real Property Amendment Act**

**Hon. Mike Radcliffe (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer), that leave be given to introduce Bill 8, The Real Property Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les biens réels, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Bill 9—The Mines and Minerals  
Amendment Act**

**Hon. David Newman (Minister of Energy and Mines):** Madam Speaker, I would like to move that leave be given to introduce Bill 9, moved by myself,

seconded by the honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Radcliffe), The Mines and Minerals Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les mines et les minéraux), and that the same now be received and read a first time.

My apologies, Madam Speaker. His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, having been advised of the contents of this bill, recommends it to the House. I am tabling the message.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Bill 10—The Mining Tax Amendment Act**

**Hon. David Newman (Minister of Energy and Mines):** Madam Speaker, I would like to move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Radcliffe), that leave be given to introduce Bill 10, The Mining Tax Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la taxe minière), and that the same now be received and read a first time.

I would like to table the Lieutenant Governor's message.

**Motion agreed to.**

\* (1335)

**Bill 11—The Treasury Branches Repeal Act**

**Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Cummings), that leave be given to introduce Bill 11, The Treasury Branches Repeal Act (Loi abrogeant la Loi sur les caisses d'épargne), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Bill 12—The Addictions Foundation  
Amendment Act**

**Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health):** Madam Speaker, I would move, seconded by the honourable

Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Findlay), that leave be given to introduce Bill 12, The Addictions Foundation Amendment Act, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Fondation manitobaine de lutte contre les dépendances, 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 would like to table the Lieutenant Governor's message at this time as well.

**Motion agreed to.**

#### **Bill 13—The Prescription Drugs Cost Assistance Amendment Act**

**Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health):** Madam Speaker, I would move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Gilleshammer), that leave be given to introduce Bill 13, The Prescription Drugs Cost Assistance Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aide à l'achat de médicaments sur ordonnance, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

**Motion agreed to.**

\* (1340)

#### **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 with us today five political studies students from the Royal Military College of Kingston, Ontario. These students are under the direction of Mr. Steven James. On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you this afternoon.

Also seated in the public gallery, we have twenty Grades 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 students from Maples Collegiate under the direction of Mr. Murray Goldenberg. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski).

Also, we have sixty-eight Grade 5 students from O.V. Jewitt Elementary School under the direction of Mr.

Roger Havrilenko and Mrs. Laura Veitch. This school is also located in the constituency of the honourable member for The Maples.

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

### **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

#### **Justice System Victims' Impact Programs**

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the acting Acting Premier. In 1991 Dorothy Pedlar recommended that a victims' impact statement program be initiated in the province of Manitoba. I would like to ask the Acting Premier: why have we waited some six years for the government to deal with this issue, and why have we not been provided victims' impact statements as required in many other provinces in Canada?

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Acting Premier):** Madam Speaker, I will take the details of any answer on notice on behalf of the minister, but let us be reminded of some of the discussion that we heard yesterday where, in fact, we heard that victims were not being listened to, and in fact they had been involved in the discussions around the sentencing and the trial that was under discussion at that time. So I think the opposition Leader should take some comfort in the fact that we have been aggressively working in a number of these areas, and the results will soon be evident.

**Mr. Doer:** Madam Speaker, the Department of Justice's own victims' report indicates that Manitoba is one of the only provinces in Canada—and this is 1996—that does not have a Victims' Impact Program, as allowed for by the federal government in 1991. It goes on to say that we should have Victims' Impact Programs here in the province of Manitoba, which was recommended five years earlier by Pedlar. It was promised by the government in the election in '95. It was reinitiated by the Department of Justice itself.

Why is this province one of the only ones in Canada that does not have a formal Victims' Impact Program—here in the province of Manitoba?

**Mr. Cummings:** Well, Madam Speaker, again, I will take the details of response as notice on behalf of the minister. But I think the member should look at the fact that we have explored this area through a number of avenues in order to get the best information brought in front of the government. He references the Pedlar Commission. That was an active response to the issues that were brought forward, and the minister has—

**An Honourable Member:** Inactive response.

\* (1345)

**Mr. Cummings:** Well, the members want to make comment about whether or not that was a response to a need. They know full well that that was what the Pedlar Commission was intended to do, was to respond to and raise appropriate issues.

The minister has indicated in this House, I believe, but certainly in other forums, that he and his predecessors have taken a great deal of information and put to work a lot of the good advice that came from that report.

**Mr. Doer:** Madam Speaker, it is close to six years after this government has received a recommendation from its own commission, six years after the government said it would institute the recommendations of Pedlar. All we see from this government opposite is condemnations of the federal government and inaction on their own benches.

Kerr Twaddle, a person known to members opposite, in his response to the Judicial Council of Canada states in his defence for reducing the sentence in the Bauder case—a tragic case, in our view, in terms of a 12-year-old child who was raped in the province of Manitoba—Kerr Twaddle cites that the province of Manitoba has no Victims' Impact Program, and therefore there was no victim impact statement before the courts.

I would like to ask this Acting Premier: why has this government been so negligent on the issue of Victims' Impact Programs and statements here in the province of Manitoba?

**Mr. Cummings:** Well, Madam Speaker, I think the response of this government was well enunciated by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews) in the issue that he referred to, and I do not think that, if he wants to sit here and second-guess some of the actions of the courts—this is not the only means by which we can respond.

#### **Victims' Assistance Committee Meeting Schedule**

**Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns):** To the acting Acting Premier or to the acting Minister of Justice, Madam Speaker. Actually, they are all acting all the time, I think.

My question is: In this province, the organization established by law since 1987 to bring together victims, prosecutors, police, defence lawyers, judges to coordinate and fund victims' services and to evaluate victims' programs—a job that is done well—and advocate for victims and make recommendations to the minister is the Victims' Assistance Committee and, indeed, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) promised in the election that increased victims' funding would be put to work by this Victims' Assistance Committee.

My question to the minister is this. How can this committee in any way help or put money to work for victims? Because the annual reports tabled—and I suspect very reluctantly so, because they were tabled on Monday, reports going back to 1994—state under the heading “meetings” the following: The chairperson of the Victims' Assistance Committee did not call a meeting during the fiscal year. Madam Speaker, in fact it has not met since June 1993.

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Acting Premier):** Madam Speaker, the member knows full well that the Department of Justice, under all of the ministers who have held that portfolio, has taken an active interest in those precise questions. In fact, the initiatives that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews) has brought forward and will be bringing forward in the not-too-distant future will respond to a number of those concerns that he is raising.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Madam Speaker, to the acting Acting Premier: in the interests of measuring the

government, not by its rhetoric, by its actions, I ask how this quashed or I would call an imaginary committee for victims, just like what happened to the Pedlar implementation committee, is in keeping with the government's own election promise that read as follows: The Filmon government will continue to look for ways to ensure that the rights of victims are given top priority by the judicial system.

**Mr. Cummings:** Well, perhaps the member senses that there are a lot of things that are happening and are about to receive some positive response from the public and he would like to lead the issue a little bit. The fact is that I stand by my statement a moment ago that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews) will be dealing, I think, in a way that will be very appropriate with the issues the member raises.

\* (1350)

#### **Gurprem Dhaliwal Sentence**

**Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupert'sland):** Madam Speaker, again today I rise on behalf of the family of the late Carol Hastings, the parents, Ethel and Thomas Okimow, of Oxford House. Yesterday, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews) made a statement in the House. He said that the family was comfortable with the manslaughter plan and the sentence range that Mr. Dhaliwal got in the Thompson court. I would like to correct that. In fact, in my conversation with the Okimow family last night, they were not consulted until one working day prior to the sentencing.

I would like to ask the Deputy Premier to investigate this and seek advice from the Minister of Justice and report to this House exactly what happened.

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Acting Premier):** Madam Speaker, the Minister of Justice addressed this and made direct comment about his understanding of the process as it unfolded. I will certainly take the details of the question as notice, but I believe the Minister of Justice rather completely addressed this issue yesterday.

**Mr. Robinson:** Madam Speaker, certainly not to the satisfaction of the Okimow family of Oxford House

who are very, very upset about this conviction and sentence.

#### **Sentence Appeal**

**Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupert'sland):** I would like to ask the Deputy Premier very simply: can this government and can the minister appeal this conviction and sentence or is it a done deal?

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Acting Premier):** Madam Speaker, I will take that question as notice.

#### **Health Care Facilities Food Services**

**Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan):** Madam Speaker, when the government of Manitoba forced all of the hospitals to centralize their food and laundry services, I was there at the public announcement. At the public announcement, the government did not say that hundreds and hundreds of jobs would be lost, the government did not say that they would be cutting a deal with an Ontario capital corporation that would see millions of dollars being paid to that capital corporation to build a stainless steel facility, and the government did not say that Manitoba patients would be getting frozen food from outside of the province as a result of this government's decision.

My question is to the Minister of Health. Given that none of that information was put before the public, will the minister put a hold on that plan, go back to the drawing board, talk to the public of Manitoba, talk to the patients, and say we do not want this plan to go forward that will see the elimination of hundreds of jobs and our patients in our hospitals and institutions getting frozen food from outside of Manitoba?

**Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health):** Madam Speaker, first of all, to the member for Kildonan, this issue really illustrates a clear difference in priorities between our two political parties because, first of all, what the member is really saying—because I think when everyone looks at it, you will find that the quality of food is certainly there, will likely improve, that we are getting better use of public money for health care. The real issue here is this: should we continue to spend

more money on food services than we need to simply to satisfy his friends at UFCW?

Madam Speaker, the priority of this administration is health care. We do not want to continue to waste \$2.5 million a year subsidizing cafeterias in Winnipeg hospitals. We do not want to continue to waste millions of dollars where we do not need to. Those dollars are best spent on hip replacements and knee replacements and health care, and that is the priority of this administration.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Perhaps the minister—and I will ask one of the pages to pass on to the minister some samples of frozen food that are now being distributed at Health Sciences Centre of which I cannot tell the difference whether it is porridge or vegetables, or whether this frozen food is in fact pineapple or whatever. I am going to ask the page to pass this on to the minister. It came from the Health Sciences Centre.

#### Point of Order

**Hon. David Newman (Deputy Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, a point of order. The well-meaning effort to use exhibits in this House is prohibited by the rules of this House, and thank goodness he did not bring feces with him.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Thompson, on the same point of order.

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader):** On the same point of order, I point out that the member is not tabling this alleged food. I would also point out that we have precedent in this House. I sat in this House when the former member for Roblin-Russell, Wally McKenzie, did not table a dead pigeon but actually had the dead pigeon taken by the page to a minister. That was not ruled as being out of order at the time. I would suggest what was appropriate in the House I believe in 1983 would be appropriate today, because we really believe this minister obviously has not seen this stuff, and we want this to be passed on to the minister in a way that is appropriate. It is not being tabled; it is being asked to be delivered to the minister.

**Madam Speaker:** On the point of order raised by the acting government House leader, indeed there was a

point of order. Beuchesne Citation 501 is very explicit. It says: "Speakers have consistently ruled that it is improper to produce exhibits of any sort in the Chamber." There is no reference specifically to tabling.

\* (1355)

\* \* \*

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

**Mr. Chomiak:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is unfortunate that food that is destined for the patients of Manitoba is not being able to be observed by the Minister of Health who made this bad deal. That is unfortunate.

My supplementary question is to the Minister of Health. How does the minister justify frozen food being flown in from out of province to feed Manitobans when we have perfectly capable individuals, produce and foodstuffs available in Manitoba that would provide for the patients of Manitoba, not this frozen gunk that is now being pilot-tested at the Health Sciences Centre?

**Mr. Praznik:** Madam Speaker, I find it somewhat troubling that the member for Kildonan would get bought into some of the blatantly wrong comments made by his colleagues in the United Food and Commercial Workers who have their own problems in the way things have been handled at St. Boniface.

When I spoke to USSC recently, they told me that they have not yet tendered any food purchase contracts. In fact, in their preliminary analysis of where likely their suppliers are going to come from—for example, in the case of their potato suppliers, most likely it is the Carberry plant.

Madam Speaker, the only people who are talking about food and toast and other things coming from Toronto are those who oppose the plan. Let us get right back to first principles in Manitoba. Yes, we want high-quality food, but who can stand here today and tell us that hospital food currently is wonderful and delightful food? When my daughter was in hospital, I

can tell you it was not the most appetizing food that she received regularly.

Secondly, let us look at the use of our resources. Last year in our Winnipeg hospital system \$2.5 million of money that should have gone to health care was diverted by those hospitals to subsidize cafeterias, and that is wrong.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Madam Speaker, the minister illustrates the problem with this government in not taking responsibility for its own decisions. The own director of USSC has said that food is going to be flown in from out of province. The minister is contradicting the person that he appointed in that position—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. I am sure there is a question.

**Mr. Chomiak:** —and he is trying to play politics with the issue when he knows—my question to the minister is: How does the minister justify \$3 million a year going to interest payments to build the stainless steel facility and at the same time importing food from offshore and at the same time not addressing the issues and concerns of Manitobans as it relates to the food? How does the minister justify those decisions made by USSC?

\* (1400)

**Mr. Praznik:** Madam Speaker, the member for Kildonan should listen to himself for a moment. When his party was in power, they had no problem with continuing to borrow money year after year after year. How did they justify \$600 million of Manitoba money going to banks and financial institutions and a variety of pension funds to pay for interest on debt, many of them based in Toronto?

Manitoba's hospital kitchens, particularly in Winnipeg, if we do not do something soon, will be in need of a \$35 million-plus—if I remember my numbers correctly—major retrofit of our kitchens. Where is that money going to come from? It will likely be borrowed and be financed. Would they object to that? Absolutely not, Madam Speaker, I would imagine. But it has to be financed.

Madam Speaker, what we have here is not a privatization—a consolidation of those kitchens with a new facility being built in St. Boniface. It is being financed through a financial organization in Ontario, not unusual for governments to finance through banks or organizations based out of province or other public organizations.

Madam Speaker, the bottom line is this saves money that will go into hips and knees and our hospitals and health care, and that is where we stand.

### **Health Care Facilities Food Services**

**Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona):** Madam Speaker, today we learn that the Filmon government's secret, 20-year deal to contract out hospital food services will cost many more Manitobans their jobs. In fact, a study that was commissioned and done by Statistics Canada indicates that the job losses will not be 182 as this government indicates but will be at least 357 and could go as high as 450 jobs lost as a result of this government's decision.

The Statistics Canada study was done and used the same formula that this government used to talk about the job spinoffs and direct jobs in the Brandon plant just yesterday.

I want to ask the Minister of Health to explain why his government is now in the business of exporting over 400 Manitoba jobs, many of them, at least 50 percent of them in the private sector, to another province. Why are we exporting our private sector jobs to another province?

**Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health):** Madam Speaker, I am, first of all, surprised the member for Transcona would act so surprised about this issue about job loss. It was last spring in fact in this House when his own colleague, the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), along with CUPE invited me to a meeting with CUPE workers. We discussed this issue. In fact, I met with Paul Moist. UFCW, by the way, was not interested in the issue at that particular time. They have got on board since, but at that time and in conversations that I had with Mr. Moist there was a recognition that everywhere else in the country is moving to this kind of



consolidation because it works efficiently, delivers a quality product and saves money.

The concern brought to me by the member for Kildonan, brought to me by those CUPE workers was that we have a fair plan in place to deal with the transition issues, and I held up USSC at that time to ensure that in fact happened, and that is now underway. But the member acts surprised as if he has learned something. It was discussed in this House six months ago.

**Mr. Reid:** The minister said he was going to freeze the plan, Madam Speaker. [interjection] Unfreeze the food, right. Instead, he did just the opposite.

My question for the Minister of Health: Is this Minister of Health not worried about giving an unelected, nonaccountable body, the USSC, a blank taxpayers' cheque to spend millions of taxpayer dollars in an irrevocable, secret 20-year deal that will cost nearly 400 Manitobans their jobs to create private sector jobs in Ontario? Are you not concerned as the Minister of Health?

**Mr. Praznik:** Madam Speaker, without trying to be too unkind to the member for Transcona, the flaw in his logic is he has bought into this propaganda by UFCW that all of this food is going to be brought in from Toronto.

Madam Speaker, the centralizing kitchens—the food that is going to be purchased could be tendered. Manitoba companies are very capable and very competitive in tendering on that food and supplying it. Both members opposite seem to imply today that there is no processed food used in our hospitals. That is ridiculous. I think if you look at any kitchen, any commercial kitchen, any restaurant kitchen in this province, you will find that the vast majority of food is already precooked or processed in some way and often supplied, very often supplied by a Manitoba company.

So, Madam Speaker, the fact of the matter is that many, many of those spinoff jobs in terms of supplying food to the central commissary are still going to come from Manitoba companies, are still going to be there, and what we are ultimately seeing I think is a more

efficient system that allows us to spend money on health care and not on the friends of the members opposite. We know where their priorities are. We know where Manitobans want them, and it is in health care.

**Mr. Reid:** My final supplementary is to the Minister of Health. Because the Minister of Health obviously fails to recognize that a lot of the food is grown here in the province of Manitoba, and it is the farmers in Manitoba that are also going to be impacted, I want to ask this minister, how is it in the best interests of Manitobans, all Manitobans who have a stake in the quality hospital services, people who live and work here, people who have a vested interest in the hospital food services and other hospital services to now, what Statistics Canada indicates will be the loss of 400 jobs exported to Ontario, how is this in the best interests of Manitobans to have these jobs lost and the opportunities lost to the producers of this province for those particular products and the families that are going to be impacted by your decision?

**Mr. Praznik:** Madam Speaker, for the third time, the member has made this assumption that all of the food will be purchased outside of this province. Tenders will go out. Manitoba companies are very, very capable of efficient tendering. That is how it works now, and you know what is very interesting? I would think if you toured most of the commercial or most of the kitchens in our hospital, you will find a wide variety of products, many of them processed, many of them produced in other provinces.

Today, the fact of the matter is USSC will be going to an open tendering process to do its purchasing. Manitoba companies are highly efficient, and they will compete and they will win those contracts, and as has been pointed out to me, the most likely contract for potatoes, for example, is the Carberry plant with a capacity to supply that.

So the analysis on jobs loss that the member raises is just fundamentally flawed on that basis, but let us remember what the New Democrats are saying. It is better to take a dollar out of health care and spend it on food service than spend it on a hip replacement, and that is wrong.

### Health Care Facilities Land Usage Policy

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Last week I was driving on Leila and McPhillips, and I saw a construction of a building at the corner there where we have the beautiful jewel of the north end of Winnipeg known as our Seven Oaks Hospital. I thought maybe there was some sort of expansion that was going on. That is what I had personally thought. This morning I found out that in fact it is a bank that is going up, and I have been led to believe that in fact the hospital was leasing it out for the bank to go up.

My question is to the Minister of Health. Are there guidelines that are out in place in terms of what limitations might be there in terms of how we can use or how land is used that belongs to our hospital facilities?

**Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health):** Madam Speaker, the member for Inkster surprises me somewhat as well today how short memories are. I remember being in this Assembly in my first session as Minister of Health and the member continually raising the question of our regional health authorities, the power we were taking away from local boards, the need to ensure that those local boards continue.

Well, today Seven Oaks Hospital is a facility that is operated by its board of directors, to which we are not the appointing body. They make decisions with respect to their property and the way they manage that. I do not now always necessarily agree with that, but that is part of independence. So the questions he asks about the specifics going on, they should be properly directed to the chair and members of that board of directors.

With respect to the fact that ultimately it is public money that funds these sites, one of the things that we did last year in some of the legislative changes that we made was empower us as a government to ensure that we do put rules and regulations in place around the use of capital, sale of assets and those types of things, to give the protection that the member now requests.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, what I am looking for, are there any sorts of limitations? Can we see, for example, Victoria Hospital and other facilities use up 90 percent, for example, of their greenery around their facilities for a commercial landlord or as a commercial landlord? Are there any limitations whatsoever?

**Mr. Praznik:** Madam Speaker, up until recently my understanding was that there have not been, and that is because those independent boards that ultimately own those facilities, that the member supported and wanted this government to continue, have that power. Now I am of the view that since the public is the funder, since we are the trustees of the public, we ultimately have to have more control over those decisions. That is why this government created the Winnipeg Hospital Authority that the member opposed. That is why we, in fact, have changed some legislation, giving us greater power over how public monies are spent on those types of assets.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Wellington. Oh, I am sorry. The honourable member for Inkster with the third—

**Mr. Lamoureux:** With my final supplementary question, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** I apologize.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Given the Minister of Health's response, then, will he indicate to us in terms of what the government's position is with respect to land usage for our hospital facilities, not only in Winnipeg but throughout the province?

**Mr. Praznik:** Madam Speaker, the position that has been in place for numerous years, obviously, is that those boards have had the power to make their decision on their own, and that is a position the member I gather supported last spring when he opposed the changes we were making. Obviously, as we create regional health authorities—the fact that these facilities have a significant public investment, it is important that major land-use decisions on their property have the concurrence ultimately of a regional health authority and Manitoba Health, because we want to ensure that sites maintain sufficient space for other expansion and other particular needs. That becomes very important in

urban settings in particular. So we have moved to give ourselves greater power and involvement in those decisions, but let us not forget that the member for Inkster opposed that.

### **Urban Affairs Committee Meeting Attendance—The Speaker**

**Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington):** My question today is for the Minister of Urban Affairs.

I would like to ask him if he has perused his records and can confirm for us today that the Speaker of the House was a participant in a meeting of the Urban Affairs committee of cabinet on November 3, 1997.

**Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Urban Affairs):** Yes, and yes.

### **Agenda**

**Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington):** Would the Minister of Urban Affairs further confirm that the agenda of that cabinet committee meeting was a discussion of the government's political and legislative policy regarding the proposed amendments to The City of Winnipeg Act?

**Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Urban Affairs):** Madam Speaker, the minutes of the conversations are not for public disclosure. I cannot give her an answer on that.

## **MATTER OF PRIVILEGE**

### **Resignation of Speaker**

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader):** I rise on a matter of privilege, Madam Speaker, and it will be followed by a motion. It is a very serious matter.

We have just had it confirmed in this House by the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer) that the presiding officer of this House, you, Madam Speaker, attended a cabinet committee of Urban Affairs, something that we raised in this House yesterday, something that is a complete violation of the impartiality of the Speaker. I cannot stress enough how important this is and how important it is to note that

this was a cabinet committee of which we as members of the Legislature and members of the public are not even entitled to know what was discussed. Not only were you there, but we are now told by the Minister of Urban Affairs that he cannot disclose what was discussed at that very meeting.

I want to point, Madam Speaker, to the fact that we know we have before us legislation dealing with the City of Winnipeg, outlined in the Speech from the Throne, which no doubt was part of the discussions of the Urban Affairs committee of cabinet, and I cannot think of anything that is a greater violation. First of all, to be in that meeting in the first place, but, second of all, to be involved with any discussions that relate to legislation that is going to be brought before this House that was outlined in the throne speech.

Yesterday, I quoted Beauchesne Citation 168, the chief characteristics attached to the office of Speaker in the House are authority and impartiality. I can reference Erskine May: confidence in the impartiality of the Speaker is an indispensable condition of the successful working and procedure, and many conventions exist which have as their object not only to ensure the impartiality of the Speaker, but also to ensure this impartiality is generally recognized. I could quote Laundy, the office of the Speaker, which I think is the Canadian authority in terms of the role of the Speaker. The Speaker is above sexual interests and immune from party influences. He, or in this case she, serves only the House of Commons regardless of which faction might temporarily be in control of it. Each individual member receives, and is entitled to expect, the same consideration from the Speaker, but the overriding duty of the Speaker is to the House collectively. The Speaker is not only impartial, he or she is seen to be impartial.

This is not something that is unique to this House. It goes back for many centuries of parliamentary tradition, and I think back, Madam Speaker, on the most famous quote by a Speaker in history, 1642, Speaker Lenthall, who established the principle of impartiality when the King came to seek the arrest of treason of five members of Parliament, and the Speaker dropped to his knees and stated: May it please Your Majesty, I have neither eyes to see nor tongue to speak in this place, but as the House is pleased to direct me whose servant I am here.

I humbly beg Your Majesty's pardon, but I cannot give any other answer than this to what Your Majesty is pleased to command of me. From that point on, every parliament has adopted one of the fundamental laws of Parliament, being the impartiality of the Speaker.

I find it interesting, reference to previous Speakers, and you know I wish the Premier (Mr. Filmon) was here, because I would like to quote back words that the Premier expressed in 1987, not about a Speaker attending a cabinet committee, but attending a retreat, basically a social event of a caucus. The then Leader of the Opposition stated: if Beauchesne is good enough for her to base her rulings on in the House, it ought to be good enough for her on this issue.

**An Honourable Member:** Who said that?

**Mr. Ashton:** Gary Filmon, then Leader of the Opposition.

I have quoted the authorities. We quoted the authorities many times in the past. I do not know how many times we have to stand on our feet and make it clear that we, as members of the opposition and I would say many Manitobans, and I have received comments and calls from many Manitobans on this issue, that we have no confidence in your ability to act as Speaker, Madam Speaker, I can tell you, if we had concerns before with what happened with other issues relating first with your taking away the ability of members of the House to call any policy racist, something that is clearly a violation of our freedom of speech or your conduct last year with MTS, your conduct again these last few days with rulings that have sat unattended for more than one year.

Madam Speaker, if we had any doubts about our concern about your ability to be impartial and nonpartisan, there is no doubt in our minds that the revelation that you attended not only a meeting—the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) discussed education policy issues—but that you have attended, by admission of the government, a cabinet committee dealing with Urban Affairs.

Madam Speaker, please do the right thing. I will be moving a motion that will be calling for your resignation, but please understand, as I believe many

other Speakers have understood in previous history, that you cannot continue in this House as Speaker, other than being Speaker in name only, if you do not have the confidence and support of all members of this House. You do not have the confidence of the official opposition. You do not understand, and I want to say to you, if you wish to participate in those kinds of committees, you can do so tomorrow without any criticism from anyone in this House if you resign as Speaker.

I say to the government, as well, who was asleep at the switch on this one? Who in that committee—and I point to the minister on this—did not realize the terrible position that you were not only placing this government in—showing I think the growing arrogance after close to 10 years of government, the abusive power that we are seeing more and more from this government, the smugness—but did anyone not dare to suggest to the Speaker—I believe showed a fundamental lack of judgment. Did the minister, did no one else in that committee not say to the Speaker, perhaps you should not be here, this is a cabinet committee? I mean, have you lost touch that much that you do not understand that to the average member of the public there appears to be something fundamentally wrong with the Speaker sitting in on cabinet committees and then coming in here and supposedly being impartial?

\* (1420)

Madam Speaker, the right thing to do is to resign, to take your place as an honourable member. As a member of that government, if you wish, you can attend every one of the committee meetings you want to as a private member of this House, but so long as you are Speaker, you are a servant of this House. You must have the confidence of all members of this House. That is something you do not have.

That is why I move, seconded by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer), that this House call on the Speaker to resign because of her violation of the principles of the impartiality and nonpartisanship of the Speaker's office.

**Motion presented.**

**Madam Speaker:** Given the seriousness of this matter, I am sure that the House would want to debate it at the

earliest opportunity, and therefore the question is that this House call on the Speaker to resign because of her violation of the principles of the impartiality and nonpartisanship of the Speaker's office.

**Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington):** I rise in complete support with the very serious matter of privilege and motion that has followed from that matter of privilege.

The parliamentary system that we operate under in this House and throughout the hundreds of countries that use the parliamentary system is based on several things: one, that there is a government; two, that there is usually an opposition, although that once did not happen in one of the Atlantic provinces recently and some of the government members actually acted as an opposition. The third thing is that there is a position of Speaker which mediates, which ensures that the debate, that the matters of the House go forward in a reasonable and effective manner.

The role of Speaker in this parliamentary system that we have evolved is a very difficult one because the Speaker, in our system, comes from the elected members of the Legislature. So the Speaker is, at the beginning of his or her term, or before he or she is selected, a partisan member of either the government or the opposition and has been elected as a partisan member of the Legislature. Then this current selection process—it is not an election which we would like, but the selection process moves that individual from that partisan stand that he or she was elected on and physically moves him or her from her seat to the front of the Chamber to act as the Speaker.

That movement from his or her seat as a member to the Speaker's chair—from that time that they leave their chair as an MLA to the time that they take their chair as Speaker, during that movement, that is when the impartiality comes into play. No longer is that individual a government member. No longer is that individual, during the operations of the role of Speaker, a partisan member. For over 300 years that has been the unalterable rule of the Speaker. Parliament cannot function without that impartiality of the Speaker.

The issue today is that the person who holds that impartial chair as a Speaker not only attended a caucus meeting, not only attended a party, but attended a

cabinet committee where the object of the debate and the discussion at that committee was the legislative agenda of the government, in this case The City of Winnipeg Act amendments which are going to be brought forward as mentioned in the Speech from the Throne. Who knows what else? We only know the Speaker attended one cabinet committee meeting. Perhaps there were others in which other legislation was debated, where the role of the cabinet committee is to be partisan; it is to discuss legislation, to discuss policy, to discuss strategies, to discuss pros and cons of the legislative agenda.

Are the minutes of that cabinet committee open? No, they are not open even to caucus members of the government, I would imagine. They certainly are not open to me as one of the 57 members of the Legislature, or even more, they are not open to the members of the public, and the minister today just reiterated that very point when he said he would not discuss the agenda of that cabinet committee. There is a logic here, and we are not talking against the need for cabinet to discuss things in privacy. That is an accepted form of the parliamentary system as well. What we are saying here is that there is no role for the nonpartisan impartial Speaker to be present at those meetings. That is the issue.

Finally, I would like to say that it has appalled me over the last two days to see, No. 1, when the issue was first raised yesterday in Question Period, the looks on the faces of the government members; they had no idea why this was a question. What? There is no problem here.

**An Honourable Member:** They did, because they could not remember.

**Ms. Barrett:** They could not remember, but at the very beginning, the first question, so what is the big deal? And again today the same thing. These members of the government do not understand or they do understand and they are saying nothing. They do not understand the role, the vital role of the impartiality of the Speaker, and that is why—neither does the Speaker who has to take responsibility for going to that meeting. Whether she was invited or invited herself, she attended that meeting. That is an absolute derogation of the role of the Speaker, and therefore I strongly support the motion

that the Speaker must resign so that the parliamentary system in this province can come back to its status as enabling us to do the work of the people of the province of Manitoba.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Madam Speaker, I, too, would like to say a few words on this particular issue because time and time again it seems that we are wanting to address the whole issue of what has been happening in the Chair since the last provincial election.

I again will emphasize I am not standing here in order to attempt to befriend you in any fashion; I am standing because I firmly believe that in fact there is an injustice that is occurring inside this Chamber. This injustice is a personal, vindictive opposition led by the New Democratic Leader of this Chamber that shows a vindictive attitude towards you, Madam Speaker, and I find that it is absolutely inconceivable that an opposition would go to the degree that they have gone time and time again. Ever since the last election, the official opposition has not respected Madam Speaker. Divide and conquer was the mentality that was there. Back on November in 1995 you moved a motion of nonconfidence. We continuously debate inside this Chamber the role that you have to play. What upsets me is that there are many other issues that need to be debated inside this Chamber. We need to get over this and start the other debate.

Madam Speaker, I have serious problems that you actually attended a meeting that the New Democrats have made mention of. I have very serious problems with that.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Be patient; let us be patient. I have very serious problems that the Speaker of this Chamber is in fact not elected. We should have an elected Speaker. We should also have guidelines for the Speaker in terms of what the Speaker should and should not be able to do, but let us take a look.

Again, we have limited research in the Liberal—amongst the three Independents, and what I did do is I canvassed across the country in terms of what other Speakers have done. In B.C., the Speaker will not

venture into space used by members of the Executive Council. When constituents' issues or need arises for discussion with ministers, the government ministers head to the Speaker's office. The Speaker in B.C. is also provided with his own dining room and meetings with government ministers take place there or in committee rooms. Private member meetings are not uncommon. No one in the B.C. Speaker's office knows when this rule started, but it is accepted practice from time.

In Alberta, the Speaker will attend caucus meetings outside of normal sessions; in New Brunswick, does not attend caucus meetings; in Nova Scotia, will attend caucus meetings outside of normal session; in Ontario, does not attend caucus meetings; in the Yukon, will attend caucus meetings outside of the normal session. The Northwest Territories have not gotten back to us. In P.E.I., yes, they will attend caucus outside of the normal sitting of the Legislature; in Saskatchewan, the Speaker does attend caucus meetings outside of session. You know what I was told from the research, in fact, the Speaker, the New Democratic Speaker, tomorrow is going to a classroom with the Minister of Education, I believe, inside a constituency.

\* (1430)

Now, Madam Speaker, why do I bring that up? The simple reason is that there really are no rules that are there that say in terms of this is what you can and you cannot do—Beauchesne says. This is the reason why I feel offended that in fact, yes, you attended these. I would be very disappointed, if in the future, you were to attend anything to do with policy development. I believe that is wrong, but you cannot all of a sudden bring up the issue in terms of attending a meeting and then start criticizing it when there is no precedent across the country which gives it legitimacy or illegitimacy.

**Some Honourable Members:** Yes, there is.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** What are you talking about? I just cited provinces with the Speakers—[interjection] Madam Speaker, the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) even made reference—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

### Point of Order

**Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples):** Madam Speaker, we are only a small group here, but I would like to hear the member for Inkster's (Mr. Lamoureux) arguments and I do not want the rabble, the shouting, that those who scream the loudest are right. I would like to hear the member for Inkster.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for The Maples indeed has a point of order. It was getting rather raucous in here and very difficult to hear the honourable member for Inkster's remarks. The honourable member for Inkster deserves the same privileges as all other members in this Chamber.

\* \* \*

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Inkster, to continue his debate.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, it was interesting. I had read an article in one of our daily papers in which it makes reference to the fact that Myrna Phillips, the former Speaker, actually attended a caucus retreat. The member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) said, well, it was a retreat. That is a special event. We do not discuss policy. We do not have anything to do with policy at a retreat.

At one time I used to be a member of a caucus of 20 and when we went on retreats there is a lot of discussion on policy. I would assume that when government goes on retreat or when the New Democrats go on retreat—what are you going on retreat for? It is the taxpayers in all essence that are, in all likelihood, paying for it. You are not talking about policy.

What I am trying to argue is that I personally believe that you used bad judgment in attending this. But having said that, I do not believe that there is anything in rules that said that you could not attend what it is that you in fact attended. I believe you used poor judgment. I believe that members of the opposition have a valid argument to put forward that you should not attend those sorts of meetings, and we trust that in fact that will not occur in the future.

But what we really need in the Manitoba Legislature are two things. One is an elected Speaker, and hopefully we will see that. But in order for that to occur there has to be negotiations, legitimate negotiations where people can actually sit around with the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), the member for Brandon West (Mr. McCrae), a representative from the independents can sit down, and we can talk about maybe we can have this elected Speaker after the next provincial election. If the will was there—and I believe it could be there, but we have to get over this vindictive attitude towards you, Madam Speaker—in fact, we could do that.

Along with a plan to have an elected Speaker, what we need is to have some guidelines, because as we look across Canada there really are no guidelines for Speakers. We need to have guidelines which make it very clear from all parties in this Chamber in terms of what is right and what is wrong in terms of a Speaker to be able to do.

Now, Madam Speaker, I really do believe very firmly that you, in comparison to the Speaker prior, might have a difference in personalities, but I can honestly say in terms of my own personal treatment, in terms of the third party treatment, I have not detected anything that you have done that has been any worse than the previous Speaker. I do believe that you did make a mistake. [interjection]

If the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) is trying to imply that I am doing this because of money by squeezing his hands like this, I say shame to the member for Dauphin, and I would suggest to you after I sit down he should apologize for making that acclamation, because I believe I am doing this on principle not because of a political vendetta.

If the member for Dauphin wants to open the rule book, in fact he will see that there is a rule. You cannot impute motives, and if you are trying to say that I am doing this for additional resources I think that member owes me an apology. I anticipate that he should stand up after I am done speaking on this particular issue.

.. Madam Speaker, I will not get bullied inside this Chamber. I will not be bullied by the Tories. I will not be bullied by the New Democrats. When I believe

something is done that is just, I will stand up and I will defend it. I do not believe that, given what has happened since your appointment to the Speaker's chair, you should have to resign. It does not necessarily mean that I agree with everything that you have done. I will still continue to lobby for more additional changes inside this Chamber and no doubt we will agree to disagree on some of those points, but I do not believe that you should have to resign the Chair.

**Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley):** Madam Speaker, I rise to support this motion, which requests your resignation.

I do so with regret, not with vindictiveness, for when you were appointed, even though I was shocked at the manner of the dismissal of the former Speaker, for whom I had and have a strong regard, as a woman I wished you well.

All Speakers will make mistakes. Most, inevitably, will make judgments with which I do not agree, and that much is acceptable. But you have clearly lost the respect of this House, and you should resign. Madam Speaker, you have made rulings which were not just mistakes but which limited the freedom of debate in this House. You ruled that the word "racist" could not be used in the Manitoba Legislature. You were wrong to do that. Racism must be named, and it must particularly be named in this Legislature.

Madam Speaker, during the Manitoba Telephone System debate, you used your power to limit debate and limit the rights of members on this side of the House to speak. That was wrong, and you forfeited our respect. You have delayed for more than a year the judgment on the Premier's unpleasant comments. This was wrong. Such matters should be dealt with quickly and judiciously so that the main business of the House can be conducted in civil terms. The Premier is only the member for Tuxedo and enjoys no special rights in this House except apparently in your eyes.

Madam Speaker, your conduct at Question Period has been repeatedly partisan, permitting several members of the government to exercise rights to speak that are not accorded to all members. They have ignored your orders from time to time and on one occasion have been so disruptive that you were forced to close the House, but no words of censure came from you.

Madam Speaker, you have been repeatedly warned that your conduct was not appropriate, that it was not what the citizens of Manitoba wanted from their Speaker, but you have not heeded and you have not learned.

Now we find that you have been part of a cabinet committee where legislation has been discussed and that you have sat with members of the cabinet to discuss formally government policy with representatives of the students of Manitoba. I know of no Speaker—

\* (1440)

#### Point of Order

**Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training):** I believe that members are not permitted to mislead the House.

I think that the member references a presentation made to all MLAs by the University of Winnipeg students, and there was not government policy discussed. I think she is misleading the House by implying that was a meeting to discuss government policy, when it was in fact a request by the students to make a presentation to all MLAs, including the opposition, who also received the same presentation. It was not a discussion of government policy. She is misleading the House.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Education does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

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**Ms. Friesen:** It is clear that the government does not even understand that when the Speaker sits with two cabinet ministers to listen to students, they are also representing government policy. When any minister meets with students, they are discussing government policy. I do not know how we can make it more plain for the Minister of Education, but that is the issue, and that is the case, and that is part of the case on which this rests. I know of no Speaker in Canada who behaves in this way. The very evidence which the



member for Inkster has put forward indicates—  
[interjection]

Madam Speaker, I believe I am being interrupted by the Minister of Education, and I do not believe she has risen on a point of order.

### Point of Order

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. The Minister of Education, on a point of order?

**Mrs. McIntosh:** Well, I am not sure. She can tell me if it is a point of order or not. The opposition has asked me to stand now and correct that. The deputy, the government House leader has asked me to do that, or their acting House leader. Do you wish to—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. The only procedure that is acceptable for interruption during debate is when a member rises on a point of order. I would ask the honourable Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) for clarification. Were you up on a point of order?

**Mrs. McIntosh:** Madam Speaker, I do not believe that this is technically a point of order. It is a request from the opposition. I was giving clarification.

**Madam Speaker:** There is no point of order.

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**Ms. Friesen:** Madam Speaker, I want to say that the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) placed before us, I think, arguments or the evidence that Speakers across Canada do not attend cabinet meetings, they do not attend the statutory committees of cabinet. Different Speakers in different provinces have, from time to time, attended individual caucus meetings. They do not attend cabinet meetings or committees of cabinet, and for very good reason, because it contravenes the fundamental principles of neutrality that must be part of a well-functioning and democratic parliamentary system.

I am disappointed that government and other members of this House cannot see the importance of these very fundamental principles and, now more than ever, Madam Speaker, in a society which is becoming

increasingly litigious, I believe that we need to be assured that in Parliament we can speak freely and that in representing our constituents we are all equal members in this House and that the Speaker takes most seriously her responsibility to appear and to be in fact impartial. This is a necessity to maintain our rights as members of this Legislature.

Madam Speaker, the mock show of reluctance that every Speaker makes on being taken to the Chair symbolizes the heavy duties and the weight of responsibility that lies on the shoulders of every Speaker in every parliament in the Commonwealth. It is intended to remind us of the times when Speakers were required to defend all members against the dreadful power of a vengeful king. All Speakers today must understand their place in that history and their task of defending the rights of all members against arrogant and autocratic governments.

In particular I believe the role of a just and impartial Speaker is even more important at the end of the 20th Century when the gap between the private and the public interest has widened and when government of all kinds have been undermined by global agreements on trade, fuelled by greed on an international scale. More than ever our democratic institutions must be clearly and transparently fair and accountable, and that accountability works only when we are assured that we have robust and strong democratic institutions which have earned the confidence and support of an active citizenry.

Madam Speaker, government matters; accountability matters; fair, democratic institutions matter. Those are the issues of principle that we are dealing with. So with regret, you were given opportunities to change and you have chosen not to do so. You might have learned and grown and, yet, you chose to ignore the advice of many members of this House, and it is with regret that I support this motion for your resignation.

**Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway):** Madam Speaker, the father of conservatism, Edmund Burke, once said, and I paraphrase, that the conventions and institutions of society is a social compact, not only among the living, but among the living and the dead, and none of us in this present generation can, with impunity, disregard all the customs and usages on which the

Mother of all Parliaments, the British Parliament, has been established.

Parliamentary law relates to the customs and rules of conducting public business in the British Parliament and all the other parliaments in the world which use the British Parliament as model. The rules are there. Although we have a saying that rules derive sometimes from violations, rules are there to be observed. What the rule shall be is not subject to the capriciousness of the Speaker. What the rule shall be should not be subject to the foolishness of the members of the House.

They have been established through ages and ages and years and years in the pattern of all generations. Even King Solomon said that what has been it shall be and what it shall be has already been. There is nothing new under the sun. It has been established that the feature that distinguishes the office of the Speaker is impartiality. Impartiality is the source of the legitimacy of the authority of the Speaker. Without impartiality, there is no legitimacy. Without legitimacy, there is no Speaker.

The three characteristics, if we analyze, are that in the first place impartiality there must be. Otherwise, there is nothing to recognize. Given that impartiality is already present, it must be total. It cannot be partial. It must be complete if the members of the House are to have confidence in the presiding officer of this Assembly. Finally, it should be generally recognized and acknowledged and accepted by all the members of the House and by all the people represented by the members of the House. For that matter, Speakers in the past, although they have to be friendly with all the members of the Assembly, generally they tend not to be too friendly with any one of them lest it may appear that any one of them is receiving some special privileges or favour. It is a very difficult role to play.

The impartiality of the Speaker, which is the source of her authority and legitimacy, is also the source of her responsibility. Authority is bestowed in the office of the Speaker for two reasons. The authority of the Speaker represents the power, the dignity and the honour of the Legislature itself, and the honour and the power and dignity of the Legislature, in turn, reflect the honour, dignity of all the members of this Assembly. In turn, the honour, dignity and power of the members of

this Assembly reflect the power, honour and authority of all the people in this province whom they represent. Any transgression of the rules, therefore, either by the Speaker or any member of this Assembly, is a transgression of the honour and dignity and power of all the people.

\* (1450)

I would like to quote from Vaclav Havel that the honourable Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Newman) had previously quoted. With respect to the responsibility of public people, especially elected people, their responsibility is to think ahead boldly, not to feel the disfavour of the crowd, to imbue their actions with spiritual dimensions, to explain again and again both to the public and to their colleagues that politics does far more than reflect the interests of particular groups or lobbies. After all, politics is a matter of serving the community, which means that it is morality in practice.

There could be debate and arguments about the Speaker attending a public meeting where all interests of special groups are heard. There can be debates pro and con. Perhaps there could be debate also of the Speaker attending caucus retreats. What is good for the goose is good for the gander. What is the sin of one is also the sin of the other, but it does not justify perpetuating that sin. But all sins are forgivable, except the unpardonable ones. To err is human; to forgive, divine. We can forgive some indiscretion, but when the fundamental principle of parliamentary institution is violated, where the cabinet itself decides the politics and policies, the fortune, lives and properties of all the people are at stake on a partisan choice of preference, then the Speaker cannot cross that line. That is an unpardonable sin.

Let me go out with a nice quotation: Vice is nice, but a little virtue won't hurt you.

**Hon. David Newman (Deputy Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, I, of course, am speaking strongly against the motion. You know, this is, I would submit, a numbers tactic. It is easier for 23 to gang up on one than it is for 23 to gang up on 30. We have a dependence here on what is purporting to be a principle and a principle which has been expressed in absolute

kinds of terms, black and white, rigid rule sort of approach because that is consistent with the numbers tactic. You have to, even if you are ganging up 23 to one, base it on something that smacks of morality, smacks of principle. So you go into the texts and you find what appears to be a statement of principle, whether it be Beausiesne, paragraph 168 or Erskine May and then you take it to an extreme. Then you bring up matters, in most cases long forgotten, to use them as the circumstances to apply what is purported to be the relevant evidence to the principles.

The only current piece which is the add-on is the alleged participation in a cabinet committee meeting. Let us put on the record something that has not been articulated. I, as an upper bencher MLA, participated in meetings of what was called the Urban Affairs committee of cabinet, and I did it along with the mayor and representatives of the council of the City of Winnipeg. I participated and listened and learned as a responsible and conscientious MLA representing the constituency of Riel.

I would submit that members opposite would expect nothing less of any member of their political party who is an elected MLA than to responsibly and conscientiously represent their constituents. For the suggestion to be made by the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) that participation as an MLA in a meeting with student leaders where you have students from your constituency attending that institution and you are invited to the meeting, like other MLAs and all other MLAs, by the students, one would be insulting those students and one's constituents by not participating in such a meeting.

I might say I was at that meeting, and my recollection is that the honourable Speaker, the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay), did not say a word but listened respectfully and, if I recall, left early and apologized for not being able to fulfill the invitation that was extended to her by those students.

If we were really dealing with the substance of things here, if you were really serious about that rather than an expanded, an exaggerated rigid-rule, kind-of-principle approach, you would be approaching this based on the integrity of the Speaker, because after all that is what is the guiding word, that is the guiding hand, that is to

whom you are accountable. You are accountable in a character way to your own conscience. If ever there was a conscientious MLA for Seine River, if ever there was a conscientious MLA anywhere and if ever there were a conscientious Speaker, it is represented by this Speaker.

Madam Speaker feels deeply, and to have a gang-up of 23 to one in that isolated position of Speaker without the guidelines the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) referred to—there is a vacuum of guidelines—you have to make choices day in and day out when you are a Speaker in any legislature in this country. You have to make choices as to: Where is the balance? Do I go to this? What is my responsibility to my constituents and what is my responsibility to my constituents in terms of being electable next time around? What is the balance?

It is no different than whether you are chair of a board and you are trying to determine balance so that you can have respect at meetings or you are a referee or you are an arbitrator or you are a judge. It does not mean you are cut off from socialization. It does not mean you are cut off from learning, and it does not mean that impartiality deprives you of the opportunity to fulfill your responsibilities in those positions.

Now, I was not confident enough of the authorities cited by members opposite with good intentions, I am sure, but the authorities that they cited represented voices from the past who we have never met and we have never seen, and they may be outdated in some respects, and maybe what they said is not applicable in Manitoba and is not applicable in any jurisdiction in this country where we have the kind of speakership that we have.

Madam Speaker, there was an article, there was a paper presented by Dale Lovick, the Speaker of the British Columbia Legislative Assembly. In his paper presented to the 20th seminar of the Canadian region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association held in Fredericton on October 25 to 27, 1996, in an executive summary at the beginning, the concluding phrase is, complete renunciation of all political affiliation is unrealistic in Canada, and that Speaker of the Legislature of British Columbia goes on to say: In short, the notion that one cannot be impartial as

Speaker unless one severs all partisan connections does not seem to me to be supportable.

I am sure Madam Speaker has attended parliamentary meetings and probably meetings with Speakers, and probably those are the sorts of things that Speakers use as continuing education tools, and they probably discuss these kinds of things. That is the sort of continuing education that is being delivered and published.

It goes on to say: probably the most frank and ingenuous analysis of the predicament for Speakers outside Westminster is provided by the former Speaker of the Fijian House of Representatives, Tomasi Vakatora. In an essay written in 1986, he pushes very hard indeed against the restraints of nonpartisanship, and quote: "Although a Member of Parliament is elevated to the high office of Speaker, he must not lose sight of the fact that basically he is a politician. This is very important to a member if he wants to continue with his political career. If he loses sight of that fact, it could cost him dearly at the next election."

\* (1500)

He goes on to say that the Speakers should be able to attend political meetings as a backstage observer, should be able to explain to constituents the government's stand on certain controversial issues and should keep in close contact with party or government.

His essay concludes with the observation that in Fiji it would be futile to pretend that a Speaker will be elected for another term just because he is the Speaker. The situation in this province and other jurisdictions in this country where you are an appointed Speaker from the party that has chosen because of their majority numbers to be government, you are not, unless you have been a Speaker before and even then you do not know what position you are going to hold. You run as a member of a particular political party and when you have been Speaker you do the same thing. That is the way the system works. It is systemic. It is the way the system works. What do you do? Do you avoid going out and even raising money for your own opportunities to get re-elected? Do you do it under another party name? Do you do it under an independent name?

What is the approach you take? There are not guidelines about this, but there is certainly practice.

There is another factor that is made by the Speaker from British Columbia in this continuing education program for Speakers and parliamentarians. He says the impartiality of the Speaker is also well entrenched in that the Speaker is obliged to rule on the basis of clearly defined and well-established practices. Speakers are not free agents who operate on whim or whimsy. What is more, though the point seems to be seldom acknowledged, the Speaker does not stand alone, and quotes, the Speaker is relieved that burden of personal decision in many of the rulings he hands down, thanks to the advice available to him through the professional expertise of the Clerk of the House and his colleagues.

I conclude that it is neither helpful nor necessary for a Canadian Speaker to be nonpartisan in the way of Westminster or in the way suggested by the two Speakers from the Canadian House of Commons, one of whom is quoted in paragraph 168 of Beauchesne. You know, this gets so petty. Where there is a concerted tactic to try and either embarrass the government or eliminate a Speaker—in effect, intimidate a Speaker into resigning—where that is the tactic, then there are no holds barred in trying to dig up evidence, and it will always be of course circumstantial evidence, and that kind of effort leads to the kind of approach which is being taken by members opposite in this particular issue. The future of this, hopefully, will be a vote which will be supported by my party against this particular motion, and we can put all of this behind us.

The honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) yesterday indicated that matters like this should be referred for consideration by committee and that is a matter which makes eminent sense and was approved of by this House yesterday. But to waste the time of the people we represent rather than debating substantive merits of policy, rather than having the official opposition party put forward some sort of option to the direction set out in the throne speech, rather than addressing the substantive merits of what this government stands for and is proud of and suggesting something better or something different for the people of Manitoba, we have this concentration on a tactic—23 against one—to try and resurrect what was a bad

memory in this Legislature and the conduct of honourable members not befitting the term "honourable" throughout the Legislature.

Let us move forward, I submit, let us move forward and really serve the interests of all our constituents and the interests of the people of Manitoba who expect more, Madam Speaker, more from the honourable members of this Legislature. Let us get on with business as has been urged by the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski), as has been urged by the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), at least we are moving towards a consensus, we are moving towards a consensus.

I would ask the leadership of the honourable members opposite to move in this direction, a consensus to serve the interests of the people of Manitoba by using this Legislature for what it is designed for, and that is thoughtful, serious debate, not the dredging up of circumstantial evidence to try and prove the unprovable, and with a person who is a highly principled, sensitive, individual human being and occupies an office which is deserving of more respect. Thank you.

**Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows):** Madam Speaker, when you began your term in office as the Speaker of this Legislature, we in the NDP caucus began on a positive note. Our Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer) seconded the nomination of the Premier (Mr. Filmon) that you be the Speaker. We wanted to give you our support. We did not know what kind of a Speaker you were going to be, and we thought that it was only fair and right to give you the benefit of the doubt and give you a chance in the office of Speaker. We were also disappointed that the Premier chose to choose a new Speaker. We were quite happy with the previous Speaker, the member for Gladstone (Mr. Rocan). We thought that his rulings were fair. We also thought that is why the Premier got rid of him, because he was fair to both sides.

We believe that the major problems with our lack of confidence in you as Speaker began during the MTS debate. In my mind, it began when the government House leader rose on a point of order and asked you to make a ruling on it. At that time I believe that you should have refused to rule on that. You should have

said that what the government House leader was asking you to do—unfairly, I believe—was to decide how the business of the House should be conducted and should be wound up, and you could have quite easily said that is a matter for the House leaders to negotiate. Certainly, that is normally how a session ends, and that was certainly an option that you could have chosen.

In fact, you could have also pointed out to the government House leader that they could have used speedup, that they could have used closure, that there were a number of options available to the government to get their legislation through the House. Instead, we believe that you chose in a partisan way to help the government get their agenda through the House, which is definitely not the proper role of any Speaker of any democratic legislature. Then, by not allowing our members to speak, you denied us probably what is the most fundamental right of every member in this Chamber, and that is the right to speak. By not allowing us to speak, you denied us that fundamental right in this Legislature.

Now in this session, and there has been a session in between, you have chosen to sit on rulings, on points of order and matters of privilege for an entire session, and we believe that you had many, many opportunities to bring in these rulings. One was only a page and a quarter long. Surely it did not take a year to write that ruling or to research that ruling. In fact, we know that Speakers routinely use their fax machine and consult other legislatures for advice, other Clerks' offices, other Speakers. The former Speaker has told us that he used to consult other Speakers around the commonwealth in other commonwealth countries as to what precedents and rulings there were in other jurisdictions. So for you to not rule on matters of privilege and points of order is quite reprehensible, and we believe that in one case you were defending the Premier. Surely a very partisan thing for a Speaker to do.

Now we have proof. The Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer) has put it on the record. The Minister of Native and Northern Affairs (Mr. Newman) was honest enough to put his reply in the record yesterday, the first time he was asked about the Speaker attending a meeting with cabinet ministers and students. So we know that you have done what is unprecedented as far as I know in this Legislature, and that is for a Speaker

to attend a meeting of a cabinet committee, namely, the Urban Affairs committee of cabinet. We believe that this violates all the guidelines and all the principles of what a Speaker should and should not do, particularly as enunciated in Beauchesne's at 168, No. 1. I will quote part of No. 1 which says: "The chief characteristics attached to the office of Speaker in the House of Commons are authority and impartiality." Further down we read: "Confidence in the impartiality of the Speaker is an indispensable condition of the successful working of procedure, and many conventions exist which have as their object, not only to ensure the impartiality of the Speaker but also, to ensure that there is a general recognition of the Speaker's impartiality."

\* (1510)

Another way of saying this would be the common phrase, not only must justice be done, but justice must be seen to be done. Not only must the Speaker be impartial and fair, the Speaker must be seen to be impartial and fair. That means, I think, by implication, that all members of this Chamber should see the Speaker as impartial and fair, and you do not exist to defend any member here or some member, but you are here to defend the rights of all members, all honourable members of this Chamber.

Madam Speaker, 168.(2) says: "In order to ensure complete impartiality the Speaker has usually relinquished all affiliation with any parliamentary party. The Speaker does not attend any party caucus nor take part in any outside partisan political activity." Yet we have evidence from the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer) that you have attended a committee of cabinet meeting.

Your role, Madam Speaker, and I would hope that you would be aware of this, is analogous to that of a judge, and I would hope that the member for Riel (Mr. Newman) would appreciate this as a lawyer. I would like to quote from a book that I think has to do with the office of Speaker, and it says: It is not merely a use of analogy to conceive of the Speaker in the modern House of Commons as above all things a judge, nay as the sole judge of parliamentary law. His decisions are called by a name used for expressions of judicial opinion, rulings. The modern president of the House of

Commons, then, is a judge who has to apply the rules of procedure to the best of his ability and with perfect impartiality, maintaining with a firm yet sensitive hand the proper relations between the two parties to the proceedings before him, the majority and the minority.

So you are sitting in this esteemed position as a judge. You have to make impartial rulings regarding the majority and the minority, and it is very important that in this role as a judge you are perceived as a judge, that you are seen to be making rulings that are fair and impartial. Now it occurred to me when I was listening to some honourable members participate in this debate that we had a former member here, a former premier, Premier Sterling Lyon, who had a great high opinion of the role of Parliament. In fact he and the premier of Saskatchewan at the time were opposed to an entrenched Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the Canadian Constitution, and the reason was that they believed, and they later were persuaded to not block an entrenched Charter of Rights and Freedoms, but they believed in the superiority of the Legislature. It would be very interesting to discuss with the honourable now Justice Sterling Lyon his view of the role of Speaker, and I suspect that because he had such a high opinion of the role of Parliament and the importance of Parliament that he would agree with the necessity of the impartiality of the Speaker.

We believe that we have a solution to the predicament that we are in now, and that is to have an elected Speaker. We believe that there would be much more support by all members of the Chamber for an elected Speaker because all of us would be committed to that person having voted for that person by secret ballot, and we believe that the government should act now and not wait until after the next election.

I regretfully say that I have lost confidence in you as Speaker, and one of the reasons for my saying that I regret to put this on the record is that I have attended parliamentary conferences with you. I was pleased to be a delegate at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conference when it was held in Manitoba when you, indeed, were the host of this Canadian conference. I believe that you did an excellent job as host. I know that you worked very hard on that parliamentary conference, and I have taken part in three or four of these conferences and seminars because I am

interested in parliamentary procedure, and we know that Speakers normally take part in all of these conferences. So on a personal level I have enjoyed taking part in parliamentary conferences with you. I commend you for the hard work that you did when you were host of the conference in Winnipeg. So it is with regret that I put on record that I have lost confidence in you as the Speaker of this House, and I regretfully say that I believe in the best interests of the impartiality of the Speaker that you should do the right thing and resign.

**Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to participate in this debate.

Madam Speaker, whenever a member brings such a motion as this, it would appear to be a very, very serious matter on which it is brought. However, I regret, in listening to the comments of the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) and several of his colleagues, I must say that the reasons behind this motion lead me to believe at least that what we are seeing here is a continuation of the debate from last year that hinges not around the impartiality of the Speaker, not around ultimately the operation of this House, but from a very real fact as to what happened last year when one party in this Legislature reneged upon an agreement that we had struck, all political parties, to overhaul the rules of operation of this procedure and that that party, the New Democrats, made a very conscious decision last year, I believe, to throw away their commitment to those rules and those processes and do everything possible, whether or not it was within the rules of this House or whether or not it was within the regular norms of operation or procedure, to take a position on an issue that they felt very strongly on.

Madam Speaker, what I find somewhat hypocritical today in this particular discussion from members opposite is when one recalls what happened here last year and see or remember their commitment to the rules that we all had agreed upon, and you have to wonder where, in essence, their commitment is to parliamentary process and procedure.

Madam Speaker, I was part of the committee over a period of time with my colleague the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), with the former member for

Charleswood, indeed the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) over the years, where a great deal of effort—and the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) was one of those members—was put into establishing a set of rules to operate this procedure of this Assembly not only to make it more civil and effective for the people of Manitoba in our day-to-day operations but to change a fundamental principle, I guess, of parliamentary life which was to provide some regularity to our sessions.

Unlike many other Chambers in the Commonwealth who have moved to a regular sitting, Manitoba has not, and part of the fundamental reform that we attempted to address at that time, Madam Speaker, was to give regularity to our sessions, that we would have regular times in which we began and ended our sessions. We would have a fall and a spring session. We would have periods in which we had rules by which we as government were compelled to introduce our legislation in exchange for the opposition ensuring that it came to a final conclusion, a vote, within a regular period of time.

If there was one error that we made in that committee, and maybe we made it consciously, was that we did not perhaps give enough definition to mechanisms around how that rule was to be given effect. One of the reasons why, in fact, we did not is because we appreciated the complexity of that rule and relied on literally the good will of all to ensure that it was carried out.

\* (1520)

Madam Speaker, last year, when we got onto a debate over an issue which was very fundamental to the political beliefs and views of many in this Chamber, certainly members of the New Democratic Party, where this government had lived up to its part of the bargain in introducing legislation within the rules provided, what happened, in essence, was the good will necessarily to give effect to the rules to which we had agreed quickly dissipated on behalf of members of the New Democratic Party and left in the most awkward of positions which was to find a mechanism to give effect to the rules of this House. What the New Democrats really objected to was the fact that Madam Speaker had

to give effect to the rules that they had agreed to. [interjection]

Madam Speaker, the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) says that Madam Speaker did not have to. Well, yes, Madam Speaker could have ignored the will of this House in establishing its rules and let one group hijack a process and throw away rules that members on this side and members of the Liberal Party had relied on to that point in time. In fact, I would argue that was extremely dishonourable on their part. In fact, there were days in this House we did not know which faction of the New Democratic Party was in charge as they battled amongst themselves at that particular time. So my regret is that we collectively, as members of this House, put Madam Speaker into a position where she had to do that which we said we would do by our own good will but were not able to because the good will quickly dissipated from members of the New Democratic Party.

Madam Speaker, the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) spoke about the right to speak as being a very fundamental right of members of this House, and it is. It is. But equally so is the fundamental right of the members of this House to make decision, the fundamental right of members of this House to vote to make decision. What we saw last year, and for which Madam Speaker, very regrettably, is being asked by members of the New Democratic Party to carry some responsibility when it was not hers, was the fact that members opposite wanted to deny all members of this House a fundamental right and that was to make decision. Because they did not represent the majority, ultimately they pushed the right of the minority to speak and delay well beyond the rules to which we had agreed and wanted to push it to the rules where, in essence, they would grind parliamentary operation to a halt.

Madam Speaker, what is so fundamentally sad about this is that when we made the decision to change the rules—and the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) was in that room—we understood that we were making fundamental change in those rules, that there were preconditions in legislation and there were results, and that members of the government relied, by carrying out and meeting the preconditions, on the agreed-upon results which were that matters would come to a conclusion by a specific date. Now members opposite

try to hide behind their extremely unparliamentary actions last year by saying there were other mechanisms. Well, we had agreed that the mechanism or the result would be a vote and members opposite initially were committed to that good will and betrayed their trust and the trust of other members.

We are being asked today by this resolution to judge you as our Speaker once again in this Assembly. We do that when we initially elect you, Madam Speaker, and today we are being asked to judge you again. Well, let us look at the criticisms that are being made. We know where this comes from. This is still a leftover from last year. We look at the criticism of slowness to make decisions on rulings and matters of privilege. We appreciate during that period that there were many matters taken under advisement. One of the prerogatives of the Speaker is the timing in which those matters are brought back and Madam Speaker has to make a judgment call as to appropriate times to bring matters back before the House because, obviously, sometimes the decision for a speedy result may result, given the mood of the House, in a further delay in its operation.

But that fundamentally is a right of the Speaker to bring in those rulings. In fact, there are many cases in other jurisdictions where sometimes Madam Speaker does not in fact bring in a ruling at all, but that is your right and prerogative. I have never once in my many years in this House heard a complaint about delay, and there have been many rulings that have taken long periods of time in which to come forward.

Madam Speaker, on the matter of rules and procedures there is a point that I may have missed in my earlier remarks that when I scan my notes I think is worthy of mentioning. Many of us in this House sat through a period when the Meech Lake Accord came here, and the former member for Rupertsland, one Mr. Elijah Harper, by using the rules of the House, was able to delay a matter coming towards a conclusion or debate on the floor till a deadline passed.

What is interesting between that period and what we saw last winter—and I wanted to make this point—we on this side, members of the Liberal Party respected the rules of this House, and the rules of the House allowed Mr. Harper to delay those matters, but the rights of



minority members and individual members were protected. [interjection] We all did. But, Madam Speaker, we had no choice. It was part of that. We had changed our rules to allow a period for bills to be brought in with set dates and periods for them to be brought to a concluding vote. And just as Mr. Harper had a right to rely on the rules to do what he did, members on this side of the House, members of the Liberal Party, indeed even members of the New Democratic Party had a right to rely on those new rules to see bills brought to a concluding vote where every member would have had an opportunity to cast their judgment on the bill at hand and a decision to be made. Members of the New Democratic Party did not respect the agreement that they made.

Madam Speaker, the matter at hand that precipitated this particular resolution is one of your attendance at a particular meeting or gathering of a cabinet committee. There is no doubt that Speakers have a responsibility to show impartiality, to indeed act in an impartial manner, but they also have equally, so I believe, a responsibility to their constituents and to represent the interests of their constituents, to advocate on behalf of their constituents, and that is a balance.

Every Speaker of every parliament in the Commonwealth has had to try to find the right balance. There is a history of evolution in this particular area. My colleague the member for Riel (Mr. Newman), the acting government House leader, spoke very eloquently about the changing role or development in that impartiality, in that balance between being an elected member and being a Speaker.

Madam Speaker, in our own House of Commons there was a time when that impartiality of being a Speaker meant that when you assumed the office of Speaker you ended your affiliation with a particular party, you sat as an independent, and the opposition accommodated that by ensuring in the next general election that candidates with their affiliation did not contest your seat. That has not happened in Canada since the early 1970s. In fact, the last Speaker that I can recall anywhere in Canada who gave up their party affiliation was Speaker Lamoureux, back in the early 1970s, who was the member for Stormont-Dundas out of Ontario in the House of Commons. After the retirement of Speaker Lamoureux, I know of no other

Speaker who abandoned their party affiliation, who sat as an independent, who had the support of the opposition in not contesting their seat at the time of the general election.

So we know that a Speaker has a responsibility of impartiality in the operation of the House. We know that they are bound by precedent and by principles and assisted in the advice of able Clerks who are learned in these matters. As the member for Riel (Mr. Newman) has pointed out, those are guiding posts for a Speaker in the operation of the Assembly. We know as well that Speakers in the Manitoba Legislature, indeed I think all the parliaments and legislatures of Canada and most in the Commonwealth, also come with a party affiliation, also have a constituency to represent. Indeed, Madam Speaker, in our own Debates and Proceedings, the Speaker is listed here as a member of the Progressive Conservative Party. I have yet in my over nine years in this House seen any member of the New Democratic Party rise to say that should not be the case.

\* (1530)

So we know that there are those two roles. We know that we have debated this from time to time. We know that those two roles are there, that the Speaker comes as a member of a political party with a constituency to represent. We know as well that in the office of Speaker and in the Chair of this House, the Speaker has a duty of impartiality and is guided by precedent, tradition and rules, and it is a balance for a Speaker to make.

Madam Speaker, in my experience in working with you and knowing you, I know that you have respected that and you have always tried to maintain that balance with integrity, with honour, and respecting the tradition of the office in which you sit. I also know you to have been and to be a very strong advocate on the part of the people of Seine River who have twice sent you to this House to represent them. You have always handled that balance with honour and integrity.

Now, Madam Speaker, with respect to a particular cabinet committee meeting, yes, we are aware of the sensitivity around cabinet committee meetings, but in the operation of our own government, we know that

this particular committee from time to time has had briefings for urban MLAs on issues, and that any involvement you have had has been to receive information that was important to you for your constituents. I know of no occasion when you have been an active participant in the formation of partisan or government policy that has come to this Chamber where you have crossed that line and that balance. What we have in this Assembly today—and by the way, other Speakers in the last 20 years in this Assembly, going back I think to Mr. Hanuschak, to Mr. Fox, Mr. Graham, Mr. Walding, Ms. Phillips, Speaker Rocan have all, I am sure, ensured that the interests of their constituents were represented as best they could within that balance between being the Speaker and also being a member of this Assembly.

Madam Speaker, members opposite attempt to attack you on the basis of your attendance at the meeting. They have not raised a matter where you have, nor can they cite a matter, actively been involved and engaged in promoting or developing a government policy to come to this Assembly and use your office to promote it or push it forward. They attempt once again to attack you on the basis of somewhat an innuendo and to try to give the appearance that you are not maintaining that balance. In knowing you, and in serving this House with you, I am very proud to say that you have always maintained that balance, as I have said before, with honour and integrity.

When you boil everything down here, when you look at the real issue here, the real issue is the fact that a year ago in this Chamber, the New Democratic Party made a conscious decision to abandon their commitment to a new set of rules and to hijack this Legislative Assembly and to take away the right of every member of this Assembly to cast a vote and make a decision on a matter of important public business. They, the members opposite, put you in a position where you had to do what our House leaders and caucuses should have done, which was to give a mechanism to the rules that we had put into place.

We put you in that position and you responded as any Speaker had a duty to do, which is to put into effect mechanisms to give effect to the rules that this House agreed on, so that matters of a business as agreed on

could come to a decision by the 57 elected members of this House.

Madam Speaker, if there is anyone here today whose interest and commitment to parliamentary democracy should be challenged, it should be members of the New Democratic Party, who did not live up to their agreement and put Madam Speaker and parliamentary tradition in this province into dispute. I am very pleased to support you on this motion.

**Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns):** Madam Speaker, it is just incredible, if not pathetic, to hear the responses of the two members opposite. The Speaker has just been caught attending a cabinet meeting. The first time, I am sure, ever in this province's history, in the history of any province—oh, you shake your head. You want to engage in debate, I know. In any parliamentary democracy in this world, never has a Speaker been attending cabinet meetings, and the members opposite, without any regard to the people who will come after, to governments and oppositions that will come later, have the gall to stand up in this House, with backgrounds in the democratic institutions of this province and this country, and say everything is just fine. I find it incredible and pathetic.

We have the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) stand up here and go on this revisionist rant without a—[interjection] Did this member, once during his speech, talk about the rule that was in effect on that sitting day in November, about the requirements, the normal requirements, the word “normally,” and what happens that day? Did he, once in his speech, acknowledge that this government asked for and got a rule change that allowed it to extend the sitting for unfinished business? In other words, they recognized that there could be unfinished business on the last day of the session. Once in his speech, did he talk about all the tools at this government's hands to end the session, whether it was closure or speedup or any other ones? No, Madam Speaker.

But I want to address the issue before this House and not what happened last year. Then we had the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Newman) stand up, and indeed it was a chilling account of how he sees this democratic institution. There was a member who could not find any citation, any convention, any

principle of common sense to justify your attendance at a cabinet meeting. Did he look to the Parliament of Canada for some precedent? No. Did he go to the Mother of Parliaments, Westminster, and look for precedent? No, but he did find some musings of someone from Fiji, some musings, and he found some musings of a greenhorn Speaker from British Columbia. Dale Lovick, who wrote the article that the member quoted, does not attend cabinet meetings. That is the answer, and it reflects so poorly once again on the Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews) who yesterday got up here on a matter of fact and said that the Speaker in Saskatchewan attends cabinet meetings. That was not true. That is the Attorney General. That is the extent to which they are going to go to justify your going to cabinet meetings.

Have they not thought, have they not seen the pictures of all the Premiers in Rooms 255 and 254? I do not know if they noticed—maybe they do not want to see it—but they are not all Progressive Conservative Premiers. Governments come and go. And there will be a day when that government is gone and those members are sitting over here, when the youth in their party may be represented in this House, and what precedent are they supporting? They are supporting a precedent that the Speaker is certainly not only more than welcome but, if I understand their argument, is an important part of cabinet meetings. Here we had two members that practised law and studied law saying that was just okay-dokey.

\* (1540)

You could imagine the democratic institutions if they had the say. You would have the judges free in this province to go and consult with just defence council, maybe another day just with the Crown attorney. I know their contempt for judges in this province, as I have seen through the wage-adjustment policies of this administration. They are not thinking ahead, and they are not thinking of what a terrible affront to parliamentary democracy has just been discovered.

I was really taken aback by the response yesterday of the Housing minister when he was asked if he recalled the Speaker taking part in the cabinet meeting. He got up there and he shook his hand, you know, or shook his head; gee, I just cannot remember, you know. Imagine

that. A minister not even thinking that there was something strange or unique or memorable about a Speaker of the Legislature attending a cabinet meeting. That was just the ordinary course. It makes me believe that you, Madam Speaker, have been attending meeting after meeting after meeting of cabinet. That is what that response of the minister leads me to believe. I would like to hear the answer. No, I would like to ask the Minister of Housing (Mr. Reimer), has Elvis been at one of your recent cabinet meetings, and the minister would get up and say, geez, I have to check the record. I think he had to check the figures or something. Can you fathom the misunderstanding of how this system works?

I am not standing here today on this issue because I want to. I had enough of parliamentary procedure. I sat at that table. I came back, and I was elected to deal with matters of public policy, the problems that my constituents are disproportionately having to deal with under this administration and to put forward positive alternatives to make our community work better together. But, Madam Speaker, I have to stand here today and deal with this. It has to be dealt with before I know that the values and ideas that my constituents bring through me to this Chamber are going to be dealt with, and I can propose them in a fair way without being prejudiced by the actions of the Chair.

It was just on Monday when I commented that it appeared your actions in the recent past have made you an adjunct of the cabinet, and here we are just two days later. Indeed, the office of Speaker in Manitoba has been made an adjunct of the cabinet of Manitoba. You, Madam Speaker, surely have not heeded one of the very important lessons in speakership in Manitoba. Do you know the last time a Speaker of this Legislature went in cahoots with the government, that Speaker was tarred and feathered? Interestingly, it was The City of Winnipeg Act and urban affairs issues that were at stake there. You pass by the portrait of Speaker Bird outside of your office. I am sure you are aware of that history. We do not tar and feather. But was that not a lesson that I thought that you would have heeded, that you would have listened to?

It is not just you but this government and its actions, its attitude, its arrogance, its callousness about democracy that has corrupted this place. Unless this is

dealt with, unless you resign, unless the government acknowledges the wrongfulness of what has happened, this will remain a precedent and forever, from now on, this place will be different, and it will be different for the worse.

Now the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) said, there are no rules to govern such questions of conduct. Well, this place operates on the basis of convention, and I dare suggest on the basis of common sense.

I want to turn to the article that the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Newman) quoted from. I will go to the Parliament of Canada and to the Mother of Parliaments at Westminster. You know, James Jerome, a highly, highly respected former Speaker of the House of Commons, refused to even go to public events where there would be only a member of one political party in attendance. He said, and I quote: "No matter how informal the event, I always made sure that if one Member of Parliament was to be there, we invited another from each political party. I never attended so much as a testimonial dinner for any of my former Liberal colleagues and indeed was never at any party function of any sort. Even in the 1979 election my campaign literature dealt exclusively with local problems, and in public meetings, on radio or television, I did the same thing. During the campaign I never made any reference to the performance of the Government or the Opposition parties."

Erskine May says—and I want the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) to heed this—"Confidence in the impartiality of the Speaker is an indispensable condition of the successful working of procedure, and many conventions exist which have as their object not only to ensure impartiality of a Speaker but also to ensure that his [or her] impartiality is generally recognized."

Whether this is a rule does not matter because it was Horace King, the Speaker at Westminster from 1965 to 1971, who said: "After a long period of evolution, the impartiality of the modern Speaker has become almost mathematical—certainly beyond doubt or question." He says that this conception lies at the heart of parliamentary democracy.

But even Mr. Lovick in his musings notes that it is an elected Speaker—and he is quoting John Fraser that by secret ballot is indeed "a guarantee of the Speaker's independence." So it is in that context that Mr. Lovick does his musings, and he goes on to say, and I quote: "To be sure, the Speaker must be impartial and scrupulously fair, and indeed perceived to be so."

Now, Madam Speaker, not only are you attending cabinet meetings, but you seem to have no hesitation at all in meeting with government members before the public. You are not just skulking around in the shadows of this building. You do not seem to appreciate how you have imperiled your office. You seem by those actions to have consciously become partisan, and I say this in the context of the rulings that you have been making in this House and your actions last November.

Madam Speaker, your tenure as Speaker must now be over. That is it. You have made a conscious decision to put government interests ahead of the interests of this institution over which you preside, and having done so there is no doubt that you cannot continue on.

Look around, Madam Speaker, this place is not doing what it could be doing. This place is not functional. This is a not a healthy Legislature. Why? Look at yourself and consider the attitudes of this government that sees you as one of their tools to consolidate and enhance their power not for the sake of the governed and for the people of Manitoba but for their own sake and for their own ends.

Well, Madam Speaker, it is over. You must resign. You cannot continue. You have no choice.

**Mr. Kowalski:** [inaudible] to frame my remarks with a couple of mentions of some topics that have gone on before, some factors in what I am going to say. One of them was the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) rubbed his fingers together—

**Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood):** I believe the honourable member's microphone is not turned on, Madam Speaker. At least I cannot hear it.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. May I get clarification? My audio is working. Are there

problems with other members' audio? Perhaps it is the individual member's earpiece that is nonfunctional?

**An Honourable Member:** Try it now.

\* (1550)

**Mr. Kowalski:** As I was saying, the member for Dauphin rubbed his fingers together to try to impute that anything we had to say would be affected by some belief that support for our vote in any matter could have affected the amount of resources our party has. Well, if that was the case, I would be supporting this motion. In that case, we would not be getting \$500 a month. So the proof is in the pudding. If we had been doing this to get support from the Speaker and to get more resources, we sure failed, because we are only getting 500 bucks a month. So I think the member should be apologizing for trying to impute those motives to anything we said or any way we voted. I would appreciate that apology.

Secondly, we have talked about the impartiality of the Speaker and, after the member for Riel (Mr. Newman) spoke, I had my researcher pull off the Internet that paper done by Dale Lovick, the Speaker from B.C., and I found it interesting that the subtitle of his paper here is Impartial But Not Non-Partisan. So you can be partisan and still be impartial, the same as a referee.

My classmate from recruit class, Jackie Watt—[interjection] Again, Madam Speaker, this party here does not want to hear another member speak. Could I be allowed to speak without interruptions from them because they do not like what I am saying? Could they be quiet and listen? Maybe they do not like what I am saying, but I have the right to say it here.

Once again, Madam Speaker, it shows the decorum that these members are willing, that they are the ones interfering with the good functioning of this House. I am trying to speak, and once again they do not like what I am saying so they think by yelling loud, by interrupting they can intimidate me. Well, they will not.

Once again, like the poor classmate, like the little kid in school, just cannot give one more remark. Let us hear the last word now. Unbelievable. Unbelievable.

But, as I was saying, impartiality is in the eye of the beholder. They have talked about the previous Speaker being more impartial. Well, that was in their eyes. As a member elected in 1993 and coming into this Chamber, it was a number of times that I felt that our seven-member caucus, because we were the smaller caucus, was always at the short end of the stick when it came to the Speaker as far as the rotation of private members' hours, of MUPIs, because there was that razor-thin majority, and to get the co-operation of the opposition with the bigger numbers, he always gave way to the path of least resistance. I have not noticed that in this session, but that is my perception.

But when I felt that, did I call for the resignation of Speaker Rocan just because I felt that he was favouring the NDP constantly in rotation of private members' hours, in rotation of MUPIs and seating arrangements? No, because when you are playing a game, and I do not want to trivialize what goes on here by it being a game, but if you are playing a game and you do not like the referee's ruling, you go on and you play the game some more.

Carrying on with the analogy, you know, this game that we are playing, right now we are debating the throne speech. We are in the fourth day. Do you know how many speakers we have had on the throne speech from the opposition? Three. Three. But, you know, I see it is a good political tactic, and possibly if I was in the NDP caucus I would support that tactic, because every time they criticize the Speaker they resurrect the MTS debate, and I am sure in the next general election that they want to remind people and, by keeping criticizing the Speaker, they remind the media, they remind the public about the MTS debate. That is a good political tactic and, hey, that is what this is about, politics. But then to try to cloak it with the integrity of a higher issue I think is very empty.

Now, one thing, and I will be anxious to hear especially from the opposition House leader (Mr. Ashton) an explanation if he could explain to me, they have acknowledged that in many parliaments, in many legislative assemblies in Canada and elsewhere that the Speaker does attend caucus meetings. They accept that and they say: okay, we do not do that here, but that is acceptable to them, but they say that attending a cabinet subcommittee meeting, that is not acceptable, and I

tend to think that if I was giving you advice, I would say, do not go to cabinet meetings.

Yes, but what is the difference between a caucus meeting and a cabinet subcommittee meeting? It all depends on how you view your caucus. Now, does the Conservative caucus direct cabinet to make decisions? Is it partisan or is it, the cabinet dictates to caucus? So if you are saying it was acceptable that she went to the caucus meeting, where minutes are not kept—minutes are not kept in caucus meetings, okay—so the Speaker could say theoretically in a caucus meeting: do not worry, I will get that legislation through. There would be no record of it. But at a cabinet meeting, minutes are kept, I believe, so I have less fears of a Speaker attending a cabinet meeting because this would have to be ratified in caucus where minutes are kept and someday that will be on the public record. [interjection]

Once again the member interrupts. Once again she interrupts.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Kowalski:** Once again, the constant interruption shows the lack of respect for the process that goes on in here, just as continually bringing up the Speaker as a political tactic shows a lack of respect for the process here. The fact that we have only been able to put up three speeches on the opposition side about the throne speech shows a lack of respect for the process here.

So, yes, I agree with my colleague from Inkster who said, yes, it probably was—no, I will not say probably. It was an unwise thing for the Speaker in the present circumstances to attend any cabinet meeting, but there are not clear rules. They referred to Beauchesne a number of times as being the rules. Well, Beauchesne applies in those parliaments in the other provincial legislatures, right? Does that mean in every other legislative assembly where the Speaker attends caucus meetings that they are ignoring Beauchesne?

So I am looking forward to the comments of the opposition House leader to respond to some of the things I am saying, but my belief now after reading this document off the Internet from Dale Lovick, MLA and NDP Speaker in the B.C. Legislature, about impartiality but not nonpartisan, hearing the comments, knowing

that in many provincial legislatures, Speakers attend caucus meetings. Unless I hear something very convincing, I will be voting against the motion.

**Mr. Ashton:** I will be the final speaker from our side on the motion, and I do want to respond to the concerns—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. I am just getting clarification, but I believe the honourable member has already spoken to the motion.

**An Honourable Member:** No, he raised on a point of privilege and then moved the motion.

**Mr. Ashton:** Madam Speaker, I had spoken on the matter of privilege, I had moved the motion. However, you had decided to put the motion directly to the House. I am asking for the opportunity to speak on the motion in response to the debate. I realize it is a bit unusual— [interjection] Well, that is fine. It is bit of a different circumstance when we are dealing with a matter of no confidence in the Speaker, because normally there is a ruling on the prima facie nature on the matter of privilege in which case the debate does begin on that part, but I have not spoken on the matter of privilege since you put it to the House. I would ask for the opportunity to speak on that largely in response to some of the concerns expressed by the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski).

I appreciate the opportunity to just put a few comments on the record. I want to say just very clearly from the beginning, I think the debate that we have had has been a useful debate, but I regret to say that I think the member for Riel (Mr. Newman) and the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) have made our point. Not once has anybody in the debate ever indicated any precedent anywhere, not only in Canada or Fiji or anywhere else in the Commonwealth, of a Speaker attending, as we have documented evidence—this is not circumstantial evidence to the member for Riel by the way, but documented by the response of the minister today, by the government House leader yesterday, that the Speaker of this House attended a cabinet committee—a cabinet committee.

\* (1600)

Now, I want to deal with that because that is the root cause here. I want to put on the record, too, by the way, that we were aware that the Speaker has attended caucus events, caucus meetings. We never raised it, and I can tell you, I would have argued and I would have probably—and I do see previous Speakers from time to time—I would argue in this province, given the tradition in this province, that in itself I think is questionable, but there was a precedent and I read this into the record on moving the matter of privilege from 1987. I mean, talk about hypocrisy. You know, to say one thing in 1987 about the attendance at caucus meetings and not understand that we are making a point that goes beyond that in this case.

Let us deal with this very fundamental point. We are not talking about attending a caucus meeting—that does occur out of session in other jurisdictions. I commend the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) for doing the research, by the way. We did the same research, because yesterday members attempted to put on the record information that was incorrect. Nowhere in the country does the Speaker attend cabinet meetings or cabinet committee meetings. There was reference made to Saskatchewan. We checked that, that is not the case. The fact is in some jurisdictions the Speaker does attend caucus meetings out of session. We acknowledged that earlier. That was made in my comments moving the matter of privilege. I think there is a fundamental distinction between that, and I look to the member for Riel (Mr. Newman) here, and what has occurred in this case.

By the way, I want to say to the member for Riel I have a great deal of respect for him, but I resent the statement he put on the record of somehow suggesting this is some 23 versus one. I want to quote to the member opposite, by the way, who should know and I am sure does as a lawyer, perhaps members in this House who do not understand, that under the British parliamentary system we have had the same kind of developments we have had with our legal system, the common-law system. We are a system of laws that is based on precedent. It is based not on strictly statute law but is based on centuries of tradition. That is absolutely the fundamental basis of our legal system and of our parliamentary system.

But I want to say, the fundamental principle of parliamentary law, Sir John Bourinot, Parliamentary

Procedure and Practice, which is the first citation in Beauchesne: The principles of Canadian parliamentary law are: “To protect a minority and restrain the improvidence or tyranny of a majority.” This is the fundamental role of the Speaker, to protect the minority in this House. The Speaker is not the minority. The minority in that case, that reference, is the opposition. You know, I say to the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) that I share his concern. I have sat in this House and the third party can be pretty lonely, and I do by the way reference the fact that some of the things he did talk about were decided. They apply to us when we were in the third party as well. I sometimes, and I do not think I am giving away any secrets, remind some of my own colleagues vis-a-vis the Liberals, having been there before, what it is like, and sometimes we may not agree, but I think we have to have some sympathy for that position.

You know what? I have been on government as well. I guess I have had—I do not know if you would call it a luxury to be on government, the second party and third party in this House, but I say the same thing to members of the government. There are members on the other side who probably do say this in their own caucus meeting, to remind them of what it is like on the other side. In 1987 I sat in the government benches. I remember members opposite sitting on the opposition side and how concerned they were at a Speaker attending what, a cabinet committee? No. Something that is done in other jurisdictions. They then called for the resignation of the Speaker. Now, to the member for Riel (Mr. Newman), were they intimidating the Speaker? By the way, the opposition in 1986 did not even have the courtesy to second the nomination, something we did. We gave the Speaker a chance in 1995. I say to all members of the House, whether you are in government or you are in second party, in third party—I speak from personal experience—what you say today will be read back to you at some time in the future because you are not ever going to be permanently in that position.

Sterling Lyon used to remind us, and I was a rookie member at the time, he talked about temporary governments. Now he referred to a government at the time that had the largest majority I think in recent history. We had 34 seats. Guess what? I hate to say this. Sterling Lyon was right. It was a temporary

government. It is no different, it is no different the other way. All I ask for members to do, and particularly members for the government, because I do not think you get the point here. First of all I heard all these disingenuous speeches from government members saying how they have confidence in the Speaker. You know, that does not surprise me. Has it not dawned on you that we understand she is a colleague? She was elected as a Conservative. What we are concerned about in the opposition—and you probably say good for her. I do not think you were unhappy with what happened last time, last year, in MTS. You are not unhappy with attendance at the caucus meeting, but understand, understand here, it is not a question of whether the Speaker can continue to do her job as a member of the Legislature as well as being Speaker. Every Speaker in this province since 1870 has continued to be a member of the Legislature. They have gone, they have represented constituents. We have always had that ability. We have never had a Speaker attend a cabinet committee, in this case a cabinet committee dealing with a major piece of legislation outlined in the throne speech that we are going to be dealing with.

I plead to members opposite and indeed to the Liberals, do you not get it? Do you not understand that is crossing the line? Do you not understand that if you are on the other side of the floor, do you not think you would be arguing what we are arguing today?

I want to finish by suggesting, walk a mile in our shoes in this Legislature in the opposition, and I say that collectively, because it is not easy. We are not invited to these cabinet committees, by the way. It is interesting. This is not some open item. The government minister I think almost gave it away yesterday when he said: any con was invited to attend. I am sure he was going to say con-servative member.

Listen. I have been in government. I have been in second party. I have been in third party. Understand this, and I say this to all members. What you do internally within your government, you can invite whoever you want to your meetings, but do not take away the ability of the Speaker to be impartial. The member for the Maples (Mr. Kowalski) talked about impartiality and nonpartisanship. There is exactly the point here. In this case the Speaker was elected as a

Conservative, so she is not a nonpartisan individual. Every Speaker we have had when we have not had nonpartisan government has been elected under a partisan label. The key element though is, the moment you become Speaker you have to separate yourself from that. You can still work for your constituents, but you do not then cross over starting off as a partisan individual and then become a partisan, impartial individual as a Speaker. Think about it. I think the member for The Maples asked the right questions.

I think the only answer is, we know, everybody in this House I believe knows, that what the Speaker did was wrong. I think everybody else knows that we are not going to resolve this matter until we do the right thing, we do by the way what every other jurisdiction in Canada has done, and that is recognize the only way to ensure that you have a Speaker that has the confidence of all members of the House, who is impartial not only in day-to-day activities but in terms of clear appearance, is to have an elected Speaker.

I regret we have to do this, Madam Speaker, and I ask you one more time, because I know the government Whip will be on this, but I ask you to consider your position as Speaker. I think you would do a great service to this House, and we can move into the future if you would resign and allow us to move the next step, to have an elected Speaker in the Manitoba Legislature.

**Madam Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is that this House call on the Speaker to resign because of her violation on the principles of the impartiality and nonpartisanship of the Speaker's office.

#### Voice Vote

**Madam Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion, 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 Nays have it.

### Formal Vote

**Mr. Ashton:** Yeas and Nays, Madam Speaker.

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

\* (1630)

The question before the House is that this House call on the Speaker to resign because of her violation of the principles of the impartiality and nonpartisanship of the Speaker's office.

### Division

*A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:*

#### Yeas

*Ashton, Cerilli, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Evans (Interlake), Friesen, Jennissen, Mackintosh, Martindale, McGifford, Mihychuk, Reid, Robinson, Sale, Santos, Struthers.*

#### Nays

*Cummings, Driedger, Dyck, Faurschou, Findlay, Gaudry, Gillehammer, Helwer, Kowalski, Lamoureux, Laurendeau, McAlpine, McIntosh, Mitchelson, Newman, Penner, Pitura, Praznik, Radcliffe, Reimer, Render, Rocan, Stefanson, Sveinson, Tweed, Vodrey.*

**Mr. Clerk (William Remnant):** Yeas 17, Nays 26.

**Madam Speaker:** The motion is accordingly defeated.

There are 11 minutes remaining in Question Period.

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

### South Indian Lake Flooding

**Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Northern

Affairs. The minister will recall that in an interview that was widely reported in northern newspapers, Glenn Schneider, public affairs manager for Manitoba Hydro, stated that, quote: Earlier this year we were holding back water in South Indian Lake and that Hydro had been diverting water away from the Nelson channel in an effort to allow the Nelson system to swallow the Red River flood surge and as such Hydro kept the lake at 257 metres, namely the optimal level.

My question to the minister is: does the minister accept that the flooding that occurred in South Indian Lake this fall was at least partly due to the Red River flood?

*Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

**Hon. David Newman (Minister of Northern Affairs):** No.

**Mr. Jennissen:** Is the minister then saying that the province and Manitoba Hydro does not bear any responsibility whatsoever for the flooding that occurred at South Indian Lake and other northern communities this fall?

**Mr. Newman:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, a yes or no answer will not do on this one because it is a very complex set of considerations which have to be adverted to in responding. There is no question that humankind made decisions about levels, within permitted levels by way of licence and by way of the regulations governing water levels which contributed to the surge of water moving in unexpected, sudden waves into the downstream of the dam in question.

### Manitoba Water Commission Hearing Request

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The honourable member for Flin Flon, with his final supplementary question.

**Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon):** My final supplementary question is to the Minister of Natural Resources.

Given all the concerns regarding flooding in northern Manitoba this fall, will the minister recommend that the Water Commission hold hearings as soon as possible in

South Indian Lake and other affected northern Manitoba communities?

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Natural Resources):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have charged the Water Commission with very specific responsibilities in the appointment of the commission and the direction that they were asked to review, and the areas the member refers to are not included.

### **Social Planning Council Report Housing**

**Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, the report by the Social Planning Council on poverty shows that more families in Manitoba are having problems renting affordable housing. Under this government, in the last five years, we have gone from 46 percent to now 50 percent of families in poverty in core housing need, which means that they are spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing. This is a dangerous trend, and it is directly related to the low minimum wage in Manitoba, with an earning of just over \$10,000 a year.

I want to ask the Minister of Labour (Mr. Gilleshammer) if he is aware that someone earning minimum wage in our province has only \$270 a month under this guideline to rent an apartment, and is he aware of the lack of availability of apartments in that range and the condition of apartments in that range?

\* (1640)

**Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Housing):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, public housing is available to individuals based on a formula of income. Affordable housing, in a sense of being available for people of need, has always been one of the priorities of this government. If there is a problem regarding not being able to get into public housing, I would like to know about it, but there is a vacancy rate. There is the availability of public housing for people in need, and it is based on a percentage of their income. The member is referring to a specific amount. We have people that are in public housing that do not pay that amount of rent, yet the availability of housing is there for them.

**Ms. Cerilli:** If the Minister of Housing is going to get on his feet to answer the questions to the Minister of Labour (Mr. Gilleshammer), I will give him a question.

The report from the Social Planning Council also recommends that this government would develop nonprofit and co-op housing and incentives to encourage affordable private market rent. I am wondering if then he will follow that recommendation in our private members' resolution and reinstate the cuts that they have made to the co-op loan program, to SAFER and to SAFFR. Will you support that resolution and follow the Social Planning Council's recommendation?

**Mr. Reimer:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, the member is referring to cuts in the SAFER and SAFFR programs. There were not cuts. SAFER and SAFFR is governed by a need. If there are less applications and less need for the program, naturally the funding will not flow or will not be allocated to it, but the program has not been eliminated. The program is still in force. Applications are sent out as requested, and if there is a need for SAFER or SAFFR subsidies, they will be met, but it is not a cut in the program. What has happened is there have been fewer and fewer applications. Naturally the funding between what was allocated two years ago compared to last year is down because the applications are down.

### **SAFER and SAFFR Budgets**

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The honourable member for Radisson, with her final supplementary question.

**Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, the minister is wrong.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I would like to remind the honourable member that this is not a time for debate, nor is there a need for a preamble in your third question at this time.

**Ms. Cerilli:** The budget for this year on SAFER and SAFFR is reduced by \$500,000. Will the minister reinstate that money and follow the recommendation by his Youth Secretariat to better promote those programs so there is a complete uptake of all dollars in the program?

**Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Housing):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, when budgetary considerations are

brought forth, there is a guideline set as to approximately how much should be allocated to certain projects and certain programs. Now the SAFER and SAFFR program has an amount that is allocated to it. However, if there are more applications than the money has been allocated for, we will continue to fund that. We will still go over and above that amount because it is driven by applications. If we do not get the applications, the funding does not flow. So there is an amount that has been set as a budgetary consideration. However, as I stated, if there are more applications, if there is more demand for it, the flow of funding will be to that level and beyond if there is a need for it. So to say that we are cutting back has no relevance at all. It is strictly programmed by the applications and the allocation of funds that way.

#### **Physician Recruitment Northern Manitoba**

**Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupert's Land):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have some questions for the Minister of Health. As the minister is probably aware, the people from the town of The Pas and the surrounding area have regularly raised this issue, particularly during the past three years, as the area has been experiencing a critical shortage of doctors. It appears that the Norman Regional Health Authority did not budget for doctor recruitment in its expenditures in spite of the fact that this issue of doctor shortages has been in the forefront while regionalization was being implemented. At the moment, as I understand it, two doctors are needed immediately in The Pas and probably up to 10 because the five that are there now are getting to a point of burnout, as they would say.

I would like to ask the minister if he indeed will support the local health authority in The Pas in supporting doctor recruitment.

**Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health):** I thank the member for Rupert's Land for that particular question. I think this is an issue that has been ongoing over a number of years, if not decades, in our province with greater or lesser severity from time to time. I am pleased to tell the member that we have a major initiative underway now, a number of different fronts in which we are trying to increase the number of doctors available to our province: some foreign recruitments;

one part of that working with our foreign-trade medical doctors to assist them in meeting the qualifications here; and also some retention issues.

I am aware of the specific issues in The Pas. I know that they are very, very important, and we are attempting to address that as we recruit a batch of physicians to fill some immediate needs, and if we are successful in doing that over the next very short while that they will be high on the list to receive those physicians.

**Mr. Robinson:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, perhaps—I would like to thank the Minister of Health first of all for his answer to my question. I wonder if he would clarify—the department that he is responsible for—their policy in funding doctor recruitment and come to the aid of the people in The Pas who are anxiously awaiting word from this government in their predicament at this time.

**Mr. Praznik:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, physician recruitment, there are obviously a number of players in the scene who have responsibility: regional health authorities; communities, with respect to, certainly, the retention part of this and the ministry in co-ordinating that. We are currently attempting to recruit a number of physicians to the province to fill some of these immediate needs in our province, and if we are successful in doing that, as I have indicated, we will have a pool of physicians available to fill some of these immediate needs, and those identified in northern communities are certainly very high on that particular list. I appreciate the concerns of communities for recruitment. At the current time, if we are successful, I think that will lessen the need for that particular community to go out and recruit on its own. So we may be able to assist them with doctors if our recruitment initiatives are successful.

#### **MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

##### **Government Action Crime Prevention**

**Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the actions our government is taking to prevent crime and ensure safer streets for the residents of Winnipeg.

Last week the Department of Justice announced that the Winnipeg Police Services will receive an additional \$2 million from the Manitoba government. This money will go to ensure that 40 more police officers are serving and protecting Winnipeg residents. Committing further funds to the Winnipeg Police Services, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is another example of the strong commitment on behalf of members of this side of the House to keep the streets of Winnipeg safe for our residents. Having more police officers to deal directly with the public is a genuine contribution to crime prevention and the safety of our communities.

This \$2-million contribution will secure 40 jobs for enthusiastic, motivated persons who have aspiring careers with the Winnipeg Police Services. It is worth noting that this is the third consecutive year that our government has committed \$2 million to the Winnipeg police force. In this time, 40 officers have been recruited and trained. Eight officers are working with the street gang unit, 20 are part of the neighbourhood foot patrol and 12 are working at our community service centres.

The presence of 40 additional police officers signals an important joint commitment to crime prevention by our government and the Winnipeg Police Services. With another increase in the Winnipeg Police Services workforce, the residents of our city will be served with greater peace of mind that our streets are being kept safer for residents of all ages. Safety and crime prevention are, after all, fundamental priorities of this government.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

#### **Bank Closures**

**Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas):** While 12 bank branches have been closed or merged in the inner city of Winnipeg this year, bank profits are over \$7 billion according to this year's records. The numbers of Manitobans living below the poverty line who have no bank accounts due to the service fees and other costs is growing. Many of these people are forced to pay exorbitant fees to cash cheques at firms preying on the poor. It is shameful that the federal government refuses to investigate the link between the huge increase in profits and the increases to user fees that have hurt so

many people living on the poverty line. The provincial government has similarly been silent over the loss of banking services and investment in the inner city of Winnipeg.

The loss of banking services leads to further economic deterioration, and this is obvious in rural areas where the closure of banks in Baldur, Miniota, and Whitemouth and soon Lynn Lake are causing great hardship for residents forced to drive long distances for banking services. The provincial government should be taking a stand on this very important issue and stand up for all citizens of Manitoba. Thank you.

\* (1650)

#### **Winnipeg High School Football Awards**

**Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, earlier today I had the pleasure of attending the Winnipeg high school football awards ceremony at River East Collegiate, honouring the River East Kodiaks on their recent victory over the Churchill Bulldogs. In an outstanding display of agility and skill, the River East Kodiaks defeated the Churchill Bulldogs 22 to 7 to capture the Winnipeg high school football league championship.

The River East Kodiaks had an exceptional year, losing only two games throughout their entire season. Both offence and defence were extraordinary. As the MLA for River East, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate and commend the entire Kodiak football team for the enthusiasm, determination and good sportsmanship they displayed in their 1997 football season.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Kodiaks' coaching staff, led by 15-year veteran coach, Gord Puttaert, for the encouragement and guidance they provided throughout the season.

Finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to applaud the many parents, students and staff members of River East Collegiate for the outstanding support they provided to the Kodiaks. Game after game, supporters braved the cold Manitoba winds to cheer on this feisty team, and I am sure their contribution attributed to the

Kodiaks' successful football season. Winning is a team effort, and this is certainly reflected in the Kodiaks' performance this season. Thank you.

### **Drug Coverage Request**

**Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, in September the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) said that he wanted to have a fair and timely decision made on the coverage of Betaseron and Copaxone. Since that time, and many times over and over, he has shifted responsibility in dealing with the issues. He has in fact shifted responsibility of this issue onto someone else and that someone being the Manitoba drug formulary committee. I would like to tell the minister today on behalf of the MS patients who could be benefiting right now by coverage of the drugs that health care is his responsibility, and he needs to accept that responsibility and deal with this very serious issue.

Betaseron and its companion drug Copaxone decrease the severity and frequency of acute attacks in people with relapsing, remitting multiple sclerosis. These drugs have relatively minor side effects while offering tangible relief to many Manitobans. Unfortunately, people who could gain substantial benefits from these drugs have been denied this earlier service as requested due to the countless delays and excuses of the past.

When we rose to ask the previous Minister of Health to cover the costs of these drugs, the minister responded: I would not want to have any delays which would be bureaucratic in nature. Since that time, up until just lately, nothing has been done despite the fact that several other provinces have moved to provide Betaseron and Copaxone to MS patients.

I say to the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik), if his government and he are going to deal with the health needs of Manitobans fairly, then he should do the right thing today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, cover these drugs, stop making the people who need them wait.

### **Youth Employment Strategy**

**Mr. Ben Sveinson (La Verendrye):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, as members of this Chamber know, Manitoba

has one of the lowest youth unemployment rates in all of Canada. This has been achieved through partnership that our government has forged with various organizations and local governments, as well as the creation of a variety of youth employment initiatives.

Today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to comment on yet another initiative our government will take part in to better the future for young Manitobans. As recommended at the August 1997 annual Premiers' Conference, our government will join with our provincial and territorial partners to develop a national youth employment strategy so that the young people of Manitoba and Canada will be further prepared to meet the challenges of the workforce in the new century.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we continue to believe that there needs to be co-operation between our federal and provincial colleagues to set the priorities for programs so the funding is used in an effective and efficient manner. Young Manitobans have seen the benefits of a government which has worked in partnership and a government which has developed a sound economic strategy.

Today, young Manitobans can look forward to a future of opportunity in their home towns and in their home province. Today, we have reaffirmed our commitment to ensuring that all young Canadians are able to look forward to a new century which will be challenging and rewarding. Thank you.

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

### **THRONE SPEECH DEBATE (Fourth Day of Debate)**

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** On the proposed motion of the member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck) and the amendment of the Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer), the debate is open.

**Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise once again in Manitoba's House, the House of Legislature, to put a few words, my words on response to the fourth session of the Thirty-sixth Legislature of the Province of Manitoba. This is the first session since the flood of

the century, and all of us have our perspectives and views of the flood and experience. The flood fortunately did not impact on my riding directly, but many of us from St. James participated in that co-operative spirit, came out and helped those that were being threatened by the flood and built dikes both in the city within our fortress protected by the floodway and outside of that fortress, where we have family members and friends who live outside of the Winnipeg area that were impacted by the flood.

Indeed, for the flood we had—personally I had the experience of sandbagging both in Elmwood and in the north end on Scotia Street and met many people there as well, people that I worked with in the school division, friends and neighbours. My own son was out, my husband, my sister from the United States who had come up for a visit. It was a spirit of unity that is something that I think that we all need to remember, that sense of co-operation and community spirit. However, that feeling has somehow dissipated, particularly by the actions of this government and its approach to dealing with what has been a very traumatic experience on many, many Manitobans.

It is our understanding that still 250 families are not back in their homes for this winter, that families are still living in trailers, that many families are living in temporary shelters or with other family members. So the crisis, although it seems a long time away, is still very real to those families, to their children and to those that know them.

We are indeed fortunate for the vision of Duff Roblin and those before us who invested public monies, who went into debt, the evil debt, to build what was a protective structure for Winnipeggers. We were saved by the Winnipeg Floodway and saved by interventionist programs in an emergency state, and I think we in Winnipeg are very, very grateful. We did not have to move our furniture out. We did not have to find another emergency place to live. We did not have to live in a shelter. So that type of foresight is indeed important, and it is important for us to remember that, and the fact is that all Manitobans built the Winnipeg Floodway. All Manitobans contributed to that protection.

So there is an onus upon all of us to ensure that our friends, our neighbours who are in the valley outside of

the floodway structures are also protected. That is why the Premier's (Mr. Filmon) comments to Manitobans that they must take on the responsibility if they choose to live outside of protected areas is such an incredible insult and so incredibly callous.

*Madam Speaker in the Chair*

At a time when Manitobans were looking for compassion and heart, they got coldness and disregard. We have got a government here who is not being compassionate and understanding to Manitobans. For not only hundreds of years the Red River Valley has been settled but actually thousands of years. Thousands of years Manitobans have been in the Red River Valley, have worked together to face floods, storms and other natural challenges, and we did it collectively. But when the Premier of our province does not understand that it is a collective disaster, when the Premier of our province suggests that these people had a choice, that shows the total disregard and callous nature of the Premier and this government.

\* (1700)

You know, I think that we all know perhaps farmers who would like to construct a hog barn in Tuxedo. Unfortunately, the land is taken up. You know, there is quality land at The Forks for example, but Sam Katz seems to want to build a baseball stadium. I could put in a crop of wheat at that field. Madam Speaker, let us be serious. I mean we have got a wonderful, vibrant city that we have chosen to have here at the forks of the Red and the Assiniboine. Perhaps the Premier (Mr. Filmon) needs to remember that and that there needs to be sensitivity to those that are outside of the protective structures and show some more compassion and heartfelt feeling for Manitobans who are dealing with this crisis.

But getting to the rest of my throne speech, and I wanted for a short time to talk about St. James itself. The St. James riding is actually made up of two communities, the west end of Winnipeg and old St. James. We have had some good news and some bad news. The good news is that we have seen the co-operative spirit extended to our business community. The West End BIZ zone was formed. The airport BIZ zone was formed, and the St. James Village BIZ zone

was recently formed. Madam Speaker, we are proud of our business community to be taking that initiative to looking to improve our community and doing what they can to enhance their businesses and their community. We congratulate the BIZ zones in the St. James riding.

We also had the good news that Winnport was successful at negotiating an agreement with the Orient, with China, for two centres. That will be a very significant deal because Winnport, as we know, has been searching for that type of agreement and has finally got that. We wish them well and success. The people who are near the airport are indeed for the most part very, very supportive of Winnport and the airport development.

However, Madam Speaker, I think that there is another area where this government falls in terms of its commitment to the people of Manitoba. This government, as well as the city and the federal government, have encouraged and supported financially and otherwise the business developments of the airport but have turned their back to date on the residents who live in the vicinity of the airport, the residents who are going to be impacted by increased noise levels, the people who have their homes and see the property values dropping, the people who are there to support the airport during good and bad times.

This government has not agreed to look at a sound insulation program as is, in fact, the case in most American cities. This government has turned its back on the residents who live near the airport, and I am suggesting to them, remember community spirit, remember the responsibility of giving your handouts to business—and in this case looking at economic development which I applaud—but also look at fairness for those people who live nearer the airport and are impacted by increased noise levels.

A small investment in the community would be appreciated, would help to have those homes and those families have a normal life, and you can do it. The program which I found for Minneapolis which is common throughout the United States has been provided to the government, and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), who also represents a riding in the west end of the city near the airport, has said that he is going to look into it. Well, Madam Speaker, the

time has come that the government actually endorse the program. I have a private member's resolution to the effect of the sound insulation program. I hope that we can see the endorsement of the members in government for this program which shows true co-operation with business development and sensitivity for the residents.

Also in our riding we have a chance to celebrate with the official opening of our new school. Greenway School was constructed and just last month we went and celebrated the opening. That is a significant step. When I took my first elected position as a school trustee in 1989, that school had been put on the prioritized list for seven years. We then fought as a local trustee to bump it up to No. 1. Then we had to wait for the government to give approval which was three years in the coming, and now finally in 1997 we celebrated with the community.

The problem is not for the Greenway community, who are truly appreciative. The problem is that we have many, many other school buildings that are deteriorating. In fact, Isaac Brock School, which is also in my riding and is a nursery to nine school, just had its roof fail. That roof has been patched and mended for 70 years.

Now, Madam Speaker, would you expect your roof at home to survive 70 years? No. Now, is that sound management? Seventy years? Put on another band-aid. Put the shingle back on. No, the average length expectancy of a roof is 20 to 30 years—20 to 30 years. Does it seem reasonable to look at our school systems and say, gee, that is a very old roof; we might expect a catastrophe. Well, did it happen? You are right, it happened. Water came down through the third floor, through the second floor into the basement, destroyed materials, reference materials, books.

There were six or eight suits, men in suits—this is fairly uncommon in an elementary school—standing in the hallway the day I came to visit. Of course it is a disaster. The building department had to be called in. Classes had to be cancelled. The principal was on alert. It was poor planning.

This is a government that has not managed, cannot manage finances, has a record that is deplorable, and, in fact, this example, Madam Speaker, not only cost

more, it wasted time of staff and managerial people, took away from educational time of our students and could have been avoided.

That is one roof and there are many. As the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) knows, there are many, many roofs that need replacement. There are many situations that we have let wait until the emergency situation rises. Crisis management, Madam Speaker, is not proper, sound fiscal management. We do not wait until the roof collapses to repair it. Seventy years is a long time for a roof. I hope that the government would admit that, but, no, they are to wait longer. Wait longer.

That is just one example of this government's mismanagement and the fact that they are allowing public school buildings to deteriorate to the point where we are not only wasting money, we are wasting time and we are impacting on the classroom. All of those things are unacceptable, Madam Speaker.

Now, Madam Speaker, I also want to talk about another feature of our community that is very important, and that is Omand's Creek. Omand's Creek is a green space that runs through the centre of St. James along by Empress Avenue, and it is in an area that is tourist recreational, and we have seen the development of a large building, a Home Depot store, and we have seen Home Depot modify the layout of their store, change the foot imprint and actually develop a walkway for us. We say congratulations to Home Depot. In fact, the community is glad to be working with this industry and this business.

Now, the other part of this commitment is to look at the development of that green space, important to not only St. James but to all of Winnipeg, and I ask for the commitment of the members of the government to develop that green space. Do you know that in the west end, in the riding that I represent, that we are very shortchanged in terms of green space? We have only two-thirds of what is considered average in Winnipeg, and the majority of that green space belongs to the school division which we all use, but I ask for members' support to ensure that something that is not only important to my riding but is important to Winnipeg and important to tourism and important to the Pan Am Games, that we look to developing that green space in

the centre of our city into a beautiful, linear parkway that we have all talked about.

\* (1710)

I especially look for the co-operation from the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) where Omand's Creek Park, a linear parkway, will feed right into River Heights and then ultimately to Assiniboine Park where we can all enjoy those beautiful green spaces.

Now, Madam Speaker, what is this throne speech? This is the fourth throne speech that I have had the pleasure to respond to. Sixteen pages. You know, I like to call it the government's air miles throne speech. Now, this government does like to travel, and it goes here, and it goes there, and it goes to London and then the Orient, and now it is going to South America, and it travels, travels, travels. I would say, if you want to pack your bags so badly, let them pack their bags and make room for a new government.

Madam Speaker, this is a throne speech to remember. I had to reread it just so I could recall if there were any initiatives. If we were not going to lobby the federal government, if we were not going to converse with the federal government, if we were not going to lobby the federal government, this throne speech would be maybe two or three pages. Is this a government that has vision? Apparently not. This is a government that is old, tired, and run out of ideas. This is a government that ran out of ideas many years ago. In fact, this was photocopied, as an insult to us, because we do do some research, and that was very easy to look up. It was over and over again.

You would think, Madam Speaker, with the resources of the government, and they love to hire communicators, that they would—in fact, perhaps they should check. You know, say, come on, you guys, put some new stuff in there. I mean, we are going to get criticized that it is the same as the other one. Try and try. Try to look at some vision. But the fact is, this is an old, tired, out-of-date government that belongs out, out, out.

Madam Speaker, I want to refer to the throne speech, page 3. Let us have a look at this throne speech,



because it was difficult to actually remember what was being said, but: My government's vision—which was what I am talking about right now, a lack of vision—for the future is one of shared and growing economic prosperity—primarily in Lotteries, I would say—and providing and protecting essential services of health.

The nerve of this government seems to be quite unbelievable. Protecting the essential services of health, education and family supports for Manitobans. Well, let us get this straight. Protecting health services is by bringing in frozen toast from Toronto three days later? They are going to rethermalize toast? Madam Speaker, we can make food, and the people who are ill and those who are in hospitals deserve the best that we can give them, not the miserly policies of the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik), not the meanspirited policies of the Minister of Health. He has decided that the food is not good enough. Well, good. Does he look to improving it? Hardly. He has decided that those elsewhere can make food for us and it is going to be better. He has come out and said that it is the bottom line, it is the money in his pocket that is important. Is it? Is it the best food, best nutrition, best diversity, being culturally sensitive to our neighbours from the North? No. When you get it in microwaved containers from Toronto, it is not going to be culturally sensitive.

Not only, Madam Speaker, are we going to see a program that is focused on miserly, penny-pinching programs which hurt and are an insult to Manitobans, but we are going to lose good, decent jobs that are going to move out of our province. That is not what we need. What we need is the development of jobs, good jobs, in Winnipeg, and we have seen over and over again young families, young people who have to find two or three jobs, part-time jobs, to make a living without benefits, without pensions, without trips to London or to the Orient or to South America, with no government cars. These are individuals who are trying to make a living, and this government has done little or nothing. In fact, the real wages of earners for Manitobans has dropped. The real earnings has actually flown out of our pockets. You talk to the people in my riding. They can tell you that: forty dollars a week less in our pockets than when this government took office. That is the record. That is what they stand for: meanspirited, coldhearted, outdated government.

Now, Madam Speaker, let us look at what economic development this government really loves. They love gambling, and we have recently had the sixth suicide related to gambling, unfortunately. [interjection] Perhaps the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) does not find this to be particularly relevant, but the fact that six Manitobans have taken their lives because of gambling and the government's policies for VLTs, I do find it a very serious situation. The government has promoted gaming in this province to the point of ridiculousness. We have seen gaming move from \$55 million to over \$200 million for the province's revenues, and apparently that is their priority.

The Desjardins report recommended a gaming control commission, one that is independent. Did they do that? No. They filled it with political appointments. The Gaming Control Commission meets regularly. I am not sure that it has met at all. It took two years to establish, year and a half, year and a half to establish—[interjection] We announced the chairperson of the Gaming Control Commission at least a year before they ever met, and this person—as far as I know there have been no policy decisions out of that committee. Has the Gaming Control Commission come forward with recommendations, presentations to the House? Not to date. Again, why are Manitobans cynical? Just have a look at the actions of the Gaming Control Commission.

\* (1720)

Now, the government says that they reduced VLTs by 600 machines. Now, that was a recommendation of the Desjardins report. The other fact, the reality, Madam Speaker, is that they increased the number of electronic slot machines, which most Manitobans cannot tell the difference from VLTs, by 500. So, in fact, let us not try and play games. Do not play games. Electronic slot machines have the same effect as VLTs. So they did not reduce VLT machines. They are more interested in getting money from gambling than actually taking any positive steps to dealing with the problem.

Not only that, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) has a certain affinity to handing out lifetime contracts. Dominion Construction for example was awarded a lifetime permanent contract for all casino construction. Who? We had to raise that as the issue. Was that fair? What about the tendering process?

There are many construction companies in Winnipeg that could do that work, and they were shut out until we pushed the government to do something about it. They changed their policies because it was bad, it was mismanagement, it was incompetent. That type of favouritism is not going to be accepted by Manitobans or this side of the House.

Now, VLT revenues are on their way up, Madam Speaker, and this government revels in the fact that it is going up and up and up. What we have called for is the separation of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) from the role of Minister of Lotteries. That seems reasonable. We have a Minister responsible for Gaming (Mr. Radcliffe) who represents River Heights. Let him handle the full responsibilities.

Madam Speaker, separate Lotteries from Finance, because obviously the Minister of Finance has the bottom line. The dollars are much more important to him than dealing with the negative impacts on addictions, on the important issues of gaming. He is interested in how much money he can scoop from Manitobans not in the protection or the preventive programs.

We have asked for this government to allow for communities to decide on VLTs. They have said no. We have asked this government to increase funding to awareness and treatment programs, and they have said, we doubled it. Awareness and treatment programs only receive \$1 million—actually less, \$966,000. That is \$1 per Manitoban. Do you know what is very interesting that in 1994 this is the amount of money put into VLTs by Manitobans? Do we have any idea how much that is? How much money did we put into those machines? Two point three billion dollars was put into VLT machines. That works out to \$2,100 for each and every single Manitoban, \$2,100 for each Manitoban. You are talking about a significant problem. Apparently not one of those Conservatives put in a loonie. The fact is then a whole lot of other people are putting in a whole lot of money into those machines.

Everybody in the addictions business calls them the crack cocaine of gambling. Has this government taken any intervention programs that are significant? Only because they were pressured at a recent death in Winnipeg Beach have they called for a meeting to work

on the intervention. That was called four years ago. It was called four years ago, and they did not do it. They stalled and they wait and they postpone and they create another committee. That is completely unacceptable, Madam Speaker.

Addictions awareness: The fact is that we estimate 4.3 percent of Manitobans are addicted or are problem gamblers. That is approximately 35,000 to 40,000 Manitobans have a serious problem. It is affecting their families. It is affecting their spouses, their children, their way of life, everything else. How many of those Manitobans are aware or receive treatment? Less than 900 Manitobans—808 I understand was the number of Manitobans who received help. Eight hundred out of 40,000 received help. That means that our program of awareness is a dismal failure. You have to promote and make people aware of the serious nature of addictions. Are Manitobans aware that gambling is the most difficult addiction to treat, that people are highly susceptible to gambling? Gambling is a much more difficult addiction to treat than smoking, drugs or alcohol.

This government chooses to spend \$1 for each Manitoban on awareness and treatment. For drugs and alcohol, 6 percent of Manitobans have a problem with drugs or alcohol, and how much is spent on awareness and treatment? Ten million dollars, Madam Speaker—\$10 million, and \$1 million on gambling. That tells you that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) is more interested in collecting monies from VLTs than doing anything to help the families that are addicted.

Who are the victims of VLTs and gambling? Not only is it the players, it is their spouses. It is their children as we have very vividly heard from the family in St. James. It is the landlords who cannot receive the rent because somebody has used it to try and win the big one. It is the mortgage companies which are not going to receive payments and people are losing their homes. It is the businesses and employers of those individuals who have been embezzled and swindled out of money because the victims, the players, are going and stealing from their employers so that they can feed their gambling habits.

Community centres are also victims. In my riding alone I have four community centres. Each one reports

a loss between \$10 and \$15,000. That means that the doors are locked; the hockey rinks are shut down. We do not have programming as we used to in the old days. That money is coming out of a community that is a working class neighbourhood. It is not being reinvested, Madam Speaker, and that is unfair.

Let us look at how the government has decided that it is going to support communities. In 1990, this government handed out \$2 million to Community Support Programs. That is when revenues were significantly less from gaming. Now, in 1997, they hand out \$2 million. Madam Speaker, their revenues have doubled and yet they are being mean, miserly, coldhearted and allow our community centres to shut down and not operate in full capacity as they should which is to provide those options for our youth, to provide those options for our communities. What used to be dedicated money for our communities is now into general revenue, into a slush fund, into the rainy day fund. Well, I would say it is raining, it is pouring, and the old Tories over there are snoring.

Madam Speaker, we are trying to emphasize how this government is more interested in the bottom line and money and revenues than providing supports for families, for individuals who need help because of programs that they initiated, and they laugh and they look at it with total indifference. What Manitobans want is a government that not only can balance the books, which I think is a commendable action, and be good managers which I feel that this government are now no longer good managers. I would say they are incompetent managers, and I used a perfect example of the roof at Isaac Brock School.

This is a government that has turned its back on real Manitobans. This is a government that rules for the elite, rules for the 19 percent of upper-crust Manitobans. This is a government that no longer has the feel for real true Manitobans, and the throne speech has exactly reflected that attitude, empty, shallow, coldhearted and with no meaningful programs for families and citizens in St. James.

Madam Speaker, this throne speech had the nerve to talk about Manitoba Hydro. Well, no matter how many times this government says: we are not going to sell Manitoba Hydro, we are not going to believe you. We

do not believe you in the past, we do not believe you now, and we will not believe you in the future.

\* (1730)

Madam Speaker, the people I represent in St. James and the people of Manitoba want the ability to tell this government what they think of this government's performance with Crown corporations. We are looking forward to that debate. We want to take it forward to the people of Manitoba, and no matter how many times the minister or the Deputy Premier says he loves Manitoba Hydro, that facts are there, the facts will say: we will sell, we will sell, we will sell. We do not trust you.

In fact, it is a Crown corporation that we can be proud of, and this must drive them crazy, Madam Speaker, because they have a philosophy, a dogma, a belief that there is no Crown corporation that is a good Crown corporation, even one that has good jobs, good wages, provides power to us that is reliable and safe.

This government's dogma drove them to sell MTS, and this government's dogma will drive them to sell Manitoba Hydro. Not only does it provide all of those good things, a head office in Manitoba, decent jobs, a future, expertise that is called on worldwide that we can be proud of, civil servants that are regarded as the best in the world. We can provide this service at the lowest rates in the world, probably. There is a debate whether we are the lowest or second lowest, but we can accept that. That is pretty darn good for a Crown corporation.

There are many large multinational corporations that are looking at Manitoba Hydro as having huge potential, Madam Speaker, with huge potential for profit, with huge attractiveness to them because, if they picked it up, the margin between what we charge customers and what is being charged in North Dakota, in Ontario, or Saskatchewan is much higher. So their profitability margin can rise dramatically.

I know that those very businesses happen also to be major contributors to the Conservative Party. Now, you tell me, it would have been a coincidence that these big businesses may want to buy Manitoba Hydro and may be trying to talk the Conservative Party of Manitoba into selling it, just like they did Manitoba Telephone

System. That is not a very long reach, Madam Speaker. In fact, most Manitobans believe that this government cannot be trusted on Manitoba Hydro or on any Crown corporation and they will sell it the minute they get their hands on it, and we are not going to allow it.

Madam Speaker, the only new thing for kids and children in this throne speech is the minister's creation of a new Internet site. The people in my riding, quite frankly, find this to be trivial and absolutely unacceptable. It is this side of the House that has a plan for a Healthy Child plan. It is this side of the House that has new proposals and a strong vision for a future, and it is the government, the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba which has lost steam, lost vision, and will lose its confidence by the people of Manitoba and the next election.

**Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Certainly—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable member for Turtle Mountain was recognized to put his comments on the record, but regrettably I was experiencing great difficulty hearing him, as I am certain other members were as well.

**Mr. Tweed:** Madam Speaker, it is certainly a pleasure to be back in the House after a summer break, and I want to welcome you back and offer you my appreciation of your help in guiding me throughout the last couple of sessions. As I get to know you better, my respect continues to grow for you.

I certainly want to welcome the six new pages. I think we have had an opportunity here to learn, as you will over time, the workings of the House, and sometimes the House does not always perhaps act the way that it was expected to or people would like it to, but it is the system that we work within, and I hope you enjoy your stay with us here.

I also want to extend welcome and congratulations to the new member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Fauschou). Knowing him a few years ago and then getting to know him again as a member it is certainly a pleasure to have him here, and I think that the city of Portage la Prairie has made a wise and good choice in their

representation. I know that the service he provides to his community and to all Manitobans will be great.

I would at this time just like to mention in regard to the flood that we have heard a little bit about from both sides and relate a couple of the experiences. I know several communities in my constituency of Turtle Mountain through their schools, through their social clubs and service clubs took the opportunity and did so with great generosity to provide care and help and helping hands to the people, the flood victims. I think it was truly a great time for all Manitobans. As disastrous as it was, it was an opportunity for everybody to pull together and to serve the common good of all people, and I think all people of Manitoba are to be complimented and appreciated for the services that they provide. I also want to include in that group, and I do when I say all Manitobans, but in particular many of the government staff that took time away from work and also away from their families to participate, I think that it does indicate a very strong commitment on behalf of all the employees of the government of Manitoba that it is not just a job for them. They do care and have a lot of consideration for the people that they work for and the people that they serve and also the people that they live with.

I think that before I get right into the thrust of the throne speech, and I think it is a big part of it, I would love to congratulate the city of Brandon today on their announcement of the McCain's announcement that Maple Leaf announcing the investment in Brandon. I know that southwestern Manitoba is thrilled with the news. I think it is great news not only for Brandon but for the entire province, but particularly I see very many opportunities presenting themselves to my constituents, be it in the production, be it in the transportation industry, be it in several of the spin-off benefits that come with such a major announcement.

I was just perusing the newspapers yesterday and today. I would like to just put a couple of the quotes on record of the community, and Turtle Mountain, the boundaries come within six miles of the city of Brandon, so I am certainly very familiar with a lot of the effort and time that was put in by the community and by the city and also by the members of government. I think at times from the opposition through criticisms

we maybe make things work out a little bit better. Today is a great day I think for all people in Manitoba.

One of the quotes that I would like to just put on the record is by the Chamber president, Mr. Todd Lumbard, where he states: "It's going to have a big impact for all of southwestern Manitoba." I think that, again, we see hog barns particularly growing up in my communities. I think that with the announcement there comes a responsibility for all people, for all Manitobans to make sure that as we grow this industry that we grow it properly, that we do it with consideration and concern for all the people that surround the areas where we are going to see increased hog production. I do not think it is anyone's intention not to do that. I think it is this government's intention to do it right and do it right the first time, so that we can build on this great announcement.

\* (1740)

One of the other ones was from Brandon Economic Development Board General Manager Don Allan. He said, "This is a dream come true for anybody in the economic development field." I know Don has been working diligently on this project for months. When you think about it, when you add 1,100 jobs to a community the size of Brandon, there are just so many benefits that come with it that I do not think as a province or as a government or as members in this House that we can even begin to recognize or realize all the benefits. I think of the benefits to me directly and to my communities, but this thing is endless. It opens up so many more opportunities. It is such a great announcement I want to stand up and cheer all night long because I think it is a great announcement.

The payroll is expected to be \$25 million and create \$500 million in economic spin-offs for the province of Manitoba. Again, if you can say that is not good news for the province, then I would suggest that maybe we do not have an impact on everything.

One of the things I do want to highlight, and I know when we toured the province on the rural task force to talk to farmers, to talk to rural Manitoba basically, about what we can do to enhance their opportunities, one of the concerns that we had was the loss of the Crow. It was something that everybody was feeling,

and the impact was just starting to hit home. Freight costs were starting to increase, and people were very concerned about that. Yet that very thing turned into a benefit in bringing this plant to Brandon because the company had recognized that we now offer the cheapest feed costs for livestock in North America because we have the farthest to ship it. So I again see the producers in my communities and again in rural Manitoba benefiting from this because the shipping costs—it is not the cost of the feed itself—are going to be eliminated or at least dramatically reduced.

I think that also one of the comments I would like to put on the record in regard to this announcement was the fact that during the debate to go to the dual market system in Manitoba, I felt a lot of pressure from the communities that I represent and from the people that produced hogs. It was impossible to avoid those concerns put forward. I met a lot of my constituents. I talked to them personally. I tried to deal with them on a one-on-one issue in regard to their concerns over where the hog industry was going and where we saw it going.

I can say that many of the people that criticized me for standing beside government and with government on this particular issue have also taken the time to acknowledge that now they see where we were headed and the benefits. They are truly benefiting from a lot of the decisions that we have made, and as hard as those decisions were to make, I stand today very pleased that the government stood fast. I do recognize the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) who had to face many of these people in the industry that were concerned over what was happening and face the music, and he did. I appreciate and recognize what he did. I want to acknowledge the ministers that were involved in this announcement today. I know they worked hard and diligently for the province, not for one community over another or one area over another but for the entire province of Manitoba.

I think that when we talk about this, we talk about the throne speech and how does it relate? Well, how does a company the size of Maple Leaf or the McCain family come to identify Brandon as an opportunity for them to invest? I think it comes from the history of a government that has been out there for the past several years promoting balanced budget legislation, producing

balanced budgets, certainly trying to enhance the economic benefits to encourage. You are not going to win every battle that you go into trying to bring big companies like this, or small companies, into your province, but you are certainly going to enhance your opportunities if you provide a stable, fiscal, responsible government with the concerns of all the people in the province at heart.

One of the things that I have discovered as being part of government, and I guess as a former small-business owner, is that 90 percent of Manitoba's businesses employ under 19 people, and I think that that is a statement in itself. Again, I suggest that that is going to be one of the opportunities we will see as rural Manitobans in building and taking from the spin-offs of the announcement of Maple Leaf. Actually, when I got home last night I had a couple of calls on my answering machine from people in my communities phoning to find out what they could do or how they could help enhance this opportunity and what opportunities they saw. In discussion with them, they had several ideas themselves as to what they saw as a benefit.

I also want to relate a story that a family—I took part in the closing of a hog barn, which is what the process is when you actually open it, and I got talking. It was a young farmer, a farmer and his wife, who would be I would suggest mid-40s, with a young son approximately 23 to 24 years old, and he told me that this was the real opportunity he saw for his son to stay on the family farm, work on the family farm and be able to have the affording money to buy his father out of the business that he has been in all his life, that his father had and his father before him.

They did not see that opportunity before. They just did not have the wherewithal to manage that type of situation. The expansion of the hog industry gave him that opportunity. It is a high cash flow business and with the ability to contract out and guarantee himself that income for five years it was certainly the right step for them. So it is things like that that reassure you along the way, that sometimes you do something right for the right reasons and the people benefit, and when they acknowledge that to you it is probably the nicest feeling that you can have.

The economy being as strong as it has been, I think it is certainly reflected in a lot of the statistics we read throughout the articles that are written. I know that our government has in the past, as always, its goals were to foster job growth. Coming on today's announcement in Brandon, again, I feel so strong about that.

I think the other thing we are trying to do is to help families become stronger and more self-sufficient. The minister has stated time and time again that the best form of support is a job, and I think by creating the opportunities and giving people the ability to create jobs we are going to create a wealth in the people that need it most and offer them the opportunity.

I spoke today on the phone to a young gentleman who has worked for a company for 11 years, and he said to me, he said you just do not know what opportunities there are out there until you start exploring it, and once you find out you do not ever want to go back to working for somebody else. You may have a good life that way, but he saw the opportunities of creating more jobs for the people that he knows.

I think the government, in its desire to be responsible, has put out a message that we are in a position and will continue to control taxes. I think that that is a strong enhancement for the communities and for people who are looking from outside and looking at us as the place to invest. I think we have set those guidelines down for people to judge us and compare us to other communities and make decisions about our province which we are bearing the fruit today.

The other areas I see that we have helped to enhance the situation that we have basically come today to discuss in the throne speech is the fact that we have become more efficient as a government and as a province, and we continue to work on that. I do not think it is something that ever ends. I think we have to constantly be re-evaluating, looking at all programs, all deliverables that we have and trying to improve on that. I think that the days of saying, well, we have satisfied a percentage of the population, that is good enough, I do not think that washes with communities anymore and I do not think that they want a government that is going to sit on that and just let time pass them by.

\* (1750)

One of the great things that I see as happening in the province of Manitoba and allowing for this prosperity is just the fact that by showing the public and showing the world, I would suggest now that we can balance budgets. We have announced the fourth consecutive surplus budget coming up in the next fiscal year, and I think about that, you know. We always talk about social programs and helping people, and I agree 100 percent with that. If I can help someone, that is what I am here for and that is what I am prepared to do, but I think by offering it as a province that we are financially stable, we have the wherewithal to move now a little bit. When you are in a position where you are debt-financing or paying extremely high interest rates and you do not have any wiggle room to respond to the issues that are in front of you, we have to be very careful and not let that happen.

I would suggest my colleagues on this side of the government have made a commitment through legislation that we are not prepared to let that happen again. I think that is something that is a strong message not only to the investors that want to come to our province but to the investors and the people within, that by doing so we will always have the ability to move a little or change the direction without having to worry about the banker at the door and the financial implications of some of the decisions, and tough decisions, that we have to make.

The things that are happening in rural Manitoba, I think, are very positive. We have a tremendous response in some of the programs that we have introduced and announced. I know one of the things that I have seen in the communities that I represent recently is the development of the CDCs, community development corporations, which provide financial assistance to small businesses, but they are locally run and locally operated. I think that is very important. The communities and the people that live in those communities help make the decisions to help people within their own communities establish businesses, expand businesses, to grow businesses, to add employees, and they are doing it on a community level, where the responsibility, I believe, should lie and does lie at this time.

In the communities I represent, many of them are small communities, I have seen many one-person home operations start with the assistance of these types of funding. I think that as the word spreads and as the word grows, we are going to see more and more of our communities get into the program, take advantage of the program and administrate it themselves so that they can see it grow and also see the successes that are there.

One of the issues that was touched on and I think is probably the cornerstone—in the province of Manitoba—as far as I am concerned—in recent months, I have had the pleasure of working with the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) on some health issues. I think I learn everyday that it is a tremendous issue and there is certainly—I am not sure if the issues are ever going to be totally solved, because it is a day-to-day issue where things come up and they have to be dealt with. Sometimes they have to be dealt with immediately, sometimes they have to be studied, sometimes they have to be understood before we can even proceed, but I think that the department has certainly tried to develop the systems and put them into place to help in that case.

We can always mention dollars, and I will, but I do not think that is the bottom line in the sense that the amount of money that we do spend on health care, it is \$1.826 million, approximately one-third of our budget. I know everybody has heard that before, but I do not think that is the whole story. I think the fact is as the government has done in the past and will continue to do, as needs and occasions arise, they will address those issues and they will address them head-on. I am not a firm believer that throwing money solves the problem, but I am also concerned that if health care is involved, we have to look at the individuals and the concerns of the people. We have to do everything that we possibly can to enhance the quality of life for all Manitobans and particularly those less fortunate than probably everyone in this House.

I think that the government has recognized the importance in being able to access health care procedures on a timely basis. I am sure, unlike everyone here, no one likes to wait in line and no one likes to be told that they have to wait to receive a service. I constantly ask the question, as members of the opposition do: what are you doing to help this problem, to alleviate this situation?

I think that the government's record has been strong in that particular area. Just to relate a couple, through additional funding for bone-density testing, waiting lists for this procedure will be reduced. I think we had to first understand what the problem was and address it from that position. The lineups were definitely there but, when we studied the issue, the bottom line was, the use of the machines and the availability of it just was not being applied in the proper way. With very little extra money but a different procedure and a different pattern to present it to people and to offer it to people, it will help shorten these lists and, again, I suggest, satisfy the needs of many Manitobans.

Additional funding has also reduced waiting lists for radiation therapy. Approximately \$380,000 was allocated to the Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation to operate a new radiation therapy unit and thereby treat more patients. It is allowing for an additional 7,000 treatments per year for patients. I think if that is not addressing an issue and dealing with it, then I do not know what it is, but I do recognize the fact that we had to address the mechanical issues before we could solve the problem. I think one thing that the department has really looked at is the fact that: what can we do to do it better first, and then what do we have to do to offer the services more to the people who need it?

A new electronic cancer treatment and management information system is possible, thanks again to additional funding from the province. It will help the

Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation to increase the quality of care for Manitoba residents by developing more consistent care and increasing the delivery of care. It is an ongoing situation.

I do not think any of us can say that health care will ever be resolved. I think that as we settle some issues, new ones will continue to present themselves, but I think putting the Department of Health in a position to deal with those issues, deal with them in a constructive manner, deal with them in a processed manner, we can resolve a lot of these problems that arise from time to time. I do not think the old—if it was used—but I am not a believer in throwing money at anything to solve the problem. I think we have to discover what the problem is and then develop it from there.

I am certainly committed to modernizing our health care system and to ensure the privacy of personal health information. We recently passed The Personal Health Information Act in the last session, and the confidentiality of personal health information is assured through the setting of limits on the collection, use, disclosure and destruction of the information. I know there is a concern around that and—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) will have 15 minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Thursday).



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, December 3, 1997

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