

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA
Thursday, 10 July, 1980

Time — 2:00 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER by Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER, Hon. Harry E. Graham (Birtle-Russell): Presenting Petitions . . . Reading and Receiving Petitions . . . Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees . . . Ministerial Statements and Tabling of Reports . . . Notices of Motion . . . Introduction of Bills . . .

ORAL QUESTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. HOWARD PAWLEY (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education. Can the Minister of Education advise what is the present status pertaining to the Steen Report and in regard to the construction of a sports complex on the St. Paul's College site?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Fitness and Amateur Sports.

HON. ROBERT (Bob) BANMAN (La Verendrye): Mr. Speaker, in reply to that question, it's the Department of Fitness, Recreation and Sport that has commissioned the report and, therefore, it comes under my jurisdiction.

The report hopefully will be available to the government within the next couple of weeks and, with reference to the particular site that the member opposite mentions, I understand that the report will be dealing with a number of sites that could possibly be used and make certain recommendations with regard to that. Until I have received the report, Mr. Speaker, I can't really make a determination or answer the question the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has posed.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. SAMUEL USKIW: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Agriculture whether he can, today, confirm that there are no people profiteering from the current drought situation, i.e., that there are no third parties involved in the allocation of hay permits on the part of the Department of Agriculture, or through his designated authorities, who are involved in allocating such permits?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. JAMES E. DOWNEY (Arthur): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated yesterday, the objective was to make sure that the hay was allocated on a fair and equitable basis. The reports that I have had, other than the one that he referred to at Red Lake that we are having looked at in a little more detail, as far as I

am concerned, that has been done, unless he can give me more specific information on one or two that he may be aware of. But as I said, the objective is to make sure that it is distributed fairly and equitably. It's a matter of responding to an emergency situation, which we have done, and again I want to say that we are operating the allocation on a fair and equitable basis.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Speaker, could the Minister indicate how many municipalities are involved in the allocation process on behalf of the government of Manitoba?

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, the areas that are directly affected, particularly in the Red Lake area, I understand there are two municipalities that are involved as far as the allocation. I'm not sure at this particular point how many are involved in working out the allocation of hay in the Sakeram area, which we've wanted to make sure that the local cattlemen in The Pas area, that the municipalities that put in resolutions to the government and those people that were closest to that particular area had an opportunity to share in the allocation of the hay.

We've also, particularly in that area where there was a larger amount of hay involved, had a local individual to help in the process to see that there was an evenness put in place.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet with a final supplementary.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if it's final. I wish to ask the Minister of Agriculture why it is that, given the fact that he has a number of field staff in every region of Manitoba, that he has decided to delegate to the municipalities the responsibility of allocating Crown land hay permits.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, the intent was to have the municipal people involved because of our confidence in the elective process that those people who are elected at a local level, living in those communities, understand the farm community and can truly work under the democratic system and support our land people, Mr. Speaker.

Again, what we wanted to assure was a fair and equitable system in place and if he can identify where that is not happening then I would suggest that it really isn't. To my satisfaction at this particular point, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that I think that the farm community and the municipal people, as well as our staff, have done their best under the extreme conditions in which they have been placed as a total community, Mr. Speaker, and that we would be not serving them well to start picking and criticizing from this Legislature, misleading the public that in fact somebody is not being treated fairly.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Rock Lake.

MR. HENRY J. EINARSON: Mr. Speaker, I also would like to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture, one that I think has been of real concern and interest to the rural communities and that is in connection with the rail abandonment of certain rails in the province of Manitoba. Because of the previous government putting certain rails into the permanent network to the year 2000, I'm wondering if the Minister could indicate what the situation is at the present time insofar as those railroads are concerned, whether or not they're going to be maintained in the permanent work to 2000.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, we have over the past few months, during the two different federal governments that we've seen in the last several months, have made representation to them. My colleague, the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation has supported the Local Rail Retention Committees by helping to support their case, as we have with the Department of Agriculture and government support their case, before the people that we're hearing, the Neil Report, and also when the government made their decision, the Conservative government federally made their decision to put those lines in the permanent network, we were very happy to see that the farm people in those communities that had worked so hard to get them put in, in fact, that decision had been made.

Again at the June 3rd meeting with the federal government and other western provinces, Mr. Speaker, we again requested of the new federal government, the Honourable Mr. Pepin, to make sure that those railroads were left in the permanent network. He was somewhat unsure at that particular time but, Mr. Speaker, I'd have to say that the government of Saskatchewan and the one from Manitoba, that we did in fact impress very strongly upon him that the battles had been fought, that those communities had justified their need to have those rail lines and that we wanted to see that decision upheld by the federal government. So I think that it's a matter of now making sure that the federal government live up to that past decision and we will be doing everything to continue that kind of support.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Boniface.

MR. LAURENT L. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Honourable Minister of Education. Has a final decision been made in regard to the proposed construction of a French regional school in Ile des Chenes for the Seine School Division?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

HON. KEITH A. COSENS (Gimli): Not as yet, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that this has been going on for months and months

now, can the Minister give us an idea when a decision will be made?

MR. COSENS: Meetings have been held, Mr. Speaker, and are being held. I feel that we're getting closer to some resolution of that problem.

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, will the Seine School Division make the final decision, as it was announced yesterday by the Minister, the school division would decide or will the Minister or his Deputy Minister overrule them?

MR. COSENS: Mr. Speaker, as in all proposals, the recommendation stems from the Public Schools Finance Board and I'll be anticipating receiving that particular recommendation soon.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Consumer Affairs.

HON. WARNER H. JORGENSON (Morris): Mr. Speaker, yesterday and again today, the Leader of the Opposition enquired about the comparison of the two reports that I tabled in the House the other day. I want to advise him that the first report compares decontrolled rents to pre-decontrolled rents for all units exempted during the period October 1, 1978 to December 31, 1978. The information on rents in Brandon and Winnipeg was obtained from landlords decontrol applications. Rents in the other communities were obtained by sampling of rents in non-urban communities because landlords were not required to file decontrol applications.

The second report compares decontrolled rents to pre-decontrolled rents. The information on Brandon and Winnipeg rents was obtained from a broad sampling of all landlord decontrol applications and the information on non-urban rents was again obtained on a sampling basis.

It is true that the first report contained an analysis of all Winnipeg and Brandon decontrol units, while the second report included information from a broad sampling of a very much larger number of applications. In both cases, the reports were prepared using identical criteria with respect to age, structure, size, type of building and type of accommodation. The second report undoubtedly includes rents for some of the same accommodations as in the first report, because the landlord may have taken an increase in the latter part of 1978 and another increase in the latter part of 1979. The net percentage of the two increases would probably be lower in the second report than the highest increase taken, because it would be an average of the two increases.

In summary, I am told that the criteria used in both reports was the same and that both reports reflect quite accurately a true measurement of rent increases in decontrolled units.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. PAWLEY: Just by way of further supplementary to the Minister, and I thank him for his information, can the Minister indicate whether or not any effort was made to verify the rents, totals,

information given to his personnel by the landlords, to verify them independently?

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, they were submitting an application for decontrol. That was an essential part of the material that was required for decontrol purposes so I would only presume that the information is there.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure whether I heard the Minister correctly but I believe that in the second report not all the information came from the decontrol applications but, in fact, some information came by way of random samplings that were undertaken. It's to that group that I'm wondering if there are independent verifications.

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, the area in which the random sampling took place was in the rural areas where there were those that had been removed from rent controls at the outset of the decontrol program. There was no other way of obtaining the sampling because there was no provision for monitoring. So we just simply asked those landlords to give us an indication, on a random basis, and it's the sampling on that random basis in the rural areas that is identified in the report. With respect to the city of Winnipeg and the city of Brandon, those are from decontrol applications.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Rossmere.

MR. VIC SCHROEDER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A question for the Minister of Municipal Affairs with respect to the proposed assessment freeze in the province. Can he advise as to whether that freeze will perpetuate any unfairness, as between municipalities, where you might have several municipalities in one school division, some of which municipalities may have been reassessed, for instance, last year, and the neighbouring municipalities may not have been reassessed for a number of years, will this freeze not perpetuate an unfairness created by the fact that one has been reassessed and the other has not been reassessed?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. DOUG GOURLAY (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned this morning, the freeze is perhaps not the right terminology; the assessment process will still continue and really the main concern we have or what is brought forward in the legislation is the fact there was some indication, or authority, given to the provincial assessor and the Winnipeg assessor to update values for the purpose of assessment in the year 1981; we're freezing that process so that there wouldn't be any undue difficulties for the assessment review in their work that is being carried on at the present time. But as far as the unfairness to those municipalities, as the members opposite know, there is an equalization factor that is put into place to try and standardize the assessments.

MR. SCHROEDER: Could the Minister also advise as to what will be happening with the staff in the Assessment Department, if there is no assessment going on for the next year and a half?

MR. GOURLAY: Mr. Speaker, obviously the member doesn't hear what I'm saying, the assessment process is going on, business as usual, the municipalities are being reassessed. It's just that there will be no update on property values. The values that will be used are those that have been in effect during the current year 1980 and I believe there based on, in the case of rural Manitoba, 1975 values; in the case of the city of Winnipeg, it goes back to 1964 or even prior to that. But as far as assessment itself, it will be proceeding, as it has in the past. The municipalities, some 10 or 12 will be reassessed each year.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Speaker, following up on the same line of questioning that I presented to the Minister of Agriculture a few moments ago, I want to take off on one of his answers having to do with understanding the electoral process. Mr. Speaker, we fully understand the electoral process and I would like to ask the Minister of Agriculture . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order please. This period is for seeking information, not for a question of whether or not a person understands the electoral process.

The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Speaker, that was one of the Minister's answers is understanding the electoral process, and we fully understand it, Mr. Speaker. Therefore, I ask the Minister of Agriculture whether he can confirm that a one, Mr. Bill Hart, was in fact the gentleman who nominated the now Minister of Municipal Affairs?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, in reviewing the allocation of Crown lands and Crown land policy, I would hope that I would not have to get into this but it appears that there was some deviation from Crown land sale policy under the last administration when the Member for Lac du Bonnet and the Leader of the Opposition were involved in a sale of land to a particular friend of theirs, and they in fact sold a piece of land that was deviation from the NDP policy of selling of Crown land. Mr. Speaker, we in fact, at this particular side of the House, are not trying to make cheap political shots and take advantage of the farm community when they're in a distress situation, Mr. Speaker. We are trying to help the farm community in a time of need, Mr. Speaker, and every effort is being put into that. But when he sits there and makes cheap political shots . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order please, order please. I would hope the Honourable Minister, when he's answering questions, will stick to the subject matter

at hand and refrain from taking so-called cheap political shots.

The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Agriculture to explain to this Assembly why it is that he allowed third parties, who had nothing to do with the livestock industry, to get involved in hay allocations in the Red Deer Lake area.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, I don't know how many times I have to answer this to get the member to understand that I have put a stop, Mr. Speaker, to the allocation of that hay and we are further reviewing it. I have staff on the scene meeting with the municipalities and the farm community right at this particular time to inform me on the situation, and the hay is not being processed or put up at this particular time. I'm expecting a report back later today or tomorrow on the situation in the Red Lake area.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet with a final supplementary.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister whether he will give us that report in the next day or two, and secondly, whether he can indicate who was in charge of allocations of the hay area of Netley Marsh, whether it's the municipality or whether it's the Department of Agriculture or Resources?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MRS. JUNE WESTBURY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is addressed to the Minister responsible for Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister advise the House whether he was personally involved in the decision not to allow the urban native community to manage housing development, as they had asked to do?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Economic Development.

HON. J. FRANK JOHNSTON (Sturgeon Creek): Mr. Speaker, the board made a recommendation. I was aware of the Board's recommendation and, as Minister, I have to concur with the board's recommendation. I could overrule a recommendation of the board. In this case, I didn't, I agreed with them.

MRS. WESTBURY: Mr. Speaker, was the decision made on the grounds that were reported, which is that MHRC has a clear mandate to be non-ethnic and non-sectarian?

MR. JOHNSTON: The decision was made, Mr. Speaker, on the basis of what we felt would be the best for the housing program that was going to be administered. That's the way the decision was made and that's what we felt was best.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge with a final supplementary.

MRS. WESTBURY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Accepting the answer of the Minister but in view of the concerns in the community, I wonder if the Minister has ever visited the Polish Senior Citizens Residence on Selkirk Avenue, which is administered by or through MHRC by Winnipeg Regional Housing Corporation.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I have heard of the particular program. I haven't visited it. I don't know what relation it has to the previous question. I only know that the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation administers many of our projects. Other people administer some of them, as well.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Brandon East.

MR. LEONARD S. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address a question to the Minister of Economic Development, if I could get his attention, Mr. Speaker, and ask the Minister about a report. There has been a report, Mr. Speaker, that the Exxon Corporation has applied to the Foreign Investment Review Agency, otherwise known as FIRA, to take over the Federal Pioneer Electric Company, which operates in Manitoba. Has the Minister examined this and has he any particular position on this matter?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order please. The question asked by the honourable member does not involve this Chamber. It is purely a federal matter and falls outside the jurisdiction of this Chamber.

The Honourable Member for Brandon East with another question.

MR. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. According to the law of the land, the province is . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, order please. There is no point of order.

The Honourable Member for Brandon East.

MR. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, the law says that the provincial Minister must give an opinion under the Federal Review Agency. As a Minister, I had to, on behalf of the government, give an opinion of the government of Manitoba and this Minister is obliged also, if he so wishes, to give an opinion. So therefore, my point of order, Mr. Speaker, is that it is within the domain of this jurisdiction; it is within the domain of the government of Manitoba.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Economic Development.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the member is correct. The provincial governments are requested, for the Minister —(Interjection)— No, I'm not arguing with the Speaker. I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that if the member believes I'm arguing with the Speaker, I'm only saying that the Speaker doesn't have the opportunity to read every regulation in the place and I mention that the member is correct. I haven't seen the particular application, Mr. Speaker. I'll take the question as notice and take a look at it. It hasn't come across my desk as yet, as far as I know, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Labour.

HON. KEN MacMASTER (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, the Member for Elmwood this morning asked some questions in relationship to whether there was any consideration being given to changes of the fire code in Manitoba. I'm not sure if I totally answered that or precisely answered it, but the fact of the matter is there is a Fire Advisory Committee in place in Manitoba and has been for a large number of years, who on an ongoing basis do in fact review the fire code. I'm aware of a subcommittee of that major committee which is precisely reviewing the heat detectors, smoke detectors and fire alarm systems that are in place in Manitoba as related to previous years' codes, updated codes, amended codes and that type of thing. So I think, Mr. Speaker, that's probably a more complete answer to the member's question than I gave this morning.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I should like to apologize to the Honourable Member for Brandon East for my ignorance of the federal law.

The Honourable Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. A.R. (Pete) ADAM: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture in regard to questions I posed to him yesterday in which he said that he could not provide information if it did not follow in his jurisdiction. He was referring to contracts entered by the municipality with people who would put up hay in Red Deer Lake. Then he went on to say that if they followed the guidelines — he mentioned guidelines, Mr. Speaker — I would ask the Minister what are the guidelines? We have asked him this question, if he would table the guideline instructions that have gone out to the municipality in order to allocate this hay to farmers or ranchers in the area. I'm asking the Minister if he would provide us with a copy of those guidelines that have been sent out to the municipalities when the decision was made to transfer that responsibility over to the municipalities.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, I guess we could start back from the announcement that was made when we called all the municipal Reeves and councillors in who were affected by the drought — and that, I would say, was the majority of the elected officials throughout Manitoba — when the Premier of this province made his announcement to tell the farm community how concerned we were about the farmers, that in fact we were going to work with the municipalities and try and work together to alleviate, to try and relieve some of the hardship that the farm community were suffering.

Mr. Speaker, it has also been the intent of the province to treat the issue fairly and equitably. We have faith in the local municipalities that they would do the same. I understand at this particular time in the majority of cases that this has taken place and the only one that has appeared not be in the — could be — best interests of the farm community, then we're assessing it. Now I don't how much further the honourable member wants to pursue this

particular issue. If he wants to again make some political points out of it, then I think there are other issues that he could probably gain on, rather than this one. If he feels that the municipalities aren't treating the farmers fairly, then he should answer that. But, as far as the guidelines, Mr. Speaker, are concerned, it's a matter of them distributing to their residents as they themselves feel are fair and adequate.

MR. ADAM: Mr. Speaker, the Minister is skirting around the answer. I know he doesn't have to reply if he doesn't wish to do so, but he has mentioned on a number of occasions that there were guidelines laid down. I'm asking the Minister what is the problem that he has? What is the problem that confronts the Minister that he cannot lay on this table for the members here? The guidelines that were sent out to the municipalities to allocate this land out, that's all we're asking. I'm not trying to make any political points. I'm just asking the Minister for an honest tabling of a guideline that was sent out, because apparently the municipalities are not all following the guidelines, as he says there are, and there are none.

MR. DOWNEY: I just want to answer, Mr. Speaker. It appears that the Member for Ste. Rose has the problem, not the government on this side of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. RUSSELL DOERN: Mr. Speaker, I wanted to direct a question to the Minister of Government Services concerning a meeting or a contest in which he is involved, including the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Education, that's going to be held in conjunction with the Stonewall Prime Beef Club and Sale on Friday at 6:30. Mr. Speaker, it's apparently a challenge milking contest and I read this with "udder" disbelief. I wanted to ask the Minister whether this contest will determine which Minister has the most pull, or who will be the next candidate for Lakeside in the next election?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Government Services.

HON. HARRY J. ENNS (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, I shouldn't respond to such "udder" nonsense, but I will. Mr. Speaker, very seriously, it's just another demonstration of our contribution to the agricultural industry, the dairy industry and the provision of the milk of human kindness for the people of Stonewall on that particular day.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Speaker, I was going to ask the Minister whether this is related to the fact that his government has been milking the taxpayers for the past three years, that they're now going to try to apply that talent to milking of cows?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Burrows.

MR. BEN HANUSCHAK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Honourable Minister of Agriculture with respect to the same competition that

three honourable gentlemen are going to participate in. Will he confirm that the name of the cow is Manitoba, to coincide with the name of the province, that the Minister and his colleagues have been accustomed to milking dry for the past three years?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Questions of confirmation do really not contribute to the question period of this Chamber.

The Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. JAY COWAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of the Environment and is in regard to the report on bacteria levels in the Winnipeg water system, in the Red River, and as there seems to be conflicting statements as to the validity and legitimacy of that report, some coming from the municipality and others coming from the federal government, I would ask the Minister if he has had the opportunity, not only to peruse the report but also to seek outside opinion as to the validity of the suggestions and the criticisms made within that particular report.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Consumer Affairs.

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, I have had an opportunity to peruse the report, and the seeking of opinions has not been done by myself. The officials of my department have been going over the report very carefully, and have been making recommendations.

MR. COWAN: I would ask the Minister, Mr. Speaker, then, if his experts within his department share the reported comments of the head of the city's Laboratory Services in regard to the quality of the report, or do they share the comments made by the Director of the Federal Environmental Control Branch for Manitoba, which says that the report, in fact, was a very excellent microbiological study of the Red River?

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, environmentalists, like economists, have a very wide range of opinions, and I would hesitate to want to accept one person's opinion over another. In the final analysis, if there are any decisions to be made, they will be made by the department and by the city of Winnipeg government.

MR. COWAN: That is exactly why I have asked my questions, Mr. Speaker, in that environmental opinions do differ from time to time, and there are two conflicting opinions in this regard. What I am asking the Minister is, does his department accept the recommendations and accept the findings of this particular report, or do they dispute them? I ask that question in specific regard to the fact that one party is disputing him and another party at a different level is accepting him. I would like the Minister to answer as to whether or not his department has examined those criticisms of the report and what opinion they have come to as to the validity of the recommendations and well as the findings in regard to this specific report on bacterial levels.

MR. SPEAKER: The question is repetitive.

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, I have friends on both sides of the issue and I always take the advice of my friends.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Economic Development and ask him whether he can confirm that the building permits in Manitoba for the first five months of this year are at an all time low?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Economic Development.

MR. JOHNSTON: Yes, Mr. Speaker, it can be confirmed. We've said that the construction industry is not doing well in the province of Manitoba. We're not happy about it, any more than they're happy about it in all areas of the country, except B.C. and Newfoundland.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Speaker, I asked the Minister if has any specific programs of construction that will help alleviate that problem, which is affecting not only tradesmen and architects and engineers but also the citizens of Manitoba and the businessmen in the community?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, we don't have any program to build new buildings when we have empty buildings. We don't have any program to put up houses when our vacancy rate is nearly 5 percent. We don't have any programs that are designed just to be solved by throwing money at them that will create problems later.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Elmwood with a final supplementary.

MR. DOERN: Does the Minister have any programs to attract people to come to Manitoba and to retain Manitobans rather than encouraging them to leave?

MR. JOHNSTON: I'm surprised that a person born and raised in Manitoba doesn't know the advantages of this province. It's a great province, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for The Pas.

MR. RONALD McBRYDE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Labour and Manpower. For some time the Minister has stated that he has been attempting to get the federal government to have the unemployment statistics, the unemployment figures, applied to Treaty Indians, and I wonder if the Minister could tell us whether he has made any progress or had any success in getting Statistics Canada to agree to that?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Labour.

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I have had no greater or lesser degree of success than my many predecessors who have held my particular office over the past many years, 10, 12, 15 years, I believe.

MR. McBRIDE: I wonder if the Minister, on the same matter, Mr. Speaker, whether the Minister could tell the House what are the reasons for his lack of success in this area?

MR. MacMASTER: I think my lack of success has been very similar, if not identical, to previous Ministers of Labour in the province of Manitoba, that the federal government does not appear to be interested in taking specific unemployment counts in certain regions of our country, not only in Manitoba, but other regions as well.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Vital.

MR. D. JAMES WALDING: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister to whom Manitoba Telephone System reports. I would like to ask him whether MTS telephone system has made a loan of 500,000 to Interdiscom Systems Limited?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Government Services.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, I will have to take that question as notice.

MR. WALDING: I wonder if the Minister would also take as notice, in case the answer to the first question is yes, what the terms and conditions of the loan were. Can I also ask him whether the Public Utilities Board has been asked for an opinion on this financial matter?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Brandon East.

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask a follow-up question to the Minister of Economic Development. In the reply he gave to the Member for Elmwood he referred to empty buildings or words to that effect, I am wondering whether the Minister can advise now whether his department has any information on the degree to which we have empty commercial and industrial space in the province of Manitoba. There are many empty buildings, according to the signs, at least, that we see along the street and I am wondering whether there is any information that we have showing the large or small amount, whatever it is, of commercial space available in Manitoba.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Economic Development.

MR. JOHNSTON: I don't have them before me, Mr. Speaker. They are upgraded approximately quarterly. I will check with the department to find out, but we get those figures usually from the Real Estate Board and other places that they are put together. The Manitoba Bureau of Statistics people will put them together for us on request. I can say, though, that the last report showed a decrease in empty office space in the province of Manitoba over last year, but we still have lots of office space available in the province, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Brandon East.

MR. EVANS: I would like to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Speaker, whether he now has a reply or some information on a matter that I have raised three times and he has said he would take it as notice, and that is the phenomenon of the loss of farms in Manitoba, the fact that the rate of farm disappearance is four times the rate of farm disappearance in Saskatchewan and Alberta in the last three years. I am wondering whether the Minister now has that information available for us.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, in case the Member for Brandon East hasn't been aware of what is going on in the province, that we have had farm communities under distress situations with the drought and a lot of other hardships, we haven't completely compiled all that because of the workload the staff have had, but we will get to it and get that information for him. If it is more pressing than that, I can move it along a little quicker, if he would like.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Health and it is in regard to the asbestos contamination of the Winnipeg drinking water. In an earlier question period on Tuesday the Minister indicated that he had been assured by the city that asbestos pipes do not deteriorate to any significant extent, and I would ask the Minister if he has had opportunity to check with any other sources or to read any other source documents in regard to determining whether or not there is some fear and concern of asbestos cement pipes contaminating water systems, as appears to be the situation here in Winnipeg?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. L. R. (Bud) SHERMAN (Fort Garry): No, Mr. Speaker, but I would like to make one thing abundantly clear on this question and this issue. There seems to be some misinterpretation and misapplication of the issue and the import involved. This is essentially an environmental issue and, as the honourable member knows, environmental health is not part of the aegis or area of responsibility of the Department of Health in the province of Manitoba; perhaps it should be, that could be the subject of an interesting discussion, but as he well knows, it is not. It comes under the Department of the Environment.

In terms of Health's responsibility, we are certainly available to answer medical questions and to give medical opinions. That is all we have been asked for; that we have done. We stand ready to answer any other questions that we can that are put to us. None have been put to us on this question.

Insofar as the comments that I have made in responding to the Honourable Member for Churchill and others, they have been comments developed by my own pursuit and my own office's pursuit of this

subject in the past 48 hours as a matter of interest, but not as a matter of Health's direct involvement in the subject area.

SPEAKER'S RULING

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The time for question period having expired, before we proceed with Orders of the Day, yesterday the Member for Winnipeg Centre raised a Matter of Privilege of the House, which I took under advisement. I have had the opportunity of examining Beauchesne and also I sought legal advice on the matter. I refer honourable members to Citation 80 and 81, as well as Citation 78, of Beauchesne and in Citation 80, sub. 3: "It follows that though the Speaker can rule on a question of order he cannot rule on a question of privilege. His function when a question of privilege is raised is limited to deciding whether the matter is of such a character as entitled to motion, which the member who has raised the question desires to move, to priority over Orders of the Day."

I have looked at the material which was furnished to me by the Honourable Member for Winnipeg Centre. I've sought legal advice, and it's my opinion that there is a possibility of a prima facie case being made in this case. However, the Speaker's role is then limited and I leave it up to the House to decide for themselves what they want to do.

So I find the motion that was made by the Honourable Member for Winnipeg Centre, seconded by the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge:

WHEREAS there appears an allegation published in the July 8th edition of the Winnipeg Tribune that "Legislative Counsel R. H. Tallin and Deputy Legislative Counsel, A. C. Balkaran, participated in political debate Monday during committee review of a bill introduced by Mr. Mercier", and

WHEREAS such allegation reflects on servants of the Legislature,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the allegations are referred to the Standing Committee of the Legislature on Privileges and Elections, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee be empowered to examine and enquire into all matters pertaining to the allegation and things as may be referred to them and to report from time to time their observations and opinions thereon, with power to send for persons, papers and documents and examine witnesses under oath.

MR. SPEAKER: Are you ready for the question? The Honourable Member for Winnipeg Centre.

MR. J.R. (Bud) BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for your observations in this matter and I was referring to the prior edition of Beauchesne which I was using. I don't intend to prolong this matter because I think the resolution speaks for itself.

It's hot. We have many concerns facing us but, as Lincoln said, the price of freedom is eternal vigilance and I think it is necessary from time to time to remind people about the paramounts of parliament. It is fair game, perhaps, as we have been bandying things about here lately, of speaking of one another

in perhaps not correct terms. I wouldn't use the word 'lie' as they have in the papers but nevertheless it is perhaps fair game for one politician to refer to another in terms which will enhance his own election, perhaps. But when people start impinging upon parliament per se, I think it's a dangerous thing, Mr. Speaker.

As Beauchesne says in Section 103: "The privileges of the parliament were first amended as a protection against outside interference", and I think that this, in my judgment, reaches an outside interference. People should be reminded of the seriousness of this matter, when they go along to remind us all as stated in Section 107, and I'm quoting from the 1958 edition of Beauchesne which is still of utility: "Parliament has the right to commit for contempt, though universally acknowledged to belong to both Houses," speaking about the Houses in Ottawa, "it has been regarded with jealousy".

It goes on to say in Section 3 of 107: "The power of commitment, with all the authority which can be given by law, becomes the keystone of parliamentary privilege. Either House may adjudge that any act is a breach of privilege and contempt and, if the warrant recites that the person to be arrested has been guilty of a breach of privilege, the courts of law cannot enquire into the grounds of the judgment but must leave him to suffer the punishment awarded by the higher court of Parliament."

So this is not a trivial matter that I bring to this House, Mr. Speaker, it is the most serious of matters. It will be up to the committee, if the House accepts my resolution, to determine how to dispose of this matter. In a case somewhat parallel, where an accusation of partiality and discourtesy had been directed against a Chairman of Ways and Means, which was brought before the House, the Speaker declared the offence to be rather a serious one but suggested that the House would not wish to proceed further than a mere apology.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the House support my motion.

QUESTION put, MOTION carried.

MR. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, yeas and nays, please.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the honourable member have support? Call in the members.

Order please. The question before the House is the motion of the Honourable Member for Winnipeg Centre. All those in favour of the motion please rise.

A STANDING VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

YEAS

Messrs. Adam, Anderson, Banman, Barrow, Blake, Boyce, Brown, Cosens, Cowan, Desjardins, Doern, Domino, Downey, Driedger, Einarson, Enns, Evans, Ferguson, Filmon, Fox, Galbraith, Gourlay, Green, Hanuschak, Hyde, Jenkins, Johnston, Jorgenson, Kovnats, Lyon, MacMaster, McBryde, McGill, McGregor, Minaker, Ransom, Schroeder, Sherman, Steen, Uskiw, Walding, Mrs. Westbury, Mr. Wilson.

NAYS

Nil.

MR. CLERK: Yeas 43, Nays nil.

MR. SPEAKER: I declare the Motion carried.
The Honourable Member for Roblin.

MR. MCKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, may I advise you and the House, in my capacity of Chairman of the Committee of Law Amendments which is directly related to the subject matter of this resolution, my conscience tells me that I shouldn't vote on this resolution.

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the day. The Honourable Government House Leader.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, before calling orders of the day I wish to announce that the committee on Law Amendments will be meeting tonight to consider the bills that I outlined this morning, and there has been agreement reached with the opposition, that the Committee on Privileges and Elections, which is currently considering Bill No. 19, will meet simultaneously with the Committee on Law Amendments.

It's also been agreed that Bill No. 99, An Act to Amend The Teachers' Pension Act, which had originally been slated for Law Amendments will be transferred to Privileges and Elections, so those two education bills can be dealt with by that committee. That has been an agreement reached by both parties.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder now if you will call . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

MR. FOX: Yes, I concur with the House Leader, we have reached consensus on the bills and on procedure. Would the Honourable Minister indicate where the Privileges and Elections Committee will meet. There is nothing wrong with meeting in here if they wish, or vice versa.

MR. JORGENSEN: There is a committee meeting available in the other room. I think that we had better meet in the other committee room.

POINT OF ORDER

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Elmwood on a point of order.

MR. DOERN: It is my understanding, Mr. Speaker, and I ask your guidance here, that any member in the Chamber who is in his seat must in fact vote, and that if a person is to abstain they must be seated in another seat or must not be in the Chamber, but that any person who is sitting in his place at the time of a vote must cast a vote either way.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order please. I believe that if the member reads his rules he will find that any

member for a very valid reason can withhold from voting.

Order please. It's been pointed out to me by the Clerk that Rule No. 10, subsection 3, "every member present and in his seat shall vote." Under those conditions I doubt if it would be advisable to call the vote null and void.

The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. SIDNEY GREEN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I think that by unanimous consent we can accept what has happened. But may I also say, Mr. Speaker, that by unanimous consent and acquiescence on virtually hundreds of occasions, members have got up after not having stood in their place when a vote was taken and said that I was paired with the Honourable Member for somebody, and if I had been in my chair I would have voted. So perhaps the rule reads — indeed, not perhaps, the rule no doubt reads as you said it is, but I think that by unanimous consent we can accept what has occurred and perhaps the Rules Committee should deal with the matter which we have been doing as long as I can remember being in the House, that a member has got up and explained his not voting.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order it's been my understanding as a member of this House since 1966, pairing is a well-respected tradition. — (Interjection)— Mr. Speaker, I think I have the floor. I would ask the Member for Minnedosa to keep quiet for a change instead of bellowing out stupid comments. Mr. Speaker, the point is that it is a rule of this House that if you are in your seat, you shall vote. It is a tradition in this House that if a member is paired he may rise in his place and make that statement. But I have never seen, and I do not recall in 14 years, anyone getting up in their place and saying for whatever personal reasons they decided not to vote. If a person isn't going to vote, the practice is they do not sit in their seat or they are not in the Chamber, and so this was a peculiar and unusual circumstance — (Interjection)— if you don't know the difference, then keep quiet.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Since I have no further direction from the House, the vote stands.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, there appears to be an error on the Order Paper. It lists Bill No. 83 as standing in the name of the Minister of Government Services. I believe that is an error. The Minister of Government Services has spoken, and that the bill should be standing in the name of the Honourable Attorney-General, who is not here and in all probabilities won't be here for a while. If anyone else wishes to speak on that particular bill now I'll call it, and in the mean time I am attempting to get a hold of the Attorney-General to determine whether or not he wishes to have his name removed from this bill.

**BILL NO. 83 — AN ACT TO AMEND
THE LANDLORD AND TENANT ACT
AND THE CONDOMINIUM ACT**

MR. SPEAKER: Bill No. 83, standing in the name of the Honourable Attorney-General.

The Honourable Member for Brandon East.

MR. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to add a few comments to the debate, if it is now in order and inasmuch as certain other people are not, as I understand, here to participate. When one participates in a debate on any bill that is of universal interest, or almost universal interest that this bill has, and having listened to some other learned members of this Assembly speak, it's very difficult at times to add new argumentation and new observations, so that one does not repeat the points that have been made previously. However, I would like to add a couple of my thoughts and hopefully not be repetitive in the process.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I believe that there is no question but that the real effect of Bill 83, that is the portion which now confirms the government's decision to get out of rent control, is a move that will hurt a number of people in our society who live in rental accommodation, for whatever reason. I believe that it will hurt pensioners; it might hurt widows; it will hurt families on low income, generally people who are among the disadvantaged in our society. I think there is information, Mr. Speaker, that rent controls, when they're taken off, often do hit areas of rental accommodation which house people on lower incomes more harshly than those areas of the rental market that house people in the higher rental areas.

In other words, it is not unusual for older apartments to be singled out for higher rents. As a matter of fact, there is some information available that when there was a decontrol procedure, the earlier decontrol procedures that were put into effect, that we had in the city of Winnipeg, older apartments certainly experiencing higher rent increases than some of the more modern apartments.

I believe the information we have shows that half of the pre-1949 two-bedroom apartments had a rent increase of more than 10 percent, and many of them were going up by at least 20 percent. Many of these types of accommodations do contain people who are on social assistance, otherwise known as welfare. Of course, we know the government does pick up the bill in the case of welfare recipients who are living in rental accommodation, but nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, the fact is that those types of apartments contain other people who are not on welfare, who are now therefore going to be hurt badly by this latest move.

I know the government and the Minister can say, well this is just the last vestige, this is the last step in decontrol, because we have announced decontrol a couple of years ago; we gradually got out of it. We removed the control mechanism from the rest of the province, and we've left Winnipeg and Brandon in there. Then we've made other moves, so that eventually we can see a gradual decontrol process, and this is simply the end of the line. So therefore, this legislation should come as no surprise. Indeed, it

is no surprise. But having said that, the public reaction is such that obviously there are many people that are being hurt by this particular last move, in this respect, by this government.

I know there is a theory that prevails that the marketplace can indeed do the job, and I can see the Minister, in fact I believe it was the First Minister who argued the other day, or who made some point, that there are — I believe it was maybe on a radio program, whatever, I'm sure I'm reflecting the Premier's comments correctly when I believe he stated that — well there are vacancies, and if people don't like the rent increases, they can move. And really, that is a theory that has some basis in logic. As a matter of fact, I guess the government could argue that this is one of the best times to decontrol because there is a large vacancy rate, and that is the case. I must say that if decontrol was to ever take place, the best time for it to take place is at a time when there are many many vacancies and, depending on your point of view whether it's a good thing or a bad thing, but the fact is that there is a fairly high vacancy rate, both in Winnipeg and in Brandon.

You could also argue, from a market point of view, that with this adequate supply of rental accommodation that, in itself, will therefore tend to keep the market rents down, that no one landlord can get out of line because. If he does, he will suffer further vacancies, and soon he or she, the owner, will have to come into line and therefore, generally speaking, there should not be a massive upward pressure on rents.

So there is some logic in that, and I'm not going to dispute that. I will not dispute that. But from what I can understand, from the reaction that's coming from the community, there seems to be some people who believe that they are being unfairly hit that, for whatever reason, they believe that they cannot move easily. They may not want to move for whatever personal reasons or for whatever social situation they happen to be in; they may not move because of lack of knowledge. You know, when we talk about the theory of the market and how we set prices by the laws of supply and demand operating in the market, one of the fundamental assumptions is that there is perfect knowledge. It's an incredulous assumption but nevertheless that is the assumption in market theory, that if the market can establish prices through the interaction of supply and demand of whatever commodity, of whatever service, it's axiomatic; the assumption is that the buyers and the sellers in the market have perfect knowledge of the market. I would suggest of course, Mr. Speaker, that this very rarely happens and therefore we never have perfect markets. But in the case of the rental market, I would submit maybe one of the reasons some people may be hurt is because of the lack of knowledge of alternative accommodations, and for whatever other personal reasons, as I have indicated.

The other point I would make with regard to the supply of housing, Mr. Speaker, is that at the present time there seems to be an indication of very little rental construction activity. In the year 1978, we indeed experienced a great amount of apartment construction, particularly in the city of Winnipeg. The figures available from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation indicate, I believe, 1978 was almost an

all-time high, or certainly a very high level of activity over the past few years. I believe I have some information here that might confirm what I have just stated. Yes, it was the year 1978, Mr. Speaker, when the housing starts in Manitoba exceeded 12,100 units and while those are all kinds of dwelling units, including single family housing, duplexes and so on, the bulk of it, I know, is multiple accommodation and they were essentially apartment blocks. That increase that year, 1978, we experienced construction activity of well over 12,000, which was an increase of nearly 29 percent over the previous year.

The interesting thing about this is that we had this great increase in rental accommodation construction when we still had some controls on, but as we all know the controls we always had on, I guess from the beginning, did not apply to new structures. There should have been no inhibitions there, although you could argue just the fact that rent controls were in existence in some form or other. It might have some discouraging effects on would-be developers, on potential developers, because the fear that will possibly, at some point, rent control regulations may be changed to include their apartments at some future time. This did not occur and we had this all time record construction, Mr. Speaker; I say all-time high because I have the figures back to 1970 and it is the highest. The only other period that was as high was 1972 when it came to 12,068 units. Certainly 1978 showed a high degree of activity.

The reason, of course, for the activity at that time was that there was fear, which later proved to be unfounded, in the minds of many developers in Manitoba that the tax incentives that were then available would be withdrawn, and, of course, everyone seemed to want to get into the act before the incentives were withdrawn. They were to be withdrawn, it was thought, the events didn't turn out that way, but at least in the minds of many developers it was thought that by the end of 1977, December 31, 1977, this Tax Incentive Program that the federal government had would come to an end. So, as I understand it, on very authority, talking to many officials in the industry or a couple of officials at any rate, it was felt that in order to get the benefit of the federal tax incentive you better get into a position of committing construction. So all these commitments occurred in the latter part of 1977 and then by 1978 you saw the results of the commitments, because the construction then began to unfold, and we had this record level. Of course, since then we have seen, as to be expected, a falloff in 1979, and then unfortunately in 1980 we seem to be even in a weaker position than ever before.

It could be argued perhaps, Mr. Speaker, by the government side that if we don't remove rent controls that we will not give the adequate incentives to the private sector to get on with the job of building additional construction. You could argue that, but at the same time there has to be something else to provide an incentive to the private sector, Mr. Speaker. Besides the absence or presence of rent controls there has to be a real demand in existence. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that unfortunately, because for various reasons we happen to be losing people in Manitoba, that we just don't have the household formation, as the statisticians refer to it, the household formation that provides the basis for

demanding, and I use that in an economic sense, for economic demand to occur for housing and including rental accommodation.

In 1979, unfortunately, Manitoba experienced a drop of people, I believe that has not been seen since the war-time period of about 1942-1943. The actual loss, according to Statistics Canada, in 1979 was 5,000 people. By that term I mean the total level of population dropped from 1,000 as of January 1, 1979, 1,031,200 to, as of January 1, 1980, 1,026,200, that is a drop of 5,000.

The basis of that population loss was inter-provincial migration. Our net loss in inter-provincial migration was 15,457 people and I know there has been some argument in the House in the past about the ins and the outs, and just to allay anyone who wants to get excited about this, to allay anyone's emotions on this, I will say that in 1979, 23,443 people came into the province of Manitoba, but unfortunately 38,900 people left, and therefore, taking the difference between the ins and the outs, you get a negative figure of 15,457. That is the major reason for our dropping population levels. If it wasn't for the fact that we obtained 4,500 immigrants, people coming from other lands in 1979, and, of course, natural increase, births over deaths, we would have had an even greater population loss. That is for the province of Manitoba.

As far as the city of Winnipeg is concerned, I don't have the figures in front of me, but I recall seeing them and it shows virtually no change. I think there is a slight change of 200 or 300 people from 1978 to 1979, but it is virtually a static situation.

So we don't have the fundamental basis of additional demand coming on, so I say that the argument you should remove rent controls in order to give incentive for more construction doesn't hold as much water when you look at the total scene and realize that there is a lagging demand for other reasons. Of course, the other reasons relate to the reasons why we have lost so many people in this past year.

I might add, Mr. Speaker, as I was referring a moment ago, the last time we suffered a population drop of this significance was 1942. 1942, again according to Statistics Canada, our population drop was 5,700, but I believe the reason for that was simply that many people were transferred out of the province for military service, it was right in the middle of the War in 1942, and I would think that is the reason for this particular decline in the total level of population.

We have had some other minor drops since the Second World War — 100 in 1946, 100 in 1967, those figures are so small that they are insignificant. 1979, we dropped 1,500 people, I am sorry, this is on a June to June basis. In 1979 we dropped 5,000; in 1978 we dropped 500. So there is no question that this year has seen the greatest loss of any significance since 1942, and therefore, Mr. Speaker, I am saying there is simply not that household formation, there is not that demand for additional accommodation. So that removes that argument for not having rent controls.

It is interesting to see what has happened in rural Manitoba. Another point I would like to make is what has happened in other places in Manitoba that have experienced rent control removal. And again, I

believe this is the information that was tabled by the government; that some areas in rural Manitoba the rent increases look to be very very unfair, very exorbitant; cases of duplexes in Neepawa experiencing rent increases of 30.6 percent. Rent for one house in the town of Russell went up by 46.8 percent. I don't know whether the Speaker is aware of that but what I have here says, one house at least went up by 46.8, which is a very large increases. Rent increases for houses in Swan River averaged 18.6 percent and the rent increases in Altona averaged 16.1 percent.

When the rents were decontrolled therefore in rural Manitoba, according to the way the government, according to the legislation, none of the landlords involved had to justify their rent increases, as I understand it. They were simply abolished and while I know there are many reasonable landlords in this world and that many would not take advantage, nevertheless there were obviously some unreasonable landlords who did take advantage of their tenants. I am suggesting that what has happened in rural Manitoba can happen elsewhere, including the cities of Brandon and Winnipeg.

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that we, in government, can do many things to improve the housing stock of this province, the rental accommodation of this province, the apartment accommodation of the province, if we want to. I talked about the private sector and how it responds to price incentives, namely rent levels, but there are other things that we on this side would suggest that is necessary. Because in our society, whether we like it or not, there are many people in the lower income categories who need assistance from their fellow man through the mechanism of government programming and I think it's been accepted on both sides of the House that there is a role for social housing construction in Manitoba.

We have all of the various programs laid down by CMHC, and when we were in government, Mr. Speaker, we, I believe, took advantage, as much as we could, to build housing units under the various provisions of CMHC. The number of units built were in the many many thousands. I don't have the figures in front of me but I believe for senior citizens alone it was over 10,000 and I hesitate to use the figure because I don't have it front of me, but there were many many thousands, let me say that. Let me put it that way, many many thousands of social housing units built for low income families and for senior citizens.

As a matter of fact I would say in rural Manitoba some of the finest buildings you can see are the apartment blocks, the apartment units for senior citizens. They are not highrises of course, it's not necessary, land is cheaper. It's highrise in The Pas, I'm told, and there are highrises in Brandon, but in most of the smaller towns you have the motel-like unit and they look rather pleasant and they are appreciated by everyone in the town; the council, the Chamber of Commerce, and of course certainly by the senior citizens that have the privilege to live in them. This is subsidized housing, it's housing that's subsidized in accordance with income.

I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that we, as government, have to recognize the continuing need to help these people who cannot find accommodation through the

normal market because the normal market price is simply out of their range.

That's one way of coping with the problem of helping people who can't afford the high cost of rental accommodation. That's one way of coping and this is supplying social housing. The government has said, and others have said, many economists have said, people who take an orthodox view of these things say, the way to do it is through the private sector, stimulate construction, you get the supply and therefore you'll get adequate accommodation at reasonable rents. But as I said there are some imperfections in that market method and I think that's proven, not only in this country but very much so in western Europe, where you have government involved on a large scale in social housing. One thinks of England for a moment; there you have what is called, council-housing and you have municipalities in England, in Great Britain very much in providing social housing for people on a very massive scale. Of course they do not have provincial governments in Great Britain. They have a central government but they have therefore municipal governments or council governments, if you will, who have a lot of jurisdiction, I would suggest, or do take initiatives to a larger extent than we seen municipalities taking in this country.

I say one way to cope is social housing construction. I think another way and one particular area of concern to us has been and remains today, is provision of housing in northern Manitoba and rural Manitoba for other disadvantaged people. We talked of the rural and native housing program, we had a rural and native housing program, CMHC has one, and that is an area that has to be given a lot of priority as well, Mr. Speaker. The fact of course is that a great deal of this housing is in more northerly climes and therefore you have additional problems of cost; costs of construction and also the very very heavy cost of adequately heating those homes. I know that this is a very serious problem. Even if a house is given to some people in remote areas of northern Manitoba they are unable to afford it in many many cases because of the costs of energy, the costs of heat; it's simply out of their range and out of their income range; beyond their capacity to pay for that heat supply, whatever it may be, whatever kind it may be.

I believe, again talking about the role of social housing, that there is room for immediate attention and action on the part of government for a major urban renewal program in the center part of Winnipeg. I believe that there is room for urban renewal in certain parts of the center core of the city of Brandon, and indeed, I think, if you look at some other regional centers in Manitoba, you will see areas that have become blighted over the years. I know we have had the program, The Neighbourhood Improvement Program, otherwise known as NIP which our government initiated in Manitoba in co-operation with CMHC. I think it's still in existence although I believe it's sort of in its latter stages and may be phased out. It was a good idea and we did a number of useful things under that program. I know in my own constituency, well it's not in my constituency it's actually in Brandon West constituency, that a number of improvements were made. Without going into the detail of that program,

I say, Mr. Speaker, that it's time for a urban renewal thrust in the center part of Winnipeg to help improve housing conditions, to help beautify the city of Winnipeg, and generally to help revitalize the center part of the city, and there are a lot of spin off benefits, there's a lot of benefits to the people involved, a lot of benefits to industry, a lot of benefits to the greater community of Winnipeg and of course that applies to Brandon, or Portage or what have you, The Pas as well.

One could argue that we should not favour only people living in rental accommodation, that government should also in being equitable in its approach to reasonable accommodation look at helping those people who own their own homes and of course that gets you into the whole debate about mortgage interest subsidies and of course this was a very major issue in the 1979 federal election. I do believe that there may be some merit in some type of assistance, in some instances, for people who are hit by very very high mortgages. Unfortunately at the present time mortgage rates should be on their way down because the interest rate, the bank rate set by the Bank of Canada, has been coming down for the last many weeks. As a matter of fact, I understand it has gone down again today by a small fraction, but nevertheless heading in the right direction.

At the same time, I believe this area is worthy of investigation by government as well, and I'd be remiss, Mr. Speaker, if I didn't refer to another element of housing stock, and that is, because it's all interrelated, home repair. We began the Critical Home Repair Program a number of years ago and I believe thousands upon thousands of people, including families and senior citizens who live in their own homes, have been assisted by this, and I just might add, as matter of interest, one of the reasons for starting the program was to stimulate the economy; to give some work to tradesmen, to small suppliers and so on, and it did have that benefit. But it is worthy of course in its own right and after the initial year or two of operation it was turned over to the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation. I know that program still is in existence but I believe it has a very low profile and I'm not sure how much money is available for that particular program, and I'm not so sure therefore to what extent it is playing a meaningful role today. I know it's operative; I know there's some people getting a bit of assistance; but I say this is an area that should be expanded, it's an area we can do something incidentally to give jobs to people, useful jobs, and at the same time to improve the housing stock throughout the province.

I say, Mr. Speaker, if we are looking at the generality of the problem of adequate housing for Manitobans, because surely that has to be the objective, how do we obtain adequate housing for the people of Manitoba. Rent control is only one component of answering that question. Rent control was brought in as part and parcel of the anti-inflation thrust a few years ago and in various ways, as inadequate as it may have been right from the very beginning, it seems to have helped many people and at least if you listen to the outcry at the present time of many many people in our communities of Winnipeg and Brandon, it seems that indeed some people are still being assisted in some respects.

Of course we are now, as I understand it from this bill, confirming government policy and at some point in the bill I think it's around the very end of the bill, which I guess I don't have in front of me, but there is a clause which, in effect, says the Rent Stabilization Act is — the two of them, there was the original and then the amendment, I think the amendment was in 1978. both of these pieces of legislation will no longer exist in effect, it wipes them from the statute books. We are at the very very end of the trail, I guess, in this respect, but I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that it is worthy of reconsideration by the government that this has been a useful way to help many people, and although the arguments of the market sound very logical and reasonable, nevertheless, there are many people out there who seem to be hurt and who are pleading for some form of continued assistance.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge the government to reconsider the legislation, and I'm sure that there will be much representation at the committee stage. I am sure there will be many people, many tenants, many tenant associations and others who are going to express their concerns loudly and clearly to the MLAs gathered there.

I would like to touch upon some other parts of the bill, Mr. Speaker, if I have time. I'm not sure how much time I have.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Seven minutes.

MR. EVANS: Seven minutes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There are a lot of housekeeping sections in the bill that are relatively minor which I really do not wish to speak on. I talked about the final extinction of any semblance of rent controls in the province, but there are some major changes in the relationships between landlords and tenants in the bill, and it does cause one to be concerned as to the justice of some of these changes. For example, under the existing legislation, there was some protection from eviction for families with school children. There were certain exceptions, for instance when you didn't pay your rent or if you had some serious breach of the tenancy agreement, if you had a lot of noise, making a nuisance of yourself and so on, if you had some legitimate reasons, you could be evicted. But you had to have some legitimate reasons to evict a family with school children during the school year. Now, as I understand it, this legislation will enable a landlord to evict a family during the school year for the reasons I have suggested before, and if the landlord wants to turn the apartment into a condominium.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable Member has five minutes.

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. — (Interjection)— Fine. Maybe when the Minister closes debate he can elaborate on that, because certainly we should all be very clear as to what the legislation does do.

At the present time, as I understand it, there is some protection against discrimination in rental accommodation, there is the usual protection against discrimination for race, colour, creed, national origin and so on. The traditional human rights, there is

reference to it, and these shall be protected, this kind of discrimination should not be allowed. And then there is discrimination on the grounds of membership in a tenants group or association. Now, as I understand it, the net effect of repealing one of the sections of the Act is that there will be no protection in the statutes against discrimination on the basis of membership in a tenants' association or tenants' group. I suppose you could argue, as far as human rights are concerned, there is The Human Rights Act, and all the protection in the world is maybe there, but at the same time, that is general legislation and I think that it doesn't hurt to have this reference continued very clearly and distinctly in the bill.

There is the one rent per year rule that now exists, as I understand it, that this will come to an end, that if the landlord so chooses he or she may raise the rent several times during the year. And of course, this can be very upsetting and I suppose you could argue it could be considered to be inflationary. Again, I'm thinking of those people, as I said earlier in my remarks, of the people that always seem to be hit the hardest, and that is people in older accommodation who sometimes are not as mobile as people who are in perhaps higher income groups or more knowledgeable of alternatives and so on. And I think therefore, that many people living in the inner city and living in older apartments are probably going to be hurt the hardest by this type of rule abolition, by this type of change.

I know I'm running out of time, but there are many other aspects of the bill that I think I would describe as negative in the sense that they take certain rights and protection away from tenants vis-a-vis the landlord. The legislation moves the pendulum certainly more towards the landlord side than it has been to date.

I would just, in closing, make one reference, and maybe the Minister earlier has made reference to this, or perhaps others on the other side, and that is the SAFER program as one way of helping people in this disadvantaged area, and I say fine, but the SAFER program can be inadequate for various reasons. It can be taken advantage of by the landlords who may wish to increase rents, knowing that there may be some sort of a government subsidy for those people who are obtaining a SAFER program or who may be eligible for a SAFER program.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Those are some thoughts that I have had on this particular piece of legislation, Bill 83.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are you ready for the question?

The Honourable Member for Wolseley.

MR. ROBERT G. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I first got wind of this when I started receiving mail as to this Bill 83 that was coming through, and I represent an area which possibly would dictate that this bill in its present form should be sent back for research and some form of study. But the Member for St. Matthews, in an article that I read in the Calgary Paper, assured this House that he had some sort of mystical powers that were going to have the Minister go against the wishes of his civil servants

and put some fairness into the bill. And I say that by reading the article because Alberta has gone out of rent controls, and because of their very low percentage, they have a situation where they are really getting hit and possibly no more so than the tenants in the province of Manitoba, except that I would be remiss if I didn't stand up, representing the Wolseley riding and representing the type of oath that I took and going by a lot of the Conservative aims and principles which were completely shattered when the former government brought in controls. And now it presents a problem to us for me to stand up here and have any sort of conscience to be able to attempt to support this bill in its present form, knowing that the unfairness of this bill and everything that's been brought on us by members opposite who introduced rent controls in the first place, whereas if it had been left up to the marketplace, the extra building of apartment blocks and that would have sifted off and the older apartment blocks would have been left alone.

But now that land values far outweigh the old block that's sitting on it, you have the phenomena where we had the promise from a particular gentleman, Mr. Silverman and others, that, oh, rents wouldn't go up more than 10 percent. I would like to find one that has only gone up 10 percent, and I would be able to write them back and give them the example.

There are many landlords like myself who are not increasing the rents, and I stand here as one. But I can't help but turn around and refer to a man who wrote me regarding the Devon Court, and he said, you know these shrewd owners of this block know that rent controls are coming in and they're a lot smarter because a lot of the small landlords and roominghouse owners don't read the newspaper, or they don't have people on the inside. They weren't taking Ian Turnbull for lunch, or they weren't doing these type of things that knew that controls were coming in. So they socked it to the tenants before rent controls came in. And this man wrote me that they had the audacity to raise his rent a certain amount, a 47 increase, a 57 increase, a 71 increase, and he goes on, but then his rent settled down at 185 a month. Now that controls are off, his rent is going from — because naturally during controls there was a guaranteed annual income for the landlords of 10 percent, or five percent, I took advantage of it. In other words, landlords were guaranteed a rental increase during rent controls.

But now these same landlords, the ones I referred to in the Devon Court, who I have had suggested to me are four lawyers who are obviously hanging on to the particular building for capital gain or property values, we know it sits there at the corner of Edmonton, right across from the new IBM Building and may be in the vicinity of — as our government builds new buildings, it increases the land values there. But this block is 75 years old, Mr. Speaker. What justification have these people got to take the small money that is brought in from the SAFER program? Are we creating, in many instances, a program that is there to help the elderly people in the core area? And have these people who remain anonymous behind corporations because they've already go the land value there, saying, well, we live

in the downtown location, we can hike the rents whatever we want.

So this gentleman's rent has gone from 205 to 283, and most of the people, at least 19 of the people living in that block have lived there 20 years or longer. And in the Free Press article of June 27th, it said, Flawed Tenant Protection. Well, it quotes someone as saying, well they can move if they don't like it. But moving is expensive and troublesome, and I cannot help but feel that representing the city of Winnipeg and representing my riding and going by some of the things that I stand for, the quiet enjoyment in life and things like that, that there has to be something put into this bill to have the uniqueness in Manitoba of having the old city of Winnipeg versus the affluent suburbs.

So when you have the old city of Winnipeg, having it in an unbelievable fashion, wave after wave of letters come in, 62 percent increase. Let me read one here from 812 Wolseley. "My rent increase has been proposed, 62 percent, from 186 to 300.00. Clearly this is an injustice. The general condition of the block has deteriorated." And this is the other fantastic thing. You know, the only thing I thought went up in value was antiques when they get older. But apparently, under the removal of rent controls, these older blocks are now a gold brick. I notice the For Sale signs are all gone down. The For Sale signs have all been removed from them, because obviously these people know something that I don't know.

I would like to think that the Member for St. Matthews is going to have some influence. But it says, "I wish to inform you what I'm getting for the old 186 apartment, now it's going to be 300, a spacious two-bedroom apartment. It has no carpeting, no air conditioning, no parking, no cable TV, steam heat with all the noise that comes with an older block, and no heat control. The ceilings are rotting and so on and so forth. Now, the letter received from the landlord, Worldwide Management Services, stated that apartments comparable to this were renting for 375.00. However, because I was such a good tenant, I'd be receiving a 75 discount on my rent."

Now to me this is unacceptable. We have to have the protection in the Act to be able to help the very people that I represent. I can go on. I have one here from Ste. 9, 28 Woodrow Place. "My rent has gone 54 per month, making it now 200.00" So if his rent was 146 to 200, this man, Mr. Farquarson, or whatever his name is at Ste. 9, 28 Woodrow Place, and he talks about the Princeton Apartments on Broadway, rent will be 180, an increase of 33 a month, and there are no less than 12 apartment blocks in the Wolseley riding that have talked to me about these unbelievable phenomena, as it has been presented by the media.

Now, I say presented because the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs has indicated to the Member for St. Matthews, maybe, that changes will be forthcoming. So I have to accept that. But then when you look at most of the people that I support, the people that support a work ethic, that are going to go through life and work and save some money, and then they live in an apartment block, and if they make 600 a month and their rent goes to 283 and the subsidy on SAFER is 25.70, they're still paying 257.30. That far exceeds 30 percent of their income.

So the SAFER program really is not helping those that save for their old age.

I would like to read a letter that I wrote on July 2nd, I was a bit of a waffler here, because I had to go and think about this. I was getting bombarded by all of these letters, and yet I wanted to be part of the caucus and part of the team, but the phenomena of the First Minister and his colleagues throwing me out of caucus is a fact that I am not aware of what is going on, and I represent the very area that this Bill affects, and was given absolutely no information about this ill-timed bill. I'm a politician, I would have been able to tell this Minister and I wrote to the First Minister and said, the Caucus decision to introduce Bill 83 at the very same time the landlords were sending out their rental increases is the most political blunder that I have ever heard of.

Why wasn't this Bill introduced two weeks earlier? It is time the politician became the shepherd and the civil servants the sheepdog, because some civil servant held that Bill up and he, no doubt, was a friend of one of those colleagues beyond, because they are the ones that caused the problem by introducing rent controls in the first place.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I would caution the honourable member to choose his words very wisely.

The Honourable Member for Wolseley.

MR. WILSON: So what happened is . . . the letter stated basically that I felt that Mr. Silverman and his colleagues had led us down the garden path by saying that the rental increases would not exceed 10 percent; I have countless examples of where the rental increase has gone beyond 10 percent. I showed that the very people that I represent, the people with incentive to get ahead and work, plus those others less fortunate, that the SAFER Program doesn't cover them.

The SAFER Program is an excellent program and was one that I could have ran in office and got re-elected in a landslide, and then I get this type of help that I don't need, like Bill 83 coming in at this time. I would say that this Minister and others in this Caucus had better turn around and have a look at this Bill and bring in some fairness to it, because I represent the old city of Winnipeg, and if you want to win any seats there you better bring some fairness back to this Bill. I am dead serious, because I'm all for turning around and putting some fairness into any particular type of legislation, but you cannot have an arbitration that doesn't go both ways. When a landlord sends out the leases, and if you don't like it . . . I'm a landlord and I know what happens when a tenant gives me a hard time, I give him an equally hard time, and this is the thing that bothers me.

I wanted to get on the record so my colleagues don't think I'm speaking in a vein slightly against their position on this Bill, but the aims and principles of the Conservative Party are that we believe in the freedom of worship, speech in assembly. We believe the State should be the servant of the people, and our national produce depends on a competitive economy. If rent controls hadn't come on, we would have had the marketplace building all these new units, and we wouldn't have had the type of thing that is happening. And we don't have an oil well

gushing out of the ground where we have only 2 or 3 percent or 1 percent vacancy rate.

So in the suburbs and in the country, my colleagues in Caucus in the Conservative Party — I shouldn't say Caucus, but certainly in the Conservative Party — have no problem in the country. I think the controls have been off in Dauphin for over a year. I can't see any problem at all with rent controls coming off in the entire province of Manitoba; but I say you have got a unique situation where you have got to build in an infrastructure to protect the city of Winnipeg, the old area where you have all the lawyers buying up all these blocks and keeping them for property values. They don't care who lives in them.

The Member for Fort Rouge is sensitive to this point, but you check the owners of the Devon Court and others and the very fact is that you will find that these corporate names — you know, the funny thing is when I get in trouble with my corporation, it is always Bob Wilson, MLA, but when a lawyer or three or four lawyers own a corporation, they don't want anybody to know about it, and this is another one of the chapters in fairness for another day.

I really think that the Devon Court is a small example of —(Interjection)— Well, I will tell you, when I ran in City Council in that area that block supported me 85 percent, and the small repayment that I could give them is to stand up in this House and speak on their behalf.

It says here, allows every individual the freedom of opportunity and initiative, and we believe in a Canada founded on these principles, a nation of many creeds and many cultures united in its aims and accepting its obligation amongst the nations of the world. I believe in the supreme worth of the individual and his right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and I underline that last word, "happiness", because if you have tenants living in the same suite for 20 years, and you have a Bill coming in and these people supported you, and part of the problem they had was because the members opposite brought in controls in the first place, and now you want to get out, and I think on getting out you must ensure that everybody is treated fairly and try to encourage that thing that I talked about, the Conservative philosophy, the pursuit of happiness.

Yet I find so many contradictions in the many pieces of legislation that we are introducing. We say we are getting out of controls because we believe that the law was made for man and not man for law, and the government is a servant of the people and not their master. The problem I find is we very quickly introduced Bill 83, taking limited consideration into these people by having an arbitration clause, but I say the arbitration clause has to be more protective. I appreciate that in the newspaper articles . . . and I always like these very fair newspapers reporters, especially Steve Pona. He happens to be the same individual that blasted me for several headline articles. He seems to have a knack of picking out the words, "Proposed Changes Savage" and "Rent Bill Hammered", and it says, almost like the Landlords' Association wrote it.

Then he quotes the very Bolshevik that I wouldn't trust as far as I could throw him, Vic Savino. This guy here has the bloody audacity to turn around . . . he turns around and he could manipulate these

media people around his little finger. This reporter has no credibility in my eyes for what he did to me and he is going to get egg on his face when I am back in here in the next Spring Session, and I will look for his column of apology, because he is always beholden to those people that feed him stories. He is not interested in true journalism. This article is utter nonsense. And he quotes another guy who has a tendency to exaggerate, the Member for Wellington, and he says it is the most savage piece of legislation since the time of William and Mary. You know, when I said that when they introduced Bill 139, back in 1969, because I had a vested interest, I also said it was the worse piece of legislation since the time of William and Mary. He must have stole my speech, but they unanimously passed that Bill 139, 57 to nothing or some particular section at that particular time.

In dealing with the proposed changes, I wish that it could have been kept out of the area of these activists out there, until they could have waited . . . you know, one of the most unbelievable things, you take a piece of legislation like this Bill 83, or the one the Attorney-General got in trouble over, this is only Second Reading. If the Minister gets the feedback from the public and from the presentations there is going to be changes. Then he can turn around and start to make changes in his department, because obviously somebody in his department, and somebody in the Attorney-General's Department put something in the Bill that was totally unfair. So therefore that is the job I am afraid of having staff that are slightly political, and will recognize some of the political aspects of introducing any bill. I would like to see the area of that appeal rejected, because human nature will not allow many of these people to be able to have the type of representation that is not terrifying.

I know that many of these elderly people suffer from a mild form of acrophobia, they don't go out very often, they are afraid of bureaucratic situations, and if there is a part of this Bill that again I believe helps further make life miserable for them in that it says that any dispute that is in the court system, it we will have nothing to do with it, and I would suggest that we should be looking at trying to avoid these people going to court. I know most laws in this House are made to create work for members of the legal profession, but in this particular section dealing with Bill 83, we should be trying to get out of rent controls in a very fair way, because we have the unique situation of the city of Winnipeg, the older section of the city of Winnipeg and we have blocks that are deteriorating and are getting older and older, and somebody said, well, if you allow these people to charge 300 a months rent from 183, they will fix up that apartment. Now, surely, if a block is standing there like some of them are standing up there near the Convention Centre, you can't tell me that the landlord is going to spend any money on that, when that block may be demolished within a year. He is sitting on that for property value, and I am very concerned that I cannot promise my friends and supporters in the Devon Court that they will have their apartments brought up to a worth of 300 a month.

So therefore I express concern to the Minister that these particular areas are . . . well, I think,

unfortunately, we have a tendency to copy other provinces and Alberta has got out of rent controls and it is time Manitoba got out, and basically if you fellas hadn't brought them in in the first place, we wouldn't have this problem, but I am saying is a problem of conscience, and I had written out something here that I . . . Well, I am telling you if you leave things to the marketplace things will take care of themselves, but you can't go back and say leave things to the marketplace when governments have disrupted that marketplace by bringing in controls in the first place, and many of these bills that are coming forward this Session are going to further shake up the marketplace under the guise of consumer protection. This is my own biased opinion, but it is one that I honestly feel.

I would hate to see the time of the Law Amendments Committee be taken up by, and I am quoting another article in the June 26th Free Press, in which Mr. Silverman is going to bring 200 landlords with him to state that this Bill is unfair. I would hope that some tenants would be allowed to be heard at Law Amendments. In other words, some fairness into the presentation before the Law Amendments Committee, that for each landlord that cries the blues that he wasn't able to double his damage deposit and that they should be able to collect a year's worth of post-dated cheques, and some of the other problems that they will come forward with, that you will have time to listen to the little people in the city of Winnipeg who are going to come forward, and maybe have a rule that the Vic Savinos of the world are only allowed one presentation. Because he has such a following in the media that the entire intent of the Bill, the entire intent I hope of changes that will be fair to the tenants, will be given to the people. In other words, more emphasis on the workingman and less on political appointments.

Let's talk about another area that this Bill doesn't talk about, and let's talk about the landlord's side. You know, we have a problem here in that as a landlord are we to believe that every presentation said that all the tenants won't pay, that they damage the property, and certainly the insurance industry of Manitoba has egg on its face because you have now a 250 deductible clause. On my block on Maryland, as a landlord, I have signs painted all over, this anarchy. I think at some point in time the city of Winnipeg has either got to prosecute these people who deface your building or they have got to have a compensation fund for the 250 deductible, because I have had my building painted twice, and it has gone from swastikas now to this big round sign with an "A" in the middle. And now my insurance company says they are not interested in insuring that area of the city, because the city of Winnipeg has moved the City Welfare Office to 705 Broadway. So now I'm going to have trouble getting insurance, at any price. I mean chances are what may be part of the thing that the landlords are saying is that there are unique situations and that is why we need this arbitration thing, to listen to both sides of the story. When you have a bad section of the city, maybe there should be something in the arbitration board that says to the city of Winnipeg, you have to lower the assessment, lower the taxes on that section, because we of government have brought this welfare office in

here and all your property values have gone down, but your rents can't go down, your rents have to stay stable or go up.

I'm saying that there are two sides to the coin. There is the landlord who is faced with a deteriorating section through lack of some form of interest in that area, or through some sort of municipal or government involvement; in this case the City Welfare Office. In other cases, in my area, were 54 halfway houses with a lot of robberies and violence and lack of police protection and so on and so forth. Then you have this other area, the Palmerston area, you have the Wellington Crescent area, you have parts of Fort Rouge and then we have these old blocks, the old Hugo Apartments and others like that, where you have these people that have lived there for 20 - 30 years. I mention the Devon Court where I would think that there has to be something in the Act to say, if you are going to increase the rent 62 percent, then you had better have a story to tell the particular arbitration people because otherwise we've got a problem. And that problem is that we, as Conservatives, talk about our aims and principles and get these people to support us and then we turn around and take away their pursuit of happiness. I think we can make this bill fair; I think as Conservatives we're committed to getting out of rent controls but I'm going to stay non-committal because I tragically was evicted from caucus and I don't have the information on this bill, but I'll look, it has to go in Law Amendments, because I want to hear the final draft of this bill and then I will decide how I'm going to vote.

I, at this point in time, from the mail that I'm getting, and I know that many of my rural friends and colleagues will not believe that there is any problem at all in getting out of rent controls because everything is based on a normal set of circumstances, i.e. the marketplace. But when they brought in controls the members opposite, and the landlords, hammered it to them before the rent controls came in, and then they automatically were given an increase, by rent controls of 6, 7, 10 percent, because many of the blocks had been written off. I challenge, when Mr. Silverman and them come before the committee, to find out how many landlords there are like me, and others like me, that are a unique type of individual, and Wolseley is full of them, that live in a particular area and they hope that particular apartment block or rooming house is their old age pension. We don't have the situation in the Devon Court. We have a 75 year old block where lawyers have bought it purely for land value and speculation; where they've taken the human element, human feelings out of the people that live in there and it's suggested in the paper that if they don't like it they can move.

I suggest it's because we are going out of rent controls and we have brought in the SAFER program to cushion some of the blow, but I say we have to look to these people and give them a fair hearing and give them the assurance that it better be justified, these increases, and if anything, I would think in the case of the Devon Court, maybe the rent should be rolled back if the property has doubled in value, because there are rumors there's going to be a new law courts building there. I've often said that in the area of — many of my colleagues out in the

Charleswood area want us to cancel their yearly property taxes because they say they can't afford to keep their farms. I'm all for that, let's cancel all their taxes. But when they sell that land for development, we'd better be in there for a share of 25 percent of the capital gain.

I think that the problem that we have with the Devon Court is an example of four businessmen, no matter who they are, and the other one that I read into the record. Don't you think it's a bit of a con job to say to the person after they've increased their rent from 186 to 300, to say to them, we're giving you a bargain of 75 rent a month discount. That's not the kind of person I want to support, and I don't know who World Wide Management Services are, and let's hope they are not who I think they might be.

We'll look forward to the tenants of 812 Wolseley coming forward with the support of their member to say that they are willing to accept a rental increase but they want it to be fair, and they want their member to insure that some form of changes are made to this bill or they'll be watching to see which side of the ledger I stand up on if the changes aren't made.

So with those few remarks, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that if you read the Conservative philosophy and you're committed to getting out of rent controls, then get out of them with a measure of fairness and get out of them with protection for these people who supported us and elected us to government and don't give the likes of this Savino character and these other Bolsheviks the chance to win a couple of these urban seats back. Let's win a few more urban seats because, you know, the Member for St. Matthews and I are a pretty good lobby for the downtown core and I think that you'll see some active participation. I know the Minister of Economic Development has built some MHRC apartment blocks down there and I look forward to two or three senior citizen blocks in my riding, and all of these are upgrading. We tore down a block at Lenore and Wolseley the other day, and I can see that we could win a goodly number of these urban seats, if we show, when we have a bill that's been a problem, because it does encompass our philosophy that we get out if it, we get out of it with fairness and we insure all those people that supported us that we will turn around and protect them.

I want them to keep the letters coming. I want them to advise me of all the rental increases. I invite them because I will photostat them and send them to the Minister and to other members of the caucus who are from the rural areas who do not have a rent increase problem of the magnitude that exists in the old city of Winnipeg.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MRS. WESTBURY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I suppose you thought that I was speaking since he referred to my old campaign so many times.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable Member has already spoken on this bill.

MRS. WESTBURY: The amendment, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Oh, pardon me.

MRS. WESTBURY: Thank you. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I did speak to the bill extensively and I do not expect to spend very much time on the amendment but it does call for some response.

However, the Member for Wolseley, in his remarks, said that I was a little sensitive when he made the comments that all lawyers buy apartment blocks or own these apartment blocks in which the rents are being raised, and to defend a honourable man, Mr. Speaker, I would like to, since that's in the record, I would like also to have in the record the fact that my husband, who happens to be a lawyer, and I do not own any property in the province of Manitoba that is not occupied by our own family. There is nothing wrong with owning property, Mr. Speaker, but the member stated that I was sensitive on the subject and so I just wanted to have that on the record.

Now in speaking to this amendment, Mr. Speaker, I will support the amendment although I don't think it goes far enough. I don't think it really hits what's wrong with the bill and there is much wrong with the bill. I think an amendment would have to be two or three pages long to cover what is really wrong with the bill. For instance, I feel that one of the more serious aspects of the removal of rent controls is that the whole SAFER program which has been implemented and supplemented this year by the government, and which I supported. I was criticized for voting against the Budget which I thought was rather quaint since I had said that I support the SAFER program, and I was criticized afterwards for voting against the Budget. Mr. Speaker, if that kind of criticism goes on I'm going to have to request, as I believed is allowed in Beaubesne, that we vote on the Budget line by line or item by item, because I think that would be a responsible way indeed for me to vote. When we voted on the whole Budget and I voted against it, Mr. Speaker, I had already stated that there were certain aspects that I supported.

Mr. Speaker, this business of the SAFER program, my support was conditional upon the retention of rent control in some form. I didn't say that because I really didn't believe this government would abolish rent control totally having brought in a SAFER program. I thought that their sense of responsibility would surely require them to have some sort of control on the expenditure of moneys under the SAFER program. But without some form of rent control it just becomes an out and out gift to landlords, and particularly to greedy and unscrupulous landlords, Mr. Speaker. I regret that very much. I think this is a very important matter and it is not going to hurt those tenants who are involved with the SAFER program; it's certainly not going to hurt the landlord but it is something that is of major concern to the taxpayer.

The statement has been made that the large vacancy rate will allow some sort of marketing control of rents. The large vacancy rate is mostly in the suburbs, Mr. Speaker, it is not in the old or low income apartments. There is not that large vacancy rate in the apartments of which those of us who serve inner city constituencies are aware and those of which we are speaking. It's mostly suburban construction and it's mostly newer construction.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution that I presented, which was talked out in this House before we went into Speed-up, called for some form of rent control taking into consideration necessary maintenance and renovation and I can understand that the landlords were unhappy with the rent controls when they could not claim for necessary renovation. I know that has led to the deterioration of apartment blocks and of individual apartments and I know that this has caused hardship to some of those landlords, even those who are not greedy, and even those who are not taking advantage of whatever loopholes they can find.

I personally believe that this government would be doing a greater favour to the landlords if they were to place a freeze on the increased assessment on older apartment blocks, Mr. Speaker, for restoration and renovation. I believe that a freeze on increased assessments for three to five years would be the answer to all our problems. I think that we could then expect the owners of older apartment blocks to restore them, and I want to remind the Minister and the House that most older low income apartment accommodation is in the hands of private corporations, families, or private individuals. The Member for Wolseley has dealt extensively with the possibility that lawyers are in all of these places. There are a lot of other people besides lawyers who invest in some real estate, Mr. Speaker, but when this older construction deteriorates to the point where it's condemned by the city and is torn down because the landlords find that the costs of restoration, maintenance, are excessive, then those spaces have eventually to be replaced and they are replaced, the new low income construction is at taxpayers' expense. It's government construction and it's at taxpayers' expense. I feel for that reason we should be looking at preservation of older housing, particularly older apartment blocks and in the inner city, Mr. Speaker. I would urge the Minister to take another look at that and perhaps to look at the possibility of placing a freeze on this increased assessment in the manner that I have suggested.

Something else that's not referred to in the amendment, Mr. Speaker, is the condominium portion of the bill and if this is allowed to go through there is going to be a great hardship done to those people who are living in apartment blocks which the owners are attempting to convert to condominium. We have many instances in Fort Rouge, and it's spreading throughout the city, Mr. Speaker, I believe.

There was a protection, there was a bill that was introduced, an amendment to the Act that was introduced by my predecessor in this seat, and it was passed then by the House, requiring consent of 50 percent of the tenants with written leases in an apartment block where the owner wished to register it as a condominium, and in fact, that requirement pertained until the . . . the registration could not take place until the 50 percent of consents was obtained. Even that is being taken away from the tenants. And that is a very serious matter, Mr. Speaker. Even tenants with written leases, as I and my advisers read this bill, will have no protection. Even a written lease will not give the tenants protection against having their unit converted and sold over their heads. And that's a very serious withdrawal of protection and I'm sure when this gets

to Law Amendments, or whatever committee it's referred to, Mr. Speaker, that there will be many, many tenants coming out who are living in this constant fear of having their apartment converted to condominium.

I have people in my constituency who have been forced to move three and four times over the past three or four years because the building is changing to condominium and they do not have the capital money to invest in the purchase of a condominium apartment, Mr. Speaker. They have the income from their money or from a pension and other income which allows them to pay a fairly good rent for adequate accommodation, but they do not have the capital to invest in purchase of an apartment, or they choose not to do so. They choose not to do so because in making provision for their old age, they were taking into consideration the kind of life they would like to live during their senior years. Some of them want to live off the proceeds of selling the family home, to go away for a winter holiday, and surely anyone who has worked and lived in this harsh climate that we have in Winnipeg winters is entitled to make that sort of choice and to find alternative accommodation in their senior years, Mr. Speaker.

I do hope — first of all, I do hope that the Minister decides to withdraw and change this bill extensively before it goes to committee, because it's just going to be insane at committee, Mr. Speaker. This is going to put The Schools Act last year to shame for the number of delegations, I would suggest. So I urgently request the Minister to have another look at this bill and to take into consideration the amendment and the remarks that have been made on both sides of this House, Mr. Speaker, because the disagreement from the inner city representatives in his own party is just as telling as the disagreement from this side of the House, and I would think surely the government must listen to that criticism from their own benches and perhaps withdraw the bill and come back with something that does provide for protection for the tenants, both through The Condominium Act and through The Rentalsman's Act and the Rent Stabilization Board.

I also think that the withdrawal of protection from people who belong to tenants' association is regrettable. There are a lot of people who form a tenants' association just for purposes of maintenance or for recreation or for governing the common room that exists in some apartment blocks, and surely these people should not have this association used as a means to discriminate against them.

So with those remarks, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude what I have to say at this point, but I really do hope that the Minister is having another look at it and will decide to make changes before it gets to the Committee stage, for all our sakes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Are you ready for the question? The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, I understood it was in the name of the Honourable Attorney-General.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

MR. JORGENSEN: That's right, Mr. Speaker. I indicated at the time that I was going to get in touch with the Attorney-General to find out if he was agreeable to have his name removed. I now have such a communication from him and he has indicated that he would like to have his name removed as holding this bill. So if somebody else wanted to take the adjournment, that's fine.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for The Pas.

MR. McBRYDE: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Kildonan, that debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

**BILL NO. 96
THE ELECTIONS FINANCES ACT**

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, I adjourned this bill on behalf of the Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. DOERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is, I think, one of the most important pieces of legislation brought by the government during this session. It's one of the two election bills and it's the bill that deals with election financing. Although there may be some useful suggestions in the bill and perhaps the intent was in fact good, I am reminded of the old saying that the road to hell is paved with good intentions, and there certainly are a number of suggestions and proposals in this bill, Mr. Speaker, that should not go forward. In fact, I think it is true to say that the entire bill should be withdrawn.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of points I would like to deal with, and time will not be sufficient to deal exhaustively with the bill, but I would like to start first of all with the suggestion that there be an electoral commission. Apparently this was inspired by some legislation in other provinces, and as a result of some of the problems encountered in this particular province, one of the particular problems being that the Attorney-General finds it difficult, as a person who wears two hats, to engage in prosecutions because of the fact that he is a member of a political party and because of the fact that he is the Attorney-General. When another political party is being considered for prosecution, then of course, it puts that person in a dilemma.

And of course, we saw the last time when we had our by-elections in October, that the Attorney-General got himself into a terrible situation of his own creation, in which he had the audacity to call a press conference to admonish the New Democratic candidate in Rossmere constituency for some election advertising. At that time he was wearing three hats. He was a member of his riding and a Progressive Conservative; he was a member of the Executive Council as the Attorney-General of Manitoba, and he was also the campaign chairman of the Conservative Party for the by-elections, and

he at that time made himself highly vulnerable to the criticism that he suggested that he was going to go after the now MLA for Rossmere.

Instead of leaving sleeping dogs lie, he went one step farther and made matters worse by putting that into legislation and that is in the other bill, and that has now been withdrawn, and I intend to deal with that in greater depth when we come to the other bill. I simply refer to it now in the sense that the Attorney-General has suggested that he is prepared to give up his powers of prosecution to a commission and I think it is clear, Mr. Speaker, that the powers of prosecution, because of the vulnerability of the Attorney-General to political criticism and the great sensitivity of his position when he is confronted with prosecuting a member of an opposition party, or perhaps the question of whether or not to proceed against a colleague is also equally sensitive. So those powers probably should be given up.

But it is my contention, Mr. Speaker, that rather than a commission, it would probably be best to bolster the position of the chief electoral officer and transfer the powers there and have the chief electoral officer as the person who would be responsible for administering elections in terms of finances in particular.

I understand that there have been some problems with electoral commissions in other provinces, Ontario in particular, and I do not like the suggestion made that there should be a commission which would include, among others, a chief electoral officer, a person appointed by Cabinet to chair that committee. That person obviously would have to be acceptable to the members of the opposition and would probably be better selected by a legislative committee if that section were proceeded with, and then two members from each political party. It strikes me that when sensitive issues arose on that commission, there could be quite a brouhaha in terms of arguments that would go back and forth.

So I say, Mr. Speaker, that a strengthened chief electoral officer could in fact administer the Act, and I do not believe it is necessary to go to a commission.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most sensitive parts of this legislation that I think is looked upon with considerable dismay by the New Democratic opposition is the section dealing with contributions and donations, and I refer in particular to the suggestion made that certain kinds of contributions and certain kinds of transfers of donations will not be allowed. I think that there are serious flaws in this particular area, and I think there are also considerable loopholes in this particular area. It appears, and I would like to have some assurance on this point, but it appears that trust funds and slush funds will be ruled out in the sense of any funds coming from a trust fund, and we know that this has been a favorite technique of certain political parties in terms of circumventing if not the formal legislation, the intent of legislation in terms of disclosure, and I say that if it's going to result, and I'm trying not to refer to a specific section of the bill, Mr. Speaker, but if it's going to result in full disclosure of trust funds, then I think that is clearly a step forward, and I assume that that means any kind of blind trust trust fund, slush fund, or whatever, dummy corporations,

anything designed to circumvent the value of full disclosure.

So I say in that particular regard, we know in Manitoba we have had information about the Premier's 3,000 a month trust fund, and I cannot accept the notion that because an individual may not, or does not know the source of that funding, that that somehow or other is a protection. Somebody knows, Mr. Speaker, where the money came from. Somebody knows who provided the funding and who therefore might be given special consideration, and if the No. 1 man in the organization doesn't know, and somebody further on down the line knows, it is very easy, I think, to respond in terms of acquiescing, it is also very tempting to give special privileges or consideration to such donors.

So we know about the Manitoba situation, we know about the fund for the Premier, I don't know if it still exists, I don't know if it is something that he can access later on. The Member for Gladstone is going to explain it later? — He's getting it now. Well then he was supposed to be the Senator and I regret that he was not promoted to the Red Chamber in Ottawa. He would have been a fine Senator; the members of the opposition would have given him a rousing sendoff, and the Member for Fort Rouge would have joined in the chorus of cheers.

MRS. WESTBURY: I would have put you on the train.

MR. DOERN: Escorted you to the train. Now that would have been a fine gesture. Mr. Speaker, we also know that the Prime Minister of Canada, I think, showed some lack of discretion in accepting a swimming pool and took a dive as a result. He, I think, should have shown more discretion in terms of accepting a gift from anonymous donors. I say again, if he didn't know who the donors were, somebody in his Cabinet sure knew and somebody therefore might have held some brief on behalf of somebody as a result of that.

Mr. Speaker, there is some very peculiar limitations on accepting contributions. You cannot, according to this legislation, accept a donation from any individual ordinarily resident outside of Manitoba. That is unbelievable. That means if somebody just left the province a few days before an election was called, they would not be allowed to send a contribution. If your son or daughter, or mother or father, uncle or aunt, here we go again, cousin, wanted to make a donation to your personal campaign or were lifetime members of the Party and had been transferred to another province, they would be barred from making a contribution. Surely, Mr. Speaker, that is incredible, that we don't want limitations of that kind.

You know, that certainly must have something to do with freedom. It certainly must have something to do with civil liberties and inter-provincial trade, or whatever. The question really is, should the government tell people how to conduct their political activity, whether those people are residents of Manitoba or whether they are not? Are there any limitations on that particular question? Maybe the solution is simply what is asked for within, namely, full disclosure of out-of-province contributions by

knowing whether they were corporate or individual. This would probably be a better safeguard than to say that these are not, in fact, allowed.

I also note, with some concern, that this legislation is going to allow corporate donations. Now that is a tricky area, that is a tricky area, but I think we have always felt historically that it is probably better that corporations not be allowed to make contributions under certain conditions, because of the fact that where the money comes directly from a corporation, somebody in the corporation might expect business or consideration as a result. That has been the principle and I think we should violate that with great care, if ever at all.

There is such a loophole in Bill 96 that you could drive a truck through it. The apparent section says that as long as — and I am using my own words here — as long as a corporation does some part of its business within a province, you can then accept a donation from it. If it doesn't do any business in Manitoba, you can't accept a penny, but if it does a penny's worth of business in Manitoba, you can accept as much money as they will give you. There is no limit, give you a million bucks. So as long as somebody from corporation buys one penny's worth of goods, whether it is a jelly bean from the lady outside the Chamber who is selling healthy jelly beans for unhealthy MLAs, or whether it is a pencil that some billion-dollar corporation in Toronto specifically buys and gets a receipt for in the event of a challenge, then that corporation is free, I would say, according to how I would understand it, they are doing business in Manitoba, they are buying something or selling something worth a penny or more and therefore they are qualified to make an unrestricted amount of contributions to political parties. Surely, that is ridiculous, Mr. Speaker. I am sure that that provision must go by the boards.

Then there are a couple of interesting ones in terms of our relationship with our senior political parties at the federal level. According to this legislation we are going to abolish intra-party contributions. If my political party in Manitoba wanted to make a donation to our federal counterparts in the next federal election, we would be limited to a total contribution of 1,400, and so would the Liberals, and so would the Conservatives. They would not be able to give more than a hundred dollars per federal candidate during a federal election. Now that has to be a very high restriction. —(Interjection)— Well, I am getting some unparliamentary terms from my colleagues here and they certainly agree that this is an outrageous proposal.

Similarly, if our big brothers and sisters in Ottawa want to make donations to us, to any party in Manitoba during a federal election, they can only give up to 5,700.00. Now I don't know how much money the other parties get during election time. I know that a few years ago, three or four years ago, the Conservative Party of Manitoba had all of its money, at least that is what they said, I mean I don't believe this, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe it, but they better believe it because that is exactly what they said. They said, I guess, in the 1973 election that, "In the last provincial election" — I am quoting from a source here in 1976. I have to admit it is my own letter to the Free Press, so therefore I will quote . . .

it is a reliable source —(Interjection)— usually reliable? No always reliable source, Mr. Speaker. You know, somebody there has a terrific laugh, if I could find out who that was, I will get them a job. We'll put them into one of the shows, they can get in the front row and laugh, I think they have a good voice.

Mr. Speaker, but it is no laughing matter, no laughing matter, that the Conservative Party of Manitoba said that they got 100 percent of their contributions in the 1973 general election from the Conservative Party of Canada. I don't believe that. I don't believe it at all. I think that that was a whopper, a whopper. —(Interjection)— Well, they were laundering the money. Well, I agree. The backbench tells me that the money was laundered through the federal party and that undoubtedly is, in fact, true.

Now the Liberal Party of Manitoba in 1973, when they revealed their sources in the paper at the time, they only had one donor too, a trust fund; some lawyer had a trust fund somewhere and all the money came out of that trust fund. So there was clearly a technique used by the old line political parties to circumvent full disclosure.

A MEMBER: Where did you get it?

MR. DOERN: Where did we get it? We got it from the little people and we got it from individual donations in particular, to help us. Taxidivers, farmers, teachers, widows, pensioners, you name it, we got it from a variety of sources — and disillusioned and disgruntled Conservatives and Liberals, not to forget them. —(Interjection)— Mr. Anonymous always gives money to every campaign.

Mr. Speaker, I say that these provisions limiting contributions, I think, have to be either completely eliminated and some of them have to be reconsidered and rewritten, but as they now stand I think they are untenable.

Mr. Speaker, another point that I wanted to mention is a very harsh penalty, and we have seen already that the government withdrew a provision on the instigation of the Member for Inkster concerning a shocking provision in the other Bill, about a truth squad. I want to point out a similar shocking provision in this particular Bill. We are going from one extreme to the other. To remedy a problem the Attorney-General seems to take an extreme opposite position. He seems to have the inability to move in degrees, he seems to go 180 degrees when he shifts, and I want to point out — well, one of my colleagues says he wouldn't know the truth if he fell over it or if it punched him in the mouth. But at any rate, Mr. Speaker, if a person doesn't file after an election — and this is a widely abused problem, a widely abused requirement, and we saw in the last election, the Attorney-General gave examples of dozens of people who didn't file properly or never filed, and there was no action taken against them, okay — well, it's a serious thing, I agree, it's a serious thing, but what are you going to do about it? So here's what the Attorney-General comes up with. His remedy . . . Well, my colleague from Seven Oaks said, shoot him; well, he is close, he is close. How about permanently barring from any further election activity that person as a candidate, that's pretty serious, and that is in the Bill; or how about if you win the election and

take your seat in the Assembly, you will lose your seat, you are barred from sitting in the Assembly?

Surely, Mr. Speaker, whereas right now if a person doesn't file within the prescribed limits, there is no action taken, we are now going to be barring people from sitting as MLAs, we are going to bar them forever in any subsequent election as a candidate, surely, that is too harsh a penalty. And we just removed that, my colleague from Seven Oaks says, from The Winnipeg Act. So if we are going to go from one case where there is no action taken to this other extreme, I think there must be something in between. I don't know if it is a fine, I don't know what it should be. I know for sure —(Interjection)— He can come here but can't talk? Okay. You tape his mouth? Or he could just second motions for the Member for Fort Rouge, something like that. So, Mr. Speaker, I say that that provision has to go, that provision has to be amended, if it is going to be there at all.

Mr. Speaker, we appear to make a step forward in this Bill in regard to advertising limitations. This I put in the general category of limiting expenditures in an election. What does the Attorney-General do? He says, well we have to watch the area where we have expenditures on radio, television and in the press so, as a result, we will limit advertising there because it's expensive and there's inflation and so on. Then he says on the other hand, I'm going to limit it there; on the other hand, he says, but in other areas you can spend anything that you want. Now we can go from limitations of a couple of hundred thousand dollars, the sky is the limit and you can spend all the money you want on, I suppose parties, I suppose hiring workers, —(Interjection)— I don't know if billboards are listed but if not —(Interjection)— They are under advertising. —(Interjection)— I see there are certain allowances, but in effect, Mr. Speaker, I say that campaigns are now going to skyrocket in terms of the amounts of money.

Although the Attorney-General gives an impression of limiting election expenses, in fact, what he is doing is removing them and I think this is a step backwards, and I think that we need, among other things, year round monitoring on political parties, not just during the election time. The old trick is you do your stuff before the election. You get all of your expenditures out of the way before, or maybe you get your bills later or something and they bill you for something later on, but surely this is something that is desirable and long overdue. There should be some accounting on an annual basis, because in a four-year period a lot of money can be spent to promote a political party that falls outside of the election period.

Mr. Speaker, my final point which is one that I am keenly interested in is the fact that, although there is now sort of a partial ceiling, there is not still a floor. We are going to make a parallel move to the federal political parties and I say that if they have this, we may as well have it, that is deductability for donations to a provincial party. I think the temptation of provincial parties was in fact to launder their money through their federal parties. So if that was the technique, send the money to Ottawa and then get it back, we may as well have it here, and it will cost.

I have said this before; I have said this before. Mr. Speaker, I don't have any problems in saying if you are going to have it federally to avoid that abuse you may as well have that provincially, but I say that that is not enough. I believe that ultimately what we need is some direct political funding. The danger always is, if we are going to have unlimited contributions from corporations now; if we are going to have deductions for donations up to 1,000 or so, where you get a 500 tax credit, it means in effect that people with money can make donations and will have an impact and will have some influence on the political parties that receive that money. I don't know if the average MLA can withstand the notion that he has been given 1,000 from this person, a 1,000 from that person, and so on and so on, and that such and such a construction company, or that such and such a brewery, or that such and such a large corporation gave a couple of hundred thousand dollars; if he could just say, oh well, you know, that was very good of you, I thank you very much, but it's not going to have any influence on our decisions. Even though this corporation gave no money and even though this corporation gave 100,000, it's not going to influence our decision making, no way.

If you were a strong person, or a person of high principle, a person of great objectivity, I think you could withstand that, Mr. Speaker, but MLAs are only human and some MLAs I think would, in their own minds, be influenced —(Interjection)— some are human. Well I have to say that all are human, although I do have trouble with one or two members on the opposite side. I won't name them, I'll just think them, I'll just look at them.

Mr. Speaker, I don't include in that group my friend from Rock Lake. I've worked with him for 14 years and he's big on the mound as we used to say in baseball, big on the mound.

Mr. Speaker, the other point, as I said, that I want to make is that there must come a time in Manitoba, like in other provinces or in Ottawa, where there is, in fact, some direct funding. And I want to outline a formula which I propose as to the kind of practice that should be introduced. I'm not saying that the public purse should fully fund political parties. I believe there is a place for individual donations from 1.00 up. I believe it is valuable that little people are able to give 1.00, 5.00, 10.00 or 20.00. It's probably useful too that some people can give 100 or 1,000, but I think that the government representing all the people should also have some input to eliminate and to dilute the effect of individual donations, especially larger donations.

Mr. Speaker, at present I cite the example of Europe where there is partial public financing in effect in such countries as West Germany and Sweden, but in Canada the federal government provides some reimbursement and many candidates, at the federal level, are now able to fight, for the first time, first class or second class campaigns whereas before they were not even in the running. They were really prohibited from engaging in useful political campaigns because they were hamstrung at the financial level.

I look at my friend from Emerson and I think to myself, okay, he's a candidate, I'm a candidate; I may run against him in the next election, I haven't decided yet, but, Mr. Speaker, the best man or the

best women should always win. It should not be a case of the person with the most money wins. We want people to get elected on the basis of their ability. Some get elected on the basis of their looks. Some get elected on the basis of their name, but presumably we want people to get elected on the basis of their ability, as to how they can think, how they can speak, what they have done for their riding, what they indicate they can do in the future. That's what you want, you don't want some guy with a million bucks swamping his opponent with expensive literature or having paid workers going door to door and having huge barbecues and giving all kinds of presents to people. We don't want that, those old barbecues that they always have in south Winnipeg during federal elections. —(Interjection)— Pardon? Well I don't know what they do down there. I am interested in that milk-off as to how the Member for Lakeside does in that particular competition.

Mr. Speaker, right now in Canada, Nova Scotia has some reimbursement and some public funding; Quebec does and Saskatchewan does, and Ontario, at least a few years ago, had a 2 per taxpayer checkoff. When you put in your income tax you checked off who you wanted to get a couple of dollars and that provided a substantial sum of money.

Mr. Speaker, could I ask how much time I have left?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has 6 minutes.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Speaker, I suggest that what we should do in Manitoba is to have a program whereby you have a complete ceiling. We have a ceiling now; now the government is taking that ceiling off, it's having a partial ceiling on advertising; it's removing the rest. So I say, in effect there is no ceiling, and I say that there should be a ceiling to limit the adverse affects of rich candidates and wealthy parties.

Secondly, I believe that there should be a floor, namely that each candidate from a duly recognized political party, duly nominated etc., should have approximately one half of that maximum provided by the public purse. Now that will cost several hundred thousand dollars more than what we are doing now, but I say that it will eliminate unfair advantage and it will eliminate undue influence. Those most be concerns. We must be concerned about the kind of scandals that we witness in the United States where you have big contributions and you have kickbacks and you have all sorts of scandals in regard to special consideration being given because of political contributions. We don't want that and we want to attempt to eliminate that.

I say, Mr. Speaker, the solution is to set a limit for political parties, and to be more precise, in each riding based on the individual voter. So many thousand dollars is the maximum; whether it's 5,000 or 10,000, whatever the amount is, and then one half of that amount should be provided from the public purse. That still means that political parties and candidates have to go out and solicit donations and have all the fund raising kinds of activities that we have; socials and dances and raffles and all kinds of techniques to try to raise the remainder —

(Interjection)— Well beer and beans is not a very good combination.

Mr. Speaker, I simply conclude my remarks here by saying, to wrap up, that the commission — and there will be more speakers from the New Democratic Party which will speak in greater depth on particular sections of the bill — but I simply say, at the beginning, that the commission is not necessary; that the Chief Electoral Officer should be the highest officer responsible for the administration of elections and that person should have transferred to them the Attorney-General's powers of prosecution.

I say that, in terms of the section dealing with contributions and donations, we must have assurances from the government that all trust funds and slush funds and techniques used to circumvent disclosure and to raise funding, those all have to be registered and completely checked. We say that, in terms of contributions, these limitations that are contained in the bill will not be useful and will not be productive. Limiting people outside of Manitoba doesn't seem to be useful. Saying that a corporation, as long it does any part of its business in Manitoba, one penny plus, they can then make an unlimited contribution, that has to be bad; and then limiting parties and people from making donations, that has to be bad; and saying to a provincial party you can't give money to your federal counterpart and saying to a federal party you cannot transfer any money or donate any money here, that can't be a good provision especially since, as I say, my honourable friends in 1973 got all of their money from their big brother in Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, the provisions about not filing are too harsh. Today anybody cannot file and there is no problem. This has been going on for decades in Manitoba. Now all of a sudden if you don't file you're going to be blocked from sitting in the Assembly or you're going to be blocked from being a candidate. Imagine if 10 years ago you didn't file and you want to stand for election, what are you going to do now, make up a financial statement? How are we going to check on some of these matters? We are going to, I think, get ourselves into a problem.

I say that there is a need for monitoring on a year-round basis, not just during the election period, because it's all too easy to spend before that election period, to have all kinds of pamphlets and all kinds of literature and all kinds of billboards. We've seen it; we all remember instances where candidates did that kind of thing. And in the final points, Mr. Speaker, that whereas it may be good to limit advertising, it's not good to limit advertising and then not limit all the other expenditures that can be made, paid organizers, parties, and all sorts of paraphernalia and office space and —(Interjection)— parties at the Royal Albert, I don't know, any place that you want, Mr. Speaker, all kinds of expenses that could be ten times as great as the advertising limitations. I think we have to look at that.

In conclusion, my final point is, until we have direct funding, I think that we are missing the boat when it comes to election . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The honourable member's time is up.

The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MRS. WESTBURY: Mr. Speaker, I am ready to speak on this but I hate to go with four minutes left. Is it your will to call it 5:30?

Otherwise, I'll move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Inkster, that the debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, in the remaining two minutes that are left, I believe the Member for Inkster would like to deal with Bill 13.

BILL NO. 13

AN ACT TO AMEND THE DEFAMATION ACT

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I did adjourn this debate on second reading because I wanted to reaffirm my misgivings about the newspapers having less of a responsibility vis-a-vis defamation concerning Letters to the Editor.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that the citizen of whatever status, whether it be politician, doctor, lawyer, or housewife, person holding any position whatsoever, is entitled to know that they cannot be defamed without the ordinary laws of defamation applying; that Letters to the Editor constitute a different category, Mr. Speaker, because the person making the statement is not merely being able to disseminate it to a small number of people, but is able through the agency of the newspaper to disseminate it to many people; that the ordinary concerns that a newspaper has with regard to defamation may not apply with regard to a Letter to the Editor and the responsibility that they may exercise with regard to their own comments, they might not exercise with regard to a Letter to the Editor.

I, Mr. Speaker, have no intention whatsoever of trying to control an opinion of a person sending a letter to the editor. What I am concerned about is that the letter to the editor not be the means by which the newspaper gets into print, in wide circulation, something which they normally would not do on their own, and make a vehicle for a person who may not have the same accountability as a newspaper to go ahead and do that.

The Attorney-General has assured the House that that would not apply to a misstatement of fact. We have already gone through the difficulties of determining the difference between misstatements of fact and misstatements of opinion and statements of mixed fact and mixed opinion which I am not going to reiterate. He also, Mr. Speaker, said that the — and the Act says — that the newspaper doesn't have to determine whether the person sending the letter did or did not have that opinion. I would think, Mr. Speaker, that they would not even have to determine whether such a person exists, and they could be publishing fictitious opinions which would be defamatory and which would have applied to them this fair comment, whether or not a person such as

the one who sent the letter existed, whether in fact he held the opinion, and whether the opinion is not his opinion vis-a-vis a question of fact which would subsequently be proved to be wrong.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate for the record that the Attorney-General has not convinced me that this law will provide sufficient protection. I am aware that the Supreme Court of Canada has found a case which some people have had misgivings about. I am not sure that the way of correcting that case is by passing this bill on third reading.

QUESTION put, MOTION carried.

COMMITTEE CHANGES

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to make one change on the Privileges and Elections Committee, the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks in place of the Honourable Member for Rossmere. (Agreed)

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Gladstone.

MR. FERGUSON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to move that Mr. Brown for Mr. Galbraith; Mr. Kovnats for Mr. Steen on Privileges and Elections; Mr. Wilson for Mr. McGregor; and Mr. Downey for Mr. Anderson; Mr. Minaker for Mr. Kovnats on Law Amendments. (Agreed)

MR. SPEAKER: The hour being 5:30, the House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10:00 tomorrow morning (Friday), but meets in two committees this evening.