

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, February 9, 1990.

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

BILL NO. 98—THE MANITOBA DATA SERVICES DISPOSITION AND CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS ACT

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance) introduced (by leave) Bill No. 98, The Manitoba Data Services Disposition and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur l'aliénation de la Commission des services d'informatique du Manitoba et modifications corrélatives. (Recommended by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.)

Mr. Speaker, I also table his message.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Is it agreed? There is no agreement? There is no leave?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for Thompson, on a point of order.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Second Opposition House Leader): If it might be of assistance, we will allow this Bill to go to first reading, but our frustration is that this Government, which talks about stalling the Session of the Legislature, makes accusations—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member for Thompson will take his chair now, please.

Is there leave to introduce Bill No. 98? Leave? Agreed.

* (1005)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Transfer Payments Federal Budget

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). Yesterday, Michael Wilson, the federal Finance Minister, introduced the facts that all Canadians would be presented with a new budget on the 20th of February. Would our Finance Minister tell this House what representations he has made to his federal counterparts with respect to the proposed and often talked-about cuts to transfer payments for health and post-secondary education?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, let me indicate right from the offset, this Government continues to be very concerned as to the potential reductions in growth that may be forthcoming with respect to federal transfer payments to this province. We share that concern with indeed other Ministers of Finance. At least I share that concern with other Ministers of Finance across Canada. The last time that we met with the federal Minister of Finance, Mr. Wilson, collectively and co-operatively, we in a sense implored upon him that he not significantly reduce, or reduce at all for that matter, transfer payments. I was in conversation with Mr. Wilson as recently as last week and again I reiterated that statement.

Documentation Request

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, what we are looking for is some concrete projections on the part of this Government as to what would happen to our economy should these transfers take place. Will the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) table in this House documentation which he has presented to the federal Government with respect to the effect on Manitoba of cuts to transfer payments?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the documentation is very basic. Last year we received an EPF funding, roughly \$430 million or \$440 million within that one area alone. I can indicate to the Leader of the Opposition that although there is forecast a slight rate of increase within that area, that increase is far below the rate of inflation, indeed far below the commitment that this Government has made in support, particularly of those two areas, of social need. Let me indicate with respect to equalization, in that area too there is great concern that the provinces are hitting now the equalization cap and that potentially there could be a major slowdown in the increase in those transfers. We have pointed that out in number form collectively amongst all provinces. At this point, the Minister of Finance has indicated that we will be apprised of his decision, unilateral as it might be, with respect to federal transfers in this area, the same time as all Canadians when he brings down his budget.

ERDA Negotiations Signing Date

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have grave concerns that we do not seem to be providing to the federal Government the kind of negative impact information that is essential if they are to make a decision with respect to this province in mind.

I have a new question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst). Over a month ago this Minister indicated, in the public media, that they were down to the short strokes with regard to ERDAs, thereby

implying that it was simply a matter of days before agreement would be reached. This week we were informed by Charlie Mayer that no agreements had been reached with the four western provinces for WDF grants, which now also include the ERDA monies. Can the Minister tell us when these agreements will be signed, or will they all be lost in the federal budget of February 20?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, when I commented with regard to those agreements between the federal and provincial Governments, I said within two or three weeks was my anticipation time, not days.

As well, I cannot comment on what Michael Wilson might do or the federal Government might do at this point. We have come to a conclusion with respect to what we think should be done. We have brought that to the federal Government negotiators. We have a general agreement between the negotiators and ourselves on that amount of money and which way it should be spent. We are simply waiting now for the federal Government to approve it.

Western Diversification Fund Manitoba Totals

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): The federal Tory senior Minister in this province, Jake Epp, promised the WDF monies would be divided equally among the provinces. As of January 12, 1990, the latest figures show British Columbia has received over 32 percent of the monies, followed by Alberta with 30 percent of the monies.

Can this Minister tell this House what explanation he has been given for why Manitoba, once again, is getting the short shrift from their federal Tories?

* (1010)

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, the use of the Western Diversification Fund is for legitimate projects that take place to diversify Canada's economy. If you remove two obvious changes from that, or at least one obvious change from that procedure in the case of British Columbia, the South Moresby project, then the numbers change significantly.

At the same time we have other work in progress at the moment for which Western Diversification funding has been applied for, and we will continue to work with the Western Diversification Fund to make sure Manitoba industry and Manitoba businesses get the kind of assistance from the federal Government they deserve.

Bill C-31—Senate Committee Manitoba Representation

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Whether it is the Finance Minister (Mr. Manness) or whether it is the Minister of Trade and Industry (Mr. Ernst), we get the same sad song. Neither of them are prepared to make forceful representations on behalf of Manitoba.

We have a further example of where they are unable or unwilling to stand up to federal Governments and changes that affect Manitobans. This Government was asked to make a representation before the Senate Committee dealing with the unemployment insurance changes, Bill C-31. Why have they refused to appear?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, recently we have had several members from my department in Ottawa and in Toronto, as a matter of fact, making representation on behalf of this province that we are concerned with regard to the unemployment insurance situation and the training dollars that are supposed to be forthcoming as a result of changes to that.

As the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) knows, there have been no announcements made with regard to the changes that are forthcoming. We are waiting for that very eagerly, Mr. Speaker. We have made representation to our federal counterparts. I can indicate to you as well, we have met with representatives right across the country, with provincial representatives, and indeed there was a paper published with regard to our position, with regard to training needs and with regard to unemployment insurance, that I am sure the Member of the Liberal Party is aware of. Indeed, we have not been sitting doing nothing, but it is a matter of consultation, a matter of discussing with our federal counterparts what indeed our position is going to be.

Bill C-31—Senate Committee Manitoba Representation

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, let me table this letter. It is a letter to the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of this province from the Senate Committee on Bill C-31 asking this Government to make representations. They received no reply to the letter. When that letter was followed with a phone call, the answer was, we do not want to appear, this despite the fact that New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, P.E.I. and Newfoundland Governments all indicated they wanted to appear.

Why is this Premier, yet once again, unwilling to speak up for Manitobans?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I have an article here from the May 3, 1989, edition of the Winnipeg Free Press entitled "Job Training Funds Sought, Province Wants Compensation For Lost UI Benefits." It details some major efforts on the part of the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) back almost a year ago with respect to these changes, meetings with her federal counterparts, presentations being put forward with respect to this particular issue.

That matter has been well documented; that issue has been raised and discussed between federal and provincial Ministers on numerous occasions. Our position was put forward publicly at a news conference with respect to last year's federal budget. I outlined the amount of money at stake, the changes there. At First Ministers' Conferences you will find comments and communiqués with respect to losses with respect

to Manitoba's changes in the UIC. This is a matter that has been ongoing for a year. It is not a matter, Mr. Speaker, that is going to change as a result of Senate hearings.

Cardiac Care U.S. Treatment

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

Mr. Speaker, there is a disturbing trend now in Canada. We are seeing it in British Columbia with the Social Credit Government moving heart patients to the United States. We are seeing it now in Ontario with the Liberal Peterson Government arranging heart surgery through Windsor to Detroit. Yesterday we learned that there are discussions going on with the committee looking at heart surgery in Manitoba with the Minneapolis Heart Institute for possible privatization of some of the heart surgery in Manitoba.

I believe a made-in-Manitoba solution is the way for us to go under our health care system. I would ask the Premier to categorically and clearly outline that this is not an option for the Manitoba health care system, that we believe in a made-in-Manitoba solution to our health care and heart surgery challenges.

* (1015)

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend's preamble is erroneous in a couple of very key areas. First of all, my honourable friend indicates that discussions are going on with the Cardiac Care Committee that I established some several months ago with the U.S. health care for-profit sector. That is not accurate.

The genesis of my honourable friend's question is a November 6, approximately, letter to heart surgeons in Manitoba asking them to send patients down to a for-profit centre in Minneapolis. Those physicians in Minneapolis, I understand, are recent Canadian graduates and have established their practices, after receiving their training in Canada, in the United States.

We are creating a made-in-Manitoba solution. We do not have to take the measures as Ontario and British Columbia have done. Emergency heart surgery is done because of increased budget allocation of time in the Province of Manitoba. We do not need, at this time, to consider the use of for-profit medicine in the United States.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I accept the comments of the Minister in terms of the process and where it is at.

The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) says we do not accept at this time that this is a viable option. Can I please get a definitive statement from the Premier (Mr. Filmon) that this is not an option at all in terms of the policy of our health care system? I am asking the Leader of the Government to clearly say that this is not an option, we are looking at a made-in-Manitoba solution to the waiting lists of heart surgery and that is consistent with a universal medicare program in Manitoba, not the way that British Columbia and Ontario have gone.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what we are crafting in Manitoba. Indeed, where procedures such as heart transplantation are not undertaken in the Province of Manitoba, we have Canadian arrangements whereby that procedure is fully funded and undertaken in London.

We used to have the process of bone marrow transplant undertaken most of the time in Canadian institutions, sometimes in U.S. institutions, where the service was available. It is the decision of this Government to make that part of Manitoba's health care service delivery, and we are doing it with resourcing, with policy planning and direction for the future care of quality and delivery of quality medicine in the Province of Manitoba.

ERDA Negotiations Northern Education

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): I have a further question to the Premier (Mr. Filmon). Mr. Speaker, we too are concerned about the health care cutbacks potentially in the federal budget. We outlined the \$100 million in the last budget over five years from Michael Wilson's budget. We are also very concerned about some very direct and immediate local problems in our health care system.

The Thompson General Hospital is suffering an exodus of nurses. Many of those nurses were trained at the Keewatin Community College as part of an ERDA program, a northern development agreement program. We now understand that in spite of the absolute critical shortage of nurses, which has resulted in the closing down of hospital beds in Thompson, this Economic and Regional Development Agreement is not going to be renewed with the provincial Government and the federal Government. Can the First Minister confirm that? What action is his Government taking?

* (1020)

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern and Native Affairs): Mr. Speaker, let me make reference to the fact—and the Leader of the third Party has made reference to Thompson. I just want to put on the record the record of this Government and its activities in Thompson as it relates to health care. The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) has introduced the kidney dialysis equipment and opportunity for all Northerners centering in Thompson, an excellent record for this province. The negotiations and discussions are going on with the federal Government as it relates to northern development, and education and training are part of those discussions.

Mr. Doer: My question is to the Premier (Mr. Filmon), in charge of federal-provincial agreements and relations. Can the First Minister inform this House of the status of those negotiations? We have been informed that agreement will not be renewed and that will put in jeopardy the Northern Nursing Program in Keewatin Community College, one of the many agreements that have either been downsized or cut back by the federal Government in an insidious way in this province.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party may want to make fun of northern Manitoba and the health care, but we do not. We take our responsibilities very seriously.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to further add that our record is very clear as it comes to nurses' training as it refers to the northern community. We just have implemented some short months ago an agreement with Oscar Lathlin and the tribal council of that area, a major health nurse training program which was not able to be accomplished for many years under the previous administration.

Training is an important part for northern Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue to work on behalf of those individuals for training of those individuals.

Thompson General Hospital Intensive Care Services

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) was notified nine months ago about the pending disaster at Thompson Hospital. That is due to the shortage of ICU staff. That is leaving 42,000 Northerners without critical care. That is unacceptable.

Can the Minister of Health tell us today why he has failed again to fulfill his obligation as a Minister of Health to provide the intensive care for the northern residents of Manitoba?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I fully accept that my honourable friend, the Liberal Health Critic, should he ever occupy the position of Minister of Health, will be able to singlehandedly hire all of the nurses that are needed in Thompson, will be able to singlehandedly create all of the solutions to every problem in health care and do it instantly and overnight by the waving of the magic Liberal wand.

Mr. Speaker, before my honourable friend jumps to the conclusion that the Minister of Health, should he ever occupy the office, is responsible for hiring nurses in Thompson General Hospital, I simply tell him that is the responsibility of the administration.

Second, Mr. Speaker, the salaries that nurses have currently availed to them through the system are those salaries as negotiated two years ago, prior to our becoming Government. Those are the salaries, plus some incentive bonuses, which Thompson General Hospital can offer for the recruitment and retention of nurses in Thompson.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Health tell us that the northern patient who requires immediate intensive care can survive a four-hour trip to Winnipeg?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, we have had a number of discussions over the past several months with the management of the Thompson General Hospital. The management of the Thompson General Hospital has made arrangements for intensive care patients, and to share with my honourable friend some of the most recent statistics available, there are three intensive care unit beds in the Thompson General Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, those have been occupied over the past ten months at the rate of 20 percent. The occupancy rate is very low in comparison to other areas of the hospital. What the contingency plan has been in the interim period of time where recruitment of intensive care nurses is facing some difficulty by the Thompson administration is, they have made extra arrangements with the air ambulance to stabilize the patient in Thompson General Hospital for rapid and very quick transportation to a southern hospital in the jet.

Air Ambulance Service Transportation Costs

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my final question, can the Minister of Health tell us how much taxpayer money will be spent transporting these patients and their families to Winnipeg hospitals?

* (1025)

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I cannot provide my honourable friend that information. The air ambulance is part of a some \$5 million increasing commitment that we have made on this side of the House to providing ambulance services to the province, to the citizens of northern Manitoba, that in addition to a doubling of the ambulance funding, which will now take us from the lowest per capita funding in Manitoba under the previous administration to the median level of funding of ambulance services in Manitoba. The monies that we have dedicated to ambulance services will serve northern Manitobans and other Manitobans very, very well.

Public Schools Finance Board Eastwood School—Thompson

Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek): Once again concerns with the Public Schools Finance Board rears its ugly head, this time from the City of Thompson, this time the Eastwood Elementary School in the heart of the city, built with an optimum capacity of 500 students, now housing 600 students, with the possibility of 700 children attending that school in September, an increase in 40 percent. We have learned that the majority of these students are latchkey kids from single-parent families who come to school without breakfast. They need their community school.

Will the Minister review the Mystery Lake School Board's request of the last two years to have portables that would extend Eastwood School, providing a less crowded environment that would obviously be more conducive to learning?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): In the last week or so we have seen the Liberals stand up in their places and ask us to build schools where there are no students, ask us to build schools all over the province, intervene in the normal process of the Public Schools Finance Board, and we really do not understand where the Liberals are coming from in terms of their policy in building schools.

Mr. Speaker, let me indicate that the Public Schools Finance is now considering all the requests that have

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been put forth by individual school boards right across the country with regard to their capital facilities requirements. When those analyses have been completed for this year, school boards will be notified as to which of their priority projects they will be able to proceed with immediately.

Mrs. Yeo: He does not know where we are coming from. We certainly know where they are coming from. Not one of the six elementary schools in Thompson has lunch facilities. Will the Minister allocate funds to increase the space at Eastwood School, or would he prefer to use these same dollars to add lunch room facilities at the other six schools?

Mr. Derkach: We do not look at a single part of a school and say, well, this school does not have a lunchroom facility, so we will build one over here and that school does not have a library, so we will build a library over there.

The capital facilities of school divisions is the responsibility of the school board. They set their priorities. They submit their priorities to the Public Schools Finance Board and as I indicated to my Honourable Member, those priorities for this current year are being looked at and examined at the present time.

Eastwood School—Thompson Open Area Classrooms

Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek): In light of research that demonstrates that open area classrooms are not conducive to an effective educational environment, will this Minister show some leadership to assure that Eastwood School in Thompson does not have to continue using curtained off spaces in the forum of Eastwood School to try and provide classrooms for these students?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Once again the critic for Education, on the Liberal Bench, wants to have the Minister of Education go into every school and determine what is the most appropriate kind of physical space that school should have. Mr. Speaker, that is why we have responsible school boards around this province who can make those decisions very well. That is why we have administrators in schools. That is the responsibility of school boards and administrators in those school divisions.

* (1030)

Winnipeg School Division Minister's Meeting

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): There is a little hint of hypocrisy in the Minister of Education's (Mr. Derkach) final remarks. He has just lectured the Member for Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo) on the responsibilities of school divisions—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): You have repeatedly warned Members of the New Democratic Party about what you call post-ambles to previous answers arising from questions put by other Honourable Members. I wonder if that is what the Honourable Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) is up to today.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for Flin Flon—I am unaware of whether or not it was a post-amble or a preamble to the question that you were about to pose.—(interjection)— You were?

The Honourable Government House Leader does not have a point of order then.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, last week or a little more than a week ago, the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) denied the parents of Margaret Scott School the right to a community school, a decision that was also concurred in by the Winnipeg School Division.

On Wednesday, the same community members learned that they may be facing a tax rate hike of \$175 to \$200.00. I am wondering today whether the Minister of Education has met, or will meet, with the Winnipeg School Division immediately to assist them in their efforts to provide quality education to inner city school residents.

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, may I indicate that the funding announcement we made on February 1 was indeed a commitment to quality education in this province. May I also indicate that just last Thursday the Winnipeg School Division or was it—pardon me, it was just this week that the Winnipeg School Division received their information, their detailed information, as to what our funding announcement really meant to their school division. They were also instructed that they are to do their homework now, in terms of analyzing their priorities.

Once that homework is done, staff from my department are very willing to meet with staff from their division. If solutions cannot be found, if there are some extraordinary problems that they have not identified in their preliminary budgets, I have indicated that I am very willing to sit down and meet with them.

Mr. Storie: We are all pleased to hear the Minister's commitment to quality of education. Given the fact that St. John's-Ravenscourt has received a 100 percent increase in funding in the last two years, and Winnipeg School Division has received 8 percent, will the Minister now agree to meet with the Winnipeg School Division to help them accommodate the needs of their students,

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100 percent for private schools, 8 percent for public schools? Will he meet with the Winnipeg School Division—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question has been put. The Honourable Minister of Education and Training.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) attempts to distort the facts. He attempts to distort the truth. We have funded public education in this province substantially, a lot higher than what was done by the former administration. I am proud of our commitment to education. We have bent or we have changed the formula, which now addresses the funding aspects of divisions in this province in a more equal manner, an approach that has been lauded by many of the school divisions across this province.

We are addressing the educational needs within the Winnipeg School Division No. 1. I have indicated that if there are some extenuating circumstances that have to be addressed, I am indeed agreeable to meet with the school division as soon as possible.

Funding Requirements

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, we finally get to the point. The Minister is willing to meet. The next question is, is the Minister willing to address the fact that Winnipeg School Division now receives only 61 percent of its gross financial needs from the Province of Manitoba? Is he willing to acknowledge that they have special requirements, both in their educational programs—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question has been put. The Honourable Minister of Education.

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, let me say first of all that the criteria that are used today are the same criteria that were used by the former administration in determining the percentage of support that school divisions receive.

That percentage, Mr. Speaker, now remains at 80 percent. May I indicate also that in view of the fact that there are special circumstances in divisions like Winnipeg 1, we have targeted funding into special areas such as increasing special needs funding, such as increasing transportation funding, such as increasing grants to those divisions that have been experiencing increased enrollments.

Forest Fires Inquiry Invitations

Mrs. Gwen Charles (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, last spring the fires in the Ashern area were devastating. It was only through the courage and initiative of many people that further tragedy was avoided.

In order that we may learn from the actions taken and the errors found, the Department of Natural Resources has undertaken a series of hearings in the fire ravaged areas. Can the Premier (Mr. Filmon) explain what use these hearings will serve when the public has not been invited to appear before them?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I find it passing strange that the Member— (interjection)—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable First Minister.

Mr. Filmon: —for Selkirk is now inserting herself into the discussion about how the forest fires were being handled last year in this province when last spring in May she and her colleague from Springfield were quoted as saying that the province should stop spending all of its time and energy fighting the fires in the Interlake and pay more attention to people problems.

Mr. Speaker, they criticized the manner in which we were handling the forest fires. I might tell you that we were complimented by people throughout this province everywhere saying that this was the greatest tragedy that we have had in peacetime in this province, and we handled it throughout this province in an organized, compassionate, considerate fashion that met the test of moving 23,000 people out of their homes and back, that met the test of containing the fires and the damage so that not one community suffered any major damage in terms of the fires, that did all of the things that people ask for.

She said it was not good enough. She said we should not be fighting those fires. We should concentrate on other people problems. Now she has the audacity to ask a question like this. She ought to be embarrassed, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Charles: If the Premier has finished his tirade and tantrum, I will ask the question again in another form. Can the Premier (Mr. Filmon) explain why the Department of Natural Resources has not called the public before their hearings to find out what can be done better, should any horrible disaster like this ever occur? Why are the people not important to this Government?

Mr. Filmon: Letters of invitation have gone out to groups throughout the province who were affected by, and involved with, the forest firefighting efforts. Public sector groups who were involved in the efforts to evacuate people, to mobilize equipment and services, whether they be Native groups, whether they be local Government groups, whether they be emergency measures groups, any numbers of public sector groups, any groups in society who were affected by, or involved with the forest fighting effort, have been invited to come to these hearings.

They have been scheduled throughout the province in areas so that it is convenient for people to get to, and it is convenient for them to have their views heard and their concerns known. Those meetings have been set up, and we are indeed listening to those people to see what things they believe ought to have been done, perhaps differently or better, what improvements can be made, because we want to make whatever improvements we can, learn from our experiences, and always be prepared to do the best possible job on behalf of the people of this province.

Mrs. Charles: Can the Premier then explain why Hodgson residents were informed only by press release,

and only two days prior to the hearings in their area, and why the Ashern residents were informed only of the hearings the day of the hearings, and why the five Indian bands in the Interlake area were not informed at all?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please. The Honourable First Minister.

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I guess we ought to ask the Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles) whether or not she is interested in us going out and listening to people holding these hearings and attempting to get feedback. I went out personally. I know she was out there holding a news conference in Ashern saying that we should not be fighting the fires, we should stop the forest firefighting activity and look after people.

I was up in Thompson with the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), with the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Albert Driedger), the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), people throughout the Government. We were up there during the fires. We were up there listening to people, meeting with people, town councils, local municipal Governments, telling them that we were concerned and getting involved in the effort. They were here criticizing the Government for what it was doing, Mr. Speaker, and they carry on that negative view. I think that this is unfortunate.

The people of this province know that we did some excellent efforts, know that we carried out the forest fire efforts, the evacuation efforts, in a way that did not lose one single life, that did not cause major property damage—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please.

Physically Disabled Program Funding

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): My question is also for the Premier (Mr. Filmon). His Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) continues to refuse to address the very real and serious concerns of the Society for Manitobans with Disabilities.

I am asking the Premier, since he received a letter as early as August 1 from David Hargrave, the president of this society, with his very real concerns—it is clear that they did not want to go public. They had hoped that this Government would deal with the issue seriously and with sincerity.

Will the Premier now step in and reverse the policy of cutbacks, the policy of killing service organizations slowly, and order the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) to provide an increase above, not below, inflation and that is responsive to the increasing demands in this area?

* (1040)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, with great respect I would like to say to the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) that she ought not to misrepresent matters in this Legislature.

The fact of the matter is that when organizations get an increase in funding this year over last year, that is not a cutback. She can attempt to maneuver it and manipulate it in any way she wants, but when they get more money from this Government this year versus last year, that is not a cutback.

I might indicate that we as a Government have substantially increased funding in the area of health care and community and family services. In those cases both of those departments for the past two years have received increases that range at double the inflation rate in this province, Mr. Speaker. Within those two department areas we have a myriad of organizations and activities that are very worthy of our support. They range across all types of services to people in this province and we want to be as generous as we possibly can in serving those needs. Regrettably we do not have an unlimited pot from which to dip all of this money and we can only go so far. -(interjection)-

Pediatric Services

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for St. Johns.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): I cannot believe that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) would say these things if he knew the emotional trauma that parents of children with disabilities go through and the added stress when there is no pediatric services. I want to ask the Premier, since the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) has postponed dealing with that problem of no services for these children, what advice would he give to the parents of the approximately 100 children with disabilities in rural and northern Manitoba who have no access to any pediatric services and whose parents must be going through incredible emotional stress?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that we fund the Society for Manitobans with Disabilities in a variety of ways with programs that come out of Health, programs that come out of Family Services. I have here, for instance, a letter dated January 22, 1990, very recently from the Minister of Health to Mr. David Hargrave, the president. It says, "I am pleased to advise you that the 1989-90 grant of \$695,300 has been approved for the wheelchair program, the Society for Manitobans with Disabilities. The grant represents a \$94,700 increase over the 1988-89 base, provides for 4.5 percent price increase which you may allocate as required plus new funds specifically allocated to . . . "and it goes on and lists. We are continually evaluating the needs of every one of these organizations. Organizations such as the Society for Manitobans with Disabilities do a tremendous job for us. We very much appreciate the efforts that they put in and we are constantly attempting to be as generous as possible in our funding of them.

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Mentally Handicapped Employment Program Funding

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, we appreciate those initiatives but we are worried about the over 100 children with disabilities in rural and northern Manitoba without any pediatric services. I want to ask my final question to the Premier (Mr. Filmon) on the same matter I raised a week ago today and also on January 15. Why is the Government cutting back to Manitobans with mental disabilities and will the Premier reinstate a grant to Premier Personnel which was cut back from \$75,000 to zero dollars in the short time this Government has been in office?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) will know I am sure that these are not matters that are directly under my area of responsibility. I indicated that I would bring her back a response on that. I know that I have had some information in my office that indicates that Premier Personnel does not only receive its funding from the Province of Manitoba—in fact much of the funding that it gets comes from other levels of Government—and that we have been, in the past, a small participant in a part of its program.

Under those circumstances, Mr. Speaker, I will get the full information and bring it back to the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis).

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

NON-POLITICAL STATEMENTS

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): May I have leave for a non-political statement?

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Minister of Agriculture have leave to make a non-political statement? (Agreed) The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker and Members of the House, it gives me a great degree of pride to rise at this time and pay tribute to one Lyndon Johnston, a figure skater from the Town of Hamiota.

The Town of Hamiota has received provincial, national and international recognition in a number of sports over the last years, baseball, curling, hockey, basketball and figure skating.

Lyndon has been a figure skater of provincial, national and international acclaim for about 10 years, and he has shown persistence, hard work and dedication as he has risen through the ranks.

Last year he and Cindy Landry won the Silver Medal in the World Championships in Paris and have just now won the Canadian Pairs Gold Medal in figure skating, a Canadian title that he has never claimed before, and I know that they will do exceedingly well when they go to the World's again in 1990.

I know that the parents of Lyndon have dedicated an awful lot of their life and their financial resources

to being able to get Lyndon to the position he has achieved in this world. Carlyle and Catherine will be very proud at this time, as well as the Town of Hamiota.

What Lyndon said last night when he received this honour was that good things come true for those who wait. He certainly exemplifies that. Mr. Speaker, I wish him well in his future endeavours and congratulate him on all his past accomplishments.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): Could I have leave to make a non-political statement?

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member for St. Johns have leave to make a non-political statement? (Agreed) The Honourable Member for St. Johns.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: Merci, Monsieur le président. Aujourd'hui, j'ai le grand plaisir, au nom de tous mes collègues et, je suis sûr, au nom de tous les députés ici dans l'Assemblée, de saluer les personnes qui ont organisé le Festival du Voyageur qui commence aujourd'hui et qui va durer une semaine. C'est un moment très important dans la vie de cette province, un événement qui est très historique et culturel et important pour la vie au Manitoba car il reconnaîtra la contribution de la Francophonie ici au Manitoba. Et au nom de tout le monde ici, nous voulons remercier les organisateurs du Festival du Voyageur et leur exprimer notre gratitude et appréciation. Merci.

(Translation)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, it is my pleasure, on behalf of all my colleagues and, I am sure, in the name of all Members here in the Chamber, to congratulate all of the people who have organized the Festival du Voyageur, which begins today and will last for one week. This is a very important moment in this province, an historical and cultural event of major importance in the life of Manitobans, who are given the chance to acknowledge the contributions Francophones have made to Manitoba. On behalf of everyone here, we wish to thank the organizers of the Festival du Voyageur and express our gratitude and appreciation to them. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member for St. Boniface have leave to make a non-political statement? (Agreed) L'Honorable député de Saint-Boniface.

* (1050)

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): M. le président, ce n'est pas la deuxième place comme le membre de Concordia (M. Doer) le dit. J'ai eu l'honneur d'être le Voyageur en '84-85. Alors, j'ai été dans la première place du Festival du Voyageur à Saint-Boniface. Mais le Festival du Voyageur, qui fête son vingt-et-unième anniversaire, démontre que -(interjection)- oui, il faut chaud, ça me fait plaisir de voir que le membre

d'Emerson (M. Albert Driedger) apprend du français. Et puis—

An Honourable Member: He is bilingual. He can heckle in two languages.

An Honourable Member: He is a junkyard dog in two languages.

Mr. Gaudry: —oh, ça ce n'est pas beau, ça, c'est pas beau du tout ça. Et aussi, ça me fait plaisir de souhaiter une semaine de fête à Saint-Boniface pour le Festival du Voyageur. En même temps, j'inviterais tous mes collègues à venir visiter le festival. Ce n'est pas juste pour la communauté de Saint-Boniface parce que ça a été démontré que c'est un festival international qu'on considère parmi un des dix sur la scène internationale depuis plusieurs années maintenant. Je vous invite à venir faire un tour, vous aussi M. le président, et puis on prendra un verre de Caribou ensemble. Bonne fête! Merci.

(Translation)

Mr. Speaker, it was not second place, as the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) says. I had the honour of being the official Voyageur in 1984-85. So I came in first at the Festival du Voyageur in St. Boniface. But the Festival du Voyageur, which is celebrating its 21st anniversary, demonstrates that.— (interjection)— Yes, it is hot. I am pleased to see that the Member for Emerson (Mr. Albert Driedger) is learning some French.— (interjection)— Oh, that was not nice, that was not nice at all. I also hope that the Festival du Voyageur in St. Boniface will be a fine week of celebrations. At the same time, I invite all my colleagues to come and visit the festival. It is not just for the people of St. Boniface because it is considered to be one of 10 major international festivals for several years now. I invite all of you to attend, you as well, Mr. Speaker, and we will have a glass of Caribou together. Enjoy the festivities! Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Minister of Health have leave to make a non-political statement? (Agreed) The Honourable Minister of Health.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): M. le président, c'est avec plaisir que je dis un message de congratulations à mes amis à Saint-Boniface. C'est avec plaisir que moi et mes collègues allons assister au festival la prochaine—what is week? M. le président, en ce temps, il fait chaud pour le Festival du Voyageur et j'espère que nous "wishes bonne chance au Festival du Voyageur."

(Translation)

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to send a message of congratulations to my friends in St. Boniface. I am happy to say that my colleagues and I will be attending the festival next—what is week? It is warm weather for the Festival du Voyageur and I am sure all of us want to wish good luck to the Festival du Voyageur.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member for Rupertsland have leave to make a non-political statement?

Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupertsland): Yes, I ask leave of the House to make a non-political statement.

Mr. Speaker: You have it. The Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

Mr. Harper: (Cree spoken—translation unavailable)

Mr. Speaker: I will have to ask the Honourable Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper) to provide translation to Hansard.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Minister of Rural Development have leave to make a non-political statement? (Agreed) The Honourable Minister of Rural Development.

Hon. Jack Penner (Minister of Rural Development): (Low German spoken—translation unavailable)

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I will also have to ask the Honourable Minister to provide translation to the Hansard recording.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member for Kildonan have leave to make a non-political statement? (Agreed) The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Mr Speaker, can I say it in my own native language?

Mr. Speaker: Yes, you can speak it. We were waiting for this one.

Mr. Cheema: (Punjabi spoken)

(Translation)

Mr. Speaker, I will offer my congratulations in my native language as other Members of the House have offered their best wishes to the French Canadian community in Manitoba. For the past 20 years Manitobans have come together to celebrate the opening of the West. Since the late 18th Century, these voyageurs have played an important part in Manitoba's history. This culture is an important part of Manitoba's cultural mosaic and the community has played a very important role in its development. My congratulations to the French-Canadian community and the Member for St. Boniface.

Mr. Speaker: I will also have to ask the Honourable Member for Kildonan to provide translation to the Hansard Recording Division.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation have leave to make a non-political statement? (Agreed) The Honourable Madam Minister.

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation): It is indeed a pleasure for me to rise and associate myself with all colleagues from all different backgrounds in this Chamber today to wish well our French community in their 21st year of presenting the Festival du Voyageur to Manitobans and for Manitobans.

We do truly recognize, and I believe by all the different languages that were spoken in the Chamber today, that we as a multicultural province and community do want to work together, do want to share our culture and our heritage with each other.

Mr. Speaker, along with that sharing comes the understanding and the awareness of each other's cultures. I believe that is the way we can truly begin to work together towards making Manitoba the best province in our country, the province that wants to show our understanding of each other and along with that understanding the desire to work together in harmony for the best we can possibly have.

We have a province in which we should all be proud. I am very proud to be associated with my colleagues from every very different background in this Chamber. I hope that we can continue to work together towards that better relationship that we all desire.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the French community on the Festival du Voyageur. I do want to congratulate the volunteers and the people in that community who have put full time and effort towards making the festival the success that it is. I will save my French comments for the opening ceremonies tonight. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member for Burrows have leave to make a non-political statement? (Agreed) The Honourable Member for Burrows.

Mr. William Chornopyski (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I too wish to add a few words of good wishes to my friends in St. Boniface in my own language if I may.

Mr. Chornopyski: (Ukrainian spoken)

(Translation)

It gives me pleasure to, on behalf of Burrows constituency, extend best wishes to the French community in Manitoba in the celebration of the Festival du Voyageur. We wish them every success now and years to come. I wish them well.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Burrows will also have to provide translation to the Hansard.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) have leave to make a non-political statement? (Agreed)

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to indicate that I am extending wishes not only to the Festival du Voyageur, but also to the Thompson Winter Carnival which begins this weekend. It has been in place for many years in Thompson. It gives people in our community the opportunity to experience the North, the many pleasures of northern living, and I would encourage Members of the Legislature to attend that. At the request of the Member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard), I will say something in Greek and that is:

(Greek spoken—translation unavailable)

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) will also have to provide translation to Hansard.

* (1100)

ORDERS OF THE DAY HOUSE BUSINESS

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I am announcing today that the Law Amendments Committee will sit on Tuesday, February 13, 10 a.m., Room 254, to consider Bill No. 83 and will sit also at 8 p.m. if necessary.

The Privileges and Elections Committee will meet on Tuesday at 10 a.m. in Room 255 to consider the matter relating to the Standing Committee on Economic Development last May, as referred by this House.

Mr. Speaker, would you call the Bills in the following order: Bills Nos. 31, 35, 19, 84, 70, 47 to 52 inclusive, 57, 59 and 60.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Second Opposition House Leader): On House business, I am pleased the House Leader has called the Law Amendments Committee for Bill No. 83, and also Privileges and Elections.

I am just wondering what the intentions of the Government are in terms of committee hearings for the other Bills that are before second reading, namely, 42, 63, 64, 71, 73, 74, 77, 81, 82 and 89, and also what the intentions are in terms of some of the other Bills that I know Opposition Parties have indicated a willingness to pass in terms of both passing them on through to second reading and getting them into committee.

Mr. McCrae: We will indeed be calling committees to deal with Bills that are passed at second reading and have been passed at second reading. I do not know of any Bill that Honourable Members have not been able to tell me they would pass. The Honourable Member suggests that we deal with Bills that have been offered by the Members of the Opposition to pass, yet

I think on Bill No. 31, for example, the Bill still stands in the name of the Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan)—

An Honourable Member: For a while.

Mr. McCrae: —for a while as he says, and as he said in his comments yesterday, maybe for perhaps several days. Who knows how long it will be?

I think the evidence kind of shows that perhaps Bills are not really going to pass as Honourable Members suggest they are. We would like to see Bill No. 31 passed. We think that might very well lead to other Bills being passed as well.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I stand on a point of order actually. I indicated yesterday, I indicated in writing to the Government House Leader December 4 that we were willing to pass a number of Bills, three of which have not yet been passed through to second reading, Bill 19, Bill 35, and Bill 84. We are willing to pass them today and still continue the debate on 31. I was wondering why the—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member does not have a point of order. The Honourable Member is quite aware that a point of order is used to show the House or the Speaker some breach of the Rules; therefore, he does not have a point of order.

Mr. McCrae: I rise on a new point of order. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to hear that the Honourable Member's Party agrees to pass Bills 35, 19 and 84 today, and that can be done immediately after we pass Bill 31. I appreciate that very much.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank both Honourable Members.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

BILL NO. 31—THE LABOUR RELATIONS AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Labour (Mrs. Hammond), Bill No. 31, The Labour Relations Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les relations du travail, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Churchill, the Honourable Member for Churchill.

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, M. le président, au demain. It is indeed a pleasure to stand to participate once again in this very important debate.

I have to make note of the House Business that transpired just previous to my taking my feet, because I believe that perhaps there is an opportunity here for the House to co-operate a bit more in order to pass some more legislation through the House and to accomplish at least part of the agenda of the Government with respect to the legislative package.

(Mr. William Chornopyski, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what clearly happened was the New Democratic Party did today, as it has done on many occasions in the past, offer to the Government a series of Bills which we would be prepared to pass through relatively quickly so that they could pass second reading and get into committee where they could be reviewed by the public as per the Rules and traditions and practices of this Legislature.

We did so because we want to see some of the work of the House progress in an orderly fashion. That is what we have wanted to see, not only now that we are in Opposition but when we were in Government, and I want to reflect a bit on how that process worked in the past. That is what we will want to continue to see as legislators in years to come, because this House does have to function. This House does have to pass legislation, but it is not the total vehicle, the captured vehicle I should say, of the Government alone, whether it be a Government in a majority position or a Government in a minority position.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can recall being House Leader in a majority Government situation for a number of years. Even with the ability to win the votes in the House, we did not attempt to railroad legislation through the House in the manner that is being done with Bill No. 31. Why did we not do that? We did not do that because we felt that the Opposition has all sorts of ways possible to slow down the business of the House if they so desire. It would be much better for us to negotiate our way through the business of the House rather than to attempt to ramrod or railroad our way through the business of the House.

I have to tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that as House Leader I was responsible for those negotiations from time to time. I negotiated with Mr. Gerry Mercier.

An Honourable Member: A fine man.

Mr. Cowan: The Member for Arthur, and the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), from his feet in the back says, a fine man. I have to agree with him that as far as the negotiations proceeded with Mr. Mercier, I found him to be a capable negotiator, I found him to be a competent negotiator, I found him to be a trustworthy negotiator, and I found him to be a person who wanted to make the system work through negotiation. I did not agree with Mr. Mercier in all issues. I certainly would not have agreed with Mr. Mercier on final offer selection, nor do I think we share agreement on that issue today. There are many other issues of principle and philosophy on which we had some disagreement.

As well, there were many times on specific items that we disagreed. There were occasions where we found ourselves in general agreement as to an approach, an item, an issue, a philosophy or principle or practice. That is not unusual in this House. Putting those disagreements aside in order to find a productive way to make the House work was our responsibility, our collective responsibility as House Leaders.

Let me tell you how the system worked. Every day for the most part, and Hansard will confirm this, I would ask the Member for St. Norbert, the Opposition House Leader, the Conservative House Leader, as to what Bills he would like to see brought forward at a particular time. I did so because I wanted as much as possible to arrange a legislative agenda so that the Opposition felt they had adequate time to debate the Bills in the order in which they wanted to. I have to tell you there were times when we disagreed as to the ordering. There were times that we had a bit of a tug of war in the Chamber. I can tell you that those times were relatively rare and for the most part we were able to reach an agreement before the provision of business on each day as to what Bills would be called.

From time to time we felt it was necessary to push and prod a particular Bill into second reading and we accept that this Government from time to time will have to do that as well, but the practice was a practice of negotiation and the objective was an objective of compromise. It was not always reached and it was not always implemented perfectly, but it in fact was for the most part a workable system.

* (1110)

We are saying today to the Government, and I am saying to the Government Acting House Leader, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), because I believe the Minister of Finance to be more philosophically and practically in tune with that process of negotiation than is the House Leader. I tell you why I believe that. I believe that because on many—he shakes his head, no. I do not want him to be humbled or I do not want him to in any way be diminutive about his ability to bring order into this House through negotiation, and to meet the objectives of moving the House through its business in a rational and orderly practice, because when the Acting House Leaders had responsibility for the legislative agenda we have found, as New Democratic Party Members, that the compromise was there, that the negotiation was there, and that the House did move quicker and did conduct its business more effectively and more efficiently.

I think the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), if he put his own humility aside and sort of stepped aside of his loyalty to his House Leader—which is imposed discipline, I think, rather than one of overwhelming emotion on the part of the Minister of Finance—he would say truthfully that the business did proceed better when it is negotiated and that he was a more able negotiator than is the House Leader.

For example, today we offered to pass a number of Bills, three Bills today, through second reading to get them in the committee. We offered to pass them through to the extent that we can make that offer. Let me be very clear. We cannot speak to the Liberal Opposition nor can we speak for the backbenchers or the Government Caucus, but as for the New Democratic Party Caucus, we were prepared to limit our debate—(interjection)—the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) picked up his attention a bit when he heard “backbenchers of the Government Caucus.” I want to just maybe reiterate the point in case he missed it. Did he miss the—(interjection)—

The point I was trying to make, for the Member for Lac du Bonnet, was that we, as a New Democratic Party Opposition, 12 Members, can commit ourselves to a certain discipline. Over the years we have shown that we can live up to our commitments for the most part. Our commitment today was that we would not unduly hold up those Bills, we would allow them to pass through on second reading if they were called. However, I cannot say—because I have no way of knowing it and, even if I had a way of knowing it, I have no way of enforcing it—that the Conservative backbenchers or the Conservative Government Caucus would respond the same way or the Liberals would respond the same way.

I believe it would certainly be in the interest of the Government to get some Bills through second reading and into committee stage. It would also be in the interest of all Parties to do so.

We made a very sincere offer. That is not the first time that offer was made. That offer has been made by our House Leader on numerous occasions, both publicly and privately. I can tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will continue to make that offer.

What happened when we made the offer today to debate those Bills first and then to go into debate on second reading on Bill 31 if time permitted? What happened, the Government House Leader said, no. He knows that we intend to speak out Bill 31 today and, knowing that, he knows that his offer was not a valid response—

An Honourable Member: As phony as a three-dollar bill.

Mr. Cowan: Well, as the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) says, phony as a three-dollar bill.

The fact is, he does not want to see those three Bills passed through the House today. I do not know why that is. Perhaps he thinks that we will crumble, sit down, let Bill 31 pass and get to those Bills anyway. We have told him that is not the case. We have told him publicly and we have told him in this House.

Let us put what happened today, what transpired today, in the context of the charges that we are hearing consistently and constantly from the Government House Leader with respect to obstruction of the business of this House. Let us take a look how it affects Bill No. 31, the final offer selection Bill, and how it affects what is transpiring right now.

They are saying, because we are taking a strong, hard line on defending the rights of working people by blocking the passage of Bill 31 to the extent that we can, we are obstructing the business of the House. The logic of that, if carried not to its extreme but just to a certain point, is that the only business before the House is Bill No. 31. No. There are many other Bills before the House right now that could be debated, three of which we said we were prepared to pass today. So who is obstructing the business of the House by not calling those Bills? The Government House Leader is obstructing the business of the House.

Certainly what we are doing today is a bit of an obstruction. We are obstructing Bill No. 31. We are

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trying to hinder the process of Bill No. 31. We are trying to prevent the Government from taking away the rights of working people and employers in this province through the repeal of final offer selection. I admit very clearly and have no problem defending what we are doing, that we are attempting to hinder the progress of Bill No. 31 through this Legislature. We will continue to do so in many different ways over the next number of days, weeks and months if required.

That is not obstructing the business of the House, because we have said at the same time we are prepared to debate other issues. We are prepared even to pass other issues. All we have to do is sit down and negotiate with the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) the number of Bills that are coming forward in what order and the business of this House will proceed through very, very quickly; as a matter of fact will proceed through much faster than it did on many days when they were the Opposition and we were the Government.

There is no obstruction of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I stand and speak at length on Bill No. 31. The obstruction of the House results as a consequence of the unwillingness or the inability of the Government House Leader to negotiate the passage of the other Bills through the Legislature or his—and it would be something that would therefore be shared by the entire Cabinet and caucus, because it is a collective process—incompetence.

Either the Government House Leader is too incompetent to get the business through the House when given a perfect opportunity to do so or the Government House Leader does not know how to negotiate in order to get the Bill through the House.—(interjection)—

The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), from his position standing in the back row, says you cannot negotiate with unprincipled people. If any Member should know about the inability to deal with unprincipled people, it should be the Member for Pembina, from the basis of personal experience, from his own history. He is the man that called the doctors the liars, and is there negotiation going on now? No. Why not? I can tell you the doctors consider him to be either an ignorant Health Minister or an unprincipled Health Minister, and they may be right in both instances. The fact is, he knows that of which he speaks. He acts upon that which he knows. The fact is, he is right.

* (1120)

You cannot negotiate with people that do not want to negotiate. He does not want to negotiate with the doctors, they know they cannot negotiate with him. Quite frankly, I bear no truck with the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), nor no truck with the doctors, but what I worry about is the intransigence and the unprincipled approach on the part of the Minister that is going to result in the detrimental health care to Manitobans. That is what I worry about.

I do not worry about what the doctors are going to get or what the Government is going to pay. I worry about the fact that because they have a stubborn, intransigent Minister who calls the doctors liars, they

have been put in a position where they are now threatening to withdraw their services, and when they withdraw their services it is not the Minister of Health that is going to be hurt, and it is not even the doctors that are going to be hurt, it is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you, I, the patients, every Manitoban who looks to this health care system as a way to provide them with a quality of health that should be second to none in the world and has been in the past.

It is now deteriorating as the crisis in the health care system grows and grows and grows and compounds itself over time. I make that point because final offer selection could be something that the doctors and the Government could be looking at as a way to resolve the impasse, given the fact that they have gone so far down a path of animosity that it looks as if negotiations may be poisoned to the extent where a settlement cannot be reached in a fair and equitable manner. So indeed that matter does relate very directly to the Bill that is before us with respect to final offer selection.

I also want to, Mr. Deputy Speaker, before getting into the crux of my discussion today, or my comments today, talk about something else that transpired this morning. The Government came in at this late day in the Session, day No. 122, and introduced new legislation. We have not even seen that legislation as of yet—Bill No. 98. Let me juxtaposition what happened today against what happened in the past. Before doing so let me tell you why things were as they were in the past.—(interjection)—

The Minister of Highways (Mr. Albert Driedger) asked if I am still on Bill No. 31. Had he listened to my comments yesterday he would have heard me say very clearly—and I think it was accepted by the House as being a legitimate approach then because there was no challenge and therefore should be a legitimate approach today—that the way in which a Bill is brought to the House and passes through the House is very indicative of the way in which a Government sets its agenda and tries to implement its agenda and how strongly or not strongly it feels about a particular issue.

Speaking to process I think is a very important part of reviewing a Bill in second reading, when you are talking about very general principles. The principles of how does a Government feel about a particular Bill, how strongly does it feel, how important is it to its legislative agenda? Without trying to stretch the point or belabour the point, I want to go back to my earlier comments before I was interrupted and distracted by the Minister of Highways, who I hope right now at his seat is working on something more positive for the Port of Churchill than he has been able to provide during the past two years. I may want to address the Port of Churchill a bit later in my comments.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we were Government House Leader, one of the complaints—and I address these remarks directly to the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) and let me tell you why I do that, because I believe that the Member for Lac du Bonnet sincerely cares about the legislative process and how it works and making this Legislature work on behalf and to the benefit of his constituents in Lac du Bonnet. I know that. I have had discussions with him. I am not telling

tales out of school when I say that he has a sincere interest in the House. As a matter of fact, he studies it. The man is a very politically astute politician and I say that in endearing terms and in no way diminutively speak of the Member for Lac du Bonnet.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Order. The Honourable Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We understand Mr. Speaker ruled yesterday that the Honourable Member for Churchill may use the right of unlimited time to discuss Bill 31 and we accept that ruling, made by the Speaker. We know the Honourable Member has given us notice that he intends to speak for days, weeks, months if necessary.—(interjection)—Well, he says not months today. That is news I suppose. The point that I am making, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that he has that right to unlimited time to speak on Bill No. 31.

I have been listening for some number of minutes now to the Honourable Member talking about other things that have nothing whatever to do with the intent of Bill No. 31. At second reading, the rules of debate call for Honourable Members to speak about the intent of the Bill, and here we have the Honourable Member talking about House Leader business and so on.

Perhaps he is disappointed that his Leader removed him somewhat ingloriously from the position of Opposition or House Leader for his Party. He would like to pretend he is still the House Leader. The time spent now on Bill No. 31 is for debate on Bill No. 31 and not on negotiations between House Leaders and how the Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) thinks the business should be done, which Bill should be called, and in which order.

We know the attitude of the Members of the New Democratic Party with regard to Bill No. 31. They have made it perfectly clear. This is the second Session that this Bill has been before the House because of various reasons, not the least of which is the unbridled opposition of the New Democrats to Bill No. 31, which is their right. That Bill died on the Order Paper in the first Session of this Legislature. We are well past the normal length of a Session, and here we are, they are trying to tell me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we should be debating other Bills, that we should be accepting the list in the order that they would like to see it done.

The Honourable Member for Churchill, I thought, had reconciled himself with the fact that he and his Party find themselves in third Party position in this House and not in the Government any more. The Honourable Member for Churchill is having trouble today understanding that indeed is the position in which he finds himself.

I am not able to quarrel and I do not wish to quarrel with the ruling of the Speaker, that the Honourable Member for Churchill has unlimited time to debate Bill

No. 31. Bill No. 31 is the issue at hand, not whether we should be debating something else, not how the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) handles matters relating to health in this province, although parenthetically I can tell you that we probably have the best Minister of Health that this province has seen for many, many years. That is quite irrelevant to this issue of Bill No. 31.

Bill No. 31 deals with the issue of final offer selection, what we on this side suggest is an intrusion into the principle of free collective bargaining in our society. That is the issue we are discussing, whether we should carry on with that process as it has been handled in this province since Bill No. 31 became law back in the summer of 1987. At the time, that Bill was referred to as a bail-out-Bernie Bill as I recall, referring to one Bernard Christophe. We remember the events at that time. We remember the picket line violence that was carried out in this province. We remember the position that Members of the New Democratic Party took with regard to violence on the picket line and all of those things.

* (1130)

All of that surrounds the issue relating to what has been known as Russian roulette arbitration, final offer selection, which somehow leaves management on one side and labour on the other, leaves us in a position where we have winners and losers, where we have no particular attachment to collective agreements that are imposed on people. Those are all of the issues.

The Honourable Members in the New Democratic Party will no doubt want to argue that final offer selection has worked in this case or that case or could work better or given time could work even better still. They can argue all of those things which are relevant to Bill No. 31, but the business of the House is something that the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) and I and the Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) deal with on a day-in day-out basis. We know how the Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) would feel when he is removed from that position, and we know why he was removed too. But that really has nothing to do with Bill No. 31 and the intent of that Bill. That is what the debate is about.

I would ask you, Your Honour, to consider calling the Honourable Member to order when he strays from that path of discussing that which he ought to be discussing and that which the Rules allow him to discuss. We are not here to deny him the right to discuss Bill No. 31. I think in the interest of the smooth operation of this House and the serving of the interests of the people of Manitoba that, if they would confine themselves to obeying the Rules of this House rather than using the Rules for manipulative and obstructive purposes that we could get on with the business of this House.

I heard the Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) for example—this is a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not finished making my point. The Honourable Member made reference to other Bills that he and his colleagues would pass. I tell you, I think we are in, somebody told me, the 102nd day or something—(interjection)— 122nd day—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. McCrae: —of this Legislature. I ask you, that alone is historic, the length of this Session. I ask you, how many Bills have they allowed to pass to this point? But that too is not relevant to the issues contained within the parameters of Bill No. 31.

These are the issues the Honourable Member for Churchill wants to debate, because he has run out of gas when it comes to Bill No. 31. Now if I am wrong about that, I would be delighted to be corrected by the Honourable Member for Churchill. In short, Mr. Deputy Speaker—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Order. The Honourable Government House Leader is right. I thank him for that advice. I would ask the Honourable Member for Churchill—The Honourable Member for Thompson, on a point of order, the same point of order.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Second Opposition House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, first of all I would like to ask whether the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) sought leave of his Leader to give unlimited time on a point of order, because I must say that was the most lengthy, convoluted and desperate attempt to raise a so-called point of order. I would like to cite for you a couple of citations in Beauchesne's that relate specifically to the fact that points of order should not be used to interrupt Members in debate.

I would note from our Rules, for example, that the Speaker may permit—and this is from our Rule book, 38 and Subsection 2, and I will quote it. The Speaker may permit debate on the point of order before giving his decision, but the debate must be strictly relevant to the point of order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would submit to you that the Government House Leader's so-called point of order was in fact nothing more than an interruption. The Government House Leader, in the space of one of the longest so-called points of order that I have seen, referenced a number of items that were not at all relevant to this so-called point of order that he had raised. He referenced House negotiations. He referenced Bill No. 31. He was attempting to debate it, something he has not done in this Session. In fact I would be interested if there was a precedent in this in terms of the Government House Leader having used his opportunity to speak, because he did reference the Bill.

But that is not the only citation that we have, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have citations in Beauchesne's as well that are very clear and indicate quite clearly that points of order are not to be used as an interruption in debate. I would refer you to our sections in Beauchesne's which refer specifically to the fact that interruptions are not permitted. I will refer you, I do not have the current edition of Beauchesne's with me, but I am quoting from the Fifth Edition of Beauchesne's in terms of questions of order, Section 234.(1). If a point of order consists of asking a question to the Member speaking or it is a mere interruption or if it is defective for other reasons, the Speaker will rule it out. I think

that is clearly what the Government House Leader's point of order was. It was nothing more than an interruption.

I would like to further read to you another subsection of Beauchesne's that also I think is relative to the point of order that was raised. A Member shall not rise on a point of order to deter or impede the progress of his own motion. In this case, while the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) did not introduce this Bill, I find it highly ironic that the Government House Leader rose on a supposed point of order to interrupt the debate, delay the debate, on a Bill that was introduced by the Minister of Labour (Mrs. Hammond), by his own Government.

I would submit to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that what we had from the Government House Leader earlier was one of the longest attempts at a point of order, but also one of the most thinly veiled and disguised ways of trying to inhibit, trying to harass the Member from Churchill (Mr. Cowan) who is giving his views on the debate, in this debate—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please; order, please. I think the Honourable Member has exceeded the very thing that he is complaining about. The Honourable Government House Leader did in fact have a point of order. He is quite right, there is some—the Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) did from time to time get off the subject matter and I want to thank the Honourable Government House Leader for that advice. The Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) did not have a point of order. The Honourable Member for Churchill has the floor.

Mr. Cowan: Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you very much. I would ask, given that I am going to be on my feet for some time, that if at all you sense that I am straying from the topic matter or that my comments are not exactly relevant to the debate that you would interject and in your most polite and kind and leading way inform me of your concerns.

I will do everything that is within my power as a parliamentarian, as a speaker, and as one who is familiar with the Rules of this House, either to convince you that indeed I was on point or relevant, or to accept your admonition without any comment whatsoever. I have to tell you though, in keeping with the Rules, once you have made the ruling as you have now I accept that. I do appreciate the assistance that you have given me, and I look forward to further assistance if I should happen to inadvertently stray from the subject matter at hand.

I do find it interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that while speaking on the subject of Bill No. 31, the final offer selection repeal, I was in the midst of complimenting the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) on his understanding and his interest in this House when I was interrupted and called to order. Those comments were called short by the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae). I just want to clear the record right now and let the Member for Lac du Bonnet know that we

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will continue this discussion in private if he so wishes. I would like to explain to him what I was going to explain on my feet for the record, but unfortunately his Government House Leader will not let me carry on with that portion of the debate.

In reviewing the debate and the background research on final offer selection, I came across an article from the 1975 Osgoode Hall Law Journal by Mr. S.A. Bellam, not Mr. Ruben Bellan, no. It is a different Bellam I believe. It was published in 1975 and it was entitled, Final Offer Selection, Two Canadian Case Studies and an American Digression. I believe that if I were to read this into the record, I would be on topic. However, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not going to do that at present. It may be necessary at some point in time to reinforce some of the comments by reading sections of it into the record, but I will try to keep those to the minimum limit possible.

I do want to start off by reading the first line. Actually I want to read the first two lines of that article. I quote Mr. Bellam: "It has been observed that politics and religions do not admit of rational discussion, and for that reason these topics should be avoided in polite company. Perhaps another subject should be added to the list, compulsory arbitration, for here too reason seems a meagre bulwark in face of the volatile response usually evoked by the suggestion of a compulsory arbitration system." In fact we have probably seen some of that volatility and that lack of reason take place during this debate over the years in this Legislature.

I want to go back and try to put some of the comments that have been made by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Connery) when he was Minister of Labour, by the present Minister of Labour (Mrs. Hammond), by the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) and also by some other Members in the context of what we know about final offer selection in the American experience, in the British experience. It has been a vehicle for arbitration and negotiation that has been used in Britain for generations, since the early 1950s in the coal mines, and what we know from the Canadian experience in other provinces and our own experience here.

Yesterday when I concluded my remarks for the day, I just started into discussing points that the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) had made in his comments on final offer selection when he, as Minister of Labour, brought back the final offer selection Bill which caused the repeal of the legislation at that time. That attempt, as has been noted by the Member for Brandon West, the Attorney General (Mr. McCrae), was an unsuccessful attempt, as we believe this one will be. I think the comments that were made at that time have been made again and have been reinforced by Members of the Conservative Party and now by Members of the Liberal Party and do warrant some full consideration.

* (1140)

I picked out a number of points that I polled from the Member for Portage's (Mr. Connery) comments when he was Minister. I would ask that if he thinks that

I am misinterpreting what he said, or I am skewing what he said or I am in any way not providing an accurate reflection of what he said, that he would call me to task, and I would try to deal with those comments at that time.

What I have tried to do in order to ensure that my comments are as accurate as possible is quote or at least very closely paraphrase what was said. In his speech, the first point that the Minister made was that repealing final offer selection legislation "was the best way to restore fairness to the collective bargaining process."

He, in that comment, makes a couple of assumptions. He assumes first that the process is already as fair as it will ever be, and that is not out of keeping with the typical Conservative approach to labour relations. They are the Party of the status quo when it comes to labour relations. They have been the Party that has fought every progressive change in bargaining and in labour relations and in creating better, fairer, more equitable safer and healthier workplaces in this Legislature and in Legislatures across this country from the time they became a Party.

That is why they have earned the reputation of an anti-labour Party. They deserve it. They worked hard to earn it. It is something that they captured over, not one generation, but over generations, by re-enforcing the public perception that they in fact oppose any sort of progressive labour legislation, because they believe the system is fair. In every instance they believe the system is fair. They have always believed that the system is fair because the system has generally been skewed toward the rights of management, historically.

I am going to go into the history of this at one point in my comments, if time permits, in some detail, to show you how labour relations legislation has evolved over the years, and historically it has been the Conservatives that have provided the most strident opposition as they are now doing on final offer selection.

The assumption is that the status quo works. That was the assumption back in the early 1800s, that was the assumption in the mid-1800s, that was the assumption in the late 1800s, the early 1900s, the mid-1900s, and that is the assumption now, of the Conservative Party. The status quo works, because what we are dealing with is an imbalance of power and labour legislation has generally given more power to working people at the expense of management. It has tried to create a fairer playing field, a more equitable system, a more balanced system.

When the Minister says that repealing the legislation was the best way to restore fairness to the collective bargaining process he is re-enforcing that historical perception and he is reiterating what has been a consistent theme on the part of Conservatives. They do not like final offer selection because they believe it takes away the rights of management and they have said that very clearly. Their assumption is that the system is already fair and that final offer selection makes it imbalanced. I disagree with that. My Party disagrees with that. The majority of the labour movement in Manitoba disagrees with that.

They do not believe that the system is totally fair now, that the status quo is perfect, and they do not believe that final offer selection creates an imbalance. They believe it brings about equity and it makes the system more balanced because it does provide for the shifting of power and the sharing of decision-making.

Yesterday I went over a number of comments from the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) which I take to be reflective of the Liberal policy. We will find that as we go through the Conservative comments piece by piece by piece, and this in fact is saying something, it is reviewing, it is analytical, it is something new to the debate, it has been carefully researched and a lot of work has gone into it.

While maybe I elaborate in some detail, the comments that I make, they are based on very specific points that I feel are reasoned points, thought-out points. There may be disagreement as to whether or not they reflect accurately what is actually happening, but that is what this Chamber is all about, a place to air those disagreements, to review them and to come to a decision on the basis of informed decision-making. I will continue to do that.

The Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) in his point No. 2, which is not his point No. 2 but the point that I classified as No. 2 yesterday, said one of his concerns about final offer selection was that one side has a gun which is loaded, the other side does not have a loaded gun, it has no bullet, and the inherent message, the implied message, the theme of that is that there is no fairness with respect to final offer selection.

Now, in his article, which is probably the most comprehensive and well thought out article I have been able to find with respect to final offer selection—there may be others and I am researching them now. I have looked through quite a few articles over the past number of years, right from when this matter was first brought to the attention of the previous administration to today, and what Mr. Bellam says to counter that argument is the following.

It will take me just one minute to shuffle through some of the papers on my desk and find the right one. I quote from his article, and he is talking about what happened in final offer selection in reality, in actual cases that were conducted under real circumstances. He said in that quote: Both parties felt compelled to justify their positions during negotiations by reference to concrete financial data in preparation for the FOS criteria of reasonableness. Indeed both reported that the FOS deadline encouraged realistic bargaining throughout. Now that is one point with respect to this type of bargaining -(inaudible)-

A more pertinent comment he made was the following, and he is talking about what happened in Ontario with the teachers. Remember, the title of his article was Final Offer Selection, Two Canadian Case Studies and an American Digression, and he reviewed what happened in Ontario with teachers with respect to final offer selection to try and get some sense of how it actually worked as a labour negotiations tool in the field. What he found was that the teachers said, and I quote: The teachers felt that the FOS device

operated to equalize bargaining positions whereas formerly they had felt underdogs in a more paternalistic setting.

In the actual case of the teachers, they felt that the system was not fair to begin with. They felt that management, because of their paternalistic approach, had put them in the position of underdogs. They felt that they were not as equipped with respect to the power that they held or the influence that they could generate to compete at a negotiating table with the employer because of historical circumstances and present circumstances as well.

At least the teachers are saying, and I think others have said it as well, it is not entirely a fair system, that labour many times is the underdog at the table, and that final offer selection in their instance operated to equalize bargaining positions whereas formerly they had felt they were the underdogs.

* (1150)

So indeed the Minister of Labour (Mrs. Hammond) may in fact believe that the status quo is good, that the system is fair now, and that final offer selection creates an imbalance, as does the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards). I expect that he is speaking for all the Liberals when he says that because the rest of them have not spoken on this Bill at any length to speak of. I think one may have. They are wrong according to Mr. Bellam and they are wrong according to what I think, but I know they are not going to accept my judgments or my analysis carte blanche. They want me to reinforce with documentation and fact and analysis what I say.

If they have other documentation or research that proves to the contrary, let them put it on the table. I have not heard them put it on the table. I have heard them say what they think. I have heard them tell us how they feel. I have heard them speak in subjective terms, but I have not heard them quote the authorities. I have not heard them quote the actual experience here. I would like to hear that if they have it. I would like to hear them quote that.

Both the Liberals and the Conservatives agree I assume that the status quo, at least in the instance of final offer selection, is a fair status quo and equitable and that final offer selection creates an imbalance. They have both said that. I think they are wrong. Mr. Bellam thinks they are wrong. Others think they are wrong.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Member for Portage then went on to say that he felt that final offer selection was, quote, intrusive, imbalanced methods for settling contract disputes. We find that the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) actually in two of his points makes that same point. One point he called it, and I referenced this as point No. 1 in my speech yesterday, unwarranted intrusion into the labour relations environment, and I have already indicated in point 2 he thought it was imbalanced.

They agree together, the Liberals and Conservatives, that final offer selection is in fact in their opinion intrusive and imbalanced. I do not quite understand how they

consider it to be unwarranted intrusion. They ignore the fact in saying so that it is the majority of workers, the majority of people that are going to be affected by the decision that must vote on final offer selection. It is not forced upon the workers. They have an opportunity to vote on it. Both parties have an opportunity to request that vote. One party has an opportunity to vote.

That is far less intrusive than is the lockout, where management has an opportunity to arbitrarily shut the gates of a plant and throw the majority of the workers out of work without ever consulting them. That is not nearly as arbitrary as the right of management to close down a plant as we have seen happen in this province very often quite recently, and not just quite recently, over the years, without any consultation with the workers, without any reference to the rights or the responsibilities of the workers other than those minimal rights and standards that are legislated in The Employment Standards Act or The Labour Relations Act or the federal Bankruptcy Act. That to me is an unwarranted intrusion into the workplace and into labour relations.

Let us take a look at how a dispute unfolds, starting from the first instance. You have two parties that enter into negotiations. Why do people negotiate with each other? People negotiate with each other because they want to see a change in a particular circumstance or the status quo that the other party does not particularly want to see in exactly the same way at that time. That happens in negotiations whether they are in a shop or a mill or in a factory or in a hospital or between Government and its employees or between two individuals or in a family. That is the very essence of negotiations.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

A number of parties—I said two parties and I want to correct myself—it could be two, it could be more than two, there are multi-party negotiations, want to see a change in the status quo. They sit down and negotiation historically takes on a process of compromise. We have often heard about the give and take of negotiation, the quid pro quo, the trading off of one item for another.

As a matter of fact, the whole language of negotiations implies that reasonable parties are sitting down, putting forward their concerns, their objectives, and discussing with each other how they can best accomplish those objectives. Some will be able to accomplish some of their objectives and others will be able to accomplish other parts of their objectives and compromise usually rules the day.

What if they cannot compromise, what if they cannot negotiate? We see an example of that today in this House. The Government House Leader and the Opposition House Leaders had an opportunity to accomplish a goal of moving business through this House. We offered to pass three Bills, but because of some reason that we will explore but perhaps never fully understand, or at least never be able to fully confirm, they were unable to reach an agreement, although they said they had the shared objective of making the House work.

Well, let us look at it right from the very start. Did they have a shared objective or was there a hidden agenda? Did they really want to make the House work? By working in this stage of the process of the Legislature it means passing legislation through. Or did they want to accomplish something else? Unless Parties are honest with each other in the negotiations, it is very difficult for the negotiations to proceed smoothly. You are always trying to negotiate a phantom issue of which you are not aware, or if you are aware, the other Party does not speak truthfully with respect to its real objectives. If you do not know what the real objectives are, then you do not know what it is you have to do to strike the compromise.

In other words, in this instance is the Government trying to set up a charge of obstructionism so that they can go to the people in an election in a period of time? That has been suggested. Quite frankly, it is not beyond this Government or any other Government to try to manipulate the process in such a way. The Premier shakes his head no. I think he is shaking his head no in response to what I am saying and not the letter he is writing or signing.

Let us explore that for just a bit in the context of final offer selection. Why is it that the Government House Leader today forced final offer selection, Bill No. 31, the repeal of the Bill, to be the only agenda on the legislative agenda today, the only issue, when he knew, and we had said very clearly that we would pass three other Bills to get them into committee? Who is obstructing the Bills from getting into committee?

The First Minister (Mr. Filmon) says we are. I do not know if that was a collective you or a singular you. Any hints? No. Maybe he is not certain. The fact is, let us assume it is a collective view.

Are we indeed obstructing? I addressed this point earlier in my comments, Mr. Speaker, on Bill No. 31. What we have said is that we are prepared to pass other legislation through the House, but we are not prepared to pass Bill No. 31. If he were to charge that we were hindering or impeding the progress of Bill No. 31, I would agree with him. We are doing that for some very specific reasons. We are doing that because we believe it is wrong-headed legislation. We are doing that because we believe it is a Bill that puts the Liberals and the Conservatives in the pockets of big business at the expense of the working person.

We are doing that because we believe final offer selection to be a fair and equitable process of negotiating and resolving disputes where it is necessary to use it. We are doing that because we want to see a fairer, more balanced, more equitable society, and one of the places you can start building that fairer, more equitable and balanced society is in the workplace.

Yes, we are obstructing the progress of Bill No. 31, but we are not intentionally obstructing the progress of this House. We have offered to pass other legislation and we will do so. I do not want to get too far off my comments with respect to Bill No. 31, but I wanted to make that point. I want to go back to the point that the Member for Portage made in his comments a couple years ago with respect to intrusive imbalanced methods

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for settling contract disputes. I think that this matter is really far less imbalanced than is the lockout.

If they really want to deal with inequity in the system in an unbalanced labour relations system, then let them, along with this particular Bill, and maybe we could actually look at that, outlaw lockouts without a majority vote of those people who are going to be most affected by it, the workers themselves. Let them do that and perhaps we will talk about final offer selection and other ways of accomplishing this. If they want to deal with inequity and an imbalance, let them really deal with the inherent inequities and imbalance in this system.

Mr. Bellam also talked about that in point No. 4, and I am not going to repeat it, but the fact is the teachers did feel themselves to be underdogs and that this provided for a more balanced system. What we are saying is substantiated by what the analysis says to us in the Osgoode Hall Law Journal article. The third point that the Minister of Labour (Mrs. Hammond) said with respect to his comments was that final offer selection is an all or nothing proposition that creates a winner and a loser.

Now, I have not heard the Liberals say this directly but I have heard them imply it. I am not going to say that they stand side by side, cheek by cheek and jowl by jowl with the Conservatives with respect to this criticism of final offer selection because I do not know and I do not want to be unfair to them. I do not want to words in their mouths or ideas in their heads that are not already there. I do not want to misrepresent their positions. Let us just deal with what the Conservatives say in that.

The fact is that to an extent final offer selection does create winners and losers but all negotiations create winners and losers. The question then is this: does the process of final offer selection make more winners and more losers, or make the winners and losers win more or lose more than would other conventional means of negotiations? If they do not, then the argument that it creates winners and losers should be an invalid one.

* (1200)

Let me read what Mr. Bellam says in his journal, page 872, and I will quote: nonetheless that final offer selection produces a "winner" and a "loser"—and he quotes both winners and losers in quotes—is most frequently cited as a weakness. That is, obvious victories by one or other parties would generate acrimonious relations over the long run. It is contended, however, that the win-loss concept is endemic to the collective bargaining system and is by no means confined to final offer selection. To be sure, if the negotiations proceed smoothly trade offs result in the collective agreement. Good will and co-operation are likely to abound in serendipitous circumstances.

If each side wants what the other cannot or chooses not to grant, the zero-sum game becomes apparent. That is, in a free collective bargaining system the final arbiter is the strike or lockout and one side or the other can better withstand the economic consequences. The strike has been termed a catharsis clearing the air of the workplace, but surely this is to gloss over the real

bitterness engendered by the picket line violence, loss of irreplaceable wages, decreased expectations, loss of faith in the bargaining process and such.

(Mr. Harold Gillehammer, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Yes, there is a win-loss element to final offer selection process, but there is much more of a win-loss element to standard negotiations. For example, today in the House we could have negotiated the passage of three Bills and delayed the debate on final offer selection for another day. That would have been a win-win.

We could have had a win-win situation today in this House by following standard negotiating procedures, and both of us would have accomplished something. There would have been a compromise and both Parties would have been able to get at least part of what they wanted. The Government would not have gotten its entire legislative agenda passed, no. We would not have gotten final offer selection dropped, which we want, no. We would have had it delayed, and they would have made progress; win-win.

Instead, today there was a win-loss. I am not certain who the winners and the losers are, but I do know that we are delaying the process and I do know that they are not passing any legislation, so I would assume from my very biased perspective, from where I stand today speaking on final offer selection, Bill No. 31, that they are the losers and we are the winners.

I would be prepared to put final offer selection to the test. I would be prepared to say in today's circumstances we could have each put down what we wanted to accomplish. We could have said, we are prepared to pass three Bills without undue delay or debate if in fact Bill No. 31 is not called today, and you know what, I believe an arbitrator would have chosen that over what has transpired today. In that instance the business of the House would have been carried on and there would have been a win-win situation.

On the basis of that very limited example and very biased example I admit, we could have had a win-win situation through final offer selection today, and instead we have a win-lose situation because of the lack of negotiations. Let us assume that there is a win-loss element.

What do other parties say about it? James Stern prepared a paper for the annual meeting of the National Academy of Arbitration. I assume that because he prepared the paper, I do not know all his credentials, that he does have credentials in this field, otherwise he would not have been writing on that particular subject at that particular time for that particular body.

What did he say in the paper? He said, and I quote, there is a good deal of misunderstanding about the process on the part of individuals who have not been involved with final offer selection. As for any damage wrought by the winner-take-all aspects of the final offer arbitration awards, it has not caused either the winners or the losers to condemn the procedures on that ground.

In other words, taking a look at the experience and reference indirectly to the win-loss concept, there is

no documentation that proves the contention of the Conservatives that the win-loss element is greater in final offer selection negotiations than outside of final offer selection.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Bellam, whom I quoted before, from the Osgoode Hall Law Journal, Final Offer Selection, Two Canadian Case Studies and American Digression, which is based on experiences in the '70s in the United States, but more importantly and more comprehensively in Canada, says and I quote, final offer selection merely reflects the broad win-loss notion of the collective bargaining system, and in fact by generating convergent pressures the parties may be so close together that animosity is lessened at the end of their arbitration process. Finally, by forcing the parties to compromise rather than risk everything in arbitration, the result is likely more acceptable than if the arbitrator himself compromised the two positions to reach a settlement.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Both Mr. Bellam and Mr. Stern, on the basis of their research, discount the notion of win-loss as being a negative with respect to the use of final offer selection. As a matter of fact, the teachers that use the system in Ontario had this to say, and I am paraphrasing the teacher through directly quoting Mr. Bellam in his article, it is one of the eight conclusions that he drew from his review. That review is based on the contention that some would suggest final offer selection discourages good faith bargaining.

He said that both parties felt compelled to justify their positions during negotiations by reference to concrete financial data in preparation for the FOS criterion of reasonableness. Indeed both reported that the FOS deadline encouraged realistic bargaining throughout. They also said that there was significant conversion pressure to appear reasonable in the eyes of the selection officer. We have talked about that in his other quote.

Finally he says, both sides felt strongly motivated to settle the agreement themselves for personal satisfaction and to avoid the risk of a complete loss at arbitration, yet both felt that final offer selection gave the parties a larger measure of control than did conventional arbitration. The teachers, who were probably the most versed in using final offer selection and had the most experience, disagree entirely with what the Minister of Labour of the Day had to say when he tried to rationalize the introduction of a Bill to repeal final offer selection.

The Minister at the time in point four also said that this can lead to animosity between the parties and that is why they were repealing final offer selection. Of course, the contention is that when you bring in final offer selection it will create an atmosphere that results in animosity because one party gets what they wanted and the other party does not.

Let us look at what the Liberals have to say about that particular issue as well. The Liberals say through the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) that in one point final offer selection does not achieve what the

proponents say it does, that is, a peaceful workplace. It may end this strike. Will it create a peaceful workplace? Not a chance. They also say that the final offer selection has caused disruption in the workplace, which is not warranted. It does not stop strikes, in my view, it creates unrest in the workplace and will continue to do so.

* (1210)

Again, we see the Liberals and the Conservatives joining hands and linking minds in a collective response to take away this right of working people. What do others have to say? I have taken a look at what has happened in the context of the Manitoba experience to date, and we cannot see that lingering animosity after final offer selection has been used as a process, whether the selector had to come to a decision, and that has been relatively rare, or whether the parties agreed to a contract before that was necessary. That has not happened in other jurisdictions. It has not happened here. As a matter of fact, the reverse is true if we listen to the experts.

I think there are experts in this particular area that we should listen to very carefully, and I have quoted them. I am going to go back to Mr. Bellam's point. Mr. Bellam's point said that both parties in final offer selection, felt that the time frames set in advance prevented a stalemate from developing and kept talks progressing, albeit slowly at times. What it does is it keeps the parties speaking to each other. That reduces animosity. Also if anyone in this Chamber has been through a strike, and I believe they have, they will know that strikes, even strike votes or even threats of lockouts, create a great deal of animosity in a workplace that is very difficult to overcome, even over a longer period of time following the strike itself or the lockout.

Mr. Bellam also says, and he is again quoting what he learned from his experience in reviewing final offer selection, I quote, both parties believe that the FOS deadline with its criterion of reasonableness set the tone for "civilized" bargaining from the outset, that they felt that less emotion and grandstanding was displayed during negotiations and less animosity remained after settlement than in previous years.

These are individuals that he is reviewing and organizations, both management and labour, that have had experience with different kinds of arbitration and different types of strikes. They felt that final offer selection, and I reinforce it by quoting again, because it is a very important point, created less animosity after settlement than in previous years.

Where does the Minister of Labour get off suggesting, along with the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) and the Liberals, that it can lead to animosity between the parties? Where is his factual information? What expert is he quoting? What research has he done, or is it just something he feels in his gut? Because he feels it in the gut, he expresses it in a speech without any basis in fact, without any reinforcing documentation, without any research.

If he has the research, if he can show definitively that it has created animosity in the majority of instances

moreso than do other forms of negotiations or contractual dispute reconciliation, let him bring forward those facts. He cannot, because he does not have them. He does not know what he is talking about. He never knew what he was talking about. They are bringing forward this legislation on false pretenses. They have the collaboration of the Liberals in doing so. If they are bringing forward the legislation on false pretenses, then what is the hidden agenda? The agenda is not to reduce animosity, because that is not a problem. The hidden agenda is to pay back their big business supporters, whether they be Liberal big business or Conservative big business for the support that they have shown them over the years.

Mr. Speaker, I did not say pay off because I do not in any way want to reflect upon their integrity. I think what they are doing is wrong-headed. I think it is done out of ignorance. I think that they do not know what they are talking about. I think that they are obviously paying back in a way support which everyone does by providing a legislative agenda that reflects the needs of those people who support us most. In our instance it is working people; in their instance it is big business. I do not think that there is anything beyond that. I think it is just the way politics works.

They are elected here on the basis of a platform that they put forward. That platform is designed to appeal to the people whom they want to support them. They get a lot of their support from big business, as do the Liberals. That is where their platform is directed. It does not matter whether it is the land developers or the large corporations or the transnationals or the multinationals. They have the same agenda.

It is not inconceivable nor is it difficult to understand why it is that those corporations and those developers and others want to have more power. They are use to power, they know it works well for them, and they want to gain more power. They see final offer selection as a way of taking power away from them. That is why they asked the Conservatives, and that is why they asked the Liberals, to support them in repealing that particular Bill. That is why the Liberals and the Conservatives, when it was first brought forward, spoke against it. If nothing else, they have been consistent, not rational. I think not coherent, but at least consistent. The fact is that others who research it from an unbiased prospective do not find that animosity.

Let us take to the next point. The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs when he was Minister of Labour and introduced this Bill said one of the reasons they were introducing it is because they thought it damaged the collective bargaining process because, and I quote: it certainly lessens the commitment of one side to the contract.

The Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), the Liberal Critic, said on one of his points as a rationale for opposing the Bill that, I quote: what you would get is a contract that the parties do not feel they have participated in. The implication if they have not participated in it, they do not have a sense of ownership of it, if they do not have a sense of ownership of it then they do not have the commitment to it.

If in fact that was the case, one would have to accept that as a reason for considering the Bill. I would say

that you would not want to accept it as a reason for considering repeal of the Bill but as a reason for considering how to improve the Bill, but is that the case?

Again, let us go back to people who have studied the issue in some detail from an unbiased, realistic, rational perspective. What do they have to say? - (interjection)- No, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology and whatever else, just Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst) says from his seat, let us go back to what the Canadian Federation of Labour said. Did I hear his comments correctly? Oh, I am sorry. Let us go to what other parties say, and I want to do that in some detail a bit later on in my comments if I have time today.

Well you know, Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that so much of my speaking time today was eaten into by different points of order and different, other events in the Legislature, although I do feel the non-political statements were indeed warranted, were indeed productive, and were indeed an important part of our work here, so I do not resent that.

An Honourable Member: That is democracy for you though, Jay.

Mr. Cowan: Yes, the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) from his seat says, that is democracy for you. Indeed it is democracy. Democracy is allowing people to stand up and have their say. Democracy is allowing people to express themselves and in trying to come to decisions based on the information that has been provided. That is what we did earlier today and that is what we are doing now.

Democracy is not trying to ram a Bill through by denying the Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper) the right to speak. Democracy is not trying to push your agenda, in a most unglorified and undignified manner, through the House by refusing to allow people to adjourn debate.

Democracy is not the way that this Government has proceeded with trying to ramrod and railroad this Bill through the House in order to pay back the support that they have received from the big corporations. Democracy is not the unholy coalition between the Liberals and Conservatives that has resulted in their attempting to thwart the normal procedures and practices of this Parliament to ensure that this Bill goes through under what they call speedy passage, but what is in reality railroading, ramroding and pushing a Bill through in an unnecessarily fast manner.

That is not democracy. I say that to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon). That is not the way this House should operate. He would not have stood for that when he was in Opposition. As a matter of fact, we can quote how he did not stand for that when he was in Opposition, when he thought that to be the case, and we will make those quotes. I only regret the fact that he may not be able to hear those quotes directly when we make them.

Does anybody have a question? -(interjection)- Well, the Member for Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo) says I am

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running out of things to say. Let me show her what I have to say. Let us just take a glance here at what—I am not running out of things to say, Mr. Speaker. In my mind, it is all relevant, and none of it is repetitive. Not only do I have important things to say, but I have lots of important things to say.

An Honourable Member: I think that the tragedy is that the Liberals are so quiet; that is the tragedy.

Mr. Cowan: As the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) says, what is unfortunate is that the Liberals have been so quiet on Bill No. 31. I ask myself, why is that? We can take it at face value.— (interjection)— Well, now he said something that I did not hear exactly and, I am certain, no one else did.

An Honourable Member: I said they are gutless.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Flin Flon, would you like to withdraw those remarks, please.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Yes, Mr. Speaker. I was referring those remarks only to my colleague, the Member for Churchill. I did not intend them to be so broadly heard. I understand he has a hearing problem.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the Honourable Member for Flin Flon.

Mr. Cowan: The Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr) says, give me a break. Indeed we will give him a break, if they stand and put on the record exactly what it is, with the type of research that we are doing and the type of documentation that we have done, as to why it is they want such speedy passage of this Bill that they are prepared to join hands and link minds with the Conservatives to ramrod it through this House. We will give them that sort of break if they give the public a break by telling them what it is they really want.— (interjection)— The Member for Portage (Mr. Connery) says it is fine with him, and indeed it should be.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs, on a point of order.

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs): The Member is trying to put on the record what he is saying is fine with me. The Member here said it is a nice day, and I said it is fine with me; the day is fine. Let there be no connotation that I am agreeing with what he is saying.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Minister does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

An Honourable Member: . . . scumbag.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Churchill. The Honourable Member for The Pas.

Mr. Harry Harapiak (The Pas): I clearly heard the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) call the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) a scumbag. I think that is not appropriate, withdraw.

Mr. Speaker: Did you hear anything?

Order, please. On the point of order raised by the Honourable Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak), the Chair did not hear those remarks, therefore the Chair may not rule on those remarks. The Chair will peruse Hansard, in case Hansard picked it up, and then we will come back to the House with a ruling.

* (1220)

The Honourable Member for Churchill.

Mr. Cowan: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I heard those remarks. I found them not untypical. I found them undignified, but they are what we have come to expect from the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery). It is something that he does quite often in this House, and it is something that I am willing to let pass, because I know that man does not have the courage to stand on his feet and put those comments into the record, that he prefers to sit on his seat and to snipe and to sulk and to insult Members of this House in the most unparliamentary fashion, which shows to me that he has not the courage to say what it is he thinks and he believes. If there were parliamentary terms to describe that sort of action I would use them, but I do not think that there is anything that is within the realm of parliamentary language that I could use in this House to describe what I think of the way in which the Member for Portage la Prairie conducts himself not only in this debate but in every debate.

Mr. Speaker, I have talked about the things he has said. I have tried to address the issues that he has put forward. I have been somewhat harsh in my criticism, and I have tried to back up that criticism with documentation and research. That man has never done that in this House. That man has never brought forward research or documentation as to anything he has ever said. That man is a classic example of how some people come to this Chamber not prepared to provide informed and intelligent arguments on issues of importance to Manitobans but prefers to sit in his seat and slander from his seat —(interjection)— Well, he says there is no slander. Then let him stand on his feet and put on the record clearly what it is he had the false bravado and courage to say from his seat. He cannot. He will not. He has no courage. He has no integrity. At least that is my opinion.

An Honourable Member: Well, you are not alone on that one.

Mr. Cowan: And I am not alone on that one. Matter of fact, it is not an opinion that is confined only to this Chamber. If you go out and talk to people who have had any dealings with that man as Minister of Labour

or Minister of the Environment or Minister responsible for Workplace Safety and Health, you will find out that they too feel that way about him. That is why he was demoted. That is why he was stripped of his position, and the only reason he sits in a Cabinet seat today, I believe and I may be wrong, is because the First Minister did not have the courage to do what he really wanted to do with the Member for Portage la Prairie, and that is to turf him out of Cabinet altogether. Believe me, he might have been better off had he had the courage to do so, because that man is an embarrassment to the Government, to the province and to the constituency. However, I do not want to be sidetracked.

I was talking about what the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) had to say with respect to lessening of the commitment. What Mr. Bellam had to say with respect to the conclusions that he drew from his review with that regard was firstly, and I quote—

I am sorry, I was distracted because the Member for Portage (Mr. Connery) was mulling over what he should have done. Well, if he thinks he should have done something then perhaps he will take the opportunity now to do it. I do not know how many opportunities we can give him to finally have some courage, but I am not going to be distracted any more by his side comments, because I do not believe they are entirely relevant to the debate.

I am going to address what he said though and what Mr. Bellam had to say with respect to commitment. He said both parties believe that the final offer selection deadline—I am going to have the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst) read over my shoulder so as to ensure Members of this House that I am not misinterpreting, to ensure Members of this House that I am not casting my own bias on this and to ensure them that I am reading correctly from the record that I have in front of me. Now when we are doing this only one of us is going to move our lips.

Is it unparliamentary for Members of the Government and the Opposition to read in tandem into the record? It is of course. Both Parties believe that the FOS deadline (with its criterion of "reasonableness") set the tone for "civilized" bargaining from the outset and they felt that less emotion and grandstanding was displayed during negotiations and less animosity remained after settlement than in previous years.

They disagree with respect of the lack of commitment, but what was also said, both sides called it strongly motivated to settle agreement themselves for personal satisfaction and to avoid the risk of a complete loss of arbitration, and yet both felt that FOS gave the parties a larger measure of controls than did conventional arbitration. They believe that it gave them a greater measure of control, it was fairer, and for that reason they would have more commitment to it. We have already discussed the concept of win-loss versus win-win negotiations, and I think we have laid that myth to rest as well.

About half way through my analysis of the comments with respect to what the Minister of Labour had to say several years ago when he first introduced this Bill—and I think I may have to use another occasion to

continue on with that. Before doing so I want to put into context what happened today with respect to my comments on Bill No. 31.

I would have far preferred to be speaking to other Bills in the Chamber, because I felt, as was indicated by the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), the Opposition House Leader, that we could have passed three Bills today, and we could have, or maybe more, but we gave a commitment to at least three. Instead we got stuck on final offer selection again. We got stuck on final offer selection again, because the process of negotiations is not working in this House, and that indeed is pertinent and relevant to what is happening here today.

An Honourable Member: And then they introduce another Bill.

Mr. Cowan: As the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) says, and then they introduced another Bill today, this late in the Session.

Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to stand and speak further on Bill No. 31. I am prepared to stand and speak further on Bill No. 31 as many times as it is called until such a time as I have concluded my remarks and then there may be others who are prepared to stand and speak on Bill No. 31 or different aspects of the legislation. I am certain that when it goes to committee, if it goes to committee, there will be lots of the public that want to speak on Bill No. 31. There will be opportunity to do so but there is also other legislation that has to be dealt with by this House.

We New Democrats want to offer sincerely—and we have done so time and time again and we will do so in the future—an opportunity for the Government to move some of that legislation through the House in an ordered and in a negotiated way. If they choose not to, knowing the consequences of continuing calling Bill No. 31 and knowing what is going to happen when Bill No. 31 gets into committee and a lot of people want to speak to it, then they are the ones who are obstructing the business of this House, not the Liberals, not the New Democratic Party, not the combined Members of the Opposition, but an incompetent—or at the very least, a Government that has a hidden agenda that it is not prepared to share with the public.

That agenda is to create a facade of obstructionism so that they can call an election, if they want an election, at any given time, because they do not have an issue to go to the public on—(interjection)— Well, the Minister responsible for Lotteries has said something from her seat which I unfortunately—(interjection)— As the Minister said, the Conservative and Liberal agenda is very open. They want to repeal FOS, and they will have an opportunity to try to do so on many different occasions.

I asked them why it is now that they will not—and they have the responsibility and the right and the obligation to call Bills in order to make the business of this House work properly. Why is it that they will not negotiate with the Opposition House Leaders to get some Bills through this House? We can continue—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. According to the Rules, I have to interrupt the proceedings. This matter will

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remain standing in the name of the Honourable Member
for Churchill.

The hour being 12:30, this House is now adjourned
and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. Monday.