



Third Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

39-40 Elizabeth II

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Denis C. Rocan
Speaker*



VOL. XLI No. 19 - 10 a.m., FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1992



MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ALCOCK, Reg	Osborne	Liberal
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	NDP
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	Liberal
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
CHEEMA, Gulzar	The Maples	Liberal
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	NDP
CONNERY, Edward	Portage la Prairie	PC
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	Liberal
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	NDP
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	NDP
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Liberal
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
HARPER, Elijah	Rupertsland	NDP
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	NDP
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Liberal
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	NDP
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	NDP
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	PC
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
NEUFELD, Harold	Rossmere	PC
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	PC
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
REID, Daryl	Transcona	NDP
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	PC
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	PC
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	NDP
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	PC
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, February 28, 1992

The House met at 10 a.m.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): It is my duty to inform the House that the Speaker is unavoidably absent and, therefore, in accordance with the statutes, I would call upon the Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Dacquay) to take the Chair.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Madam Deputy Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Filomena Villas, E. Watson, H. Stasiuk and others requesting the government show its strong commitment to dealing with child abuse by considering restoring the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Deputy Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Wilf Betts, Adele Betts, Paul Danter and others requesting the government show its strong commitment to dealing with child abuse by considering restoring the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign.

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Madam Deputy Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Shannon Walesiak, Cindy Hamlin, Darren Solmundson and others requesting the government show its strong commitment to dealing with child abuse by considering restoring the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): I beg to present the petition of M.L. Taronno, S. Gordon, Val Werier and others requesting the government consider restoring the former full funding of \$700,000 to fight Dutch elm disease.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): I beg to present the petition of Jean Hunter, Stella LéJohn, Joan Rogers, and others requesting the government consider restoring the former full funding of \$700,000 to fight Dutch elm disease.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Mr. Bob Rose (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Development): I beg to present the report of the Committee on Economic Development.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Your Standing Committee on Economic Development presents the following as their First Report.

Your committee met on Thursday, February 27, 1992, at 10 a.m., in Room 255 of the Legislative Building, to consider the October 31, 1990 and 1991, Auditor's Reports and Consolidated Financial Statements and the business of A.E. McKenzie Co. Ltd.

Mr. Dale Smeltz, Chairperson, Mr. Ray West, Chief Executive Officer and Mr. Ken Robinson, Vice-President, Finance, provided such information as was requested with respect to the Auditor's Reports, the Consolidated Financial Statements and the business of A.E. McKenzie Co. Ltd.

Your committee has considered the October 31, 1990 and 1991, Auditor's Reports and Consolidated Financial Statements and the business of A.E. McKenzie Co. Ltd. and has adopted the same as presented.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

Mr. Rose: I move, seconded by the honourable member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. James Downey (Minister responsible for The Manitoba Natural Resources Development Act (with respect to Channel Area Loggers Ltd. and Moose Lake Loggers Ltd.)): Madam Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to table Channel Area Loggers Ltd. Annual Report, 1990-91, and Moose Lake Loggers Ltd. Annual Report, 1990-91.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I am pleased to table the report of The Trade Practices Inquiry Act, and I am

pleased to submit the report required under Section 114(4) of The Insurance Act.

* (1005)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 57—The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (2)

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I move, seconded by the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie), that Bill 57, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (2) (Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur la protection du consommateur), be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Maloway: I am very pleased to introduce Bill 57 to deal with a problem in this province with odometer rollbacks in used cars. I am sure that all members in this House will agree that this is both a timely and necessary bill and, over the past week in particular, it became widely known that consumers had been at risk due to the actions of a few unscrupulous salespeople.

This legislation has been requested by the RCMP among others who want more power, both to prosecute those found tampering with odometers of used cars and to make it clear that such activities will not be tolerated in this province.

We know regrettably that the RCMP has said that it is a widespread problem, and it will not go away by wishful thinking.

Point of Order

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Government House Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, I would hope the honourable member would remember the rule about the introduction of bills that it is not the time for making a speech. It is a time for a very brief description of what the bill is. It has gone beyond that limit already.

Madam Deputy Speaker: On the point of order, I would draw the attention of the House to Rule No. 85. It indeed is a point of order. When a bill is introduced by a member upon motion for leave, the mover of the motion may make such an explanation as will enable the House to understand the purport of the bill, but the explanation is to be brief.

Mr. Maloway: In conclusion, I would like to encourage all members to support the passage of

the bill, and I look forward to the support of quick passage and support from this government.

Motion agreed to.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Education System Funding Formula

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Madam Deputy Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education and Training.

Madam Deputy Speaker, another 50 teachers face unemployment which is in addition to the 300 positions lost last year and just adds to the 57,000 unemployed in this province. It is ironic that at the awards for exceptional children that I attended the day before yesterday, of the eight divisions receiving awards, more than half are going to have their funding cut absolutely by this government and its formula.

Will the minister acknowledge the difficulty with the formula, something the former minister would not do, and the difficulty it is perpetrating on the province of Manitoba before every school division in the province has to attend at her office to ask for change? Will she look at that formula and truly have the formula and the funding match the government's rhetoric of investing in children and our future?

* (1010)

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to start by saying that we are very concerned about the quality of education in this province, and that the funding formula which has been instituted was in response to the fact that divisions had felt the previous formula was not working. The previous formula required a lot of patch-ups, so in the development of this new formula, stakeholders were in fact the ones who sat around the table and did develop it; and, by and large, in this province, it is working.

St. Vital School Division Funding Formula

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): My supplementary question for the Minister of Education and Training, Madam Deputy Speaker: Can the minister indicate in the first 60 days of this formula, which is already a failure in its first 60 days, what the percentage increase is to St. Vital School

Division versus the percentage increase to private schools this year?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Deputy Speaker, we have not yet announced any funding for independent schools in this province. I would like to remind the honourable member that this government has provided a total 3 percent increase in Education, which looks very good, compared to the 1 percent increase offered in Ontario.

Education System Funding Formula

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Deputy Speaker, my final supplementary to the same minister: Will the minister consider taking some of the millions going to private schools, 11 percent last year and probably 10 percent this year, and channelling that money into the public school system to try to deal with the difficulties incurred by St. Vital, Evergreen, Intermountain and the various school divisions which are suffering under this funding model?

* (1015)

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Deputy Speaker, I think it is very important for the member to know that we are working together with school divisions to look at the issues which they are facing at this time.

Mount Carmel Clinic Cross-Cultural Counselling Unit

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Madam Deputy Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). The Cross-Cultural Counselling Unit at Mount Carmel Clinic provided community-based mental health services to new Canadians in 10 different languages and in the last year has provided culturally sensitive services to more than 140 people. Many of these people need counselling services because they have been victims of torture in their own home countries, or because they are having difficulty in adapting to life in a new country.

This pilot program was funded through the Core Area Initiative for one year, but that funding runs out today. The cross-cultural unit is now looking for emergency bridge funding of less than \$50,000 while they are searching for new budget sources.

My question to the Minister of Health is: Will he provide that bridge funding so that the program can continue to provide community-based, culturally sensitive mental health services consistent with his government's stated policies?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Madam Deputy Speaker, about a year and a half ago, or maybe it is two years ago now, I had the pleasure of being at Mount Carmel when the program was, as envisioned, kicked off. I met with some of the individuals who from a volunteer basis were providing that kind of assistance to newcomers to Manitoba. The department, I believe, earlier this month, was brought into the discussions around the one-year funding commitment from the Core Area Initiative and has been, I suppose one might say, a last-minute invitee to the table and has been working with Mount Carmel to see whether there is any resolution that we can participate in as government.

As I stand today, I do not have the opportunity to provide any more information other than that we (a) are aware of the problem, and (b) are undertaking discussions with Mount Carmel.

Mr. Hickes: Will the minister personally meet with the people involved with the program so that he can gain a full understanding of the services that are provided through this innovative program?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Deputy Speaker, I realize there is a danger in having precrafted questions which have to be used, regardless of the first answer. I indicated to my honourable friend from Point Douglas that 18 months ago or two years ago, I do not know exactly the date, I in fact met with a number of the people who were volunteering to provide services in that program. My honourable friends in the opposition want instant solutions to everything.

I have indicated to my honourable friend that earlier this month the department was brought in to this discussion because we were made aware at that time that the Core Area funding would be ending and terminating without any opportunity apparently from Core Area Initiative to continue with this pilot project funding. Those very discussions are ongoing right now without resolution as I stand today.

Mr. Hickes: Madam Deputy Speaker, will the minister live up to the commitments that his government has announced over and over to

community-based mental health services and the provisions of services to new Canadians in their language of origin by committing today to provide funding for the program to continue? Yes or no?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Deputy Speaker, I realize that probably in Ontario the Bob Rae government makes instant decisions on funding. I do not imagine my honourable friend would want those kinds of zero funding commitments to be made by this government as they are made in Ontario. I cannot give my honourable friend an answer today because we do not have a budget commitment for that program.

My honourable friend must appreciate that the government of Manitoba, my mental health division was not involved in any way with the original funding of the program. It was a Core Area Initiative which was undertaken with exclusive funding outside of the Department of Health.

* (1020)

In terms of being brought into the discussion earlier this month with the funding ending tomorrow, I believe, the government is attempting to deal with the issue. I do not have a resolution. Madam Deputy Speaker, we have only been working with Mount Carmel on this program for this month, not even the full amount of this month.

Conawapa Dam Project Renegotiation

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Madam Deputy Speaker, yesterday the Finance minister (Mr. Manness) indicated that change was a fact of life and that the Repap deal was being renegotiated because of structural change in our midst and changing economic conditions. Well, when Manitoba and Ontario Hydro negotiated the Conawapa sale, it was on the basis that Manitoba needed the power by the year 2000. We now know we do not need that power until the year 2012.

In light of the government's recognition that things have to be renegotiated in changing times, will the Minister responsible for Hydro now agree and now initiate negotiations with Ontario Hydro with regard to renegotiating the contract on Conawapa?

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Energy and Mines): Madam Deputy Speaker, as has been indicated by the Manitoba Public Utilities Board, the agreement that is signed between Manitoba Hydro

and Ontario Hydro is good for the people of Manitoba, is good for Manitoba Hydro, and it is not my intention to contact the Ontario government or Ontario Hydro to renegotiate that deal.

Repap Manitoba Inc. Environmental Inspection

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): It is obvious that the government is not prepared to take any initiative. They only respond when corporations demand that they take initiatives.

On February 21, Madam Deputy Speaker, a lawsuit was filed in the Court of Queen's Bench, The Pas, between Hendrickson Mechanical & Structural Co. Ltd. and Repap Enterprises Inc. and Repap Manitoba and Repap Ferrostaal, a copy of which I am prepared to table in this House. The legal action is a matter of the courts to decide, but a number of issues were raised affecting the government of Manitoba which is not a partner in this suit and therefore can respond to those questions.

Can the minister responsible for the environment tell this House today if a government environmental inspector was on site at the time of the cleanup to, one, ensure that the cleanup was done properly and two, that the government was getting value for the \$3-million bill that it paid?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Yes, Madam Deputy Speaker, we worked very closely in designing the process, making sure that it was done correctly and to standards. The second part of the question, yes.

Bunker Tank Relocation

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Madam Deputy Speaker, can the Minister of Environment tell the House today if the movement of the Bunker C tanks to a new location was paid for by this government? At the time they were moved, did they have on file a copy of a testing result which showed that the lines going in and out of the tanks not to be leaking?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): No, I cannot answer specifically to that question, Madam Deputy Speaker. It only goes to demonstrate the enormous amount of cleanup that has to be done at that site. The Bunker C for sloppy management practices for the full history of that plant allowed, just simply from sloppy practices, the

pollution of an aquifer which we may never be able to clean up.

* (1025)

Recycling Programs Glass Processing

Ms. Marianne Cerlill (Radlsson): Madam Deputy Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Environment.

Last week the government's Sustainable Development initiative was criticized by the Chamber of Commerce as merely a public relations tool. Today I have another Chamber of Commerce report on the government's Waste Reduction and Prevention initiative stating that once again there does not appear to be in place a mechanism whereby targeted materials may be collected, recycled, and the process funded.

My question for the minister is: Will he take action on the confusion surrounding recycling of glass bottles, as this report states, and ensure that recycled glass bottles do not just pile up or end up in landfill sites?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Madam Deputy Speaker, the member raises a point that is one of very considerable concern to myself and to this government, because not only is the issue of recycling important the issue of developing markets to deal with the recyclables. It is only within the last two or three weeks that we have seen a very severe critique of the blue-box program in Ontario, because the costs are rising dramatically and being passed back into the municipal associations or the municipal jurisdictions that are dealing with it.

The concern that we are dealing with—and we have a program in place where we are waiting to deal with the City of Winnipeg to deal with newsprint recycling. We need to make sure that we have markets available so that we are not simply subsidizing material either to be stockpiled or to be returned to the landfill.

Ozone Depleting Substances Act Enforcement

Ms. Marianne Cerlill (Radlsson): Will the minister also respond to the criticism in the report that the ozone-depleting substance regulations are largely symbolic, and immediately strengthen the enforcement mechanism to go along with this act?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Madam Deputy Speaker, the member is now getting on very thin ice. The regulations that the Province of Manitoba has put in place are considered to be one of the leading sets of regulatory reform in this province for protection of the ozone layer. Secondly—and I hope the members opposite are listening carefully—the industry has said, by their own calculation, that as soon as the completion of the implementation of the reforms and the direction that are involved in our regulations, within this year we will see a 50 percent reduction in the amount of CFCs released in this province.

Ms. Cerlill: See how all those refrigerators and air conditioners are going to be collected.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. Please put your question.

Recycling Programs Newspaper Processing

Ms. Marianne Cerlill (Radlsson): Madam Deputy Speaker, will the government also take action on its own report on the recycling of newspapers to ensure that newspapers are properly recycled and do not also end up in the landfill as we are currently seeing?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Madam Deputy Speaker, newsprint recycling is one of those issues where we keep expecting the price to rise to \$60 or \$80 a ton just around the corner. Unfortunately, because of the world economy and because of the impacts on demand and the type of print being able to be recycled, we are approaching a real market growth as de-inking plants come on stream. We expect to see a new de-inking plant looking for newsprint within a very short period of time.

* (1030)

I put that on the table, Madam Deputy Speaker, because the ability to recycle newsprint material in this province will be there and will be in place as soon as we can access the markets. As I stated earlier, we have a proposal on the table to work with the City of Winnipeg and to work in regional waste collection programs across the province to be able to approach those markets and provide material very quickly as soon as we see some possibility of a reasonable price return.

Manitoba Housing Authority Layoffs

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Deputy Speaker, a year ago the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ernst) abolished 98 locally controlled housing authorities, fired 600 volunteer board members, and now the axe is about to fall on 195 housing staff who will be laid off.

Can the Minister of Housing tell the House and tell those staff, assure the staff, that the process will be fair and explain why people have to reapply for their own positions?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Housing): Madam Deputy Speaker, the people of Charleswood elected me to this House to effectively and efficiently manage their affairs and spend their money as efficiently as possible. I think that fact has escaped some of the members opposite in terms of dealing efficiently and effectively with the taxpayers' money.

With respect to the Manitoba Housing Authority, that is exactly what we were doing, spending their money efficiently and effectively, a lot more so than was done in the past. We are not perfect here in this House in terms of those kinds of programs, but we are working toward that, and we intend to continue to work toward that.

Service Contracting

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Can the Minister of Housing then tell Manitoba taxpayers how there can be any savings when a private contractor bills the Manitoba Housing Authority \$50 for a fuse, a fuse which costs \$1.19, which I bought this morning? Where are the economies of scale? Where are the efficiencies that this minister talks about and brags about? Why is the minister contracting out services that are much more expensive?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Housing): Madam Deputy Speaker, I am not familiar with the exact circumstances of that issue. If the member wants to provide me with the information, I will look into it.

In general terms, Madam Deputy Speaker, the expectation is that with the realignment and restructuring of the Manitoba Housing Authority, the taxpayers of Manitoba and Canada who share these matters—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Ernst: Madam Deputy Speaker, the taxpayers of Canada and Manitoba anticipate saving some \$3 million annually with the restructuring into the Manitoba Housing Authority. I think that is efficient and effective management.

Mr. Martindale: Madam Deputy Speaker, paying a contractor \$50 to replace a \$1.19 fuse is not efficient, is not going to save this government money.

Can the Minister of Housing explain how contractors are going to provide the personal kind of service that staff and former volunteer board members provided? Do you realistically expect that they are going to check on senior citizens, that anyone is going to take responsibility for them, especially in small rural communities?

Mr. Ernst: Madam Deputy Speaker, under the Manitoba Housing Authority, every single project in the province of Manitoba that houses some 22,000 housing units will have direct contact made with it through the Manitoba Housing Authority on a daily basis.

Health Sciences Centre Knee and Hip Replacement Surgery

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Madam Deputy Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

Patients in need of hip and knee surgery continue to wait for their operations. We have recently heard from a patient who has been confined to a wheelchair for the last year because she is unable to have a knee operation and she needs that operation now.

On January 14, the Minister of Health called his quick response team into action and asked it to investigate the freeze on knee and hip surgery which his department, through Health Sciences, has placed for three months. Madam Deputy Speaker, it is more than 43 days today.

Can the minister tell us why his quick response team has not provided us with a report? If he has a report, can he table that in this House today?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Madam Deputy Speaker, I have the report. I intend to release it Monday pending the receipt of two more pieces of information that I thought would be relevant for the discussion around the report.

Let me correct my honourable friend on one small point. The Health Sciences Centre made the decision to not proceed with any more elective surgery in either hip or knee replacement, not the province. I do not want my honourable friend to leave the wrong impression that we ordered that. That decision was not ordered by the province.

I know that my honourable friend will be aware that already this year, in the first nine months of the year, the Health Sciences Centre had undertaken the same volume of services as they did in the previous 12 months. I am also informed, for my honourable friend's information, that any urgent or emergent replacements of knees or hips are continuing at the Health Sciences Centre.

The specific case my honourable friend referred to, if it was urgent or emergent, could be dealt with.

Mr. Cheema: Madam Deputy Speaker, the decision was by the Health Sciences Centre. I will correct that.

Can the minister tell us why he would not release the report today so that we, as members of this Assembly, can also make a judgment, because the patients are waiting and they are suffering, and it is costing taxpayers more money to keep them in the hospital and in the community?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Deputy Speaker, I indicated to my honourable friend that I hope to be able to release the report on Monday, pending receipt of two additional pieces of information that I requested after having received the report yesterday.

I realize my honourable friend is anxious to have government's response. I will be pleased to provide that for my honourable friend, but I do need two additional pieces of information that I think he, as a critic, would be asking me for. In anticipation of that, I want to be fully informed so that I can more fully inform my honourable friend and Manitobans in terms of the circumstance at the Health Sciences Centre.

Mr. Cheema: Madam Deputy Speaker, can the minister tell us, or assure Manitobans who are waiting for this surgery, as of his initial assessment from the report, can he at least assure us that the surgical procedure will resume as of Monday?

Mr. Orchard: Madam Deputy Speaker, that assurance was given by the Health Sciences Centre in announcing their decision, in that any emergent or urgent surgeries in either hip replacement or knee replacement would be ongoing. My understanding

is that those urgent and emergent procedures are ongoing.

As I indicated to my honourable friend in my previous answer, should the circumstance that my honourable friend described be deemed urgent or emergent, that surgical procedure could be undertaken today.

* (1040)

Manitoba Housing Authority Parkland District

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Deputy Speaker, this government has committed itself to decentralization and talked extensively about employment opportunities it will bring to rural Manitoba. However, as my colleague from Burrows has indicated, in the past year this same government has abolished local housing authorities and plans to amalgamate them with the Manitoba Housing Authority, closing the office in Swan River, and as a result, the people from Swan River will be served out of Roblin.

Can the Minister of Housing explain why he has decided to move the office to Roblin and how he expects to adequately meet the needs of approximately 200 housing units in the Swan River area and expect to save money at the same time, if this is what he—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Housing): Madam Deputy Speaker, the question of districts for the Manitoba Housing Authority was looked at long and hard. In the Parkland area, it was divided in half, similar to how the Rural Development Corporations are divided.

In doing that, there are about 600 units overall in that Parkland west district. There are 181 units under management in the town of Swan River. Madam Deputy Speaker, when you look at a geographic map of that area with Shoal Lake in the south and Birch River in the north, Roblin is in the geographic centre of that district.

Ms. Wowchuk: Roblin also seems to be located in an area that has an imaginary line around it for appointments and jobs.

Can the Minister of Housing tell this House how many jobs will be lost in rural Manitoba and why he is working against his government's stated policy of decentralizing jobs in rural Manitoba—and not setting up one rural community up against another,

and moving jobs from where there are 200 units to a place where there are 60? This is not centralization—

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

Mr. Ernst: Madam Deputy Speaker, there were 98 housing authorities in the province of Manitoba; 96 of those are outside the city of Winnipeg. To change anyone from one community to another is going to cause some friction. I understand that.

When you look at the fact that, in the case of the Parkland West region, Swan River is located at the extreme north end of that particular district; and, at some point, you have to make a decision as to where best to situate an office in order to serve the entire district.

Ms. Wowchuk: In light of the hardship of this decision, the hardship which has been caused to the community of Swan River, which is struggling because of the recession, which is struggling because of farm prices and the loss of jobs from the Repap deal, will the minister reconsider his decision and open the office in Swan River?

Mr. Ernst: Madam Deputy Speaker, as I have indicated to the member today, several days ago, in correspondence over a past period time, the rationale for locating the office where it is proposed to be located is extremely reasonable and the most efficient location within that district.

RCMP Confiscated Liquor Disposal

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Madam Deputy Speaker, over the last few years, the amount of liquor that is being confiscated by police forces in the province has increased dramatically. I have learned that the RCMP are about to pour some \$25,000 worth of confiscated liquor down the drain.

I want to ask the minister responsible for the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission (Mrs. McIntosh), can she tell this House how much confiscated liquor and beer, the value of that liquor and beer in total, is being poured down the drain? How many taxpayers' dollars are being wasted by this current practice?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister charged with the administration of The Liquor Control Act): Madam Deputy Speaker, I will take that question as advisement, check the figures, and get back to the member.

Liquor Control Act Confiscated Liquor

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): There is another problem which police forces have been raising with the minister for many months. Madam Deputy Speaker, my question is, given that this minister has the right, under Section 147 of The Liquor Control Act, to resell confiscated liquor, will this minister explain to the House why she is allowing hundreds of thousands of dollars of revenue from booze poured down the drain disappear through this government's fingers? Is that efficiency?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I think the question is more an evidentiary matter, and not a matter for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh). I, too, will obtain some information about this, and inform the honourable member.

Point of Order

Mr. Storie: Madam Deputy Speaker, the minister responsible for the Liquor Commission (Mrs. McIntosh) unquestionably has the authority to resell unopened confiscated liquor. It is not an evidentiary matter at all. It is a matter of government policy. Are they going to allow hundreds of thousands of dollars to be poured down the drain when they could resell this unopened liquor? That is the question. It is not an evidentiary question at all.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Flin Flon does not have a point of order. The question was directed to the government, and the government may indeed decide which minister shall respond to the question.

* * *

Mr. Storie: Madam Deputy Speaker, for the third time in a week this minister has refused to respond—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. Does the honourable member for Flin Flon have a final supplementary question?

Mr. Storie: My question is to the minister responsible for the Manitoba Liquor Commission (Mrs. McIntosh).

Given that she has the power, will this minister now put in place a policy that will collect revenue for the province of Manitoba to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars a year by not pouring liquor

down the drain when it is unopened and could be resold for the benefit of everyone in the province?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Deputy Speaker, we will ascertain if indeed, as the honourable member suggests, ministers of this government do have such powers. That is not acknowledged by me today, but we will look into the matter.

Dutch Elm Disease Government Position

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Madam Deputy Speaker, earlier this morning I presented, along with the representative for Wolseley, a petition with respect to the funding for Dutch elm disease and the restoration of that funding. Two backbenchers, the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) and the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) said very vocally, perhaps not in Hansard, but certainly from where we could hear it here, that there was absolutely no money, no further money should be spent trying to stop Dutch elm disease because it is a lost cause.

I would like to ask the First Minister: Is this the policy of the government of the Province of Manitoba, that they will do nothing further to stop Dutch elm disease and are prepared to watch the trees die?

* (1050)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Without accepting any of the preamble of the question from the Leader of the Liberal Party, obviously the program has been in place to cut up and remove diseased trees, trees that are already diseased and dying. I will look into the matter and have the matter responded to by the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), under whose jurisdiction it does come so that he can engage in a full discussion with the Leader of the Opposition.

I would say, Madam Deputy Speaker, that this is an area in which the Leader of the Opposition should be debating the issue when Estimates are brought forward on the expenditures of this province, so that she can debate the authorities and the various rationales that are presented with respect to Dutch elm disease and the money that is spent on the removal of diseased trees.

Mrs. Carstairs: Madam Deputy Speaker, would the First Minister tell us if he is in agreement with his colleagues on his back bench that the money spent on Dutch elm disease is a lost cause?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Deputy Speaker, as I said earlier, I accept none of the preamble of what the Leader of the Liberal Party has said.

Mrs. Carstairs: Madam Deputy Speaker, will the First Minister undertake to have discussions with the members for Emerson (Mr. Penner) and Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) so that he will know first hand exactly what they said, which was that it was a waste of money?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Deputy Speaker, last time she said it was a lost cause; then she says it is a waste of money. She changes her story every time she stands up.

I invite the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) to debate this issue in Estimates of the Department of Natural Resources where she can obtain, from the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), all of the rationale and all of the explanation as to what money is being spent with respect to Dutch elm disease.

Federal Budget Impact Cultural Programs

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Deputy Speaker, the recent federal budget proposed many cuts which are going to affect Manitobans. Amongst these are the Cultural Industries Development Fund, cut by \$600,000; Telecom Canada, cut by \$7.5 million; the National Film Boards Independent Film Makers, \$500,000; the Museums Assistance Plan by \$1.1 million. This is on top of severe cultural cuts in the last year.

I would like to ask the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mrs. Mitchelson), before she threw her support behind this Mulroney budget, did she determine the impact of these severe cuts on the Winnipeg Art Gallery, the Museum of Man and Nature, The Forks archeology program, the independent film producers of Manitoba, the conservation programs of Manitoba and the local archives networks? Will she table this information?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to make it abundantly clear in this House today that this government has supported our cultural industries in a very major and significant way. We will continue to support our cultural industries and our cultural institutions in the province of Manitoba. We consider them extremely important. We consider that our cultural institutions,

our cultural industries not only are a positive example of what Manitobans can do culturally but they also are of economic benefit to our province of Manitoba. Our commitment is strong, and our commitment will remain.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Deputy Speaker, to the same minister, I would like to ask: Has she determined the impact for Manitoba's cultural sector of the federal transfer of \$100 million out of retraining programs in the Canadian Jobs Strategy? Will she table that information?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Deputy Speaker, we will, over a period of time, be analyzing the impacts of what the federal budget has done to culture in our province. As I indicated in my first answer, our commitment is strong. We believe and support our cultural industries. We believe and support our cultural institutions and we will continue to do so.

Property Rights Proposal Legal Opinion

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Has the minister asked for a legal opinion on the implication for Manitoba's heritage of the Conservative property rights proposal for the Constitution? Will she table that opinion?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): I will bring information back. I have not asked for a legal opinion, but I will get information and bring that back to the House.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Nonpolitical Statement

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): May I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Madam Deputy Speaker: Does the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? Leave has been granted.

Mr. McAlpine: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise today to express my sincere congratulations to a student who attends Strathmillan School in my constituency. This young Grade 3 student's name is Danny R gnier. Danny was one of 24 exceptional children who was recently recognized by the Manitoba Council for Exceptional Children for his outstanding achievement. The Manitoba Council for Exceptional Children gives awards to children with special needs who have made outstanding progress in their development.

Danny was awarded for his progress in independent living skills. This progress in life skills has not come easy for Danny who has had a series of illnesses including a stroke, triple bypass surgery, or any of the other children in special needs programs across this province. Each day these children face challenges, and I am pleased that the Manitoba Council for Exceptional Children recognizes their outstanding achievements.

As the MLA for this area, I am truly proud of him and the other students and wish to congratulate them for their strengths and courage in facing their daily challenges. Congratulations also must go to the teachers who work so diligently and the parents for patiently dealing with these exceptional children. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Government House Leader): Would you be so kind as to call firstly, Bill 38 on page 4 of the Order Paper today and the remainder of the debate on second readings as listed on the Order Paper. Thank you.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 38—The Manitoba Evidence Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), to resume debate on second reading of Bill 38 (The Manitoba Evidence Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la preuve au Manitoba), standing in the name of the honourable member for Inkster.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Deputy Speaker, I would adjourn debate in hopes that the member for St. James would comment on behalf of the party.

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Madam Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to see this legislation before the House. We have wanted some reforms to The Evidence Act in prior years, both with respect to witnesses under the age of 14, as well as with respect to those who have been in the past, I think, in some cases, unreasonably denied the ability to testify in court because of a mental handicap.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in that vein I am pleased to see this legislation. Let me say at the outset that our party looks forward to this going to the committee stage and having a full and frank

discussion of the particulars. It is not a long bill, but as I have said with others, I think it is significant, and I think it is an important step forward.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I think as one and there are a few, perhaps not that many, but a few of us here who do spend quite a bit of time in court, I can tell you that in my view, the better course of action is to allow the judge of the day to decide the weight of the evidence, rather than to not hear the evidence at all. I think that to deny someone the ability to testify simply and solely based on age is unduly restrictive.

Of course, in child abuse cases and other cases like that, it is particularly important to have the evidence before the court. Now that does not of course prohibit defence counsel or opposing counsel in any given case from attacking the weight that is to be attached to that evidence. That is fair game to expose that someone testifying maybe does not know the full import of the oath that they take before they testify. That is fair, but to say that the evidence cannot be heard at all, it does I believe provide a carte blanche restriction of the evidence before the court which is not always reasonable and I think not always in the best interest of justice.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I do have some concern which I want to draw to the minister's attention, and that is with the indication that the proposed Section 24(5) which indicates that the burden of proving that there is an issue as to the capacity of the underaged person or the mentally compromised person, the burden falls on the party that challenges that. I am not sure that is appropriate. I look forward to some discussion on that point in the committee.

It strikes me, and the general rule of evidence is that he who puts the evidence forward has the burden of proving that this evidence is coming from a competent witness. It is up to the party putting the evidence forward to prove that. This shifting of the burden, shifting of the onus, I have some concern about. I do agree that we should pull back from the restrictive nature of the exclusions, the evidentiary exclusions, and that is what is being achieved here.

With respect to the shifting of the burden, I must say I do have some concern about that. That is really my only concern with this legislation, but I would like a full and frank discussion at the committee stage on the shifting of the burden which is the last section of this act, Section 24(5), because my concern is that the party that would challenge

will not have sufficient or adequate evidence or as much evidence as the party that is putting forward the evidence, and rightly so in the normal course.

As I have said, the party that puts the evidence forward has the burden of showing that he who testifies is competent to testify. I do not know the particular reason that the minister is shifting the burden in this case, but I look forward to his explanation at committee stage.

Madam Deputy Speaker, with that caveat on our approval of this bill going forward to committee, we welcome this lessening of the standards for testimony from witnesses under the age of 14 and those who may be mentally compromised.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading of Bill 38. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

* (1100)

Bill 6—The Denturists Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), second reading of Bill 6 (The Denturists Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les denturologistes), standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis).

Is it the will of the House to permit the bill to remain standing?

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave has been granted.

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Madam Deputy Speaker, on this Bill 6, which is a very straightforward bill, and in principle we support this bill, I think this will bring the regulation of the denturists into line with other health care professionals. We consider it a progressive step.

The minister has told us that he has the assurance from both the associations, and they are in support of this move. We believe that the partnership between the health care professionals and the Legislative Assembly will help not only the professional community, but the interests of all Manitobans. In fact, the minister is removing himself from the authority which is in line with all

professional bodies. I think that will help in the long run.

What we would like to see at the committee stage are any questions or any further suggestions from the association so we can improve the bill. I will just end my remarks saying that we will let it go to the committee stage, and we will be open for any comments. In principle, we support this bill.

Madam Deputy Speaker: As previously agreed, this bill will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis).

Bill 9—The Economic Innovation and Technology Council Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable First Minister (Mr. Filmon), to resume debate on second reading of Bill 9 (The Economic Innovation and Technology Council Act; Loi sur le Conseil de l'innovation économique et de la technologie), standing in the name of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Stand? Is it the will of the House to permit the bill to remain standing? Leave?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave has been granted.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Madam Deputy Speaker, I wish to put a few remarks on the record on Bill 9, The Economic Innovation and Technology Council Act. [interjection] The Highways minister made a remark. I say that maybe he wants to offer that advice and warning to the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) when he is speaking, as opposed to myself.

In any event, Madam Deputy Speaker, The Economic Innovation and Technology Council Act seems quite clear from our point of view. It seems quite clear that the First Minister, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) is engaging here along with the many other activities of his government with more window dressing, more PR to leave the impression, to create an aberration that in fact the government is innovative and is doing something innovative to create jobs and to ensure that Manitoba is moving forward in the areas of technology at the forefront of technological developments.

We believe that in fact this is just what I said, an attempt to leave the impression that the government is doing something, and it is simply a reshuffling of dollars, and as a matter of fact cutting of dollars for research at the same time. Really, there is nothing substantive.

My speech today will attempt to determine and to demonstrate, I should say that point, that in fact this is little more than window dressing. It is being done for the purposes of creating an illusion that something substantive is taking place in the area of innovation and technology in this province when in fact it is not taking place at all.

I think we can look, first of all when we make this supposition, this assertion that in fact the government is creating an aberration. If we look at the issue of sustainable development, the issue of sustainable development was one of the major so-called initiatives of this government, and it has been basically a shell, a shell game. There has not been a lot taking place under sustainable development. Even the government's friends in the Chamber of Commerce say that there is nothing happening, that it is a PR game. In fact we agree, that the government has talked a lot about sustainable development and done little, so their track record is demonstrated there probably as good as any place.

The water management initiative that they talked about, they sent out all kinds of fancy brochures and papers about the water management initiative that they were going to undertake. In fact, it has just petered right out. We do not hear anything more, no substantive action. Nothing has happened with the water management and conservation initiative. Again, the track record is consistent there with the sustainable development so-called initiative.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we can look at the rural economic development of cabinet, that committee, the Rural Economic Development Committee of cabinet was allegedly set up to stimulate economic development in rural areas and create opportunities for economic development in rural areas. In fact that did not take place. Nothing happened as a result of that committee of cabinet in the economic development.

While it was much touted, the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) announced this Rural Economic Development Committee of cabinet in the first couple of months that the government was in place

after 1988. It had all the rural ministers on this committee. Nothing happened. We did not see any results from that committee. They did not present any reports to the Legislature. When questioned during Estimates, nothing was forthcoming from the ministers as to what in fact they were doing on that committee, if anything, for rural economic development. They are again, consistent with the assertion that I am making today, that this is nothing more than a PR effort by the government insofar as innovation and technology.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Plohman: Madam Deputy Speaker, there are a lot of meetings taking place, one significant one is taking place while I am attempting to make my very important points on this bill. I would ask your assistance in that matter.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. May I please ask all honourable members to engage in their private conversations either outside the Chamber or in the designated loges.

Mr. Plohman: Madam Deputy Speaker, I very much appreciate your intervention there to assist in bringing some order to this House. It was very timely.

I want to go on with the contention and the assertion that I am making here that the government is doing little more than PR with this Bill 9. I have demonstrated in the remarks that I have made so far that the examples I have given with sustainable development, with the rural economic development of cabinet, the water management so-called initiative, that in fact the government has been engaged in a lot of PR activity to create an illusion that something is happening.

They have also demonstrated that they are not committed to major economic development initiatives in rural Manitoba through a number of actions. The Business Development Centre in Dauphin was closed when this government came in place. The Regional Development Corporation in the Parkland was split in two, and the funding was dramatically cut. As a matter of fact, they were cut off last year and it was only at the last minute that some bridge funding was granted to sustain them through the current fiscal year. They are continuing to press for more funding from this government, even though the government has already cut dramatically in economic development funding for

the Parkland region. There was a major cut in 1988-89 in the Parkland Regional Development Corporation.

There again, we see the evidence that this government is not committed to economic development in the rural areas and is creating an illusion with this bill that they are going to be at the forefront of technology and innovation in this province. They also demonstrated that lack of commitment by their cutback at the Manitoba Research Council.

The Manitoba Research Council, which in fact is being restructured now to be called the Economic Innovation and Technology Council, was cut back in the previous year, 1990, by some \$700,000. The year ending 1991, that is last year, pardon me, the current year, it was \$2,714,000. It was cut back for the 1991 fiscal year ending March 31, 1991 to \$2 million, so there was a \$700,000 cut, an extremely significant cut in the Manitoba Research Council before undertaking this act now to destroy the Manitoba Research Council completely and to replace it with the Innovation and Technology Council, which of course as we are saying is merely window dressing to leave the impression with the people and the public of Manitoba that rather than that big cut that was put in place the previous year, the government is embarking on a bold new initiative in the area of technology and innovation. We know that is not the case as I have demonstrated with the various examples that I have provided.

As well, the Information Technology Branch and program in the Department of Industry and Trade was cut back significantly in the 1991 year as well, a 10 percent cut in Information Technology under Industry, Trade and Tourism for the 1991 year, so again, major reductions there.

* (1110)

Technology—we are talking about technology and innovation here. There have been cutbacks in those areas in the last couple of years by his government, so we fail to see that there is any consistency in their approach, any genuine desire to expand the activities of the government in this area. We are very suspicious that indeed they intend to do anything with this Innovation Council, which is being set up by way of this act, other than to create the illusion that I have talked about.

We see the results of this government's inaction as well with 57,000 people unemployed, record

numbers, Madam Deputy Speaker, in this province—57,000 people unemployed, a 13-percent reduction in 1990 over '89 in manufacturing shipments—a 13-percent reduction in manufacturing shipments. Thousands of jobs have been lost in Manitoba and Canada, hundreds of thousands, because of the Free Trade Agreement, which this Conservative government supported, one of the things which they were not afraid to go out on a limb and support Mulroney on.

In many areas they distanced themselves from the federal government. They said, well, we are not like those guys. That is not us. We are Manitoba PCs. We are not part of this Mulroney bunch that is so insensitive. We are kind of special here in Manitoba. We are a little different Conservatives.

In the area of free trade, they did not worry about distancing themselves. This was obviously the right policy by Conservatives, and they supported the Free Trade Agreement. The information, which has come in over the last couple of years since free trade was implemented on January 1, 1989, now we are three years into it, shows that in fact free trade has been worse to us than ever imagined in terms of jobs and in terms of its impact on our economy.

Insofar as jobs lost, Canada lost over 435,000 well-paid manufacturing jobs between June of 1989 and March of 1991. One of every five manufacturing jobs has disappeared since the deal was signed. That is a devastating legacy as a result of free trade. I would hope that the members of this government would not keep their heads in the sand, supporting blindly the Free Trade Agreement when they see the evidence coming in.

I would think the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) would stand up and he would say, you know, I wish to apologize to the opposition for supporting that Free Trade Agreement. I realize I was wrong. I realize that you were right on this side of the House. Now I want to set the record straight and let my constituents know that I no longer will be an advocate of the Free Trade Agreement. The evidence has been presented. I agree with it. It is bad for Manitoba, bad for Canada, and I intend to cross the floor on that issue in any event, whether I intend to cross the floor physically—physically, no, I do not think the member would ever do that. He just could not say a thing, but could he cross the floor on that issue, Madam Deputy Speaker, then we will see whether he is a master of his convictions,

whether he believes in his convictions and is prepared to act when he believes.

We see that 435,000 well-paid manufacturing jobs lost. We also see that manufacturing employment in Canada has fallen from 19 percent of total employment, 19 percent manufacturing before the trade agreement, 19 percent of total employment was created in the manufacturing sector. It is now down to 16 percent as of April '91. It will be lower now. We are approaching April '92, but the figures I have are for April 1991—fallen to 16 percent, a 3 percent drop in terms of its impact on total employment.

Insofar as the economy, since the Free Trade Agreement, some may say it is a coincidence, but I would say the evidence is clear that the Free Trade Agreement has contributed to the recession, the deepest recession, high interest costs and the deepest recession, most severe in the past 50 years in this country, and a massive shutdown of the manufacturing sector as more and more firms transfer their operations to the U.S. and Mexico.

In 1988, the last year before the agreement was signed, investment rose 24.7 percent. During 1989, it rose by only 5 percent. That was the first year of the Free Trade Agreement. These are figures that the members of the Conservative caucus and cabinet should really be listening to, when you consider that investment in 1988 rose by 24.7 percent in manufacturing, and during 1989, it rose only by 5 percent, and in 1990, it declined by 2.3 percent, and it is expected to decline in 1991, once we get the figures, a further 6 percent to 10 percent, when these figures are known. That is the devastating legacy of the Free Trade Agreement.

When these members of this government continue to support the Free Trade Agreement, they are doing so knowing that they are supporting a policy that has dramatically hurt the Canadian economy and particularly the province of Manitoba because that is what we are concerned about.

The members opposite like to talk about Ontario. It has been devastated by the Free Trade Agreement, no thanks to Bob Rae. This is because of Mulroney and the Conservative premiers who supported him, the Free Trade Agreement. That was in place and he has certainly inherited the legacy of that Free Trade Agreement. As well, right here in Manitoba we have been devastated by that Free Trade Agreement, and that is something that

these ministers cannot deny if they listen to the facts and look at the facts.

The government here is a mirror image of their federal counterparts. In 1984, the National Research Council building was under construction in Winnipeg, the Manufacturing Technology Institute. The Tories scuttled that project. It was too far advanced in construction, and I think this is very relevant to the whole area of technology and innovation when we are talking about this particular act, because the National Research Council is very much involved in exactly that particular activity.

At that particular time, the government came in and said, no, the private sector is going to do all the research; we do not think there is a role there for the federal government. They went ahead, completed the construction, with great reluctance, of the National Research Council building in Winnipeg here and then left it as an open shell and tried to find tenants and private money to undertake the research in that beautiful facility. In fact, it has never happened.

It has been a failure, because the government did not have the commitment to research in the public sector which is absolutely necessary in this country, especially at this time and age where patent protection is ensuring that private companies are going to be able to develop certain processes and products and then keep a monopoly on them for so long and make huge profits on those products recovering by many times-fold their research costs, so it is important to have the public sector involved, and yet the government of Manitoba cut back in the research processing in Manitoba and at the same time the federal government cut back on the National Research Council, again, a parallel here between the provincial government and the federal government—the federal Conservatives, the same thing.

We say this is a PR exercise, this particular act. There is no doubt about it. Let us look at the duties of the Innovation and Technology Council to see in fact whether that bears out our contention that this is a PR exercise or whether in fact there is something substantive that is going to be done by this new council.

We look at the government news release that was put out on November 8 when the Premier announced this. He went through a number of things, the committee of cabinet and the Economic

Development Secretariat, all part of this illusion that they are creating, that there is something going on. Then they went to the economic innovation development council and described what the objectives are going to be, the objects of this new council and what it was going to be doing.

If you look at it, there is nothing there that is going to provide any substantive action. The new Innovation and Technology Council will provide a forum for consultation and dialogue, a forum, more talk. That is one of the functions of this new council, not action oriented and testing and research that will actually result in new products, but they are going to act as a forum. They are going to recommend a course for action. It is kind of a study, a think-tank here as opposed to something that was going to actually undertake substantive work in research.

They are going to sponsor personal exchanges and recommend means for encouraging private-sector investment, much like the federal government said was going to take place in 1984 when they reluctantly completed the construction on the National Research Council building in Manitoba and left it as a shell for the private sector to invest. No, nothing happened. They did not come running with the research dollars. Similarly, it is not going to happen here. There is not going to be a great influx of dollars from the private sector and the public sector under this government, and the federal government has been cutting back.

The description of the work that is going to be undertaken by this new council bears out what I have been saying and that is this is little more than a PR exercise, an effort to create an illusion of something taking place in technology innovation by this government, nothing substantive. I think undoubtedly we will see more as a result of this inaction by this government as a result of this simple PR effort on their part, more of the same kind of failures that this government has provided us with over the last couple of years. Even as late as yesterday with the SEA Inc. in Portage la Prairie where Mr. Kim Sigurdson, who met with my colleague the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) and others to discuss this issue, told us that in fact the government was totally disorganized in responding, that the Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson) did not know what he was doing. He did not have staff there that were briefed, that knew what was available.

* (1120)

There is massive confusion in the department. They do not know what kinds of things could be available. On the one hand, they say the government will not get involved in joint ventures, then they take 24 percent of the ownership of Linnet Graphics, so they were in fact deviating from that principle. There is a confusing message being sent out there to potential investors and creators of jobs in this province. Yesterday, we saw that in fact this opportunity for 200 jobs in Portage la Prairie is being lost because of this government's inaction and indecision.

We saw a similar response from them with regard to the Piper aircraft issue, too little too late to get into the whole area, much later than other provinces had initiated some contacts with Piper. In fact, they are perhaps the last ones in, with very little chance of achieving any kind of successful endeavour here in the province of Manitoba.

I can say that the town of Dauphin had expressed a great deal of interest in having this firm locate to Dauphin in my constituency. They met with the minister, and he said, oh, yes, they are in the running and so on; but meanwhile the minister had not been doing his job. While the communities around this province felt that maybe they had an opportunity to attract this major employer to their community, they did not realize that the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson) had dropped the ball, had fumbled the ball at his level, had not been taking the initiatives and steps that would be necessary to ensure that there was in fact a realistic opportunity for Piper to locate in Manitoba.

The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) realizes that what I am saying is absolutely correct, that his colleague has fumbled the ball, and that perhaps as he sat around the cabinet table he contributed to that fumbling. Now he is upset that I would even raise it here. We do not want to talk about those kinds of things, the failures of this government. That is not nice to talk about. We should talk about the successes; but, unfortunately, Madam Deputy Speaker, if I was going to talk about the successes of this government, I would not have more than five minutes, maybe a two-minute speech. That would be about it and obviously a very short list.

An Honourable Member: Talk about Tupperware.

Mr. Plohma: Tupperware, and the Minister of Health's Tupperware in Morden is one casualty. My Leader has pointed out the fact that the Minister of

Health lost the Tupperware plant with all of the jobs that were created there when that firm moved into the Morden area, that that has been lost as a casualty of the Free Trade Agreement. The Minister of Health is very silent on that side of it, because he knows that he, in supporting the Free Trade Agreement, was working precisely against his own constituents and the people who were employed at the Tupperware plant.

We see the failures of this government in attracting new industry, and we see the failures insofar as business that has been lost to Manitoba, existing businesses that were employing people, creating jobs in this province. We are part of those 435,000 lost jobs. The Tupperware employees were a part of those 435,000 lost jobs since the Free Trade Agreement in this country. They are part of the devastation. Morden has been part of that devastation.

What is really happening in the whole area of food processing and agriculture products processing in this province? Where is this government taking and showing initiatives? What is taking place here, other than window dressing and setting up this new technology council, innovations council that they talk about?

Have we seen any movement, any success in the whole area of rough fish processing, for example, a tremendous opportunity because we produce so much rough fish in this province, commonly known as mullet or sucker or carp. A few of those species can be prepared in such a way that they are a very tasty product and yet this has not materialized. It is because the government is cutting back in funding. In 1990, they cut back by \$700,000 in the Research Council. Now they are replacing the Research Council with a technology and innovation council. It is just playing around with names, create an illusion that something is happening.

The Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), the member for Ste. Rose, knows that the Eddystone fish processing was one initiative that had been on the books for some time. Testing was going on at the Research Council. Nothing has taken place lately. I have not heard a thing about any developments here. Where is that minister now and this government following through to ensure that the rough fish in Lake Winnipegosis and Lake Manitoba have a market, that there is an opportunity to sell this for human consumption, not only for cat food

and for other food that might be sent to Third World countries.

There is a tremendous market if the product is developed. I have tasted it. I have eaten that. I have canned rough fish myself, and it is very much like salmon. It can be used in sandwiches—excellent tasting. There are patties [interjection] yes, that can be made, fish patties from sucker and mullet as well, excellent products—

An Honourable Member: How about carp?

Mr. Plohman: And carp. Before they were cut off at the knees, the other thing the Parkland Regional Development Corporation had been working on was the tanning of the skins of these fish. They make excellent exotic leathers, just like snake skins and crocodile skins that could be used for fancy belts and purses and shoes and so on, a tremendous product. I have seen it. There is a tremendous opportunity there.

There could be total utilization of these fish. They even use the waste products for enzyme production. The whole fish could be used, but this government has not followed up in this area of research where there could be a huge number of jobs. [interjection]

The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) makes light of this issue, but he knows, if he has read any of the information or talked with the people involved, that in fact there is a tremendous opportunity for job creation in rural areas around our lakes where we produce so much of this fish but do not have a market for it at the present time. Why is this government not moving?

Now he is going to blame it on the previous government. I mean, that is getting a bit tired. We are talking here four years that he has been in government now. Man, time flies, does it not—four years and this minister has dropped the ball, fumbled the ball on that along with his colleagues. [interjection]

Yes, indeed we were moving forward in government. This government dropped it and discontinued any further research. Where is it? Let them stand and defend their action on fish processing in this province since 1988, in the last four years. Let them stand and defend it. I would like to get a progress report from the Minister of Environment and the member for Ste. Rose du Lac (Mr. Cummings) who has those lakes adjacent to his constituency, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard)

who likes to talk about how great they have been doing.

There is the issue of alfalfa processing in the Interlake area, one of the major requirements. In the Swan River area, they would like to see a plant such as the one that is in Dauphin at the present time. The people in Dauphin would like to see the farmers' alfalfa plant vastly expanded as well because there is a market for those products, and we believe they can be competitive in Manitoba with cheap sources of energy, but natural gas has to be extended to Swan River, has to be extended into the Interlake to make that possibility.

Why is this government not moving ahead quickly to provide those opportunities, to work in concert with those communities, so in fact those developments can take place if they are really interested in economic development in our rural areas, in research and innovation? They have a bill here that talks about innovation, technology, but they are not taking action.

* (1130)

I say it is window dressing, it is PR, it is creating an illusion hopefully to get them past the next election. That is all they want to do is create an illusion, like they did with sustainable development, but it is petering out before they even get to the election. People have now recognized what it is and called it what it is. The same with the water management strategy that they talked about, the same with the Rural Economic Development Committee of cabinet which went nowhere.

The Premier (Mr. Filmon) has been announcing various, what he calls, initiatives for the last four years, and then when nothing happens, he announces another one. He takes that inaction right into the next little carcass that is sitting there, and he says, now these guys are going to do something. It goes from one to another, musical chairs, nothing happening—[interjection] Yes, things were happening. The Information Technology Branch of the department was set up when we were in government. There were tremendous things happening in Manitoba, but this government has continued to fumble the ball, and there has been nothing but cutbacks since this government took place in jobs in this province, and increases in unemployment in the rural areas of this province, a declining rural economy.

This Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) knows he has presided over the worst disaster in agriculture in this province in the history since the Dirty Thirties, so he has nothing to be proud about either insofar as his initiatives in the area of agriculture. He does say that we should not talk about that anymore. Let us not talk about that anymore; it is all rosy in the future. We shall see how rosy it is, and we have it on the record the minister is predicting all kinds of things at this time. We will see, and we will also find out from this minister whether that kind of statement of encouragement is sufficient for those people facing foreclosure and bankruptcy, facing quitclaim.

The members who are sitting around bragging about GRIP should know, if they had been out there, that in fact people are very concerned about the inequities in GRIP. They need major changes to GRIP. They are not saying throw it out completely. They are saying we need improvements and changes. The minister knows that.

He knows he was wrong on many counts, but he has not told you people that. He has not told his colleagues that he was wrong on a number of areas in GRIP, because he does not admit his mistakes. He just has a policy, you do not admit that you made a mistake with regard to GRIP or NISA or whatever it might have been. So we know that he is going to try, hopefully quietly bring in these now and say, yes, minor little improvements needed here. Meanwhile his colleagues are going to think that he made a perfect program in the first place because they are insulated from those complaints. We know they are there, the minister knows they are there and we hope it will be improved.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I deviate somewhat from this bill. I have been talking about processing and innovation and technology. In agriculture it is a very important part of our future in terms of new products, processing and processes that can be developed. We are hoping that this minister—and we will see in the next budget whether there is a major increase in research spending by this government, because in fact the public sector must lead the way in that area. They cannot leave it all to the private sector.

With the patent protection, as I said earlier, that they have now given to them by Conservatives, they will continue to rake off profits far beyond their development costs, far beyond what is reasonable and rational.

An Honourable Member: Do you believe in a partnership?

Mr. Plohman: Yes, we believe in partnerships and joint ventures. That is what we want this government to initiate, because right now, as we saw with the SEA Inc. in Portage la Prairie, they had no partner. The government did not know where they were. They did not know how to respond in the private sector in a joint venture way because they have not even developed the concept yet in their departments.

Let us hope that they are developing it now. Let us hope that they have learned and that in fact this innovations council and this research council will in fact be something substantive rather than just another hollow shell so that the government can say, yes, we are doing something—a PR exercise, an illusion. Let us hope that is more than that. We will be watching very carefully, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Thank you very much.

Committee Changes

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Madam Deputy Speaker, may I have leave to make a committee change?

Madam Deputy Speaker: Does the honourable member for Point Douglas have leave to make committee changes? Leave has been granted.

Mr. Hickes: I move, seconded by the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments be amended as follows: Wellington (Ms. Barrett) for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes), for Thursday, March 5 at 7 p.m.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Deputy Speaker, it is an honour to speak on legislation before this Chamber, Bill 9, The Economic Innovation and Technology Council Act.

I guess it is fitting that I have the opportunity to speak on this bill today during this period this week when one recognizes the fact that a federal budget was produced by the Conservative government, their eighth budget, and we see the Conservatives, unlike their position in the 1990 election now where they were bashing the federal Conservative

government and quite accurately pointing out the inadequacies of the federal Conservative government, doing a hallelujah chorus to the Mulroney government and their economic vision of this country without any recognition of the devastation that the economic policies of the Conservative government have produced in Canada and in Manitoba.

The hallelujah chorus was loud and strong from ministers opposite in Question Period on Wednesday because, Madam Deputy Speaker, in spite of all their public relations electioneering, the smiling person in the canoe, when you come right down to it, the members opposite are all sizzle and no steak when it comes to the economy and they are ideological Conservatives when you scratch the surface. It is very clear again with this bill and their policies and articulations of this last week.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Conservatives have introduced a bill with the usual fanfare that has brought us previous bills in the past of totally a public relations content without any substance at all in terms of what it means for the province of Manitoba. This bill again, when you look at the past record of the Conservative government in Manitoba on research and development and training and all these other things that go along with innovation and technological developments, is a number of whistles and bells on top of a shell of development for our training and development of our economy.

The Attorney General wants to continue to defend—the second largest cutback in any of the budget lines last year was in the education ACCESS programs in the university section of the budget.

I know facts do not mean anything to Conservatives, but they are important to Manitobans. I would suggest to members opposite the more and more they get bunkered in this Chamber and the more and more they feel they are under siege, the more and more they are losing touch with the people of Manitoba and the more and more they should be calling an election to get back in touch with the real people of this province. Perhaps they can get in touch by a good healthy term in opposition again, because they have certainly lost any vision and any innovation and any technological development that would go with the government-in-waiting. They have become tired before their time. They have become stale before any other government in the history of this province, and it shows every day with their lashing out at

people in the hallways and in this Chamber. They are a stale, tired government that only can produce public relations gestures in forms of bills that are sponsored by the Premier (Mr. Filmon).

Madam Deputy Speaker, this is very consistent with their Conservative cousins in Ottawa. In 1983 and 1984 the Conservatives in Ottawa said, and I quote, we must work smarter. We cannot work harder than other countries, we must work smarter and we must invest in research and development. We must invest in technological innovation. We must invest in the future industries of this country.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the federal Conservatives, supported by their cousins opposite, went out with that message in the 1984 election and defeated overwhelmingly the discredited Liberals because they got soft and out of touch with the people and they were not taking Canada into the next century. Many people believed that Canada had to become more and more relevant in a technological way and that we had to invest more and more in innovation and technology to be competitive on a changing world environment.

Madam Deputy Speaker, at the time the Conservatives came into office in 1984, the research and development grants, the amount of money spent on research and development in Canada, was quite a bit lower than the United States, quite a bit lower than the Japanese, quite a bit lower than the West Germans. The government promised to change that equation, but in every successive Conservative budget the Conservative governments reduced dramatically the level of support to research and development.

* (1140)

Now, as we look in 1992 in Canada, the eighth budget, that the members opposite sang the hallelujah chorus to this week, produced by the Mulroney government, the level of percent of spending in research and development as a percentage of the GDP is less than when they came into office in 1984 and less than what they criticized the Liberals in terms of their record under the Trudeau-Turner government that was defeated overwhelmingly in 1984. Nineteen ninety-two again represented cuts to the science council, cuts to the economic council, 22 independent agencies, some of which produced independent innovative advice was cut by the federal Conservative governments and applauded by members opposite with their

answers in this Chamber on Wednesday. This is a very similar pattern—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Doer: I wish members opposite would solve the Assiniboine diversion conflict in their caucus at another time, Madam Deputy Speaker. We know it is a real dispute in the Conservative caucus, the Assiniboine diversion. I want to say that I hope you settle it in your Monday night meetings—[interjection] Well, unlike members opposite, we talk about these province-wide issues with all our members of our caucus. We think that basin-wide—[interjection] I know that members opposite do not want to talk about the Assiniboine diversion project and want to move it over to some other topic as quickly as they can.

Madam Deputy Speaker, getting back to the research and development record of the Conservative government in Ottawa, one now must look at the Conservative government in Manitoba. In 1988 and 1990, the Conservatives opposite promised all kinds of innovative and technological innovation for the province of Manitoba. They made promise after promise after promise. In fact, some of the promises were made with the former critic for Industry, Trade and Tourism. The member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) was often side-by-side in 1988 with the Premier (Mr. Filmon) making promises on innovation, technology and industrial development.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what is the record of the Conservative government opposite? In the last budget, we saw major cutbacks in the Research Council of Manitoba. The decisions these people make are absolutely opposite to the rhetoric they give us in this House. It is very similar to the Mulroney government—say one thing and do another; smile in a canoe and then cut back everywhere in Manitoba; say that happy days are here again and have the worst recession in the history of this province.

It is the record of this government now, and it is starting to come through to Manitobans. That is why they are discredited, that is why they are sitting in the bunker, that is why they are losing touch with the people. They cut back in Industry, Trade and Tourism. They cut back the grant by 10 percent in the last budget. Do they want Manitobans to work smarter? No, they cut it back. They also cut back \$700,000 to the Manitoba Research Council, a

council that provides technological infrastructure to Manitoba industries and Manitoba Developmental Centre. They cut it back. Again, we see the rhetoric opposite to the action.

You know, the Latins used to say, and the member for west Winnipeg the other day said, let the buyer beware. Caveat emptor, I guess, were the words from the member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh). There is another slogan in the old forum of Rome that said *facta non verba, deeds not words*, Madam Deputy Speaker. That may be the hallmark of our criticism of members opposite, because their words flow with all the best rhetoric that spinners can produce and all the greatest public relations document that has ever been known to personkind, but their deeds are hollow, and nowhere is this more evident than in the bill and their action on technological innovation and the bill before us today.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this is very similar to another bill we had in this House, the Environmental Innovation Fund. We said then—in fact, it was the same member, the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie), that quite accurately pointed out, point by point by point, how this bill was only a public relations gesture. He pointed that out chapter and verse. If you go back in Hansard, he pointed it out very specifically how there was no necessity to produce this bill, and it was only an attempt to get a headline, a successful attempt I might add, because it did get a headline in the papers. It was only an attempt to get a headline, not an attempt to do anything innovative on the environment.

Madam Deputy Speaker, members opposite said, no, no, this is not public relations; this is really innovation. You know what happened? We got a copy leaked to us, written by Mike Bessey, the member for Portage's (Mr. Connery) best friend, I think, a memo leaked to us through Mr. Bessey's office that had a memo to the Premier that said that this bill was nothing more than public relations. That has absolutely no credibility at all. In fact, it may be even cited by the Auditor's Office as being illegal. The same criticism the member for Flin Flon made was made by their own chief advisor, their own chief technocrat or bureaucrat or political fixer, in a memo that he wrote.

So who was right? The member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) supported by the Conservative Premier's (Mr. Filmon) own advisors, Mr. Bessey, or the government opposite who was giving us wind and,

as John Diefenbaker said, wind and rabbit tracks but nothing more? Smoke and mirrors, wind and rabbit tracks, all the old traditional sayings from old traditional Conservatives about PR versus reality.

It is too bad members opposite whose parents, relatives and friends were very supportive of John Diefenbaker do not remember some of the words of John Diefenbaker, because they would not be bringing in public relations puffery after they have cut back on technological innovation in the province of Manitoba. They would not try to foist that kind of hypocrisy on the people of Manitoba.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this is very similar to the environmental bill, but if it was not just Mike Bessey being critical of the government and their innovation funds and their environmental policies, and if it was not just the NDP, what happened last week? Their friends in the Chamber of Commerce came out and said, the round table chaired by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) is nothing more than a public relations exercise that lacks any credibility at all.

Again, today, the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) pointed out in another document from the Chamber of Commerce that all the government's action is wind and rabbit tracks. Again, there is no substance to them, there is no reality to them.

Why do I mention the round table in connection to this bill? I mention it, Madam Deputy Speaker, because anytime you see the words of the Premier attached to anything that says innovation, you will find eventually an analysis that the innovation is not really an innovation, it is only public relations, nothing more and nothing more for substance in this Chamber.

The Premier (Mr. Filmon) introduces a bill just like he chairs the Round Table, and what we see is, again, blue ribbons, blue whistles and no substance for the people of Manitoba. That is very unfortunate because this Chamber has had a history of premiers—whether you agreed with them or disagreed with them, it has had a history of premiers who would put substance on the record and stand for something, not just stand for a public relations exercise at a public relations press release signed by the government.

I think back, Madam Deputy Speaker, to past premiers and what they would think of a premier that was just putting in hocus-pocus in the name of a bill after he cut back the Research Council, and I say, shame on the legacy and the Office of Premier

coming from members opposite that they would trivialize such an important issue of technological innovation.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the government's technological and innovation record is well known to the people of Manitoba. They cannot hide through public relations their own disastrous economic record. The government said last year, and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) said last year at this time, that their philosophy was that they would just step aside and they would let the private sector create the jobs and opportunities, and Manitoba would be the first province out of the recession. We expected it to be out of the recession in the next quarter of 1991. Well, boy, did they ever get that one wrong! Did they ever get that one wrong!

The private sector revenue is reduced by 45 percent in their own budget, a disaster, the worst record in Canada in terms of private sector spending and revenues, and we now have, after the hollow public relations words of the Premier last year, a record number of people unemployed in the province of Manitoba—57,000 people unemployed.

* (1150)

What do the members opposite give us? They give us a press release creating an economic council chaired by the Premier, an economic council, again, that is just a public relations exercise, Madam Deputy Speaker, because I will go over a couple of specific examples of where this economic council has been, nowhere to help the people of Manitoba, including the community of Portage la Prairie.

Madam Deputy Speaker, 51 percent increase in welfare—the highest number of increase is 51 percent in the city of Winnipeg, the highest increase in numbers of people for any major urban centre in Canada. The highest increase in unemployment of any province in Canada last month occurred right here in Manitoba. The corporate revenue decline on the revenue side of the budget in Manitoba was the largest decline of any province in Canada in any one of the budgets presented in any one of the provinces. That is the legacy we are dealing with members opposite with their economic agenda or lack thereof.

Let us look at specific projects in terms of innovation that is available on the benches opposite. I mean, if we could see the removal of cobwebs from some of the ministers' offices, that would be a great

enough innovation for us, Madam Deputy Speaker, because there are too many people sitting back on their plush velvet seats over there, and no initiative at all going on in terms of developing the economy of this province. [interjection] Actually, they were a long time ago. [interjection]

The member for Brandon West (Mr. McCrae) makes his comment. What is the increase in unemployment in the Westman region? What is the increase in unemployment in Brandon? The Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) may be spending too much time in Winnipeg and not enough time standing up for the residents of Brandon and Westman, Madam Deputy Speaker. He is losing touch with his own constituents. The unemployment rate rises, and the minister's soothing words try to soothe us, in spite of the economic record in his own back yard. I know that the member for Brandon will continue to enjoy the challenge he will receive from Sherry Decter-Hirst, a person who is dogging his unaccountable steps every day.

I know the member for Brandon West is getting a little exercised, and I would too, because the people from Brandon West are starting to recognize the dismal economic record of the Conservative Party, and the absolute inaction of the Brandon cabinet minister, the member for Brandon West, the Minister of Justice in this Chamber. [interjection]

Madam Deputy Speaker, I can see I have the attention from the member for Brandon West (Mr. McCrae), and he should be nervous. He should stay in this Chamber and worry about his seat, because Sherry Decter-Hirst is coming after the member for Brandon West, and I am confident she is going to defeat him, based on the economic record of the Conservative government in the next election whenever the government has the courage to call an election in this province.

Let me talk for a moment about some specific projects. What better place to start than the Repap Corporation? What kind of economic capability do we see opposite—and I address this to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson) and the Premier (Mr. Filmon), what kind of economic forecasting do we see available on the Conservative benches? Perhaps, there has been too many people who have inherited money and not worked for it. What kind of forecasting do we see from members opposite? If anybody takes offence from that, it was not a serious comment; I withdraw it. I

withdraw it; I saw some people coming right out of their chairs. I do not want that to happen.

*(1200)

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Repap Corporation, we signed a deal—well, it is like a Monty Python skit, is it not? Remember that skit, you were lucky, Linda. I was born in a shoe box. Let us get back to the topic. The Repap Corporation—remember John Turner and Brian Mulroney arguing about who came from more humble upbringings in the '84 election? I drove a truck, said Brian Mulroney. John Turner said, oh, that is nothing; you were lucky. I was in Rossland, British Columbia, and we hardly had a nickel to rub together.

Madam Deputy Speaker, let us look at the economic forecasting ability of members opposite. [interjection] I have no sad stories to tell, I am sorry. I never danced with Princess Anne like John Turner.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Repap Corporation—and this is a very important point. The Repap Corporation, besides all the disagreement we have had with members opposite, really points out a deficiency in the government's capacity to understand and predict future markets. We were saying from Day One that there would not be a market for bleached products, because the whole world was changing and therefore the whole marketplace would be changing. There was a greater awareness of people and therefore a greater awareness of corporations not to proceed with outdated bleached kraft products because chlorine and dioxins were going to become a major environmental issue and the public, who is way ahead of corporations and public policy making, would stop buying their products and would stop buying bleached kraft products. We predicted that three years ago.

Where was the government opposite that bragged about their big expansion based on chlorine bleach? Was nobody looking at the future? Was nobody looking past one or two years? What if that plan had gone ahead and now we would be closing it down? We thought that there would be no market for chlorine bleached products, and we said so.

Do you know what happened, Madam Deputy Speaker? The Conservatives in 1990 and the Liberals took out ads in The Pas community, great big full-page ads, condemning the NDP for standing up against chlorine bleach. I have the ads from the

Liberal Party and I have the ads from the Conservative Party. The Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) also said—and she had more nerve than—I better not say anything, I do not want her to get up. Some people like debates, and some people—anyway, I will say that the Liberal Party said to the NDP, you could not reopen the deal. She was with the Tories down the line, campaigning in The Pas for the chlorine bleach, campaigning down the line and taking out ads against the NDP.

I do not know how people could get up in the House yesterday after they had taken the same position as the Conservatives and then criticize them in Question Period the next day after they had taken the same position. I do not understand how they can do it. I guess that is why they are Liberals, Madam Deputy Speaker, because they can do that.

There is a lesson here. The lesson is that there is no economic and innovative technological forecasting going on in the government opposite. You would have made the biggest economic blunder since the CFI disaster that the Conservatives signed in the late '60s. You would have proceeded with an absolutely disastrous project that would be closed down because there is no market for chlorine bleach and bleach kraft products. Madam Deputy Speaker, when the company said yesterday that we missed the window, they should say that the Tories and the company missed the boat because they did not predict the future market. I say to members opposite, if you cannot predict past one or two years on changing markets in the world, you are lacking a very major capacity in your own caucus and your own cabinet and in your bureaucracy with your own advisers, because you almost made the biggest economic blunder since Sterling Lyon and Duff Roblin signed the deal with Kasser in 1968 for the CFI enterprises, ironically in the same community.

You really better take stock across the way of what kind of capacity you have in your caucus because you almost made a \$500-million blunder, something you criticized us for criticizing.

Madam Deputy Speaker, you would have been a lot better off listening three years ago to members opposite because you would have been in a lot better position to negotiate with the Repap corporation some of the issues that were important to Manitobans like the Swan River valley area, like the chlorine bleach, like the aboriginal treaty land entitlement. You would have been a lot better to

negotiate that with a company that had surpluses in 1987 and 1988, as we were with Repap, rather than negotiating with a company now that every time you put a demand on the table, they are going to say, we are going to walk away from this deal because we cannot afford it because we are bankrupt.

You are going to be negotiating with a company now that is so weak because they could not predict the marketplace, that is so weak, Madam Deputy Speaker, that every time you put something on the table they find objectionable, they will say, we are walking away from this deal, and what recourse do you have.

I suggest to you that you are sorely deficient in predicting the future. If you cannot predict the future, you will not produce jobs and opportunities for Manitobans.

Repap is very instructive. Besides being a one-day wonder in Question Period yesterday, it is a lot bigger issue for members opposite in terms of their absolute hapless capacity to deal with the future world.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I could go on on MacLeod Stedman. I could go on on the Piper aircraft. Why was Manitoba the last province to get involved with Piper aircraft?

An Honourable Member: Bankrupt company.

Mr. Doer: Madam Deputy Speaker, the member opposite says, bankrupt company. Why is it a bankrupt company? It is because of the American liability laws. It is because of the unfunded liabilities that have to go into cases that are before the courts.

Do they just read the press releases and not do any other investigation? Maybe that is again the problem for members opposite. They read these press releases that are sent to them from their central communication bureaucracy, and they do not roll up their sleeves and hustle—no hustling. [Interjection] Well, I hope we do. I hope we see them.

Madam Deputy Speaker, why does the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) have to say the things he said about getting off your—and I will not repeat the phrases the member opposite said so graphically in the Portage Graphic. The member for Portage was very critical of the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism and its innovation and technological development.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what about the CN transportation issue? Here we have this great big economic council announced by the Premier (Mr. Filmon). The Premier is chairing this economic council, and he has had three press releases about chairing this economic council. One of the largest issues of jobs at risk for Manitoba was dealing with transportation and CN. CN came to Manitoba to meet the minister responsible for Transportation. Where were the members of the economic council of Manitoba? Where was this illustrious cabinet group that was announced in so many press releases?

Did the Premier join the minister of Transportation meeting with the chair of CN? No. Did the Premier meet with the minister responsible for Transportation, Jean Corbeil? No, they will not even walk down the hallway. For hundreds of jobs, they will not even walk down the hallway. Did the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson) come to that meeting? No. Did any other of these illustrious members of this council who are paraded before the Chamber of Commerce about once a month come down the hallway? They were all in the building. They were all in a cabinet meeting. I checked, you were all here. You did not even walk down the hallway—wind and rabbit tracks, wind and rabbit tracks in terms of this council announced by the Premier, because you will not even go down the hallway for the hundreds of jobs that are at risk in Transcona, in East Kildonan, in Elmwood, in The Pas, in Dauphin, in Churchill, in Point Douglas, and I could go on in every constituency.

When hundreds of jobs are on the line, oh, the members of this economic council do not want to get involved. They may get a bad news story that they could not win the fight. They do not like getting involved.

* (1210)

Madam Deputy Speaker, when the last dispute was taking place between CN and Manitoba, when it was obvious that the Conservatives in Ottawa wanted to move all the headquarter jobs over to Edmonton, the Premier of the province got involved. Yes, he took the risk of losing. You do take a risk when you get in a fight. You do take some risks, because you are in a fight with a power like the federal government that ultimately has the unilateral right to say no to you, and you do take a risk of losing it.

The former Premier Pawley got in a fight with the CN Board of Directors, got in a fight with the federal minister of Transportation. All the moves that were proposed to go to Edmonton were cancelled in 1987 after the Premier got involved. Since that time, since the Conservatives of Manitoba got elected and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) promised us in the 1988 election all he had to do was pick up the phone—I mean, it is like a Lily Tomlin skit, the Premier picking up the phone, because all those head office jobs have gone to Edmonton in '89 and '90. They are slipping out of this province by night, every day, every month, and the Premier does not have the backbone to meet with the head of CN and the minister responsible for Transportation. He does not have the backbone to get involved and fight for Manitoba jobs.

There is no sense having an economic committee of cabinet chaired by the Premier if it does not have a backbone and will not get involved in a fight. At least the member for Portage (Mr. Connery) will get involved in a fight. At least the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) will get involved in a fight, but what good is it if he has no backup from the Premier and the Premier's Office?

You know what the Premier's Office says? Oh, do not get involved in this fight, you may get a bad news story out of this. It will not look good in our media imaging. Our overall communications strategy will not be followed, so leave the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Driedger) out there by himself. The Economic Council, paraded around Chambers of Commerce, does not get involved and support the minister, and the minister knows this. The minister does know this. [interjection] I remember one Friday, the only talk about hitting was coming from the member for Portage la Prairie, but that is a long-ago Friday. I am sure it was in a debating sense. Madam Deputy Speaker, those are a couple of examples of the technological innovation of the members opposite.

I would say that the announcement made by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) in terms of the individuals who are involved, I have a lot of respect for those individuals. I want to say on the record that our comments on the government's strategy on the economy are in no way a criticism of the individuals who are on that commission. I want to thank each and every one of those members of that commission which was announced by the Premier for agreeing to sit on that council because I think they are credible

people, they are good Manitobans, and they are Manitobans who want to help our economy.

We have called on a real partnership and a real economic summit as a forum for business, labour, government, education, and farmers to work together. Why is this government afraid to have a real partnership in a real balanced way with all sectors of our economy? Why is this government afraid to have a partnership with all groups and have an open public summit, open to the public and open to the media, with all the major players in the government and the economy of Manitoba? Why is the government afraid to have a true economic summit?

In 1982, there was an economic summit which was held in Portage la Prairie which consisted of business, labour, government and agriculture. Some of the major players in this economy got together and planned a number of initiatives, including many of the health initiatives which are still being announced by the government opposite to develop Manitoba's excellence and to develop Manitoba's potential.

Why is this government afraid to have an economic summit? Why do they not have people from all sectors in a balanced way in an open forum to discuss our challenges, our opportunities and some of our weaknesses together? Why are these things just media opportunities?

The economic summit which was held in Portage la Prairie was a two-day event—Madam Deputy Speaker, the Leader of the Party has unlimited time, as you know, so I will be speaking longer than perhaps your two minutes—[interjection] I beg your pardon. Does not have to give notice, only a designate.

Madam Deputy Speaker, why does the government not have an economic summit with all players in our economy? Why is it just having a one-hour photo opportunity with these credible people? Why do they not get more of a balanced representation and sit in a room for a couple of days with all the media and the public attention focused to give them some ideas? Do not the 57,000 people who are unemployed right now not deserve something besides a photo opportunity? What are you afraid of? Why will the government not have an economic summit for the 51 percent increase in people on social assistance? I suggest to members opposite that economic and technological

innovation is not a public relations press release, it is real work and the desire for real consensus with all partners in an equal way in our economy, not a photo opportunity. We would like to see a real format for real innovation.

I had the pleasure of attending an economic summit in 1985. I had the pleasure of attending an economic summit in '82. I had the pleasure of sitting down with Kevin Kavanagh. I had the pleasure of sitting with the former head of Molson's in Manitoba, who was the president of the Chamber of Commerce. I was in a group with Lloyd McGinnis. I was in a group with all walks of life in developing and talking about Manitoba's future, business, agriculture, labour and government in equal partnership in an open forum. They had to produce recommendations. We did not want just a photo opportunity.

Fifty-seven thousand people deserve more than just what you are going to think you are going to do. They deserve some recommendations. The crisis is upon us now. It is not going to be solved by a press release. It is not going to be solved by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) standing up here with a bill. It is going to be solved by some consensus with all our partners. I would suggest to members opposite, respect the individuals you have attracted to it, expand it to be more balanced and develop a summit immediately with business, labour, government and agriculture in equal partnership in an open forum. You obviously do not have any ideas of your own. You obviously do not have any economic forecasting ability.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would suggest to members opposite that they make this format real, give it real substance and do not have this continued public relations exercise. Give it some real decision making; give it some real recommendations. Do not treat it the same way as you treated the Round Table on the Environment. Do not have, two years from now, the same criticism from bodies like the Chamber of Commerce that this is nothing more than a public relations exercise. Learn from your mistakes so that we will not have to live your mistakes again and give it a real forum.

I would also say, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the funding issue is quite curious. First of all, if the government was serious about reducing the deficit, they should not have taken the sale of Manitoba Data Services and placed those assets in the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. Those assets were developed

over a number of years and they should have gone toward the past deficit. They should not have been used again for Conservative public relations.

Secondly, if you wanted to have an ongoing fund for technological innovation, you could have used the \$3 million operating profit of Manitoba Data Services, \$3 million a year profit or surplus to fund this economic innovation centre rather than sell it away at a bargain basement price and have no revenue coming into the Province of Manitoba.

I will refer members opposite to the \$3-million and \$4-million profit that was made in the last four or five years with the Manitoba Data Services, more than the amount of money that you got back for your payment of \$20 million and it could fund this corporation.

I would also say to members opposite, you cannot cut community colleges and technological courses in community colleges and talk about innovation and technology. You cannot cut Access programs and talk about R & D. You cannot cut research and training and innovation, Madam Deputy Speaker, in your budgets and talk with any credible way about the whole issue of adopting our Manitoba economy. Your second largest cuts—last year's budget was in the whole area of continuing education, universities, Access, training programs, New Careers—your second largest cut was in investing in our youth and in investing in our technological innovations, and it makes hypocrisy of comments from members opposite about where they stand on this bill and where the real beef is in terms of their commitment to technological innovation.

* (1220)

Madam Deputy Speaker, we of course support partnership. We were the first jurisdiction in Canada to develop a partnership with business, labour and government in terms of economic summits. We were the only province in Canada that had an ongoing economic council of the province that was not made up of cabinet ministers and Conservative staff, it was made up of real participants of the economy. The former Economic Council of Manitoba was made up of six cabinet ministers, six labour representatives and business and agricultural representatives in equal partnership. I find it passing strange that the Conservatives want to have a back-room cabinet committee to deal as their economic committee, whereas the NDP had a working, viable economic

council with all participants for our economy in the economic council.

We obviously, as the originators of a forum of partnership, will support initiatives of the Conservative government, albeit weak initiatives and public relation initiatives, we will obviously support forums and would not vote against those forums. We need something from the Conservative government opposite, Madam Deputy Speaker, rather than their step-aside mentality on the economy that was articulated in their budget and has been manifested on the people of Manitoba.

We see a real innovation function. We see real partnership and we do not see all of the components of a real partnership in this bill. The intent is public relations, the reality is something a lot less than what the Economic Council of Canada had recommended in Ottawa and what New Democrats had recommended in Manitoba. This bill is a shell of the kind of substance that we would like to see, and we have an inch of innovation from the Conservatives, but the New Democrats was a mile of economic development. We are committed to producing the mile so that 57,000 people are not unemployed. We will not rest like Tories will on public relations. We will rest on real innovation, real technological development and a real partnership in our economy in the province of Manitoba. Thank you very much.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to add my comments to those of others on Bill 9 as we debate it here in the House today.

I will pick up where my Leader has had some discussions about the impact of lack of government action in the province of Manitoba and in particular upon my community of Transcona. We have once again seen, by actions and by announcements coming out of federal government agencies, in particular CN Rail, where we have the extended closure once again this year of the CN Transcona Shops that will put at risk some 1,300 jobs once again for an extended period of time, forcing these individuals onto the unemployment rolls in our province and in our country and, at the same time, reducing the economic opportunities for these families that are so dependent upon these incomes.

We have not seen any statement by the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) to criticize the decision of the company to move in this

direction. We have seen no action on the part of this government to protest the way the CN Rail has handled these layoffs and the fact that they are solely impacting upon the province of Manitoba and in particular the community of Transcona.

The minister should have at least stood up and indicated his position in opposition to what the railway is doing to Manitoba. He has indicated to us that he has met with the company, and in private discussions I am sure he was told that this was the CN's plan. I think it should have been incumbent upon the minister to come forward with a ministerial statement at the first opportunity when this House resumed sitting to protest the way CN is handling this issue.

In Bill 9, the government proposes to set up an economic development structure that will hopefully lead towards improvement of the economic situation as we find it in our province of Manitoba. Of course others have mentioned the fact that this is just merely window dressing and that we do not see any real steps being taken towards this end.

We have some projects that are currently ongoing in the province now that I am sure would relate to this particular piece of legislation. I talk particularly about the space port in the community of Churchill. I had the opportunity to ask questions of the Premier earlier this week about the actions of his government to take the steps to ensure the long term future of the province of Manitoba in the areas of the space port as well as the port facilities itself in Churchill. The minister was noncommittal in the way he answered the questions that were placed to him at that time and would not give us a long-term commitment of his government to play a financial role in the future of Churchill and indeed the North of the province of Manitoba.

At the end of last week, one week ago I had the opportunity to attend meetings in Ottawa with various groups from the province of Manitoba. The Pas-Port of Churchill Promotion Committee, the Hudson Bay Route Association, the mayor of The Pas, the mayor of Churchill and other interested residents as well as myself attended these meetings. At the meetings there were several positions that were put forward and were debated about around the table. The ministers, Mr. Corbeil and Mrs. Martin, listened intently to the positions that were put forward. The group proposals included

import-export opportunities for the province of Manitoba through the Port of Churchill.

The one other area that we put forward as a recommendation was that there was a potential, since we have and currently still do find ourselves in a position of stalemate in this province because of the inaction on the part of either the railway, the federal government or the province of Manitoba to take any initiative to rectify this situation, we find that the federal government would be unwilling unless there was a partnership arrangement, to deal with this situation. We proposed a partnership arrangement to break this stalemate, and the federal Minister of Transport took seriously our concerns and looked favourably upon that proposal.

That is why at the beginning of this week we asked the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of this province to seriously consider a partnership arrangement that would allow Manitoba to play a role in the development of the North and the continuation of Churchill's future. I have yet to see any answer come back from the Premier or the Minister of Transport to become involved in a partnership arrangement.

It is my understanding looking at the purport of this bill that this is the intent of this bill, Madam Deputy Speaker, and yet when there are viable opportunities for the province to become involved in, the province refuses to take that action and to seize that initiative. I suppose I might have been asking the wrong person when I was asking the Premier to undertake those partnership opportunities. I suppose I should have been talking to Michael Bessey. That probably would have been a better person to talk to. Obviously that person is involved with the secretariat for the Economic Development Secretariat. Maybe Mr. Bessey would have been in a better position to answer my questions.

This council is supposed to deal with various issues of economic development for the province of Manitoba, including transportation links, and yet when we put forward solid proposals for the government, we find that they refuse to act on these proposals. I believe, Madam Deputy Speaker—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) will have 35 minutes remaining.

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

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Friday, February 28, 1992

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Presenting Petitions

Fight Back Against Child Abuse Campaign

Barrett 791
Reid 791
Chomiak 791

Funding to Fight Dutch Elm Disease

Rose 791

Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees

Standing Committee on
Economic Development

Rose 791

Tabling of Reports

Annual Reports: Channel Area Loggers;
Moose Lake Loggers

Downey 791

Annual Reports: Under Trade Practices
Inquiry Act; Under Insurance Act

McIntosh 791

Introduction of Bills

Bill 57, Consumer Protection
Amendment Act (2)

Maloway 792

Oral Questions

Education System

Chomiak; Vodrey 792

St. Vital School Division

Chomiak; Vodrey 792

Education System

Chomiak; Vodrey 793

Mount Carmel Clinic

Hickes; Orchard 793

Conawapa Dam Project

Carstairs; Downey 794

Repap Manitoba Inc.

Carstairs; Cummings 794

Recycling Programs

Cerilli; Cummings 795

Ozone Depleting Substances Act

Cerilli; Cummings 795

Recycling Programs

Cerilli; Cummings 795

Manitoba Housing Authority

Martindale; Ernst 796

Health Sciences Centre

Cheema; Orchard 796

Manitoba Housing Authority

Wowchuk; Ernst 797

RCMP

Storie; McIntosh 798

Liquor Control Act

Storie; McCrae 798

Dutch Elm Disease

Carstairs; Filmon 799

Federal Budget

Friesen; Mitchelson 799

Property Rights Proposal

Friesen; Mitchelson 800

Nonpolitical Statement

Council for Exceptional Children

McAlpine 800

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Debate on Second Readings

Bill 38, Manitoba Evidence Amendment Act

Edwards 800

Bill 6, Denturists Amendment Act

Cheema 801

Bill 9, Economic Innovation and
Technology Council Act

Plohman 802

Doer 808

Reid 816