



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

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Speaker*



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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

Wednesday, May 20, 1992

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Dawne Doyle, Debbie McCabe, Darrell Cole and others urging the government to consider establishing an Office of the Children's Advocate independent of cabinet and reporting directly to this Assembly.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of W.A. Fraser, W.H. Thomson, J.K. Johnstone and others requesting the government to reconsider its decision and return the Manitoba Heritage Federation its granting authority.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 90—The Seven Oaks General Hospital Incorporation Amendment Act

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): I move, seconded by the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that Bill 90, The Seven Oaks General Hospital Incorporation Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation le "Seven Oaks General Hospital"), be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY

STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairperson of Committees): Mr. Speaker, is there leave to revert back to Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees? [Agreed]

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us today His Excellency Andre Kilian, who is the Ambassador of the Republic of South Africa to Canada.

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

Also with us this afternoon, seated in the public gallery from the Kirkness Adult Learning Centre, we have 25 students under the direction of Lenore Wiebe. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Broadway (Mr. Santos).

Also this afternoon from the Warren Collegiate, we have sixty-five Grade 11 students under the direction of Mr. Jake Wiebe. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns).

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

*(1335)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Economic Growth

Federal Government Strategy

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Conference Board is considered one of the most optimistic forecasting bodies in Canada. Today they came out with very bad news for Canadians.

They have stated that the recession is much worse than they first anticipated, that the economy is taking a severe turn for the worse, that the situation is grim, and we have seen sharp declines in the Canadian economy and jobless rates in both March and April, something, of course, all Manitobans are very aware of with the 17,000 fewer people working today than there were a year ago—17,000 full-time jobs.

The Conference Board goes on further to state that jobs are all that matter now, and they are asking for a co-ordinated strategy to get the economy going and to get Canadians going again.

In light of the fact that the federal budget has obviously failed, and in light of the fact that the Premier and his colleagues did support the Mazankowski federal budget which was tabled in Parliament a couple of months ago, I would like to ask the Premier whether he will be calling on the federal government to have a strategy to get Canadians working again and to get the growth rate in Canada up to a level where we can start giving people, and our young people, an opportunity for work and an opportunity for their future.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Well, indeed, the Conference Board pronouncement is not news that anybody would welcome. The fact of the matter is, they are suggesting that the recession is carrying on longer than people had expected. I might say that their reduction of expectations for growth this year, even though they suggest that next year will be higher than they projected, it is still not good news.

The difficulty with getting a co-ordinated strategy, and I say this, Mr. Speaker, in a nonpartisan fashion, is that there are provinces which insist on carrying out plans that we believe are fundamentally wrong with respect to the way by which to create jobs.

As a for-instance: This province is the only province in the country that has been able to keep its capital spending within its budgetary context this year equivalent to last year. In provinces particularly that are ruled by New Democratic administrations, they are chopping their capital spending for public works—and I say this in a nonpartisan fashion—by hundreds of millions of dollars less of public capital spending in Ontario, in Saskatchewan, in British Columbia for this year. [Interjection] No, they are not—for this year.

In fact, by doing that, they are going to cut out the opportunity for hundreds of millions of dollars of job creation, and that will be a serious problem for the province of Ontario, for the province of Saskatchewan, for the province of British Columbia. Infrastructure, highways, personal care homes, public spending in so many areas is being reduced by those provinces.

That is not the way to create jobs. That is the way to reduce opportunities for employment, and we believe that it will be difficult to come up with a co-ordinated strategy when those provinces are going in diametrically opposed directions to even that which is suggested by this Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer).

He has suggested that we keep up capital spending, and we did in our budget. All of his colleagues in government elsewhere have cut the spending and therefore cut the opportunity for real job creation that would also provide us with benefits in terms of improved infrastructure for our provinces.

* (1340)

Federal Employment Creation Strategy

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I would suggest that the Premier, who is the head of a government that was in last place for growth in 1991, should hold his advice to any other government of any other political stripe in any other region of the country until his results start turning around.

Mr. Speaker, the government, this Premier supported Don Mazankowski. This Premier supported Brian Mulroney and his recent budget that was tabled in the House of Commons. They stood up here, minister after minister after minister, applauding their Tory cousins in Ottawa in the introduction of their federal budget that has now been called by the Conference Board to be a pipe dream.

The pipe dream in the budget was that the lower inflation rate in Canada and the lower interest rates in Canada would lead to thousands of jobs being created, and the Conference Board has called that a pipe dream, because thousands of Canadians are absolutely fearing for their jobs and their future, Mr. Speaker, and if you look at the recession in Canada and the jobless rate, the number of people who are unemployed is going up in Canada and, ironically, as George Bush has lunch with Brian Mulroney today, the numbers of jobless are going down in the United States.

My question to the Premier is: Is he going to call on his federal cousins to have a job-creation strategy that was so clearly missing from the federal budget? Will he now admit he was wrong in his analysis of the federal budget and now call on a job-creation strategy today, as the Conference Board is calling for all Canadians?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the point is that there is not just one order of government in this country. There must be an understanding amongst all levels of government of what the challenge is and what the opportunities are.

Just by way of information, I read for him a news release which was issued just this past week by the province of Saskatchewan that tells about their highways program for this year. It says that they took what was an \$80-million capital spending program for highway construction last year, and they chopped it to \$65.9 million this year.

In addition to that, if you listen to those who are economic forecasters—[interjection] Well, by way of comparison, this province had \$102.5 million last year, and it is \$103 million this year. So we held the line and slightly increased it, Mr. Speaker. Those are jobs that are created by that capital investment. That is long-term infrastructure for the benefit of the province and real job creation.

In addition to that, those provinces again, and he can read the economic analyses of the budgets, those that are governed by New Democrats raised taxes substantially, \$1.1 billion taken out of the economy of the province of Ontario by way of new taxes, new taxes taken out of the economy so it cannot be spent on job creation and new job opportunities. It is, in fact, taken out of the economy by increased taxes. Same thing is true. Over \$300 million of new taxes out of the economy taken by the province of Saskatchewan cannot be spent on job creation. Same thing is true in British Columbia where over a half billion dollars of new taxes taken out of the economy cannot be spent on job creation.

How can you have a co-ordinated program for economic recovery when provinces go diametrically opposed to the advice that even this Leader of the Opposition has given? It does not make sense, Mr. Speaker.

* (1345)

Employment Creation Strategy

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in the first question, he defended Brian Mulroney. In the second question, he defends the mess that Grant Devine left in the province of Saskatchewan. It is just an absolute shocking "nonpartisan" display by the Premier in the answer to the question.

Mr. Speaker, since our budget was tabled two months ago, every bank and every economic forecast has been downgraded for the province of Manitoba. In other words, all the basic assumptions in the budget are now wrong.

The province is also off on its unemployment predictions and, unfortunately, it is not going in the

right direction. We now have 17,000 fewer people working today in April of 1992 in full-time jobs than we had working 12 months ago in the province of Manitoba—17,000. We have lost 14,000 people who have dropped out of the labour force in Manitoba, the second highest number of people who have dropped out, only behind the province of Newfoundland. This is the solid foundation.

My question to the Premier is: Given that this will have a dramatic impact on revenues, given that this will have a dramatic impact on economic development and growth, it will have a dramatic effect on businesses, on people's incomes, et cetera, what mid-term correction is this Premier going to make in terms of his budget predictions that are all wrong right now? What mid-term correction is he going to make to heed the advice of the Conference Board of Canada and to make the No. 1 priority getting people working again in this province and this country?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): It is pretty obvious that the Leader of the Opposition does not do a good deal of research or investigation. He would know that the Conference Board and every major bank in its forecast has downgraded the entire country in their expectations. The province of Ontario has lost 260,000 jobs.

Now, that does not make us happy, Mr. Speaker, but it is evidence that what is happening is endemic right across the country. This is not something that you try to make cheap politics on in this Question Period every day.

This is a national problem. This is a national recession and one has to deal with it as a problem that requires long-term solutions, not short-term cheap tricks here in this Legislature by the Leader of the Opposition. That is why this provincial government has committed to spend in capital works, including the Crown corporations, \$1 billion this year. That is why in direct provincial expenditure out of the government, over \$300 million, whereas all of those provinces that are represented by his colleagues as New Democrats are reducing capital spending, reducing job creation and reducing economic activity in their provinces. We do not think that is the way to go, Mr. Speaker.

Justice System Charging Directive

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

The inquest into the murder-suicide of Mr. and Mrs. McKay concluded that the murder-suicide could have been prevented. The inquest concluded that the police department, as one of the recommendations, misinterpreted the charging directive of the Department of Justice.

Can the Justice minister indicate to the House today whether or not that directive has been clarified to ensure that police departments across the province of Manitoba will not be under any misunderstanding with respect to that particular charging provision?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Acting Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I will take the question as notice on behalf of the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae).

Mr. Chomiak: My supplementary, Mr. Speaker, is to the same minister. Can the minister also confirm that since the same recommendation was in the Pedlar report which occurred since these tragedies, that this directive has been issued and has been clarified across the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I will not confirm any portion of the member's question, and I will take that question as notice also.

Pedlar Report Recommendations

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): My final supplementary to the same minister is: Since the response of the government to the Pedlar commission was to set up a committee to set priorities to study the Pedlar commission, can the minister ensure that all of the recommendations in the inquest, many of which are contained in the Pedlar report, are instituted, not tomorrow, not the day after, but immediately to prevent another tragedy?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Acting Minister of Justice): I cannot ensure what the member wishes, Mr. Speaker, but I will take that question also as notice.

* (1350)

Health Care System Reform Monitoring Co-ordination

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Minister of Health unveiled a health reform package, one which in principle we support to a very large degree

because we think it is essential for the appropriate delivery of health care in the province of Manitoba, but we indicated that we thought it had a principal weakness, that there was not a monitoring process which was consistent and would report to the public.

We have looked at the monitoring positions that have been outlined by the minister, and we find four. On page 17 it says the Centre for Health Policy will evaluate the effectiveness of health services. On page 32, an appropriate access report will look at the management of urgent referrals. On page 33, a consultant will work with Winnipeg/Brandon Inter-Hospital Medical Staff Council, and on page 37, we have another review mandate, this time which will look at resulting health outcomes.

My question is to the Minister of Health.

If there are at least four mandates for different referrals, where is the confidence to be found in the public that there will be a communication and liaison between these four committees? When will they report effectively to the public in the province of Manitoba?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, the four areas of investigation deal with four processes of reform, all essential to achieving a more effective use of our \$1.8-billion budget in health care, through the varying analysis structures that my honourable friend referred to.

There is also a fifth one that possibly was not as evident as it should have been in the strategy paper, that being a liaison with the Centre on Aging at the University of Manitoba to assure ourselves that the social needs of seniors are appropriately provided for without access to the formal acute-care hospital system.

Mr. Speaker, each of those groups has a mandate to deliver information, analysis and underpinning of strategy announced in the action plan that was tabled on Thursday, and each of those group's recommendations to government will naturally become part of the public information because we anticipate their recommendations will be part of the implementation process over the next two years.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, there is no formalized liaison process of one mandated review agency with another. For example, surely the group that is examining waiting lists should be working quite closely with the group that is studying the appropriateness of hospital admissions. The group that is monitoring health outcomes should surely be

working with the group that is studying ways to fund hospitals.

Will the minister ensure that there is a regular liaison process going on between these review groups? Will he ensure that they will make a public presentation so that we will know not only what they are each doing individually, but what they are doing in consultation with one another?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly why this province was able to table the most comprehensive strategy on reform of the health care system in Canada, because the various analyses that has been done and underpinned by the Health Advisory Network, by the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation, by the Urban Hospital Council have been interrelating with respective results to create, Sir, the most comprehensive reform strategy announced in Canada to date.

Part of the public communication, for instance, of the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation has been a number of ministerial statements to this House, complete with follow-up briefings for all members of the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I would suspect that this will continue, because it has helped significantly in an understanding of the challenge before us—similarly, an open process at the Urban Hospital Council, and very shortly, a number of the Health Advisory Network reports to become part of the public discussion, already used in terms of creating the most comprehensive reform blueprint in Canada today.

* (1355)

Waiting Lists Review

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, one of the review groups which he talks about is the Appropriate Access Review Group, and they have indicated that they are going to review the needs for orthopedic surgery, for cardiovascular surgery and for cataract surgery, all areas which we know have had long waiting lists in the province of Manitoba.

However, there are two other areas that are not listed in the action plan of the government. One is those that need consultation with a rheumatologist, those suffering from arthritis, and the other is the many children, in particular, who have great need for speech therapy.

Can the Minister of Health tell us if he will now add those two to this access review group, so that we

can come up with some solutions to their problems as well?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I know my honourable friend will have supported the 20 percent increase in office visit fee schedule to rheumatologists, which was part of the settlement with the MMA some year and a half ago, in an effort to recruit and enhance the numbers of rheumatologists that we have available for service in the province of Manitoba as one of the very fundamental strategies in terms of having those Manitobans suffering from arthritis have professionals that they can consult with.

Mr. Speaker, similarly, we have put additional resources into speech language pathology, and I know my honourable friend and her party endorses that and supports that direction, but the specific appropriateness of review committee, chaired by Dr. Naylor out of Toronto, is dealing with five surgical areas for which we have a number of professionals delivering care to analyze how, within waiting lists maintained by up to 20 service deliverers, we can ensure that Manitobans needing care access the care the quickest, regardless, Sir, of whose waiting list they appear on. That is the appropriateness of access committee that is coming to grips with that in the five areas specified.

Mr. Speaker, I want to simply close by saying that, as stated in the document, waiting lists for cardiac surgery have gone down significantly over the last 18 months.

Foreign Domestic Workers' Program Labour Law Coverage

Ms. Marianne Cerlill (Radisson): One of the problems facing foreign domestic workers in Manitoba is that they are not covered under our labour laws. They have no sick leave. They have no overtime provision guaranteed to them, and they are essentially able to be asked to work 24 hours a day.

The federal government, when it changed the domestic workers program, said that they would be working with provincial governments to ensure that they are covered under our labour laws.

My question is for the minister responsible for Citizenship. What progress has been made with ensuring that domestic workers in Manitoba are going to be covered under our labour laws, and when can we expect this to happen in Manitoba?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Labour): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Radisson for that question. It is certainly a very apt question on the issue, and she has identified partially correctly the exemption with respect to domestics.

I would point out to her as well that under our current employment standards legislation that has been in place in this province for a number of decades, there are no provisions for sick leave, for example, for any employee.

So there are a number of issues that have to be dealt with in our current round of discussions with the Labour Management Review Committee. Some of these were flagged, and I know that this committee has an interest in considering some of these areas over the next year.

Minister's Consultations

Ms. Marianne CerlIII (Radisson): My supplementary question is for the minister responsible for Citizenship.

Why has she not gotten back to the groups that are advocating in this province on behalf of domestic workers to explain to them the results of the communication she has had with the federal government regarding these issues? Why has she not gotten back to these groups?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, I met with those organizations that do represent domestic workers in the province of Manitoba. They expressed their concerns to me, and as a matter of fact, I know that my honourable friend across the way was at one of the Filipino functions where the domestic workers were a part of that process.

I spoke, and she was there to hear me speak and indicate quite clearly that I believe domestic workers play a very important role in the life and in the community in Manitoba and in Canada, and that we did not want to see anything put in place that would discriminate against any country in allowing domestic workers to come here and look after our children.

* (1400)

Government Access

Ms. Marianne CerlIII (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, the problem is that the minister is getting back to the groups—

Mr. Speaker: Question, please.

Ms. CerlIII: Can the minister inform the House where these groups should call, which department in government? Which area in government should these people call to find out what the government is doing, since the minister will not—

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

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): I just read in my correspondence this week a thank you letter from the Mary Poppins Group that was expressing their thanks for the contribution that this government has made in supporting their efforts, so I have difficulty understanding where the question is coming from and where she is getting her information, Mr. Speaker.

I will continue to meet, as will officials within my Citizenship branch, within my Women's Directorate and within the Multiculturalism Secretariat, and continue to dialogue with my colleague the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) on issues that do affect domestic workers.

Health Care System Reform Home Care Program

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, as you know, we in the New Democratic Party have less confidence than the Liberals in this House in the Conservative record on health care. Our confidence in this so-called health care action plan is tempered by the lack of detail and by the Tory record in community care and home care, where in fact the record is in reverse to the rhetoric of this report.

I want to ask specifically about home care, when in the time this minister has been responsible for health care, the number of people served by home care under this government has declined in direct proportion to the number of people who have increased in our population over the age of 65.

I want to ask the Minister of Health: How is it health care if we are not even increasing home care services to reflect increases in our aging population? When are we going to see—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has put her question.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I recognize my honourable friend has difficulty in agreeing with some of the positions

placed in the public with this document by this government.

I quite frankly, Sir, was about to seek out the quotable quotes which were used on Thursday last, wherein former Ministers of Health whom my honourable friend sat with say they would have loved to have tabled a document like this, but I will not get into that kind of reversal of position by the NDP from government to opposition.

Mr. Speaker, I refer my honourable friend to page 14 of the strategy paper where it deals specifically with the numbers of beds, the numbers of personal care homes and the waiting list for placement in personal care homes, all of which have gone down in these last six years, four years of which we have been in government, funding the Continuing Care program at significantly greater increases than any other portion of the department, and it says and I will quote to my honourable friend: "The over 75 age group has increased from 4.8 percent to 5.5 percent of the population. Both active treatment bed ratios and PCH bed ratios have declined between '85 and '91."—four years of which we have governed. "PCH waiting lists have also declined indicating the impact of Home Care."—i.e., the positive impact of home care, Sir.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: In contrast to that rhetoric, I would like to table a chart, Mr. Speaker, which I would like all members in this House to read because it shows that—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Does the honourable member have a question? Kindly put your question now, please.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Considering this table showing a drop of over 2,000 cases of home care during this minister's—

Mr. Speaker: Question, please.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Could the minister indicate when we will see the breakthrough, when we will see the plan of action to make us believe that there is a true community-based Home Care program in place to which Manitobans, particularly our senior population, can have faith and trust in?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I am rather puzzled at my honourable friend's lack of knowledge of a program of home care. It has always been a community-based program. Home care always provides services in an individual's home. The success of that over the last six years is demonstrated on page 14.

That is exactly why we placed not \$1 million more, not \$2 million more, but \$7 million more money in the Continuing Care program this year to serve more Manitobans in their home, closer to the home, to prevent, curtail and shorten institutional stays for seniors.

Mr. Speaker, that is a significant increase in the budget to provide a significant increase in the number of services that Manitobans will enjoy through the Continuing Care program to prevent their institutionalization, to provide that care closer to home in their community.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: How can the minister justify the \$7-million so-called increase which will, in the minister's own figures, get us up to 24,000 clients served under Home Care, still 1,000 short from the numbers of clients served in 1987? How does he say that this is health care reform—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, there are two answers to that question. First of all, the success of the 1985 program introduced by, guess who, the New Democrats. I have given them credit for this program. It is called Support Services for Seniors, wherein community resource councils, through a grant, a modest grant from the taxpayers from the province of Manitoba, will establish a volunteer co-ordinator—to do what?—to provide meals, to provide house cleaning and other services that were traditionally provided by the Continuing Care program from community support agencies.

That program was introduced by the New Democrats, and a number of individuals have had those services replaced by community council resource-based services in the community, Mr. Speaker, exactly the designed intent of the program. That is the first answer.

The second response is that in the provision of \$62 million of home care budget this year, we will provide incredibly greater numbers of hours of intensive services which has allowed us over the six-year period of time referred to in this program to defer admissions to personal care homes, to have our waiting lists for personal care home placements decline and to have the number of personal care home beds in use decline relative to the growth in population, a complete success of the program, Sir.

Conawapa Dam Project Delay - Net Savings

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro.

The member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinsson) and the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) have recently in this House, as well as other members in both other parties, sung the praises of the Conawapa project. They have said, build it bigger, build it sooner, this despite—[interjection] The member for Point Douglas has said it repeatedly—build, build, build, anytime, anywhere. Of course, I would not want to read his speech in the House to members, but I do recommend it to all members.

Mr. Speaker, the revised predictions of Manitoba Hydro suggest that the power will not be needed in 1999 by Manitobans, as they told the PUB, but rather will not be needed until the year 2011. Mr. Zaleski told the Public Utilities Board—and I want to ask the minister to comment on his speech—if recognized soon enough and the need for the new generation is moved to beyond 2000, Conawapa and Bipole III could be delayed with significant net savings over current expectations.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro is: Why is he insisting on sacrificing the net savings that Mr. Zaleski told the Public Utilities Board about?

* (1410)

Hon. James Downey (Minister responsible for The Manitoba Hydro Act): Mr. Speaker, I think I got the question out of that speech.

Two things have happened following the past administration, two major events. One is that the Conawapa project will go before full hearings of the Manitoba Clean Environment Commission, which is the responsible thing to do. No. 2, it is being built based on, as well as Manitoba use, the sale of a thousand megawatts or some \$900 million in current-day profits to the taxpayers and the Hydro users of Manitoba, which was again reviewed by the Public Utilities Board and supported by their review.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, in a time of economic difficulties that we have heard about day after day, it will create a thousand person years of jobs for the people of this country.

Mr. Edwards: Again, for the same minister, why is the minister insisting on sacrificing those net

savings to Manitobans, given that he knows that Manitoba Hydro told the PUB that Manitobans would need the power by 1999 and the Public Utilities Board specifically stated that they accepted Manitoba Hydro's base case forecast? Why is he sacrificing—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. You have already put the question.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, we are not sacrificing savings for the people of Manitoba. We are embarked on a responsible process of Clean Environment hearings, through Public Utility Board hearings and, we believe that carrying out the activities that have been carried out by this government compared to past administrations, we are doing the responsible thing on behalf of the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, being responsible compared to this government's predecessor is not difficult. Unfortunately, the government is not even reaching that standard.

Why is this minister sacrificing the savings to Manitobans given that Mr. Zaleski, Manitoba Hydro's expert, went on to say that there could be domestic rate savings resulting from plant deferral?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, we are not sacrificing rate savings for the people of Manitoba in the process in which we are embarked upon.

There is a contractual sale made between Manitoba Hydro and Ontario Hydro of some 1,000 megawatts of power annually, which will give a today's value of some \$900 million net benefits to the people of Manitoba, plus major employment opportunities for northern and southern Manitobans.

Grain Export Licence Removal Government Position

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture.

Marketing boards have been established in this country for the purposes of allowing producers to collectively market their products from a position of strength and on an equal playing field with the large agribusiness conglomerates that they deal with, in much the same way that unions have been established by workers to ensure that they can negotiate from a position of some strength.

I want to ask this Minister of Agriculture—because he says that he supports marketing boards, but his actions do not support that and especially with

regard to the Wheat Board—why he has not answered the questions that I asked in this House of the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) on April 27, dealing with the federal government's decision to remove the enforcement of export licences for board grains moving to the U.S. via truck.

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the United States a few years ago was the 11th largest customer of Canadian grain, Canadian Wheat Board. Last year they were in sixth place. This year, it looks like they will be the fourth largest customer for Canadian grain. For Manitoba, agricultural products have represented 32 percent of our total exports. The next highest country is Japan at 12 percent—so a very significant market.

The procedures for an individual producer to sell in the United States, there is a long list of procedures. I do not have them in front of me at the moment. When we get into Estimates, I will give him the list of procedures.

The only thing the Wheat Board has changed is that they no longer require a producer to go into an elevator and dump the load and then load it back up. They just do the paperwork, and they can exercise the option if they receive the payment from the Wheat Board at the time of delivery and then negotiate a buy-back price if they want to export. That procedure has not changed.

Processing Potato Producers Marketing Board

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, if they are not enforcing export licences, we will in fact be competing with our own grain.

Mr. Speaker: Question, please. Order, please.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, if this minister supports marketing boards, I want to ask this minister why he vetoed the establishment of a marketing board for producers of potatoes for processing, after it was democratically asked for as the result of a vote by those same producers. This minister said he believes in democracy. Why did he veto that decision?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, if I understand what the member is talking about, a vote was held across the country. Manitoba producers voted against it.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Dauphin will have time for one very short question.

Mr. Plohman: The producers in Manitoba voted 68—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Would you like to put your question now, please? It was not on the record.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, I asked the minister why he vetoed a decision that was arrived at democratically in this province—68 percent of the producers asked for that marketing board.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, we have a Vegetable Producers' Marketing Board in the province, have had for many years. [interjection]

I am not sure what the member is referring to. Let us get into Estimates, and we will talk about it. This minister did not veto the performance or the setting up of anything. The vote that was held across the country, unless we are talking about something different—I am pretty sure that the producers of this province did not vote in favour of a national potato marketing agency. A national potato marketing agency was voted against in this province when it was held some year or so ago.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Committee Changes

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Mr. Speaker, I have some committee changes.

I move, seconded by the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development be amended as follows: the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) for the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey); the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) for the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer); the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) for the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson); the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose) for the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render). [Agreed]

Mr. George Hickeys (Point Douglas): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development be amended as follows: Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickeys); Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie), for Thursday, May 21 at 10 a.m. [Agreed]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you call the bills in the following order: Bills 61, 64, 62, 10, 12, 15, 20. Then I propose to go to second reading, Bill 75, and then back to Bill 70.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 61—The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (4)

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh), Bill 61, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (4); Loi no 4 modifiant la Loi sur la protection du consommateur, standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett). Is there leave that this matter remain standing? [Agreed]

* (1420)

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I am very pleased to speak to Bill 61 today. I note that the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) is suggesting that we not read any notes in the Chamber, and certainly it is not my intention to do that, but I certainly will refer to notes here and again throughout the presentation.

This particular amendment that has been brought in by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) is evidently required to make some changes to The Consumer Protection Act to allow the Consumers' Bureau to share information with other departments within the Manitoba government.

The way the act is currently written, it allows the Consumers' Bureau to share information with governments of other provinces. So the Consumers' Bureau in this province can share information, for example, with the province of Saskatchewan without any difficulty, but it cannot share information with, for example, the Attorney General's department in Manitoba itself.

The intent of this bill is to allow the Consumers' Bureau to communicate the information and share it freely with other departments within the government, which makes me wonder why this particular bill and its companion bill, Bill 62, which I will be speaking to later on today without the benefit of notes, were brought forward at this time.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that the government had some reason for pulling this together rather quickly. I suspect that it had to do with some of the

pitfalls that they have run into recently with issues in this province such as the odometer rollback case and others where in fact the police department had a certain set of facts and information and the Consumers' Bureau perhaps had a different set of facts and information.

I am not making any comments here as to which one had more correct information. Perhaps they both would have but, in fact, because they were not communicating with one another, the government found itself in an embarrassing position, and it has moved to try to amend the legislation to make certain that this does not happen again. Now I am making an assumption that this is what has happened. The minister, in her address to this bill, did not provide us with more than a one- or two- or three-minute speech on this amendment, so I do not know what the real story is behind this bill.

It seems like a very simple bill. It is only a one-page bill, but the fact of the matter is that the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) claims that it is for them to know and for us to find out. It seems to me, given the timing of this bill and the way that it has been brought in, that my hunch is probably correct, that they found themselves in a rather comical situation here of not having the correct information on different issues; and, being at a disadvantage, they have moved to try to correct that information.

I might point out that we on this side of the House do not intend to stand in their way in terms of correcting this. I feel that the government is missing a major opportunity here, because the minister is probably aware that it is difficult to get amendments through the cabinet. It would seem that if she was able to get the very limited attention of her colleagues to get these amendments on the caucus agenda of the Conservative caucus and make her presentation and get people like the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) to agree to an amendment like this, if she was prepared to do that, then I would wonder why she would not have taken the opportunity to go that one step further and bring some meaningful amendments to the caucus of the Conservative Party, the governing caucus, temporarily at least, and to allow them to bring in some consumer protection amendments here that would really help consumers here in this province, and that are long overdue, some of which, I might add, have a fair amount of support over there in the caucus.

Last evening this caucus, those members who were not trying to bail the water out of the boat here in the House, were over in Crescentwood for the nomination, nominating the former president of the Consumers' Association, a good friend of the auto dealers in Manitoba. Having said that—and certainly that particular newly nominated candidate and I have some disagreements fundamental as to what sort of consumer protection would be adequate for this province—even she, in her very narrow, conservative view of the world, supports the sticker prices, the manufacturers' suggested retail price sticker legislation on cars, new cars bought in this province.

As the president of the Consumers' Association for the last four years, I believe she has lobbied this government on that issue, at least she has said and told me and told others that she has.

I really wonder what is going to happen with that caucus and that government if in fact she is successful in the election, which I do not really think is going to happen, but if she is successful then it will be very interesting to see whether the government does change its view on the manufacturers' suggested retail price stickers.

But that is not the only area that that particular newly nominated candidate of theirs and that government disagree on. There are a number of issues that she has supported over the last few years and it will be very interesting to see what sort of profile these issues now get with this government. They obviously got nowhere with this government for the last three or four years when she advocated on the part of the Consumers' Association. We will see whether they get anywhere in terms of the attempts to win the by-election or, in fact, if she makes it to the caucus, whether she has any influence in terms of getting any of these things accepted from within.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that this whole exercise of Conservative interest in consumer issues will extend no further than the end of the by-election, that they may show some interest here in consumer issues during the 35 days during the run-up to, and the 35 days of the by-election, but once that period is over I think they will be back in the pockets of the car dealers where they have been for the last numerous years. The car dealers that have bankrolled their election campaigns and funded them in the past have them in their pockets. This new candidate will be no different, in fact if she

ever has been, than any of them sitting over there right now, firmly under control.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) also had the opportunity at this point to bring in documentation fee legislation, which is another aggravation that people have as regards car dealers in this province. In this province the car dealers charge consumers anywhere from \$40 to \$240 when a car is purchased simply to type up the sales contract.

It is called a documentation fee and a lot of them today are so brazen that they print them right on the forms. I get complaints constantly from people who usually have paid this fee and then question what it is about and by then it is too late to get their money back. Some people have been successful in getting these fees waived when they question them at the point of sale and before they sign the documents are able to save themselves this substantial amount of money by questioning what this documentation fee is.

But when they question what it is they are told that it is the fee to pay the secretarial staff to type up the sales contract.

An Honourable Member: Two hundred and forty bucks an hour, eh?

* (1430)

Mr. Maloway: My colleague the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) says \$240 an hour. That is what expensive lawyers get paid. It is just another profit centre, in my view, for the car dealers. They are not making enough already, it seems, on the sale of the car itself and all the extras, and so on, that they are adding on to the car, but they have to gouge the consumer for another \$40 to, as I said, \$200 thereabouts, for a documentation fee, a fee to type up the sales documents.

We feel that those should be banned. In fact, to be fair, I can tell you that there are several dealers around town who, in fact, do not have a documentation fee. I think consumers would be well advised certainly to check that out in the mix and deal with dealers perhaps who have a very low documentation fee or have none at all.

Given the amount of complaints that I have had over the last four years on this area of documentation fees, it seems to me that the minister should pay some attention to this particular area of the documentation fee and should take some steps either to ban outright or certainly limit the amount of

documentation fees that can be charged. Certainly, the minister is listening now. Perhaps the minister could take under advisement the option of having the fees explained, a requirement that they be explained, if not outright banned. But I do not think that is going to work. It seems to me that an outright banning of this fee is the only way to go.

Mr. Speaker, there are many, many areas that this minister should be addressing in terms of consumer protection. We could not possibly deal with all the areas in the limited time of 40 minutes, but we have attempted in our last four years to pick some obvious areas that require attention and to advance them and bring them forward to the government. Whatever avenue, whatever opportunity I have to speak to the minister or put comments on the record on these issues, I have tried to take the opportunities to clear up some of the misunderstanding, some of it, I think, just deliberate misunderstanding, that some of the members opposite have on some of these issues and, in fact, members of the House in general.

There are so many issues that we deal with in this House, in fact, 100-plus bills each legislative session. It is mind-numbing to have to keep up with all of the bills themselves and the intricacies of the bills. So no one person in this House, on either side of the House, is an expert on any more than a dozen or so of these bills, although most of us end up speaking on a goodly number of these bills and become instant experts in fields that we only touch on briefly and, in fact, rarely. But that is the nature of our legislative system. I am not about to change that overnight. We would not want to put the Speaker out of a job.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): Is this your personal position or a caucus position?

Mr. Maloway: The Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) wants to know whether these are personal positions. Well, the Deputy Premier has been around long enough to know that any piece of legislation in this House, that gets promoted and accepted to the point where it gets to the floor of the House, is normally caucused by the caucus and has been accepted by the caucus.

I would say to the Deputy Premier that even the legislation that the backbencher, the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau), brought in in the last week, the legislation that he has introduced to require safety certificates on all used car

transactions, even that piece of legislation, while the Conservative caucus does not support it, while they do not have the nerve to bring it in on their own—

An Honourable Member: How do you know that?

Mr. Maloway: Well, the Deputy Premier wants to know how I know that. I happen to know that particular legislation was taken to the Conservative caucus on three occasions over the last year, and in fact it has been thrown out of the caucus each time. The member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) as the lone ranger from St. Norbert, has brought this bill in as an independent member, and in his own limited experience of the legislative process somehow thinks that this bill has some hope of getting through, when this government that is elected by the people to govern does not have the nerve to take the initiative to bring in this legislation. This member has communicated to the car dealers association that somehow, and given them some false hope—and in fact they believed, perhaps foolishly, that there was some hope for this legislation to pass.

What has essentially happened is the government which does not have the drive, the initiative, to bring in this legislation has essentially passed it over to one of their back-bench MLAs to carry the ball—knowing full well that it is not going to go anywhere—to keep the car dealers onside.

Point of Order

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

I was wondering if there might be a will of the House today to relax the rules just a little bit to allow the members to remove our jackets in the House today.

Mr. Speaker: Would there be leave to allow the members to remove their jackets for this afternoon.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No, leave is denied.

* * *

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member for St. Norbert giving me a break in the proceedings here. I thought he was getting up on one of his many points of privilege there that he is hoping will propel him into the Speaker's chair at some point, but this one was certainly different.

Mr. Speaker, the minister should be also aware of some other consumer issues that should have been

brought in with this bill, and I think she also should be aware of the area of the octane levels. In the United States—I do not know how many states, but a number of states have octane levels posted right on the pumps.

If anyone knows anything about octane levels in gas—the octane levels are responsible for giving a person's engine a better response and they are a very important determinant in gasoline pricing and something that the consumer should know, and what one of our national TV programs showed a couple of years ago—I think it was last year—was that a major change had occurred in the pricing of gasoline over the last couple of years, whereby the major producers of gasoline in Canada basically changed not only the pricing of the product but changed the octane level of the product. They created essentially another product and charged a higher price for it. So what people were essentially getting was that to achieve their old octane levels for the type of gas they were buying they had to upgrade to a higher-level gas.

This was a major national exposé last year, and, in fact, the government has certainly had a year now to do something about this. I am really curious as to why the minister has not taken some initiative here to require, because all we are asking is that the minister require gasoline retailers in Manitoba to post the octane levels on the gasoline pumps.

* (1440)

(Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Surely, that cannot be an onerous responsibility for gasoline retailers in this province, Mr. Acting Speaker, and it would go a long way to allowing the consumers to be able to make a decision based on fuller knowledge of what the octane levels are, so that the consumers, if they could see what the octane levels are, could make a decision as to what level of gasoline to buy.

When this issue became public last year, I did check with several gasoline retailers, and I believe all of the gas stations that I initially checked with, four or five stations in fact, not one of the station attendants could identify what the octane level was in the gas. It was something that they were just not familiar with at all and, quite frankly, could care less about.

I inquired further of these gasoline stations, and I know, Mr. Acting Speaker, you have some

knowledge of it, having been in the gasoline retail business yourself. But when I went beyond the person who was filling the tank at these four or five stations, none of whom knew anything about the issue. When I went to the owners of the stations or the managers of the stations and inquired of them, well, they were able to shed a little more light on it, but not a lot. They did not seem to be too interested in the octane levels either. I mean, they would refer me to phone the manufacturer because their information was very limited about it. They were unclear about the octane levels.

In fact, they, in one or two cases, gave me the wrong information about which octane level they had, and it convinced me that nothing would happen here unless the government did take action, the government did regulate and require the gasoline retailers to post the octane levels at the pumps.

Mr. Acting Speaker, this is another very, very simple consumer protection change that, in fact, I would think would enhance the popularity of a government that brought it in. What could it possibly cost to require gasoline retailers to put little stickers on their pumps telling people what the octane levels are? What could that possibly cost? What could it possibly cost this government, in terms of money, to require the motor dealers to eliminate documentation fees which are just huge costs for typing up the sales contract? It would not cost a government concerned about fiscal responsibility, it would not cost them anything, and it might help them in terms of their popularity.

Why would I be recommending that the government would do anything that would help their popularity? I am just letting you know that it seems to me that when you are in an economy where things are tough and money is tight, and money is not available for major league programs, here are some issues that cost next to nothing, that could be meaningful to the constituents in our constituencies.

The sticker price question, even the car dealers will admit to you that they will accept the sticker price question. It is a fact in Ontario; it is a fact in other provinces. The sticker price question is something that either they hope to trade off for something else they want with the government, or they will reluctantly accept—I have had the car dealers on a radio show a couple of years ago on CBC, I believe, when pressed, the representative from the car dealers' association said, well, publicly, of course we support the sticker price.

What is the cost, Mr. Acting Speaker, associated with a sticker program? Next to nothing, it is negligible. So, here are three different areas that this government could bring in that would cost almost nothing.

We have the whole area here of the odometer tampering, which I suspect had a lot to do with the timing of this bill, this amendment to The Consumer Protection Act in the first place. You have a major scandal, I believe, having been perpetrated for many, many, many years by the automotive industry, but in fact the RCMP have brought forward quite a number of charges over the last few months now on odometer tampering.

I have been getting information that has been passed along to appropriate authorities, and so on, about different situations that are developing in this province. Believe me, the police have borne me out on this fact, that this is a widespread scandal, and there are a goodly number of charges right now that are outstanding. There is a situation, I believe, in Roblin-Russell where a car dealer is going to court. I believe the case has been remanded now for a couple of months.

I think that over the course of the year we are going to find a goodly number more people being charged with odometer tampering. It seems to me, Mr. Acting Speaker, that this government, in fact, rather than doing anything about the situation, has simply tried to divert attention here by passing this whole area over to the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) because the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) has gotten into trouble on this issue already, when she was contradicted by the RCMP.

In fact, she has been sitting on a report on this issue of odometer tampering since the end of February and shows no sign of releasing the report to the public or to the Legislature. In fact, when I asked her two months after the fact to release the report that would shed some light on the situation, the Minister of Highways took the question. The Minister of Highways is now burying this issue and is attempting to handle the questions that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs cannot handle.

What is the Minister of Highways saying about the issue? He is checking into a sticker question, a question that has been going on now a couple of years whereby MPIC and the Motor Vehicle Branch have got together to try to somehow identify and

stamp motor vehicle write-offs in the province and identify them as such so that consumers will be able to know what it is they are buying, and what it is they are driving.

When I checked with the Motor Vehicle Branch on this matter, I was told that not only had they not considered requiring odometer readings to be put on this particular sticker that they have been working on now for two years, but, in fact, they had not even mocked up a rough plan of the sticker that they are proposing to use.

Mr. Acting Speaker, two years have gone by, meetings have been going on with the Minister of Highways and the Motor Vehicle Branch head and the MPIC head. At this point, they still have not even agreed on what the sticker is going to look like for Autopac write-offs. They have no plans. As a matter of fact, it was a new idea to him; they had not even considered the idea that they would, in fact, include the odometer readings in the sticker arrangements that they would have.

It seems to me that this government has simply embarked on a little bit of damage control. They knew that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) could not handle this issue, because she had proven she could not with Corporal Sangster saying that she was totally wrong in her assessment of where things were at.

* (1450)

So they threw the ball over, along with the report, to the Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger), who has also done nothing for the last two years on this issue. He, in fact, is doing the public relations to try to throw us off track on this issue and trying to tell the press that he is, in fact, doing something when he is not.

You, Mr. Acting Speaker, know full well what I am talking about when it comes to action or lack thereof from this government, because you would not have to introduce your bill on the used-car sticker question if this government had any direction—I mean, if they had any direction at all. They are piecemealing, and they are operating on a day-to-day basis. I mean, we saw that yesterday in spades, the ad hockery of this government, when they just about went down the tubes—all 30 of them—just about went down the tubes because they did not have enough people here.

They had 16, they had 17, they had 18 people here over the 45 minutes of Question Period, and that, in anybody's terms, any mathematical

calculation, is not enough to win a vote in this House, Mr. Acting Speaker. So they had to bring ministers in off combines, and bring ministers in from sick bays into this Chamber to rescue the government. In fact, they lost the first vote, and they had to delay until they got the members here.

Now that, Mr. Acting Speaker, is no way to run a government. Now we have some personal experience on how not to run a government. We had the same numbers as they do.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): History is repeating itself.

Mr. Maloway: The member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) says that history is repeating itself. There is an uncanny sense about that, that this government is heading down the same rocky road as the last government. As a survivor of that previous government, I can tell you that life goes on, but the point is that people should learn from their mistakes. I think we learned something from our mistakes of the previous government. I would think this government should learn some lessons too before it repeats some of the mistakes that we did when we were in government.

I see it largely making the same mistakes. Only, in fact, it seems to be doing them even quicker. It had a good run in the first couple of years, but it is now quickly falling down very fast. The economic indicators are showing its performance to be 10 out of 10. Conditions in the province are getting worse. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) seems to be under enormous pressure, and not reacting well. The wheels are starting to fall off this cart, and it is getting pretty wobbly over there.

I do not know that we are going to see this government last to the end of its mandate. It is pretty unclear at this point. In fact, if yesterday was any indication of where this government is headed, I would say that it is headed pretty quickly to that brick wall and it had better wake up before it hits that brick wall.

After all, if you cannot count, you should not be here. In fact, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) was quite comical yesterday in trying to pull this thing back together and explain it all away as just something that just kind of happened: Well, you know I was out there in the fields and the whole thing fell apart on me.

Well, surprise, surprise. When you have only 18 people here, of course it is going to fall apart on you.

What do you think, we cannot count? This government is convinced that, after the happenings of 1988, somehow we had forgotten how to count and we would not learn again. Well, I have to remind this government that we have some new people here. We are back up to 20 seats and we are knocking on the door of government again. We are knocking on their door, and if they do not watch out, we are going to walk in and throw them out the back door, maybe quicker than they think.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I think I had better get back to the bill at hand here. This is Bill 61, and I had better not be reading that either.

I did want to talk to the minister a little further on the whole area of the consumer legislation that she must bring in. You know, it has got to the point where it is wearing thin for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) to argue that her department is understaffed. This comes now from a minister and a government, but particularly a government, that promised to do more with less.

When we were in government, they were, on a daily basis, almost saying that you are misspending money, that we are going to do more things with less money. Well, I am waiting to see the evidence of that—where they are doing more with less.

The previous Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, before he got unceremoniously turfed out of the job, would tell me that his staff that he had in the department were out monitoring gas prices, and there were only one or two of them, they could not possibly cover all of these areas. Well, we were able to put together something like 15 consumer bills without too much effort, Mr. Acting Speaker, and this government has an entire department that, per year, puts out two little one-line bills. I mean, that is all they can get together in a year? What else can they possibly be doing with their time?

When I asked last year about negative option offers and whether some legislation would be put together—[interjection]

Well, the Deputy Premier is reminding me that I do not have to go the full 40 minutes. I might remind him that you, yourself, tell me I only have two minutes left of my first 40 minutes, and I have another bill to speak to this afternoon. It is another one of these one-line bills that this minister is bringing in, and I am hoping to get the rest of my speech this afternoon into the second part of the bill. So perhaps I will be able to continue on where I left

off in Bill 62, and I will be able to complete my remarks on the negative option offers question, which, by the way, interestingly enough was an issue—give her credit—brought up by the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) a couple of years ago, when in fact the cable TV company in town, one of the two, instituted this option and did not tell anybody about it. Then we find out that the minister, himself, has to declare a conflict of interest because he owns 20 percent of Portage cable TV. Well, no wonder nothing was done about negative option offers for the time he was around in power. Very shortly thereafter the minister was unceremoniously dumped out of that ministry and that was the end of that.

Well, the new minister is there, and I am sure she has not declared any conflicts on negative option offers. She owns no shares in any cable TV companies.

An Honourable Member: How do you know?

Mr. Maloway: Well, at least she has not declared it. It took the other minister nearly two years to declare his issues. As a matter of fact, it was the former member for Crescentwood who in fact snared the minister at a committee hearing on the matter, and only then did he declare his conflict, Mr. Acting Speaker.

In that period since, this minister has done nothing in the area of negative option offers. There is nothing pending. She does not even use the excuse that her department is short of staff as the—

* (1500)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Order, please. The honourable member's time has expired.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Acting Speaker, the bill is standing in my name, and I would very briefly like to just put on the record the fact that the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) has very eloquently over the last 40 minutes outlined everything I could possibly want to say on this bill. So in the interests of expediting the legislative process, I will conclude my remarks and say that we are prepared to pass this bill through to committee.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Acting Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 64—The Child and Family Services Amendment Act

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), (Bill 64, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfant et à la famille) standing in the name of the honourable member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock). Is there leave that this bill remain standing? [Agreed]

Bill 62—The Business Practices Amendment Act (2)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh), (Bill 62, The Business Practices Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur les pratiques commerciales), standing in the name of the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans). Is there leave for this matter to remain standing?

An Honourable Member: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Leave? No.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Acting Speaker, I had been hoping for a break here, but I guess I get to finish my speech on my second bill back to back. So I will have to stay away from this water after my next little sip here.

If I might briefly talk about Bill 62, which is The Business Practices Amendment Act, as you recall, The Business Practices Act itself was only proclaimed into law this past January 1. So The Business Practices Act itself has been around now for five months and already this government is bringing in amendments to that act. Now, once again, that conjures up a whole lot of questions here about why and how it is that a government that spent nearly four years fine tuning, retooling, watering down a Business Practices Act under two different ministers would in fact be able to come back, only five months after it has been proclaimed and in operation, with an amendment, when in fact it is not able to bring in other substantive consumer protection changes that we feel should be necessary.

Mr. Acting Speaker, this particular piece of legislation also allows the exchange of information

with municipal police forces such as the Winnipeg Police. Now, it seems to me that this particular piece of legislation was prompted also by the odometer rollback scandal. I can only conclude that is certainly a major reason why this one-line bill was rushed through the cabinet and caucus and brought into the House less than five months after the act is in place. Why else would the government see this as such a high priority to have to introduce a piece of legislation this quick after bringing in the bill?

It seems to me that with all the fine tuning they did and all the studying they did with the president of the Consumers' Association and all the watering down they did of this bill with her and members of the Chamber of Commerce and the auto dealers' association—and every Tory hack group in this province had their say and got to write that legislation to their specifications, and here after all of that they still manage to mess it up, and just months later they manage to come into their caucus and their cabinet and bring in—I would have loved to be a fly on the wall at that caucus meeting when they brought this in and trying to decide how they were going to explain this to the House when this major, major, major piece of legislation—all the effort, all the work that was brought in—had to be amended in such a short period of time that they would want to take the time of the caucus, the cabinet and the House to bring in this piece of legislation at this point, Mr. Acting Speaker.

So they obviously have, in the minister's own comments on the bill she—you know they have only been working with the act since January and according to her they have not been able to communicate adequately, and I say adequately, with law enforcement officials. Well, that was pretty obvious, after the dressing down that the minister got from the RCMP over the odometer situation. Right? So I think at that point they decided that something is wrong here, that they got rid of one incompetent minister from the Consumer and Corporate Affairs department and they were perhaps going to be saddled with another one, so they thought, my God, we have to do something here. So what they did was they quickly brought in this piece of legislation to allow the police department to start communicating with the Consumers' Bureau, because they had not been communicating up till now. They simply sent the report that they had on the rollback case over to the minister, who sat on it for a couple of months and

then shuffled it off to the Highways minister (Mr. Driedger), who is now doing their damage control.

That is what the damage control department has been up to over there, and I think that this is just another part of the damage control department. They have to bring this in because they did not want, in a future time and place in this House, to be caught unawares with the police department knowing and working in certain areas, and we in the opposition having more information on that issue and others than the minister in the government. They did not want that situation to happen again, and this is what is supposed to occur.

I want to remind the deputy leader of the government here, the person in charge of this operation supposedly, the Dan Quayle of Manitoba politics in charge of this operation when the Premier (Mr. Filmon) is around, I guess the person who is responsible for this mess that we had here yesterday. I do not know whether the Premier has allocated blame yet, whether he has taken the Finance minister (Mr. Manness) to the woodshed yet or whether it is the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) or whether it is both of them. He probably should be taking both of them to the woodshed.

Nevertheless, to give them credit, they see a problem here and they are trying to do their damage control. They are trying to correct it so they do not have any more repeat performances of what we saw in the House here two months ago. On that basis, Mr. Acting Speaker, we in this caucus decided to help this government out and to give speedy approval.

Now, we do not know whether the Liberals in this House are prepared to give speedy approval to this piece of legislation, but we saw, a few minutes ago, the Liberals in this House held up Bill 61, which is a sister companion bill to this particular piece of legislation, Mr. Acting Speaker. So the Liberals obviously have more to say about this, and perhaps they will expound further on what this government has been up to with this particular bill.

We, on our side of the House, felt, discussed in caucus, that we would not hold the government up on either one of these bills. In fact, while we do like to catch them unaware, misinformed, uninformed and embarrass them, we do feel that this is important enough that we should pass this legislation and allow them to share proper information between the police forces and the minister so that she will get her stories straight in the

future; so she will have the information for a change; so she will be able to answer questions for a change; and she will not have to give the question off or give the information off to the Minister of Highways to try to save the day.

The minister is obviously working with the Liberal Party here, or what is left of it, to try to get them to give speedy passage to this—[interjection]

* (1510)

The member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), just minutes ago, held up the companion piece of legislation that the minister needs to get informed, so that she is an informed minister for a change in this House. If she is not talking to the Liberal Party about getting these bills through, she should be talking to the Liberal Party about getting these bills through.

Perhaps she can spend the next few minutes convincing the Liberal Party not to hold this piece of legislation up any longer. Perhaps she can convince the member for Inkster to speak to Bill 62 and to pass this bill into committee. He certainly will have time at third reading to put his other comments on the record, and those of the Liberal Party, which has been a stranger, I would say, by and large, to consumer issues in this province.

The lone exception, Mr. Acting Speaker, has been the Leader in the question of the negative option offers, which brings me back to the point at which I left off on the last bill: the whole area of negative option offers and why it is that this government, after four long years of Tory rule in this province, has yet to address the whole question of negative option offers.

As I indicated, I gave full credit to the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) for seeing the issue when it came up and bringing it up, and the former member for Crescentwood.

The reason why we are having this by-election in the middle of 90-degree temperatures and why I have to go out and knock on doors when it is 93 above in Crescentwood tonight, because the member for Crescentwood, one of the remaining members of the Liberal Party after the last election, has decided to call it quits. Well, that particular member when he was around here was the person who did some work on negative option offers.

But, at that time, Mr. Acting Speaker, the member for Portage la Prairie, the former minister made the excuse that he did not have enough staff in the

Consumers' Bureau. His department did not have enough staff to do any work on the ghost car program. It is an area that he was going to work on. He said he only had one or two staff, and they could not be out there monitoring the gasoline prices, driving around checking the gas prices, checking up on the negative option offers, legislation which we suggested he bring in.

Then, lo and behold, he declares his conflict of interest for owning 20 percent of Portage cable TV. The next thing you know, he is out of the department completely. We thought this new minister coming in, we thought there was some hope for her, because we thought, well, there is no reason why negative option offers will not be dealt with right now. After all, the Liberal leaders brought it up; the member for Crescentwood has dealt with it; the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) has practically resigned over the issue—or resign or be fired.

We are going to see some action here. Two years have gone by and this minister is basically treading water. In fact, some would argue she is even worse than the previous minister, because for whatever we want to say about the previous minister, at least he managed to get The Business Practices Act through that caucus. He managed to get more than a one-page bill through the Conservative caucus. This minister has done nothing more than a one-line bill. That is all she has managed to do.

The member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery), as much as we criticized him and chased him around for being a do-nothing minister, he at least got the one piece of legislation—well, I think he got an amendment to The Prearranged Funeral Act and a couple of other minor pieces of legislation, perhaps not so minor to the people affected by them, but they were minor in the context of something as big as The Business Practices Act, Mr. Acting Speaker. At least he got the legislation through the House.

Then the business community jumped on his case, and he pulled his own bill. He pulled his own Business Practices Act in committee. Subsequent to that, the unconscionable acts were taken out of the bill, and the bill was watered down. We were very unhappy with that, but we were at least content that we got some piece of legislation through. It was not as strong as we would have liked, but at least we got a Business Practices Act. In the context of

a Conservative free-wheeling, free-enterprise government, we thought that is pretty good coming from a group of Conservatives. You would not expect them to do even that much.

You know, Mr. Acting Speaker, even with the best piece of legislation around, it is one thing to have good legislation, but it is another thing to have proper enforcement of that legislation. That is what makes me very suspicious of this particular government, because while they came through with the watered-down Business Practices Act, the real suspicion I have is whether or not the act itself is going to be properly administered and enforced under a Conservative government and whether it is going to be aggressively pursued.

The departments of government take direction from the ministers in those departments. In fact, if the minister has a very hands-off approach on a particular piece of legislation or particular idea, then I think the people who are working under that particular minister learn from the directions they get from the boss and follow those directions. I am a bit concerned that with the change of ministers that in fact the—

An Honourable Member: Wasted Days and Wasted Nights. Freddie Fender should be your next theme.

Mr. Maloway: Well, thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker, that was a welcome break, and I wish my Leader would come back and give me another two or three minutes.

The fact of the matter is that this act was only proclaimed in January. After considerable delays, it was watered down. It has not been given enough time for us on this side of the House to make a definitive decision as to how well it is operating, we decided, I think, on January 1 when it was proclaimed, to take a look at it after six months. The first six months are not up until July 1. We intend to review it at that point to see how well it is working, and to see well how this government and people are enforcing the act, and to see what sort of a benefit it does have.

In fact, I might say that I am a little bit disappointed in the minister for not making much of an effort to date to let people know about the act. I have had calls into my office, and I find, certainly, in the first part of the—because the act was passed last summer, the minister had quite a run-up to the proclamation of the act to let it be known that it was available.

We have heard, really, very little from this minister about this act. Many people that are phoning me are totally unaware of The Business Practices Act and not aware that they have a recourse under this act. But I think that as the time goes by, as people get more aware of it, if the act is actively pursued and enforced by the department, then people will take heart from the legislation and will find more use of The Business Practices Act in the province.

* (1520)

This particular amendment is not a good sign, that they would have to make these amendments so soon after bringing in the act. It causes me to wonder how many more amendments we may see coming out of this particular piece of legislation. I would not like to see us at the end of session, as we saw in the last session the government furiously producing pieces of legislation in the dying days of the House, in the middle of summer almost, because they had forgot this piece and they had forgot that piece.

They needed all these different pieces to make the whole even workable, and that is not the way that this government should be running. It is not the way a government should be running, and obviously there are a lot of cracks in this system. [interjection]

Mr. Acting Speaker, I was only beginning. The Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger) would prefer to get on to other things, but the Minister of Highways should, perhaps, get to work on the odometer tampering question and get back to this House reasonably soon about what he plans to do.

In fact, he plans to do absolutely nothing this session. He plans to stonewall; he plans to sit back and let this issue simmer until he is forced to do something, perhaps sometime next session. That is not the way this government should be operating at all. In the area of the lemon law, this government has had adequate opportunities to introduce proper legislation in this province for lemon law. In the United States we now have 48 states which have a lemon law. In Canada only one jurisdiction has anything even close to a lemon law. That is Ontario and that is a very watered down, very poor version of a lemon law.

In the United States, of the 48 states I believe only South Dakota and Vermont are the only two—I think I had better retract that. I believe it is South Dakota and I am not sure of the other state that does not have the lemon law, but of those 48 who have it, there are at least a dozen states who have lemon

law that is considered pro consumer. Most of the other states have a very watered down version that is viewed as more manufacturer oriented, more in keeping with what the Motor Dealers Association would be advocating in this House and to this government.

Florida has the toughest, if not the toughest, in the top two or three pieces of legislation in the United States. Florida is also the second largest new car market in the United States. I know you, Mr. Acting Speaker, are very interested in this area. In fact, they have just completed, just days ago, a three-year study into their Florida lemon law program encompassing 1989 to 1991. Their program, while their legislation is right up at the top, is up there with New York—New York has some better provisions to it—the bottom line is that when you look at the legislation, while New York's legislation may be marginally better in some areas, it is the enforcement that makes Florida a really excellent program, and they could use some improvements as well. They have people running the program—Dr. Phil Nowicki is in charge of it in Florida—who are very aggressive, and they aggressively pursue these cases.

In fact, recently I sat through some panels, lemon law arbitration panels in Florida, and the one I sat through, the judgment was in favour of the consumer, but there are, of course, numerous cases where the judgment could have just as easily been in favour of the manufacturer.

Mr. Acting Speaker, having some experience in the automotive industry, you should be aware that the lemon law has nothing to do with the car dealers. It has to do with the manufacturers, and Dr. Nowicki himself told me last week that he was surprised at the interference he got from the organized car dealers when it had nothing to do with them.

That, in fact, is exactly what happened here a couple of years ago, where the head of the Consumers' Association—former head, the new Conservative candidate in Crescentwood—sided with the car dealers association and said that lemon law was a bad idea. Well, three or four months ago she saw the light and now she thinks lemon law is a good idea, and now she understands that it has nothing to do with car dealers. I was absolutely aghast that the president of the Consumers' Association could be that ill-informed to not understand what lemon law was all about.

Either she misunderstood what it was all about or she deliberately misrepresented what the lemon law was all about and sided with the car dealers, who also misrepresented what it was all about. It had nothing to do with the car dealers themselves.

As a matter of fact, one of the newer people in the Automobile Dealers Association is actually supportive of lemon law. He has some experience with Florida lemon law, and in fact to me is a breath of fresh air coming out of the car dealers association. Hopefully working with people like him in the future, we will be able to adopt a Florida equivalent of lemon law in this province, but as a car dealer in Manitoba, he understands fully that the dealers themselves do not like dealing with disgruntled customers.

After all, it is the dealers that the customer comes back to time and time again with their lemon cars. It is the dealer who has to listen to the disgruntled consumer, not the manufacturer. So what lemon law does is it requires the manufacturer to come good for the lemon cars that they are producing and selling to the consumers.

What person in this House would disagree with that? What person in this House would say and would be content to have to go back to their car dealer over a car that just does not work? What person in this House would disagree with the concept that the manufacturers should be responsible, not the dealers, for the cars they sell? That once you had a problem with a new car, once a person took it back three or four times and the dealer was unable to fix it, it should not come as any surprise to anyone here that if the dealer cannot fix it after four attempts there must be something wrong with the car. Therefore, it is logical that the manufacturer should be held responsible. Does it make sense that the consumers of this province or any jurisdiction for that matter should have to go to Small Claims Court and go before a judge and make an argument for a new car?

In fact, they cannot do it in Small Claims Court in this jurisdiction, because since I have been here for the last six years and not the 10 that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) keeps thinking I have been here for, it might seem like 10 for him, but we, since I have been here, have increased the level at which a person can go to Small Claims Court on two occasions. We now have it at \$5,000.

I ask you, Mr. Acting Speaker, what good is that to you as a consumer, because if you have a lemon

car and you want the manufacturer to take it back, a \$5,000 limit is not going to help you. Cars are worth a lot more than \$5,000.

* (1530)

In Florida and the Florida legislation, which is consistent with the bill that I have introduced several times now, a couple of times now, there is a provision. There is an adjustment for use of the car. The person who purchased the lemon car does not take it back three or four times and get a brand new car after the three or four attempts have failed. That does not happen.

If the panel agrees that the car is in fact a lemon, then the consumer has the option of having a new car given to them or their money back minus an adjustment, and there is a formula right in the bill. It seems like a complicated formula, but it is not that complicated. It is evidently an accurate formula; it is an accurate way of computing what wear and tear would be on that automobile.

So, as a consumer, if you have driven the car for three or four months, you are not going to get all your money back, nor are you going to get a brand new car. You are going to get either all your money back minus your three months' wear and tear and use of the car, or you are going to get a new car and have to pay for three months' use of the car. That is another provision of the Florida bill and my bill which makes sense.

But was that provision acknowledged by the car dealers of this province or by the so-called president of the Consumers' Association? No, it was not. It was deliberately misrepresented by them, and these people can read. Surely these people are not that ill-educated that they cannot read? No, they deliberately misrepresent, basically keeping with the Conservative agenda, keeping with the Conservative government of this province. We see how closely they work together.

The car dealers' association has had this government in their pockets from Day One. This government does what the car dealers want, and the president of the Consumers' Association was in that pocket as well. Now she shows her true colours and she emerges as a born-again Conservative, a candidate now for a by-election, and hopes to be the third Consumer minister in this government.

So they turf this one out for doing nothing and then put in another one. But this next one that they put in, if she in fact wins and gets put in, cannot read.

So they should know in advance that the new one that they would be looking at, the former president of the Consumers' Association, cannot read; and, if she can read, she does not understand what she reads; and, if she understands what she reads, she lies about it.

An Honourable Member: That is good because you do not want us reading over here

Mr. Maloway: Well, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs is upset here—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Order, please.

Point of Order

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): This is a serious statement. I think I heard rightly, Mr. Acting Speaker. I think I heard the member opposite say, in referring to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh), she lies about it.

An Honourable Member: The candidate. The minister would never lie about it.

Mr. Manness: I thank the member for that clarification, but I think also that when we are referring to any member of the public, whether they are running for political offices or not, it is not proper decorum to refer to how they might present any case or any issue.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Order, please. I thank the honourable minister for his point of order. At this time, I would like to caution the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) that the Speaker has cautioned members to exercise great care in making statements about persons who are outside of the House and unable to reply.

* * *

Mr. Maloway: It seems to me that my position at the time was certainly misrepresented by the new Conservative candidate in Crescentwood. I would have appreciated at the time if she had been a little more forthright in her interpretation.

I do not have any objection with anybody opposing a piece of legislation as long as they adequately represent what it is all about and are fair about it. I have no objection to her, whatsoever, saying that she is opposed to lemon law. I have no problem with that at all, but I do have a problem with her making statements to the press which totally

misrepresent what the bill is all about. That was my comment, Mr. Acting Speaker, in that area.

Now, Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like to think that this government will see the light in the area of the lemon law and bring it into this House. If it is any consolation to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), he should know that in Florida the lemon law was originally introduced by a Republican, people who are not exactly known as being overly progressive. I am sure there are one or two Republicans on this Earth who are somewhat progressive, but I am not aware of any. Maybe the member is.

The fact of the matter is that Democrats and Republicans in the United States, in 48 states, have brought in this legislation. Even in a state like Michigan, where the auto manufacturers abound, it seems to me, Mr. Acting Speaker, that even there, legislation was brought into play.

Here we have a situation where we have no auto manufacturers in this province. I could understand this government being somewhat reluctant if we had auto plants and the government was worried about auto plants being relocated to other jurisdictions because of lemon law being onerous. But this province, Mr. Acting Speaker, has no car manufacturers at all, none whatsoever. So what are they concerned about? Where do they anticipate the pressure to come from? There are no manufacturers to pressure them in terms of "we will withdraw plants; we will withdraw jobs from here." The auto dealers are not affected.

In fact the auto dealers are helped by this legislation in the sense that it puts the responsibility for producing lemon cars back on the manufacturer where it belongs and in fact allows the retailer, the auto dealer, in a way, a way out.

Third, and most important, it allows the consumer redress. It allows the consumer a way to get his or her money back or a new car adjusted for the wear and tear without having to resort to the court process, which is very costly. As I indicated before, the court process in this province would really not work in this situation because the \$5,000 limit on small claims court would simply not be sufficient in this situation. People would be forced into the Court of Queen's Bench. People would be forced to deal with high-priced lawyers, which is the situation right now, and that would not be a very good situation, is not a very good situation.

* (1540)

I am the person who gets the majority of the complaints and the files from people who are upset about cars, who feel they have these lemon cars. The members of the government are not getting representations from people because the people are not going to this government. They know that they are not going to get action from this government. This government is not willing to take the initiative. The only initiative they have taken is business practices, which I have applauded them for in the limited scope that they have done it in.

We do not feel that they are planning to enforce that legislation the way we would like to see it enforced. We are very suspicious about that. Time will tell whether we are right in that assessment or whether we are wrong in that assessment, but we have our suspicions, and we are not finding proper initiatives from this government in the whole area of consumer legislation.

With that, Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like to move the bill to committee stage, unless there is anyone else who wants to speak on it.

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Yes, Mr. Acting Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 10—The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), Bill 10 (The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Hydro-Manitoba), standing in the name of the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohm). Shall this matter remain standing? [Agreed]

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Yes, Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like to speak on Bill 10.

Bill 10, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act, what appears to be a simple little piece of legislation is not quite so simple as it would appear.

For example, it is very clear that the purpose of this bill is to raise the limit of Manitoba Hydro's temporary borrowing authority from \$150 million to a mere \$500 million. We are simply talking about \$350 million in this particular piece of legislation.

That is a rather major piece of legislation. There are very few things, other than the budget, that we

pass in the Manitoba Legislature that includes that kind of quantity of money. So when we are talking about \$350 million, I think we should put it into some kind of perspective. There are only two departments of government that spend more money than that, the Department of Education and the Department of Health.

So we are talking about a sum of money which the government wishes to grant to Manitoba Hydro which exceeds every single line of the budget with the exception of two, so what we have is something that should not be considered lightly. It must be considered a very serious bill, because the question is, why does this government want to extend the borrowing authority of Hydro by 233 percent?

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

What do they want Manitoba Hydro to do with this additional line of authority of 233 percent? Well, if we listen to the minister responsible for Hydro (Mr. Downey), he will say, well, we do not want to spend it on Conawapa. Now, we know that the major project before Manitoba Hydro is Conawapa, but we are led to believe by the minister that none of this money is going to go into Manitoba Hydro with respect to Conawapa. Well, that, Mr. Speaker, I would say is absolute nonsense.

I would also suggest to you that we passed a loan act last year which gave authority to an additional \$500 million to Manitoba Hydro, so we are expanding each and every year the potential of Manitoba Hydro to borrow money, and we say, what do they want to borrow this money for?

Well, obviously, it is for the ongoing functions of Manitoba Hydro. One of those very important ongoing functions is this government's slavish devotion to having Conawapa built before it needs to be built, and that leads us to, of course, a debate of the politics of power in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, we have watched power being constructed in the province of Manitoba which goes well beyond the mandate of Manitoba Hydro. I heard the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) himself say that the mandate of Manitoba Hydro is worthy of discussion, is worthy of debate, that it is something we should put before the Legislative Assembly for debate because the mandate at the present time of Manitoba Hydro, I would suggest to you, does not allow for the construction of Conawapa. The mandate of Manitoba Hydro would suggest that we must build power first and foremost to meet a need in the province of Manitoba.

Well, there is no need for the power from Conawapa. Take a look at what Conawapa was supposed to do. Conawapa is supposed to build a major dam in the province of Manitoba which will produce power, the vast majority of which will go to Ontario, and the residue will remain here in Manitoba.

The theory was that that residue power was essential to the needs of Manitoba. So we might just as well build the whole project, because we would need 300 megawatts, and that would be the excess above and beyond the power sale to Ontario—quite a simple concept.

We accepted the judgment of Manitoba Hydro that they would require this power by the year 2000. It is quite interesting to read what Manitoba's one authority had to say during the Public Utilities Board approval of Conawapa with respect to the need of power. This is Mr. Zaleski, whose official title is program director of generation. This is a man who is an expert in the field of Manitoba Hydro, and this is what Mr. Zaleski had to say: If recognized soon enough, and the need for the new generation is moved to beyond 2000, Conawapa and Bipole III could be delayed.

Mr. Zaleski then goes on to say: with a net saving over current expectations.

It would, in other words, save us money to not do it. There could be, he says, domestic rate savings resulting from plant deferral. This is Manitoba Hydro's expert witness saying that if we knew we did not need the power in the year 2000, then we could delay it and there could be genuine savings to the ratepayers of the province of Manitoba.

Well, Mr. Speaker, not only do we now know that we do not need that power in the year 2000, we know we do not need the power in the year 2005. We know we do not need the power in the year 2010. The most recent projection says we will not need the power until the year 2011.

So why is it that this government that works with the Manitoba Hydro system, whose mandate is to provide essential power for Manitoba, is going ahead with a project which Manitoba does not need for almost two decades, two decades less a year?

Why are we doing it? Well, I think we have to look very specifically at the politics of power. I think we have to go back into history just a little bit. I remember watching the debate, albeit from the gallery at this particular point in time, between the

then-governing New Democratic Party and the then-opposition, Progressive Conservatives.

The debate was about Limestone. The Premier and the critic responsible for Hydro got up day after day and said that we must not build this project for political expediency, that there is no need to build this project for 1986, that we should be building it when it is necessary. When did we decide to build it, Mr. Speaker?

We decided to build it for the 1986 election campaign. Why? Because the NDP had built a strategy of Howard Pawley on the top of a giant earth mover. There they were on television ads, there they were on campaign literature, of Howard Pawley on his earth-moving machine, the giant killer creating, I think it was, 2,000 jobs—a wonderful day for Manitoba. Therefore, one must vote NDP, because this will be a new era of prosperity for the province of Manitoba, and they unfortunately got re-elected. Then what have we learned about Limestone? Well, first of all, we learned a number of things. First of all, we learned that the Limestone training initiative, which was a very good and genuine concept, failed, and it failed because instead of having four years to train people adequately, they only had two years by pushing the target date back by two years.

* (1550)

People who could have been trained in much more sophisticated technologies ended up being trained to be cleaners, ended up being trained to be cooks' assistants instead of being able to achieve the apprenticeship training that would have been necessary for them to become heavy equipment operators—very few. Particularly and tragically, very few aboriginal peoples received that kind of intensive training because it was discovered, as we so tragically know, that many of them needed upgrading before they could begin the formalized training for jobs. That upgrading in and of itself took a couple of years. So by the time they had completed the upgrading, they were not given any time frame in order to acquire the more technological skills. So a good concept went awry because of the speed on behalf of the government to make sure that 1986 was an election issue.

Tragically, I see exactly the same thing happening here, Mr. Speaker. We have an agenda for a 1994 election campaign. So now we can have the Premier (Mr. Filmon) on the big giant earth mover saying he is going to create X numbers of jobs so

he can have his picture on the TV ads on this giant machine, and again we are doing something which is outside of the mandate of Manitoba Hydro and which has not been evaluated appropriately.

Now, the Minister responsible for Hydro (Mr. Downey) would say, oh, yes, but it has been before the Public Utilities Board. But the Public Utilities Board had misinformation or at least misinformation now. I suspect that at the time they received the information, and I want to be very clear, that information was the best guess of Manitoba Hydro in November of 1990. That was the best guess that this would be the figure that would be the time frame that we would require this power, and the time frame was to be the year 2000. Miraculously three months later we have a whole new projection, and miraculously three months after that we have a further projection.

Now, why were these changes happening? Well, they were happening for several reasons. They were happening primarily because Manitoba Hydro began to look towards a conservation modality which they had never seriously looked at before. There is no question about that. That conservation modality meant that they could save power, that they could get involved in programs like Power Smart which the Liberal Party recommended to the government, that they could buy into programs which would encourage the conservation of power. That would mean that the needed construction of power could be delayed. So that was one of the reasons why the projection changed.

The other reason why the projection changed, quite frankly, was because there was an understanding in the world economy that business could use the process of co-generation far more effectively. It is interesting. For example, I debated the other day, or discussed, with an individual who is interested in purchasing an interest in the Pine Falls plant, what is now Abitibi-Price but will someday probably be Pine Falls Paper. One of the things that they are looking very carefully at is a co-generation scheme so that they cannot use the demand for electricity that they had to use before.

Certainly, we see West Coast Energy as a company which has become a leader in the field of co-generation projects in the province of Ontario. Co-generation—the use and re-use of power and the use of what was normally considered a useless by-product as an ingredient to produce additional power—has become a much more acceptable

concept within the corporate community, and a powerful one. But the result of that has been the requirement for less power.

So, we now know that although the Public Utilities Board made a judgment on the information that was valid at the time, that information is no longer valid by Manitoba Hydro's own forecast. We have the member for Rossmere (Mr. Neufeld), the former minister of Hydro, on the record, stating that if he knew then what he knows now, he would not recommend the year for construction being 1994. So it is argued that hindsight is a wonderful thing.

But, Mr. Speaker, hindsight can be very useful here, because, to this point in time, naught significant money has been invested in this project. So it is time to, appropriately, re-evaluate what is happening with regard to this.

Now, we have entered into a sale with Ontario Hydro. Mr. Speaker, we found what we thought was a considerable loophole in the agreement between Manitoba Hydro and Ontario Hydro. The loophole was very simple. Ontario Hydro had to have approval of their agreement by Order-in-Council, and that Order-in-Council had a very narrow window time frame.

Through an error somewhere in Executive Council in Ontario—perhaps similar to the error that I noticed, for example, today in an executive assistant to a minister who has been functioning since January, finally got it approved in a Order-in-Council last week. Those kinds of errors do occur, an error in Executive Council. Things do not happen as rapidly sometimes as they should.

In this particular case, it did not happen and as a result, they were outside of the contract. I wish the honourable members had been here. Some of you know, I think, that I am married to a corporate lawyer, and I took this agreement home to my husband. He chuckled loud and long when he found the little loophole in this particular agreement, and said, here, here, this is what you can do with this particular one. It is very useful to have spouses who can do that kind of thing for you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, we brought it into the House and the minister responsible said, well, you know, we will have to look at this. So they hired a law firm, and that law firm came out with a legal opinion. Now, they would not give us the full legal opinion. They gave us sentences from the legal opinion. Some of the problems with the legal opinion were that it had the

wrong dates. It had the wrong dates for the Order-in-Council.

So we became very suspicious of this particular Order-in-Council, and so we decided to hire our own law firm.

Well, we hired our own law firm, and guess what? We came back with a legal opinion which is totally opposite to the legal opinion which had been obtained, we think, by the government, and I say we think because they have never afforded us a glimpse at the entire legal opinion. We, on the other hand, tabled our full agreement so that there would be no question in the minds of Manitoba Hydro as to exactly what arguments were being made.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell you something about legal opinions. I know that if you direct a law firm appropriately, you can get probably any legal opinion you want. I am saying that there is often a situation in which there are gray areas and in which legal counsel can be persuaded to give opinion A or opinion B. Let me tell you that we know full well that legal opinions can be used in that manner, and have been used by governments and opposition parties on many occasions. That is why we were prepared to table our legal opinion.

We have been waiting with some patience now for some months for a legal opinion to be tabled by the government which would refute the legal opinion that we tabled. They have not even bothered to do that, Mr. Speaker. They have not even bothered to take our legal opinion to Manitoba Hydro and say to Manitoba Hydro's lawyers, would you shoot this legal opinion down, because I have been close enough to the law all my life that I know that this can be done. [interjection] Ah, I have been very close, on all sides.

* (1600)

Lawyers can take an agreement and interpret it in a number of ways, and I think we are very well aware of that, every member of this Chamber.

You have a legal opinion which you will not table. When I say, you, I mean the government—will not table in this Chamber. We got a legal opinion in contradiction to your legal opinion which we had, quite frankly, the guts to table. You have done nothing to refute this.

But let us go beyond exactly what the legal opinion was. The legal opinion that we received said that this action had been taken outside of the time frame of the contract between Ontario Hydro

and Manitoba Hydro, and therefore it could be argued that the legal contract was invalid.

Now, what did we want the government to do with this legal contract? Did we want them to scrap it? No, we did not. Did we want them to rip up their contract with Ontario Hydro? No. We wanted them to use this as a negotiating tool. If in fact the contract was open to interpretation, if the contract was indeed invalid, then Ontario Hydro should be given the opportunity to negotiate with us for better terms for Manitoba, because Ontario cannot use the argument. This is the interesting case here. Ontario would have a very difficult time in a court of law saying that this contract is illegal because they failed to perform. Manitoba, on the other hand, has a very good argument in presenting that Ontario did not do what Ontario should have done, and therefore, Ontario is at fault. Manitoba is not at fault. Manitoba passed our Order-in-Council within the appropriate window of opportunity. It was Ontario Hydro that did not.

We believe that the project needs to be re-evaluated, and it needs to be re-evaluated for three reasons. This is where the Liberal Party stands firmly on the development of power. First and foremost, no power should be built in the province of Manitoba under the present mandate of Manitoba Hydro unless Manitoba needs the power. That is the No. 1 criterion. Manitoba must show need for the power, or else we must change the mandate of Manitoba Hydro, because the present mandate says Manitoba Hydro exists to produce power to meet the needs of Manitobans. If Manitoba does not need the power, then we are working outside the Manitoba mandate, and therefore, it is something that is unacceptable.

Secondly, we must meet the environmental standards imposed by an environmental review process. The government has committed to a review process, but let us look at what they have done since they made that commitment. They have limited the amount of money available to intervenor status. Now we are at a million dollars, a lot of money, but we are talking about a \$5.8-billion project. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinsson) can quickly tell me how many zeros that is. It is a heck of a lot.

An Honourable Member: How many is it, Sharon?

Mrs. Carstairs: I asked him.

What we are talking about is 580 times one. That is what we are talking about. We are talking about

a project which is extremely critical to this province in terms of the money which we spend and the debt load—which is of interest to the Finance Minister (Mr. Manness)—that we assume as a result. We know darn well what is happening at Limestone. Limestone is not paying for itself. Limestone is a charge against the ratepayers of the province of Manitoba, because a New Democratic Party negotiated a bad deal. The result is that if we do not have an appropriate evaluation based on the economic potential of this deal, then we have not met the third factor.

So the three factors: We must need the power in Manitoba, or else we must change the mandate of Manitoba Hydro and have a thorough debate of that issue in this Chamber; the second thing is, it must meet environmental standards, and there must be an appropriate evaluation and not one in which, quite frankly, Manitoba Hydro is sending out bills with enclosures saying everything is wonderful about the environment at Conawapa, as went out this week. Now, how can they say that when they have not even yet subjected the project to an evaluation? How can you possibly make that unilateral evaluation before you have even decided on the process, on the intervenor funding, on the evaluation that would take place.

I am not equipped, and I would suggest to you that there is not a member in this Chamber who is equipped to say categorically, there will be no environmental damage. None of us is equipped to say that.

I am not saying there will be. I cannot say there will be or there will not be, because I am not an environmental expert, but what I resent is Manitoba Hydro putting out a pamphlet to already prejudice the environmental process. That is what they have done. They have said everything is wonderful, everything is perfect, there cannot possibly be any environmental damage. Well then, why are we bothering with an environmental assessment? Is it just show? Well, I hope not, Mr. Speaker, because if all it is, is show, then that would be a tragedy for the future of the province of Manitoba.

I notice that the member has indicated that their candidate for Crescentwood that they nominated last night, Jenny Hillard, has indicated her opposition to Conawapa, and she is waiting with a certain amount of anticipation for the environmental assessment.

Well, I wonder if Ms. Hillard is aware of the fact that they have limited the intervenor funding. I am wondering if Ms. Hillard is aware of the fact that Manitoba Hydro has already decided that it is an environmentally benign project. I am wondering if Ms. Hillard is aware of the fact that this government has made it part and parcel of their election platform for 1994.

I know Ms. Hillard personally. I think she is a very fine person. I first met her when she was making skating costumes for my daughter Jennie, and I know that as a single mother, she struggled very hard to raise two children in the west end of the city, just south of Polo Park. I visited her home frequently for fittings and for costume pickup, and I noted with interest her participation then in the community. So I welcome her. I would suggest we are going to defeat her, but I welcome her as a candidate in the Crescentwood by-election.

But I find it fascinating that this is a major thrust of this government, and they nominate a candidate who goes on radio this morning and says, well, I am opposed to Conawapa. This is a woman who indicated in the past that she was in the NDP. I wonder if she left them because she was opposed to Limestone? She indicates that at some time she has been a Liberal. I cannot find any record of a membership for her as a member of the Liberal Party, but I would have welcomed her because I think she is a very fine person.

I cannot find a record that she was ever a member of the Liberal Party, but in terms of her membership in the Conservative Party, I find it fascinating that she is coming out immediately in opposition to one of the major thrusts of this government. That will be interesting in terms of the evolution of the Crescentwood by-election.

Mr. Speaker, let us take a look at one of the reasons why I believe the project should be delayed. I believe that one of the serious faults of the Limestone project was the fact that the training was begun far too late.

* (1610)

Now let us take a look at what has happened to Limestone training in between 1988, when this government came to office, and the present. Well, first of all, we watched Limestone training being unilaterally shifted over to Keewatin Community College. Then we watched hundreds and hundreds of positions at Keewatin Community College being cut.

There are significantly fewer young people being trained at Keewatin Community College than there were in 1988 when they did not even have the Limestone training centre. Now they have the Limestone training centre as part and parcel of Keewatin Community College, and we have fewer students than we had back in 1986.

That does not bode well for training opportunities for those who would like to work on Conawapa. Again, we are in the same scenario. We are now at 1992. We have a project which is going to begin construction, the government would tell us, in 1994. Have we started the training process for those who would work at the site? No, we have not.

Are we going to be able to give them a four-year apprenticeship? No, we are not, because this government is making exactly the same mistake that they made in Limestone in 1986. They precipitated a movement which was not in the best interests of the training of northerners into highly skilled, technological occupations.

Mr. Speaker, we have provided this government with an opportunity to renegotiate. Why do we want them to renegotiate? We want them to renegotiate for a number of reasons. First and foremost, we do not believe, nor does Manitoba Hydro, that the power is required at the present time in the province of Manitoba. It does not meet the mandate, and therefore, it should not begin at this particular time.

Secondly, the environment assessment process is being speeded up by this government. They have cut intervenor funding. They have not provided adequacy of dollars for those who would like to hire experts in contrary opinion to those experts who will be provided by Manitoba Hydro, and we know what the experts for Manitoba Hydro are going to say. They already said it in a pamphlet they delivered to all of their users just this week, that it is an environmentally benign project.

So we know that there is a genuine need for intervenor status for people who will present contrary arguments and then allow the environment assessment process to continue in as free and open a dialogue as it is possible.

Thirdly, we believe that it is inappropriate to speed up this project—and that is what is being done, because we do not need the power—because of the dearth of training opportunities which will result to northerners as a result. If we take sufficient time so that we are providing for Manitoba Hydro needs by the year 2012, then we have enough time to do the

adequacy of training that will be required to give northerners, and particularly aboriginal northerners, the skills they will need to not only build this project but to take that learning with them from that project to be used in other useful development projects in northern Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, it is very easy for members of the government to say that the Liberal Party is on both sides of this issue. We are not both sides of the issue. We are very clear as to exactly where we are on this issue. We believe that Hydro projects necessary for Manitoba's needs should be built. There is no question of that. If Manitoba needs the power, then we should build the power to meet Manitoba's needs, but I question why we are building a project when it has been demonstrated by no other agency than Manitoba Hydro itself that we will not need the power at the time that this project is going to be built. So what are we building it for at this particular juncture?

I also questioned why we are building a project which now, since it is not needed by Manitoba, is going to be used exclusively for the needs of Ontario, because the rest of the Hydro presumably is going to run down the line. Why are we so interested, in this province, in beating up the potential of Ontario to create jobs? Why are we interested, as we were in Limestone, in transmitting power south of the border so they can have an industrial complex which will then compete with the industrial complex that we have in Manitoba?

That is why I would like to see the entire mandate of Manitoba Hydro debated. The First Minister (Mr. Fillmon) came back from his meeting in B.C. and talked about the western grid. I see the western grid as a very positive thing. I think that is something in which Manitoba could benefit and so could the other provinces, but there would be some quid pro quo of a western grid transportation system.

I see no quid pro quo in the deal that we have signed with Ontario. Are they offering to do anything in return other than to pay some of the upfront costs of this project because they need it?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): They are promising never to elect an NDP government again.

Mrs. Carstairs: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) indicates that the quid pro quo from Ontario is that they will never elect an NDP government again. I have to tell him that if

that really was a quid pro quo, I might be more interested in this particular deal.

Unfortunately, I do not think that he can control the nine million people living in Ontario and how they may choose to vote next time around. However, it is something worthy of debate and we certainly could debate that if we had before us a bill which would change the mandate of Manitoba Hydro.

Mr. Speaker, we are going down a path that we have gone down before in the province of Manitoba. We have used power in an abusive way. As citizens, we all overabuse the need for power. We have, tragically, in the past abused the part of the province where the power is produced.

I think that it is clear to many on the scene that northerners have benefited little from the massive power projects that we have produced in their part of this province. They have benefited on occasion from short-term jobs but not long-term skills. They pay higher Hydro rates than we do in the city of Winnipeg, so they wonder why this great resource coming out of the North has never been used to benefit them. They wonder why they have achieved so little from massive projects.

Our aboriginal brothers and sisters have far more serious complaints. Their lands have been destroyed. Their environment has become uninhabitable for many of the skills that they once had. Their fishing has frequently been destroyed. Their hunting grounds have been destroyed.

I would suggest that the minister has made very positive moves in settling some very long outstanding claims from our aboriginal people and I congratulate the minister—progress which was not made by the previous administration despite the fact that they pretended to represent those communities in great number. I find it somewhat interesting that the settlements for these claims are being made by a government which I think would readily admit is primarily a southern government and not a northern government, yet they have worked hard at maintaining and trying to make some of the settlements with the Northern Agreement.

But now we are launching into another stage of power investment, and that power investment must meet, in the opinion of the Liberal Party, three very clear priorities. It must be, first and foremost, in the need of Manitobans for that power. Secondly, it must be environmentally sensitive and thirdly, it must be in our economic best interest. At this point in time, Conawapa fails all three, Mr. Speaker.

* (1620)

On that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my remarks on this particular bill.

Mr. Speaker: As previously agreed, this matter will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman).

Bill 12—The Animal Husbandry Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), Bill 12, The Animal Husbandry Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'élevage, standing in the name of the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), who has 10 minutes remaining. Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? [Agreed]

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, I would like to just make a few comments on The Animal Husbandry Amendment Act.

As the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) has indicated, we will not be passing this bill at this time because we are waiting to get into the Agriculture Estimates where we can discuss with the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) some of the consequences of his privatization of services to rural Manitoba, because that is really what this bill is, Mr. Speaker, is the privatization of many services that were made available by government to farmers in Manitoba, and this government has chosen to privatize many of those services.

Mr. Speaker, the bill deals with three issues. It deals with the residing of technicians, in that technicians are no longer going to be required to reside in the region that they serve. It also deals with the reference of the Manitoba Semen Distribution Centre because this is no longer an agent of government. It also deals with the violations of animal artificial inseminations and an increase in fines. I would like to comment briefly on each of those sections that are being amended.

One of the most interesting ones is the requirement that technicians no longer have to live in the community that they serve. When we look at the direction that this government says they are going in, they talk about decentralization and providing more services to the rural communities, moving services out of the city into the rural area, but here they are taking services away. Rather than bringing services closer to the community, they are

telling technicians that they do not have to live in the area where services are required, and we have some concerns.

We know that many farmers, ranchers have difficulty getting the services that they need, and we have heard of cases, since this government has changed the regulations on artificial insemination, that there are people who are saying that they are not having services provided as adequately as they were previously. The organization that has the responsibility, that owns the company now, is operating to make profit. When it becomes too far to drive to make profit, when there are too few clients in a particular area, then they do not find it necessary or it does not pay for them. That was why it was important that government was involved in providing the services to the farming community, and it is disappointing that this minister has chosen to take this service away at a time in particular when we say we have to diversify the rural economy. Farmers need supports; we are having that reduced.

As I said, it does not sit well with the government to, on one hand, talk about decentralization of services and then have a commitment broken when they say the technicians. Then, of course, the government's record is not all that good on decentralization anyway.

Point of Order

Mr. George Hickey (Point Douglas): We are ready to move Bill 10 into committee, so we would like to deny leave to keep it standing in the name of the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman).

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised, the House has already granted leave that this matter could remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Dauphin.

Is it the will of the House to deny leave?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: There is agreement. Leave is denied.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Energy and Mines): Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that leave has been denied on Bill 10.

Mr. Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Downey: Can I now proceed to close debate on Bill 10?

Mr. Speaker: The honourable minister to close debate on Bill 10—order, please. We are still dealing with the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk).

In order to prevent some chaos, the honourable member for Swan River still has the floor on Bill 12. Therefore, when the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) concludes her remarks, at which time we will revert to Bill 10, with leave—we will have to ask for leave to allow the honourable minister to close debate. That is agreed? That is agreed. The honourable member for Swan River, to continue her remarks.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with Bill 12, which is really a privatization bill of this government. As I had indicated earlier, we are not prepared to move this bill to committee, because we want to hear what the minister has to say when this comes up in Estimates. We are going to be dealing with those Estimates on Thursday and perhaps the earlier part of next week, so it will not take that long. At that time, we will then be prepared to move this bill along when we have the information that we require as to what this government has saved in dollars versus the services they have reduced to farmers and ranchers.

Before I was interrupted I was talking about decentralization, and I would like to get back on to that topic. This government appears or gives the impression that they are very much committed to decentralization and bringing services closer to the people in the rural community. That is why it is difficult to understand why the government would move in the direction of removing technicians from the rural area, why they would privatize a service that is very much needed, a service that is very difficult to get in some parts of the province.

As I said, there are some technicians who are now operating basically to make money, and it is not in their best interest to provide those services. The government was providing a good service. At a time when we have to diversify our economy, I am disappointed that the government has moved in this direction. As I said, it was not surprising that the government on one hand talked about decentralization and then took away a service, because that is what they did with many of their decentralization promises. They gave their word on it, and then they broke that word.

There were many political decisions made on the whole decentralization, and I do not think that it was done in the best interest of all the people. The

government made the commitment that they would be decentralizing jobs to areas of high unemployment, areas where services were really needed. What we have in reality are jobs that have been moved into areas for political purposes. You see decentralization into Neepawa and Minnedosa, and jobs that were in Swan River now being decentralized to Roblin as far as Housing goes. We heard a big promise and a whole slew of cabinet ministers going up to Dauphin during the last election talking about the decentralization of jobs to Dauphin, and what happened?

After the election, all of a sudden, the equipment was not there, the technology was not there to move the jobs to Dauphin. That applies to many of the other ones, but it is surprising that the equipment and the technology are there to move jobs to Minnedosa and Neepawa.

Mr. Speaker, this government's record on decentralization with rural Manitobans is not as good as it could be. It is tainted with political interference. I would hope that the government, as they proceed with their decentralization plan, as the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) indicated yesterday in Estimates, is going forward. They will really look at where services are needed and where the unemployment rates are very high and then move their projects to those areas.

* (1630)

(Mr. Jack Penner, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

I wish that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) would reconsider what he has done with the moves he has made to privatize services to farmers and look again at how those technicians could be kept in the rural community. Surely there must be ways that we can encourage people to stay in the rural area and provide the services that are needed, because in reality, that is part of the Department of Agriculture's role, is to help farmers get new technology, bring the technology to the farmers.

I am afraid that many of those services right now that are supposed to be provided by the Department of Agriculture are not happening. One of the complaints that we have heard about the Department of Agriculture is that staff, home economists and ag reps, are spending an awful lot of their time working on GRIP and NISA, filling out application forms and dealing with those things, rather than providing farmers with the service.

There is a role for ag reps and there is a role for home economists and that is to help farmers, to help with new technology, provide services to the farming community, but I do not believe that the role of ag reps is to spend their time filling out GRIP and NISA forms. There is a far more important role. I do not believe that when this government talks about decentralization and diversifying the rural economy, when they encourage farmers to diversify, they are sending a very good message out to the community. First of all, I do not think they are sending a good message out to the community when the agriculture staff should be there helping farmers diversify or providing information and they are spending their time on GRIP and NISA forms, and then I do not think they are sending a very good message when they centralize or privatize a service that takes away services from the farmers that are needed.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the other area that is covered off in this is the increase in penalties, and that we have no difficulty with. If the level of penalties is not at a realistic level, then it should be brought in line with what is realistic by today's values, so we have no difficulty with that.

But I wonder why the minister has chosen to bring this in in this bill because it is my understanding that this could have been done by regulation. It was not necessary to bring it in as a bill, and there are other changes that government has made by regulation. One that comes to mind is the change of fees for Crown land leases for campers on lakes. Now, that is an increase and it is going to cost more money. If the government could bring that in by regulation, then I do not know why they could not bring this fee change in by regulation as well. Perhaps the minister can explain that when we get into further discussion on this bill.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the other issue is the removal of the residence and the removal of the reference to the Manitoba Semen Distribution Centre. This service was privatized last year, so it only makes sense that it be removed with this legislation.

We want to question the minister as to the impact of this privatization, not only the privatization of the Semen Centre, but also the privatization of the drug centre, the Soil Testing Lab, and the Feed Analysis Lab. All of these services have been privatized. From discussions we had last year, we know that people wanted to take over these services because there was a good opportunity for them to make profit.

The government decided that rather than provide service, they would let some private sector business make profit. But there is a risk when you do that. Are you going to provide the same service?

The minister said that the Semen Centre lost money last year, that it was a loss of \$5,000. In reality, when you look at the service that was provided, is \$5,000 that great a loss? Also, was that \$5,000 worthwhile in providing service for farmers who are now not able to get that service in some areas of the province? As I said, there have been people who have indicated that the people who now own the private company are not prepared to travel to some of the remote areas. It is something that has to be looked at. Is the service as adequate as it was? The minister may not feel that this is a problem, but I think that it is something that we have to address.

I guess the other things that we would want to look are, how are these operations working right now? Are there the same number of jobs that were there in the province? Where are these companies operating from? Are they operating out of Manitoba? What are they doing for the employment of Manitoba? What kind of a service is provided? I am sure the minister will be able to provide us with that information when we get into Estimates.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the other area that was privatized was the Feed Analysis Lab. There is some concern, as well, with the Feed Analysis Lab as to why the prices of that went up so high in the last couple of years of operation. Why did they increase those fees that made it unrealistic, that farmers had to then look for other sources? If they were interested in providing services for the farmers, they would have provided them at a reasonable cost, rather than jacking up the price to such a rate that privatization was—[interjection]

When the minister first brought in the idea of privatizing all of those four centres, we disagreed with the concept at that time, and we still disagree with the concept.

We will look forward to discussing this more thoroughly with the minister when we get into Estimates, but I want to say that, again, I think that the biggest concern that we have is that the service may not be adequately provided. Those centres were playing an important role. They were providing a service, and, Mr. Acting Speaker, we have to really look at what we believe in. If we believe in helping the rural economy diversify, if we

believe that agriculture is changing and that the role of the Department of Agriculture is to support the rural community, then we should be prepared to also provide the services.

It is my belief that services to the rural community have been decreased because now the whole philosophy, when we look at private ownership versus providing service, I do not believe that the service is as adequate as it was. This I say from information that we have received from people who were using the services before. Concern about the prices of veterinarian supplies has also been raised, and we will raise that with the minister. I am sure that he has some studies that can tell us whether there has been an increase in veterinarian supplies since the privatization of the vet board.

Those will be very important to us to find out whether the service is the same, whether there is an increase, because the minister is well aware that the farm community is facing some very difficult times and cannot afford to be picking up extra costs at this time. If there is a shift in pricing, we will want to question the minister very closely on how he is going to address this. I hope that we will find that there has not been a change and that there is adequate service there for the farming community.

* (1640)

Just briefly then, I am disappointed that this government has decided that it is not necessary for technicians to be in the remote areas. I believe that there could have been a way to entice people to stay in the rural community where services are most needed. Perhaps we can discuss this more thoroughly when we get into Estimates. [interjection]

Yes, the minister has indicated that he would like to discuss fuel tax for the farmers, and that is something that perhaps we can discuss when we get into the Agriculture Estimates. There are many things that we could discuss. We could discuss the educational taxes that are being offloaded onto the farming community by this government even though they lead people to believe that farmers are going to pay less tax.

Farmers are getting their bills in many municipalities and they are paying a higher education tax, they are paying more money than they did. So there are issues that we can discuss that are related to the farm community and costing the farmers more money.

We can also talk about GRIP and NISA and the changes that have been put in place and the mistrust that the community now has with this Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) because he changed the lentils formula during the middle of a contract. That causes some concern for farmers, Mr. Acting Speaker, because farmers in this province dealt with the Minister of Agriculture in good faith. He said there was a contract signed saying that all changes had to be made before March 15. The minister did not make those changes ahead of time, he made them afterwards. That makes people wonder what the next change this Minister of Agriculture is going to make.

Does it mean that next spring when too much red spring wheat is grown that he can change the formula as well? That is where he has lost credibility. When you put your word on the line, then you should stand behind that word. It is things like that that cause farmers to have some real concern in the community.

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, we will be talking about those issues and many other issues. Another issue in GRIP is the disparities in certain parts of the province and coverage for wildlife damage versus waterfowl damage. I know the minister is aware of the issue that comes up along Duck Mountain where people feel they are being treated unfairly, compared to the people having coverage in the southern part for duck damage.

So we will be raising all of those concerns when we get into Estimates. As I said, we will not be passing this bill at this time. We will wait and perhaps after we get the information that we require, then we will deal with it at that time. With that, Mr. Acting Speaker, I close my remarks.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Mr. Speaker: As previously agreed, this matter will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman).

Bill 10—The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to revert to Bill 10? [Agreed]

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Energy and Mines): Mr. Speaker, I rise to just take a few minutes to close debate on Bill 10 and thank the Leader of the second opposition party (Mrs.

Carstairs) and the members of the opposition party for their comments as it relates to Bill 10.

They expanded somewhat the debate on the bill. Initially the bill is intended to allow for Manitoba Hydro to increase the amount of borrowing that they can carry out on their own behalf to \$500 million from the \$150 million. It is my understanding that the monies that are being requested, the borrowing authority that is being requested will not be used for Conawapa construction. However, the debate got into the whole question of Conawapa, which I quite frankly appreciated. If it was a little bit off what the specific intent of the bill was, it was still helpful I believe to have had the discussion as it relates to Manitoba Hydro and their activities.

I want to, as well, acknowledge the compliments from the Leader of the second opposition party (Mrs. Carstairs) as it relates to the Northern Flood Agreement and the activities that are being carried out with our aboriginal communities, as we have had difficulties with over the past few years in accomplishing some settlements. We, of course, I think have shown progress in that area, and I thank the member for that acknowledgement.

I want to, as well, thank her for putting her position forward, so that we can in fact, when Hydro comes before committee and at other opportunities in this debate, that there can be a response, an accurate response from Hydro. I do not intend today, Mr. Speaker, to enter into the direct debate as it relates to the Conawapa project. I want, though, to make this comment and the word politics, the power of politics or the politics of power, I guess as it was expressed, goes back a long ways. I may have put this on the record, but I think it is worth putting on the record again as it relates to Manitoba Hydro.

There is no secret or any magic or anything that has changed dramatically as it relates to Manitoba Hydro and the development of this province. It has been used as a generator of economic activity in a major way in Manitoba. I am not going to try and deny that, nor do I want to deny that, Mr. Speaker. I am extremely proud of Manitoba Hydro and Manitoba Hydro's history in this province. I think the majority of members in this House would stand up and make the same basic statement.

Mr. Speaker, let us start with a Premier known as D. L. Campbell who was certainly not of the faith of the members opposite, in fact—not very much. D. L. Campbell, a great Premier, introduced rural electrification for the people of Manitoba. I believe

they will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of that later this year and, of course, Hydro's acknowledgement of that I think is extremely important, and in this Legislative Assembly, the recognition of that is extremely important.

The rural electrification in Manitoba was a tremendous boost to the whole economy of this province, not only for the demand side that was created in the generation of the electrical power, but of course the absolute need for economic development in rural Manitoba which flowed from the introduction of rural electrification. For farm house purposes, for farm energy, for general small business, everything related to economic development was able to be accomplished with the introduction of rural electrification;

Followed by, Mr. Speaker, the Duff Roblin government who had a greater vision of expanding it for additional economic activity in this province. Not to say that the vision was to be any greater than the previous one, but the ability for Manitoba to generate volumes of power that could add to the overall economic activity of Manitoba was extremely essential—again, the foresightedness of two Premiers who were extremely important to this province, again, in the interests of Manitoba Hydro and Manitoba's economy, power of politics or the politics of power, again, are part of it;

Followed in a short period of time by Walter Weir, who really had no opportunity and length of time to change the mandate;

Followed by the Schreyer administration which built and developed the Nelson River system, again with the objective of the overall economics of the Hydro activities helping all of Manitoba;

Followed by the Lyon administration, Mr. Speaker, which again continued on a planned basis to see the development take place or continue to take place, based on more the principles of using the hydroelectric power in Manitoba and also an interconnect between Manitoba and the western power system through a western power grid, again using Manitoba Hydro as a major generator of economic activity;

Followed by the Howard Pawley administration, which, Mr. Speaker, again saw the opportunity for hydroelectric power to be used for the overall economic generation of this province;

* (1650)

Followed by, of course, the Filmon administration which is currently here, which has done a couple of basic things differently. They have added two new processes: Number one, they have added the process of having the complete environmental commission hearings, and, secondly, the Public Utilities Board to make an assessment as to whether or not the feasibility of a sale to Ontario was in the interests of Manitobans and of Manitoba Hydro.

Well, we are in the process of the Clean Environment Commission hearings right now. We have had the hearings as related to the Public Utilities Board, Mr. Speaker. Of course, we have seen some major settlements or proposed settlements as they relate to our aboriginal communities.

The Liberal Leader (Mrs. Carstairs)—I will get into a debate with her over the next period of time, as the opportunities permit, to say where I disagree with her. She raises the whole question of starting a training program today for the Conawapa project. To start a program today for training would be—I would then come under criticism from the Liberal Party to say, well, why are you having environmental hearings; why are you doing all these things, developing training when you have not even got a permit or a licence to proceed with the project?

I do not think she can have it both ways. I think we have to clarify those points, as we have to clarify some other points, and again I am prepared to do that as this debate proceeds.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is the power, the political power that we are talking about—all Premiers whom I have referred to have had the mandate from the people of Manitoba to proceed in the development of Manitoba Hydro to use it, yes, in Manitoba, to export it, to make a profit for the people of Manitoba, is in the people's interests.

I believe that mandate has carried forward to the Filmon administration, and I believe the public are quite prepared, Mr. Speaker, particularly during times of tough economic difficulties in our society, shortage of job opportunities where this will create tremendous job opportunities, create a good bottom-line profit for the people of Manitoba, do it under the regulatory authority of the Clean Environment Commission, having the Public Utilities Board pass its judgment. I believe the government and Manitoba Hydro are on the right path.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to future debate as it relates to this whole issue, and I hope that the Leader of the Second Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs), particularly, will take a look at the history of the development of Manitoba Hydro as it relates to the politics of power, if that is what the terminology is. It is important to this province. It is important to the people today and to the future of this province.

We intend, Mr. Speaker, to deal with it responsibly and properly on behalf of the people of this province.

I thank members for their contribution on Bill 10 and look forward to its further discussion in committee and its final passage. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

The question before the House is second reading of Bill 10, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Hydro-Manitoba. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? [Agreed]

Bill 15—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger), Bill 15, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act; Loi modifiant le Code de la route, standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). Is there leave that this matter remain standing? [Agreed]

Bill 20—The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), Bill 20, The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'évaluation municipale, standing in the name of the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen). Is there leave that this matter remain standing? [Agreed]

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on Bill 20 because of a number of concerns that my caucus has with the whole assessment process as it is being conducted in the province of Manitoba and particularly in this respect with regard to farmers in Manitoba.

When we originally dealt with assessment legislation under the former ministry, we raised the issue then of why we had to go with assessments

on a three-year time frame. We used British Columbia as an example and indicated that in that province it was possible to do reassessment each and every year, based on current property values. It works extremely well, and it makes sure that there is an orderly process whereby people pay tax based on the real value of the property upon which they are paying that tax.

At that time, it was argued that it would be too complex and too difficult to put into place an assessment system that was yearly. We do not agree with that argument, but that was the will of the government at that particular time.

We were then assured that the assessment would be put on a regular basis, and it would take place every three years. Well, lo and behold, we are not two years into that process, and we are being informed by the government that they cannot quite do the assessment in 1993, and it must be postponed till 1994. Well, interestingly enough, it is not because the assessments are not going to be possible. It is because the government, for reasons known only to the government, has decided that they cannot put the assessment in 1993, and they want to further delay it.

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the window of opportunity for an election campaign could just possibly be the spring of 1994, and municipal assessments of course would not go out at that particular point in time and would not go out until later, perhaps after the election was over. I would like to think that this was not the rationale for why the government was doing this, but I have to suggest that we have a certain question in our mind as to the political motivation of this government at the particular time.

What we have however is a far more serious concern, the rights which we believe will be removed and to some degree were already removed in Bill 79, and that is the right to appeal on current market value. That is our fundamental disagreement with this.

I would like to give a very specific example. We have a situation with the Campbell Soup factory in Portage la Prairie. The Campbell Soup factory has an assessment. That assessment has not been—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, I have a point of order.

Perhaps just to enlighten the Leader of the third party to clarify a matter, Mr. Speaker, Bill 20 that is before the House does not have any section dealing with the rights of appeal to farmers; therefore, I just thought I should clarify that for the member's sake.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mrs. Carstairs: I am very aware of what Bill 20 does not have. What I am suggesting is what Bill 20 should have.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 20 does not correct a failure of Bill 79. The failure—[interjection] Yes, but because we support legislation—this is the naiveté of the minister. You know, it is wonderful. I am so glad he has moved out of Education because we could not stand that kind of naiveté, that you do not ever change anything when you discover it has a fault. You just toe the party line and you say, that is the way it has been; that is the way it has to be forever and ever and ever.

The value of being in this Legislature is that you can make things better. When you realize and recognize that perhaps something has not been dealt with as thoroughly as it could have been dealt with, you make the necessary changes. There is nothing wrong with doing that. There is nothing wrong with admitting that perhaps there was a mistake in the original bill and that a further change could be made.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a flip-flop because Bill 79 did not deal with this issue effectively. There are many pieces of legislation—and I would suggest that the government look at the number of bills they have introduced in this session that are amendments to existing legislation—not new legislation, amendments. Why do you introduce an amendment? Well, it may come as a remarkable thought to the minister responsible for Rural Development, but you amend a bill because you found a flaw.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This bill will remain standing in the name of the honourable Leader of the second opposition party (Mrs. Carstairs) and the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen).

* (1700)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 5 p.m., it is time for Private Members' Business.

ADDRESS FOR PAPERS REFERRED FOR DEBATE

Mr. Speaker: On the motion of the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik). Is there leave that this matter remain standing? [Agreed]

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radlsson): I would like permission to speak on this Bill 91.

Mr. Speaker, this is a fairly important bill that we are dealing with today, and I would appreciate it if all members, including the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), who has a lot of responsibility to deal with this bill, would take this issue seriously, and do what he promised to do a couple of years ago when this bill was passed in this Legislature, and that was to have some way to deal with the problem of solvent sniffing.

I remember when this bill was initially passed, when there was a minority government, when the government of the day was a minority government and the current opposition Health critic was part of this minority situation, and she felt like she had accomplished something. [interjection] Yes, I remember, because I was in the caucus at that time. The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) is correct. I was not elected; I was a party activist. I was visiting. I was not here as an MLA.

I remember the sense of satisfaction that the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) had to have a private member's bill passed. I understand that happened a lot more often than it does now when our private members' bills are treated in a way, a joking fashion that they are now, where they are turned into these self-congratulating amendments. They are amended to turn into these self-congratulating sort of bits of fluff that the government then will try to pass for themselves.

This is an important bill, and the government would I think do well to go back and review its own comments when dealing with the bill, its own promises that it made in Question Period, at the various public hearings that were held, to have some way of dealing with the problem of sniffing.

Throughout all of that debate, people agreed this was not going to be the complete answer. It was not going to solve all the problems, but it would be a step in the right direction. [interjection] Now, as the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) seems to suggest, the problem is the Minister of Health's, with his negligence in not proclaiming this bill.

I have seen the effects of what sniff can do. I can recall a few times when I have been walking, particularly over the Norwood Bridge, and I have seen people come from under the bridge with a paper bag and stagger across the street. I am sure that many of us have seen this kind of desperation in our city and in the province and would agree that we have to have some steps to try and deal with this.

The City of Winnipeg, in fact, tried to proclaim some kind of bill similar to this, but it was not in their ability or jurisdiction to do this and that judges have been asking for this kind of legislation. The police have been asking for it. Social workers, community groups, they have all been asking for this kind of legislation. It makes us stop to wonder why is the government now stalling on proclaiming this.

It has been suggested to me that there is a lobby that is developing by some stores. I would hate to think that the government is caving in to a lobby of stores that would retail and sell the kind of solvents that this bill would deal with, because the stores would have to have a better system of monitoring. There might be some expenses on their part for ensuring that these kinds of solvents are no longer in reach of particularly young people, and because there would be these kind of requirements of them that they would be encouraging the government to not pass this bill. I would hate to think that is true, as some people have suggested to me, and I am sure others on our side of the House, if that is the case with this bill.

So I hope that the government is not caving in to that kind of a lobby, but we might believe that to be case, because they have not given us any other legitimate reason for why this bill cannot be proclaimed. There has been some reference to that they have a legal opinion that suggests that it is not enforceable, but yet they have not been willing to table that legal opinion.

Until they do that, I guess we are able to agree with those who suggest that they have been under some influence by merchants who do not want to see this legislation pass because it would make their job more difficult and would give them some

responsibility for refusing to sell solvents in situations where it is going to be misused, particularly with children.

The other thing that is interesting, when we are dealing with this bill, is to ask the question, what happened to this government's self-proclaimed war on drugs? This bill is a concrete step that would be part of that war on drugs, and the government is ignoring the opportunity to follow through on its promise and it has not come up with any alternatives. It has not come up with any alternatives to deal with the problem of sniffing, and I would suggest that it is irresponsible in that way to basically be throwing up its hands, saying, yes, there is a problem out there, unlike the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) who saw the problem and took it upon herself to work with the community, to work with various groups and individuals and develop this piece of legislation to see the problem and to try and do something about it.

This government admits that there is a problem. They are aware, and yet they will stand to the side and throw up their hands and say, well, we cannot do anything about it, and we will just have to leave this piece of legislation. They refuse to proclaim it and will stand behind this argument that they have some mysterious legal opinion that is advising them that it is not possible to enforce this piece of legislation.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to conclude by encouraging the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) to go back and take this matter under consideration again, to consult once again with the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae). The Minister of Justice has put on record, as the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) has, that way back in 1990 there was a need for this legislation. They are on record as saying that. I would encourage the members opposite to keep their promise and to proclaim Bill 91 and go from there to try and deal with the other mechanisms to try and help people who, out of desperation that I am sure many of us find hard to understand, enter into this practice of sniffing glue and solvents.

(Mr. Ben Sveinson, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)
* (1710)

I would like to see that the minister would take this seriously and would, as I had said, reconsider his own comments and his own promise about the need for this kind of legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Sveinson): As previously agreed, this matter will remain standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik).

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Res. 22-Grow Bonds

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Acting Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render),

WHEREAS the economic growth of rural communities means a more stable community with more opportunities for young people to find employment close to home; and

WHEREAS Manitobans will be able to invest in the economic growth of their own communities through the new Rural Development Bond Program; and

WHEREAS the bond program includes a provincial government guarantee of investments in rural development bond corporations; and

WHEREAS the bond corporations will be able to invest in local commercially viable projects, such as manufacturing, processing, tourism, export service industries, environmental industries, as well as commercial water and gas development.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba commend the government for initiating the Rural Development Bond Program.

Motion presented.

Mr. Penner: Mr. Acting Speaker, it certainly gives me pleasure today to rise on an issue that I feel is of extreme importance to all of Manitobans. We realize, of course, that investment in commercial ventures is the mainstay of our economy in this province, whether it is in rural Manitoba or whether it is in any of the large number of some larger, some smaller urban communities in this province. Employment initiatives are of course generated by these kinds of investment.

We also realize that virtually 60 cents out of every dollar that is spent in rural Manitoba, be it on industrial development, be it in manufacturing, be it on virtually any other initiatives that you can think of, ends up in one or two of the larger commercial centres in this province.

The diversity of our province, not only in manufacturing but in agriculture production, the key base resource element of our province is well known

and need not be commented on. However, we do have a problem in many of our rural communities, and that is that the growth has either become stagnant or has, in many cases, become regressive. Therefore it is important that we recognize, as a government, and take initiatives to implement policy and direction that will clearly support the growth that is needed in rural Manitoba, recognizing of course that a diversified Manitoba is in the long term a viable Manitoba.

Therefore, the Rural Development bond program, I believe, is going to be one of the programs that is going to be the cornerstone of turning the population decline around in many of these communities. I say many of these communities, because not all communities will take the initiative that is required to generate, first of all, the interest in putting together a pool of money to invest in business ventures, be it manufacturing, be it tourism, be it even infrastructure, that is required to generate the economic flow that will create growth and of course stability.

When one looks at some of the more successful communities in the province, some of the growth areas in the province, one recognizes that it has largely been the initiative very often of a small group of people, very often an individual who has been the spark plug that has created the kind of growth that some of these communities have experienced.

I very often compare the initiatives that have encouraged this growth in some of the communities to an engine. An engine of course has many parts, but until you put all those parts together and provide the one key element to give it life, nothing happens. But when you add the spark plug, when you turn the spark plug into the block and you give it fuel, the engine starts turning and firing and generating power.

Similarly, Mr. Acting Speaker, these Grow Bonds, I believe, will be the fuel that can be used by those individuals who are the spark plugs in a given community who will generate the interest to provide the economic incentives to cause that growth in employment initiatives.

The idea for a Rural Development bond, or a Grow Bond was not a new idea. It was really an assimilation of ideas that had been used by various other jurisdictions, some provinces, and some aspects of it put together as a vehicle that will help us create an investment capital fund that will encourage investors, be they from within the

community or be they from outside of the country even, to encourage them to come into this province to create that industrial development.

Quebec, for instance, has for many years used the incentive method to cause either industries to come in and settle in their province or has encouraged growth within industries by using various tax incentives and other incentive methods.

Many of the communities in Manitoba that have experienced growth have used tools that really are prevalent and available in all communities. When you look at some of the growth areas, they have used sometimes tax dollars which they have set aside to encourage or to develop small pools of money that can either be used as loan guarantees or can be used as initial seed money to invest and sometimes even help along fledgling industries that are in difficult times.

This Grow Bond pool of money, in my view, will be the start of many such initiatives in many of our communities in rural Manitoba. We have a situation whereby many of our initial commercial ventures encounter a great deal of difficulty at the outset because of three things.

* (1720)

Number one, they need to build a capital structure or a physical structure that requires a large amount of capital. Once they have the physical structure in place, they need to start putting equipment into this facility that can actually start manufacturing stuff. Once you start manufacturing, you need fairly large inventories in order to be able to start exporting or marketing. By the time you have got these three steps in place, you have used an awful lot of money that you are paying an ongoing amount of interest on.

This Rural Development Bond initiative can put together that money without incurring large amounts of interest payable before you start turning a profit. That is really the essence of the whole idea, Mr. Acting Speaker, behind this encouraging factor. That is why the provincial government will take upon itself the guarantee of that initial investment in the various ventures that individuals might want to invest in.

It will do another thing. It will create, I believe, an educational process within our population which is sometimes hesitantly used by some people but not widely used by many, that is that it will encourage, teach people how to invest in, be it local ventures or

other ventures, and maybe use the stock market system to a much greater degree to enhance our whole economic situation and create an investment mode, an investment attitude and climate in this province.

That is really what we need to start regenerating the growth and stimulate our economy back into action. I believe that the bond program plus the REDI program that the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) announced only very shortly, combining the two elements will be a tremendous vehicle to allow that kind of growth to take shape in rural Manitoba.

It will create the encouragement to many people in rural Manitoba to start looking at different ways and means to make use of our most valuable natural resource that we have, I believe, No. 1, the huge agricultural base that we have. The box-it, ship-it mentality that we have developed over the years will, I think, eventually disappear, because we are going to be very inventive and start, in fact, manufacturing processing using that double-bang approach and encourage the value-added process to become very prevalent in this province and, therefore, create a much larger economic base, instead of just dumping it into a boxcar and shipping it off to some foreign country whereby they might process and box and ship back and sell back to us, as is now the case very often.

Tourism is another industry that I think has some tremendous potential in this province, yet we need the infrastructure for tourism. We need good facilities so that when other people come to visit us, they can feel comfortable in and warm in and feel protected in. The tremendous number of natural resources that we have, our lakes, our rivers, our streams, our wildlife, our geographic locations and, yes, even our agricultural areas, lend tremendous beauty and could be used as a main attraction area if we only allowed ourselves to invest in our economy through an investment vehicle such as we have in place now.

This is something that is dramatically new. This is something that no other government in this province has dared do before. I very often hear lots of baffle-gab from the opposition suggesting that we are stagnant in our approach. Well, I would suggest to my honourable friends opposite that they had some 15 years to initiate some of these kinds of vehicles that would in fact encourage the growth in our province, that we might not have hit the

economic downturn that we now have faced over the last four years and are continuing to face.

It is my belief, Mr. Acting Speaker, that initiating these kinds of fundamental programs that fundamentally will change how we think about investing, how we think about putting our money where our mouth is, in the long term, will get us down the road. It is that mental attitude that people in this province wanted to change, and that is why they elected a different group of people with a different kind of thinking back into power again in this province because people in Manitoba said, we want private initiative, private investment, less taxation and more investment and job creation in this province.

I believe that this program, together with a number of the other initiatives that we have started, that we have announced, plus some other ones that I believe will be forthcoming—because we do have a tremendous number of people on this side of the House who are innovators, who are realists and who are able to be the kind of thinkers that put new programs in place. That is what people elected us to do.

Regardless of the kind of rhetoric that we have seen from the opposition members over the last number of years criticizing virtually everything that we have done, whether it be in Health, whether it be in Transportation, whether it be in Agriculture or whether it be in developmental kind of mechanisms and issues that we brought forward, they are critical, yet we are not looking back. We are looking forward. We are looking forward to the opportunities. We are looking forward to the positive attitudes that Manitobans have, and we welcome the investments that rural Manitobans will make in their own communities to generate the dynamic economy that this province and the people of this province so richly deserve.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Acting Speaker, when we look at this resolution and we see that it is economic growth for rural communities and stabilizing our rural communities, we cannot help but say, this is what we all want. Of course, we have said before that when the Rural Development Bond Program was introduced, we thought it would be a good program. We had some doubts about the program, but we were prepared to support it and see how it would work in the community. There were some parts of the program that we were not happy with.

I am a little bit disappointed in the resolution that this member has brought forward in that he has not put more strength into it, more support. Rather than just flattering the government for a program that he has brought in, why has he not brought in a resolution that is going to encourage his colleagues the members of cabinet to make a real commitment to rural Manitoba? When we look at the Grow Bond program, and as I said, Mr. Acting Speaker, we have supported the Grow Bond program. We want to see it go forward, and we wish that there would be successes, but the Grow Bond program is not enough. The member has stated that we want to give our young people an opportunity to be employed close to their homes. We want to keep our young people in this province. Definitely we do.

All of us are very concerned with what is happening in rural Manitoba. We are concerned about the statistics that have just come out that show that our rural population is lower than it was before the census in '86. That is a concern. Why are our young people not staying in the province? The member praised his colleagues for the great work that they have done in bringing this province forward with economic growth. Well, I do not see any of those numbers. In fact, if you look at it, we have not had any economic growth in this province, so the member should think seriously, and should have been a little bit concerned when he was bringing his resolution in, that he should push harder, that government make a commitment to rural Manitoba because, as I said, although Grow Bonds are a good thing, they are only one tool.

Government has to do more. Government has to be prepared to invest in the rural communities as well. It is not enough to say, well, yes, here you people are in rural Manitoba, we are going to give you the opportunity to invest your money, but on the other hand, government is going to cut back on the supports, the services.

The member across the way shakes his head, but there have been cutbacks. When we look at regional development corporations, regional development corporations have had their funding cut. There is an additional corporation now, but the funding is at a lower level than it was when the NDP was in power. The numbers were higher than they are now.

Regional development corporations are part of community growth. This government, members of the government, have indicated at some point that

regional development corporations are a good thing and that they do support them, but in reality, they have cut back the funding. It is at a lower level than it was when the NDP was in power, and if you take inflation into consideration, there is not a commitment on this government's part to see growth. [interjection] The minister says it is a \$10 million commitment. A commitment of what? Ten million dollars. But there has to be a commitment to have other services.

* (1730)

The government has to put in place supports for communities. The minister says this gives the rural communities an opportunity to invest. What about those communities that do not have the resources? There are many communities in this province that do not have resources. There are very poor people in many communities that have very high unemployment rates, very little money. There are those cases where the Grow Bonds will not work and government has to show some leadership. [interjection]

The Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) says, what would we suggest? In communities where there is very high unemployment and people who want to work, the government should look at suggestions that have come from those communities. The government should look at suggestions that have come from those communities because they are investing millions of dollars into welfare, social assistance. People want to work. [interjection] The minister talks about roads and bridges. There is a lot more that can be done in rural communities besides roads and bridges. I would hope that he is saying that roads and bridges are not all that is going to come out of Rural Development bonds.

There are serious concerns in rural communities. Many people are unemployed, and many young people want to come back to their roots. They want to live in rural communities, but this government is not prepared to invest fully, I believe. Mr. Acting Speaker, there are many places that the government can invest. There are many ways that the government can treat rural Manitobans more fairly than they have.

One of the areas where this government has not treated rural Manitoba fairly is in their decentralization policy. They made big decentralization promises, big political promises, election promises, and then they played politics with those jobs.

If they were sincerely committed to rural Manitobans, and if they were sincere about economic growth in all communities, particularly those with high unemployment, they would have looked at moving jobs to areas that needed the economic growth. The member knows that there are many, many communities that could have benefitted from decentralization that did not benefit from it. They happened to all fall very far south—in the southern part of the province. Then when we have the Grow Bond office. Where did it go? To the southern part of the province.

If we want to have economic growth, we have to look at all parts of the province and treat all people fairly. Government has to be prepared to put its fair share in as well, because it all cannot be done by investment from rural Manitobans. The government has to be prepared to invest as well.

The member said that there are many areas. I have to agree with him that there are areas in Natural Resources that we could diversify and get the jobs into our community. I agree with him on that, but again, I do not agree it can only be done with Grow Bonds. There have to be other things. It is only one tool, but our government is taking away other tools, and the government has to, I believe, be prepared to invest as well.

When you take away opportunities—and I want to go back to my constituency. Government took away an opportunity in Swan River when they shut down the wafer board plant and brought in Repap, took away funds that the community had worked very hard to get through western diversification. In fact, our Member of Parliament, whom members of government are well acquainted with, Brian White, was quite surprised that Repap was established when he had just announced money from Western Diversification for development in Swan River.

So what do we have in Swan River now? We have Repap that is not creating jobs. We have the government saying invest in Grow Bonds and get your economy going. One of the resources we have is our forests, but our forests are tied up in the Repap deal. What can the community do? Government has to have some role in it as well. How are we going to get the resources if this is the area that particular community will grow in? It cannot all be done with Grow Bonds.

As I say, there is a role, but the government has to address very seriously the problem of our declining rural population. There are parts of the

province that have been very successful in attracting people back to their community, but we have to look more broadly than what is happening in southern Manitoba.

I give the people in southern Manitoba credit. They have done a very good job, but they have also had supports and resources to help them along, I believe. If they have not, then more credit to them; they have done a very good job. But there are other communities who need support, and government must be prepared to support them.

The government must be prepared to invest in jobs. That is not happening. I do not believe that Grow Bonds will create enough jobs to help sustain our rural community. It will take more.

The government also has to be prepared to invest in our young people, in education of our young people so they can take on these jobs when they become available, but at the present time, education is becoming very difficult to get for many people. When we see the cutbacks at community colleges, when we see university fees increasing, it makes it very difficult for our young people to get the education that is required.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the member also spoke about tourism, and I do believe that tourism is one of our most important industries that can grow right now, and we have to do a lot of work. Unfortunately, I cannot praise this government for what they have done in tourism. I recently spoke to some people who were at a trade show in the United States, and they brought back some examples of what was being displayed at the Manitoba booths versus what was being displayed by other provinces. Other provinces are doing much more to promote tourism.

As far as rural bonds go to promote tourism, I am not sure. The member is saying that we can improve our infrastructure to help tourism. We can do roads. We can enhance our communities to attract tourists. It is going to take a lot more to attract tourism, and it is going to take promotion from government.

The other thing that is included in things that can be done with Grow Bonds, we talked about bringing gas development and I really question that. Does this member really believe that there is enough money in this Grow Bond program that can finance bringing natural gas into the community? When we raised the issue with the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) about gasification of

communities, he talked about what an expensive project this was, and it is an expensive project.

Communities need gas in order that they may grow and attract industry, but it is going to take much more than Grow Bonds to do it. It is going to take a commitment from government that they want to see rural communities grow, that they want to see growth. It goes far beyond the Grow Bonds. There are other things, and that is why I am disappointed that the member did not bring in a stronger resolution that would encourage government also to invest in the rural community.

For that reason, Mr. Acting Speaker, I am going to move an amendment to this resolution, not as criticism, because we would support the resolution. However, we are offering an amendment that will strengthen the resolution.

Therefore, I move, seconded by the member for the Interlake (Mr. Cliff Evans),

THAT the Resolution be amended by deleting all the words after the first "WHEREAS" clause and substituting the following:

WHEREAS there has been an absolute drop in rural population; and

WHEREAS the government has failed to provide for rural economic development by cutting support for rural economic development corporations; and

WHEREAS the Rural Development Bond Program will not provide sufficient job creation to offset the effects of the recession unless additional funds are made available.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT this Legislative Assembly request the government of Manitoba to consider the possibility of matching funds raised by the bond corporations, thus enhancing the Rural Development Bond Program.

*(1740)

Point of Order

Hon. Darren Praznik (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Acting Speaker, I am speaking as the deputy government House leader, and I wanted to comment on the amendment that the member has moved—

An Honourable Member: On a point of order.

Mr. Praznik: Yes, speaking on a point of order. My point is that I would ask the Chair to have a look obviously in great detail at this particular amendment. I would suggest that the member is getting very close to the prohibition which does not

allow for an amendment that requires the government to spend money.

I admit that there is use of the word, I believe, "consideration," but I would have you, Sir, examine the amendment, because I believe that it is moving very close to the line requiring the government to expend money by its tone, by its calls and the conclusion that it draws.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Sveinsson): The honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) did not have a point of order.

* * *

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Penner: I must rise to put a few brief comments on the record on the resolution. I stood with great anticipation, Mr. Acting Speaker, waiting for some concrete, firm suggestions on how to improve the viability and the employment opportunities in many of the so-called communities, so-called have-not communities in this province. Yet I heard the criticism from the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), but I heard absolutely no resolution resolve as to how to.

That has been the problem with the previous administration all along. That is why this province is in the kind of dire straits that we are trying to jack it out of because they were bereft of any real concrete suggestions and/or ideas on how to.

We have, Mr. Acting Speaker, over the last couple of years, put in a significant number of economic initiatives that are in fact creating jobs. Let me give you a few. We have increased our Highways budget by some \$30-odd million annually to create infrastructure and create jobs. We have increased our spending on water projects to supply communities with water—yes, even in the honourable member for Swan River's (Ms. Wowchuk) area. We are expending money on some of the smaller communities, creating jobs, creating an infrastructure, creating a water supply that they can use.

We are expending significant amounts of money trying to search out ways in which to enhance the opportunities for industrial development in many of our smaller communities. Let me give you another thing. The infrastructure is of key importance to many of our smaller rural communities. We are expending some \$800 million ensuring that we will have a proper communications process in place in

this province by expanding our telephone services in this province.

Then we have proposed that we will probably start one of the biggest employment opportunities that this province has seen for many years and that is the Conawapa project. Yet, from the opposition, we hear nothing but criticism and question as to whether this is the right time.

Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, let me say this to you, that I do not think that there has ever been a more opportune time than today to start generating this economic activity in northern Manitoba because, as the honourable member for Swan River has said, there are many communities in northern Manitoba that do need employment. These initiatives that we have started will certainly create that employment in rural and northern Manitoba.

She talks about Repap. Who was opposed to the development of Repap? It was the members opposite that continually condemned and criticized for encouraging a new company to come into Manitoba to do what?—to provide jobs in the forestry industry.

If it was not for private initiative and investment by a large corporation, such as Repap, in all likelihood we would by now have faced some dire consequences or huge investments out of taxpayers, out of our coffers of government to support the industry that was previously there.

Natural gas—do I believe we can, in fact, use private investment to bring natural gas into some of our communities? Yes, I do. I believe that people have the will to put together or to join together to form smaller corporations, to invest in themselves, to create little companies that will in fact distribute and build the infrastructures of natural gas pipelines, and you can use the Grow Bonds to form these little corporations.

Can we use the Grow Bonds? The Grow Bonds have never been intended to be the cure-all and end-all and the be-all for investment in rural Manitoba. It is just one tool, Mr. Acting Speaker. It was always only intended to be one tool, but it is a tool. The REDI program provides five different initiatives under one blanket, another tool. Highways program, another tool; Telephone, another tool; Hydro, another tool. By putting together all the pieces, as I said in my initial remarks, I believe we as a government are well and will be well positioned to drive the economy into first gear, to generate more speed to it by creating these kinds

of job opportunities that will be generated by the Grow Bond initiative, and it will only be one tool out of many that we can bring into place that will cause us to have more economic growth.

* (1750)

It need not always be taxpayers' dollars, but the opposition members have continually harped on the fact that it must be generated by tax, generated by tax, and pumped into. Well, very often, Mr. Acting Speaker, when you put a pipe into a dry well you get nothing but hot air, and I suspect that is all we are hearing so far from the opposition benches. I would welcome some real input into policy development, into economic generation type of initiatives, and some real firm suggestions from the opposition, because by working together I believe we can bring this economy back on track again.

Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Acting Speaker, I am delighted to add a few comments to this resolution which I commend the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) for bringing before the House at this time.

I am not really surprised at the knee-jerk reaction from the socialist members opposite, whose only answer is more taxpayers' money. That is the gist of her amendment. It has to be taxpayers' money, and I am a little disappointed in the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) who I know personally. I know her family; I know her brothers. I know that they have an understanding of what makes the world tick. They are of a farm background. One of her brothers, who used to sit in this House, is doing well in industrial operation and private enterprise. So she should know that is not the only resolution.

Furthermore, anybody who has sat in this House, without bringing the question of ideology, knows that if there are extra dollars around, they are going to go into our social services. Where do you spend 90 percent, 95 percent, no, 99 percent of your time in this House questioning members of this government? It is on the maintenance of our social programs, whether it is Health, whether it is Education, whether it is Family Services. We understand that. We accept those priorities.

I congratulate my government, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), in searching out these particular mechanisms that fit so well within the

Conservative philosophy, because we believe that the function of government is to provide the wherewithal, to provide the climate, to provide the opportunity for individual Manitobans to make their decisions. If the climate is there, the decisions will benefit the collective whole.

There are things that we have to do. Honourable members do not understand some of the things that my colleague from Emerson (Mr. Penner) just mentioned. Sometimes putting an extra two inches, three inches on a road makes an industry viable in rural Manitoba, because then a trucker can move with a 140,000 pound load instead of a 70,000 pound load. That may be just the difference between keeping 40 or 50 people employed in rural Manitoba. That is the responsibility of government.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the provision of water happens to be very important to the very things that we are talking about in this resolution. I would look forward from honourable members opposite not to ally themselves with the doom sayers who deny us the prudent use of God-given resources that we have in this province, and water is one of them.

It has to be done with caution, it has to be done with care, but we can, Mr. Acting Speaker—and I say this immodestly because I happen to have a great respect for the creator that created all our resources. From time to time I am honest and say, mankind, humble and as mistaken as we are sometimes, can make improvements on nature. We can divert a little bit of water somewhere that provides abundant crops, that provides jobs opportunities or that provides better recreational opportunities.

The honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) talks about we are not doing enough about tourism. Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, one of the things that attracts tourism is to have quality of water in our lakes. Some of our lakes, particularly in the southern part of the province, require that little help, that little assistance.

We are, for instance, providing quite adequately to Pelican Lake in the southwestern part of the province. By simple—not by massively interfering with nature, not by destroying nature, but by a little common sense, by a little use of relatively limited public funds we can create the situation where all of a sudden it is a different, more attractive, opportunity for people, not only native Manitobans in the area but those who come to visit us and leave their dollars while they are doing it.

Mr. Acting Speaker, it is in this mode that I want to draw a bit of attention to, because it does spell the difference between a Conservative philosophy, a Conservative government, and a socialist government.

Years ago, the same philosophy that prompted a then Conservative government to bring these kinds of tools that my colleague from Emerson (Mr. Penner) speaks about to help agriculture is to bring about a little bit of stability in agriculture and introduce a credit corporation, Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation.

Not that there were not lending agencies then in the late '50s or in the early '60s. The banks were there. The credit unions were there, but it was felt that agriculture was not always getting a fair shake in terms of consideration for available credit dollars. So a Conservative government—not a socialist government, Conservative government—established a Crown-owned credit operation known as the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation which has served us well to this day.

Now mind you, I grieve for my current Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) who is still trying to clean up some of the mess that the honourable socialist friends made of that corporation when they had it. Every week, just about, we bring into cabinet to get rid of their resolution to the farm problems which was to buy the land and lease it back to create service out of Manitoba farmers. Now these farmers are trying to buy it back, as it is their right to do so, but very often at some considerable loss to the public treasury.

Mr. Acting Speaker, it was the same way that another agency to help agriculture in rural Manitoba was created, the Manitoba Crop Insurance, which has served this province and farmers well throughout the many years that it has been in existence. That is how I believe the Grow Bonds will help rural Manitoba. They will certainly not solve all the problems, but if the government that I am pleased and privileged to serve plays its role in doing the other things that are necessary, and most of them were mentioned, ensuring that our infrastructure is in place, whether it is roads or water or distribution of water systems through our Manitoba Water Services Board in our growing towns and villages and communities adequate to provide the residential needs as well as the municipal and industrial needs in these

communities, then we are doing what governments are mandated to do.

If we use our natural resources in a prudent and in a cautious way, whether it is our trees, whether it is our lakes, whether it is our land, we can improve the economic well-being of all Manitobans and future Manitobans to come. The Grow Bonds program that we are talking about here in this resolution is one program that will make that come along a little easier. It will bring about a degree of co-operation within smaller rural communities. Business people, individuals, will see an opportunity, and maybe rather than investing in it their monies—and there is money around. We see that demonstrated, for instance, every time the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) lays out another Hydro bond. All of a sudden 300 million, 400 million Manitoba dollars pools together.

The honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) is far too pessimistic about the

opportunity of finding these Grow Bonds. This government is doing with a minimum of public exposure, they are guaranteeing of debt, is going to act as a catalyst to bring some of those dollars out of other savings accounts to invest in the future of rural Manitoba.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I have no doubt at all that this program will succeed, and I leave you with one parting thought. In the year 2006, when this government likely will face the possibility of making—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Sveinson): Order, please. The hour being 6 p.m., I am interrupting proceedings according to the rules. When this matter is again before the House the honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) will have seven minutes remaining.

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

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Wednesday, May 20, 1992

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