



Second Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(Hansard)**

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

Name	Constituency	Party
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise, Hon.	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary	Concordia	N.D.P.
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	P.C.
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	N.D.P.
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	P.C.
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	P.C.
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane	Osborne	N.D.P.
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	P.C.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn	St. James	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	P.C.
NEWMAN, David	Riel	P.C.
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
RADCLIFFE, Mike	River Heights	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack, Hon.	Niakwa	P.C.
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Gladstone	P.C.
SALE, Tim	Crescentwood	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin	N.D.P.
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	P.C.
TOEWS, Vic, Hon.	Rossmere	P.C.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 19, 1996

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Manitoba Telephone System

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Bernice Enns, Richard Enns and R.N. Gooding requesting that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) withdraw Bill 67 and not sell the Manitoba Telephone System to private interests.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Karen Hamm, Maria Arevalo and Ann Rietze requesting that the Premier withdraw Bill 67 and not sell the Manitoba Telephone System to private interests.

Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Mae Allen, James Brown, Ed Allen and others requesting that the Premier withdraw Bill 67 and not sell the Manitoba Telephone System to private interests.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Winona Struthers, Neil Brown, Louise Hudson and others requesting that the Premier withdraw Bill 67 and not sell the Manitoba Telephone System to private interests.

NDP Youth Crime Action Plan

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): I beg to present the petition of Ed Gelhorn, Phillis Gelhorn, Dietrich Lessing and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) to consider using this action plan, that is, the NDP's gang action plan, as a basis for provincial policy and organized criminal gangs.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Guaranteed Annual Income

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford). It

complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? Dispense.

THAT in 1976 Canada signed the United Nations Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which recognized the right of everyone to make a living by work which is freely chosen, recognized the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living, including adequate food, clothing and housing, recognized the right of everyone to enjoy a high standard of physical and mental health, and provided for the widest possible protection and assistance to the family; and

THAT poor children and adults in Canada continue to die at a higher rate and earlier age than people with adequate incomes; and

THAT Bill 36, The Social Allowances Amendment Act, will create even greater poverty in Manitoba by eliminating government responsibility to ensure that everyone who lacks adequate food, clothing, housing and health care has these needs met; and

THAT the bill will punish people by cutting them off from social assistance or reducing their benefits if they fail to meet employment expectations; and

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Family Services to consider repealing Bill 36 and replacing it with improved legislation which provides for a guaranteed annual income that allows people to have adequate food, clothing, housing, child care and health care and that this annual income increases as prices increase and that this new legislation provides for the creation of real jobs with the goal of creating full employment so that individuals on social assistance can find safe, meaningful work of their own choosing that allows them to meet their needs and the needs of their families and that this new legislation provides adequate supports so that individuals with disabilities receive appropriate assistance in finding meaningful work

Manitoba Telephone System

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Yes. The Clerk will read.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT the Manitoba Telephone System has served this province well for over 80 years providing province-wide service, some of the lowest local rates in North America, thousands of jobs and keeping profits in Manitoba; and

THAT MTS contributes \$450 million annually to the Manitoba economy and is a major sponsor of community events throughout the province; and

THAT MTS, with nearly 4,000 employees, including more than 1,000 in rural and northern Manitoba, is one of Manitoba's largest firms, headquartered in Manitoba and is committed to Manitoba; and

THAT the provincial government has no mandate to sell MTS and said before and during the 1995 election that MTS was not for sale.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) withdraw Bill 67 and not sell the Manitoba Telephone System to private interests.

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? Dispense.

THAT the Manitoba Telephone System has served this province well for over 80 years providing province-wide service, some of the lowest local rates in North America and thousands of jobs; and

THAT MTS has made over \$100 million since 1990 and this money has stayed in Manitoba; and

THAT MTS contributes \$150 million annually to the Manitoba economy and is a major sponsor of community events throughout the province; and

THAT MTS, with nearly 4,000 employees including more than 1,000 in rural and northern Manitoba, is one of Manitoba's largest firms and headquartered in Manitoba is committed to Manitoba; and

THAT the provincial government has no mandate to sell MTS and said before and during the 1995 election that MTS was not for sale.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) not sell the Manitoba Telephone System.

* (1335)

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT the Manitoba Telephone System has served this province well for over 80 years providing province-wide service, some of the lowest local rates in North America and thousands of jobs; and

THAT MTS has made over \$100 million since 1990 and this money has stayed in Manitoba; and

THAT MTS contributes \$150 million annually to the Manitoba economy and is a major sponsor of community events throughout the province; and

THAT MTS, with nearly 4,000 employees including more than 1,000 in rural and northern Manitoba, is one of Manitoba's largest firms and headquartered in Manitoba is committed to Manitoba; and

THAT the provincial government has no mandate to sell MTS and said before and during the 1995 election that MTS was not for sale.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) not sell the Manitoba Telephone System.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the Annual Reports 1995-96 for Red River Community College, 1995-96 for MERLIN, the Manitoba Education Research and Learning Information Network, the Financial Statements for Assiniboine Community College as of June 30, 1996, plus the 1995-96 Annual Report for Assiniboine Community College and Keewatin Community College Financial Statements as of June 30, 1996. Thank you.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Manitoba Telephone System Privatization—Impact on Rates

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, my question is to the First Minister. The Premier has repeatedly stated in this House that there is no difference between a private and public company because the CRTC will deal with rates based on costs.

The telephone system is asking for an exemption from the rate cap that is being established at the CRTC hearings in Ottawa. I would like to ask the Premier, what are the costs that are necessitating the Manitoba Telephone System in applying for the exemption from the rate cap and the ability to go beyond the rate cap in terms of rate increases for the consumers of Manitoba?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I know of none.

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the Premier why he has stated in this House before that there is no difference between a private and public company when his own legal counsel at the CRTC decisions, in verbal testimony, which for the November 13 hearing has stated that there will be increased costs based on privatization, first because of the tax changes of the corporation and, secondly, due to the higher costs of borrowing money because the government will no longer

be there to allow its credit rating or a situation on capital to be considered. Why has the Premier maintained one position on costs and rates in this House, and why is the legal counsel in Ottawa stating that privatization will increase costs and rates in terms of the decision being made?

Mr. Filmon: Firstly, Madam Speaker, the rating that the new corporation would have is expected to be at least equal to that that the corporation currently has, so there should be no reason for a greater cost of borrowing.

Secondly, as I have indicated, there may be many other factors that would lead to reductions in cost, and when you look at comparisons, the only valid comparisons are the comparisons between what exists today. As I have indicated, in the rating categories that cover rural and remote type networks for telephones, we have examples in Canada today at which on both of the categories for rural telephone service, there are at least four private companies that have lower rates than the Manitoba Telephone System for the same size of exchanges.

* (1340)

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, whom are the public to believe, the Premier who has broken his election promise to the people of Manitoba, or Ross Nugent, the Legislative Counsel, in verbal testimony and which I have a transcript of, who is saying that MTS privatization will allow this corporation to face costs that it has never faced before, one, the income tax cost and, two, it will have to—and let me get the quote further: They will have rather substantial costs in the costs of borrowing money and capital.

Who is telling the people of Manitoba the truth, the Premier in this Chamber, who has maintained there is no difference in cost, or legal counsel in Ottawa that is saying that these are costs that MTS has never faced before and they will be substantial costs?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, as a result of the ruling on pension funds that has been obtained by the Manitoba Telephone System, it is not anticipated that they will be facing income taxes for a considerable period of time.

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, this is a new question. This government Crown corporation has applied for an

exemption to the cap being established by CRTC for the Stentor corporations. The Premier is saying that there is no difference in cost. Legal counsel for the telephone system at the hearings in Ottawa on November 13, well after the decision was allegedly made on pensions, has stated that they will have costs that they have never faced before, No. 1, on the income tax decisions, and No. 2, on the increased costs of dealing with the capital borrowing for a corporation that no longer has the ability to be backed up by the lower rates available to a provincial government. I would like to ask the Premier, is the testimony before the CRTC wrong, or is the Premier wrong in terms of what is coming out in terms of the facts here in the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Filmon: I have already answered both aspects of that question, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, we would suggest that the Legislative Counsel, Mr. Nugent, is telling the truth, and the Premier is not telling the people of Manitoba the truth. That is the answer to the question.

Mr. Nugent goes on to say in his testimony, his verbal testimony of November 13, in asking for this exemption to the ceiling or the cap on rates, that there will be a substantial rate shock based on privatization and cost recovery in the province of Manitoba. Can the Premier tell us what this rate shock is going to be, and why are not all Manitobans informed how much of that rate shock is due to the ideological position of this government, the extreme position of this government to privatize MTS contrary to their election promises?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, I have indicated before that the only valid comparison for rates between those telephone companies that are privately owned and those that are publicly owned in Canada today are those in their rate groups, and I refer him to MTS Rate Group 1, MTS Rate Group 2, both of which are rates for rural exchanges and their comparative exchanges throughout Canada. In both cases there are four other utilities, privately owned, that have lower rates in both categories today than the Manitoba Telephone System.

Mr. Doer: That, of course, contradicts what was in the budget. We still have not been able to figure out the Newfoundland rates, but I would like the Premier to be consistent with his own budget.

I would like the Premier to answer the question. His telephone system and his Legislative Counsel are asking for an exemption from the Stentor application to go beyond the ceiling. They are saying that that rate increase to go beyond the ceiling, above the cap, is due partially to privatization where there will be substantial costs incurred with the changes based on privatization.

Can the Premier delineate for the people of this province what costs and what rate increases will be based on privatization so the public of Manitoba will know? Stop this cover-up and give us the complete information that is being contained and applied in Ottawa.

* (1345)

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister responsible for the administration of The Manitoba Telephone Act): Madam Speaker, some things will change for the corporation in terms of their costs, no question. When half of the debt is written off in the process that we are going through, obviously the amount of interest the corporation has to pay will go down from \$90 million to approximately \$40 million to \$50 million. That is a significant reduction in cost.

Applications that are made to CRTC have nothing to do with the ruling. Ultimately, CRTC will rule on all applications from all telephone companies across the country.

Yesterday I referred to a press release just out from the CRTC which identifies very clearly, they take very seriously maintaining telephone rates affordable for all Canadians, and that is taken into context in every ruling that they are going to do now and on into the future.

Manitoba Telephone System Privatization—Impact on Rates

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): We now see why the government was so desperate to pass Bill 67 on November 7, because on November 13 the counsel for MTS was appearing before CRTC referencing that MTS—and this is a quote—will face costs that it has never faced before. There will be a rather substantial increase in the cost of capital borrowed. There was a need to pay income taxes. Rural residential rates in Manitoba are certainly going to change more than others, and perhaps

most significantly—and this is the counsel for MTS in front of CRTC who stated that: We are concerned with rate shock. He went on to say: It is in fact one of the major problems facing the introduction and passage of the bill before our House. Residents are naturally very concerned.

I would like to ask the Premier a question here, if he will finally admit to the fact that the counsel for MTS are now approving what we have said all the way along, that there will be increases in rates because of increased costs to MTS and that will involve a potential rate shock, particularly for rural Manitobans.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): No, Madam Speaker. My previous answer stands.

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

Mr. Ashton: Supplementary: I would like to ask when the Premier will understand here that this is not the NDP, this is the counsel for MTS. When will he admit to the truth, that we are going to be faced with higher costs and that rural Manitobans face a potential rate shock because of the privatization of MTS?

Mr. Filmon: My previous answer applies.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Thompson, with a final supplementary question.

Mr. Ashton: What does it take for the Premier to understand that when the counsel for MTS himself states that residents are naturally very concerned, the change from a government-owned utility to a private one has everyone nervous? When will he start giving some straight answers, some real answers to very serious questions Manitobans have about the privatization of MTS?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, the only cause for nervousness is that people might believe the New Democrats who consistently misrepresent, who consistently put false information on the table, who consistently look for ways in which they can frighten people in this province, and that is the only cause for concern in this province.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, a further question. I am reminded of the story of the emperor who had no clothes. Everybody in the province of Manitoba right now understands what we are faced with under privatization except the Premier. He is the only one left who believes his own rhetoric.

I want to ask the Premier, since this has been filed with the CRTC as of November 13, if he can indicate what the rate projections are in terms of MTS, including the privatization costs that are outlined in the CRTC. What are the increased rates we are going to be faced with as a result of privatization that are confirmed by the MTS presentation?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, as I have indicated before, the projections are that the increases should be no different under private ownership than they are under public ownership.

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

* (1350)

Mr. Ashton: A supplementary question. I want to ask the Premier, when the counsel for MTS states that rural residential rates in Manitoba are certainly going to change more than the others, what is that change going to involve? How much more of an increase are rural Manitobans going to be faced with?

This, by the way again, is the counsel for MTS, not the NDP that has put this on the record.

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, the counsel for MTS is stating what has already been happening because, in fact, there has been that rate rebalancing ongoing by CRTC. It was part of the \$2 charge that was placed on earlier this year by CRTC as part of rate rebalancing. So he is just stating what already exists.

Mr. Ashton: As a final supplementary, I just want to ask once again if the Premier will recognize, when the counsel for MTS states that MTS will face costs that it has never faced before, will the Premier finally, on the record, admit to what everybody in Manitoba knows and that there will be additional costs as a result of privatization? MTS knows it. The counsel for MTS

knows it. Most of Manitoba knows it. Only the Premier does not know it.

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, as has been adequately pointed out in the past, MTS will also achieve savings by virtue of the interest that it will not have to pay on borrowed money. That has also been adequately pointed out in the past.

Health Sciences Centre Capital Projects

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, the government, through the sale of MTS, is going to be seeing a revenue increase of somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$300 million to \$400 million. The Health Sciences Centre needs immediate capital infusion in order to ensure that we are not going to lose accreditation at that particular facility. Given the importance of the teaching hospitals to all Manitobans, will the Premier (Mr. Filmon) or the Minister of Health commit today to assign an amount of dollars that would be necessary to ensure that the accreditation is going to be there for the Health Sciences Centre so that all Manitobans will in fact be provided quality health through the Health Sciences Centre?

An Honourable Member: He is hurting a bit today.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I am reminded by my colleagues to be gentle with the honourable member for Inkster in light of developments in Prince Edward Island yesterday, so I am going to try to do that.

The honourable member expresses concern about capital improvements for the health system in the province of Manitoba; those concerns are shared by myself and anyone else who is concerned about the future of health care in Manitoba. The government of Manitoba is working with proponents of capital projects to try to get those capital projects that are required on the tracks, similar to the way we have handled our requirements at the Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation. We found that very significant savings were possible while at the same time building structures that would provide for the planned and projected requirements of patients in Manitoba for the future. That work will carry on, and it is my hope that at as early a date as it is

possible to do so, we will be able to get other projects on the tracks, too.

* (1355)

Mr. Lamoureux: Will the Minister of Health acknowledge today that there is an immediate need for capital infusion in the Health Sciences Centre, and if that need is not met, we could look at the Health Sciences Centre losing some of its accreditation in terms of its operating rooms? Will the Minister of Health commit today to invest in capital dollars as a direct result of the selloff of MTS, as opposed to seeing that money be put into a slush fund?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, I think the honourable member and his party have a responsibility to be clear about where they stand on the issue of the Manitoba Telephone System and any funds that might be derived. On the one hand, I think that there is no support coming from the honourable member for Inkster, but on the other hand—and there always is “on the other hand” with Liberals—here is how we want you to spend the money. Well, you cannot have it both ways, but nonetheless, we share his concern about Health Sciences Centre. Indeed, as a result of concerns raised by the Canadian council on health services accreditation, work is being done on the electrical system upgrading there. Air conditioner replacement is underway. There is equipment inventory management and O.R. slate adjustments going on. There is expansion of storage areas, and so on. Those are issues that are being addressed in direct response to concerns raised by the Canadian council on health services accreditation, and, as well, my first answer applies to this as well.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Inkster, with a final supplementary question.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, then will the Minister of Health acknowledge or state that he is prepared or this government is prepared to meet the capital requirements for the Health Sciences Centre so that they will not lose any form of accreditation into the future? Will the Minister of Health make that commitment today?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, the commitment of this government can easily be measured in our commitment to

this date with respect to health care spending. Just yesterday the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) was asking about dialysis services in the province of Manitoba and, you know, since 1989 we have seen a 56 percent increase in the number of people who have accessed services under that program. In terms of expenditure, and this is excluding the medical remuneration and the capital and equipment aspects of it, we have seen a 110 percent increase in spending on that program in a six-year period.

The honourable member for Inkster and the honourable member for Kildonan ought indeed to be able to take some comfort about the priority this government places on the health care of Manitobans.

Health Sciences Centre Capital Projects

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, what the minister failed to mention, when the accreditation committee visited Health Sciences Centre, they said, and I quote: First and foremost, new operating room construction must proceed and failure to successfully complete the follow-up visit could result in the withdrawal of accreditation status. Since then we have had fruit flies in the operating room, we have had leaky ceilings, we have had surgery cancelled at the Health Sciences Centre, and now the president says the accreditation may be in danger.

My question to the Minister of Health is, when will the minister stop playing games with the people of Manitoba? Since he announced the Health Sciences Centre is the major trauma centre in Manitoba, when will you get on with the construction that jeopardizes the accreditation of the largest tertiary care facility in the province of Manitoba?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, the honourable member for Kildonan should have been listening. The honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) just asked that very same question and I just finished answering that very same question. Just because the honourable member for Inkster gets the floor before the honourable member for Kildonan and asks a question, it seems to me the honourable member for Kildonan ought to perhaps give over the time to a member of his caucus to ask some other question. It

seems he has a question all written down and come hell or high water he is going to ask that question even if it has already been asked by the honourable member for Inkster.

I answered the question with respect to deficiencies uncovered by the Canadian council on health services accreditation. Health Sciences Centre is working towards meeting the concerns that have been made known and of course the longer term redevelopment of the Health Sciences Centre is a major, major project which in any event takes a number of years to happen, and the planning for that will begin in earnest as we develop our new regional health association system for the governance of health services in Winnipeg.

* (1400)

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, will the minister, who knows there is a proposal before him for \$4.5 million to have new ICU beds so cardiac surgery and thoracic surgery will not be cancelled anymore at the Health Sciences Centre, recognize that these piecemeal solutions are not the solution to the problems at the Health Sciences Centre and will they go back to the election promise the government made? The first election promise the Premier (Mr. Filmon) made in the election was they would redo the operating rooms at Health Sciences Centre, and will they go ahead with it so we can get on with proper care at the Health Sciences Centre?

Mr. McCrae: Of course, Madam Speaker, a piecemeal approach is the inappropriate approach. That is what the previous government and governments before that were doing to try to keep up with the demands that were being placed on the health care system. Because we reject the piecemeal approach that the honourable member says he rejects too, that is why we made the announcement we made on August 20 of this year with respect to the future of the health care system in Manitoba. Why will the honourable member not recognize that and support, as everyone else does, that these are the directions that we ought to be going in in order to build a sustainable health care system for the future?

It is the piecemeal approach of the New Democrats that got us in so much trouble in the first place. There is \$600 million this year we have to spend to pay interest on the debt run up by those honourable colleagues opposite.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, can the minister explain to the citizens of Winnipeg and Manitoba how it is that the government can promise on August 20 that Health Sciences Centre would be the trauma centre, the main centre for all the province of Manitoba and the city of Winnipeg and at the same time have cancelled the capital program, have fruit flies in the operating room and have surgery cancelled because there are no ICU beds available within the last two weeks? We have raised it over and over again. This is ridiculous and it makes Manitoba look like a laughing stock in the rest of Canada.

Mr. McCrae: It is hard to get the honourable member to understand or believe or accept anything because of the role that he plays as a paid critic in this House. That is what he does. His job is to criticize, not to be helpful. There are many, many other Manitobans who look at things a little differently. There have been over 16,000 of them that we have consulted thus far in our reform efforts here in Manitoba. We have a plan which we laid out on August 20 which enjoys virtually unanimous approval except of course from the honourable member for Kildonan. While everybody else is working towards the solution of our problems, why does the member for Kildonan not work towards a solution of our problems, too?

Education System Teaching Position Decline

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, everyone in this Legislature who listened to hearings on the education bills is aware of the pressure of classroom teachers in Manitoba who are on the front lines of dealing with the serious issues facing young people today. They are doing so in larger classes and with fewer resources. I would like to ask the Minister of Education to explain why, according to the figures of her own government and the submitted budgets of school boards, there are 91 fewer full-time teachers in Manitoba public school classrooms this year than last year at a time when enrollments remain stable.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I point out again that we have been detained in this House to deal with the Manitoba Telephone System bill, and once again the members opposite have run out of questions before

Question Period is even half over on the telephone system, so they are having to ask other questions because they are tired of asking the same questions over and over on the telephone bill.

However, having said that, I am pleased—[interjection]

Who cares, says the member from—oh, very interesting. The member for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk) just said, who cares? I think that is very, very interesting. Clearly it is not they who care about the telephone system bill. They keep us here; they cannot even have enough questions—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Madam Speaker, on a point of order, not only does the minister not listen to Manitobans, she did not hear what I was saying. I would ask that the minister answer the question which relates to public education which she apparently does not wish to answer.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Education, on the same point of order.

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, the opposition I think has established all-time records for rising on incorrect points of order. They claim to know Beauchesne, but all their points of order are incorrect. The member is in dispute over the facts. I know what I heard; she knows what she said. No one will ever be able to prove it except everybody here who knows the truth. I will answer the question now—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised by the honourable member for St. James, the honourable member for St. James does not have a point of order; it is clearly a dispute over the facts. However, I would remind the honourable Minister of Education to respond to the question asked.

* * *

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to respond to the facts and indicate to the people of Manitoba that when we took government in 1988-89 the number of teachers in Manitoba was 12,000—I do not

have the exact figure, but I can tell you that from 1988-89 until last year, which is the last current figure we have, the number of teachers in Manitoba schools increased by 2.5 percent full-time equivalent teachers while students over the same period of time from 1988-89 until last year, 1995, when we have our last stats, the student enrollment decreased by 1.8 percent.

So, in the time that we have been in office, we have 2.5 percent full-time equivalent more teachers and 1.8 percent fewer students, and that is the bottom line. Those statistics are correct, and they tell the whole story.

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

Ms. Friesen: I would like to table the information from the minister's own records, the FRAME final budget; classroom teachers have declined in the number from 1990. Would the minister confirm that for the remaining mandate of this government Manitobans can in fact see exactly the same as is demonstrated in that chart, a continuing decline in the number of classroom teachers, in fact, 663 since 1990?

I want to know if the minister really sees that as the future for the young people of Manitoba.

* (1410)

Mrs. McIntosh: The member has been very selective in her figures. She is tabling correct figures from the all-time peak high in Manitoba's history which was 1991 when there was a peak in the number of people enrolled in the schools till today when student enrollment has gone down by 1.8 percent, as I indicate. We still have an increase of 2.5 percent full-time equivalent teachers in Manitoba schools since we took office in '88.

The fact that there was a peak in one given year and she chooses to operate from the peak does not negate the fact that we have 2.5 percent more full-time equivalent teachers in Manitoba schools today and 1.8 percent fewer students since we took office in 1988.

I can indicate to you as well that that equates in two ways. One is the pupil-educator ratio, which is the number of educators in the school per student, which is 14.9. We have one educator for 14.9 students in every

school. Some of those are resource teachers because we are resource-rich. In terms of class size, the class size is 19 on average in Manitoba, the third best rate in Canada.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Wolseley, with a final supplementary question.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister tell us whether she has investigated what the impact has been on Manitoba classrooms of the loss of 5.6 percent of our classroom teachers since 1990 and the loss in fact of 663 full-time equivalent positions? Those are people who are not in the classroom. The class sizes are larger. Manitoba students are being disadvantaged compared to the rest of the country.

Mrs. McIntosh: The member—well, I do not know whether she does not understand, does not hear or does not want to acknowledge the truth of what I have said. Only Newfoundland and the Yukon have smaller class sizes on average than the province of Manitoba. That is a very good statistic.

We have on average and have consistently had—fluctuating within just a one or two percentage point over time—class sizes on average in Manitoba, classroom teacher per number of students fluctuating between 18 and 20 over the years consistently in that area. That is very good.

We also have an extremely rich resource base in the schools. When I say that the pupil-educator ratio is 14.9 to one, I am indicating that there are resource teachers, guidance counsellors, clinicians in the schools to assist classroom teachers who have on average 19 pupils per class with those students in the class who require extra help, to lift that burden from the regular classroom teacher and assist them in bringing students to full productivity.

Manitoba Telephone System Privatization—Head Office Location

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, on Thursday the Minister responsible for MTS confirmed that a privatized MTS can be owned by any other company, the board can be made up of non-Manitobans and the real head office could be in Basking Ridge, New

Jersey, where AT&T has head office or Timbuktu if that is what a new owner wants, as soon as the government debt is paid off in four years.

Will the minister now take steps to ensure that all Manitobans know his promises about the future control of Manitoba Telephone, its head office and its ownership are shams?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister responsible for the administration of The Manitoba Telephone Act): Madam Speaker, I would ask the member opposite to read very carefully the bill and the amendments that were passed in committee. If he would read very carefully, he will find out that statements we have made in the past, that the registered head office, 12(1) in the bill, shall be in the province and the amendment added that provides the corporation shall not continue out of the province, and 13(4) the majority of directors of the company shall be ordinarily resident of the province. Those elements of the bill live on forever. They live on forever regardless of the process of continuance which is contained in the bill under Section 14, allows for continuance of those provisions forever within the province of Manitoba as long as the bill is not amended in this House.

The member chooses not to understand the process that the bill goes through, the process over time, but those provisions of board of directors and head office and not continuing out of the province requires that they stay here forever.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, will the minister order MTS to put out an ad to tell Manitobans the truth about the privately owned MTS and its future control and its future ownership in particular, and will he tell his own backbenchers not to write to their constituents, as Mr. Radcliffe has done, making promises which cannot be sustained by the bill as it now stands in terms of the ownership of MTS? Tell him to cease and desist.

Mr. Findlay: Madam Speaker, I think that member likes to say that people do not have freedom of expression and I find that intolerable. People have the right to believe what they want to believe. People have the right to express their opinions.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister responsible for the Manitoba Telephone System, to complete his response.

Mr. Findlay: The many editorial writers in the province of Manitoba in many papers have the right to explain to the public why this is the right thing for Manitobans, it is the right thing for the government of Manitoba, it is the right thing for the Manitoba Telephone System to respond to the new world. It has the right to tell the world that they are feeble in their approach. They have a right to say that they are foolish in their approach which many editorials have done because they refuse, they keep their head in the sand, refuse to acknowledge the world has changed and the competition level over there requires MTS to have the freedom to respond quickly and aggressively to those opportunities that exist in the telecom world.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Crescentwood, with a final supplementary question.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, will the minister finally tell Manitobans that his government has planned its sham protection to expire four years from now in the year 2000, conveniently just after the next provincial election? Nice timing.

Mr. Findlay: Madam Speaker, the member is so desperate for a third question, he repeats the first question, which very clearly I answered to him. If he would read the bill, he would find that the protections we have indicated are there, will be there, will continue forever.

Madam Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Prince Edward Island Election

Mr. Mike Radcliffe (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Premier-elect, Pat Binns, whose PC Party won a majority government in yesterday's election in Prince Edward Island, moving up from just one seat in the provincial Legislature before the election. Mr. Binns and the PC Party received a solid mandate from the people of P.E.I. in yesterday's election. Clearly, a trend is emerging

across Canada. Voters are electing governments that bring common sense and moderation to the great challenges that face us as a society today. All provinces are being forced to deal with the deficits and the debts left to us by our free-spending predecessors in the '80s and at the same time preserve the high quality services the public has come to expect.

Madam Speaker, Mr. Binns becomes the fourth PC Premier in Canada, joining Alberta, joining Ontario, and joining, of course, our own Premier Filmon in Manitoba. There are now PC governments in all regions of the country, maintaining the party's position as one of only two great national parties. I would also like to remind all honourable members that there are now more provincial Conservative Party provincial governments in Canada than those of any other party. Clearly, Canadians are making their voices heard in support of the ideas and solutions proposed by the Conservative Party. I would ask all honourable members to join me in congratulating Mr. Binns in his election victory and in wishing him well in the mandate the people have given his government in yesterday's election.

Speakers' Portraits—Legislative Building

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Last weekend many Manitobans remembered the death of Louis Riel. November 16 is the anniversary of the tragedy of his death, but it has also become a time to commemorate the history of the Metis people of Manitoba, and I wanted to ensure that this House took that opportunity. So I want to note formally the installation of the three Speakers, the portraits of the three Speakers of the Executive Council in the hallways of the Legislative Building. I am surprised that the government had no ceremony, no formal notification of this. I had anticipated that they would do it this past weekend, but it was not to be. Nevertheless, I want to acknowledge the role of the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Pallister) in this. I had asked him in the House last year to reinstate these portraits, and I am pleased to see that he had them conserved, restored to good condition and replaced in the halls of the Legislature.

I also want to recognize the initiative of my own constituent, Ms. Ruth Swan, who has, as an historian of the Metis, pressed the government and her MLA over the

last number of years to ensure that these portraits are restored to their rightful place in the Legislature.

I hope that members of the Legislature will take the opportunity to look at them. There are three: one of Colin Inkster, one of J.H. O'Donnell and one of the Honourable James McKay. The three portraits in themselves reflect very well the history of the old Red River: Colin Inkster, a man very much of the old Red River settlers who cast the deciding vote in the abolition of that council; J.H. O'Donnell who represented the new Ontario settlers; and most particularly the Honourable James McKay, a man who spoke Michif, Cree and Ojibway and who was the president or the chair of the executive council for many years. He was described by his contemporaries as immensely broad-chested and muscular, though not tall. He weighed 18 stone. Yet in spite of his stoutness, he was exceedingly hardy and active and a wonderful horseman. His face is very handsome—short, delicate, aquiline nose, piercing dark gray eyes, long dark brown hair, beard and mustaches, white regular teeth, skin tanned to red bronze from exposure to weather. He was dressed in Red River style, a blue cloth capote with brass cuff buttons, red and black flannel shirt which served also for waistcoat, black belt around the waist, buff leather moccasins on his feet, trousers of brown and white striped

* (1420)

I wanted to ask members of the Legislature to ensure that when they take their constituents around the Legislature they recognize these Metis leaders, these early citizens of Manitoba. Thank you.

Oak Bluff Community School

Mr. Frank Pitura (Morris): Just this past Saturday I attended the grand opening of the new Oak Bluff community school. The new school is a replacement of the one that was built in 1930. This grand opening marks the completion of two years of planning and working together, governments, school and community, to develop a learning facility that we can all be proud of.

The old school housed children from kindergarten to Grade 6, and students in the upper grades went to Sanford for school. The new community school is kindergarten to Grade 8. Oak Bluff will also accom-

modate 175 to 200 children, but there is room for expansion by adding additional classrooms. Core facilities, gym, library and multipurpose room, have been designed in such a way as to accommodate a larger student population.

The school division, community and the Public Schools Finance Board worked together to make the grand opening possible. Members of the community followed the project very closely and some even got together to buy the adjacent field for use in sports activities. One of the unique things about this school is that individuals within the community personally sponsored classrooms within the school. They also have corporate sponsors taking part in the physical facilities of the school as well, in the gymnasium and so on.

Oak Bluff community school is the first to have a complete data cabling system throughout the school. All instructional areas are centrally connected. The school is also the first to have a special place for the reading recovery program. It will allow teacher trainers to train other teachers in reading recovery strategies.

Madam Speaker, this government will continue to work together with educators, parents, students and the community to make such initiatives in education possible. I would like to congratulate the community of Oak Bluff for their dedication in this long-term investment for our children. Thank you.

Restorative Justice Week

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, this is Restorative Justice Week in Canada. It is important that we take time in this Chamber not only to acknowledge and recognize Restorative Justice Week but adopt the principles that underlie restorative justice. It means we must make, as the first and foremost consideration in corrections policy, the changing of behaviour for the better, rebuilding a justice system around the needs of both victims and offenders and indeed around the needs of the community.

It is important that we work to transform the justice system so that the needs of victims are finally recognized, rather than having a competition between the state and the offender. It is important that we not only pay tribute in words but through our deeds, both in our election

promises and in our programs that we can usher in, that restorative justice principles be brought into play. For example, we have urged the adoption of a make-up, face-up rule. We have urged the expansion of the mandate of youth justice committees and, indeed, in the constituency of St. Johns next week we will have our first annual meeting of the St. Johns youth justice council where victims and offenders and their families will have the matters dealt with so there is accountability to the community, and there is accountability to the victims.

Madam Speaker, I would like to quote from the brochure on Restorative Justice Week the following. This is from an incarcerated man who participated in a mediation program: Coming face to face with my victim and realizing the impact of my actions was the hardest thing, the most important thing I have ever done.

Thank you.

Prince Edward Island Election

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): I would like to rise and give congratulations to the new Premier of the province of Prince Edward Island. But I find it very strange that this government was elected, a Conservative Party that campaigned against cuts to social programs. Then I think about Bob Rae and his change of heart, a former socialist now campaigning with conservative views. I look at what is going on in Saskatchewan with cuts to hospitals and that, and I think for an outsider looking at the political picture in Canada they must feel like they have just fallen down the rabbit hole and are in Wonderland. It is getting to the point where you cannot tell which party is which in the provinces, depending who is in power, who is not in power.

Though we respect the view of the people, I am starting to become cynical about politics, as politics is nothing more than obtaining power and retaining power and what happens to the values of the parties, the original values of the Liberals, the Conservatives, the socialists and the NDP party. I wonder that we as politicians have to get back to the roots, the values of our party, and put seeking power and maintaining power as secondary consideration to maintaining our political platforms of our parties. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: For the information of the House, I have been advised that His Honour the Lieutenant

Governor will enter the Chamber at approximately 2:30 p.m. to grant Royal Assent to those bills which have been passed during this session.

* (1430)

ROYAL ASSENT

Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms (Mr. Garry Clark): His Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

His Honour Yvon Dumont, Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Manitoba, having entered the House and being seated on the throne, Madam Speaker addressed His Honour the Lieutenant Governor in the following words:

Madam Speaker: May it please Your Honour:

The Legislative Assembly, at its present session, passed bills which, in the name of the Assembly, I present to Your Honour and to which bills I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

Bill 4—The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société d'assurance publique du Manitoba

Bill 5—The Horticultural Society Repeal Act; Loi abrogeant la Loi sur les associations horticoles

Bill 6—The Veterinary Science Scholarship Fund Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Fonds des bourses d'études vétérinaires

Bill 8—The Chiropodists Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les chiropodistes

Bill 9—The Public Health Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé publique

Bill 10—The Pharmaceutical Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les pharmacies

Bill 11—The Court of Queen's Bench Surrogate Practice Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la pratique relative aux successions devant la Cour du Banc de la Reine

Bill 12—The Barbers Repeal and Hairdressers Repeal Act; Loi abrogeant la Loi sur les coiffeurs et la Loi sur les coiffeurs pour dames

Bill 13—The Highway Traffic Amendment (Lighting on Agricultural Equipment) Act; Loi modifiant le Code de la route (éclairage de l'équipement agricole)

Bill 14—The Manitoba Trading Corporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société commerciale du Manitoba

Bill 15—The Tourism and Recreation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le tourisme et les loisirs

Bill 16—The Charleswood Bridge Facilitation Act; Loi facilitant l'application de l'entente sur le pont Charleswood

Bill 17—The Government Essential Services Act; Loi sur les services gouvernementaux essentiels

Bill 18—The Payment of Wages Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le paiement des salaires

Bill 19—The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la manutention et le transport des marchandises dangereuses

Bill 20—The Highway Traffic Amendment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act; Loi modifiant le Code de la route—modifications diverses

Bill 21—The Oil and Gas Production Tax and Oil and Gas Amendment Act; Loi concernant la taxe sur la production de pétrole et de gaz et modifiant la Loi sur le pétrole et la gaz naturel

Bill 22—The Credit Unions and Caisses Populaires Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les caisses populaires et les credit unions

Bill 23—The GRIP and Related Programs Termination and Crop Insurance Amendment Act; Loi abolissant le régime RARB et des régimes connexes et modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-récolte

Bill 24—The Agricultural Credit Corporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société du crédit agricole

Bill 25—The Jury Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les jurés

Bill 26—The Labour Relations Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les relations du travail

Bill 27—The Museum of Man and Nature Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Musée de l'Homme et de la Nature et apportant des modifications corrélatives

Bill 28—The Winnipeg Stock Exchange Act; Loi sur la Bourse de Winnipeg

Bill 29—The Winnipeg Commodity Exchange Act; Loi sur la Bourse des marchandises de Winnipeg

Bill 30—The Dairy Act; Loi sur les produits laitiers

Bill 31—The Livestock Industry Diversification and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi concernant la diversification de l'industrie du bétail et apportant des modifications corrélatives

Bill 32—The Council on Post-Secondary Education Act; Loi sur le Conseil de l'enseignement postsecondaire

Bill 33—The Education Administration Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'administration scolaire

Bill 34—The Contaminated Sites Remediation and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi concernant l'assainissement des lieux contaminés et apportant des modifications corrélatives

Bill 36—The Social Allowances Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aide sociale et apportant des modifications corrélatives

Bill 37—The Ambulance Services Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services d'ambulance

Bill 38—The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-maladie

Bill 39—The Pari-Mutuel Levy and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi concernant les prélèvements sur les mises de pari mutuel et apportant des modifications corrélatives

Bill 40—The Pension Benefits Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les prestations de pension

Bill 41—The Fisheries Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la pêche

Bill 42—The Northern Affairs Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les Affaires du Nord

Bill 44—The City of Winnipeg Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg et apportant des modifications corrélatives

Bill 45—The Consumer Protection Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection du consommateur

Bill 46—The Securities Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les valeurs mobilières

Bill 47—The Public Schools Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques

* (1440)

Bill 48—The University of Manitoba Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Université du Manitoba

Bill 49—The Regional Health Authorities and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi concernant les offices régionaux de la santé et apportant des modifications corrélatives

Bill 50—The Remembrance Day Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le jour du souvenir et apportant des modifications corrélatives

Bill 51—The Civil Service Superannuation Amendment, Public Servants Insurance Amendment and Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la pension de la fonction publique, la Loi sur l'assurance des employés du gouvernement et la Loi sur la pension de retraite des enseignants

Bill 52—The York Factory First Nation Northern Flood Implementation Agreement Act; Loi sur l'accord de mise en oeuvre de la première nation de York Factory relatif à la convention sur la submersion de terres du Nord manitobain

Bill 53—The Nelson House First Nation Northern Flood Implementation Agreement Act; Loi sur l'accord de mise en oeuvre de la première nation de Nelson House relatif à la convention sur la submersion de terres du Nord manitobain

Bill 54—The Municipal and Various Acts Amendment Act; Loi concernant les municipalités et modifiant diverses dispositions législatives

Bill 55—The Financial Administration and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi concernant la gestion des finances publiques et apportant des modifications corrélatives

Bill 57—The Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Act; Loi sur la divulgation de la rémunération dans le secteur public

Bill 58—The Parental Responsibility Act; Loi sur la responsabilité parentale

Bill 59—The Powers of Attorney and Mental Health Amendment Act; Loi concernant les procurations et modifiant la Loi sur la santé mentale

Bill 60—The Law Society Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société du Barreau

Bill 61—The Statute Law Amendment Act, 1966; Loi de 1966 modifiant diverses dispositions législatives

Bill 62—The Jobs Fund Repeal Act; Loi abrogeant la Loi sur le Fonds de soutien à l'emploi

Bill 63—The Statute Law Amendment (Taxation) Act, 1996; Loi de 1996 modifiant diverses dispositions législatives en matière de fiscalité

Bill 66—The Boxing and Wrestling Commission Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Commission de la boxe et de la lutte

Bill 68—The Farm Lands Ownership Amendment, Real Property Amendment and Registry Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la propriété agricole, la Loi sur les biens réels et la Loi sur l'enregistrement foncier

Bill 70—The Animal Care Act; Loi sur le soin des animaux

Bill 71—The Manitoba Film and Sound Recording Development Corporation Act; Loi sur la Société manitobaine de développement de l'enregistrement cinématographique et sonore

Bill 72—The Public Schools Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques

Bill 73—The Construction Industry Wages Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les salaires dans l'industrie de la construction

Bill 75—The Commodity Futures and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur les contrats à terme de marchandises et apportant des modifications corrélatives

Bill 76—The Gaming Control and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur la Commission de régie du jeu et apportant des modifications corrélatives

Bill 77—The Natural Products Marketing Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la commercialisation des produits naturels

Bill 300—The Salvation Army Catherine Booth Bible College Incorporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation le Collège biblique Catherine Booth de l'Armée du Salut

Bill 301—The Native Alcoholism Council of Manitoba Incorporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation "The Native Alcoholism Council of Manitoba"

Bill 302—The Grand Lodge of Manitoba of the Independent Order of Oddfellows Incorporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation "The Grand Lodge of Manitoba of the Independent Order of Oddfellows"

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): In Her Majesty's name, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor doth assent to these bills.

His Honour was then pleased to retire.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, would you call report stage on Bill 67.

REPORT STAGE

Bill 67—The Manitoba Telephone System Reorganization and Consequential Amendments Act

Madam Speaker: To continue debate on report stage, Bill 67, The Manitoba Telephone System Reorganization and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi concernant la réorganisation de la Société de téléphone du Manitoba et apportant des modifications corrélatives), standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), who has 17 minutes remaining.

* (1450)

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to continue my comments, but I will try and be very brief.

We note from the list of bills that was just given Royal Assent here a few moments ago in this Chamber that there was one piece of legislation, a significant piece of legislation that was missing from that list, one that I am sure all members opposite would like very much to have passed.

Well, Madam Speaker, since this Minister responsible for the Manitoba Telephone System (Mr. Findlay) has said that he supports the first amendment that we have tabled in this Legislature, this is, I think, a significant start. We hope that this minister will show the same consideration for the other amendments which we are about to present to this Chamber through our MTS critic (Mr. Ashton). This could go a long way towards speeding up conclusion of this session if that is the government's will.

So they have the option here of looking very favourably upon the amendments that we have tabled here today, and since this government has said that they want this bill to pass in a very timely fashion, this is the way to do it.

Take a look. You have the list of amendments before you. Now all you have to do is say yes to them and that would be it. We would be out of this session, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, with those few words, I am prepared to conclude my comments, and we thank the minister for indicating his support for this first amendment and look forward to his continued support on all the remainder of the amendments, and we will table them.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is the amendment, report stage on Bill 67, moved by the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), seconded by the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Doer).

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

An Honourable Member: Nay.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The amendment is accordingly carried.

Formal Vote

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Yeas and Nays, Madam Speaker.

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

* (1500)

Division

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

Yeas

Ashton, Barrett, Cerilli, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Downey, Driedger, Dyck, Enns, Ernst, Evans (Brandon East), Evans (Interlake), Filmon, Findlay, Friesen, Gilleshammer, Helwer, Hickes, Jennissen, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Laurendeau, Mackintosh, Martindale, McAlpine, McCrae, McGifford, McIntosh, Mihychuk, Mitchelson, Newman, Pallister, Penner, Pitura, Praznik, Radcliffe, Reid, Reimer, Render, Robinson, Rocan, Sale, Santos, Stefanson, Struthers, Sveinson, Toews, Tweed, Vodrey, Wowchuk.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Yeas 51, Nays 0.

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, I was paired with the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings).

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): I was paired with the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach).

Madam Speaker: The amendment is accordingly carried.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), that Bill 67 be amended by striking out the second paragraph of the preamble and substituting the following:

AND WHEREAS it is proposed that the shares of the Manitoba Telephone System be offered for sale to members of the public without the support of a majority of the people of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker: The amendment proposed by the honourable member for Thompson is out of order. The amendment to the second paragraph of the preamble is out of order, because it proposes to substitute an alternative scheme to that contained in the original provision which is contrary to Beauchesne 698(9).

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, I challenge your ruling.

Madam Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has been challenged.

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: All those in favour of sustaining the ruling of the Chair, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Madam Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer),

THAT Bill 67 be amended—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The amendment is accordingly out of order. The ruling of the Chair has been sustained.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer),

THAT Bill 67 be amended in the definition “land” in subsection 1(1) by striking out everything after “rights-of-way”.

Motion presented.

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, indeed I am very pleased to be able to speak on this. I am just wondering if the Deputy Premier's (Mr. Downey) yelling out “question,” indicates that now the government, after having said that Bill 67 was ready to go, to be pushed through on clause by clause at 3:22 in the morning on November 6—now we have just seen that the government unanimously, along with members of the opposition, supported an amendment brought in by the New Democratic Party.

Is it not amazing what a little bit of time can do in terms of the consideration of a bill? I realize it was difficult for some members opposite. I look at the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh). I do not think we voted the same way on anything since she has been elected to this House, but we voted the same way on the first amendment. What a way to look at the business of Manitoba. The member for Riel (Mr. Newman), and I voted the same way. You know, it is just amazing.

The minister responsible for MTS (Mr. Findlay), I give him credit because they had to enforce the whip. They

had members who wanted to instinctively vote against anything moved by the NDP, right? On the voice vote, there were some of them who said, nay. I appreciate the minister probably felt he had to apply the whip, but do you know what? I think that is encouraging because those two or three members on the government side who were saying nay on the voice vote, just hang in there. When we get to the final vote, that is all we need, is two or three of you to say nay, and this whole bill will be defeated. So I am extremely encouraged.

To the government members, we just had Royal Assent. Now, normally that means the end of the session. I realize that we were somehow being told after the 7th that we are being punished because the government was not going to bring in Royal Assent on its bills. To the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews), I tell you, I had a real tough time explaining that in my legion, that we did not pass The Remembrance Day Act through Royal Assent because you did not ask for it. But, you know, we voted against it, you bet.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Ashton: I think the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) is going to make himself sick here. Do you know what, Madam Speaker? Exactly—I had no difficulty explaining in my legion why we voted against the bill, and we are quite happy it was not proclaimed.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would remind the honourable member for Thompson that debate is supposed to be relevant to the amendment just passed.

* (1510)

Mr. Ashton: I was only responding to the Deputy Premier. I have not quite figured it out, but we did vote against Bill 50, and we are quite happy it was not proclaimed before November 11, one more year in which Remembrance Day will be a true Remembrance Day.

So, to the Deputy Premier, he like to chuckle sometimes—and I think that description of him in the paper where it said he takes a thought and spins it out over 30 minutes—we know, when he heckles for a minute

or less, there is no thought, and I think he just proved it a few minutes ago

So, anyway, I get back to my point. My point here is, this is the government that a short time ago was saying, that is the way it is. We are going to ram through Bill 67. Today they supported one of our amendments, the first. I wish they had had the chance to support the second one. If it had been considered in order, Madam Speaker, they might.

But let us try for the third. I believe—and I will just check the order paper here. I just want to make sure this is clear. There are 36 amendments remaining in my name, and one in the member for Crescentwood's (Mr. Sale) name. So it is not bad. We are batting a thousand here. We have one passed. The other one was not in order. I felt like asking leave to see if they might consider it to be in order, given their generosity of spirit on this. What unholy alliances, I mean, the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) and I voting the same way on a bill. Who would have thunk it? It was, I am sure, quite the experience for members opposite.

But, you know, it is not unusual on MTS for people to come together. When you have 78 percent of rural Manitobans saying Bill 67 is wrong, boy, is that not kind of a coalition-building exercise if you ever saw one?

I realize that the Deputy Premier still likes to think that anybody who opposes the bill is a socialist, and I mention this in the House that I thought it was quite bizarre. I think there are a fair number of socialists out in rural Manitoba but not 78 percent of the population. I mean, 22 percent supported this. That is hitting your base, 22 percent. I realize there are 22 percent diehards out there in Manitoba who think that the Conservatives can do no wrong. Wait a sec, that is 78 percent who think they can do a heck of a lot of wrong. You add it up, it just does not add up. I do not know what kind of math now, new math that the Tories are practising, but 78 percent is pretty overwhelming. Seventy-eight percent of rural Manitobans, 67 percent of Manitobans across the province

An Honourable Member: What about this rate shock?

Mr. Ashton: And indeed we will talk about things like rate shock. What I find amazing though that as we go by

and introduce amendments such as this which deal with very substantive issues, I mentioned this in Question Period, but the Premier increasingly reminds me of the fable of the emperor with no clothes. Who can forget that? Remember as a kid learning about this where there was this tailor who convinced the emperor that he was going to make this new suit of clothing. He even convinced him that no one else could really necessarily see it, even including himself, but it was the most finely tailored suit of clothing that had ever been created by any tailor, whether it be to a royal personage or to an average citizen. And who can forget what happened? All the courtiers, everyone in the country said initially about the suit of clothing, what a tremendous suit of clothing. They did not want to offend the emperor. They did not want to say the truth that in fact perhaps there was not anything. So what I find interesting is, what an interesting parallel, because the conclusion of the fable was when one brave soul had the nerve, the temerity to stand up and say, the emperor has no clothes.

Think about it because, first of all, I think there are a lot of parallels to this situation. First of all, the Premier and the emperor. I think I need to say no more because the Premier has been taking on rather a—I have to be careful of the words I use, but I think he has forgotten that he is the servant of the public in this province, a trustee of the public assets. I think the Premier has been acting like an emperor for quite some time. [interjection] Well, I cannot use “dictator,” I did say on the record “not a dictator” before and that phrase has been taken under advisement, and I may have to withdraw that part, particularly the “not” part, but you know, the emperor. Who are the tailors in this case? Well, it is Jules Benson probably, Mike Bessey and the Bay Street bankers. The Bay Street bankers. They have said, this is the most beautiful set of clothing you have ever seen. Now, it does not exist. But you know what? The Premier stands there, he stands up in Question Period, it is like look, look, no rate increases, as he touches the hem of this invisible cloth. Hey, we are not going to have any increase rate shock in rural Manitoba. He touches the invisible pant leg and says we are not going to lose jobs. He says it will all come out in the wash. All going to come out in the wash.

Well, some of us can take credit. We started off—[interjection] Well, the only thing that is going down the drain is the Conservative Party in Manitoba. But what is interesting is we started off, some of us in

February stood out in minus 20, minus 30 degree weather and we said, the emperor has no clothes. This suit of clothing that they like to wear does not exist. This privatization is a sham. It is going to lead to higher costs. It is going to lead to reduction in service across rural Manitoba particularly with the new services that are going to be coming in place.

What is interesting is the first thing the emperor, in this case the Premier did, was say, oh, well, that is the NDP. They extended that after a while, then it was labour, then it was social action groups. They must have had their caucus interne who wrote that letter churning out a number of them, because it was like—even though there was growing evidence of that. Then they ran into a slight problem. Then it was the union, the Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities, the union of Manitoba municipalities, a new definition to the term “union bosses.” I think Jack Nicol must have been quite surprised, but the Manitoba Society of Seniors, after a while there were more and more people saying the emperor has no clothes but still they did not stop. Then they came in and we had 185 Manitobans out, 182 of which said the emperor has no clothes. Then we had in this House the ultimate denial. It was like nobody out there is really against this sale, they really support us. They say get it over with, do it. CBC runs a poll, 78 percent of rural Manitobans are saying the emperor has no clothes, 67 percent of Manitobans. But where does it stop? Now we have the comic opera, and I can think of a few Gilbert and Sullivan characters that the Premier might fit quite well here.

An Honourable Member: Phantom of the Opera.

Mr. Ashton: Well, the Phantom of the Opera. He is certainly going to be haunting the hallways.

Today we get up and we say, the counsel for MTS made statements on the record, the CRTC. I look at the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) because he knows as a lawyer that lawyers do not lie. What they say on the record and what they say in their private life is the truth, and I mean that seriously. [interjection] Well, I think it is true. I think we all trust in that word and I mean that seriously to the Minister of Labour.

An Honourable Member: Is that Vic? Did he say Remembrance Day was our fault?

Mr. Ashton: Well, we will not get into that. I am trying to make a point in the debate here. I do not want to be distracted by my own members.

When I say that lawyers tell the truth, particularly on the record, is that a fair statement? Do lawyers tell the truth on the record? I am saying that.

An Honourable Member: Most do.

Mr. Ashton: I will say lawyers do. The member for Riel (Mr. Newman) gave us good advice on that. A short time ago, I thought gave an excellent view of the legal profession and I credit him for that. But we have Mr. Nugent. Who is Mr. Nugent? The legal counsel for MTS. Speaking where? On the record in front of MTS. [interjection] Well, we will not talk about Shakespeare and lawyers, that is going a little bit too far.

You know, he went to the CRTC, and what did he say, Madam Speaker? He said—I am quite prepared to get into the detail of this. In fact, at some point in time, for the Minister of Labour, I probably will. I may read it into the record.

An Honourable Member: I advise you to read the whole thing into the record.

Mr. Ashton: Well, you would. Listen, on third reading I do get unlimited time so you may get your wish coming true.

An Honourable Member: You do not have the guts to put the whole thing on the record.

Mr. Ashton: Oh, Madam Speaker, it is interesting. The Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) says you do not have the guts to put it all on the record because if you read it—to the Minister of Labour, have you read the transcript? Read the transcript, because, in fact—[interjection] Well, I have lots of—the minister can talk about guts here. It is interesting because we heard yesterday, or a few days ago, the House leader saying they were going to debate us one for one on these amendments. So much for that promise. I have not heard the Minister of Labour yet on this issue. I want him to speak. He will have plenty of opportunity after I am finished on this debate. [interjection] You might hear some truth because you know what is interesting, for the Minister of Labour, the

Premier (Mr. Filmon) went outside of this House and said that the legal counsel for MTS was wrong.

You know, I mentioned about the emperor with no clothes. Even now the legal counsel for MTS does not know what is going on, only the Premier does. It is interesting, to the Minister of Labour, because if he was to read this and I will table this document for him, he will see that this is a very serious application. [interjection] Madam Speaker, I wonder if there might be leave to have the entire document printed in Hansard to satisfy the Minister of Labour. I would be quite happy with that.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

* (1520)

Point of Order

Hon. Darren Praznik (Deputy Government House Leader): On a point of order, Madam Speaker, I for no moment want to impinge on any member's right to speak on these matters; however, there is an issue of relevancy, and we have many amendments with which to deal. The member has moved an amendment with respect to the definition of land under the act. That is a very specific and narrow topic. I would ask if the Speaker would call the member over to discuss the reason why in fact he is proposing this amendment to redefine or change the definition of land and to make argument around that issue. We have heard many of his other arguments. There is opportunity to speak to it throughout the course of the process of bringing this legislation to a final result. I think it does the House an injustice if the member is not using his time to properly address the matter that he has moved. I think he owes us that respect.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised by the honourable deputy House leader, I would indeed agree that the honourable member does have a point of order. Rule 35 is very explicit, and I will quote: Speeches shall be directly relevant "to the question under consideration or to a motion or amendment that the Member speaking intends to move."

* * *

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, in fact, I was about to end that particular discussion, which was being ably

assisted by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews), by suggesting that I table the document that he wanted read—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

The honourable Minister of Labour, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Labour): Yes, Madam Speaker, all I was interested in was the document there, but, to the extent that I may have led the member for Thompson down an erroneous path, I do apologize to this House.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Labour does not have a point of order, but I am sure the House accepts his comments with sincerity.

* * *

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, I accept the Minister of Labour's apology.

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

I want to stress, though, in terms of what is happening here, that the emperor in this case definitely has no clothes. I mean, it is obvious to everyone. There is hardly anybody left outside of the cabinet in this Chamber, and I do not include a lot of their caucus members who cannot figure it out; and, if they have not looked at the documents I referenced, they should. What is interesting, particularly when we deal with this particular amendment, is that this is a government that fundamentally has not done the due diligence that should be required in any kind of sale, and I have said this on the record. I know a lot of people put a lot of due diligence into small business decision making. When you are going to sell a corner store, when you are going to sell a small business, you go through due diligence. There has been less due diligence on this bill than you would get in the sale of a corner store or small business, and this is a good example of it. I found it amazing following the committee hearings.

It was bad enough that the government deemed consent on such issues as pensions, deemed consent. They had not even consulted with key employee groups until the Thursday, November 7. It was a memorandum that was drafted during that day, and it was a positive memorandum. I have said that. Still more work needs to be done, but I gave credit on that, but what I am saying, they did not even consult with the pension groups. We know they did not consult with Manitobans, but I can put that aside for a moment. I will get back to that.

But they did not consider the fact that, particularly when it comes to First Nations, for example, there is a completely different legal situation that transpires once ownership is transferred. I want to deal with that because that is very relevant to what definitions of land are included in this act and what definitions continue. I do note that this section has already been amended. It has been amended to take out mines, minerals and quartz. We believe serious questions about how far the amendment goes. I want to explain the First Nations issue, because the first point is First Nations' land is not privately owned land. First Nations' land is land held, according to treaties, with the federal government. It is held in trusteeship, and anybody who knows anything about the law or even such areas as commercial lending will tell you that. First Nations will tell you that.

There is a difficulty with dealing with land in First Nations community in the same way as you would elsewhere for very real reasons. You cannot sell off a parcel of reserve land. Reserve land is part of a document, an agreement, that overrides any commercial transactions. It is held in trusteeship. [interjection] The Minister of Highways (Mr. Findlay) says, we build roads. [interjection] To the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Praznik)—well, the minister says, I am stretching it. I mean, I think the government is stretching this entire bill, quite frankly. But the issue, and I advise the members opposite to be very careful because when I see First Nations with the able legal assistance of one Jack London—[interjection] Well, oh, oh, I would say, oh, oh, if I was members opposite.

Does anybody remember Meech Lake? I mean, I want to repeat what happened with that and some of the legal advice that took place but, you know, the First Nations have a relationship with the Crown that goes back to the Royal Proclamation, the first contact between British

settlers and between First Nations in this country. It is a relationship confirmed in the British North America Act. Who has jurisdiction over First Nations issues? It is the federal government and the Crown. It is further confirmed in treaties. Who signed the treaties? The First Nations and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Crown. It is further confirmed in the Constitution of Canada, signed, repatriated Constitution, 1982, once again, by fundamental contact between the Crown and First Nations. That is the basis of the way land is held in trust on reserves.

An Honourable Member: That has nothing to do with it.

Mr. Ashton: Well, the Minister of Northern Affairs says, it has nothing to do with it, and I would note that he is the Minister of Northern Affairs. One of his responsibilities, I believe, should be to talk to First Nations about the very real concerns.

I want to deal with the question of easements, attachments, et cetera. First of all, the very real legal question has been raised about the fact that the Minister of Indian Affairs and indeed Northern Affairs at the federal level has to, as part of that trusteeship, agree to any transfer of liens, easements, et cetera, rights of way that are part and parcel of this. That is the essential legal point that is being proposed by the First Nations, and I say to the Minister responsible for MTS, do not take my word for it, talk to First Nations—[interjection] Well, the Minister of Northern Affairs, I am surprised at the Minister of Northern Affairs, he says, there is no transfer. I am really surprised. Well, he says, if I knew the law. You know, if he knew what First Nations were saying right now, I think he would be out there meeting with them the same way he did with pensioners. There is a real problem, there is a real concern.

An Honourable Member: No, there is not.

Mr. Ashton: Oh, the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey), says that, no, there is not. Is it not interesting that once again Conservative ministers are speaking for First Nations. [interjection] Oh, now we get into the telephone poll. You know, like, I have had one call on the issue.

To the Minister of Northern Affairs, have you not heard about the legal action that is being contemplated on this

issue? I mean, you do not have to have a lot of calls, all you have to do is one document filed in court, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is successful and you have got a problem. I mean, you have already got one lawsuit. You do not have to take my word for it. The counsel, Mr. Nugent, stated today, put on the record that there was a lawsuit and pointed out that the Consumer Associations, the Manitoba Society of Seniors all wanted to be participants in the proceedings, has taken the matter before the Manitoba courts, trying to set aside the privatization bill on the grounds that it is unconstitutional. They have already got one lawsuit.

An Honourable Member: On what basis?

* (1530)

Mr. Ashton: On what basis? Actually, to the Minister responsible for MTS, on the basis of a court decision that was made in Quebec which was successful, which I understand was appealed and may be subject to further appeal, the same constitutional issue. I say this to the Minister responsible for MTS because, do not get dissuaded by the Minister of Northern Affairs and others. This is a real concern out there. It is partly the legal, it is partly also the very real symbolic relationship for First Nations when you are dealing with matters such as this.

Do not forget that when MTS operated as a publicly owned institution, there were two key factors for First Nations. First of all, MTS has a reputation throughout First Nations communities that is impeccable in terms of providing service to those communities. It has provided services throughout northern Manitoba, throughout Manitoba generally in rural areas and it has been a leader in northern areas. I mean, when I go to Nelson House today, for example, Nelson House not only has a fully functioning phone service as part of the call areas, it has its own Web page, its own Internet site. Indeed, it is a great community and in fact other communities are now becoming part of the mainstream.

An Honourable Member: They could not have it when you were in government, they have got it now.

Mr. Ashton: Oh, well, it is interesting to the former Minister of Northern Affairs who has the dubious distinction of driving the Tory vote in the Thompson constituency in the last election below the NDP vote in

Arthur-Virden. That is a record to be proud of. I remember him and the current Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Praznik) arguing over who was responsible for doing that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Either way, I would be embarrassed if I was the Minister of Northern Affairs talking about anything to do with northern Manitoba, because the people of northern Manitoba spoke in volumes in the last election, particularly people at Nelson House. You know how bad it was in Nelson House? They barred the Tory candidate from the riding. They said, you are not walking here. You know how many votes they got? They got five votes, five votes in Nelson House. So let the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) not lecture me.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Could I ask the honourable members if they could keep the decorum to a mild roar. The honourable member for Thompson had been staying relevant until such time as some people went on a fishing expedition, so I would really appreciate it if we would allow him to maintain his relevancy to the motion before the House.

Mr. Ashton: I just will conclude on that section by saying that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) calls it a good start with five votes. I think in the previous election they had 10, so you can see the trend line, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But the point is there is a distinct relationship between First Nations and the Crown, and I mention this because when you are dealing with MTS, as a publicly owned corporation there is that service element. Believe you me, and I say this with no offence to Hydro but given the history of Manitoba Hydro's dealing, there is a whole lot of a different response that is received with Manitoba Hydro. They have done a lot of work not only in terms of getting into communities, but Bob Brennan—and I give him a lot of credit for dealing with the historic distrust that Manitoba Hydro has developed in the past 25, 30 years as an institution.

That is not the case with MTS. MTS has always been welcome in First Nations communities, but I want to point out that what you have essentially, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is also the fact that MTS is a Crown corporation. You cannot underestimate the significance of that to First Nations. For many First Nations people, when it comes to granting easements for Manitoba Telephone System access, we are dealing with a situation

for those First Nations dealing with the Crown—and I realize the Deputy Premier's concern; he cannot stay and heckle me. I will stay after we are officially closed so he can get it out of his system. I know he is just bubbling away. I know he wants to call rural Manitobans socialists again. I really know that is really important to him, and if he wants to, I will grant leave at the end of my 40 minutes. He can get up and go on a 40-minute diatribe on how all the opponents to the sale of MTS are diehard socialists here.

But I digress, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What the government has to realize with First Nations, there is a distinct issue here. For many First Nations now, if—and I say if and I say this to the Liberals. Well, theoretically, I say this to the Liberal members, who I am sure will read my comments in Hansard. When I hear them get up in the House and say, well, now that you are selling off MTS, and we are sort of against it—well, mind you, their Leader is sort of in favour of it. She is in favour of privatizing in principle but not the way it is being done, so I do not know how that works. I do not know how she would rather do it.

To my mind, it is like the Liberals are kind of firmly on the fence on this one, on both sides of the issue, but I do not think you can be on Bill 67. There are only two choices at the end of this vote, for or against it. We are against Bill 67; the government is in favour of it. But the Liberals say, their argument was—and I heard this today—well, now that you are selling it off, let us talk about the money here. They are almost rubbing their hands. They want to spend the money before it has even been—[interjection] I have news for the Liberals. It ain't over yet. It ain't over till it's over, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Some people thought it would be over a little while ago. It is still not over.

I know some people wish it was over, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but until we have dealt with every single amendment including this one, it ain't over till it's over.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable deputy House leader, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I appreciate the pressure that the member for Thompson sometimes comes under when members of this side of the House or

members of other benches heckle and make comment and lead him astray. I think we all have to endeavour to ensure that the member can address the matter at hand, which is changing the definition of land. In the course of his remarks, I have heard some commentary, but he seems to easily stray off to matters that he is more familiar rather than the detail of which he discussing.

I would ask Mr. Deputy Speaker to call him to order and I will hope that members on this side will endeavour not to help assist him in getting off track as he appears to so easily do.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I thank the honourable member for that suggestion, but he did not have a point of order. The honourable member for Thompson had digressed but at periodical times he has been returning to the subject matter before the House.

I would ask though that the House assist me. If we want him to remain relevant, I think it is important that we listen to what he has to say and that will help him to remain relevant to the matter before us.

* * *

Mr. Ashton: If I do amble at times, I would just point out that one of things we are doing by this amendment is deleting reference to paths, passages, ways, water courses, water orders, water rights, water powers, water privileges. So, if I do seem to amble at times, it is perhaps because that is what we want to do, get rid of the ambling in the bill. So there is some relevance even with that.

The reason I referenced the Liberals—oh, and I take back the theoretical—is because this bill is not over. I hope the minister responsible will inform that to the Liberals. Until each and every amendment is dealt with, this is not a fait accompli. I cannot stress that—[interjection] I was talking about how the Liberals were trying to spend the money for MTS before it was even sold. [interjection] Okay, all right, and I thank you. Well, you were here, and I know you are always here in spirit too. So I did not mention anything other, so you do not have to worry about that.

But I was only focusing on the approach in that, because the Liberal approach here, and I will be interested to see, as I said—

An Honourable Member: You think you can provoke me to stand up and debate.

Mr. Ashton: Well, I hope I do provoke debate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

The honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) might want to be aware that the honourable member is dealing with an amendment that is dealing with the definition of land. It would be much more appropriate if we would allow him to continue his debate and be relevant to that matter.

The honourable member for Thompson, to continue.

Mr. Ashton: Thank you, and actually I was appreciating the assistance from the member for Inkster. I do think it is important for all members to participate in this debate. I know he was listening to my comments, and I appreciate that. I look forward to his defence of the position his leader has taken on this issue.

Because this is relevant to this amendment, I am wondering when the Liberal leader says that they are in favour of this except the way it is being dealt with. For example, if this amendment is passed, will they then support the bill? There are 37 other amendments. I say that to the Liberal member because—I do not mean this personally, because I know the member for Inkster has opposed this bill from Day One. I just find it interesting because there is a problem when you get into that position like the Liberal Party has in Manitoba now, where they are sort of on the one side and the other side.

If we pass this amendment, is this good enough? We have 38—how many have I got left?—36 other amendments. If they are all passed by the Legislature, is then the process improved enough that they support the bill? I guess one of the concerns I have is, I do not see any way of making this bill better other than—even if you pass 90 percent of our amendments, including this one, the principle still applies. The only way this bill would be acceptable to our side is if a later amendment requires that the bill be put to a vote before it could be proclaimed, if that was part of it. That is the only amendment in here that would make it acceptable to this side of the House.

In fact, and if I am going out on a limb here, but I think that amendment and maybe a few others, if you were to pass those amendments, we would probably let this bill go straight through to third reading. We would not really need to deal with the others because, you know what, it goes to a vote, it is over—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Ashton: —and that is what I am talking about, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the key amendments. I appreciate your keeping the focus on this, because I want to know, is this one of those amendments that the Liberals want that will change their mind on this issue? I am almost afraid to bring in amendments in case the Liberals go, aha, that is it, now we have exactly what we want, we are actually now in favour of the sale, we believe it in principle, and now it is the right process.

* (1540)

I do not want to go that far. I do not want to amend this bill, and I hope the House leader will, the member for Inkster will tell me if there are any of these amendments that might trigger them to go the other way. I may reconsider whether I bring them in, because I still have hope that the three Liberals are going to vote with the 23 New Democrats, and two members of conscience on the government side.

An Honourable Member: I will vote.

Mr. Ashton: He will vote. I know he will vote against it. He will vote against the bill, but you know, I have faith. I still have. I had a lot more faith too when I heard the members on the other side defy their MTS minister in trying to vote down one of our amendments.

An Honourable Member: Just like the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) did in the committee.

Mr. Ashton: Oh, I know. It is interesting. The Minister of Finance in committee actually, on an amendment, put his hand up to support our position. You heard of Freudian slips; these are Freudian votes. Their hands just wanted to go up. I saw some of them. I am sure there was a twitch there going on, and I think a number of them were just keeping their arms from just popping right up and voting in favour of this. I heard those nays

today. I really think there were some government members. Listen, I thought it was government backbenchers, but the Minister of Finance. I would be interested to see on this amendment, we could set a pattern. What if we were to go through all 38 amendments that I have introduced and if they were to support every single one of them? My goodness, you know, would that not be an achievement?

An Honourable Member: You would still vote against the bill at the end of the day, would not you?

Mr. Ashton: Do you know what is interesting? The member opposite says, we would still vote against the bill at the end of the day. If you vote for the section that says it cannot be proclaimed unless there is a referendum, then you do not have a problem anymore. [interjection] Hey, listen, let us talk about it here. We may have a way of getting consensus on this bill. I appreciate the member opposite's comments because it is interesting. He is looking for ways to build consensus on this bill here. Let us start. We can pass this amendment, but do you know what? I think it is really interesting—

An Honourable Member: You would still vote against the bill.

Mr. Ashton: The member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) says we would vote against the bill. You put in a reference to—[interjection] I say this to the member for Emerson because, if he wants to put in the section on putting it to a vote here, that may be a very interesting proposition. I am sure we would be out of here very quick, and I think everybody would be happy with it.

Do you know what? You would win some, and you would lose some. I have been on the losing side of elections before. To the member for Emerson, you win some, you lose some. You have been on the winning side of some and the losing side of others. You have to accept that.

An Honourable Member: You cannot raise mushrooms everywhere. You cannot leave everybody in the dark.

Mr. Ashton: Well, it is interesting about keeping people in the dark—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Could I remind all honourable members that they will all have an opportunity to put their voices on the record at a later date and that the honourable member for Thompson at this time has the floor, and I know he is trying real hard to be relevant towards the amendment that is before the House at this time.

The honourable member for Thompson, to continue.

Mr. Ashton: I am trying, for the member for Emerson, to shed some light on this, because the government has not had a single informational meeting on the implications of this section or any section in this bill.

I would say that the government might have some ability to get up and criticize us for bringing in this amendment. If they had had the courage to travel around Manitoba and have public hearings in every corner of this province—it is interesting, the Minister responsible for MTS talks about editorials. How about the Brandon Sun? I think they actually support the position of the government, but they said they had blown it. They said you are blaming people out in rural Manitoba. You are calling all New Democrats and socialists—they said, a lot of average folk out there are against this. They said, you should have held public hearings; you should explain your position. I think the fact that they have not had a single public meeting anywhere in the province is proof positive that this government does not have a leg to stand on. It cannot make the argument. It cannot, in any way, shape or form, get public support for this bill, and I think they made that decision right from the beginning.

They did not want public hearings because they knew that they would run into difficulty. They cannot get up—and I mentioned this before. At some point in time, you go to a public meeting and the emperor has no clothes, someone is going to say, the emperor has no clothes.

If the Premier goes to a public meeting, if he dares, on MTS, people are going to say, you do not have a leg to stand on on this issue. You do not know what you are talking about. They will be waving the CRTC documents around. They will be talking about the common sense of it. Do you know what people are saying at our public meetings? They say this about the government: You can fool some of the people some of

the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time. They are saying, you cannot fool us. That is why the government—oh, they came out with a brilliant strategy. They do not want to go out and explain the impact to this, and I find it interesting.

The member for The Maples' (Mr. Kowalski) father came. What was he talking about? Easements. Here is an average citizen, and I am sure he probably has a greater than average interest in the political process because of his son's involvement as an MLA. I credit him for coming out to the committee, and he stayed throughout the hearings and made a very good presentation. Those are the people who have a lot of questions. Call a public meeting. We are concerned about this broad definition of land here. Is it necessary? You have already deleted the mines and minerals section. Do you need to pass passages, water courses, air rights, licences, liberties, privileges, easements, and pertaining thereto and all trees, timbers? Do we need that? [interjection] The messages. Yes, do not forget the messages, and I am prepared to explain what that means if I am allowed leave to go past my 40 minutes which is one minute last.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this kind of detail is subject to real questions out there. We have received questions, a number of people have raised questions, not just the member for The Maples' father, about easements, et cetera. First Nations are raising those questions. They are real questions. If the government is so sure they can be answered, why not answer them? I say to the minister responsible, for example, he can start tonight. At the Dugald Community Centre at 7:30 we have a public meeting. He is invited. I have sent him an official invitation. I hope he will come tonight and he will ask his constituents in Springfield what questions they have and will actually answer them. You know what, I repeat that invitation. He has received a written invitation to it. We are quite prepared to give the minister all the time he needs in the world to explain to his constituents about this and other issues relating to MTS. I hope he is there.

In fact, I have an open invitation to any Conservative members across the way: if you want to set up a public meeting or if you get a chance, you can get up and call me whatever you want at a public meeting. I will come. You can call me. You can blame me for this, that and the other. You can call all those people out there socialists

if you want. You can do that. But how about if we have public meetings throughout the province to explain what the real issues about MTS are with the people of Manitoba? You and I will have a joint meeting with all our members of the caucus.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member's time has expired.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a pleasure to get up and speak in support of the amendment to delete a portion of the definition of "land" from the definition of "land" in Bill 67, the bill to privatize the Manitoba Telephone System.

I would like to speak in dealing with this amendment in two areas: one is the process, and the other is the impact. Now this amendment on the surface of it, you wonder why this amendment is here. Why are we asking for the deletion of this part of the definition of "land"? [interjection] and I am wondering if the Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. McIntosh) would care to answer the question that I just posed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Education, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): I wanted to indicate by what I had just said here was when she asked, the answer to the question, I think, is that their ideologically—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Is the honourable minister up on a point of order?

Mrs. McIntosh: No, I was just going to respond to—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Wellington, to continue.

Ms. Barrett: I was going to say that we were raising this amendment because we are ideologically hidebound, and if I have put the wrong words on the record, I know

the Minister of Education will certainly correct me, as the member for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk) corrected the Minister of Education earlier in Question Period today. It is important that when people make positions and make statements on the record that they are sure of the accuracy of those.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Let us start the debate off by being relevant to the amendment that is before us. I do believe the honourable member has a copy of the amendment before us, so I would ask her to be relevant towards that amendment.

The honourable member for Wellington, to continue.

* (1550)

Ms. Barrett: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Yes, I was beginning by saying rhetorically, I guess, why would the New Democrats put in this amendment? We have a number of amendments that we have to deal with in this—

An Honourable Member: Thirty-nine.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Deputy Speaker, 39 in total or 39 more. I have not even counted them.

An Honourable Member: Thirty-six more.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Deputy Speaker, 36 more amendments to deal with in this piece of legislation. Why are we dealing with this particular one in the definition? Usually definitions are fairly straightforward, and they do not cause a lot of concern and trouble. Well, this particular amendment, as I understand it from having discussed it with my colleagues and having listened to some of the discussion here this afternoon, does have a great deal of relevance to the import and the impact of Bill 67 on the people of Manitoba, on all of the people of Manitoba in one sense and on a smaller number of the people of Manitoba in another sense. I will get into that when I talk in terms of the impact that this amendment will have on the people of Manitoba, the impact that not voting for this amendment will have on the people of Manitoba as well as the impact of, we hope, the continuation of the government in seeing the validity of the amendments which we have brought forward and that they will vote with us in this amendment.

I would like to speak to the process that has led to this particular amendment, the process that shows, we believe, because of the elements in the definition of land that the government has put into this piece of legislation to our way of thinking, that the process that they undertook in developing Bill 67 from the beginning to end was flawed. This amendment itself is only one part of that.

We have stated that we believe that the government knew before the provincial election a year and a half ago that they were intent upon privatizing the telephone system. The government has stated that was not the case, but we believe that in effect is actually the case.

We believe that and have been shown in the process of Bill 67, the way it was introduced, the way it was handled at the public hearings, the way it was handled in the committee when it was going clause by clause, the way it is being handled in the House as we come to report stage and ultimately after discussion of this amendment and other amendments, third reading, while the government talks about its competency in introducing legislation and dealing with legislation, the way that this bill has been handled from first to last—and I think I am being charitable here—shows the incompetency of the government. If it is not an incompetency factor, then it is a factor of—and I am trying to think of a word that I can use that will be parliamentary—putting things over on the people of Manitoba. It comes from the understanding very clearly understood by caucus members when they were even candidates, before they were even caucus members, that they had as their intention to privatize the telephone system.

They knew that they were going to do it. They also knew that the people of Manitoba would not appreciate that, so that they did not make it as part of their election platform except when they were asked. And several of their candidates, including some who are currently in the House today said—erroneously as it turns out, and I believe erroneously knowing that it was erroneously stated—that there were no plans to privatize the telephone system.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that an argument could be made that one of the reasons the process has been so poorly—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member might have to explain to me how the process is relevant towards this section.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the connection between the process on Bill 67 as a whole and the amendment that we are putting forward in the “definition of land” is that I believe that an argument can be made that in the definition of land the process was not thought out. We are trying to help the government in making a definition of land that is more accurate.

We believe that the process that was followed by the government had to be done in sort of a very quiet covert manner because they had told the people of Manitoba they were not going to privatize the telephone system, and so they could not act in an open, above-board manner. Part of the problem that we see in the whole process that it has gone through with this whole bill including the definition of land in the definition section is that the government, because it chose not to consult, because it chose not to talk with people who had a particular interest in the impact of the sale of the telephone system such as the people who are affected by the definition of land in this amendment, as well as the entire province of Manitoba.

Because they knew that they were going against the wishes of the people of Manitoba, because they knew that they were on very shaky ground, they did not do in this definition of land what they should have done. What they should have done was, as the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) has stated, they should have consulted with the people who were going to be affected by this. They should have gone to the First Nations. They should have gone to the federal government. They should have said, okay, this is what we are going to do. We are going to go against our election promise. We made a decision that we are going to do that. We are going to privatize the Telephone System. In the act, one of the things we are going to have to do is we are going to have to deal with easements; we are going to have to deal with Crown lands; we are going to have to deal with land that is under treaty rights established between the federal government and the aboriginal First Nations. So how do we do that so that we protect our process?

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, clearly, they did not do that. The First Nations have told the government, the First

Nations have told us, that they have never once been consulted on the impact that the sale of Manitoba Telephone System will have on them, particularly as First Nations. Now, the impact of the sale of the Manitoba Telephone System will be great on everybody in the province of Manitoba, but in the definition of land as proposed by Bill 67, it has particularly focused impact, we believe, on the First Nations, but because the government knew that they had to go behind the province's back, that they could not discuss this in the light of day, that it had to be done in the basements of the Legislature, metaphorically speaking, that it could not be done in good consultation. What has happened is that the entire bill is riddled with problems.

Whether you talk about your position, your principled position in opposition to the sale of the Telephone System, leaving that aside, the bill itself as exemplified by the definition of land which we are amending, the bill itself in its entirety is full of contradictions, is full of things that cannot possibly take place, is full of stuff that even the government admits. To take a case in point, what actually happened in committee when the committee went clause by clause is that the government itself brought in 26 amendments—26 amendments to a bill that is only 31 pages long.

Well, just to compare that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I am talking about why we are proposing this land amendment, because it is part of a larger problem that the government has in this, The Municipal Act which was a brand new act, the first time in over a hundred years that a municipal act had been put together, the Minister of Rural Development went out and he consulted. He talked for over two years with virtually everybody in the province of Manitoba who would be impacted by this with one small exception and that being the City of Winnipeg, and there was a problem that was brought to the minister's attention about that. But, by and large, The Municipal Act, the process was undertaken very well.

* (1600)

You know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Because that process was undertaken in the proper fashion, there were very, very few amendments that were brought forward by the government to The Municipal Act and very few amendments, I might add, that were brought forward to

The Municipal Act by the opposition, because the process was undertaken properly.

Not only that, but the amendments that were brought forward by the government were amendments that were a reflection of and a response to the public hearings, the things that the people of the province of Manitoba said to the government in the public hearing process, were listened to by the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) and responded to with a series of amendments that he brought forward and that we in many cases, in most cases, agreed to because they were good amendments, and they showed the Minister of Rural Development's commitment to the legislative process that we all should be responding to.

In the case of the government and the Manitoba Telephone System, they had ample opportunity to listen to concerns that were raised and specifically concerns that are probably not only being dealt with in the amendment before us now on the definition of land, but that will be dealt with in other amendments, they did not listen to nor did they consult with the people most affected by this definition of land, and that is the First Nations. [interjection] No. The Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Praznik) says he has not received a phone call from the First Nations.

I would suggest to the Minister of Northern Affairs that it is his responsibility as one of the members of the government that is putting in place this act, which will have an enormous impact on all of the people of the province of Manitoba and most particularly on the people that his department is supposed to be representing, it was his responsibility to say, wait a minute, let us look at the definition of land.

This is an enormous change, but the minister did not look at that. The minister changed, eliminated, and all mines, minerals and quarries, from the definition. Why did the minister not deal with the issues around easements and around water, air rights, all of these things that, according to our understanding, are issues that relate to Crown lands and issues that relate to the First Nations people of the province of Manitoba?

The minister, the government, was put on notice several days ago by a question asked in the House by the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) tabling letters and

concerns raised by First Nations about this particular issue, about the fact that First Nations do not believe the government has the right to transfer those Crown lands to a private corporation, and that is specifically what this amendment does. It says that land as defined does not include those Crown lands that are Crown lands as a basis of, as a result of treaties between the federal Crown, provincial Crown and the First Nations people.

So I would say that the due diligence in the largest sense of the word has not been done in the MTS bill as a whole but, most particularly, in defining what land means.

I would like to talk about the impact that this amendment, or not passing, perhaps, this amendment, will have. In effect, if I am reading this properly, what this—[interjection] The Minister of Northern—the Minister of Urban Affairs or the Minister of Northern Affairs says that I am not reading the act properly. I would like to, rhetorically only, ask the minister how he knows I am not reading it properly when I have not even had a chance to say what I think the impact is going to be. Clearly, he does not care to listen to anything. Their ears are closed. Their minds are closed. They are not prepared to debate in any meaningful fashion this incredibly important piece of legislation, and if he is not prepared to listen he can at least stop chirping from his seat.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. If we continue along those lines we will be into a debate between the honourable members. At this time the honourable member should revert back to what she was dealing with, and that is the amendment before the House.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am talking about and will talk about—whether I am heard by the government members or not we will be heard and are being heard by the people of Manitoba. I am talking about the impact that the current definition of land will have on the people of Manitoba as a whole and most particularly on the First Nations. If this amendment does not pass, if in effect Crown lands are left in the definition of land, then what will happen is that Crown lands, which are now controlled by a Crown corporation as a result of treaty negotiations between the Crown and the First Nations, with those benefits of Crown ownership, Crown lands being felt by and having benefits attributed to all of the residents and citizens of the province of

Manitoba in general and most particularly benefits accruing to the First Nations.

If this definition is not amended, the current situation, as is now the case, will be changed and what will ultimately happen is that those Crown lands that are currently beneficial to one million, one hundred and some thousand residents of the province of Manitoba, those benefits will now be given over to a private corporation, and a private corporation, the ultimate ownership of which we are morally and legally convinced, will, within four years, potentially go to a private corporation not only that is not owned by all of the citizens of the province of Manitoba, as the Crown corporation is now, but that could very easily be owned entirely by non-Manitobans and even non-Canadians.

So Crown lands that currently are held in trust to all of the people of Manitoba will now potentially go solely under ownership to a private corporation such as AT&T, the largest communications company in the world, a communications company that is advertising hourly on our television screens, and that is making tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of calls to the people of Manitoba getting ready to take over not only our publicly owned telephone system, but the Crown lands that are delineated under the current definition of land.

If this government is not prepared to listen to this, if they have not, in a sense, made a mistake in their lack of due diligence in drafting this legislation, if they really meant and mean to have lands as defined here include the Crown lands that we believe they include, then this government has shown even larger lack of control or concern for the people of Manitoba than we first thought.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to be able to put a few things on record because when you look at this amendment, it is an excellent amendment because it will hopefully protect a lot of citizens of Manitoba.

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

As a private landowner, I know, for myself, if a Crown corporation came to me and wanted to use part of my

land to help others, in most cases, I would say, sure go ahead and do it and sign whatever agreements that they wanted because, as a socialist, I have always believed in sharing what you have and enable to have the ability to help others. But, if it is a private individual that wanted to build a store or whatever on my land, then I would have to say that I have the right to charge you rent because you will be profiting from the use of my land. So, if you will profit, then I should make some kind of a profit.

So, when I think in those terms, and I am really surprised that the government has not dealt with some of the land issues, the first thing that comes to mind when the government is dealing with First Nations communities. That agreement that was signed between the Minister of Indian Affairs and the Province of Manitoba on behalf of MTS, or the Minister of Indian Affairs and MTS, was signed in good faith. It was Crown to Crown because reserves are Crown land, which is owned by Indian Affairs, and MTS, the way it is today, that is Crown land. So you are dealing Crown to Crown; but, if you change the definition of one or the other, then you have Crown versus private. Whichever is the one that is asked to give their rights or give their land away for nothing to a private individual or company for profit purposes, I do not think anyone in this room would ever agree to that, if they were the ones that owned that parcel of land that a private individual or private company was going to profit from.

So if you look at that, how can the government say that we will just transfer the lease agreement that we have with Indian Affairs from a Crown corporation to a private company, and everything will go along as in the past? If you read the agreement and if you read the document that was sent by Opaskwayak Cree Nation, they are very concerned.

* (1610)

For instance, they start off by saying the microwave tower on the Umpherville Road which was leased to MTS, when MTS divided into separate corporations, the lease was assigned to MTS NetCom which is currently the lessee. This is standard commercial lease which requires ministerial consent for any transfers such as an assignment, relinquishment, et cetera. Failure on the part of the lessee to obtain consent would make the transaction void.

Even for the government of Manitoba or MTS to go the Minister of Indian Affairs to ask for blanket approval for a private company to use reserve land, that minister cannot give blanket approval because that minister should go back to every leader and the people of that reserve to get the consent of a new agreement, because it is a new agreement.

Also, it goes on to say, to the best of our knowledge, neither MTS nor their subcompanies have contacted our First Nation with regard to any transaction or the sale of MTS. We are aware that Indian Affairs and MTS have had some discussions regarding the blanket permits which are in existence on most reserves in Manitoba. Those discussions have not been extended to include our reserve.

Now, there is a problem here. We keep talking about MTS and the government have to consult with people, and this is a good indication where obviously that has not occurred in the First Nations communities, and I hope before this bill passes that they will put together quick hearings, so people can have their say, because how can you just ram something through onto people hoping that the agreement you have or should have is the right one?

It goes on to say, the blanket permits which were utilized to allow MTS to install services on the OCN reserves are agreements for as long as required for the purposes described. Although it is now Indian Affairs policy that permits cannot be assigned, the MTS blanket permit provides that the permittee agrees not to assign or sublet the rights hereby granted without the written consent of the minister, and the minister cannot give written consent without consulting each individual band. The bands have to give their agreement to the minister on their behalf, and I know that that has not been done.

The permit may be terminated by the minister if the permittee is in default in the performance of any of the conditions in their permit for a period of thirty days, so if it goes on to say that we have an agreement, and if the bands say, no, we do not have an agreement, and it is taken to court and the bands win, what happens after 30 days?

Also, another interesting paragraph in this letter, it says MTS has installed their infrastructure along highway rights-of-way throughout the province. Is there going to

be an automatic agreement provided to a new non-Crown company? Further to this, highways such as in front of Otineka Mall were expropriated from reserves for road purposes. The Order-in-Council mentions nothing about other uses.

Further yet, there are several highways in this area which remain reserve land, yet both have telephone and hydro services installed within the right-of-way. This situation has been brought to the province's attention December of 1995, but no response has been received to date. Well, why? If they were requesting information at that time, you would think now would be a crucial time for the government to try and get some correspondence and communications going with First Nations communities. Like I said earlier, when you are dealing Crown to Crown, a lot of times you get full co-operation and it is an easy thing to do, but when it becomes Crown to private, that is a whole different matter.

A First Nations individual can go and hunt on any Crown, as long as it is not a park, on any Crown, but a First Nations' individual cannot go hunt on private land unless they get the permission of the land owner. So would you not think that onuses would be the same if you reversed those roles, that if a private person wanted to do something on a reserve for their own profit, whether it is to feed their families or put in a telephone system or build a store, I am sure they would have to get the permission from the band members or even the Minister of Indian Affairs, who, in turn, cannot give approval, I am sure, without getting approval from individual bands. So that is 61 different communities that this government, hopefully, will deal with, because if you go ahead and do the agreement, hopefully, understanding that you have a blanket agreement and if it is proven not to be in 30 days, what happens? If the agreement is there, fine. Give it to us. Tell the people.

In the Indian Act, it says right here: Every transaction purporting to pass the title to any property that is by this section deemed to be situated on a reserve or any interest in such property is void unless a transaction is entered into with the consent of the minister or is entered into between members of a band or between the band and a member thereof.

So I think that should explain itself. I hope that this government will take those letters that were tabled by our

member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin), that was given to him by his band, because they are very concerned, and I think all citizens should be because First Nations people and all aboriginal people, I think, have to be taken seriously. It goes on to say—this letter is from Indian Affairs and Northern Development of Canada, and it goes on to say in 9, the permittee agrees not to sign or sublet the rights hereby granted without the written consent of the minister.

I hope the government has that written consent, and I hope the Minister of Indian Affairs has got the approval by band members, because the old days of just ramming things through, I do not think, are here any longer. In the First Nations and all aboriginal communities we have strong leadership, and we have more consulting going on in those communities than has ever happened in the past.

Also in No. 7. it says, during the term of this lease the lessee will not assign, sublet, mortgage, pledge, hypothecate or otherwise encumber this lease or part with possession of the whole or any part of the demised land without the consent in writing of the lessor first, first had and obtained, that any purported assignment, subletting, mortgage, pledge or hypothecation shall, in the absence of such consent, be void. The lessor agrees that such consent shall not be unnecessarily withheld, and that consent to any mortgage shall be deemed to include consent to the right of the mortgage or exercise any power of sale or chattel or remedy under the mortgage.

In No. 8. it goes on to say, if at any time during the continuance of the term hereby granted the lessee be permitted in the manner hereinbefore provided to sign or sublet the demised land or any part thereof the amount of rent set out here and shall be subject to revision.

* (1620)

I am glad it says "subject to revision" because, if the understanding is Crown to Crown and now Crown to private, I am sure the bands will be asking for some form of compensation. At least I hope they will, because the reason I say I hope they will is because you only have to go into any First Nations community and you will see such a shortage of housing, employment opportunities, and any way that the bands can generate some revenues to help their people has to be a plus.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

When you are going into a new agreement, or if that will be the case, the revenues that could be generated from rent or the amount of compensation paid for use of reserve land could really go to offsetting a lot of the child poverty that we see in Canada.

The revenues generated need to be directed because yesterday you heard on radio, you saw on television, I am sure you read the papers where Barb Gray, who is a Winnipeg schoolteacher, she said she "watched a child come to her school in sneakers yesterday—because the child's sister was quicker to grab their only pair of boots." Now, is this Canada we are living in?

So any form of revenues that can be generated by First Nations or any community that could be used to help eliminate child poverty has to be a plus. And it goes on to say, "That's not unusual, said Gray, a Winnipeg schoolteacher." "There are lots of hungry kids out here." "If you're hungry and you're cold and you're tired, you can't pay attention."

So you just think about that. Anyone that says, you know, a private corporation is there to only make money for their shareholders, and that is what a private company is all about, when you sell shares, you are there to make money for your shareholders, so if there is a way that First Nations can reap some of the benefit of a sale of MTS, a Crown corporation—[interjection] The minister says, buy shares. Like, how, what world do you live in?

I am just talking to you about how poor a lot of those communities are. They cannot even buy shoes, and you say, they should go buy shares. Like, how can you buy, why would you buy shares instead of shoes for your children? Where is the priority? So how can you sit there and say that? If they do not have money for shoes for their children, they are not going to have money to buy shares in MTS or any corporation. That is what I have been saying from Day One. What will happen to those people that have telephones today because they are subsidized by a Crown corporation, they are subsidized by all the users, and the way it should be? [interjection] That is what you say, in the future, till when? Four years from now, and then what happens? The rate rates will go up because, as you know, in northern communities—

An Honourable Member: Read the press release from the CRTC.

Mr. Hickes: Would you put it in the bill? If the government is serious about the rates staying the same, I wish they would put it in their bill so that the citizens of Manitoba can have a better understanding and maybe if the minister puts it into the bill, you might get support out there instead of 78 percent of your rural members of Manitoba saying they do not support the sale of MTS. Now, if 78 percent of the rural population does not support—CRTC is not in business to look after people that need a pair of shoes for their child to go to school. That is not how it works, and you know that. CRTC will look at how much it costs to run the telephone company, how much they have to pay out for new taxes now, because they will be a private company, and how much they need to pay their shareholders, and if you think the rates will go down, I do not know. You know, put it into your bill guaranteeing to all citizens of Manitoba that, yes, the rates will stay the same or the rates will go down. Put it into your bill. If you are that confident, put it into your bill. [interjection] Competition for who?

Will the most members of the First Nations communities, most members of northern communities, will they be able to compete, will they be shareholders? Most constituents in Point Douglas, will they be shareholders? Will they—[interjection] When the stocks are down. Now, how can you say that when I gave you an example. The cost of telephones right now are even difficult for some individuals to maintain, and in Winnipeg, it is \$13.30; rural \$12.90; northern Manitoba \$11.75. So you mean to tell me that once it is privatized and they have to pay the true cost for a telephone in Gods Lake Narrows, the private company will subsidize those rates? Sorry, I cannot answer that call because the private company is not there to help individuals as Crown corporations are there for everyone to make the phones accessible to people, to keep the rates down. A private company is there for profits for their shareholders, simple as that.

An Honourable Member: To satisfy our customers and keep their service.

Mr. Hickes: That is right.

An Honourable Member: And make profit.

Mr. Hickes: And make profit. Who is going to buy shares if the company is losing money because they are subsidizing northern and rural users? Are you going to line up to buy shares for that? Of course not. No investor will.

An Honourable Member: It is going to be interesting to read these comments back in about three years.

Mr. Hickes: Yes, for sure it will be. Then it goes on. When I was talking about, I hope that the First Nations will get some benefits. I hope all citizens that need the help will get it, because you just look at what has happened to child poverty in Manitoba. The number of children living in poverty has jumped 46 percent since 1989 when Ottawa pledged to eradicate child poverty by the year 2000 according to Stats Canada. In Winnipeg about 42,000 children were living in poverty in 1994. That represents an almost 17 percent jump from 1989.

Jerry MacNeil, who is the executive director of the Manitoba school association, said that the escalating number of poor children has trustees worried.

Well, I hope it has all citizens of Manitoba worried because, if we can use any dollars that are either gained through the governments or gained through whatever means is earmarked to help child poverty, I applaud.

It also goes on to say: It is very, very difficult to teach children whose stomachs are empty. These are the future leaders of our province. We need to give all children an equal opportunity to be what they can be and to give an opportunity to all children, whether rich or poor, to fulfil their dreams. With kids going to school on an empty stomach, that will not solve that problem. We have to make sure that we find ways for all children to have the opportunity to at least go to school with a full stomach.

If it is to be the sale of MTS to help the First Nations communities to at least help a little bit to this way, I would applaud the First Nations to stand up for all Manitobans and, hopefully, stop the sale of MTS for all the citizens of the province.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, I want to take the opportunity to take a few minutes to say that I support the amendment that has been put forward by my colleague the member for

Thompson (Mr. Ashton). When we look at this amendment, I have to say to the government that, had they listened to the public and had they gone out to rural and northern Manitoba and heard what people had to say about this and not been afraid to face the people, they might have been able to address these concerns.

I have to say that the concern about easements has been raised by the aboriginal community, as my colleague from Point Douglas has indicated, but the issue of easements has also been raised in the farming community. Thousands of people—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) will have 19 minutes remaining.

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, given the opposition's interest in debating these very important matters that are before the House, this side is certainly more than prepared to grant leave to waive private members' hour to allow for this matter to continue for a further hour of debate.

You may wish to canvass the House to see if there is leave. This side of the House is prepared to grant that leave; and, considering it is a government member's resolution today, we are prepared to give up that time to all members to address these important issues.

* (1630)

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I was going to ask the question.

Point of Order

Mr. Hickes: On a point of order, Madam Speaker, the government is asking leave to debate MTS. We feel on this side of the House that all issues pertaining to Manitoba is very important, as is MTS, but tourism is also very important to us, as is health and education.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Point Douglas does not have a point of order. Is there—

* * *

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, just for the clarification of the member for Point Douglas, I can appreciate—perhaps I caught him a little off guard. I understand that the next resolution before the House is one to be put forward by the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson) on tourism, and this side of the House is more than prepared, the member for La Verendrye is more than prepared, to waive private members' hour and debate on that resolution in order to allow for the consideration of the amendments that the opposition is moving forward.

They have come to this House and made a very strong argument about the importance of their resolution. We are prepared to give them—I just wanted to make sure that he was aware of matters that we are prepared to give up in order to further their opportunity to debate.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Is there leave to waive private members' hour?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: No, leave has been denied.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 200—The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), Bill 200 (The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-maladie), standing in the name of the honourable deputy House leader (Mr. Praznik). Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? [agreed]

Bill 201—The Aboriginal Solidarity Day Act

Madam Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson), Bill 201, The Aboriginal Solidarity Day Act (Loi sur le jour

de solidarité à l'égard des autochtones), standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau). Is there leave to permit? [agreed]

Bill 203—The Public Assets Protection Act

Madam Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), Bill 203, The Public Assets Protection Act (Loi sur la protection des biens publics), standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau). Leave? [agreed]

Bill 205—The Dutch Elm Disease Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), Bill 205, The Dutch Elm Disease Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la thylose parasitaire de l'orme), standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) who has 11 minutes remaining. Stand? [agreed]

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Madam Speaker: Bill 202, The Home Care Protection and Consequential Amendments Act.

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Res. 24—Tourism

Mr. Ben Sveinson (La Verendrye): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer),

WHEREAS Manitoba's tourism industry employs more than 50,000 people and contributes in excess of \$1 billion to the provincial economy; and

WHEREAS growth in the tourism industry in the past two years has increased; and

WHEREAS Manitobans are increasingly opting to remain in Manitoba for their vacations and more Americans are choosing Manitoba as their vacation destination; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has expressed its willingness to work co-operatively with the tourism industry; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has demonstrated its commitment to foster and increase tourism in Manitoba both through the publication of a new trade journal, *The Tourism Journal of Manitoba*, and through the formation of The Manitoba Tourism Marketing Council; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba Vacationmart, to be held in Winnipeg in 1996, is designed to introduce Manitobans and those outside the province to vacation possibilities in Manitoba; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba Tourism Education Council will train Manitoba's hospitality industry employees for the Canada Games in Brandon in 1997 and the Pan Am Games in Winnipeg in 1999.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT this Assembly recognize the importance and significance of the tourism industry to Manitoba's economy; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all members of the Legislative Assembly support and encourage further tourism development in Manitoba.

Motion presented.

Mr. Sveinson: The resolution today, of course, is on tourism, and I would definitely have given that up for the important debate that was going on on the amendment to the MTS bill. It is too bad that the members opposite did not take that opportunity.

Madam Speaker, the purpose of this resolution is twofold. Firstly, it is for the Assembly to recognize the importance and significance of the tourism industry to Manitoba's economy; and, secondly, it is to ensure that the tourism industry will continue to flourish and expand as a result of further legislation.

In June of 1993, Manitoba's framework for economic growth designated tourism as one of the six sectors of emerging opportunity along with six sectors of traditional strength. The industry advisory committee was created to establish a plan for economic development in tourism. A forum was held in November of 1994 where industrial organizations were invited to attend. A strategic direction for the sector was collectively established at this time. The results of this meeting were published in the

Manitoba Tourism Strategy: A Framework for Development, released at the second tourism industry forum held in November of 1995. The over 200 tourism representatives who participated in last year's forum, entitled *Exploring the Opportunities*, developed many initiatives which clearly indicated that the people of Manitoba are interested in and committed to developing and promoting a vibrant and prosperous industry in rural Manitoba. The real test of the strategic framework success was the ability for industry and government to work together to develop strategic directions. The provincial government has helped to establish a healthy relationship with industry and has ensured the continued success of the tourism ministry in Manitoba.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I am experiencing difficulty hearing the honourable member for LaVerendrye.

Mr. Sveinson: Madam Speaker, tourism is a broad-based industry comprised of all products and services consumed by business and pleasure travellers. Various subsectors include accommodations, transportation, food and beverage, lodging and outfitters, travel and financial services, attractions and travel-oriented retail products. I am sure that all honourable members would agree that tourism is a critical and emerging sector in Manitoba. Its receipts are more than \$1 billion annually and have a projected growth in receipts of 6 percent per annum to 1997. Manitoba's \$1 billion represents approximately 3.5 percent, approximately, 23,000 full-time Manitobans are employed in the province's tourism industry. When seasonal part-time positions are considered, the number jumps to 50,000 jobs. This figure represents one in 10 Manitobans.

Manitobans contribute more than \$625 million annually to tourism by travelling within their own province. Other Canadians contribute \$280 million, and foreign visitors contribute \$135 million. Performance indicators suggest that 1995 was a very good year for tourism in Manitoba. Increases in domestic travel contributed to industry growth as Manitobans and Canadians travelled closer to home. In 1994, Manitoba was a popular place for Americans and other foreign tourists. More specifically, U.S. tourist arrivals to Manitoba in 1994 increased by 7 percent.

* (1640)

Manitoba had one of the highest growth rates in tourism from American visitors in Canada for that year. Statistics indicate the same trend occurred in 1995. Direct entries at Customs increased by 2 percent to 574,000 arrivals. According to the Canadian Tourism Research Institute estimates for 1995, domestic pleasure trips and domestic business trips in Manitoba were estimated to have increased by 3.2 percent and 3.6 percent respectively.

By examining some of the key tourism subsectors, accommodation occupancy rates have increased in Winnipeg by 7 percent to 67 percent for 1995. This survey done by Price Waterhouse ranks Winnipeg 28th out of Canadian jurisdictions surveyed. The survey also indicated that occupancy rates in rural Manitoba and Saskatchewan also increased by 7.5 percent to 59 percent.

The Winnipeg International Airport also celebrated a successful year in 1994. Passenger traffic has increased 12.5 percent. Attendance at Riding Mountain National Park exceeded above average numbers for the 1994 season. Festivals and events held across the province were also very well attended.

The Manitoba government has created many opportunities for developing a vibrant and prosperous tourist industry in rural Manitoba. Rural Manitobans would like more initiatives in identifying, developing and promoting their surrounding tourist attractions. According to the preliminary report of the Working for Value Task Force released in April 1996, rural residents have suggested the creation of a department of tourism based on the need for a higher priority to be placed on this area. This strategy would encourage more co-operation and co-ordination amongst communities and regions towards tourist promotion. As well it would create a vigorous marketing component targeted at key potential tourists such as the United States and Asia, and it would identify and co-ordinate resources and activity at all levels in support of rural tourism.

Within the last year, Madam Speaker, we have made some important first steps towards supporting the development of the tourism industry of Manitoba. Most importantly, the Department of Industry, Trade and

Tourism has funded the Tourism Industry of Manitoba Association's publication of a quarterly journal entitled the Tourism Journal. This publication provides a central vehicle for the distribution of information, and it emphasizes co-operation between industry and government.

In the areas of training and development, the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism continues to support the Manitoba Tourism Education Council. It will ensure that Manitoba's hospitality industry employees are qualified for events such as the Pan Am Games in Winnipeg in 1999. The department is working on the Pan Am Games committee. It has appointed an executive director to develop the strategy for pre and post opportunities for trade and tourism from the Pan Am Games and to ensure there is a lasting legacy of the games in both tourism and trade.

The department has initiated a co-operative marketing effort with the tourism industry through the establishment of the Tourism Marketing Council. This body has recently been appointed, which will work on developing the next marketing plan for Manitoba. We have established new partnerships with a tourism alliance for western and northern Canada and the Canadian Tourism Commission. The Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism has also introduced a tourism signage program with support from Rural Development and Highways and Transportation. This program has been established to develop policy and opportunities for tourist attractions and border-crossing signage, and it responds to calls from the tourism industry and the travelling public.

The department will also play host to regional tourism forums that will be held in early 1997 throughout Manitoba to assist in the development of regional strategies. These strategies will be incorporated into the Manitoba strategic plan for tourism. Regional forum team members will include representatives from Rural Development, Agriculture, Natural Resources, Tourism, Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, and from the private sector.

The Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism is committed to providing funding to various programs such as the tourism industry in Manitoba's reintroduction of the Manitoba Vacation Mart Showcase held on April 27 and 28 of this year. This event showcases the province's hospitality industry and promotes Manitoba's top-quality

vacation opportunities. The department also participated in the Open Skies marketing program with the Tourism Alliance for Western and Northern Canada in 1995-96 and will support this program again this year. The program is designed to promote Manitoba as a destination to tour operators in the U.S.

Lately, an interdepartmental assistant deputy ministers' committee has been established to improve regulations and legal framework for tourism. The intention of this committee is to take a global approach to addressing issues in the tourism industry and to ensure that policies and regulations are practical and are nonconfrontational with other jurisdictions. The committee will ensure that the tourism industry is strong in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, I have a strong tourism industry in my constituency. I have seven golf courses, some of which have been putting together packages for tourists from other countries and, indeed, from other provinces, other countries such as the U.S., Japan and others. These packages consist of a stop, for example, in Winnipeg where they might attend the ballet or other attractions right in Winnipeg, then off on a fishing trip or hunting trip in northern or other parts of rural Manitoba. Next possibly would be a day at Quarry Oaks, one of the finer golf courses in Manitoba or Falcon Lake or Cottonwood or Oakwood, which are all very fine golf courses, and then maybe a couple of days in the Whiteshell at one of the very beautiful lodges or wilderness cabins which in fact, through our tourism initiatives, have increased or modified or done some renovations that make these places absolutely beautiful. My wife, Milly, and I have spent a little bit of time at these places, and they are really something to experience.

The Trans-Canada East tourism group has been very active. The name itself tells you where they are, and that is running the Trans-Canada east from Winnipeg. They have done a lot of work to their establishments and have really done well in the last couple of years as far as tourists and people spending a lot of time in their campgrounds and the different tourism businesses that they have. There is a strength, determination, a really good feeling in the tourism groups out there right now. I can only say to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey) congratulations for doing the work that you have in working co-operatively and with

the groups out there. They really appreciate the work you have done. Thank you.

* (1650)

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): Madam Speaker, I want to rise today and tell a little bit about the tourism that is taking place in the Parkland, something that we are very much proud of in the Parkland area. I want to also point out that this is despite this government's backward, regressive, elitist, 18th Century approach to tourism in this province. I would like to say that there are a lot of very good things happening in the Parkland when it comes to attracting people up to our part of the world. I would like to also point out that the local folks around Dauphin and Swan River and Roblin and Russell and Ste. Rose and other areas in our Parkland Region have done a lot of good work to get people from around not only the province but from outside of the province and indeed from outside of North America.

People in Dauphin who have recently opened a bed and breakfast, the Edgar House Bed and Breakfast in Dauphin, have had people come from all over different parts of the world. Just as I looked through some of the people who have signed in at the Edgar House Bed and Breakfast, it shows that there are a lot of good things in Dauphin happening that are attracting people from around the globe.

I just want to make sure that a few things that we are doing in our part of the world get put on the record here. Of course the No. 1 thing that people hear about in Dauphin these days when it comes to tourism and having a fun time and people coming from all destinations is our Countryfest celebration that we have on the July long weekend. I would indeed encourage all members in the House to come and—

An Honourable Member: They are sold out.

Mr. Struthers: That is exactly right. The Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey) makes a very valid point. Countryfest's tickets went on sale here on November 4 and 72 hours later all the tickets were sold. People like Countryfest. They like the Dauphin area. They come up and they take part in an absolutely world-class event and they have fun in our town.

Of course, yes, even some Tories come and partake in the excitement. Yes, once they loosen up a little bit the Tories are fun too. The other event that happens in Dauphin for 31 years now, and I know that the member who actually put forward this motion, the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinsson), was actually at this event in Dauphin last year, and I want to recognize that and congratulate the member for La Verendrye for coming up and taking part in our National Ukrainian Festival, the Canadian National Ukrainian Festival, where we celebrate the Ukrainian heritage, the Ukrainian food, the culture, the traditions, the customs, the dance.

On the long weekend, on the north side of Riding Mountain, the Selo site, which my predecessor, Mr. John Plohman, did a lot of work in putting together and allowing for that site to be built nestled inside the north side of Riding Mountain, an absolutely perfect venue for events like Countryfest and the Canadian National Ukrainian Festival and of course Jesus Manifest, which takes place in the middle of July, a country gospel event well worth the trip to Dauphin to take part in.

For the first time, this summer we are going to host The Passion Play, an event that takes place in South Dakota. They went around looking for a venue in which to do their Passion Play in Canada, and it came down to Dauphin and the city of Hamilton. The folks from South Dakota who put on The Passion Play came up to Dauphin and checked out our venue, checked out the people in Dauphin and who they could get to organize, and they were so impressed that they chose us over Hamilton.

So that is a real feather in the cap for the organizers in Dauphin, a feather in the cap of the local people in Dauphin who did the work, went out and brought yet another exciting venue for the people of not just Dauphin and the region but, of course, other people in Manitoba, including the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey), if he would like to come up and see what we have to offer in Dauphin.

Of course, Madam Speaker, those are some of the bigger events that we have in the Dauphin area that take place in the summer. We do not just rely on the big events, though, to attract tourism to our area. Dauphin is one of the, probably the—I might even get some flak from members on my own side of the House here, but I am

going to be so bold as to suggest that there is no better place in the province than Dauphin to come and have a good time in the summer or in the winter.

Other members will have their chance to get up and make their cases once I am done, so I would invite them to do that, but here we are in Dauphin nestled between the Duck Mountains on the north and Riding Mountain on the south. The natural beauty of the area is something to behold, something that all Manitobans should come up and take a look at. What is this government doing to promote people to come up to, say, the Duck Mountains to view from the top of Baldy Mountain, the highest point in the province? I have been up on the tower on Baldy Mountain. I can see all over. I was there in the autumn when there were greens and oranges and reds and yellows. It was beautiful.

What is this government doing to promote that? It has come up with increases in park fees. It fines people \$66 who do not have a park permit stuck on the rearview mirror of their car. Is that good for tourism? Is that helping us in Dauphin and throughout the Parkland to promote our provincial parks at Assiniboia or at Duck Mountain or the little Manipogo Park north of Rorketon? This government should be ashamed of the way it is treating tourists in this province, and this government should start to think of ways that it could promote people using our parks rather than what they are doing in making our parks inaccessible, available only to those who can afford to go there.

Madam Speaker, in the Duck Mountains, which this government is so intent on scaring people away from, we have all kinds of work being done on the lakes, lakes such as Blue Lake, Perch Lake, Laurie Lake, Childs Lake. A good example is Perch Lake, where the Swan Valley Sport Fishing Enhancement group has restocked the lake with bass and with brown trout. Now, the Swan Valley Sport Fishing Enhancement fund, which I am a member of, proudly, which I support, which I would hope that the government would support, has to step in because the Natural Resources department is moving away from and cutting back on the amount of money it puts into restocking lakes. So I am really glad that the Swan Valley Sport Fishing Enhancement group is able to come to the Duck Mountains and work at Perch Lake to make that lake available for people to come and use and

enjoy, because this government is not helping out a whole lot.

Let us go south. Let us give the provincial government a little bit of a rest here and let us move to see what is happening at the federal park in Riding Mountain, which is just south of Dauphin. Now, in our part of the world the Intermountain Sport Fishing group at Dauphin is also working to make up the difference where this government seems to be wanting to pull back. But let us look at Riding Mountain National Park. You have Clear Lake, one of the best known lakes in Manitoba, a deep, clear, cold lake, good for fishing, beautiful beach; Audy Lake, another good destination for people in Manitoba to come to.

What is the federal government doing to promote these lakes? Again, they are kind of following along with the Conservative government here in Manitoba, increasing the fees that people need to pay to go and golf at the Clear Lake Golf Course, to get into the park to golf there or to take part in any of the lake's activities that are going on, and they are cutting back on the number of people in the park. These are those federal Liberals following the lead of this Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism's (Mr. Downey) colleague in Natural Resources by cutting back on the number of people employed within the park who can be there to help monitor such things as poaching, the number of people at the front gates who do have a role to play in keeping some kind of control on what happens in the park.

So in those two examples, one federal and one provincial, one federal park at Riding Mountain and one provincial park at Duck Mountain, we can see that each of the governments is not doing a whole lot to help encourage tourism in that part of the world. But despite that, Madam Speaker, we in the Dauphin area and throughout the Parkland continue along, and we try our best to make sure that the Dauphin area is well known. There are a lot of activities in the Dauphin area to attract people up to take part in all the activities that we have going.

In the wintertime, there is just as much fun and excitement to be had in the Dauphin area. If people are interested in snowshoeing, you could come to the Duck Mountains or the Riding Mountains, and there are oodles of trails there that you can use—all again, no thanks to the

provincial government, but all again developed by local groups who are interested in providing this kind of a service to people, groups such as the Fort Dauphin Museum and a man I mentioned here a while ago by the name of Joe Robertson, who heads a group of snowshoers every Sunday up into the Riding Mountains, cross-country skiing, trails being built by local folks, by people who are interested in having tourists actually come up to Riding Mountain and up to Duck Mountain.

* (1700)

Madam Speaker, there is a thriving, strong group in the Dauphin area who are also concerned with snowmobiling. Snowmobiling is a very quickly fast-growing sport in our area, and there are good examples of trails that have been developed throughout the Parkland area. In on this whole thing, the people of Dauphin have had the foresight to support the construction of our Parkland Recreation Complex, which I know will draw people from around the province up—

An Honourable Member: Where did you get the money to help support that?

Mr. Struthers: Well, let us talk about where the money came from to support the Parkland Recreation Complex. This government put in enough money to get a headline in the Dauphin Herald, hoping beyond all hope that we would not have the courage to go ahead and raise the bulk of that money locally. That is exactly what this government did. Despite the government's lack of commitment on this, the people of Dauphin have gone ahead and we have almost reached our target to raise the amount of money that is necessary to build this Parkland Recreation Complex. No amount of obstruction by this government is going to stop us in Dauphin from developing a tourism package that is going to be the absolute envy of all.

Madam Speaker, again, I want to look at the potential, because we know in Dauphin that locally we are doing a good job of promoting our area; we will continue to do that because we know a couple of things. First of all, I read an article not too long ago that said the two fastest growing sports in the world were: One, gardening, and I can assure you that Dauphin is no slouch when it comes to gardens; and No. 2, the article said, sport. I am just quoting from the article.

Now, the other sport that the magazine talked about was bird watching. Now if you want to go and you want to watch birds, there is no better place than in the Parklands and the Waterhen area. Members opposite someday should take a trip up to Waterhen, binoculars in hand, and go out there and start counting. Start counting those birds, I say, to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey). He can understand the importance of having tourism in a very wide-ranging, very holistic, very eco-centred way, that is the way of the future.

That is the way we in Dauphin in the Parkland intend to proceed and we will continue to offer the great tourist activities that we have in the past, and with our eye on the future, we hope to be able to attract even more people to our beautiful part of the province. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): I just wanted to say a few things about this particular resolution because I think since we are here anyhow and we are here and we know that we are supposed to be here to be debating the Manitoba Telephone System bill, all our other work having been completed we extended the session to deal with Bill 67, it is a great disappointment that everyday we make ourselves available to debate Bill 67 and everyday the opposition refuses to lay aside the work we have already completed in order to avoid their—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Wellington, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): On a point of order, I do believe that the resolution that we are discussing today is a resolution on tourism. It was brought forward by a member of the government side, and I would ask you to call the Minister of Education to order so that we can debate and discuss the resolution at hand.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Wellington, the honourable member for Wellington does indeed have a point of order. I would remind the honourable minister that debate should be relevant to the proposed resolution.

* * *

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, I was indicating that I am glad we are speaking on tourism today since we have to be here anyhow. Even though all other business of the House is technically finished and has been since November 7, I am still pleased that if we are going to be here—not being given leave to continue the debate on Bill 67 for which we are here—then I say that tourism is a good topic to fill in the hours since they will not be filled with what we should be here to do.

Point of Order

Ms. Barrett: On a point of order, Madam Speaker, I would like to ask you to call the Minister of Education to order once again. The Minister of Education is very quick to ensure that we on this side of the House obey the rules. I would like you to ask her to do the same.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I believe the honourable Minister of Education was about to start talking about the resolution, and I have already ruled previously that the minister's comments should be relevant to the proposed resolution.

* * *

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, I would be well into my remarks on tourism by now. I find it interesting to hear my words that I used to ask her to be relevant being now given back to me asking me to be relevant. I am not going to go on about that, because I do want to talk about tourism even though I would rather talk about Bill 67, which is why we are still here.

One of the factors you will find that is a very important part of tourism of course is the ability to have telecommunications access to get into resort areas and make reservations, et cetera. The whole business of telecommunications of course can be better served by having an industry that can respond quickly to the changing marketplace to make us more viable in a whole variety of areas including tourism.

It would be very nice—[interjection] Now the member, of course, who has been chastising me is now out of order herself by heckling from her seat. I do not think that I am off topic in stressing the importance of telecommunications to the tourism industry and the need to be able to provide quick and accurate service for

people at rates that are competitive. We know that CRTC controls the rates, and we should be spending a lot of time talking about this. Unfortunately, although all of us are here on our side of the House cancelling appointments, breaking appointments to be here to debate MTS. Every day we say, please, could we have leave, and every day they who want to be here to debate it say, no, we will not give leave to debate it. So I am going to say in terms of tourism that telecommunications is a very vital important part of telecommunications—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Wellington, on a point of order

Point of Order

Ms. Barrett: Madam Speaker, I would like you to again ask the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) to be on topic with tourism and also to remind the Minister of Education that it was the government that adjourned debate two days last week. Let her not talk about our unwillingness.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the same point of order, the Minister of Education.

Mrs. McIntosh: The member saying my speech is not relevant is incorrect, because telecommunications is a very vital and important part of the tourism industry. We know that, if you have fishing lodge up north and you have telephone access there or fax machines, you have, Madam Speaker, a more viable entity. We know that. They will not even talk about it, so it is going to have to come into this resolution. [interjection] It is relevant.

* (1710)

We adjourned debate because we had asked leave of the House to have debate. They said no, they will not debate, so we adjourned because there is nothing else to do. So, when her point of record on the order says that we adjourned the House, let it also be shown we adjourned the House because they would not debate the important issue we are here to do. They are cowards to talk about it. Tourism, Madam Speaker—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), I have cautioned the honourable member. The point of order initially was moving in the right direction,

but the latter comments by the honourable member for Wellington provoked debate and also were not relevant to the point of order.

I have cautioned the minister previously and would appreciate it if she would keep her comments specific to the resolution.

* * *

Mrs. McIntosh: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We know of all the wonderful things that Manitoba has done to encourage tourism. The growth in tourism, the impact on the economy in Manitoba of a viable tourism industry have been important. This government's record is exemplary in that regard.

One of the things that we have done of, course is, to ensure that long distance rates in telephones and so on are extremely good. Madam Speaker, we have done that in order to assist those in all walks of life, including tourism, to be able to compete and to survive and be viable. I think that we cannot ignore the importance of telecommunications and good competitive industry that will bring good results on the tourism industry in Manitoba. Telecommunications does impact onto all areas of life, and I think it is important that we discuss the impact of telecommunications.

On almost any resolution that comes forward before this House, telecommunications will have an impact. It is unfortunate that we cannot get on with making decisions on telecommunications so that the tourism industry, amongst others, can be made stronger and better by this government and by the people of Manitoba and by private industry which could do the job better than government. We know that CRTC, for example, will determine the rates and those rates which are public and private. So as far as tourism is concerned in Manitoba, those decisions will be made in terms of how effective we can be in communications for our fishing lodges and hunting lodges and hotels and—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Wellington, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Ms. Barrett: Madam Speaker, throughout the debate in the House today, the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker

have asked members on both sides of the House to remain relevant to the topic at hand, I being one of the ones who was called on several times. I would like you to ask once again for the Minister of Education to discuss tourism without bringing into the debate, the discussion, extraneous material. Ask her to be on topic, please.

Mrs. McIntosh: On the same point of order, Madam Speaker, I am absolutely shocked that the member for Wellington would think that telecommunications in the tourism industry is not applicable to the topic under discussion. Tourism in Manitoba without any ability to access the operators and to provide services for clients in hotels and fishing lodges and so on is absolutely pertinent, and I am horrified for her to think that it would not be to show us how little they know about the Manitoba Telephone System and what it does in Manitoba.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I recognize this is a very sensitive issue, but there have been continual points of order, identical points of order raised on several occasions during the last 11 minutes. I would ask for the co-operation of all honourable members in adhering to the rules of the House.

* * *

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, in June of 1993, Manitoba's Framework for Economic Growth designated tourism as one of six sectors of emerging opportunity. They had a meeting in November 1994 where industrial organizations were invited to attend, and a strategic direction for that sector was collectively established at that time. The results of this meeting were published in the Manitoba Tourism Strategy: A Framework for Development, released at a second tourism industry forum held in November of 1995. In terms of exploring opportunities, which they did at last year's forum, many developed initiatives that clearly indicated the people of Manitoba are interested in and committed to a vibrant and prosperous tourist industry in rural Manitoba and that certain things will be required for a vibrant and prosperous tourist industry in rural Manitoba.

Of course, we know one of the things that is really required and it is totally relevant is a strong, viable,

vibrant competitive communications industry, and that is relevant. That is absolutely relevant to this particular topic. It is unfortunate that I am here emphasizing, only able at repeated badgering from the opposition, to speak about one aspect of the telecommunications industry when we are supposed to be here to debate the whole thing, but that is beside the point.

That is beside the point, Madam Speaker, stay on topic. I am restricted only to talk about the types of things that are required in tourism, even though the only reason we are here and extending the session is because of Bill 67 which they will not debate, because I do not know why they will not. I do not know why they will not. They have run out of things to say, I guess. That is why they want to do this instead.

But they cannot run away from the fact that telecommunications will affect every aspect of life in Manitoba and that it had better be done responsibly and had better be done well and it had better be carefully, carefully, carefully—carefully—thought out instead of just knee-jerk ideological, hide-bound thinking because that is what we are seeing over there. They want to socialize everything. We know there are things government can do and should do, and things that government cannot do and should not do. We are trying to be pragmatic in these decision-makings instead of ideologically hidebound.

I am going to conclude my remarks there because clearly they are not the least bit interested in tourism over there. They are not listening; they are talking; they are heckling. They also do not want to talk about the Manitoba Telephone System. I do not know what they want to do expect spend \$10,000 of taxpayers' money every day to sit in here and play silly games instead of getting down to the business in hand which is work.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to note that the Minister of Education has blazed the trail for me in tourism, erratic though that trail might be. I presume in the next cabinet shuffle she will be the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism which may give our teachers a sigh of relief.

I am pleased to rise today to speak on this resolution because the tourism industry is indeed extremely important to the economy of this province and it certainly is to the economy of northern Manitoba. So when we talk about a \$1-billion tourist industry, it is not the only billion-dollar industry in northern Manitoba. Hydro is certainly one of those and so is mining, and I do not believe that forestry is far behind.

Now in the four northern constituencies of The Pas, Thompson, Rupertsland and Flin Flon, tourism is of great economic importance both for the citizens of northern Manitoba and indeed for all of Manitoba. The crystal clear lakes and the pristine wilderness of this region are well known. In fact, my home town of Cranberry Portage is situated just at the edge of the Canadian Shield in this very scenic region. Every year hundreds and hundreds of tourists and sightseers, hunters and anglers, mainly American but some European, some Manitobans and Canadians as well, visit the Flin Flon, Cranberry Portage, Snow Lake, Sherridon area. Many excellent lodges cater to the needs of these welcome visitors. We have a lot to offer, scenic splendour, great fishing, boating and hunting, excellent hiking and skiing trails, fine shopping and dining facilities. No wonder that tourists who visit our area once keep coming back.

Now as the member for La Verendrye has pointed out, it is important that the members of this Assembly recognize the importance and significance of tourism to the Manitoba economy, and the members should do all within their power to support and encourage further tourism development in Manitoba. Increasing fees to park users is viewed by many Manitobans, however, as a step in the wrong direction.

The member for La Verendrye makes mention of the Canada Games in Brandon in 1997 and the Pan Am Games in Winnipeg in 1999. Of course, all Manitobans rejoice at both those events because they give prominence to Manitoba and they are good for the Manitoba economy. Worthwhile though both the Pan Am Games and the Canada Games will be, they will not necessarily have a great spin-off for central and northern Manitoba. We in northern and central Manitoba hope that in all the PR, in all the glossy pamphlets extolling both the Canada and the Pan Am Games, there will be at least a mention of the tourist attraction of northern and central Manitoba. I am not suggesting that Brandon or Winnipeg lack

drawing cards for visitors or tourists, but I am suggesting that there needs to be more vigorous marketing of the wonderful tourist potential further north than the cities and the wheatfields.

* (1720)

Northerners are aware that more vigorous marketing is needed and to that end are willing to develop and stimulate tourism. They are willing to build on existing strength. We applaud the efforts of the Northwest Manitoba Futures Development Corporation centred in Lynn Lake and similar efforts by the Greenstone Futures in the Flin Flon region in promoting tourism. Equally commendable are the volunteer efforts of the Grass River Corridor Tourism Association Incorporation. This regional group was formed on October 25, 1994. The capable chairperson for this group is Mr. Jack Forsyth from Snow Lake, a distinguished northerner and the former mayor of Snow Lake. The Grass River Corridor Tourism Association, Inc., consists of the chairperson and a representative of 19 sectors in the region, representatives speaking on behalf of lodge owners, hotels, mining, forestry, chambers of commerce, trappers, NAC communities, wild rice growers, fishermen, and so on and so on. All representatives are volunteers and all communities in all sectors are represented. Each member has a vote, and 99 percent of all decisions are made via consensus.

The association held a forum in October 1995 and over 100 people attended. Northerners are interested in expanding the enormous tourist potential in the North. We need more well-paying jobs in northern Manitoba beyond the hydro jobs, the mining jobs and the forestry jobs. Tourism is the logical strength upon which northern Manitoba can diversify and expand its economy.

The members of the Grass River Corridor Tourism Association Inc. seek to diversify the economy of the region and to enhance the type of employment opportunities that are available to northern Manitobans by developing the area's potential as a tourism destination. That is their mission statement.

The region under discussion is a huge area that encompasses the Flin Flon, Sherridon, Cranberry Portage, The Pas area in the west towards Snow Lake,

Wabowden and Thompson, further east to Thicket Portage, Bird, Gillam and York Factory.

The process used by the Grass River Corridor Tourism Association Inc. is sound and straightforward. It is a process that fits well with our northern tradition. We try to be objective, we try to reach consensus, we try to cooperate even if there are differing political views or opinions in the group. Madam Speaker, I sometimes wish that southerners and city dwellers could be as accommodating and as courteous and hospitable as our northern people are.

The Grass River Corridor Tourism Association Inc. started at a logical point, namely to take an inventory of all the positives that each community or smaller area had to offer. In other words, make a list of the unique strengths upon which tourist activity could be built. The second phase is to do market studies. We know there are demands out there, demands for ecotourism, demands for consumption tourism.

We have one of the most beautiful and scenic regions of the world. There are numerous people in Canada, the United States, Europe and Japan who have the dollars and the leisure time to come to northern Manitoba for a great experience. In fact, several months ago on a flight to Flin Flon I happened to meet Mike Harris's brother-in-law. We may not have agreed upon Mike Harris's common sense revolution or common sense nightmare, whatever, but we sure as heck agreed upon the great fishing, the great scenery and the great hospitality that northern Manitoba has to offer.

I am also proud of the fact, Madam Speaker, that six of my own relatives and acquaintances from Holland are coming to northern Manitoba this May as tourists, as hunters and as fishermen. We hope it will help to open the floodgates. We would like to triple the number of tourists visiting northern Manitoba. It can only be good for the northern Manitoba economy. We need the jobs out there.

The third part of the process embarked upon by the Grass River Corridor Tourism Inc., apart from making a regional inventory and apart from assessing global tourist demands and market studies, is to encourage entrepreneurs to meet the demands.

I will give you an example. Many tourists, especially overseas tourists and especially those from Europe and Japan, also seek to meet aboriginal peoples. They are interested in aboriginal values, lifestyles and spirituality. For these tourists it is not enough to enjoy the scenery, to photograph the wildlife or to catch a trophy fish, they want a deeper human experience, and this involves talking to aboriginal elders, meeting people with different lifestyles, different cultures.

Yes, these tourists want to meet southern Manitobans, but also northern Manitobans, especially aboriginal Manitobans. For example, a tourist can now visit or stay at a teepee village in Wabowden. In the evening such a tourist can talk to elders who are willing to discuss aboriginal ideas, values and spirituality.

Madam Speaker, we know that ecotourism is the growth industry of the future. We still wish to maintain consumption tourism, hunting and fishing, but all resources are finite, so ecotourism, experiencing the land but not touching the land is the direction of the future. Northern Manitobans are committed to sustainable development.

We talk about an increased north-south flow of trade and tourism. We talk about central North American trade corridors. We talk about Manitoba's central location and, yes, we are the Keystone Province. It is logical for trade and tourism to expand further north, to flow further north. We hope that the new owners, the potential owners anyway of the northern Manitoba CN lines, that is, OmniTRAX of Denver, will do a better job of marketing northern Manitoba, especially the tourism portion of it.

An Honourable Member: From Denver?

Mr. Jennissen: Yes, they are from Denver. We would have preferred to see a Canadian company, but we will work with whomever does own that line.

Yes, there is great tourist potential along the Sherridon line, the Cranberry Portage, Pukatawagan, Lynn Lake area. There is great tourism potential along the Bay Line. That is why all members of this House should commend such grassroots organizations as the Grass River Corridor Tourism Association Inc. Associations such as this explore the diversity and the potential of northern Manitoba. They seek places where the tourist potential

can be expanded or created. Sometimes this takes strange and surprising directions, Madam Speaker. For example, in the last few years the remains of two former northwest fur trading posts were discovered, one on Lake Athapapuskow and one on Reed Lake. That will definitely hearten those amateur historians who revel in the fact that we have fur trading routes in this province. Certainly, I know that the former mayor Jack Forsyth and a friend of mine, Barry Phillips from Frontier Collegiate Institute, an amateur historian will be delighted to explore this further.

Yes, tourism can also involve amateur and professional archeologists. It can involve fossil hunters. We have some major fossil deposits along Athapap Lake on some of those lines, limestone ridges. So we need to identify the potentials, to assess the demands and to create the entrepreneurship that is willing and able in a creative manner to exploit those demands. Tourism creates jobs and we need the jobs. We need a strong tourism industry in Manitoba, especially in northern Manitoba. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Madam Speaker, I know I do not have very much time, but I would like to add a couple of words to this important topic of tourism in Manitoba. I think everyone would agree in this House that expanding tourism is good for the Manitoba economy and we as legislators, as government, will want to do everything in our power to stimulate the tourist industry to bring more dollars into the province.

Unfortunately, we have some very serious challenges in Manitoba. I suppose one of them is the weather. Unlike our cousins on the B.C. coast where it is a much more moderate temperature, we have a greater challenge in overcoming this. But I want to say that our community groups do overcome it and make use of that which exists with us. I am thinking specifically of how we challenge the winter weather through activity, particularly such as the Festival du Voyageur. The Festival du Voyageur is one of the major activities in Manitoba attracting tourists from the United States, indeed, from other parts of Canada. This is one way we can overcome the obstacle of very cold weather or what would look to be as a deterrent to many potential visitors.

Also, our community groups have met the challenge of attracting tourists here and keeping Manitobans in Manitoba to celebrate their holidays or to fulfill their holidays by activities such as Folklorama. Folklorama has become a world-class activity. It is a world-class tourist attraction, and it is one that has enriched our community. It has grown over the years and it has played a significant role.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Brandon East will have 13 minutes remaining.

The hour being 5:30 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 19, 1996

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