



Fourth Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Louise M. Dacquay
Speaker*



MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

| Member | Constituency | Political Affiliation |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 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 | Steinbach | P.C. |
| DRIEDGER, Myrna | Charleswood | P.C. |
| DYCK, Peter | Pembina | P.C. |
| ENNS, Harry, Hon. | Lakeside | P.C. |
| EVANS, Clif | Interlake | N.D.P. |
| EVANS, Leonard S. | Brandon East | N.D.P. |
| FAURSCHOU, David | Portage la Prairie | P.C. |
| 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, Hon. | Riel | P.C. |
| PENNER, Jack | Emerson | P.C. |
| PITURA, Frank, Hon. | Morris | P.C. |
| PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon. | Lac du Bonnet | P.C. |
| RADCLIFFE, Mike, Hon. | 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

Thursday, June 18, 1998

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Independent Judicial Review Committee

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of P. Carasig, D. Carasig and M. Cordova and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to advise the minister of the need to consider establishing an independent judicial review committee to report to the Legislature on ways in which our judicial system may better serve the public of Manitoba.

Winnipeg Hospitals Food Services—Privatization

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of H. Thibrt, G. Kourdi, G. Sinclair and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) to put an end to the centralization and privatization of Winnipeg hospitals food services.

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): I beg to present the petition of A. Courchene, M. Bagnulo, A. Courchene and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Health to put an end to the centralization and privatization of Winnipeg hospitals food services.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of N. Jsurre, M. Wirth, A. Silva and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Health to consider immediately cancelling the hospital food proposal and concentrate instead on delivering quality health care and using health dollars to provide contracts for private firms.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of D. Miner, B. LeBlanc, M. Antonio and others praying that the Legislative

Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Health to put an end to the centralization and privatization of Winnipeg hospitals food services.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have this afternoon twenty-nine Grade 7 students from Gimli Early/Middle Years School under the direction of Mr. John Strutnynski. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer).

Also, forty Grade 5 students from Souris School under the direction of Mr. Glen Wallmann and Ms. Theresa O'Brien. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed).

We also have eight Grades 7 to 9 students from Darwin School under the direction of Mrs. Lori Arnal. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Newman).

Also, seventeen Grade 6 students from Hamiota Elementary School under the direction of Mrs. Linda Irwin. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach).

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

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Mike Radcliffe (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, do I have permission to revert to the item on tabling of reports?

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to revert? [agreed]

Mr. Radcliffe: Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to table the Annual Report for 1997 for the Public Utilities Board.

* (1335)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Physician Resources Waiting Lists

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, we have been raising the issue of shortage of doctors in rural and northern Manitoba and in our urban centres. Family doctors, in particular, are in real demand, creating hardships for families in this province. In 1990, this government talked about moving more resources to communities; in 1993, they talked about moving more health care resources to communities, and in 1995, the Premier promised to move more resources in health care to community-based health care centres. Today at Klinik, female doctors are not seeing any new patients until January 1999; male doctors it is well into the fall of '98. At the Women's Health Clinic, the shortage is resulting in not accepting any new patients right now.

I would like to ask this Premier (Mr. Filmon): why has he broken another promise on health care here in Manitoba?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, first of all, I do not have the specifics on the cases that the member has raised here in Question Period today. If past history serves us well, one should check on the facts, and we are certainly going to do that.

One of the fundamental problems with respect to family physicians, which we have raised in this House and discussed in this House and attempted to move on, was their place within the allocations that the MMA determined on fee-for-service schedule. That particular area is now being addressed under the arbitration process. That is No. 1.

Number two, we have made some major efforts in building community clinics. The Assiniboine Clinic model was one which is now being evaluated. Madam Speaker—[interjection]—of course it is going to be evaluated. That is how we learn as to whether or not the model works, and we are working very closely to take the next stage, which is some enhancements in our community clinic models.

Let us not forget that we recruited nearly 30 new doctors this year to this province.

Pain Clinic Waiting List

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Speaker, Beatrice Mansell suffers with severe back problems. After waiting nearly seven months, she was able to see a back specialist who referred Mrs. Mansell to the pain clinic only after she was unable to get an MRI appointment because the waiting list was so long for MRI procedures. Unfortunately the waiting list at the pain clinic is some 400 people long, which will take nearly 12 months before Mrs. Mansell is able to get an appointment.

Can the Minister of Health, or perhaps the Premier (Mr. Filmon), indicate or explain why Mrs. Mansell and other Manitobans suffering with debilitating pain should have to wait for seven months to see a back specialist and then have to wait another 12 months to get an appointment at the pain clinic, all the while in debilitating pain? Is this acceptable policy and practice by this government?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I am not going to accept without checking the numbers that the member for Transcona has put before the House or the specifics of those cases.

But I can tell the member that part of the plan for the Winnipeg Regional Hospital Authority has been the amalgamation enhancement of pain clinic services. With respect to MRI, we will see an increase in MRIs in this province from one to three. They are in construction, and Manitoba Health, through the Winnipeg Hospital Authority, will be buying more time appropriately on those particular machines when they are up and operating.

Liver Disease Treatment Waiting List

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Madam Speaker, Kelly Garrioch-Hartfiel had suffered the symptoms of primary cirrhosis for about a year before she was diagnosed with the disease this past February. It was not until this week that she got an appointment

with a specialist who was only able to take a blood test and tell her that in four months he might possibly be able to see her again to determine a treatment program.

I have been informed that there are only three doctors who treat this type of liver disease, who are overworked and overbooked with patients. It appears that Ms. Garrioch-Hartfiel will wait for a year before she can even begin to receive treatment for her disease. By the time this Manitoban receives necessary treatment, it is possible that she will require a liver transplant and face yet another waiting list.

How can this government allow diagnosis and treatment for liver disease, such as primary cirrhosis, to proceed at such a snail's pace while patients like Ms. Garrioch-Hartfiel continue to suffer for endless months?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Again, Madam Speaker, my experience is, when many of these cases are checked out in detail, they do not often match the way in which they are portrayed by members opposite. My experience has been—in all of these cases where a matter is determined by a physician to be urgent and is so flagged with specialists—that their ability to access those specialists is very, very quick. So, if those particular physicians who are making the recommendations are not flagging that as urgent, that should be taken up with their general practitioner.

* (1340)

Heart Valve Replacement Surgery Waiting List

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, if the Minister of Health thinks that urgent operations or procedures are being done on an urgent basis, he is wrong. Ernie Dooley of Brandon, Manitoba, can testify to that. He had heart valve replacement surgery scheduled; he was told it would take two or three weeks back in February. It was cancelled three times and was only done three months later.

I am wondering if the minister will review the experience of Mr. Dooley, who went through a great deal of hardship. Many other Manitobans are going

through a similar hardship. Will he finally admit that people in Manitoba are getting sick and tired of the lengthening waiting lists and the rhetoric from this minister, which is doing nothing to help people like Mr. Dooley?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, the member refers to the heart program. In all the years that program has operated, heart surgery has been done on the basis determined by physicians of the urgency of the matter. We have all had constituents who have been scheduled for surgery, and a more urgent case has happened, and that is the time that the surgeon has moved that case forward. That has always been the case, and it always will be because those cases are assessed on the basis of urgency.

So the example that the member brings, I think, proves very clearly about the setting of emergency by doctors. The reason why the individual was moved back three times is because urgent cases came in and took that operating time. Those are decisions made by the physicians who run the programs.

Video Lottery Terminal Commission Chairperson's Opinion

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, there is no doubt that this government is in fact addicted to the VLT revenues. In fact, one of the things they did to try to divert some of the problems that they were having is they established a commission. Chairing that commission is a gentleman by the name of Archie Cham, who is quoted as saying in the media yesterday, and I quote: We do not see a groundswell of support for people to have VLTs removed from their communities.

Madam Speaker, this is the individual who is supposed to be leading the public discussion on this. I would suggest and would ask the Premier: is this person in a position in which he can in fact be neutral and do what is in the best interests of the communities in the province of Manitoba?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I read the same article, and I took it as an observation of fact, as opposed to an opinion.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, let me ask the Premier then: is he of the same opinion that his politically appointed chairperson is, that Manitobans do not care about this particular issue, that they do not have any concerns, that they do not want to see the reduction of the VLTs? Is that the position of this government today?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, the reason that we appointed this committee to review this matter and then approved their plan to go out for public hearings was so that we would find out just exactly what the concerns were, the intensity and the degree of the concerns. You can only do that by holding public consultations. That is precisely what is happening. Unlike the member for Inkster, I am not prepared to prejudge the outcome of those hearings.

Standing Committee Appearance

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, will the Premier, at the very least, take his political appointee and ask him to come before a standing committee at which MLAs can in fact ask him some of the questions? Because the chairperson is dead wrong on that issue. This is a serious issue. Manitobans want to be heard. This government should be allowing for a plebiscite this fall, as opposed to putting it off—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, we are treating it as a serious issue. That is why we have asked the commission to hold these hearings, unlike the member opposite who just wants to treat it as a cheap political issue.

* (1345)

Sleep Disorder Clinic Waiting List

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Speaker, I would like to table three copies of a letter from the sleep lab at St. Boniface Hospital dated March 7, 1996. Unfortunately, this patient was unable to get an appointment to this time and is going to Thunder Bay, Ontario, for a diagnosis. The main reason is that the

waiting lists are two to three years long for a diagnosis for sleep disorders.

I wrote to the minister on February 16, 1998, and I asked the minister and I will ask the minister again: what is he willing to do to reduce the serious waiting lists for sleep disorders, disorders which have a huge impact on individuals and a cost to society and which are potentially fatal? What is the Minister of Health going to do to reduce these serious waiting lists?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, there are whole hosts of issues that fit into this, the number of specialists available. There are many particular times when people want a particular service, and there are only so many people available to provide it, often because there are only so many experts in that particular field.

We also know that we do not have all the resources in the world, and the ones that we do have we attempt to target into very high areas. One can always point out where more money can be spent, but the reality is there is only so much. We have added many more millions of dollars over the last number of years despite losing over \$200 million a year from the federal government in transfer payments, which the former NDP member for St. Johns, who is now a federal critic, seems to be the only New Democrat in Manitoba who recognizes that.

Hip and Knee Replacement Surgery Waiting List

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Madam Speaker, I have a constituent in Brandon who is suffering considerable pain with her hip. In mid-February she was told that she could have perhaps a replacement operation in March, but this did not happen. In May she was told that the surgeon at Brandon General could only do two operations a month, was only allowed to do two operations a month. She was 10th on the list, and the doctor was going to take a few days holiday in the summer. The lady now believes that she will be lucky to be operated on in November.

In the meantime, as an alternative, she has contacted the Grace Hospital but cannot get an appointment with

the appropriate doctor till the end of August, and even then she was given no indication if and when an operation could take place at that hospital. My question to the minister is: this woman is suffering considerable pain and is very apprehensive of the future. Can the minister do something to help her?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, part of our plan has been to purchase an additional—and we are purchasing an additional 500 large joint replacements.

Let us remember how we found the dollars for that. We found that by closing the obstetrics facility at Grace Hospital, saving \$1.8 million annually. We did not need that service. We are down some 3,000 births a year, and we have dedicated those dollars to additional hip and knee replacements. Let us remember that the New Democrats opposed that, that the New Democrats would have preferred to spend the money on a service we did not need rather than to put it where we did need it. That is the kind of choice one has to make. We are glad we are able to make that.

With respect to the specific case of the surgeon, it may be in fact that that surgeon has a very long waiting list, but as we have indicated, we are purchasing some 500 additional surgeries a year now.

Health Care System Waiting Lists

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. Mr. Vandale of St. Boniface damaged his rotary cuff one year ago. When the pain became severe, Mr. Vandale had to wait several months for an appointment with a specialist. He was told to see another specialist and is now waiting for his appointment which is scheduled for June 26. In the meantime, when he attended the Pan Am Clinic, the doctor said that he should have received attention right away. Hopefully, he will find out on the June 26 meeting what treatment he will require, but undoubtedly that will simply place him on another waiting list.

I want to ask the Minister of Health: can he explain to Mr. Vandale and many other Manitobans why they have to wait months and months to receive serious medical condition attention?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Again, Madam Speaker, the member brings an individual case. I would certainly welcome the opportunity to look at all of the facts around that case because the experience of many individuals who have called my office or have spoken to me is that when matters are very urgent and identified so by their primary health care physician, on an urgent basis they are moved forward into the system.

* (1350)

Magnetic Resonance Imaging Waiting Lists

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Madam Speaker, Angie Shynkaruk, a constituent, a mother of a young baby, new baby, a three-year-old, suffered from serious spinal injury in November of '97. Treatments unfortunately were unsuccessful and additional neurological problems developed. By February, surgery was recommended, but before that could occur, an MRI had to be done. The earliest appointment given to Ms. Shynkaruk was July 28, 1998, seven months later. Angie, her husband and the two children packed up, drove to Grafton, North Dakota, where she received her MRI immediately. In fact, the technician who gave her the test came from Winnipeg where he could not have full-time employment.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Would the honourable member please pose her question now.

Ms. Mihychuk: Madam Speaker, my question to the Minister of Health: what does the minister have to say to Ms. Shynkaruk, who was left with the choice of not being able to pick up her baby for seven months or taking a trip to Grafton, North Dakota?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, as members opposite know, Manitoba has had one MRI at St. Boniface in which the Ministry of Health has bought a significant amount of time. Over the last while, a great effort has been made to increase the MRI capacity in the province. Health Sciences Centre will have one MRI. It is in the process of being set up, as we speak, and at St. Boniface they are replacing their current MRI with a state-of-the-art MRI and adding a second, all of which will give us the

capacity to be able to meet the growing demand for this service in the province.

Women's Hospital Bed Availability

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): What would the Minister of Health have to say to the woman who, less than 10 days ago, found herself in labour in the women's pavilion in this city, in our chief maternity ward, sitting in the waiting room, not because she was late getting there but because there was no bed for her? There was no bed in which to deliver a baby in the maternity ward of the women's pavilion. What would he have to say to that woman, Madam Speaker?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I would like the opportunity to get the facts on that particular case. There is more than enough capacity in the Winnipeg hospital system to handle births. From time to time, I am sure that they have more taking place than less, and that is part of any scheduling of facilities, but the capacity—

An Honourable Member: You do not schedule babies.

Mr. Praznik: And the member says you do not schedule babies. You are absolutely right; you do not. And you do not build a church just for Easter service and Christmas, you build it for what you generally need. It is very ironic, but the members opposite did exactly the same thing when they were in power.

Speech and Language Services Waiting Lists

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Madam Speaker, since 1991, this government has been cutting speech and language services, especially for children. Today we have waiting lists of two years. In the city of Winnipeg alone, there are over 500 children waiting for services, and the situation is the same or worse in rural and northern areas. In March of this year, 1998, over four years after we first started raising this issue in the House, the minister informed the House, and I quote: the departments of Education, Family Services and Health were working with Treasury Board to bring down these lists—and that he would inform the House about a plan before the end of this session.

Given that Lorraine Leo, who must pay for private services for her children, said when a child does not learn to communicate, they get frustrated and have behaviour problems and not addressing this issue is a fiscally irresponsible attitude on the part of government because we will pay later, can the Minister of Health indicate to the House today whether it is the Ministry of Health, his department, or Jules Benson and the Treasury Board, who refuse to invest in children in this province?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, this government spends some 34 percent of the budgetary allocation of this province for health care. We spend extremely large amounts in family services and education. In fact, I do not know if it is somewhere over two-thirds of this government's expenditure is in the area of social services, health and education. We invest a great deal. We also know that the demands for many of these services have been increasing to a very large degree, and it has been a struggle to keep up. We have put more money in a rural program—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I am sure all members would like to be able to hear the response, and I am experiencing great difficulty.

* (1355)

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, as we have indicated, particularly in a more refined way, the plan for the Winnipeg Hospital Authority and the work being done by Dr. Brian Postl in identifying those resources is now being worked through. We hope to be able to see them flow very shortly.

Speech and Language Services Waiting Lists

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, some weeks ago in this House we notified the government about the hundreds of children on waiting lists in rural Manitoba for speech and audiology assessment. Mrs. Gardiner of Clearwater has a son on one of those lists, and so she was delighted to learn of a preschool program that could help her child 10 miles away in the

Tiger Hills School Division but shocked that that division rejected her son. She now drives 180 miles every week; she pays \$65 an hour for speech therapy for her son. She says: I found it very frustrating trying to find help for my son, and I know there are a lot of people who need the help but cannot afford the \$65 an hour or the long drive for private therapy.

Could the Minister of Health tell us how long these waiting lists have to grow before those cuts to the speech therapy programs are restored?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I am not familiar with the detail of why that particular child was rejected from the program in the Tiger Hills area, but it does make the point there is a program. Why that individual was rejected, I certainly would like to investigate with my colleague the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh).

Echocardiograms Waiting Lists

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. Mr. Eugene Cherniak of Selkirk runs a risk of suffering a stroke from clotting since the atrium in his heart is not draining properly. Although it is critical that he have an echocardiogram as soon as possible, he is currently enduring a four-and-a-half-month wait for this test. Can this Minister of Health assure my constituents and others with heart conditions when they will receive this echocardiogram in a timely fashion and not run the risk of suffering strokes? Why do my constituents and other constituents across this province have to wait for an election before they get action from this government?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, there are two points to be made. As in all of these programs, the urgency of an individual patient is determined by the physicians, and the experience of many of us as MLAs when these matters have been brought to our attention is that, based on the urgency of their particular case, they are scheduled for the procedures and work that they need. That has always been the case, and the process rests with the physicians who are involved.

The second point I make, Madam Speaker, is with respect to many of these programs. They were run in a

very diffuse basis traditionally within individual institutions. The ability to get a more central control and make the kinds of alterations that are needed to ensure that we do not have long waiting lists is now in place with the regional health authorities and is being done.

Audiology Testing Waiting Lists

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health, too. Consistently I have risen in this House to advise the members on the government side that, while problems are very serious in southern Manitoba in relation to health, the problems that we experience in the North are about 10 times worse than they are in southern Manitoba. I think everybody understands that.

I have a situation from a patient in Pukatawagan who has been waiting since January. He has been referred by a doctor to go to Thompson for a hearing problem to be tested. He has been waiting since January, and finally on July 7, I am given to understand, he is finally getting his hearing problems dealt with in Thompson.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health: would he wait all that time if he had a hearing problem here in Winnipeg to see a doctor?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, we all know that the ability to recruit specialists to various parts of the province that are more remote is a difficult one and that the ability to provide the service is not a financial issue; it is one of availability of recruiting those specialists. All the reports in the world do not necessarily make it possible to recruit those specialists. I can tell the member, in the course of the last year and a half I have had the opportunity to speak to a number of physicians who have practised up North, some of whom were leaving, about the reasons why they choose not to stay.

Madam Speaker, they are always very complex. It is a very difficult part of the world and of this province to recruit to, and so we continue to attempt to recruit. That is why we made a very large effort, and we were successful in getting some nearly 30 additional physicians into the province this year. The regrettable part is the New Democrats do not even recognize that.

* (1400)

Pediatric Surgery Waiting Lists

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): To the Minister of Health. In February I wrote to the minister on behalf of a constituent, Ms. McCorrister, whose son was suffering from fusing of the skull, causing immediate risk of brain damage. After her son had been booked for surgery on more than one occasion, she showed up as scheduled for admission—that is at Children's—waited four hours and was then told that there were no beds. Only weeks later, after my letter and publicity, could her son get surgery.

My question to the minister: is it this government's policy that parents whose children need surgery must seek and obtain publicity to ensure timely operations for serious conditions?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, the case that I particularly recall, and I look to the member, was involving surgery that did take place out of province. Is this the case? It is a different case that I am thinking of. One of the experiences I share with him as an MLA, from time to time patients' conditions worsen, and they often do not make their treating physician aware enough to have them moved up on the priority list.

There is also sometimes difficulty that you have a rash of requirements for beds that again mean those most urgent have access to surgery or beds, and you cannot always control that. There will never be a capacity that can take everything into account in a hospital system. There never has been anywhere in the world and there is never likely to be, but you manage. You manage to be able to accommodate all in acceptable fashion, and the member opposite talks about 10 years of neglect. I would imagine if he went back 10 years—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Praznik: If he went back 11 years, he would find many of the same stories because of the actions of his party in government.

Betaseron Coverage Approval

Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake): Madam Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Health. We on this side of the House first raised the issue of Betaseron coverage for MS patients in 1995. Again, last December, I raised the issue relating to a constituent of mine, Mrs. Verna Hryhorchuk, who suffers from this very deadly disease. It is now seven months, and still Mrs. Hryhorchuk and others like her are waiting for treatment for this very serious illness.

Given that MS sufferers have had to wait, first for the committee process, then for the implementation and then for a doctor to return from a conference, how can this minister justify this delay that now may render some MS patients ineligible for the program because their disease has progressed too far?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I would love to be able to provide medical care without doctors, but it is not possible. The member well knows, because we have discussed these cases in great detail in Estimates, that we put in place the funding for the drug. It was \$1.7 million this year, if memory serves me correctly. The staff were hired. The nurses were trained. The initial assessments were done. I understand Dr. Auty began at the beginning of June. He was away for a period. He is back I believe on the 26th. Appointments have been scheduled and the program is underway.

The MS Clinic is the place that has the expertise with which to do this. They had two doctors. They now have one. They are in the process of recruiting others to work there. That is something that no minister or government controls, but the dollars and the support for the program have been in place since late winter, early spring.

Hepatitis C Compensation

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, victims of hepatitis C are getting sicker and poorer while they wait for compensation, and I refer to those both outside the window and those who on March 27,

1998, were promised compensation. We know that the Minister of Health has abandoned those who were infected before 1986, but I want to ask the minister today how much longer victims of hepatitis C, those on the right side of the minister's tracks, must wait for their compensation.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, what a twisting of facts the member brings to this House. Ministers across this country, indeed governments across this country, approved the program for the window group '86 to '90. It requires two things to be done. It requires the program to be negotiated with the group involved, although the member opposite would have it imposed, I am sure, on them whether they like it or not because that is the logical inference of her question. Secondly, it requires the approval of the courts.

So, Madam Speaker, if the member is suggesting that we just did a unilateral payout without going through the process or involving those people, I am sure that they would not appreciate that kind of assistance or advice. They have a role to play in it. That negotiation has to go on, and it has to have the approval of the courts.

CT Scans Waiting Lists

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Health. One of my constituents from Cranberry Portage is suffering from extreme pain in the lower back. He is unable to work, under a great deal of stress and very depressed. He has been told that, because of a long waiting list, he will have to wait four months before a scan of his lower back is possible. What does the minister suggest I tell my constituent who is even now on the verge of physical and mental collapse?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I know that the waiting lists for CT scans in—certainly with the additional resources we put down has come down considerably from the four months that the member is referencing. Perhaps it is a matter of working out where they are intending to get the scan. Those lists are coming down because of the additional resources that we have put in.

Bone Density Scans Waiting Lists

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): To the Minister of Health. Last September, this Tory government announced with great fanfare that \$76,500 would be spent on staff in order to bring down the waiting list for bone density testing. Yet, already by December, after the money was spent, there was a new waiting list of several hundred people requiring this testing. Staring at this naked fact, the Health minister admitted this was unacceptable and said: "We want to ensure that we do not have another list grow."

Yet, earlier this week, this minister again admitted to the media that more people are coming back to the list. We will be putting these resources to bringing back that list again, he said again. Question: when will this government put an end to this endless yo-yo effect and implement a comprehensive waiting list strategy as any politically responsible, responsive and accountable provincial government would do?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, any government that is going to be a responsible administration—and the history of this province has shown that some have tended to be very far from that, both in what they delivered and how they spent taxpayers' money, but it is to find the right amount of resources and to budget appropriately. One of the difficulties in that particular area is a growing demand for that service. We took care of the backlog. The list came up. There was unexpected demand. It has, as we have indicated, stabilized the list, and we are actually putting more resources in now and have been for several months to bring that list back down to where we think—and we are advised—it should be an acceptable waiting list for that particular procedure.

I answered that question actually just the other day in the House, I believe. We had the same discussion.

* (1410)

Personal Care Homes Bed Availability

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, it is very interesting listening to the minister's excuses as we went through Question Period.

In 1990, the government had a report to build 1,600 personal care home beds in Manitoba by 1996. By the government's own count, they were only at 400, and that is in Winnipeg. In fact, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) in the last election in 1995 promised those beds. One of the reasons we have these waiting lists is because they broke their promise, and they did not implement— [interjection] Why did the Premier not implement the 1990 report that recommended those beds be constructed by 1996?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's question because what it brings into context is what this province has been going through, because for many, many years in this province members opposite could care less about what was spent, put the province into a position where we were spending millions of dollars every year that we needed in health, needed in education, needed in family services, that we were sending for interest payments, and this government, being responsible, with no support from members opposite, balanced the budget for the first time in decades and ensured—

An Honourable Member: Voted against it.

Mr. Praznik: They voted against it, and they ensured—and we all knew that there would be difficulties in doing that, but the province had to go through that so we would have a future. If we had followed their course, this province would be bankrupt and we would have no health care, Madam Speaker.

Health Care System Government Initiatives

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, a new question in light of the fact that the minister failed to deal with the fact that the Premier broke his election promises in 1995.

Can the minister, who has just announced a grand scheme to have something called the central bed registry, a trauma centre at the Health Sciences Centre, and amalgamation of emergency services, explain to this House why those recommendations which came on June 26, 1991, July 1992 and July 1993, those same recommendations were not implemented for seven years and now they are promising again before another

provincial election to implement those same recommendations that have not been put in place for six years?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I can tell the member why those things did not happen as quickly as they should have. They did not happen because in the city of Winnipeg we had a diffuse system of governments, of every hospital protecting its turf and negotiating. Now, when we have the courage to do the right thing and create the regional health authority, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) does not have the courage to support the mechanisms that get the job done, and he hides and runs from that problem.

Magnetic Resonance Imaging Waiting Lists

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, a new question to the minister or the Premier (Mr. Filmon).

In light of the last answer by the minister, perhaps the minister can turn his mind to this subject and explain to the people of Manitoba, who have the longest waiting lists in ultrasounds, MRIs and CAT scans in the country—based on the minister's own briefing notes provided publicly—perhaps they can explain why imaging, which is a provincial responsibility and has got nothing to do with the hospitals' centralization, why he has a report from January 1995 and another—two reports from January 1995 that recommend the immediate purchase of a second MRI, a reduction of the CAT scans in Winnipeg, a reduction of the ultrasounds in Winnipeg, make specific recommendations to be put in place by '95-96 to reduce those waiting lists when you have not done it and you are still promising it, Madam Speaker?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, the MRIs are in the ground today. They will be opening shortly. They are being built.

The member talks about imaging. Well, it is interesting, when you look at how imaging was organized and operated, that Dr. Blake McClarty has been able to bring that down without purchasing new equipment just by reorganizing how it is delivered. What I found so troubling about the New Democratic

Party's position is they expect things to be done, but they refuse to support the tools that are necessary to do them, and they hide in the old world like the dinosaurs that they are.

Madam Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Speaker's Rulings

Madam Speaker: I have two rulings for the House.

I am ruling on a matter taken under advisement on May 14 during Question Period. The point of order arose from an answer given by the honourable First Minister (Mr. Filmon) to a question asked by the honourable Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer).

The point of order raised by the House leader for the official opposition was that the answer did not answer the question and that words spoken by the Premier should be withdrawn. Hansard shows that the First Minister said: "... we have a member opposite who clearly broke the law by revealing names of people who were on the list of the—and he does nothing about it. He is proud of it. He thinks that is a good thing, a good example to set for Manitobans."

What the First Minister said was out of order according to Beauchesne Citation 481(f). It amounts to a personal charge, and I am asking him to withdraw the comments.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I recognize that, although things may be true, they can also be unparliamentary, and so I accept your admonition and I withdraw the comment.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): A point of order, Madam Speaker, and the Premier should know this because he has had some practice in the House of withdrawing comments. The practice in this House is that withdrawals are made unequivocally.

What the minister did there was not only not withdraw the comments but indirectly put the comments back on the record. That is not acceptable to the House. That Premier should either withdraw those comments, or you should name him for breaching the rules of this House.

Madam Speaker: The honourable government House leader, on the same point of order.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, on the contrary, the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) recognized the ruling, recognized that the words uttered were deemed to be unparliamentary and withdrew them.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I will take the matter of the point of order raised by the honourable member for—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Leader of the official opposition, on a new point of order.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Yes, on a new point of order.

Just recently, Madam Speaker—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Then I will complete my ruling on the previous point of order.

As I was about to say, the point of order raised by the honourable member for Thompson I will take under advisement so that I can very carefully consult the authorities and review Hansard and bring back a ruling to the Chamber.

* * *

I have a second ruling.

The deputy opposition leader rose on a point of order on May 21 respecting the fact that the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) had entered the

Chamber while the question was being put on a motion and after the division bells had been turned off. I thank all honourable members who gave advice to me on the matter.

The issue arose in the Committee of Supply, and Speakers both in Manitoba and the Canadian House of Commons have many times ruled that committee matters should be resolved in that forum and not in the House. As Beauchesne Citation 760(3) states: committees are and must remain masters of their own procedure. Therefore I am unable to rule on the matter.

However, I understand that the honourable member for Emerson subsequently in Committee of Supply apologized for his actions and acknowledged that he should not have entered the Chamber for a vote in Committee of Supply once the bells were turned off.

* (1420)

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Hip and Knee Replacement Surgery

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Madam Speaker, Mrs. Elizabeth Jessen of Sanford has had to wait 18 months for reconstructive hip surgery which she desperately needs. While she waits, she is in extreme pain and is taking many painkillers which can have very serious deleterious side-effects, and she is in danger, frankly, of becoming addicted to these painkillers. She also may be in a wheelchair before she is even able to have her surgery.

Her doctor calls this situation atrocious and says does the doctor—who is, by the way, the only doctor in Manitoba who is authorized to perform this surgery. He has had to close his clinic in Winnipeg until he can reduce the waiting list that has grown beyond 18 months. Dr. Sekundiak has only been practising for a year and a half, and he says his staff, after a year and a half, are becoming burned out because of the intolerable situation that he and his patients and his staff have been put in by this government.

I am calling on the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik), the government, the Premier (Mr. Filmon), the Treasury Board and whoever else over there is prepared to take a look at this situation and the others that we have raised today and actually do something, instead of

blaming the doctors, the patients, a government that was last in power 10 years ago, or the gods, and will actually take some personal responsibility for the situation that is facing not only Mrs. Jessen, but hundreds and thousands of Manitobans in this province today, because this government refuses to undertake its basic responsibility, which is to provide for the health and well-being of all of its citizens.

Royal Canadian Legion Convention

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Madam Speaker, this past weekend I had the pleasure of attending the opening ceremonies of the Royal Canadian Legion's 37th Dominion Convention. As the daughter of a veteran of the Royal Canadian Air Force, attending this event was an honour for me. This was a very special event, as the very first Dominion Convention was held right here in Winnipeg. The Royal Canadian Legion has a long tradition of providing support and services to our veterans. The legion recognizes the sacrifices these veterans have made on our behalf.

Madam Speaker, Manitobans hold our veterans in the highest of regard, and we owe them a debt of honour for the freedom we enjoy as a nation today. Canada's 500,000 legionnaires are helping to carry on the fine tradition of the Royal Canadian Legion. Their work extends far beyond their military ties. The 1,600 legions across Canada are well known for supporting a wide variety of activities for Canadians young and old alike. Whether it is sponsoring a local youth team, supporting cadet camps or offering their services at community events, the men and women of the Royal Canadian Legion contribute immensely to the fabric of Canadian culture. In short, they help make Canada the best country in the world.

Madam Speaker, I am sure that all members of this House will join me in thanking members of the legion for their dedication to our nation. I hope they have enjoyed the time they have spent in Winnipeg for their convention. Thank you.

Health Care System

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, if ever there was any doubt that after 10 years of Tory

government our health care system is in neglect, we saw it earlier today when we brought to this House case after case after case of waiting lists and delays and inadequate health care. I say to the Minister of Health, we now see why he and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) were unwilling to attend a CBC forum earlier this year, because they cannot face the people of Manitoba on their record in terms of health care.

I want to say, Madam Speaker, that I want to note for the record and I want to note to the Minister of Health that virtually all of these cases have been documented in writing to the minister, and I have letters myself to the minister going back to November from last year that have remained unanswered. That is one of the reasons we have so many difficulties in our health care system. When we raise problems, the Minister of Health cannot even respond to our letters, let alone deal with the concerns.

I say, Madam Speaker, it is obvious that this government has run out of steam when it comes to health care. It is obvious that all they talk about in terms of plans is meaningless, because every time they have had plans in the past and reports, they have ignored action on that. I say to this government, after 10 years, after 10 long years, we need a government in this province that is going to reform our health care system and deal with waiting lists and patients' concerns. We need a New Democratic Party government that is committed to health care. Thank you.

National Child Benefit

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): It is a pleasure to rise today in response to yet another initiative by our province in participating to better the lives of the children in Manitoba. Madam Speaker, next month the National Child Benefit will expand the child tax benefit for all lower income families with children. This will help ensure that families with lower incomes do not face a disincentive when entering the workforce.

Our government believes that parents and families find the greatest form of social security in having a job. It is with this in mind that we are pleased to participate in this federal-provincial initiative that ensures that parents find the transition to workplace rewarding and financially beneficial.

Madam Speaker, this initiative is only one piece of the puzzle. While our province believes that we need to ensure that there is an incentive to find employment, we also realize that we need to foster an environment that ensures that jobs are available.

Manitoba is working. So today in Manitoba lower income families have a new employment incentive, and they have access to a job market that is one of the best in the country and better than it has been in over two decades. Ultimately, all Manitobans will benefit, but it will be of particular benefit to the young Manitobans, to our children, by providing families with the means of financial security, the means to healthy relationships through programs like BabyFirst, the educational tools through the EarlyStart program, and the child care resources through enhanced daycare. This government has again proven its commitment to the well-being of Manitoba's children.

Let me say, Madam Speaker, this government has proven that the old-think of the NDP does not work and that we will proceed into the future.

Video Lottery Terminals

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I did want to stand up to recognize some disappointment, I believe, that the public has with respect to the Gaming Commission. I think that the Gaming Commission—when I hear comments that the chairperson has put on the record, I would suggest that maybe we are using the wrong mechanism in order to really evaluate what the public thinks about the VLT issue and that maybe it is time that we start allowing the public to determine whether or not they want the VLTs removed from their local communities.

I am not advocating that VLTs be banned from the province. What I am advocating is a responsible government policy dealing with VLTs, and what I see is not anything near being close to being responsible to the public with respect to the VLTs. I know first-hand in the sense of in 1996—[interjection] No, I do not play them. Back in '96, I had an extensive survey done inside the constituency, and one of the questions I had asked was regarding the reallocation of VLTs, removal of VLTs, and a majority, a clear majority did support that need. That is why I am very disappointed with the

mechanisms that are currently being used today in order to deal with the issue of VLTs.

* (1430)

I would suggest to the government that they rethink the direction that they are taking the province of Manitoba on the whole issue of gambling and start focusing more on the benefits of tourism, promotion of tourism, as opposed to the revenue generation. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY (Continued)

House Business

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader):

I understand that we were considering second reading stages of some bills. My expectation is that once we get through that list this afternoon, the House would move to consideration of the concurrence motion.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 26—The Teachers' Society Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: To resume adjourned debate on second reading, on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh), Bill 26, The Teachers' Society Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Association des enseignants du Manitoba), standing in the name of the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) who has 38 minutes remaining.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, I was, I think, in the middle of expressing surprise at the co-operation of the government and teachers on this bill, because that certainly has not been the norm in the relationship. We have seen a minister who talks about real teachers and a Premier who has wanted to cut teachers' salaries by 25 percent. We have seen the decline of teacher input into curriculum and into other educational issues. We have seen a government which has ignored the advice of teachers offered over and over again on examinations and on special needs issues and particularly, more recently, on issues of technology.

Most importantly, in the minds of many teachers, of course, is Bill 72, which unilaterally intervened in collective bargaining and, in fact, took away the right to bargain collectively from the province's 12,000 teachers. So the relationship has, shall we say at the best, been a very uneasy one, and this is a government which seems to have set out to blame teachers, to attack teachers, to undervalue the contributions that teachers are making every day and under great duress, in some situations, to the education and the future of the children of this province.

At the moment, we have the minister and teachers considering the Scurfield report which although it makes some points of use I think also has a very unfortunate tendency to devalue further education, certainly playing into the kind of argument that the minister has often made about some mythical Albertan that she has heard of who has a business degree and yet teaches phys ed, and here is something which should not be rewarded. I am always interested to learn of the I assume equally mythical Albertan school division which cannot find a place in an entrepreneurial society for a teacher who has both a physical education and a business education degree, particularly as we increasingly see sport becoming as much of a business as it is physical education.

So, Madam Speaker, I could talk at great length about the other attacks that teachers have been under as a result of this government's policy, and it has now been 10 years. It has been a consistent and I believe quite deliberate policy of this government, and it is one that is counterproductive, undermines the education of children. One of the most important things that anyone will tell you is that you must have the teacher, the child, the school division and the government, the general public, pulling in the same direction on education, but this is a government which has sought I believe, quite deliberately for political purposes, to drive wedges between all of those partners in education. I do not think it has served them well, and I do not think it has served the people of Manitoba well.

So, Madam Speaker, I am interested to see the amendments to this Teachers' Society Act, and I welcome the co-operation that the government has been able to provide to the Teachers' Society. With that, we

are prepared to pass this to committee and to listen to the presentations of the public.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I, too, want to say a few words on Bill 26 before it goes to committee. As the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) has pointed out, it is always encouraging when you actually see the government working with as opposed to working against, Madam Speaker. For good reason we do have Bill 26 before us and, in part, the Manitoba Teachers' Society in working with the government and being persistent in bringing forward what are relatively positive amendments.

From what I understand, Madam Speaker, the amendments in this bill were, in fact, requested from MTS to enhance the structure of the organization. Some of the changes that this bill will entail include allowing members at large to elect the society's president rather than delegates and the elimination of the president designate and past-president post. This is done in the hopes that the Teachers' Society will be more accountable to its members as well as enhancing the democratic process within the organization.

The Teachers' Society, also, Madam Speaker, seeks to create categories of memberships, namely a special category of membership for student teachers, as an example, who are currently associate members. There are also other housekeeping provisions that are within the bill. With those few words, we are prepared to see it go to committee. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading Bill 26, The Teachers' Society Amendment Act. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 34—The Public Schools Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: To resume adjourned debate on second reading, Bill 34, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques), standing in the name of the honourable

member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen). Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? No? Leave has been denied.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): I am again glad to have the opportunity to put a few words on the record on Bill 34. This is a very short bill, and I think there are three significant purposes that it has. That is to, first of all, fix the term of office for all school trustees in Manitoba at four years, rather than the shorter provisions that have been in place. The anticipation is, and this includes the Division Scolaire Franco-Manitobaine, to have elections at the same time as the general municipal elections.

Madam Speaker, we have some concerns with that. We have expressed these in other bills in this Legislature before us this session which have also attempted to do that. Both The City of Winnipeg bill I believe has done that, and a municipal bill is also making that proposal, and our concerns are the same. They are consistent.

In the municipal bill, for example, my colleague the member for Interlake (Mr. C. Evans) and my colleague the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) made some very good points on this. I do not want to reiterate everything they said but to say that we recognize this is the same principle and that we have similar kinds of objections.

My colleague for Swan River pointed out the difficulties in some school divisions in rural Manitoba in ensuring that there are elections, that there are people who are prepared to put their name forward. At two years or three years, as has been the norm, it was possible to find people who were in effect prepared to devote the hours, the time, the travel, and all of the difficulties that go with being a school trustee. They were prepared to do that for three years, but perhaps to find people to do it for four years is going to be increasingly difficult.

In rural Manitoba, I think one has to recognize that the remuneration for work as a school trustee is very small. It is quite different than say Winnipeg No. 1 or the larger school divisions in the city of Winnipeg or Brandon. It is a very small remuneration. The duties are enormous. School trustees face their constituents every day of the year. They have to be available all of

the time, and they are dealing with issues which are very close to people's lives. They are not going to be the issues which concerned them throughout their lives, but for five, 10, 15 years, those issues of education are the most intense and the ones that most concern parents. So the school trustees are often dealing with people at very high emotional levels. As a result of the continuous cutbacks and offloading of this government in education, they have of course faced tremendously difficult issues of taxation and of trying to fund a school system, particularly in areas of diminishing population and at times of increasing cost particularly in areas of textbooks and technology.

They want to ensure that their children have an equal access to education and to education resources as do children in the city and in other provinces, so it is a difficult job. It is not well remunerated. It requires, in some divisions, many hours spent away from one's family because the travel is extensive. As we know, if you move outside of southern Manitoba, the roads are often not the condition one would wish one's family to travel on for long periods of time and certainly not repeatedly. So, Madam Speaker, for those reasons that my colleagues have outlined we do have some very serious concerns about that. We expect that the Manitoba Association of School Trustees, which has consulted its membership on this, will also be making presentations at the committee.

* (1440)

The second area that we want to draw to the House's attention is that the bill establishes an enabling section that allows a common mill rate to be created through an amalgamated school division after a three-year transition period. There is certainly value in the minister considering this issue. We are disappointed that school amalgamation has not been pursued in a way that it has been in Saskatchewan. This government, of course, set out with a stick rather than with a carrot. Not surprisingly, people resisted the stick in Manitoba. They are very attached to their rural divisions, and there was very little encouragement given to them financially or even organizationally to begin the process of amalgamation that I think most people see over the long run as being very valuable.

Saskatchewan went with a carrot. It went with money. It went with persuasion. It went with a minister who started out going to rural Saskatchewan

and talking to division after division. It took quite awhile, but it gave people confidence that the minister understood their position. After that the incentives were there. In fact, Saskatchewan has been able to reduce its school boards by about half.

Madam Speaker, this government went with a stick, the heavy-handed approach, the centralized authoritarian approach which has been so consistently the public face of this government, and they got the resistance one would have expected. They have now had to turn to the carrot. Things have been much slower. The divisions are quite understandably very suspicious of this government, very suspicious and very concerned that the amount of—I guess the size of the carrot is not very big and certainly does not meet the needs of some of the larger rural divisions which have enormous costs of transport.

So the establishment of a common mill rate, we see as something certainly the minister should be addressing, but we are concerned about what consultation will be done, where the highest rate will be used and who in fact other than the ministers will be involved in establishing such mill rates. We have some concerns about that that I believe also the Manitoba Association of School Trustees will be discussing.

Thirdly, Madam Speaker, this bill also provides for ministerial regulation of information contained in audit of supplementary reports to school boards. This continues a trend that we have seen in education legislation from this government over the past five or six years. It is a government which uses the language of decentralization but, in fact, in education matters, as in health matters, has established some very strong centralized controls. In some cases—I am speaking particularly in terms of the Minister of Education—there is I think a very authoritarian and centralizing tendency within so many aspects of the ministry. I believe also that the trustees have some concerns about that, the regulation of information contained in the audit of supplementary reports, and we look forward to some discussion from them on that.

So, Madam Speaker, we do at this stage want to draw the government's attention to those concerns, and we will look forward to the discussion at second reading on this.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I, too, want to put a few words on the record before Bill 34 going into committee.

This is one of those bills that is taking some action like bills such as Bill 36 where we see an extension from three-year terms to four-year terms. On the surface, as I have indicated in the past, it is somewhat easy to say to the public that there are going to be fewer elections. I really have not heard any dissenting information saying that we should not be going to the four years per se, but I still do have some reservations with respect to it for numerous reasons, and some of those concerns I have expressed in other bills.

But I did want to highlight that as at the very least a concern. It would have been nice to have seen somewhat more debate on that particular issue, because the biggest difference, of course, Madam Speaker, is that, generally speaking, your school divisions are, in fact, to operate in an independent fashion. They do not have the same sort of party structures, whereas in the parliamentary system you have government being held more accountable through opposition parties.

I was interested in knowing what other municipalities, for example, do, three versus four years. I would equally be interested in knowing what other school divisions across the province do. The member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) makes reference to reforms that are happening in Saskatchewan. It would be interesting to see whether or not they have gone to four years, three years, because I do not think that is a debate that has really occurred to get public feedback on. I trust and have some limited faith that, in fact, the government has done some work in that area.

Having said that, Madam Speaker, I think one of the interesting changes in it was the idea of the landed immigrant being changed to permanent resident. I much prefer the wording of permanent resident as opposed to landed immigrant. That is just kind of a personal note.

The other thing that I really want to comment on, and the member for Wolseley had made reference to it, is the common mill rate. Well, Madam Speaker, I think the government has really dropped the ball on the whole issue of amalgamation of school divisions. I

think that we could debate endlessly for the government, and the government has chosen to use its selective hearing on this particular issue and is not going to be taking any sort of tangible action to deal with the inequities that are created in the way in which we finance public education.

Madam Speaker, I really do believe that the government was right when it was in opposition when it argued for a higher percentage of financing of public education through general revenues. I believe the critic then was Clayton Manness who talked about increasing up to 80 percent through general revenues. Then you have the provincial levy, and then you have the local school board levy. The more you rely on the local school levy through the school divisions, the more you will find that inequities are, in fact, being created.

I understand why it is that they are doing the changes today for that common mill rate in order to help assist in facilitating some amalgamation, Madam Speaker, but I just do not really believe the government has addressed the whole issue in the way in which we finance public education. I think that is unfortunate, that it does not serve Manitobans well by doing that.

With those few words, Madam Speaker, we are quite prepared to see Bill 34 go into committee. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading Bill 34, The Public Schools Amendment Act. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 43—The Victims' Rights and Consequential Amendments Act

Madam Speaker: To resume adjourned debate on second reading, on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews), Bill 43 (The Victims' Rights and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur les droits des victimes et modifications corrélatives), standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?

An Honourable Member: No.

Madam Speaker: No. Leave has been denied.

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, this legislation is comprised of two main parts, as we see it. The first part is with regard to recognizing certain rights of crime victims, and the second significant part of the bill has the effect of gutting our victim compensation scheme in Manitoba, a scheme that has developed since its establishment in 1970 by the Schreyer government. I will deal with each of the parts of the bill in turn.

It was back in June of 1996 that the New Democratic Party, at its annual convention, passed a resolution supporting new rights for victims of crime, including enhanced access to information relating to investigation, charging, and criminal proceedings; access to and opportunity to discuss plea bargains with the Crown responsible; opportunity to make a victim impact statement at the sentencing hearing; information relating to sentence, release, parole and probation and any conditions attached; enhanced recognition of restitution for victims; and increased confidentiality for vulnerable victims. The party supported enshrining new victims' rights in law.

* (1450)

Subsequently, we were informed by the assistant deputy minister of Justice that the government was then looking at the idea of some recognition of rights for victims, but he said that they were looking at more of a statement than a charter. Well, Madam Speaker, we then began developing this legislation, as directed by the convention, in consultation with victims in Manitoba and based on our experiences and after hearing the concerns of victims in this province.

Then this September in the Portage la Prairie by-election our Leader was able to announce that in this session we would be bringing in a victims' bill of rights to provide a comprehensive code of rights for crime victims which was enforceable. It was interesting that, although the Minister of Justice had earlier said that—and I quote—I am not really sure if it will become actual

legislation—and that was referring to the government's ideas, he changed his mind after our announcement in September. So we certainly are pleased that the government has seen fit to follow our lead and pay attention to what we were doing and bring in this legislation, although I have something to say about the substance of that legislation.

I really should also note that the Winnipeg Free Press in an editorial on March 4, 1998, said: Manitoba New Democrats are well ahead of the Filmon government in thinking through the attention crime victims should receive from police, prosecutors and courts. Justice Minister Vic Toews is left to trot behind them, saying he long ago meant to do much the same thing. He went on to say that the victims' bill of rights and the discussion paper we released was thorough, detailed and rooted in the realities that Manitoba crime victims have encountered.

We produced, before we introduced the bill to this House, a document entitled Victim-Centred Justice for Manitobans, which we tabled a few weeks ago in the Legislature. Attached to a discussion paper there is discussion legislation, which we received a lot of feedback on, and we improved that discussion draft before introducing our bill of rights into the House. It was our hope, it was our intention, that this government would look at the substance of our victims' bill of rights, and we urge them to copy the provisions and the philosophy that is set out in that legislation. Over the last couple of decades, a victims' rights movement has developed not only in North America but elsewhere. Particularly in the United States, the victims' rights movement is very mature and has a real impact on legislative change to, in a real way, recognize the rights of crime victims and give them the place that they deserve in the justice system.

In Manitoba, we have a questionable record in dealing with victims under this government. I want to remind members that it was under New Democratic governments in this province that this province and victims in Manitoba received one of the first victim compensation schemes in the country. We received one of Canada's first child abuse victim support programs, the first provincial protocol for zero tolerance of spousal violence, Canada's first surcharge on criminals to fund victim services, Canada's first

legislated Victims' Assistance Committee, Canada's first specialized victims' assistance, the Women's Advocacy Program, Canada's first enactment of victims' rights principles, and one of Canada's first pioneers of victim impact statements. Unfortunately, that development and that recognition by New Democratic governments of the rightful role of victims in the criminal justice system began to fall by the wayside, to the point where we are on a regular basis having to bring in cases to this legislature and to the attention of the government where the rights of victims have been trampled on.

I think one of the most telling signs of this government's disrespect for victims is the fact that when auto theft in this province increased by 246 percent in just four years, this government did not do anything of any significance to deal with this challenge of auto theft, but what it did do was penalize theft victims with a \$500 deductible, regardless if the vehicle was in a locked garage or left running in the street. I think back to the last election campaign when the Premier himself announced that the government would put an extra quarter million dollars into victims' assistance by 1996. They broke that promise, Madam Speaker.

In case after case after case, we have seen problems with regard to the use of victim impact statements. This is still one of the few provinces, one of the last provinces in Canada, to have a victim impact statement program. We have seen problems of mismanagement of funds designated for victims, cuts to victims' assistance grants, lack of co-ordination, gaps in victim services, particularly outside of Winnipeg. We have seen problems with regard to plea bargains. We have seen problems with regard to the prosecution of offences and the lack of protocol and support so our prosecutors can pay attention to the needs of victims.

Madam Speaker, what we are hearing from one victim after another is that things must change and they must change quickly. It is our contention that we do not need just a step forward for victims, a leap forward is required, a revolution, if you will, of respect for victims of crime in this province. This bill does not meet that need. This bill falls far short of the standard set by our bill before this House and by the standard that, I believe, victims in Manitoba deserve and expect.

What was critical when we drafted our victims' rights bill was to ensure that the rights set out there were comprehensive, that victims would have information and to all aspects of the case that affects them. Second, it was critical that victims be given the enforceable right to participate in the prosecution of offences. That, in fact, was even recommended by the Prairie Research Associates report from December of 1996. It there specified that victim participation was important. We thought it was very important to protect victims from harm and, most importantly, that the rights set out in that act must be enforceable.

Now, how do you ensure effective enforcement, Madam Speaker? First, you have to say who is responsible for delivering on the rights that are set out in the legislation. A task, an objective, a duty has to be given to certain people; second, that task or duty has to be specific; third, there has to be a place that someone can go to when their rights are violated. In our legislation, we said there must be a crime victim investigator, someone who was specialized to deal with complaints of this matter, who understands the criminal justice system, knows who the actors are and can swiftly deal with complaints that are brought to the investigator's attention.

We also believe, and we concur with the Canadian resource centre for victims of crime, that there should be the right to go to the court to obtain redress when one's rights are violated. We also believe that job descriptions should be changed, and the Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews) directed to ensure sanctions and incentives so that officials in the justice system comply with their obligations to deliver on the rights set out in law.

* (1500)

Madam Speaker, what do we have in the legislation before us? It has been said by observers of victims' legislation that the most important right, the threshold right, is the right to know your rights. If you do not know your rights, how can you seek them; how can you request them; how can you enforce them?

This bill does not even make it mandatory for crime victims to be advised of their rights. We know how important it is for that information to be provided to

domestic violence victims. It is important that all victims of crime be given that right and that it be made mandatory.

Madam Speaker, the legislation talks about victims' entitlement to rights. The words are, and I quote: "Victims are entitled to," and then there are rights that are described. We are concerned that without the mandatory phrasing found in the word "shall," and without a person designated to provide the information and provide the rights, the legislation will not be enforceable. Even if those conditions were met, who do victims complain to under this bill when their rights are violated? They go to the same department that broke their rights in the first place. They complain to the Department of Justice. What kind of remedy and complaint mechanism is that? It is not good enough. Not only must there be an independent complaint process, there must be an appearance of an impartial complaint mechanism.

On the issue of victim participation in the case, this bill really is pathetic. I think, for example, of all of those cases where victims have come forward to complain about plea bargains. It is not always the outcome of the plea bargain, but invariably it is the lack of information. It is the lack of understanding as to why the plea bargain was entered into. I hear of cases, for example, where victims were never told about a plea bargain until after the sentence had already been handed down. That is the worst kind of case. But, Madam Speaker, the government bill does not allow for a victim to give an opinion about the plea bargain that is proposed, give any information, nor is the victim entitled by an enforceable law to an explanation about the plea bargain.

Participation in prosecutions should involve input into bail when charges are stayed, about restitution and presentence reports, about a release from custody. Why not? I keep thinking of the Bauder case. If the victim and the victim's mother there, father, had even been contacted and asked questions by the prosecution, many of the shortcomings, and in the mother's own view, the outcome at the Court of Appeal would have been different. There was wrong information as a result of the lack of victim involvement. I remember the ombudsman for crime victims in Minnesota saying that victims' rights lead to stronger cases. If you involve

the victim in the case affecting the victim, there will be better information, a more co-operative and comfortable witness. Everyone benefits. In particular, justice will benefit. The prosecution will more likely be successful.

This bill, Madam Speaker, does not even allow for an oral victim impact statement. I think of the Futch family and their desire, indeed their need, to be able to present an oral victim impact statement. We know sometimes those are accommodated, but it is the obligation of the provincial government, we believe, to do everything it can to ensure that oral victim impact statements can be presented, if a victim so chooses.

It was interesting to see in January 1998, the Canadian resource centre for victims of crime present a document entitled *Balancing the Scales*, which recommended item after item which this government has refused to put in this bill. I cite, for example, the recommendation that the rights of victims be enforceable; that all provinces remove no-cause-of-action clauses, allowing victims to sue the Crown if rights under legislation are violated; recommending that all provinces have a victims' ombudsman or advocate in place.

The report goes on and on, Madam Speaker. They talk about what kinds of powers a provincial victims' ombudsman should have, and then go on to deal with issues of victim compensation.

Well, Madam Speaker, this part of the bill is a sad disappointment, and we do not know if this bill is beyond repair. I think it may be because it is based on a philosophy different than our bill of rights. Whether the government will be open to amendment, I certainly am skeptical, given that we have already proposed and the government is aware of our legislation and had ample opportunity to adopt, in some way, the provisions that we have put forward for Manitobans.

It is interesting, I saw the minister's comments somewhere to the effect that he thought this bill of rights before the House was the strongest in Canada, if not North America, and I really thought what puffery that is. This bill pales in comparison to almost any victims' bill of rights or victims' rights law in the United States. I do not think we have to go further than the

state of Minnesota to see legislation that is way beyond this legislation. Minnesota, of course, has coupled their legislation with the crime victims' ombudsman in an office to give support to the rights set out in the legislation.

Madam Speaker, this is not a time for puffery. It is a time for meaningful action, for respect for victims of crime. It is time to open the black box of the justice system to let victims in to participate, to recognize their natural rights, to recognize their needs. I think as well, and I will say, with regard to victim impact statements, as one example, it is not only a part of the healing process that victims be able to describe, whether in written form or orally, the reality of crime, the pain, the tragedy of crime, bring to that sterile environment of the court reality, but it is important that offenders know that a crime is not simply another score in a video game, that it is not another body count in a movie, that crime produces horrible effects. It can last for generations and destroy people and communities, and, as part of the offenders' process for changing behaviour, it is important that the reality be brought to the courtroom.

* (1510)

Now, Madam Speaker, I want to move on to the other part of the bill, the main part of the bill, and that is with regard to victim compensation. There are two issues here. The first one is that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews), when introducing this bill, went on to talk about how this legislation will recognize the harm done to crime victims, went on to talk about what a great step forward this bill was for victims' rights. Yet at no time in his debate on second reading or in his press release did the minister admit that this legislation essentially guts the compensation that has been available to crime victims in Manitoba under the Criminal Injuries Compensation scheme. He did not have the courage. That, coming from a Minister of Justice, is shameful and only widens the credibility gap that he suffers.

It is interesting to hear the minister then go on to say: and I am surprised, he said, that the opposition is critical—because he alleges that while the opposition agreed to this kind of recommendation by Prairie Research Associates in their '96 report on victims, you know, Madam Speaker, this minister just digs himself

deeper. Was there not an editorial to that effect? He digs himself deeper and deeper when he is in trouble. He got caught misleading this House and Manitobans as to what was in this bill, and then he had the nerve to say that the opposition was in favour of reductions to victim compensation. When that report on victims was leaked to us and we released it to the public, as this government did not have the nerve to do that, what did we say? We said the report points to the need for the government to rebuild the justice system around the needs of victims instead of the broken promises on victim assistance and cuts to victim compensation we have seen in recent years. We went on to say: we will continue to fight the constant cuts to victim compensation. That is what we said about that report. Hardly an endorsement of a recommendation to gut victim compensation. We told them to stop it.

Indeed, Madam Speaker, last session this government had moved on the report to look at victim compensation, took that one recommendation from Prairie Research Associates to take away victim compensation from anyone who was not employed on the day of the crime. And we opposed that legislation. Unlike the government, our actions and our words are the same. But we are beginning to expect that kind of puffery, that kind of fantasizing, as I said yesterday, from the Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews) because when he cannot deal with the embarrassments that he faces, when he cannot deal with the credibility issues that he has created, he concocts, he makes up an argument.

Well, what is in this part of the bill, Madam Speaker? You have to get three pieces of legislation to work through this law and its effect: this law, the existing Criminal Injuries Compensation Act and The Workers Compensation Act. Because, of course, criminal injuries compensation in Manitoba is determined by reference to The Workers Compensation Act, which in legislation sets out detailed formulae and the duration of benefits payable. In fact, the appeal system is also under that act and under Workers Compensation. What we discovered was that important provisions in The Criminal Injuries Compensation Act are now missing, important provisions for compensation of those injured by crime. The surviving spouse's death benefit, that is, the lump sum, is taken out. Payment of retraining costs is gone as an explicit provision. Under the current legislation there is clear provision for maintaining a

child born from a rape. That is gone. They went to the effort of taking it out.

They even are going to the extent of including a provision allowing for the new director in the Department of Justice now, not in some independent body, to review, confirm, discontinue, or vary an order made under The Criminal Injuries Compensation Act. In other words, even if a crime victim appealed through all the levels of appeal under The Criminal Injuries Compensation Act and succeeded and obtained an award, the director can rescind that. The time to apply for compensation is cut in half, and of course the independence of the administration and the independence of the appeal body is taken away or certainly threatened. One level of appeal is gone, and that is the review office.

As well, benefits that were enshrined and protected in law before are now going to be set out in regulation. They are to be lowered and lowered and lowered at the discretion of the government. The formula and duration of wage loss benefits will be at the discretion of the government. Today they are set out very clearly in The Workers Compensation Act. The formula for a dependant's monthly payments, the payment of rehabilitation costs, of counselling costs, the formula for compensation for permanent impairment, even the criminal offences that give rise to a claim will be set out in regulation now.

What is very disturbing, particularly given the recommendation from Prairie Research, is that it will be up to the discretion of the government to decide on the cap of any particular benefit and the total benefits payable, even funeral expenses, Madam Speaker.

So in this part, there is a step back. Of course, in the earlier part I described regarding victims' rights, I suppose victims will take what they can. There is a limited improvement over the existing scheme, but it falls short of what we hope and expect. We believe that when it comes to the changes this government is making in the way of victims, it is looking to Prairie Research to determine the policy direction of this government, but at the same time we believe that Prairie Research was given the clear direction to look at how Victim Services in Manitoba, including victims' compensation, can be changed, but I am sure they said

to Prairie Research, make your recommendations expenditure neutral. Why else would Prairie Research say reduce your victim compensation benefits and spend the money somewhere else?

That is not a way to recognize need and deal with the needs of crime victims. I just want to, as a footnote, note for the government that Prairie Research Associates did have a comment on the \$2,000 cap that this government brought in for counselling and therapy, which of course affects mostly sexual assault victims. The report said, "to set an arbitrary limit on counselling creates a system that has no sensitivity to the needs of the victim." Indeed, the gutting of the victims' compensation scheme follows a trend by this government. Not only did they cap counselling sessions, of course last year, as I said, they got rid of benefits for those who were not working on the particular day of the injury, even though they would have a loss of earning capacity, even if they were to start work tomorrow, if they were seasonally employed. Earlier they deindexed all the benefits.

* (1520)

Now we are seeing behind the rhetoric that it is a government that has rhetoric on a regular basis about enhancing victims' rights and services and giving victims the first place in the judicial system, I think were words to that effect in the last election campaign. No, Madam Speaker, behind the rhetoric is a government that is being stingy, that is in many ways cruel and is disregarding victims.

We are prepared to see this matter proceed to committee. We hope that the government has a tall pile of amendments to improve the legislation. We hope the government has a tall pile of amendments to continue to recognize victim compensation in Manitoba, but we will see. We look forward to hearing the input of Manitobans, particularly those who have suffered not only at the hands of an offender, but at the hands of a justice system that does not recognize the rightful place of victims.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I just wanted to put a few words on the record on Bill 43.

It is indeed a very important bill. I read with interest one of the daily newspapers that had an interesting article on Bill 43 which caused a great deal of concern. Unfortunately, we do not necessarily have the same sort of resources as others in terms of trying to get some of the details, but I did do some consulting with respect to the bill. One of the things—actually what I should indicate is—generally speaking, it would appear that the bill is actually a positive bill. I want to comment on what I would have said had this bill come before the committee yesterday. That would have been something to the effect that this is in fact a large bill consisting of many small steps towards the bigger goal protecting victims' rights. Some of these steps are necessary, like informing victims of the criminal status.

The bill sets out a list of general rights for victims in the criminal justice system. It also ensures that victims have the right to free legal counsel in order to protect personal information. Also, victims will be able to have restitution requested at the earliest possible date. Victims will also be informed about the status of proceedings against the person accused of a crime, including police investigations. Victims will also be entitled to participate in a Victims' Impact Program in order to provide senior or federal, if you like, lawmakers with an account of how crimes affect victims. Further, there are provisions to ensure that the victims, as I say, are aware of the status of offenders once they are in the correctional facilities or under supervision while in the community.

I was, as a whole, fairly pleased. In fact, when we were in committee during the Justice Estimates, I went somewhat outside of the norm. I talked about that there are many ministries within the government which cause me a great deal of concern for their lack of real action. In some cases where they do take actions, Madam Speaker, it is not towards the betterment. I cited, for example, health care where there are a number of actions that are being taken, and one has to question why those actions. It would appear in many cases that it strictly has to do with the dollar as opposed to the social value, or the complete, absolute lack of action. I made reference to the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh). I talked about the Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews) and the ministers of Justice prior, and commented to the effect that the ministers of Justice prior to this particular minister, the current minister,

were very lacklustre. I did not see, outside of the drinking and driving legislation which just needed a phenomenal number of amendments—and our Paul Edwards was the one who talked about many of those amendments that it was so in need of, and, eventually, the government did bring in those amendments.

But what I found was the previous ministers of Justice had a laissez-faire attitude in dealing with it. They might have talked tough, but their actions spoke otherwise. Then what I did say is I said that this particular minister, if one could criticize, there will be a number of areas in which he can be criticized, but, Madam Speaker, I would also acknowledge that the minister has likely been more bolder than his predecessors. There are a number of pieces of legislation, and how they actually work out, the jury will still be out, but there is legislation that is there that was not being acted upon previously, and I can be very critical of the government for taking so long in bringing in the types of legislation which we have before us today.

But having said that, I make reference to that there are a few bills. When I looked at this particular bill and then I read the one news article today, it raised a lot of concern because, yes, there are some very positive things that have a lot of value to what are being talked about and to what I was able to study in Bill 43, and it deserves the support of the Chamber. Then when I read the article, red flags started popping up all over the place. When we start talking about spousal death benefits, the elimination of retraining benefits for victims who cannot go back to work—you know, my brother has told me of experiences that he has had where he has had a gun put to his head for robbery; he has had a knife put to his throat because of a robbery. These are very dramatic things, and these types of things in many cases do need to be addressed, and I was very disappointed when I read the article. The Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews) came by my chair, and I expressed the type of disappointment that I have.

What I found interesting, Madam Speaker—because I can recall the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) raised the question, I believe it was yesterday, on the victims' rights bill in which he posed the question, and I will actually quote from the member. He says, "My question to the minister is this: is the minister also

proud that the bill eliminates for victims their death benefits, retraining allowances, the clear provision for maintenance of a child born of rape and a legislated formula for benefits:?"

* (1530)

Well, I think it is a very good question and I would not question that, but I have been provided with some other information which I understand at least the caucus would have been aware of, and that was that, in fact, the NDP caucus did raise the issue internally within the department. Madam Speaker, within the department, from what I understand, this was, in fact, being taken into consideration. In fact, there was a memorandum for June 12, and in the memorandum it talks of a couple of civil servants who indicate that their office was advised that concerns that were raised were, in fact, being addressed under regulations currently being developed.

Now, there is a big difference between regulation and legislation, I will grant that, and there is no doubt about that, Madam Speaker, but when I read the article, my first response was I could not support a bill of that nature. This is not about victims' rights when you start taking away things of this nature. What was not necessarily talked about was that it was, in fact, being incorporated in regulation. I am not convinced that regulation is the best place for it. I think that the best place for it could and should possibly be in the legislation. I am interested in whether or not or what the arguments are for having it outside of the legislation. With the type of information that I would have been provided if I was in the same sort of situation as the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh), I would then have raised the issue of why you are putting it into regulation as opposed to legislation, because then this way the message is quite different.

If you believe that it should be in the legislation, then one should articulate as to why it should be in legislation as opposed to regulation, but the impression that was definitely left was that it was not going to be there, not only in legislation, but also regulation. But that was not the impression that I was given, and I think that that could cause a great deal of concern.

Had I not, for example, further requested information from the Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews) on this issue,

I thought the Minister of Justice would have been very negligent. Had the Minister of Justice not made any reference to it being in regulation, I would not have voted in favour of the bill. I would have suggested that both opposition parties should vote against this bill, but because we see it in the format of the regulation—it was interesting, the minister makes reference that he would be open to possible amendments. My plea to the Minister of Justice is that if you are not going to bring in the amendments, to give the assurances that, in fact, we will see, that we do not have to worry about what the regulations might be in the future, but that if you are not going to bring in those amendments, you better give pretty darn good rationale as to why that has to be in the format of regulations.

But the general principle of the bill is something which overall is fairly positive. It would be nice if in fact something was incorporated to ensure within the legislation that there will be compensation. As I say, I do not have the same sort of resources that other members in the Chamber have, so I cannot tell you today if in fact that is the case, that somewhere within those clauses that assurances are there, but I will look to the Minister of Justice to question his departmental officials and find out whether or not that is in fact the case, and if it is not the case, then to explain why that would not be the case, because I believe, and I would then ask the minister what harm it is to not have it put in legislation. If you want to demonstrate that you are sincere in your actions, then what harm is caused by having it incorporated in some fashion in the legislation?

I look at the government and the assurances were given that it would be put in regulation. That was given back on June 12 to at least one member of the opposition, so what would have been a good action plan, I would suggest, is to not only raise the issue during second reading with respect to concerns of taking from legislation into regulation, but also then to take it into the committee stage, because in the committee stage, then you can have more of that dialogue with the minister to try to ensure that there is an excellent understanding of exactly what is happening.

I am not sure if I am going to actually be present for the committee hearing itself, but I will be asking the

Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews) to give me the assurances with respect to what the current legislation is saying about compensation, a government's obligation for compensation, and I would expect that the Minister of Justice, whether I am there or not, will address the issue of what is going to be in the regulation so that government can be held accountable for what sort of compensation packages are going to be there.

I thought, as I said in the past, that there are a number of pieces of legislation that are dealing with justice that are here today in which the principle of them is quite supportive, recognizing the importance of crime to all Manitobans. What I have found personally is that you will find some sectors of the public who will say, well, health care is the issue. You will find others that will say education is the issue or jobs is the issue. What I find breaks every socioeconomic demographic that is out there, and it is the only issue that has as much appeal, is the issue of crime.

The public, if you raise the issue, anyone is prepared, virtually, to talk about that issue, because it touches. What people want and what people expect is to feel comfortable in the home in which they live. They want to be able to feel relatively comfortable that if there is going to be some sort of action that is taken against them that there is going to be a consequence for that action, that in fact the victim is not going to be forgotten through this whole process.

As I say, I look at the issue of crime, and in the government's past 10 years, all in all I have seen a lot of talk about let us get tough on crime. I can recall giving speeches before talking about not only there is a need to be tough on crime, but there is more of a need to get tough on some of those causes of crime. It is because of that that I got me involved at the local level.

What I have seen, because in more recent years as more and more constituents want me to make this more of an issue inside the Legislature, is to follow it more closely and to address the types of legislation or initiatives that the government is taking. But a part of doing that, equally when I was the Health critic for the Liberal Party, when the government does do something positive or takes a step in the right direction, I think that there is nothing wrong with saying that the government is doing just that, equally where government is falling to the side.

The New Democrats have talked about their task force report that they have, and there are a number of different ideas. Well, nothing prevents them from continuing to lobby on those good ideas.

* (1540)

It is the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) that often says to me that no one owns a good idea, that if we, whether it is as a government backbencher or a member of the opposition, have a good idea, why not share it? It is not a question of taking credit for it. There are initiatives that the government has taken which have followed, in my opinion, as a direct result of pressure from opposition, both the New Democrats and the Liberals. You can rest assured I will be ensuring that my constituents and as many Manitobans as possible are aware that here are the types of ideas that we have brought forward and the government has adopted.

Well, Madam Speaker, a good example of that would have been the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer), who has now put me in a little bit more of an awkward spot. He has seen the public's reaction to the mayor having two votes, and now I understand that has been amended and the mayor will not have two votes. Well, who takes credit for the idea or raising the issue with the Minister of Urban Affairs does not matter. The point is that it has been rectified. When I go to my constituents, I will indicate that I lobbied for that particular issue.

Now, the same applies to justice. When we talk about the victims' rights, I would like to think that if the government starts taking up on ideas—and a good example, if I find out that it is not legislated or there are no amendments that take out or there are no clauses that re-enforce the compensation for the victims, and as a result there are going to have to be amendments in order to take that into account, I will, at least in part, suggest that I lobbied for the government to do it—not taking full credit, knowing full well about the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) and others. What we are hoping is that common sense will prevail. If common sense in this issue does not prevail, and if there are some amendments that can be made and should be made and the government does not make those amendments, I will criticize the minister for not

making those amendments if in fact they are not rationalized. If he cannot demonstrate that there is a good reason why it is not in there, I will then criticize the government. I will tell my constituents in the next election that, if I am elected, I will guarantee, to the best of my abilities, to lobby to ensure that there are going to be victims' rights when it comes to issues such as compensation for the spouse of a murder victim. Those are the types of things that I think our electorate wants us to do as a whole.

That is the reason why, when I looked at the bill and if had I spoken to the bill yesterday, my speech would have been somewhat shorter in nature; but, because of the Question Period yesterday, because of the newspaper article, I am concerned in terms of why it is that we do not necessarily approach things in a different fashion in some circumstances. I think that this is one of them.

I am interested in knowing—and I say “some circumstances” only because I have seen information that—because I requested information that shows otherwise, that in fact there was going to be the compensation in the future for these victims. Had I not taken that specific action of trying to seek further clarification, then I would have been more inclined to suggest to individuals like the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) and others that they vote against this particular bill because it would be going against what it is that the bill's title actually is. So I am glad that I had the opportunity to seek some clarification on it, but I do appeal to the minister to seek from within the department whether or not there are clauses within the act that do in essence give the guarantee of compensation for some of those victims, that virtually all Manitobans who would have subscribed to today's paper and have read it now would be of the opinion quite possibly that there will not be any sort of compensation for some victims, and that does cause some concern. The only reason why is because as MLAs we can only go by information that is provided to us. Had there not been any information provided to the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh), I would not be critical whatsoever of his comments with respect to what has been said and recorded.

With those few words, Madam Speaker, I look forward to seeing the bill go to committee, and again I

would hope to get some sort of assurances from the Ministry of Justice with respect to that compensation component in particular. Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading of Bill 43, The Victims' Rights and Consequential Amendments Act. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 46—The Correctional Services Act

Madam Speaker: To resume adjourned debate on second reading on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews), Bill 46, The Correctional Services Act (Loi sur les services correctionnels), standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh). Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? [agreed]

Bill 51—The Cooperatives and Consequential Amendments Act

Madam Speaker: To resume adjourned debate on second reading on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Radcliffe), Bill 51, The Cooperatives and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi sur les coopératives et modifications corrélatives), standing in the name of the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway). Is there leave to permit it to stand? [agreed]

Bill 53—The Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act

Madam Speaker: To resume adjourned debate on second reading of Bill 53, The Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act (Loi sur l'apprentissage et la qualification professionnelle), standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett). Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? No. Leave has been denied.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to add my comments to Bill 53, The

Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act. I had the opportunity to talk with the members of our communities with respect to The Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act and to gain more insight into how this particular act is structured and to receive their advice and consultation with respect to this particular bill.

I must state at the beginning here that I was a product of the apprenticeship training program through my early years in the workforce and had received my apprenticeship training in the electrical field quite a number of years ago, and I will not say on the record how many years ago that is now. I must admit that it was a very good program in the way that it allowed young people and I believe still does allow many young people the opportunity to receive skills training while obtaining some form of income.

Many of the people that I worked with over my years in the four-year program that I was involved in, and at that time it had just switched from a five-year apprenticeship program down to a four-year apprenticeship program for the various trades, many of the people that I worked with at that day that were enrolled in the apprenticeship program were living on their own and of course had been employed in jobs that were paying them at a wage level which many of us at that time suspected we were not going to be content to remain at. We wanted to improve our opportunities for the future and saw that the only way we could do it was to achieve some higher level of training or education to allow us to move to a higher level of income.

*(1550)

In those days, of course, as we see much the same now, there are people that go from a certain level of income. In fact, in my particular case, as we see no doubt with apprentices these days, you take a cut in wages under the knowledge or understanding that after a period of time, and it is usually a year, that you would have an increase in your wages as you would progress through the various increments or stages of the apprenticeship training program. In our case we had six-month evaluations of our progress, and we had the opportunity to receive increases in our pay along with the passage of time and the ability to demonstrate that you had increased your proficiency with respect to your knowledge in that particular chosen trade.

At the same time, people who were enrolled in those areas had the opportunity to grow and expand their knowledge base. Of course, during our years in that Apprenticeship Program—and the employer was CN Rail in our particular plan—we had an in-house Apprenticeship Program that would allow us the opportunity to meet directly with our counsellors, our apprenticeship counsellors, who were in-plant or in-house employees themselves but had knowledge or had demonstrated proficiencies in the trades for which they were regulating or administering the Apprenticeship Program.

As a part of that Apprenticeship Program, we had two months every year which we spent at the Red River Community College receiving the formal part of our training program, and it would start off with the basic electrical knowledge for my particular trade and then would advance each year, tied more directly with the broad practical experience that we were gaining through the workplace involvement. So each year, we would have more difficult challenges placed before us with respect to our chosen trade.

So, overall, that particular program I think was a very great advantage for myself, and I know for my family, because it did provide me with the opportunity to have, as it does for so many of our people in this province who are enrolled in Apprenticeship Programs or have completed their apprenticeship training, it provides us with the opportunity to have greater knowledge and to gain a skill that is portable and at the same time gives us the opportunity to have increased income opportunities for ourselves and our families.

Madam Speaker, when the federal government withdrew from apprenticeship training or from training programs in general just a short period of time ago, we were disappointed that the federal government would take that action. It is our understanding that when they withdrew from that training involvement that they transferred a certain amount of monies to the provinces. I believe that Manitoba's share was to be spread out over three years, \$47 million, I think, in each of the first two years, and I think it is \$49 million in the third year, even though it is my understanding that transfer has now been sped up somewhat. I hope that some of the monies that would be transferred from the federal

government would be attached to the speed-up of the transfer that would take place.

I had hoped that the federal government would have remained involved in the training programs in the sense that they would be the body that would bring all of the authorities of the provinces together to develop national standards, so that people receiving training perhaps in Manitoba and wanting to relocate with their particular chosen trade to another jurisdiction or province in our country would have the same level of training and have the same level of experience and also a demonstrated proficiency in their chosen trade.

I am not so certain that is going to be the case now, although there are certain trades in our country that are part of the Red Seal Program which will be a national certification, but with the expansion of the trades that are proposed in this province there may be many of those trades through the expanded number of trades that will not be part of the Red Seal Program, for which there will be no national certification, and therefore it may become more difficult to have a balance of demonstrated trade proficiency from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. It may be a problem that Manitoba and other provinces encounter in the future as people move back and forth across our country.

I know the government through the Department of Education and Training had recognized that when the federal government made their announcement to transfer the Apprenticeship Program to the provincial governments—I believe it was in the fall of 1997, November '97, when that was going to occur—that the provinces were given some short notice that transfer would occur.

It created quite a flurry of activity I know here in Manitoba and perhaps in other jurisdictions, as well, because I believe that we were not well placed or well prepared for that transfer and that the announcement was kind of sprung on us by the federal government without too much forethought. [interjection] Why would he do that in the middle of my speech? [interjection] In the middle of my speech you would do that. Is that the way you want to do it? [interjection] Courtesy? So you have no courtesy for my speech. So my time is not important and yours is. Madam Speaker, I am appalled that the government House leader would

act in such a fashion and not recognize some common courtesy in this particular House. But, that aside, I hope he will come back and announce whatever pressing matters that he has that were so urgent at the time.

Madam Speaker, getting back to the bill at hand here, when the federal government transferred the responsibility to the provincial jurisdictions dealing with the apprenticeship and training programs, it caught the governments off guard in that this government then had to react by way of having a task force that was appointed. The task force reported some time ago, and it came back with 18 recommendations, some of which had merit, in my opinion, and there were others in that particular report that I felt that I could not support. In fact, one of the recommendations was dealing with a special operating agency, and I know the government has since rejected that recommendation. I, too, thought that it was not advisable to move in the area of special operating agencies dealing with apprenticeship training.

Madam Speaker, the government has made a commitment, so they say, that they are going to double the number of apprentices or the number of people employed or participating in apprenticeship programs over the course of the next three years and that they have invested another \$3 million into apprenticeship training. Now I am not sure if that money that they are investing there are new dollars into the apprenticeship training program or it is part of the monies that are transferred from the federal government. Perhaps the numbers that they are talking to for increased enrollments in apprenticeship are a part of the numbers that would normally have been part of the federal training program itself as well. So we will have to wait as time progresses here to see how that pans out.

There are 51 designated trades in this province. At the current time it is my understanding that those numbers of trades are going to expand and that there will be some input that will take place on the part of the Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Board that the minister will appoint, and that, as new trades training programs come on stream, of course, the numbers will increase. Currently enrollment, from my understanding, there are some 500 people that graduate a year from the apprenticeship training program and that there are some 3,000 or so people who are

registered in apprenticeship training programs through the 1,500 employers that are part of that particular training.

Now part of the recommendations that came about as a result of Bill 53 indicate that apprentices will now have to pay for their textbooks, and there will be a tuition fee that will be set by the minister, I believe, through regulation. I believe that the number we are hearing is \$200 annually for an apprentice to be enrolled in the program. Now, apprentices are somewhat different than we would consider people enrolled in university or colleges in that young people usually are the ones that are enrolled in university or colleges and quite often living at home with their parents and have access to resources. In other words, there is support from their parents while they are continuing to complete their education.

* (1600)

Apprentices quite often are different in the sense that they already have been in the workforce and have moved out from under their parents' roof and are self-sustaining. For them to enroll in an apprenticeship program, of course, they are going to have to take quite often in many cases a cut in pay to do that, which will affect their standard of living. Then to be asked to pay for their textbooks in addition to that and to have to pay for the tuition fee in addition to that can place a burden on individuals who may already be in low-pay situations. I am not sure how the minister proposes to address problems such as that, particularly where we have, and we want to encourage, involvement of First Nations people in training programs, particularly apprenticeship training programs, how that \$200 tuition fee plus books will work out because it may be a discouragement from people enrolling in apprenticeship programs. That is not something we want to see occur.

I note in the article in today's newspaper that there was some concern about people who are employed in low-income jobs not having the ability to advance, and they get quite often stay in low-income jobs. Of course, it can affect them for the rest of their lives in that they will not be able to increase their quality or standard of living as a result of being trapped in those low-paying jobs. I would hope that with the announced expansion of the Apprenticeship Training Programs that we would

want to encourage people to move into these particular higher skill areas of employment and that we would want to make some consideration available for people who are coming from these low-paying jobs or do not have the financial wherewithal to pay for the tuition fee or book costs, some consideration given to people in those areas.

It is my understanding that the average apprentice is in their mid-20s and that they no longer are resident in their parents' homes. Therefore, if you are living on your own and paying your own way or you are in a low-income job, the announcement about the tuition fee and books can be, in some cases, an onerous financial undertaking. Apprentices, as I have already stated, make sacrifices going into the apprenticeship program in that they start off at a lower wage knowing that the future would be brighter for them.

Some of the proposals in the bill that the minister has announced, and we have had a chance to talk with people who are affected by the changes in The Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act and the ATQ Board that is going to occur. The ATQ Board will establish policies and procedures for the Trades Advisory Committees. The Trades Advisory Committees, of course, will be comprised of people who will possess knowledge or experience of that particular trade or perhaps be an employer that would have those trades working for them.

It is interesting to note that in the appointment of the boards that the minister will appoint the 13 members of the new board, five from employers, five from employees, two persons representing the public interest, and the chairperson. What I cannot understand through this legislation, and perhaps the minister could clarify in committee, is how the chairperson is going to be chosen.

One would think that if the minister is moving to the ATQ Board that you would want to have the stakeholders, the employers, and employee reps that are going to be on that board, give them the ability to choose their own chairperson that would be mutually agreeable to the parties to allow them to be able to have some confidence that there is not some political involvement in this particular process of choosing the chairperson. So I leave that as a suggestion for the

minister, knowing that the minister still has the ability to appoint two persons of the public interest to represent the government's intent on the ATQ Board.

In this legislation, it indicates that each member of the Trades Qualifications Board must be knowledgeable of the trades. If you have 51 trades and you are going to be expanding the number of trades in this province over a period of time, as has been announced, and we agree with that intended direction where it is warranted, how are you going to have that particular expertise of all of those trades contained within the members of the board, the 13-member board?

So we would hope that perhaps, in regulation, the minister would indicate that there would be some way to structure in the Trades Advisory Committees or some other form of body that would possess that knowledge would be able to provide that expertise and advice to the members of the Trades Qualifications Board.

In the limits of terms that the minister references in her bill, it is interesting to note and compare the appointments dealing with the ATQ Board versus the Trades Advisory Committee board in that the limits on terms, if you are on the main apprenticeship advisory board, you are allowed to run for two terms of three years each for a total of six years, and then you must leave the board, you can no longer be appointed or serve on the board for a period of time of three years, one term, but you are allowed to go back on the board, the apprenticeship advisory board, for a further term of two terms of three years each.

But the same rules do not apply for the Trades Advisory Committee that is structured. Once you have had your time on that Trades Advisory Committee that is permitted under this legislation, which is after serving six consecutive years, a member is no longer eligible to be appointed to a further term—so I take that to mean ever, that you can no longer be appointed. So I would hope that the minister would consider some explanation as to why on the ATQ Board you can serve two terms, off one and then back on, but the same rules do not apply for the Trades Advisory Committee.

It is my understanding that there is some difficulty now getting people to serve on the TACs and that under the current structure the Apprenticeship branch

counsellors who are involved with regulating or administering those particular trades now seek out people to serve on TAC committees. Now, that may not be in the best interests of the public, as well, and perhaps the members who are representatives of those particular trades, the people from labour and the people from the employer representatives, would be the best ones to find members of the TAC to sit on the TAC body.

But that is not occurring at the current time, and I hope that that practice would change in the future, because it is, from my understanding and what I have been told, difficult to find people to serve on TAC bodies because if you are in rural Manitoba or northern Manitoba, you would have to travel some way to attend these meetings. Quite often you would have to give up not only the time away from your job, you would have loss of income in such situations. It would be more difficult to encourage people to travel to the larger centres, whether it be Brandon or Winnipeg or wherever, to attend the TAC meetings. It is not only the loss of income, but there is the travel and time factors that are involved, as well, which can discourage people from being on the TAC body. So we hope that the minister would give some consideration to wanting to have people with a commitment to remaining on TACs bringing that expertise to the body.

One of the other areas where there is some concern is with respect to the fees because it is my understanding that the Trades Advisory Committee has certain powers that will be given to them by the Apprenticeship and Trades Qualification Board, but it does not include the area of setting of fees. So I am not sure whether the TAC is going to be in a position to advise the ATQ Board with respect to fees for the chosen trades or professions, with respect to licensing or application fees, but perhaps the Trades Advisory Committees would be the ones with the closest day-to-day working relationship with people in those particular chosen trades.

One of the other problems that was identified, and I can draw it to the minister's attention, was dealing with people who would serve on Trades Advisory Committees because the Trades Advisory Committees, I believe, will be a creation of the ATQ Board and that under the current act that is in place now, under the

proposed act here, Bill 53, there can be a problem that can occur, and I would like to describe it for the minister's benefit.

Under the old act, I believe that if you were a member of the TAC and had been on that body for a period of time and then for whatever reason moved out of the province of Manitoba, or you stopped working in that particular chosen trade, or you changed your status—you went into a new business or you moved into the management structure—you could then be removed in your capacity as a member of the Trades Advisory Committee.

* (1610)

Under the new legislation that is in place, we do not see any provisions in here that would allow for members of the TAC to be removed from the Trades Advisory Committees by reasons that I have just described, whether you have stopped working in the trade, you move out of the province or you get a promotion into the management structure, so there may be a problem dealing with quorum in the future if you have several members of a TAC, for example, that would have that occur and that therefore those particular bodies will not be able to hold their duly constituted meetings and conduct their powers or use their powers that would be given to them by the Trades Qualification Board. So I identify this for the minister's attention, that there is a need to look at whether or not there needs to be some mechanism put in place to deal with people who would make changes and no longer be available to the TAC body itself.

Dealing with the decisions, dealing with the appeals, it is my understanding, and I am not 100 percent certain on this and I would need some clarification from the minister, because the director under the legislation 17(5) indicates that a director may suspend or cancel an agreement, apprenticeship agreement.

It does not indicate on whose advice that decision may be made, whether it is the Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Board or whether it is the TAC body itself and perhaps because this matter is subject to appeal and that the minister is empowered under this act, notice of appeal, the minister must within 30 days set up an appeal board to hold hearings on the decisions

or make decisions on these matters, whether or not the director himself will be called in to provide evidence or testimony or whether it will be the Trades Qualifications Board or whether it will be the TAC itself that will be providing that advice to the appeal panel or whether or not there is only going to be one side of the information that would be heard. So there is some ambiguity in this act with respect to how that process is going to take place.

It is my understanding too that in this legislation that anyone that contravenes this act is subject to the provisions of the act, in other words a fine not more than \$10,000. Although the old act provided for fines—I think it is between \$100 and \$500 and I think Alberta has \$35,000 maximum fines—this new act is going to allow for up to \$10,000 fines.

I take it then that if the minister does not appoint an appeal board within the 30 days, the minister or the government will be subject to those fines as well because there is nothing in here that says that the government is exempt from any provisions of this act if they contravene the act itself. So I hope that where appeals do come forward that they will be commenced within the required 30 days.

In the old act, of course, the minister was the final level of appeal. Under this new Bill 53, the appeal board that the minister appoints will be the final level of appeal. Conditions that can apply for appeals can be somewhat varied, but if there is not a continuation of an Apprenticeship Program or there is some breach of the terms under which the Apprenticeship Program is commenced, either by way of participation by the employee or perhaps those that are the employers under this act do not provide the necessary training or qualified tradespeople to provide the training, then of course the registry of that Apprenticeship Program can be terminated.

Another area that we have not seen any information or feedback on is correspondence, I believe, that has gone from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) on behalf of the Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. McIntosh) and the government dealing with apprentices that are enrolled in trades where you have to purchase your tools and you have, of course, travel costs that are associated. Now, it is my understanding that there are

going to be some tax provision changes that are brought about to allow people that are enrolled in apprenticeship to claim the tuition fees, but with respect to the books, that is a provision that is held under Revenue Canada and that is something that has been applied for change.

I did not see anywhere in there whether or not there is going to be some taxation provision changes made to allow apprentices to claim tools or devices that may be required to allow them to perform their trade function. So I reference that for the minister's attention. Perhaps it may be already covered under The Income Tax Act for Manitoba, but we will attempt to ask the minister that question, because we want to make sure that those apprentices that have to buy tools, particularly where they are at a time at a lower level of income at the beginning of their apprenticeship, have the ability to claim those costs against their taxable income.

We want to make sure that we get people interested in the Apprenticeship Program. We do not want to put roadblocks in their way. We want to encourage as many people as possible to participate in the training and that by making these changes and opening doors for them we will encourage more people to be involved in apprenticeship and training.

Madam Speaker, I know there are perhaps other members of this Chamber that would like to comment on Bill 53, and I look forward to members of the public, those so choosing, to comment on Bill 53 when it goes to committee hearings. Thank you for the opportunity to add my comments.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I, too, want to put a few words on the record with respect to Bill 53, an important bill. It should go to committee.

This bill is an attempt to strengthen the apprenticeship system in the province of Manitoba. It takes into account recommendations made by the Apprenticeship Task Force chaired by Mr. Vern Davis, which reported in 1997. In response to the shortage of skilled workers in Manitoba, this bill attempts to bolster the apprenticeship system through a number of means. The Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Board will be increased in size to 13 members and will play a role in steering the direction of the apprenticeship regulations.

Because of the increase in size and responsibility, an appeal board will also be introduced.

I think that is a positive thing. Appeal boards provide the other alternative for individuals or groups that feel that they have been unjustifiably treated, and I much prefer them going before an appeal board, let us say, as opposed to having to go before the committee. So I think that is quite a positive change. Obviously, it is going to be introduced.

Trades Advisory Committees will be given a mandate to advise the board on issues related to apprenticeships in their respective fields. Again, that can be a fairly positive achievement in the sense that it is important that there are avenues or vehicles in which organizations will be able to get what is the reality of the situation from different perspectives. By having advisory committees being given the mandate to advise the board on issues, I think that will make the board itself a lot more functional, and I think that is a fairly strong positive.

Also, endorsements will be introduced to ensure that workers and industries are committed to keeping individuals' skills up to date in all sorts of different professions and trades. One has got to acknowledge the need for ongoing training. I know Mrs. Sharon Carstairs often talked about learning being a lifelong experience, and that is so true because, as technology and times change, there is a need to ensure that time is set aside for individuals to be able to maintain and update and hone their skills.

There is also a part of this bill to ensure basic standards are met by tradespeople. Again, I think that this is to meet, in part, expectations that are out there, and that is the reason why we have the standards and we ensure that those standards are, in fact, being followed. It also ensures certain quality of work that has been completed.

* (1620)

This is indeed somewhat of a noble step on the part of the government. Somewhat—I do not want to give it too much credit on this. But one must ask why it remains so lethargic when it comes to the funding of four apprentice and trades education programs.

Manitoba cannot afford to be left behind. It is imperative that more programs be established to ensure that there is an adequate supply of skilled workers in this province.

There has been a shortage in many different areas that need to be addressed. I can recall a couple of years ago within the garment industry where there was, and still is today, a huge shortage of workers. When we have shortages, wherever it might be in different trades and so forth—and there are shortages today because of some of the construction that is going on, Madam Speaker—the overall, the provincial GNP, if you like, there is economic loss. There are social losses as a result. I do not think that a government can be aggressive enough to be able to address the demands that the economy puts on the province, and the province has a very significant role; not only does the province, I would ultimately argue even our national government.

That is why there was a great deal of concern when we talked about apprenticeship and the offloading of some responsibilities and this government agreeing in certain areas and us agreeing somewhat, Madam Speaker, in some of the things that were happening with the apprenticeship and labour offloading that was taken. But suffice to say, in general, Bill 53 is indeed a positive. It would be nice to see the government emphasize the importance of apprenticeship for the future of the province and in some form even to go abroad.

I can recall a conversation I had with a constituent, Madam Speaker, as an example, where she went to the local newspaper in order to get a carpenter, and because anyone can, in essence, advertise in a newspaper, there are no real qualifications, and that was being called into question. Obviously, this is a constituent who felt that they were somewhat burnt through the process. There is that saying that the consumer beware, but I think that there is a great deal of merit for government to be involved in many different areas of ensuring that we have adequately trained workforces serving a wide spectrum of the economy.

I think, in the most part, the government has not addressed that particular issue in terms of its financial requirements or obligations. I would think that even

though Bill 53, as I have indicated, is somewhat of a positive step forward, we see more and more trades being developed. I believe it is just over 50 that have been identified, and we are looking at the expansion of things such as the trades board to that 13—the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) made reference to the need to possibly expand it to a larger number, given the number of trades that are out there, and there is some merit to that. But, wherever possible, Madam Speaker, what you want to ensure happens is that you want to ensure that the Apprenticeship Board does, in fact, have an infrastructure that is below it that allows it to better serve all of its members.

I have a very good family friend actually who works within the Apprenticeship Program, and on the odd occasion I do get the opportunity to sit down and listen to some of the concerns from his perspective. It is interesting because he brings a very good perspective in the sense—and I will not say who he is, Madam Speaker, because he is somewhat critical of the government's approach with respect to apprenticeship training.

If we take a look at the jobs that are out there, the jobs that are going unfilled, I think that it is most unfortunate that we have not been keeping with the times in ensuring that we are best utilizing the talents that Manitobans have to offer. I know in the last provincial election I was in Inkster Industrial Park and we had a couple tours. There was one company that worked with steel. They had a lathe that was vacant for a good while because they could not find someone that had the skills to be able to work the machinery that was necessary.

I can recall a tour that I had of a garment factory out on Inkster Boulevard. There, there was discussion in terms of what this individual was having a difficult time with was getting an individual that could operate this specific machine that made a certain piece of clothing and the upkeep of that machine. You could relatively easily train one part of it, but the actual upkeep in understanding of the equipment is what made it so very difficult. Both of these jobs, both of the examples that I give are fairly good, decent paying jobs. Because they are left vacant, it does have, as I say, a negative impact, because if you start talking about the micro scale and you apply it to the macro scale, the impact is quite dramatic.

Even though, as I say, Bill 53 is a positive bill, I would have liked to see the government being more aggressive on the whole concept of apprenticeship training in trying to equip other Manitobans with the skills necessary in order to achieve a proper place in the workforce, therefore contributing more positively in many cases to the province.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, to speak on Bill 53?

Point of Order

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, on a point of order. On House business, I would like to do this before the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) gets going, because I do not want to do to her what I attempted to do a little while ago to the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) who was not too pleased with me. I have offered my apology to that honourable member for creating a bit of a stir while he was trying to make his contribution to the debate.

Madam Speaker, there would be a will, I believe, to waive private members' hour today.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to waive private members' hour? [agreed]

House Business

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, in order to facilitate the business remaining before this House, and there is a significant amount of work going on right now with respect to a number of bills, I believe that it would be useful to get the work done to have the Standing Committee on Law Amendments meet at 10 a.m. on Monday, June 22, to consider bills, the consideration of which has not yet been completed in the committee on Friday of this week.

* (1630)

I can go through all the numbers, but certainly these bills need to be considered, need to be referred to the Standing Committee on Law Amendments: 2, 11, 26, 34, 43, and 53. In addition, we would be referring to this committee Bills 300, 301, 302, and 303.

If necessary, and with the leave of the House, I would also announce that the Law Amendments committee would sit at 3 p.m. on Monday while the House is sitting, that is why I need the leave, and that is Monday, June 22 at 3 p.m.

Also, if necessary, that committee could carry on on Monday, June 22, at 7:30 p.m., to work on the bills before it, including Bill 35 and all of the other bills that would have been the subject of presentations today and tomorrow.

Now, I think what you need to put to the House is whether leave would be granted to allow that committee should it be necessary to sit at 3 p.m. on Monday, June 22, while the House is also sitting.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. First, I will make the announcement that the Law Amendments committee on Monday, June 22, will sit at 10 a.m. to consider bills before it, which include 2, 11, 26, 34, 43, 53, 300, 301, 302, 303 and clause-by-clause consideration of Bills 8, 10, 28, 32, 33, 38, 39, 40, 45, 54, 55.

Now, is there leave to permit the Standing Committee on Law Amendments to sit concurrently with the House on Monday, June 22, at 3 p.m.? Leave?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered. Subsequently, the Standing Committee on Law Amendments will continue to sit at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, June 22, to do clause-by-clause for Bill 35 and any other bills that are before it.

* * *

Ms. Friesen: Madam Speaker, I want to speak for a few minutes on Bill 53, which is a bill under the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh). My colleague for Transcona has spoken at length and went in great detail about this bill, so I certainly do not want to repeat what he is saying.

I do want to point out that this government has faced what in itself has called a crisis in apprenticeship over the last eight or nine years. Madam Speaker, it was clear, I think, by the early 1990s that apprenticeship

was reaching a critical situation in Manitoba, that the numbers of people in apprenticeship were declining, that the ages of apprenticeship were increasing, and that the number of trades into which apprentices were entering was decreasing. I remember I used to speak regularly in Estimates to then Minister of Education, the member for Fort Garry, when she was Minister of Education and Training, asking about the inclusion of training programs into cultural agreements and the necessity of ensuring that Education and Training be part of cultural industries.

I note that the government has not done that, although it has continued some of the cultural industries agreement, but the training element has not been there and so, not unnaturally, very easy to predict, we are actually facing a shortage in the film industry in Winnipeg at a time when it could have been expanded. The very clear example of British Columbia including 20 new trades in the film industry alone is a very interesting and important example to us. We could have adopted it some years ago, but we did not. So when the federal government—and I am surprised that the previous speaker did not speak about the federal withdrawal from apprenticeship; it would have been most appropriate to have heard his comments upon it.

When the federal Liberal government withdrew from apprenticeship most recently, it did so in a very hurried manner. It did so with very little advance notice to the provinces, and indeed, once it had begun the withdrawal, it then speeded it up. So the government here in Manitoba was faced with a crisis, and indeed, in Freedom of Information, I have just received documents of a presentation that was done to the business advisory council that this government has formed. There the assistant deputy minister, or the deputy minister rather, has presented information referring to the crisis in apprenticeship, and it was. I seemed to me that for a year and a half the provincial government was literally frozen. It did not know what to do.

Finally, it appointed a review committee, as other provinces had done before, and the review committee, of course, given the nature of this government, had no representatives in the Manitoba Federation of Labour. Why on earth should we have expected that the Tory government in Manitoba would have appointed to a review committee on labour management issues

anybody from the Manitoba Federation of Labour, that which represents over 80,000 workers in the province? They did not, of course.

The review, however, did report. Some of its recommendations I am pleased that the government has accepted; some of them I am pleased that they have rejected. I think the proposal for a special operating agency at a much greater arm's-length distance from government we would have had some serious concerns about, but, fortunately, they rejected that.

There is some element in this bill, and I think it is one of the reasons it is receiving general support amongst the people that I have talked to, not support in every detail, but general support, is that it does lead in the direction of greater co-operation between business and industry and labour. That really has to be the heart of any Apprenticeship Program which works. We hope that the conditions which are being set in this bill will enable that to take place.

It is also important, I think, and I am not sure how this bill is going to be interpreted in that sense, but apprenticeship is a very old system and is one which depends upon the transfer of knowledge from journeyman to apprentice. It is one of the few areas in life where labour has control over education and the transfers of skills, and I think we want to make sure that that sense, in a modern context, is retained. So we are hopeful about the new system and the new principles that are being applied to the selection of the board or at least the appointment of the board. There does seem to be a greater opportunity for that kind of co-operation there.

We have some very serious concerns about the charging of tuition fees. Many of the apprentices in Manitoba are age 27 or older. This is also the case in some other provinces as well, but these are people with families, often people who are making a sacrifice in terms of wages already to enter into an apprenticeship system and for whom tuition fees of whatever size may simply not be possible. There are those, of course, who would not want to take on the student loans. I think we are now averaging in student loans in Manitoba \$18,000 on average at graduation, and that is an enormous amount for anybody in post-secondary education to take on. That we should now actually be

looking at as a baseline, because it is going to increase. That is where we are now and that is where we are now with people coming through the system who were there in the time of low fees, their first couple of years at relatively low fees. The rapid increases of the last couple of years are now beginning to show themselves and will increase those numbers, I think, to a considerable extent.

So tuition fees are a concern for us. These are older students. We do not know yet, although I understand the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) have written letters on this, how these will be applied in terms of a student tax credit, and we must remember that for apprentices as well, it is not just tuition fees, it is not just the price of books for which we look forward to some relief from the federal government, but it is also the question of tools. Tools are enormously expensive. Even in a trade such as barbering and hairdressing, where you would think that the tools, relatively small, portable, et cetera, would be affordable, in fact good scissors cost upward of \$200 and \$300 in some cases, and this adds, of course, to the tuition fees. So we have concerns about this.

* (1640)

That is a structural change, and an important one, and we also view this in the context of the withdrawal of the federal government, which has meant that the mobility of labour through national standards in apprenticeship is not as it might have been. Certainly the Red Seal Programs will be retained, and we certainly hope that is a long-term retention. You never know with the federal government and post-secondary education or indeed with the provincial government and post-secondary education, but in this case, there is certainly a lot of responsibility and blame that has to fall upon the federal government. So we would like to see some move by the board and by the trade Apprenticeship Boards, committees which are created under this bill that they exert pressure for an expansion of federal standards and that we do all that we can in Manitoba to expand the mobility of labour through national standards and national skills.

We notice, and my colleague from Transcona has already spoken on this, that the appeal mechanism is

changed. We will have some questions for the minister about that at committee, and we notice particularly that the regulations are not to be made by the minister and hence passed through cabinet and published. They are to be made by the board for the most part, not entirely, but the majority of them, and in very crucial areas on licensing will be made by this board. What this means, of course, is they will not be as easily available to the public. They will be subject to perhaps easier changes than they would be if they had to go to cabinet, but the absence of a readily available public account of that, I think, is quite significant.

It is an area that the government has been moving into in many other bills. It is one where we register our objection. We think that this is a diminution of democratic principles and we think that public accountability, the public record, has to be important here, and we will be reiterating that to the government at committee time.

I notice, finally, one other area of responsibility that has been allocated to this board is to advise the minister on skills required in Manitoba. That seems to me an enormous responsibility. It is one of course we have been raising questions about in the Legislature in the last week. We went back to the Mauro report, we looked at the Roblin report, we looked at all the opportunities the government has been given to create advisory bodies to advise them on the match between post-secondary education and training and the skills that would be required in Manitoba. Mr. Mauro, very early in the 1990s, gave the government some very specific recommendations on this. They ignored them.

The next few years were taken up with ministers dancing around the federal Labour Force Development Board. Over and over again I asked minister after minister about that issue. Where were the labour development boards for Manitoba, the ones that would have brought together labour and business and industry and education? Manitoba went to meeting after meeting and never ever formed a labour force development board in Manitoba. So now, as part of the responsibilities of this board, they are to be given an enormous responsibility, and it is my impression, Madam Speaker, that they do not have the staff to do that and it certainly is something which we will be asking the minister about at the committee.

We will want to know whether this will take the form of an annual report, whether it will be a report every other year, what it will be based upon, where the research is going to come from this and how the minister will be making this advice public.

It is an enormous responsibility. It is certainly one that is much demanded by Manitoba. The government should have been addressing it over 10 years. Now, after 10 years in office and when employers in Manitoba are reporting skill shortages, the government slides it into a bill which essentially deals with apprenticeship and adds it as an additional responsibility to a board which already has very large responsibilities in an area of post-secondary education.

So Madam Speaker, we are prepared to pass this bill to committee. I know that there is general support for the general direction that this legislation is going in. There are areas of serious concern for a number of specific areas. It may be that we should be looking at some amendments to this bill in committee. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading, Bill 53, The Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Committee Changes

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments for Monday, June 22, be amended as follows: the member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh) for the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik), the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer) for the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed), and the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson) for the member for Morris (Mr. Pitura).

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Glen Findlay (Acting Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Urban

Affairs (Mr. Reimer), that Madam Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Consideration of Concurrence Motion

Mr. Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): The Committee of Supply has before it for our consideration a motion occurring in all Supply resolutions relating to the Estimates of expenditure for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1999. When the committee last met, the question had been posed by the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen). We are moving now to Mines.

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Mr. Chairman, I do not intend to be very long, but I did want to ask a few questions on the situation at Leaf Rapids, Lynn Lake, in that mining district.

In fact, tomorrow there is a celebration of the 25 years of the Ruttan mine, which has provided livelihood to the miners and indirectly to the whole business community and actually created the community of Leaf Rapids, a community that has thrived for 25 years but unfortunately has been given a sentence of only three years remaining in known reserves. This is a situation that must be directed immediate attention, in our opinion, and my questions will surround what strategies the government intends to take now that being a silent partner, as the minister has suggested in other forums, is apparently not sufficient for this mining district, which is in a significant crisis.

* (1650)

Any type of exploration will take a lead time of three to four years before we can look to the development and the extraction of ore from deposits that we are fairly certain of. If that is not going to be the intention of the government, then I would ask them what evidence, what geological evidence, there is to indicate that the reserves have been depleted in that region.

So my first question to the minister is related to the government's own policy. The government's policy

indicates that they will create incentives and initiatives for mining communities, mining districts, that are facing pending closure or depleted resources. Clearly Leaf Rapids falls into this situation and is in a desperate crisis right now. This government needs to become interventionist, needs to take action now, and it would be an appropriate time to make those commitments as we look at the past 25 years and, hopefully, to developing 25 more years for the future. So I ask the minister how he can justify breaking the government's own policy of not providing specific initiatives for the Leaf Rapids area.

Hon. David Newman (Minister of Energy and Mines): The most helpful answer to the question being asked is to go back to what we have discussed many times in committee, and that is the proactive approach is the favourite approach by our government in relation to addressing the kinds of challenges that face Leaf Rapids. We did not use the description, silent partner, lightly. We are there to listen to the community with the kinds of ideas that they might have to address this concern in partnership with us. That is the kind of challenge that we have put out to the communities of the North through, I might say, the critic for the official opposition, the honourable member for St. James, and directly in conversations and in responses to communications we get.

We are encouraging Leaf Rapids to come up with the kinds of approach they would like to take with us. My department has been challenged to involve the northern mining communities, the traditional communities that are in the state that Leaf Rapids is in—that is, with an uncertain future—has been challenged to work with them and involve them more in things like the mining conferences that take place to generate capacities for them to promote themselves from their perspective as a mining community.

Other than these kinds of special community-driven approaches in partnership with the department, we of course have continued involvement in the MEAP programs that have already been committed to. I certainly agree that many times this does not result in a mine emerging until some years after the exploration begins, but I am very pleased to say that there is evidence that does not sometimes take that long, because today it was announced by Canmine that they

have proposed to build Manitoba's next new mine, a \$20-million Maskwa nickel project to create 100 jobs in the eastern part of the province near Bird River, which is south of Bissett and about 150 kilometres northeast of Winnipeg. The commencement of construction is proposed for the spring of 1999 with mill commissioning during the last quarter of 2000 planned.

A plan has actually been filed, a proposal with Environment Manitoba, to construct a 1,365 metric tonne per day nickel-copper mining and milling development on the Maskwa property. So these things do happen. That was a beneficiary of programs put forward by this government, and that kind of thing can happen in other areas of the province.

The other aspect is there is continued geological programming in the traditional mining areas of the province, and this sort of programming has allocated approximately \$1.7 million for direct expenditures on field geology, and Lynn Lake and Leaf Rapids have a portion of that funding. I might say, these decisions as to where funding goes are the product of—as the honourable member knows—consultation with and advice from the Mining Association of Manitoba and its members and the industry generally.

The focus is on those sorts of approaches. We look forward to working closely with Leaf Rapids, with their ideas, just as we have been doing with Lynn Lake. We have funded through the Mining Reserve, as the member knows, an economic development officer there. We will be announcing support for another economic development program there within the next two weeks. We also have still under consideration the idea, which I give credit to the honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) for, but we started the program suggesting a credit union involvement in Lynn Lake. By working together with the honourable member for Flin Flon, we think something might be able to be done in that respect, and we continue to work on that.

Leaf Rapids we encourage to follow that example and the honourable member for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk) to follow that example of working together on these kinds of issues. I am sure something might emerge.

Ms. Mihychuk: I would like to ask the Minister of Mines if he would reconsider the allocation of geoscience resources that he is responsible for, and that is the staff of the Mines Branch, Geological Services branch, redirect those resources in a significant way into the Leaf Rapids area.

During the Estimates period we discovered that less than 1 percent of the department's resources were going to be working in the Leaf Rapids area. Mr. Chairman, this is totally unacceptable. This community is not going to have a future in the mineral sector unless we do some major investment in exploration right now. So I am asking the minister: will he intervene in the plans of the department, ensure that there is a significant commitment of resources, geoscience personnel, that are going to be conducting full field seasons or the equivalent in the Leaf Rapids-Lynn Lake mining belt?

Mr. Newman: The breakdown of the expenditures, the \$1.7 million that I mentioned on field geology, is that 22.6 percent is directed at the Flin Flon-Snow Lake area; the Thompson nickel belt 20.6 percent; Northern Superior 37.5 percent; Bissett region 2.7 percent; and south central Manitoba 16.1 percent. Indeed the Lynn Lake-Leaf Rapids percentage, according to my understanding, is less than 1 percent and is about .5 percent of that. I have asked my department to indicate why that is the case and why there has not been a redirection in those areas.

* (1700)

My understanding is that there is a mapping cycle, and the focus is on the areas which are receiving most heavy expenditures. There is a beginning of an initiation for new programming in the Lynn Lake, Leaf Rapids, and Bissett areas as the cycle turns. The department is in the process of evaluating what could be done to upgrade the level of knowledge in these two camps, but they have advised me at this point that full-scale implementation could not occur until after ongoing program commitments are completed.

The possible actions in the Lynn Lake region would include a reanalysis of existing data using new scientific techniques in an attempt to find new insights into base metal potential for the belt. This approach was highly successful in the Flin Flon-Snow Lake area

and is currently being employed in the Northern Superior Geological Province. This work could be carried out this fiscal year with additional funding requirements for approximately \$12,000 based on interpretation of new data. A new geological program targeted at base metal exploration could be developed. There are going to be two departmental geologists in the Lynn Lake region for approximately one week in August of 1998, and the geologist will be looking at the structural controls on gold mineralization within the belt with a view to developing a more comprehensive program targeted at gold exploration. Any additional geological programming beyond what is now committed for in Thompson nickel belt and Northern Superior Geological Province in the Flin Flon-Snow Lake area would require additional staff.

I have challenged my department to examine this situation because of the increasing needs for new mines, new potential to be determined in Lynn Lake, Leaf Rapids, but this again will not solve the shorter-term problem which the honourable member identified. That is why, in the periods between mines in production or mines being developed, communities must, in anticipation that this will inevitably happen, sometimes sooner rather than later because of mining prices for minerals and other features of the marketplace in the world market for minerals, there is a need to have alternative means of sustaining communities. As a result, I go back and continue to urge the honourable member to invite and encourage the community of Leaf Rapids, like Lynn Lake has done, to really focus on alternatives to mining for livelihoods in the interim.

I think that is the best solution, and we have proven with Lynn Lake and we have indicated to Leaf Rapids that we are supportive of using the mining reserve for these kinds of situations. My understanding is Leaf Rapids is in the process of preparing a presentation, a proposal in this respect and may have even presented it. I look forward to seeing what emerges out of that.

Ms. Mihychuk: Well, the minister's response to my question was extremely disappointing. Having practised in the field for numerous years, I would suggest to the minister that indeed it may be somewhat difficult, but the civil service, and in this case the geoscience department, must go on to a fast track, go

into areas of emergent need, and I would suggest that Leaf Rapids is one of those. To wait another year for planning is just going to make it even more difficult.

The last time that I recall that any active intervention has been done in the Leaf Rapids area was back in the mid-'80s when we also went through a cycle of low prices and diminishing known reserves. At that time, numerous geologists were deployed into the area and would further challenge the minister to evaluate the priorities. It is true, and I understand that there is a long-term plan and these things usually take a number of years, but that is old-think, Mr. Chairman, to the minister. It is old-think. What the mining association told us yesterday in a meeting that we had with the executive was there were three things that they felt that were crucial for mining in Manitoba: one, a fair tax regime; two, stable land tenure; and No. 3, more frequent and many more geoscience reports and maps. The more maps that you can pull out, the better things will be for industry, for exploration and for developing known reserves which are absolutely essential for a stable mining community in Manitoba. That is our goal, and I know that it is the goal of the minister.

I urge him to become active in this area. Push the department into a new vision and challenge them to go into the new areas and forget the old cycle. As the World Turns is a long-running soap opera, and what we need is a new leaf, new-leaf profits, so the minister must think new and look for new ways to meet the challenging needs of Leaf Rapids.

The Chamber of Commerce of Leaf Rapids and Lynn Lake has challenged the minister into declaring that area into a mining watch zone which then would be—they have called on the minister to make it a special designated area under the MEAP program, similar to the Superior Province. Has the minister considered their proposal and is he willing to endorse their recommendation?

Mr. Newman: First, in response to the preamble, the windup, the preamble to what you have just asked as a question, the answer to the Mining Association, of course, has been by us that we are working towards the first two objectives in ways that are demonstrable with our last budget and through our very vigorous and

aggressive efforts to achieve implementation of treaty land entitlement and northern flood agreements.

On the geoscience data, we certainly are looking very closely at the future of funding of these kinds of programs. That is something that is currently under serious examination, and we look forward to see what emerges from the ideas that we have put forward which we think are consistent with what the industry wants and is beneficial to all Manitobans.

Specifically responding to your question, and being a past president of the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce, I have a certain continuing appreciation of the ideas that they come up with. In this case, I know that the Mining Association contributed to the formulation of those ideas, and I am very pleased that the honourable member for St. James has now become a respecter of, and appreciator of, the chambers of commerce of the province and their ideas. I am most appreciative and hope that continues in all issues where the Chamber of Commerce brings its ideas here. I will keep careful note and monitor when the honourable member for St. James agrees or does not agree with the positions that are advanced by the Chamber of Commerce. The fundamental philosophy, of course, I subscribe to and contributed to implementing during my years in private life. I am very pleased that the honourable member for St. James has likewise seen fit to probably endorse the underlying principles of that organization which would include, of course, enterprise and include a community-building, community-development sort of approach, something that chambers do well.

* (1710)

Now, the very specific recommendation here, in answer to the question, very simply is yes, we are considering that in the approach we are taking on the longer haul as we review the MEAP program and how it might be revised and indeed how our approach to investing in mining development will be done in a futuristic way. There are some very serious changes we have been recommending there and will be announced in due course.

With respect to the mine watch approach, that leads into the kind of partnership that I have been talking

about, the kind of partnership I would envisage with specific communities. I appreciate the gesture of the mining companies, but we do not want to do old-think.

We do not want to, in effect, induce mining companies to focus their efforts on areas they know well when there is a potential for other areas that might have far greater potential for lasting and sustainable mining production. That is, of course, why the focus has been, to a certain extent, on the Northern Superior area which is largely unexplored. The attitude, which I hope the honourable member is not attempting to engender for Leaf Rapids, is that it has got to be found in our backyard, because that is not how this country was built. It is not how Manitoba's north was built, and it is not what private enterprise is going to respect either.

They will go where they are going to ultimately achieve the greatest return, where their investment is going to get the greatest return. Allowing the marketplace to determine that is something the mining companies even want to have done, and we can, however, as a local community, demonstrate how welcome mining companies are in their area, and they can do all those things locally to make mining as attractive as possible. The cost-effective vantages are already there, and those can be broadcast and celebrated to attract and retain mining companies.

Also, those communities, as I spoke to the Mid-Canada Mining Corridor Conference in Thompson when the honourable member was there, these communities can become suppliers and participants in mining, wherever it is in the province, and certainly in the north of the province.

There are also new opportunities opening up in Nunavut, emerging huge opportunities, and these mining communities, with experience, can not only provide sometimes trained people to work in these new operations but also can provide training, can provide resources, can provide supplies, expertise, to these kinds of communities that are developing as well. The attitude that a community must continue to exist as it is now, forever, and the taxpayers of Manitoba should support that or mining companies should subsidize that is not even a value to the community because it does nothing but create false hopes and not cause them to do

things that really ensure stability and recognition of the realities of the times and of the future.

Mr. Peter Dyck, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Ms. Mihychuk: My final question. Given that the minister has basically said that he refuses to reallocate geoscience personnel, that he is not prepared at this time to make special provisions for the MEAP, I am going to suggest another proposal for the Leaf Rapids-Lynn Lake area, something that the minister had within his powers for several years and realized through the department its immediate importance and relevance, and that is a workable prospector program.

The recent Order-in-Council which reduced the amount allocated for that program was cut in half, but it was not used up. It was not used to its potential. Obviously, the people that had planned that fund had aspirations of having this be a fairly significant program. Unfortunately, for a number of reasons, this program was a dismal failure in terms of recruiting new prospectors. The province took a step to create a course that was to occur last year, was bungled and really was a disaster. I am asking the minister to create a prospector's course this summer, right now, in the Leaf Rapids area, where individuals could be out in the field doing what needs to be done, and that is staking claims, going out into the bush, looking for those signs that would indicate further mineral potential. We have the personnel in that area. We have a crisis situation. All it takes is leadership from this minister, and he could pull it together and provide a meaningful program for an area where we have infrastructure, where we, unfortunately, have very short reserves and where we have a great deal of enthusiasm and need right now.

Will the minister create a special prospector's course for the Leaf Rapids-Lynn Lake area?

Mr. Newman: From the specifics of your idea, and if they are embraced by the community as well, it is something that I would bring certainly to the attention of the people in my department who are very interested in having a very effective prospector's training program.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Chairperson, I have a question for the same minister. I have had a few calls from constituents who have property up in cottage

country on Lake Winnipeg, and it is a question that I do not have an answer for. It is with respect to the regulation of the waters on Lake Winnipeg. I continue to get these calls with respect to the water levels and the erosions that are occurring, from what I am told, to the properties of the people that live in my constituency and have their property in the Lake Winnipeg area.

Can you tell me: the water levels on Lake Winnipeg, have you exceeded, do you have a maximum level that is on the lake? What recent checks have you done to ensure that the water levels have not been exceeded? Has any consideration been given by your department or yourself, as minister, with respect to the appointment of an independent study to look at water levels on Lake Winnipeg, to give the people that are calling me and I know my colleagues, to give our constituents some level of comfort or assurance that the water levels have not exceeded the maximum levels to which they were supposed to be regulated to? Can you provide me with that information, please?

Mr. Newman: What I will do is I am going to invite Manitoba Hydro to come and make a presentation to your caucus to update you on, first of all, the facts as they see them, and also on the program which has been developed in conjunction with the communities and stakeholders along the shores of Lake Winnipeg, the people impacted by living on the shores of Lake Winnipeg. Then, I think you will be in a position to answer the questions of your constituents based on that kind of expert opinion, analysis and community consultation.

The process is one of trying to address the inherent consequences of living on the shores of a lake which has always, since its post-ice-age emergence, been subject to rises and falls, far more extreme before regulation, in terms of the total range, and also the impact of wind, which sometimes, in combination with higher water periods, can, with the forces of nature which become apparent from time to time, wreak havoc on anything in their path.

* (1720)

The short answer that all of the evidence provided by Hydro reveals is that there were certain times when there was a convergence of persistent winds over a long

period of time, in conjunction with high water levels that had an impact in certain locations, that were dramatic and hurtful to families who of course have the greatest love for their properties, whether they are homes or cottages. It is something that can be mitigated by taking some actions, and that is the other part of the process which we are working with Hydro on and Natural Resources is working with Hydro on, how one can minimize the impacts of these forces of nature converging at particular times.

Mr. Reid: So then I take it, because the last part of my question had to do with an independent study, our constituents collectively could have some reasonable level of assurance, because I get the sense in discussions with them that there is, if I can use the term guardedly, some mistrust in the information that perhaps is coming forward from Hydro through us to our constituents, that if there were an independent study that could be done, it hopefully would provide some confidence that the information coming forward would be accurate. I think that is part of the problem that is here, that there is not an independent study that has taken place. The last part of my question was: would you be prepared, through your department, to have that independent study undertaken so it would provide that level of assurance for our constituents?

Mr. Newman: The position that has been taken repeatedly by the honourable member for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk) as the critic with respect to Hydro issues has been to express admiration and respect for the way Hydro conducts itself and the leadership shown by the board and its chair, Mr. McCallum, and the president of the corporation, Mr. Brennan. Hydro is not a corporation which, in this modern age, exists to profit at the expense of Manitobans. It is there to serve all stakeholders in the province; it is owned by them, and they are their customers as well. This is not a case where the mandate of Hydro is inconsistent with the goals of the stakeholders.

The challenge is to balance the impacts of all consequences of nature's involvement to the extent that we have deigned to interfere with nature's normal processes and therefore replace Mother Nature's way or God's way of having things happen. There is a need for the greatest intelligence to be applied to try and control results. But the moment you do that, you are going to

have to make sure it is done fairly and equitably in ways that are understood by all people impacted by it. The only solution to do that is to have public input. It is not having an expert say something.

I have no doubt that the credibility is there for the reasons I have given in terms of Hydro's data, which I might say is often the product of monitoring which is done and is unimpeachable in terms of its objectivity. The great challenge is for enough people to understand how this corporate interference with nature should be distributed, how it should be allocated among Manitobans. The only way you can do that is through discussion, sharing of the facts and, hopefully, allowing reason to prevail over emotion that always emerges when there is damage to property and one is looking for someone to be faulted for it. There can be things that are done collectively to try and minimize impacts on individual properties, but there is no point doing it for one individual or a set of families or set of properties if there is a greater impact on somebody else. So it is a very complicated issue, and the approach that is being taken by Hydro, which I have certainly influenced in happening and support, is to have stakeholder involvement in arriving at what is appropriate and fair to properly allocate the consequences of corporate involvement in regulating the lake and dealing with the forces of nature in ways that are an act of good will by Hydro, an act of customer relations by Hydro. I invite you, if you make a request to have Hydro make a presentation to you, I will send my request immediately that they accede to your request and frankly make the same presentation to your caucus that they made to our caucus.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): My questions I believe are for the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), but they may also have implications for the Minister of Urban Affairs, so I will just ask the question and whoever can or will answer, can or will answer.

It is dealing with Portagescape, which is I believe a very positive plan for making Portage a pedestrian-comfortable environment, a phrase I heard today which I thought was an excellent phrase. My understanding is that the city has committed approximately \$3 million from several sources to begin phase one of Portagescape, which is to go from Fort to Carlton. There have been negotiations, I understand, underway with the

province to participate financially to assist with the second phase of Portagescape which would be from Carlton to Spence, which would include the University of Winnipeg and the CBC.

I guess my first question is: what is the status of those negotiations for the provincial component of Portagescape?

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Urban Affairs): The project that the member is referring to was brought to our attention just a little while ago, in fact, as to the request for funding. Usually what we do is we ask the City of Winnipeg to come forth with suggestions for funding under various allocations early in the year, which they did do. This came in as a sort of add-on once there was an indication that the Portage Avenue business association was willing to participate, and then the City of Winnipeg initiated discussions also of trying to enhance Portage Avenue.

They came to us with a request originally for I believe it was \$3 million, and then when we got the official request through a letter it was \$4 million. So that was of a concern to us as to exactly what the request was and why it had changed so much.

We did have a meeting though with the city. One of the topics of discussion was exactly what was the request and the amount of monies that were being proposed. We do have funding allocation resources under what we call the Urban Capital Allocation fund, and that is a place where we can allocate funds to try to accommodate the city. The city has asked that we try to find so-called new funds or different funds to try to accommodate this request.

* (1730)

We are in the process of looking at various allocations throughout various programs within the city of Winnipeg to see whether we can accommodate a portion of the request. We cannot appropriate \$4 million worth of new funding to the city for this project. They know that and we have indicated that to them, but we can look at possibly a redirection of similar fundings through possibly the Urban Capital Allocation

fund or possibly maybe through the Winnipeg Development fund to see whether we can accommodate some of the requests. The initial request for \$4 million for new funding is not available at this time from the city, pardon me, from the province.

Ms. Barrett: Why is it not? There is a project that has been undertaken by the city, by the merchants of Portage Avenue. Just in the last few months, there have been 11 buildings bought on Portage Avenue. The Delta, the Lombard and the Free Press are undertaking multimillion dollar renovations which will bring more people downtown to work and will also provide a new look to two of the landmark hotels on Portage Avenue. The work is being undertaken, I understand, by the Mennonite Central Committee or a group of Mennonite people for the renovation of the Met, to say nothing of the fact that seven new storefronts have been rented in the last little while and 11 buildings bought on Portage Avenue, plus there has been an enormous amount of interest on the part of not only the Portage Avenue business people but the citizens of the city of Winnipeg who are beginning now to recognize the need for Portage Avenue to become what it once was, which is not just a freeway through which people drive but the heart of the city, the connector between the newer parts of the city and the downtown area, the Exchange District, The Forks area, the north Main area and through the Main-Norwood bridge down to the southeast part of the city.

This shows, I believe, a huge commitment on the part of No. 1, the city; No. 2, the business people on Portage Avenue to make a major contribution to the upgrading of this essential component to a vital Winnipeg which is essential to a vital Manitoba. The problem, Mr. Minister, is that if the province does not give assurances as to money, and enough money, to help with Phase II of streetscape, very soon what will happen is that—tenders are going out now given our weather situation. They have plans to start construction this fall, to go as late into November as they can, and to begin again very early next spring in order to complete it in time for the Pan Am Games. The communications hub will be the CBC building. Many of the people, we hope, that participate in the Pan Am Games will be using downtown, will be passing through downtown. They come from parts of the world where a downtown is a vital place.

I am sure the government is aware of the concerns and the need for commitment now to money to assist the owners of Portage Avenue businesses, the Downtown BIZ, the City of Winnipeg, who are simply asking for the assistance from the Province of Manitoba to do something that is in the province's best interest not only for the Pan Am Games and beyond, but also, Mr. Minister, remember we are going to have on November 20, the Grey Cup parade. What could very easily happen is if we have half of streetscape only, or Portagescape only, that is going to be completed, you are going to have for the Grey Cup parade—well, you will anyway even if the province comes through, it will not be finished by November 20, but it will look very strange if it is only a quarter done because the province will not kick in the money needed to make it complete, so that they cannot plan for it to be completely finished.

Try to imagine, Mr. Minister, what it will look like next July and August if it is only Portagescaped on the north side of Portage or if it is only Portagescaped for Phase II, which is Fort to Carlton. What kind of traffic problems are there going to be? What is the single largest concern that people raised with the Atlanta Olympics? It was transportation. Now I am not for a moment suggesting that the problems here would be anywhere near what Atlanta had, but it is one of those areas where people pay attention to it. It is a visual thing. It is easy to talk about, and if there is a problem with Portagescape, then that is going to be a huge, I mean a huge, problem for Portage Avenue in the long run and for the people of Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba in the short run, both for the Grey Cup and the Pan Am Games. I do not understand why the province does not say to the city, we do not know where this money is going to exactly come from because we have to work it out through special warrants or reallocation of WDA money or something, but we agree with you that this is an essential component to a successful and vital downtown, and we know that we are under the gun as far as timing is concerned.

So I am asking the minister to take these things into account and to pledge today, if he can, but certainly to pledge that money from wherever it is coming—if it is not coming from WDA reallocation money, perhaps \$1 million or \$2 million or \$3 million or \$4 million out of that \$600-million fiscal stabilization fund could be

utilized. There is nothing keeping the government from supporting this project except a political decision. There is no legislative requirement that has to be changed. There is no policy decision that has to be made. The government is on record saying it is essential that we have a vital and vibrant downtown. Well, Mr. Minister, I am asking you, on behalf of the merchants of Portage Avenue, on behalf of the citizens of Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba, to put your money where your mouth is and support today Portagescape Phase II.

Mr. Reimer: The member seems to imply that this government is not supportive of what is happening in Winnipeg in the downtown area and on Portage Avenue and working with the city in trying to come to some sort of understanding in the direction of what is best for Winnipeg or Manitoba. Far be it for her to think that we are not committed to trying to help the city in any way we can. I think it has been proven time and time again of our commitment and our allocation of funds and, in fact, it was just even reported in the fair taxation report that we just put out yesterday by the committee that Winnipeg is by far the highest per capita funded city by the government in a province of any place in Canada.

But in regard to Portage Avenue, I have indicated to the member that, if the City of Winnipeg wants to use the UPCA-III funding allocation, we are willing to work with them on that. There is approximately \$5-million unconditional money a year that goes into the UPCA, and if they feel that is where the allocation should come from, we can utilize that as their area. But the City of Winnipeg has indicated that they do not want to use that fund. They want to keep that fund, and they want new money to go into this Portagescaping. Well, we are saying that we have enough categories of funding in envelopes of funding that are available that we give to the city that we can utilize those types of allocations for this Portage streetscaping. As I mentioned prior, we did meet with the city. We are in discussions with them to try to come to some sort of understanding of funding requirements because as it is right now, there is a discrepancy in what was originally requested and what was sent out in a letter. Originally the request was for \$3 million. When the letter and the proposal came from City Council, it was for \$4 million. So we asked for a clarification as to exactly what the

allocation that they are requesting is. To date, to the best of my knowledge, we have not heard a reply back from the city on that. So we have indicated there are various envelopes that are available for possible reallocation of funding, but they have to agree to that too, because that is funding commitment that we have with the city.

* (1740)

So it is not as if we do not have the commitment to try to work with the city, but there are certain procedures and avenues of availability of funding that we want to make clear and we want to be established with concurrence with the city. As to not having the dedication towards trying to make it better for the downtown area or for streetscaping, I think that is a long stretch by the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett).

Ms. Barrett: The minister appears, in his answer, to be saying several things which, if they are not mutually exclusive, certainly are going on divergent paths, so I would like to ask for some clarification.

My understanding is that the minister has said that they have a question about what the actual dollar amount is that the city wants from the province, and I am assuming they also have a question as to how that \$3 million or \$4 million would be spent and that they are in negotiations in talking about that. The minister is also saying there might actually be some money available from the province outside of the Urban Capital monies that the minister referenced—the \$5-million unconditional money. So that is slightly different.

Then, finally, the minister appears to be saying that there is no more money, that they should use their own resources to fund this, that they should use the \$5-million unconditional grant. So, if the minister could please clarify that—is he saying there is still an opportunity for the province to come up with new money from whatever source, or is he saying that they are only in discussions about reallocating existing monies that the city already has a commitment from the province that will be flowing from the province to the city?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): As the member for Wellington may have seen in one media source today, one of the local papers, an article talking about some of the requests that we currently have before us from the City of Winnipeg, directly or indirectly. I think she is familiar with probably all of them. There is the Portage streetscape initiative which, as the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer) has said, is a \$4-million request, and there also is a request to do some improvements at the Winnipeg Stadium. The City of Winnipeg just approved putting some money into the Winnipeg Stadium and also providing some loan guarantee authority for Winnipeg Enterprises to do some improvements there. So there is a request in that area to provide some support for that facility, and they certainly make a compelling argument as to why they need some upgrading to that facility in terms of its continual utilization, whether it be for professional football or concerts or other community activities and events.

Mr. Mervin Tweed, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Of course we have the whole north Main initiative, the Neeginan project, which the City of Winnipeg has made a commitment to, and the task force that prepared the report on that initiative has made a request of both the federal government and the provincial government. So what has happened over the course of the last several weeks is we have had at least three very major projects coming to the provincial government asking for financial support for, on the surface, what appear to be both important and very good initiatives. The combination of the Department of Urban Affairs and departments of Finance are obviously looking at the financial magnitude of all of these requests, doing the assessments of the staging of them, what the timing requirements are, what the cash flow requirements are, obviously assessing the merits of the projects, and that is the most important part of that, the issue that is being addressed right now.

When it comes to potentially funding any of them, if we decide that it is appropriate to fund them, it might well be that some funding is redirected from some existing funding like the Urban Capital Partnership Agreement, but there might also be the opportunity to direct some funding from some other sources within government. So it could be a redirection of some

funding from existing allocations or some funding being provided from some other sources. So that decision has not been made; that analysis is currently in process.

We recognize the time lines that she has already touched on these issues, particularly Portage Avenue. We recognize the City of Winnipeg has committed their money and that, if we are going to be partnering in that, we should be giving a decision fairly shortly, and we are certainly intending to do just that.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): I want to ask the Minister responsible for Sport (Mr. Stefanson) about some issues that have arisen recently that have affected my constituents and which I believe have been issues for some time. I know the minister must be aware of them, and I would like to know what he has done in the interim.

This deals specifically with the hirings at the Pan Am Games, and the proportion of people who are being hired from outside (a); and (b) the way in which applications are being treated from local people. I am referring particularly in this case to the Winnipeg Free Press article by Scott Taylor, on Saturday May 30, 1998, and it deals with an issue raised in this case by one of Canada's gymnasts who has served Canada in the Pan Am Games, at the Olympics, as well as at, I believe, the Pan Pacific Games.

In addition to these accomplishments, Ms. Cushman also has a degree in Spanish from the University of Manitoba. She responded to advertisements for events co-ordinators, and I believe there was another kind of advertisement, as well, for the Pan Am Games. I believe this was over six months ago. When she applied, she took her resume down, and she went over it with people at the Pan Am Games. She did anticipate that she would at least get an acknowledgement of response of that application. To this date, she has not received even an acknowledgement of her application.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I want to ask through you to the Minister responsible for Sport, a version of this story, as far as I know an accurate version, was carried in the Winnipeg Free Press by Scott Taylor. I believe my colleague the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli), our critic for Sport, has raised this issue or similar issues

with the minister. We are now almost at the end of June. I wonder if the minister could tell us what he has done, what inquiries he has made of the Pan Am Games committee, and what he can tell us about the principles of hiring and the actual application of those principles. In particular, can he give us some explanation of why an Olympic medallist, a Winnipegger, speaks Spanish and has served Canada in many capacities as an elite athlete, has not been even accorded the dignity and the courtesy of a response to her application?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister responsible for Sport): The member for Wolseley is partly correct. Her colleague did raise the issue about the staffing for the Pan Am Games. To the best of my recollection, she did not raise this particular situation with this individual who, as has been outlined, was the basis of at least one article in the Winnipeg Free Press.

First of all, on the overall issue, the information I currently have is the Pan Am Games are currently employing some 170 people, of which 14 are non-Manitobans, and actually out of the 14, four are non-Canadian. So one can certainly see from that, that obviously the vast majority are Manitobans. Certainly, the objective of the games and our objective as a government and a funding partner, and I am assuming it is shared by members opposite, is to give every opportunity to Manitobans. I think what has happened with these games, not unlike the Canada Games in Brandon, not unlike many other games in particular areas, there are people who have developed the particular skills and so on, so you do end up with a core of some people who really are so-called games experts, who offer their services to various games. As a result, we are seeing some of that here with the Pan Am Games. But, certainly, our focus is to give every opportunity to Manitobans, either as employees, obviously as volunteers—I think we are now up over 12,000 volunteers—Manitoba businesses, all of those kinds of things.

* (1750)

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

I will follow up on the specific individual. What I was told initially, and there seems to be some confusion, that, again, I am going from memory here,

but that the Pan Am Games Society did go back through all of their applications and could not find an application from this individual. So that, right there, seems to conflict with the media coverage through the Free Press, but I think it is an important issue to clarify. I think it is important for the games to obviously have contact with her and have a discussion about that issue, along with whether or not she still is looking for opportunities with the Pan Am Games Society and so on.

So I am certainly prepared to ensure to make a commitment that I will follow up with the Pan Am Games organization to encourage them and push them to do just that, obviously be in contact with her and resolve all of this, whether the confusion around her application, but more importantly whether or not she is still interested and/or whether or not there is a role for her to play with the Pan Am Games. I want to assure the member for Wolseley, our expectation and our commitment is to maximize the opportunities for Manitobans to participate in various ways in these games.

Ms. Friesen: I thank the minister for his undertaking to look into this. I understand that he has essentially already looked into it once, and that the Pan Am Games committee had difficulty finding her application, in fact did not find it. Could the minister explain to me why a simple phone call at that point would not have solved all of this? When did that evaluation of the applications occur, and why did they not simply phone up the person? She is very clearly identified in Scott Taylor's article. It is a symbolic issue, as well as an issue of great concern to an individual who thought that she had a lot to offer to both her city and to her country. Could the minister explain to me why, at that point, a phone call was not made?

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Chairman, I cannot confirm here today for the member for Wolseley whether or not contact has been made with her at this particular point in time or not. I would expect it has, but possibly it has not. In a general sense, I would agree with her that, once that article surfaced, once the Pan Am Games went through whether or not they had an application on file—and I am told there were no applications, no record of any application on file and so on—I would agree with her that at that point in time based on this individual's

contributions in the community, contributions to sport and the coverage that was given through the media, that a phone call would certainly be the most appropriate thing to do at that point in time.

I am not certain today, Mr. Chairman, whether or not any contact has been made with her but as I have said to the member for Wolseley, I will ensure that it is followed up on.

Ms. Friesen: I did speak to the household, not directly to the individual but to her household last night, and as of last night, in fact indeed as of this morning, no contact had been made. This is in spite of—this is not just an application which was sent by mail. This was an application which she actually delivered in person, sat down with an official and went over elements of the application, as I understand it, as I am told. So it seems to me there have been a number of opportunities. That is what is so puzzling is that there have been a number of opportunities from the public raising of it in May to the time when she went over the application with people individually, to the actual application itself, that this could have been raised. It seems to me it is not just one accident. This is a series of incidents which do not give people great confidence in at least the personnel aspect of the Pan Am Games.

We know what the dangers are out there. We have seen them in Atlanta with the transport issues and other issues of the training of volunteers. The personnel piece and—what do they call it—the venue piece are the ones in effect that can be prepared in advance and which we have to have confidence in. If people really are going to participate and to raise the number of volunteers, which I know the games are still interested in doing, we have to have confidence that it is going to be properly run, that Winnipeggers and Manitobans will be welcome, and that there is an administrative system in place which is in fact able to look after all of these issues. From this particular incident, that does not seem to be the case.

I know that Scott Taylor has talked to other people. There are quotations in his articles which I am sure have been brought to the minister's attention before; Mr. Wirth, I think, was one. Then of course there is the whole issue of the firing of Ernie Nairn who was only one of a series of local people who were fired in the

communications department. There are quotations in here I believe from—I do not have the name right in front of me, but people who were fired in the communications department.

Communications is crucial. It is amazing to me that this kind of confusion, what seems to be arrogance in communications in the organization of the games, a disregard for people who want to help and who appear certainly to be qualified to play a role at some place in the games, whether it is Ernie Nairn or whether it is Susan Cushman. There are the incidents themselves, but it is also the level of confidence that Winnipeggers need to have, and Manitobans, I should say, need to have in the Pan Am Games. So it is a matter of very serious concern.

I think during the flood, Manitoba—and I am thinking particularly in Winnipeg, I am thinking of Channel 11, as simple as it was, enabled very good daily communications. In emergencies like that, people could do it. Are we going to be able to pull the same kind of thing together for the Pan Am Games? There is a great deal of experience in Manitoba in organizing events, venues, as well as communications. We, in fact, have a number of advertising firms. We have a number of people who are available and who have been very well trained and have a wide experience in communicating across Winnipeg and Manitoba. I think that is one of the points that was made about Ernie Nairn, that you have to have people who know who needs to be in the loop, and in Manitoba I think one of the points he was making is that a lot of people have to be in the loop.

It is something where you need to be very much aware of the social connections, I guess, particularly the political connections. It is a very small community in many ways, and people who are communicating need to be very much aware of those, and they need to be aware of the importance of involving and committing every section of the community.

So I am raising this on behalf of Ms. Cushman and indirectly on behalf of other people whom I believe—they certainly believe and it certainly appears to be the case of not being treated fairly. We are in the early stages. We are in the planning stages. We have to have confidence in this, and there are a number of places

along the way where things could have been changed in this case and they were not. I mean, we have had a month since this was in the paper, and what has happened? No contact has been made as far as I know.

So I wonder if the minister could tell me what steps he is going to take, who he is going to speak to and when he will report back.

Mr. Stefanson: Well, first of all, even though the member brings these concerns to the House, I want to tell her it is my understanding and impression that these few examples are certainly the exception, and they are not the norm, that, as I have already indicated to her, there are some 170 staff. All but 14 are Manitobans, and even out of the 14, 10 of them are Canadians.

As of May 9 of this year, we had 11,716 volunteers. I believe as of today we are up over 12,000 volunteers. The same reporter that she referred to, Scott Taylor, I think on the heels of those two articles that she has briefly quoted from—I do not have it before me, but I know he wrote a somewhat complimentary article about the status of the games, certainly some of the challenges. I mean, it is a major undertaking. It is the third largest multisport event ever held in North America, a \$140-million budget, obviously a major undertaking, but I think on an overall basis there will be all kinds of opportunities for Manitobans as employees, as volunteers, as suppliers.

But in terms of the very specifics, I will get back to the member very shortly, Mr. Chairman.

* (1800)

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The hour being six o'clock, committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Committee Changes

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): I wonder if there is a willingness to not see the clock while we conclude some House business. [agreed]

I move, seconded by the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments be amended as follows: Transcona (Mr. Reid) for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak); Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway); St. James (Ms. Mihychuk) for Osborne (Ms. McGifford); St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale), for the meeting to be held Monday, June 22, at 10 a.m.

Motion agreed to.

House Business

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Acting Government House Leader): I wish to clarify that the meeting of the Law Amendments committee called for Monday, June 22, at 7:30 p.m., was announced as being required if necessary. I wish to clarify on the record that the meeting will be required for the consideration of Bill 35 and other bills not completed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I thank the honourable minister for that.

The hour now being after six o'clock, this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until Monday, 1:30 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 18, 1998

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

| | | | |
|--|------|--|------|
| Presenting Petitions | | Magnetic Resonance Imaging Mihychuk; Praznik | 4641 |
| | | Chomiak; Praznik | 4646 |
| Independent Judicial Review Committee Lamoureux | 4637 | Women's Hospital Sale; Praznik | 4642 |
| Winnipeg Hospitals Food Services— Privatization | | Speech and Language Services Barrett; Praznik | 4642 |
| Santos | 4637 | Friesen; Praznik | 4642 |
| Hickes | 4637 | Echocardiograms Dewar; Praznik | 4643 |
| Martindale | 4637 | | |
| Maloway | 4637 | Audiology Testing Lathlin; Praznik | 4643 |
| Tabling of Reports | | Pediatric Surgery Mackintosh; Praznik | 4644 |
| Annual Report, 1997, Public Utilities Board Radcliffe | 4637 | Betaseron C. Evans; Praznik | 4644 |
| Oral Questions | | Hepatitis C McGifford; Praznik | 4644 |
| Physician Resources Doer; Praznik | 4638 | CT Scans Jennissen; Praznik | 4645 |
| Pain Clinic Reid; Praznik | 4638 | Bone Density Scans Santos; Praznik | 4645 |
| Liver Disease Treatment Hickes; Praznik | 4638 | Personal Care Homes Chomiak; Praznik | 4645 |
| Heart Valve Replacement Surgery Ashton; Praznik | 4639 | Speaker's Rulings Dacquay | 4647 |
| Video Lottery Terminal Commission Lamoureux; Filmon | 4639 | Members' Statements | |
| Sleep Disorder Clinic Martindale; Praznik | 4640 | Hip and Knee Replacement Surgery Barrett | 4648 |
| Hip and Knee Replacement Surgery L. Evans; Praznik | 4640 | Royal Canadian Legion Convention M. Driedger | 4648 |
| Health Care System Cerilli; Praznik | 4641 | | |
| Chomiak; Praznik | 4646 | | |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------|
| Health Care System Ashton | 4648 |
| National Child Benefit Laurendeau | 4649 |
| Video Lottery Terminals Lamoureux | 4649 |

ORDERS OF THE DAY
(continued)

Debate on Second Readings

| | |
|---|------|
| Bill 26, Teachers' Society Amendment Act Friesen | 4650 |
| Lamoureux | 4651 |
| Bill 34, Public Schools Amendment Act Friesen | 4651 |
| Lamoureux | 4653 |

| | |
|--|------|
| Bill 43, Victims' Rights and Consequential Amendments Act Mackintosh | 4654 |
| Lamoureux | 4658 |
| Bill 53, Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act Reid | 4662 |
| Lamoureux | 4668 |
| Friesen | 4670 |

Committee of Supply

| | |
|---|------|
| Consideration of Concurrence Motion Mihychuk | 4673 |
| Newman | 4674 |
| Reid | 4677 |
| Barrett | 4679 |
| Reimer | 4679 |
| Stefanson | 4682 |
| Friesen | 4682 |