



RE 9-28491

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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

40 Elizabeth II

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



VOL. XL No. 49 - 1:30 p.m., THURSDAY, MAY 23, 1991



MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

LIB - Liberal; ND - New Democrat; PC - Progressive Conservative

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
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ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	ND
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	ND
CARR, James	Crescentwood	LIB
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	LIB
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	ND
CHEEMA, Gulzar	The Maples	LIB
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	ND
CONNERY, Edward	Portage la Prairie	PC
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	ND
DOER, Gary	Concordia	ND
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
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DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
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ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
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EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	ND
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
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MALLOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	ND
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MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	ND
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PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	ND
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
REID, Daryl	Transcona	ND
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	PC
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	PC
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STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	ND
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary	Fort Garry	PC
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	ND
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	ND

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 23, 1991

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery, where we have with us this afternoon from the Victory School thirty-seven Grades 4 and 5 students, and they are under the direction of Pat Plohman. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis).

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

* * *

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, with the leave of the House, I wonder if we might revert to Introduction of Bills.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable government House leader have leave to revert to Introduction of Bills?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave? Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 59—The Workers Compensation and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, I would move on behalf of the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik), seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), that Bill 59, The Workers Compensation Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les accidents du travail et diverses dispositions législatives, be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

The honourable Administrator of the Government of Manitoba, having been advised of the contents of this bill, recommends it to the House.

Mr. Speaker, I have tabled his message.

Motion agreed to.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Immigration Consultants Investigation

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, on May 15, 1990, the Premier stated in establishing a multiculturalism minister: Manitoba has been a land of opportunity for many people, and it must become a land of opportunity for all people, and it will.

The Premier further, in the election, made a number of commitments dealing with new immigrants to the province, and immigration policy generally, and stated that new Canadians must be able to take full advantage of the opportunities that Manitoba has to offer.

Last night, in a television documentary, there was striking evidence that immigration consultants were working in the province of Manitoba and preying on perhaps the most vulnerable people, either in the province or people who want to come to Canada, charging fees, making certain commitments that were unfulfilled and leaving Manitoba families at the airport with deportations, leaving Manitoba families with new immigrants of their families without the proper papers in terms of being a Canadian citizen and really preying on people who are so vulnerable that I think all of us should take action in this regard.

I would ask the Premier, whether in light of this documentary last night, his government will be investigating fully the practice of immigration consultants in the province of Manitoba and their activity in terms of immigration for the people of Manitoba?

* (1335)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I might say that the words I said in May of 1990 are words that I subscribe to, and I believe this province has been a land of opportunity for immigrants. I know it was for my own father. I know it ought to continue to be in the future.

I believe, as has been said, that Manitoba should attempt to enter into an agreement with Ottawa whereby we can be involved in the immigration procedure to ensure that independent immigrants

with skills that are needed to fulfill skill shortages in this province ought to come here. That was an area that there was support from the western Premiers at the recent conference in Nipawin last week. A communique was issued to that effect.

I, too, was very disturbed at watching that report and at the great sadness and the great anxiety that prevailed in families who were the victims of the immigration consulting that was referred to. I have asked my senior staff to investigate what areas might be involved with the provincial government and to ensure that we do whatever we can to clean up what I think is a bad situation.

I might say, for the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition, that the RCMP have issued a news release today indicating their investigation of the matter. I know the Attorney General (Mr. McCrae) will want to keep informed of that and see whether there is room for provincial co-operation and involvement.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, we are pleased that the Premier has instructed senior staff to review the situation. However, we would want and we think the public interest would be best served by an independent investigation in terms of the provincial responsibilities in this matter and how this situation exists in our borders, in our province and in our communities.

In the minister's own departmental Estimates, he talks about the goals and objectives of having humanitarian immigration policies in this province, in our provincial Estimates. We further talk about the need for objectives to co-ordinate and deliver services to immigration policies in the province. Clearly, it is a responsibility that is joint with the federal and provincial governments but certainly under the bailiwick and responsibility of ministers in this department.

I would ask the Premier, in light of the fact that some of the people mentioned or alleged to have been involved in the story are senior civil servants of the government, whether we would be better served with an independent investigation to ensure that we can take all action necessary to stop what most Manitobans would find to be an unsavoury and dishonourable practice of preying on people who are so vulnerable within our borders?

*(1340)

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, clearly, I do not think anyone would suggest that there will be any

investigation more independent than that which the RCMP will be conducting.

The RCMP will be looking at all areas of law, whether they be criminal or immigration or other areas of law, and I am confident that whatever comes from that investigation will be pursued to the fullest extent possible under the law. I believe that is absolutely the way that it should be, any possibility to investigate and pursue the outcome of this matter to try and eradicate this kind of action within our borders.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I respect the fact that there are potential criminal elements to the documentary last evening. There are also humanitarian and ethical issues involved in this issue. There are issues of senior civil servants of the Province of Manitoba, civil servants who are well known to the Premier, who have been involved potentially in this immigration consultant area.

There are the letters of the law in terms of The Civil Service Act. There are the issues of whether those people disclosed under The Civil Service Act fully their involvement, disclosed airline tickets that may have been given to them, the issues of whether they in fact used government titles which are very important in foreign lands in any of this activity, Mr. Speaker.

I would ask the Premier, will he go further than just the RCMP investigation which we believe is necessary to deal with the criminal activity? Will he look at the ethical and humanitarian issues that are part of his own government department's mandate and objectives, so that Manitobans can know that we are first and foremost a humanitarian province, and a humanitarian province does not tolerate people preying on innocent immigrants and people who want to immigrate to our great province?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, there is no question that we want to investigate any areas of humanitarian and ethical involvement. We obviously want to investigate all areas in which our provincial laws and our provincial accountability are implied, whether that be through The Civil Service Act, whether that be through conflict of interest act, whether that be through The Consumer Protection Act or anything else, all areas in which the provincial Civil Service and/or government departments could potentially be implicated.

That is why I have asked senior staff to get together, for instance, with the Civil Service

Commission, so that all of these areas can be canvassed to see where there is a potential implication or involvement of the provincial government.

Seniors RentalStart Program Information Release

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, last year the Premier campaigned on a theme of "trust me." Now this same Premier defends the Minister of Housing who continually misleads the House and betrays the trust of the people of Manitoba.

Will the Minister of Housing explain why MHRC staff were not allowed to tell all the Seniors RentalStart applicants, not just Roy Lev and Rotary Pines who were informed by the minister, that funding was available in February of this year?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Housing): I am advised, Mr. Speaker, by the staff that no such order existed. No one was told not to speak to anyone.

Mr. Martindale: It is most unfortunate that he contradicts his own staff, Mr. Speaker.

Neepawa Application

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Why did the Minister of Housing receive phone inquiries and have meetings in his office with representatives of Neepawa Elks Lodge and not tell them that funding for Seniors RentalStart was available as he did with Rotary Pines?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Housing): Mr. Speaker, I reject totally the allegation that I spoke to anyone with respect to Rotary Pines. That is not a fact.

With regard to the question of the Neepawa Elks, they wrote me a letter on February 27 that came to my attention on the 13th of March. At that time, I acknowledged the letter. The letter requested a meeting to discuss a senior citizens project in Neepawa, no mention of any program one way or another.

Mr. Speaker, at that time, we arranged a meeting. Because I was in Treasury Board Estimates in preparation of the budget, I had limited time available to meet. We did meet on April 5, 1991.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Speaker, that is not what the technical resource group says, and we will never believe that it was strictly coincidence that on February 11 Rotary Pines applied for this funding.

Minister of Housing Apology Request

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Will the Minister of Housing apologize now to the House and to the technical resource groups, since he said on May 15 that funding was available in the department when, clearly, it was not, and that it was the fault of the technical resource groups for not reapplying, when in fact he had no intention of telling them that funding was available? One of them inquired and met with the minister in his office.

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

* (1345)

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Housing): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, I met with the people from Neepawa on April 5. April 5 is five days after the end of the fiscal year and about 11 days prior to the budget being tabled in the House.

At that time, I indicated to the people from Neepawa who attended, and my colleague the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) was there as well, along with a dozen or so people from Neepawa, in fact, that we could not indicate whether the program would be renewed in 1991-92 and that we would have to wait the tabling of the budget.

Claro Paqueo Notary Public Status

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

We were alarmed to learn about the alleged misleading of immigrants by Mr. Claro Paqueo, which took place under the guise of his status as a limited notary public. We have learned that Mr. Paqueo received his notary public in 1983. In 1985, he was convicted of violating the Immigration Act. Given that his business was associated with immigration, surely it was incumbent upon the Consumer and Corporate Affairs to investigate the matter and to take it into consideration upon application of his notary status.

Can the minister advise the House as to why this individual was granted a renewal of his notary public status in spite of the fact that he had a conviction?

Point of Order

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether I caught the full question. If the member is asking a member of this Treasury Bench to give rationale as to why a decision was made in 1985, I say the question is highly out of order. Beauchesne makes several references as to the requirement of a minister and as to what time frame they have to make reference.

Mr. Speaker, the question is certainly out of order.

Mr. Lamoureux: On the same point of order, this administration does have responsibility. Because it is a limited notary, they have to apply every two years. This one expires in September of '91, which tells me that he would have received another one in September of '89 which would have been after the '85 conviction.

I would ask the minister as to why something of this nature would be able to go through?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised, the honourable government House leader did not have a point of order.

* * *

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I do not have that information available at this moment, but I will check with department officials to ascertain the various details of this case. If I have anything that needs to be reported back to the House, I will do so.

Mr. Lamoureux: I would ask the same minister, can the minister tell the House what steps she has taken, if any, to ensure that background checks, which would uncover convictions, will be undertaken when the renewal is under process?

Mrs. McIntosh: With regard to this particular case, I did not see the I-Team report last night because I was busy with other meetings of my own. I have heard about it, of course, this morning, will be very pleased to check out any relevant details with my department and to come back with the reporting of the procedures that are followed in my department, as a matter of course, in terms of investigating renewals of licences or other aspects that are required by law.

Claro Paqueo

Marriage Commissioner Status

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I would ask the Minister of Family Services, in addition to being a notary, he is also a marriage commissioner, a licence he received in March of 1990; can the minister tell us what revocation procedures are in place in his department to ensure that those who misuse their position are prevented from doing so in the future?

*(1350)

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): I will check into the details of that and report back to the member.

Mental Health Care Rural Services

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): My question is to the Minister of Health.

Last June the Minister of Health met with the Swan River chapter of the Canadian Mental Health Association at which time he indicated he was very committed to improving mental health services in rural Manitoba. However, these people are very concerned at the present time with the announcement of the budget and the fact that there is an increased funding for institutional beds, and there is no action in increasing mental health services in rural Manitoba.

When is the Minister of Health going to be in touch with these people in the Swan River area and the Parkland area, and when can we see improvement to the mental health services in rural Manitoba?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend, if she would wish to be part of the reform of the mental health system, that opportunity will be made available to her and to other members of the official opposition.

Let me first of all indicate to my honourable friend that the group that probably she has been in contact with in the Swan River valley are part of the first regional mental health council that was established in the province, representing the Parkland Region of the province. That is a very diverse group of individuals who are providing to government an examination of where the mental health service delivery system ought to go. They are not mandated to simply indicate to government how we should spend additional resources, but rather to

indicate to government a more effective use of the current budget dedicated to mental health services in the province of Manitoba. I believe that they have some excellent contribution to make in the future, as they have already as a council.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell my honourable friend that, in the course of this budget year, my honourable friend will have ample opportunity to join in with government and those who wish to see reform in the mental health system and a very progressive reform of the services we provide to those citizens in Manitoba who are in need of mental health services.

Ms. Wowchuk: I would also like to tell my honourable friend that I am very interested in mental health services, and I have been in contact with the people in Swan River.

Mental Health Care Facilities Parkland Region

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Will the Minister of Housing tell this House the status of the application submitted by the Parkland advisory council to have a housing project set up in the area? What is the status of this application? When can we expect to have some housing in the Parkland area?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Housing): Mr. Speaker, I was involved in a conversation here, and I missed the member's question. Would she please repeat it?

Ms. Wowchuk: Just the question?

Will the Minister of Housing tell this House the status of the application for the interim housing project that was submitted by the Parkland advisory council to get a housing project for the mentally handicapped in the Parkland area?

Mr. Ernst: Mr. Speaker, that application was submitted under the special projects division, I believe, for the 1991 proposal call. Those matters are under consideration at the moment. We anticipate making a decision within the next month or two.

Ms. Wowchuk: I await that answer.

Mental Health Care Facilities Parkland Region

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Since the Minister of Health has given these people assurances that there will be housing, can the Minister of Health also assure the people of the

Parkland area that there will be adequate staffing with this housing, so that people in the rural area can finally have true community-based mental health service?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): You know, Mr. Speaker, if only the NDP, when they were in government, had had such advocates for reforming the mental health system, they might have done something in 14 of the last 20 years that they governed this province.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell my honourable friend that we have—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): I hesitate to rise once again, in response to a question and an answer by the Minister of Health, to point out that Beauchesne says that answers should be brief and relate to the matter raised and should not lead to debate.

Mr. Speaker, the so-called answer of the minister was clearly lending itself to debate. The member for Swan River asked a very straightforward question. We expect a straightforward answer, yes or no, from the minister. I think that is only reasonable, and those are our rules as well.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, the member did ask a straightforward question after a long preamble. Beauchesne's 409.(1) says on the question, "... question, not an expression of an opinion, representation, argumentation, nor debate."

The member, who two questions ago provided a straight question, fell back into her old ways in the last question, provided a question with a long preamble engaging in debate.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised, I would remind all honourable ministers, answers to questions should be as brief as possible, should deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate.

* * *

* (1355)

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, in answer to my honourable friend the member for Swan River, I just simply want to say to my honourable friend from

Swan River that she ought to consult with my honourable foe from Thompson, who has in Thompson, under the initiative of this government, a community mental health residence, the first one in northern Manitoba under the initiative of mental health reform by this government, staffed adequately, supplying services needed in Thompson and northern Manitoba as an objective of health care reform in the Mental Health Services delivery area that this government started and will continue to work with.

Point of Order

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, on the previous point of order—

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order, there was no point of order.

Ms. Wowchuk: The Minister of Finance—pardon me?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Swan River, on a new point of order.

Ms. Wowchuk: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) indicated that I use too much preamble. If he will check Hansard, on my third question, I did not have any preamble.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Swan River did not have a point of order.

Anicinabe Housing Corporation Government Involvement

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): With a short preamble, Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Housing, at my request, met with the new board of Anicinabe Housing Corp. of Dauphin. I appreciate the fact that the minister met with that group.

There has been, as he knows, a great deal of turmoil at the corporation over the last several months and allegations of improper maintenance of homes, patronage, mishandling of financial affairs and so on, Mr. Speaker. Because of this, the membership held an annual meeting and elected a new board recently.

Can the minister indicate, after his meeting yesterday, whether his government recognizes the new board as the legitimate and legal board of the Anicinabe Housing Corp., and further, could he also indicate the degree of financial and administrative involvement that his department has in the Anicinabe Housing Corp?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Housing): Mr. Speaker, the Anicinabe Housing Corp. in Dauphin is a private, nonprofit housing corporation. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation have been involved with the financing of the project.

Mr. Speaker, this agreement, entered into in about 1986, left a number of gray areas in terms of who has responsibility ultimately, in terms of administration of the project, should it get into difficulty.

The situation is under review by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation as to determine, in effect, what rights we as corporations-funding agencies to this private corporation have, and we are in the process of attempting to determine exactly what rights we have and what rights we do not have.

In terms of the recognition of one board or another board, Mr. Speaker, it is a matter of law. I indicated to the people I met with yesterday that it is a matter of law and will have to be determined in the due process of law.

Investigation

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the minister has acknowledged a substantial investment of provincial dollars—as a matter of fact, I understand it is some \$100,000, although he did not say that here today—and in view of the fact that the minister did not initiate an investigation by his department of the allegations that were brought before him yesterday and the supporting evidence, and now that he has had an opportunity to review those allegations and supporting evidence, can the minister indicate whether he is now prepared to initiate an extensive investigation audit to determine the validity of those allegations so that the cloud can be lifted from the board, and they can start dealing with the legitimate concerns of the tenants?

* (1400)

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Housing): Mr. Speaker, we have certainly a great concern over the tenants and the fact that, based on allegations made—I have not seen the project myself—there are considerable repairs required and things of that nature.

Mr. Speaker, it is incorrect to say an investigation has not been launched. It was launched long ago, within the last two or three weeks, when this matter came to our attention. Our concern is that we cannot act if we do not have legal status, and we are not certain, because of the way the agreements were originally written, as to whether we have appropriate legal status or not. That matter is under investigation.

We are not alone in this situation. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has an interest four or five times larger than our own in this project. We have to first determine what our legal rights are, what we can in fact do and cannot do. Then from that point, we will take appropriate action to try and resolve this issue as quickly as possible.

Mr. Plohman: The minister should know that this is not a project. This deals with 71 units spread throughout Dauphin that are in bad need of repair.

Anicnabe Housing Corporation Board Status

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): In view of the fact that the minister does not seem to know the legal status, I would ask his colleague the minister responsible for Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) that, since she has received—and she is not listening, Mr. Speaker—(interjection)— Well, I am trying to assist her, so I do not have to repeat it later on.

In view of the fact that the minister's Corporations Branch has received official notice of change of the board on April 25, 1991, and in view of the fact that she knows that the previous board was not legally constituted, could the minister responsible for Corporate Affairs today clarify the legal status of the board that was elected recently and which was recently incorporated by her department?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I must apologize in that I was in conversation at the beginning of the member's question, and I would appreciate it if he could tell me again which board it is he is referring to.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity. The House leader for the government side groaned when I wanted to get the attention—(interjection)— I can see why.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have recognized the honourable member for Dauphin to clarify his question for the honourable minister.

Mr. Plohman: Yes, for the minister of Corporate Affairs' edification, this is the board of the Anicnabe Housing Corp. which sent in official notice of change of the board. It was received April 25, 1991, by her Corporations Branch. What is the legal status of that corporation?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Speaker, I will take that question as notice and report back to the member at the next Question Period.

Manitoba Telephone System Oz Pedde Contract

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): My question is to the First Minister.

Having said on Tuesday, quote: Unless you can prove otherwise, you are going to have to take my word for it.

Then changing his mind in providing the salary level of MTS President, Oz Pedde, after staff obviously made him aware of the arrogance of his statement, the First Minister has now added to his dismal ignorance of senior corporate operations by stating that the benefits package would not be disclosed because it is, quote: details and trivia.

Will the First Minister today table the agreement with the new president of the Manitoba Telephone System, complete with the detail and trivia?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, if I wanted to learn about arrogance, I would not have to ask staff. I would just come and listen to the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs).

I said before that the information with respect to contracts of senior officials, within various Crown corporations, we will be happy to reveal levels of compensation. We can also assure the public that there are no aspects of the agreements which would contravene normal practices.

The other aspects of it that have to do with severance arrangements, that have to do with holidays and pension arrangements and everything else are all part and parcel of the guidelines that we have set for all. We will not contravene guidelines. We will not give anyone severance arrangements that exceed the standards that we have set.

I might tell you that one of the things that the New Democrats did when they brought in people to run

Crown corporations was to give a two-year severance to the CEO of Manitoba Hydro, two-year severance. They gave to the head of Manfor, memberships in a golf club in Montreal, all of those, memberships to a golf course in Montreal—these are the kinds of things.

We have said we have put limits on what they could do, and they have to be within the ordinary norms. If a person does not want to join the pension plan, we can arrange for that by lieu of the agreement. We can also arrange for the severances, all that are within agreement within the normal standards that we set, and we are not going to violate those standards.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, the only one who knows what is normal is the Premier because he will not divulge the information. Included in the so-called details and trivia of many senior corporate executives are such things as car allowance, pension benefits, enhancement on pension benefits for senior executives, insurance benefits, severance benefits, club memberships, holiday benefits, housing allowances.

Would the minister tell us today just which ones of these things, which can amount anywhere from 10 to 100 percent of salary, are to be given to Mr. Pedde?

Mr. Filmon: Of all of those things that the member has referred to, I am not aware of ones that are there in that contract, so I will investigate the matter and report back.

Premier of Manitoba Apology Request

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Yesterday, the Premier also said that, in order to get the best, you have to pay for it. As a result, he obviously indicated that every civil servant in the province, because they are only entitled, according to the Finance minister, from zero percent to 2 percent, is not the best.

Would he now like to apologize to the Civil Service of the Province of Manitoba in that his statement that you only get what you pay for quite frankly is not in keeping with the statements of his Finance minister?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I have to say, with the greatest of respect to my honourable friend, that is the most insensitive garbage I have ever heard. I have said that we value very highly

the services of the civil servants of Manitoba, and we have—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable First Minister, to finish his response.

* (1410)

Mr. Filmon: There are salary ranges for every single position within the public service of Manitoba. As I said right from Day One, Mr. Pedde is paid within the salary range that is allocated for the heads of our Crown corporations. That is exactly what happened, Mr. Speaker. Despite the challenge, despite the innuendo, despite the suggestion of the Leader of the third party, all of that is accurate. Mr. Pedde is paid within the range.

Every other public servant is paid within a range that is negotiated by their union on their behalf or in their public service position when they are hired. There is a range for deputy ministers. They are not all paid exactly the same. There is a range for assistant deputy ministers. They are not all paid exactly the same. There is a range for special assistants. They are not all paid exactly the same.

Mr. Pedde is paid within his range, and every other public servant is paid within their range. We value very highly the contributions that are made by the public servants of Manitoba.

School of Psychiatric Nursing Selkirk Closure

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I have asked the Minister of Health repeatedly in this House and in the letter I sent to him almost three weeks ago to provide an explanation for his decision to close the School of Psychiatric Nursing in Selkirk. In addition, the town of Selkirk mental health organizations and students have requested the same.

So far, no one has received a suitable answer from this minister. Will he now table in this House an explanation for his decision and the groups he consulted with prior to closing this school?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend has been bringing up, on occasion, the issue of the consolidation of the two schools of psychiatric nursing into one located at Brandon. I realize my honourable friend may find that decision difficult in his community, and I respect

that. There is concern from the council of Selkirk about the move.

Those decisions are never taken lightly. I reiterate to my honourable friend that the goals we are seeking to achieve with psychiatric nursing as a profession in a reformed mental health system are much to the betterment of that profession, its training opportunities and its service delivery opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot tell my honourable friend what the registered psychiatric nursing education will be four years from now and their contribution to the system, but let me assure my honourable friend, it will be greater than it is today as a result of decisions made by this government.

Selkirk Veterinary Clinic Closure

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, my next question is to the Minister of Agriculture.

Will the minister listen to the over 200 residents who signed a petition, many from his own riding, and commit capital funds for the upgrading of the Selkirk veterinary clinic so this much-needed facility remains open.

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the Veterinary Services Commission has been working with the Selkirk veterinary clinic to deal with their future, to deal with the issues that they have in front of them. I can assure the member that the Veterinary Services Commission will continue to listen to them and work out the situations that they are putting in front of the commission.

Mr. Dewar: My final question is to the same minister.

Will he meet with the Selkirk Veterinary Services District Board to look at alternatives to the closing of the Selkirk veterinary clinic?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, that issue is in front of the Veterinary Services Commission, and I will act on whatever recommendation the Services Commission gives to me.

CKY Television Strike Government Advertising Withdrawal

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, for several months, we have been calling on the Premier to do what many businesses in Manitoba have been doing in terms of the labour dispute currently at CKY, and that is not to advertise during

the period of the labour dispute. The Premier has refused to do so.

Recently, the ratings have come out. If it was not good policy for them before in sense of fairness, it is certainly a good policy now, given the drop in ratings, for them to review their advertising policy.

Given the sensitive nature of negotiations currently underway, will the Premier not further become involved in this dispute? Will he pull the advertising from CKY for the remainder of the strike?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to the member for Thompson when he last raised that question, to depart from what is normal practice and to deal and single out one unit of employment in the province because of a labour dispute is to intervene in the strike and to take sides.

It would be no different than if we decided not to buy goods from a certain manufacturer or supplier in the province because there was a labour dispute on. That would be changing, the supplier would be intervening and taking sides in a strike. We have chosen not to take sides in the strike.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, once again, will the First Minister recognize at least that the Province of Manitoba is not getting its money's worth and at least withdraw the ads because of the major drop in ratings for Manitobans who are tuning out CKY because they will not participate and interfere in the strike? They are voting by turning off.

Would the First Minister also show the same sense of fairness that other Manitobans have shown?

Mr. Filmon: The process of placing public information ads is a nonpartisan one. It is carried out by the public service in accordance with a plan that they developed for the year. For us to take political action, get involved and start telling them where to advertise, how much to advertise, when to advertise, and all of those things, would be to do what the New Democrats did when they totally—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable First Minister, to finish his response.

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, we will not politically interfere and intervene either in the strike or in the placement of ads by virtue of the way in which the public service does that on a normal routine basis. That is the kind of policy that I think ought to be there. It should not be politicized.

Mr. Ashton: A final question: If they will not stop interfering, will they at least do what other businesses are doing, even those who are not pulling their ads, and make sure they do not continue to pay inflated rates, or is it the position of this government to keep paying standard rates to CKY and, in fact, actually subsidize the company during the length of this labour dispute?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what rates are being paid for the advertising. I do not know whether there are preferential rates, discount rates or anything else happening that reflect the viewership of that.

That is something that we have professional public servants there to do, to make sure that we get value for the dollars that we spend, and we will ensure that they do get value for the dollars that they spend.

Department of Education ESL Consultant Layoff

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, this government has not been good to ESL programs. They have transferred adult ESL from the Department of Education to the Department of Culture. They bungled the ESL negotiations with the federal government. They cut the ESL program at Red River in half, and now the ESL consultant at the Department of Education has been cut.

Will this minister reconsider its assault on the ESL program and reinstate Mr. Peters?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, the programs that were transferred from the Department of Education to the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship were those that were of a generic nature. Indeed, there has been more funding go into ESL over the last two years as compared to what was in the ESL program before. Also, the member knows full well, from the Estimates debate that we just went through, that the ESL training at Red River Community College is that of a specific nature, and also the advanced ESL training.

I have to indicate quite clearly that we as a province have not reduced any of the ESL training or any part of government's ESL programming. Indeed, we have increased it over the last two years, and we are trying to do as much as we can. It is the federal component that has been decreased, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Speaker's Ruling

Mr. Speaker: I have a ruling for the House.

On Thursday, May 16, 1991, I took under advisement a point of order raised by the honourable government House leader respecting the statement: "... is not the real reason that this minister is repealing this section because he wants to do yet another favour for another of his Tory pals in St. James..." used by the honourable member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) in respect of the honourable Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst).

I have reviewed Hansard and have concluded that the statement goes beyond the usual cut and thrust of debate. In my opinion, it does impute unworthy motives to the minister, makes a personal charge against another member and reflects on the character of a member of this Legislative Assembly. In doing so, the honourable member for St. James has contravened provisions of the 6th Edition of Beauchesne's, citations 481.(e) and (f) and 411.(5).

I am therefore calling upon the honourable member for St. James to withdraw the words in question.

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): With respect to you, Mr. Speaker, the words are withdrawn.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the honourable member for St. James.

* (1420)

Nonpolitical Statement

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if I could have leave of the House to make a nonpolitical statement.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable Minister of Education and Training have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? Leave. That is agreed.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, the Faculty of Mathematics at the University of Waterloo annually sponsors a mathematics contest for Canadian students in Grade 9, Grade 10 and Grade 11. The contests were written on February 27 of this year.

Between 25,000 and 30,000 students per grade write the contests annually across the country representing approximately 2,000 schools. The

school's score is based upon the top three results in the school.

The results of this year's tests were recently released, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to congratulate all the students and schools which participated and mention a few individual achievements.

In the Pascal contest for Grade 9 students, the top student in Manitoba was Mike Runge from Acadia Junior High. Mike placed 14th of all students who wrote the test across Canada.

In Grade 10, Joanne Thiessen from MacGregor Collegiate placed first in the province and finished 52nd overall in the country.

In the Grade 11 contest, Mr. Speaker, Manitoba's top student was Andrew Sarkar of St. John's Ravenscourt. Andrew also finished second overall in Canada.

I would like to commend our Manitoba students for their fine showing in this national contest.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, after some discussion with the House leaders of the opposition parties, it was agreed that we will start today off in debate on bills. Mr. Speaker, would you therefore call second readings, Bills 42, 47, 48, 53 and then proceed to Bill 38.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 42—The Public Schools Finance Board Amendment Act

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), that Bill 42, The Public Schools Finance Board Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Commission des finances des écoles publiques, now be read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to speak to Bill 42, an act to amend The Public Schools Finance Board Act.

I would, first of all, like to thank my colleague the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) who spoke Friday to Bills 40 and 41 to amend The Public

Schools Act and The Education Administration Act, respectively.

Mr. Speaker, I draw particular attention to Bill 41 because it is directly related to Bill 42. Together provisions of these two acts will clarify the mandates and the organizational structures of the Public Schools Finance Board and the Department of Education and Training as they relate to the government support of education programming.

Mr. Speaker, in the past the Provincial Auditor has raised concerns in his reports to this Chamber about the operations of the Public Schools Finance Board and the Department of Education and Training as they relate to the government's support to education programming. The Auditor's concerns have been taken very seriously, and the amendments which we have before us today are intended to address those concerns.

In brief, Mr. Speaker, as a result of these amendments, the Public Schools Finance Board will administer the capital support program to school divisions and will collect education support levies. The board will continue to have an appointed chair who reports directly to the minister. The board will have its own staff who will report to and be directly responsible to the chair.

The department, on the other hand, will administer the operational support program to school divisions. As well, Mr. Speaker, the department will continue to co-ordinate the overall budgeting process for the capital operational support programs and will provide reporting and monitoring of the financial operations of the department.

Mr. Speaker, that is the basic intent of the changes of the bill that are being proposed in Bill 42. It is to ensure the proper and efficient delivery of government support to education programming with clearly defined and compatible roles for the Public Schools Finance Board and the Department of Education and Training.

Mr. Speaker, I might add that many of these changes have been due for some time, and indeed it is the Provincial Auditor who made sure that these were noted in his report to the Chamber. It is now time for us to move on these changes, so that indeed we will not only comply with the Provincial Auditor's request, but indeed that the operations will be more clear and more meaningful in terms of how the Public Schools Finance Board conducts its activities

and how the Department of Education and Training conducts its operations as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, with those few comments, I would recommend that this bill move through to committee.

Mr. Jerry Storle (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), that debate on this bill be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 47—The Highway Traffic Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), that Bill 47, The Highway Traffic Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; *Loi modifiant le Code de la route et d'autres dispositions législatives*, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Driedger: It gives me great pleasure to present to you Bill 47, The Highway Traffic Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act.

I want to indicate to my critics that I have information here that after the reading of both these bills I will be presenting to them, indicating what the current program is and what the proposal is of the bill.

Bill 47 proposes to repeal Bill 88, The Physically Disabled Persons Parking Act which was passed March 15, 1990. As Bill 88 was introduced as a private member's bill, proclamation was reserved to ensure the act that it did indeed effectively meet the interests and concerns of the disabled community that it was intended to serve.

Upon detailed examination it was discovered that the bill was severely problematic both in content and design. The primary deficiency of Bill 88 was that it enacted an independent statute, distinct from The Highway Traffic Act, which was to legislate disabled persons' parking offences and parking provisions by provincial statute when these responsibilities are a municipal responsibility delegated under The Highway Traffic Act. Legislating these provisions by provincial statute rendered the legislation virtually unenforceable due to the lack of administrative and enforcement mechanisms.

Bill 47 developed after extensive consultations with the representatives of Manitoba's disabled persons, advocacy organizations, Manitoba law enforcement agencies, parking lot owners, Departments of Justice and Rural Development, the Cities of Winnipeg and Brandon, Chambers of Commerce in Manitoba and rural communities, has been specifically designed to address the inadequacies of the original bill.

I have to indicate, Mr. Speaker, that when Bill 88 was introduced, the whole House at that time was under the impression that this kind of consultation had taken place, and obviously that was not the case.

Bill 47 amends The Highway Traffic Act with consequential amendments to The City of Winnipeg Act and to The Municipal Act to ensure a consistent and uniform disabled persons' parking program is implemented across the province.

The program has three specific intents in serving the disabled community of Manitoba: (a) The bill provides for the sole recognition of a provincially issued disabled persons' parking permit which will eliminate the confusion presently being experienced due to a variety of permits currently available for different purposes in Manitoba. All other permits currently being issued in Manitoba will be legislatively invalidated after a six-month phase-in period.

Establishment of a provincial permit is consistent with the 1984 federal-provincial territorial memorandum of understanding designed to promote the consistent display of physically disabled persons' parking permits across Canada. In keeping with the reciprocity agreements with virtually all U.S. states, all extra-provincially issued permits will be recognized as valid in Manitoba as will Manitoba's permits be recognized extra-provincially.

* (1430)

The three-year renewal permits will be issued by one central body, the Society for Manitobans with Disabilities at a cost of \$10 per three-year term. Manitoba currently provides an annual grant to the society and will continue to do so for another two years to assist in the development of this program. However, the fee will allow the program, after a two-year period, to be operated on a cost-recovery, nonprofit basis.

Section (b): The bill requires all municipalities with populations of 3,000 or more to enact, if already not in place, by-laws making it an offence to park in a space designated for disabled persons without displaying the provincially-issued permit. These by-laws shall also ensure that the penalty for such an offence shall be the maximum fine allowable within each municipality's current fine structure.

These by-laws are to be enforced by both law enforcement agencies and on-site security personnel with designated special constable status.

Municipalities will also be encouraged via this legislation to pass accompanying by-laws requiring parking lot owners to designate disabled persons' parking spaces in accordance with the individual needs of each municipality.

Section (c): In a provision unique to Manitoba, the bill will also enhance the accessibility of physically disabled persons by allowing left side to curb parking in restricted circumstances. Disabled persons, both passengers and drivers, tend to exit vehicles from the passenger side and are often hampered by the curb when parked right side to curb.

I am now confident that Manitoba, through this legislation, will be delivering to the disabled community a parking program which will both effectively address the needs of the physically disabled and will provide a role model to other jurisdictions in the development of similar legislation.

Mr. Speaker, there was an article in the paper the other day at which I took some exception really, where it says: "Handicapped parking bill branded 'gutted'." This was the view and comments, I suppose, of the individual who at that time brought forward the bill, Mr. Mark Minenko. I took some exception to the comments that he was making in there because at the time when he brought the bill forward and indicated that adequate consultation had taken place, that was not the case.

As a result of that we have spent a lot of time working on this bill and bringing it forward. I have to indicate that—I just want to read one little comment in here by John Lane, the executive director of the Canadian Paralegic Association's Winnipeg office, who says: "There have been compromises made in order to ensure the co-operation of the municipalities in securing a bill that they will enforce," said John Lane, executive director.

"The big thing the bill has got going for it is that there seems to be broad public acceptance . . . I think it's a good bill."

So with those comments, I submit the bill for second reading and ask for the support of the opposition.

Mr. Cliff Evans (Interlake): I move, seconded by the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), that debate on Bill 47 be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 48—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (2)

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) that Bill 48, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant le Code de la route, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

(Mrs. Louise Dacquay, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

Motion presented.

Mr. Driedger: Madam Deputy Speaker, in presenting The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, this is our normal housekeeping bill that is presented every year. The Highway Traffic Act is a very thick and complex act, and each year we come forward with certain amendments as we have done here. I am hoping that one of these days we will be able to take and bring forward a whole revised act so it will not be as complex as it is now.

I also want to indicate, as with the previous bill, that I have information here that I will be giving to the critics which indicates the present legislation that we have, the proposed changes, what it is intended to do and the new changes. They can go through the bill item by item and deal with it in that manner. I want to indicate to the critic from the official opposition that one of his colleagues had also expressed interest in that, the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), and maybe the member could make him aware of the information as well.

Madam Deputy Speaker, Bill 48 is my department's annual housekeeping bill to update The Highway Traffic Act in response to ongoing improvements in the administration of highway safety in Manitoba. This year's bill contains amendments to 10 main subject areas. The first one is learner driver's legislation. With respect to

learner drivers, it is amended to ensure driver education students have more opportunity to gain driving experience, to ensure learner drivers are protected against being accompanied by a person who is impaired and to ensure the efficient issuance of a learner's licence to novice motorcyclists.

The second one is accident reporting threshold. The act is amended to increase the property damage threshold for reporting traffic accidents from \$500 to \$1,000. The increase to \$1,000 reflects a reasonable threshold for reporting an accident to the police in light of the current costs of repairing motor vehicles damaged in traffic accidents.

I will continue to put the 10 areas on the record, Madam Deputy Speaker, and the details, as I indicated, I am prepared to go through with them, even on a sit-down basis with the critics to make sure that they understand if they have any questions on that.

Item 3 is vehicle equipment inspection and registration. Amendments are proposed to ensure fish farmers may register their trucks as farm trucks to require daytime running lights and centre high-mounted stop lights as standard equipment for current model vehicles, and to ensure automatic occupant restraint devices. For example, air bags are prohibited from being removed from a vehicle.

The fourth area is stolen vehicles. Amendments are introduced at the request of Manitoba's law enforcement agencies to assist in the apprehension of car thieves who are selling stolen vehicles to car shredders and batteries for their scrap value.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I had the representation from the RCMP and the city police who talked to my colleagues and brought forward some of the concerns about what is happening with the car theft rings that are operating in the city, where they will take and pick up a car and within a half an hour have it through a shredder, and you never have any evidence of it. We have some things here that they feel are going to help protect against that. These are things that they brought forward, and I have another area that I will bring forward as well.

The fifth area is driver improvement. Amendments are proposed to ensure errant drivers cannot avoid driver licence suspension action by changing their residence status to suit their circumstances.

The sixth one is driver fitness. Amendments are proposed to ensure more consistent provisions with respect to requiring reports from persons who are actively experiencing problems with alcohol or drug use and to ensure consistency in the matter of physicians reporting to the register any medical condition of their patients which would negatively affect the patient's ability to operate a motor vehicle.

This is another area where there is some concern that we are not being consistent in terms of how we deal with somebody when a doctor brings forward a report indicating that an individual is not capable or should maybe not be driving. Some of these things, Madam Deputy Speaker, have actually been used or are being done, and what we are doing is, we are just bringing it forward in legislation.

* (1440)

The seventh area is law enforcement. Amendments are proposed on behalf of Manitoba's law enforcement agencies to ensure peace officers, under specific circumstances, are allowed to extinguish their emergency warning devices, both to the benefit of the public and to assist in the apprehension of law violators. This, again, was at the request of the law enforcement agencies.

I will give a brief little example where we have, let us say, a fire call at three o'clock in the morning, either a false call—I am dealing specifically with a false alarm that is sent in—and we have our crews tearing down residential streets at three o'clock in the morning with the sirens going and the bells going. What happens is that we are talking specifically of residential areas where, at times, we do not think it would be necessary to wake up the whole neighbourhood by having it done—under certain circumstances, and that is very important.

The other thing, of course, the law enforcement agencies have asked that during the case of an investigation where, let us say, a robbery is in effect, that as they move in, providing that they use proper safety precautions, that they would maybe be able to extinguish their sirens so that they could possibly move in to apprehend an individual. At the present time, they have to have their lights flashing, sirens wailing. In many cases, the individuals have managed to elude, you know, get away from the place where they are committing their crime before the police get there. These are things that they have basically requested and we have brought forward.

The eighth area is under the national safety code. Amendments are proposed to ensure that a driver's licence is not suspended for unwarranted reasons.

The ninth area is criminal code renumbering. Amendments are proposed to update the act to reflect section numbering changes in the Criminal Code of Canada.

The tenth area is under the Highway Traffic Board. Amendments are proposed to ensure the streamlining of the approval of board orders. I want to, Madam Deputy Speaker, talk to the critics specifically about this.

This is an area where we have had a court ruling go against the Motor Transport Board under their insurance aspect of it, and it is creating a certain amount of uncertainty within the industry and in the trucking industry right now. They are asking for, actually, speedy passage of this area alone, and it was felt, on discussion with my staff, that we should not bring forward a specific bill just for this one item, that we could include it in the amendment bill that we have before the House which is basically our normal housekeeping amendment act. So I am prepared to have further discussion of this and clarify that, and possibly have some of the critics, if they have concerns, meet with some of my staff people to fully acquaint themselves of what we are trying to accomplish by the 10th amendment in here.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in summary, Bill 48 proposes a number of amendments to The Highway Traffic Act which are routine in nature, which are vital to keeping the administration of highway safety in this province current and progressive. Thank you.

Mr. Jerry Storle (Filn Flon): Madam Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), that debate on this bill be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 53—The Natural Products Marketing Amendment Act

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to move, seconded by the Minister of Education and Training (Mr. Derkach), that Bill 53, The Natural Products Marketing Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la commercialisation des produits naturels, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Findlay: Madam Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to introduce Bill 53, The Natural Products Amendment Act. The intent of this bill is to provide authority in The Natural Products Marketing Act which will specifically authorize the use of the producer boards' funds to first establish compensation reserves and, secondly, to permit the funding of research. Currently, there is no such funding provision available in the act.

For several years, the poultry boards have been discussing the possibility of establishing a fund to compensate those producers whose poultry flocks have had to be destroyed because of particular diseases. An example of the poultry disease that has really caused significant trouble in Manitoba in recent years is infectious laryngotracheitis, more commonly known as ILT. This disease affects chickens but not turkeys or waterfowl.

The province has, through the authority of The Animal Diseases Act, operated a policy of attempting to eradicate this particular disease. This has resulted in a slaughter of infected fowl involving compensation, assistance, cleaning, disinfection and payment compensation. It is important to note that once a bird becomes affected by this virus, it is a carrier for life. Therefore, the choice has been made to eradicate any outbreaks rather than try to vaccinate the fowl.

Up until the fall of 1985 the Manitoba government assumed all the expenses associated with investigation, eradication, cleanup and monitoring. In October of 1985, there was a serious ILT outbreak in a large commercial broiler flock. The government approached the industry to share in the cost of eradicating the diseased fowl. Industry agreed and shared the \$38,000 compensation package on a 50-50 basis. In 1986, a large layer flock was stricken with the same disease and eradication proceeded on the same 50-50 basis.

In the past few years, there have been several outbreaks of ILT in small flocks and the industry has agreed to pay 100 percent of the compensation to those poultry flocks that had to be eradicated.

The Manitoba Egg Producers' Marketing Board, the Manitoba Chicken Broiler Producers' Marketing Board and the Manitoba Broiler Hatching Egg Commission have reached an agreement to establish a joint fund in the amount of a maximum of \$150,000, and a request that this amendment to

The Natural Products Marketing Act to allow them to set up this compensation fund.

They have agreed that the funding will be shared on a 67 percent basis for the egg industry, 30 percent by the chicken industry, and 3 percent by the hatching egg producers. This particular fund will be administered by a committee comprised of the general managers for each of the three boards I just mentioned.

Payment from the fund will only occur when the director of veterinary services, Manitoba Agriculture, has issued a destruction order pursuant to The Animal Diseases Act.

I would certainly like to, at this time, congratulate the three poultry boards for taking the responsibility to fund their own compensation programs, when particular flocks have to be destroyed because of disease.

The amendment will also permit those other industries, those other producer boards, hogs, milk, honey and vegetables, to establish similar compensation funds that may be unique to their industry.

In terms of funding research projects the boards in Manitoba have on many occasions made financial contributions to such research organizations as Veterinary Infectious Diseases Organization, otherwise known as VIDO. The boards have also made financial contributions for the purchase of testing equipment used by the Animal Industries branch of Manitoba Agriculture. These funds will be administered by the individual boards for the research check off.

In conclusion, I would like to urge all members of this House and the Legislature to give the bill their support so that we can ensure that the funds are available to compensate producers whose poultry have to be destroyed because of infectious disease, as well as establishing a source of additional funds to continue to support essential research in agriculture in the province of Manitoba.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): I move, seconded by the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

Madam Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River—

* (1450)

Point of Order

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Madam Deputy Speaker, I do not know whether I have made this request before, but the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Dreidger) in addressing Bill 48, I believe, kindly agreed to provide members opposite with a spreadsheet which shows the existing section, the proposed amendment and the rationale. It was common practice in this House in 1987, 1988 certainly, to provide members opposite with a breakdown of the details of the bill. The Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld) has kindly provided us with a detailed breakdown of the—(interjection)—Thank you.

We have been blessed with an abundance of new legislation in the last few weeks, and I would simply ask that members, ministers when they are introducing legislation for second reading provide the spread sheets, as has been done and is past practice in this House.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Flin Flon does not have a point of order.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 38—The Wildlife Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate on second reading of Bill 38 (The Wildlife Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la conservation de la faune), standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk). Stand? Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

* * *

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, would you call Bills 5, 6, and thereafter the bills as shown on the Order Paper, Debate on Second Readings.

Bill 5—The Mental Health Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate on second reading of Bill 5, The Mental Health Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé mentale), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis). Stand?

Some Honourable Members: Stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 6—The Mines and Minerals and Consequential Amendments Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate on second reading of Bill 6 (The Mines and Minerals and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur les mines et les minéraux et modifiant diverses dispositions législatives), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld), standing in the name of the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes).

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Madam Deputy Speaker, the member for Point Douglas would like to speak on this bill. Unfortunately, he is detained at a meeting. I would like to ask leave of the House to recall this bill at a further time later on this afternoon.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed that this bill be recalled at some point later in the afternoon?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 8—The Vital Statistics Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 8 (The Vital Statistics Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les statistiques de l'état civil), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gillshammer), standing in the name of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak). Stand?

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 6—The Mines and Minerals and Consequential Amendments Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on the second reading of Bill 6 (The Mines and Minerals and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur les mines et les minéraux et modifiant diverses dispositions législatives), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld), standing in the name of the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes).

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): It gives me pleasure to conclude my remarks today. As I mentioned yesterday, Bill 6 is a positive step in the right direction and it has been long overdue. It has taken 60 years to come forward with amendments to this bill and it will, I repeat again, it will change some of the regulations into statutes which should have a little more power for the people instead of the legislators.

I was encouraged to see where the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld) had indicated that they were negotiating a new Mineral Development Agreement, and I think that is very important for all Manitobans, because with the new mineral agreement and with dollars in place, we should see a flurry of activity in the exploration field and right across Manitoba.

When you look at the outlay of Manitoba in general, you will notice that in northern Manitoba the vast part of northern Manitoba is covered with lakes, rocks and trees and has not been developed yet. When you have a new mineral agreement where individuals can access exploration dollars, those are probably the areas that they will be targeting and, hopefully, they will find some new minerals for a mine to start up in one of those communities or start up a new community.

I recall the Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger) when he was describing his journey to Cullaton Lake which was a gold mine that was developed in the Northwest Territories, but it was very close to Churchill. It was between Churchill and Eskimo Point. He mentioned the fact that they had to fly in with this huge plane. That plane would have been what they call a Hercules plane. He said that they flew over the wilderness. There was no community in sight, no runways, nowhere to land.

What he had mentioned was that they would fly as low as possible over the tree line and drop this huge cat into the middle of nowhere. A lot of those

pieces of machinery are very heavy and when it hit the ground it did some damage, but what they did was they brought people in and they repaired that cat. From there they got the cat running, and then they cleared the land and developed a clearing. Then they built their runway, and that is how they brought the rest of the equipment in to start that mine.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is very important that they come up with a new agreement to get dollars for exploration companies to utilize our vast resources we have in Manitoba, especially in northern Manitoba, because we have such a high unemployment rate in a lot of the communities and reserves that we have in the North. People are always looking for ways of increasing job opportunities, and a lot of people are looking for new businesses to develop and start in northern Manitoba. What better place than if you developed a new community, a whole new community, if they found, say, a gold vein or copper or zinc?

Once you brought in your cat and you cleared the land, built a runway, then what is the next step? Then you bring the workers in and they start developing the mine. You bring your development miners in and they will sink a shaft, or it will be an open-pit mine. Once you do that, then you have started developing a community, and a lot of the communities in northern Manitoba were started exactly that way.

You could look at Flin Flon, Snow Lake, Thompson, Sherridon, which is a good example. There was a thriving gold mine there at one time. People would come in and work in those mines. For awhile they would come in for two weeks at a time, fly out for another two weeks. Then eventually what happens is people start feeling the loneliness and isolation. Someone will build a small house, then someone else will build another small house, bring their families in. Then what happens when the families come in, they will say, well, we need a school for our children, or we need this, we need that, we need a store for our groceries, and then the community develops.

* (1500)

I am encouraged that if we see a progressive new mineral development agreement, that we will hopefully see some new communities developed in Manitoba. The more employment opportunities we have for individuals, it will be much better for all of

Manitoba. We will have a much greater tax base. What happens when you start a community, Madam Deputy Speaker, people always mention that you need incentives for the big companies to develop a mine, and they need the return on their dollars that they have invested, and that is correct. Also, you need fair return for the workers that go and work in the mines and the quarries, and you need protection for the labourers, the miners, engineers who live in those communities. It cannot all be one way.

What would you have if you developed a mine? You invested, say \$20 million into opening of a mine, and the rate of pay that you would pay each individual would be, say, \$5 an hour. I do not think that mine would be very profitable, because you would not have the individuals to work it for one thing. Qualified miners, muckers, and group tram operators need a fair return also for their work. So when you develop a new community and mines, then you have people that will have a good wage incentive. Also, you look at the individuals that go to these remote communities, a lot of these individuals are attracted by the so-called isolation of those communities.

That is why, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is so important in this bill, and it is very encouraging in this bill, that the whole rehabilitation process is part of the whole bill. Because a lot of these individuals who move either north, east, west, wherever the mine is, if it is isolated, a lot of them will go there for the hunting, the fishing, the great outdoors that we have in Manitoba today. If we could preserve that, then that will keep those attractions for our children and their children.

I do not know if you have—like, I know a lot of members of the House here have travelled in northern Manitoba, for example, and if you just look at some of the mine sites that we have today, you ask the workers, why would you move to say Leaf Rapids, Lynn Lake or Sherridon or Thompson or the Pas? Ninety-nine percent will say I came up here to make some dollars, the money was good, but I fell in love with the community. I fell in love with the outdoors. You will hear that over and over and over.

When you have that kind of attraction and the whole development agreement in place, you will attract many more workers and many more Manitobans. People from other provinces will be able to enjoy what we have to offer in Manitoba.

I recall many experiences that I have had living in northern Manitoba with a lot of the remote lakes and stuff that we would go into. We would do some fishing and some hunting, and they are some of the most pleasant moments of my life. I wish everyone here in this House would have a chance to experience that at least once. The ones that have had, they know exactly what I am talking about.

You are away from everything and everybody. It is just you and the blackflies and mosquitoes. They do not seem to be that bad because you are giving something in return of gaining something.

A lot of those lakes and stuff like that, that I am speaking of—

An Honourable Member: No mosquitoes there?

Mr. Hickes: Oh, there are lots of mosquitoes, blackflies.

Madam Deputy Speaker, when you experience that, that is something that we need to preserve for our children, our grandchildren and for generations to come. Also, the whole danger of a lot of that tranquility and peace and the fishing and the hunting that I just spoke of could be disrupted and lost forever if we are not active with the whole rehabilitation process.

That is why, it is so important that if we are going to be aggressive and put into proper measures the whole rehabilitation process, I encourage the government to look at the number of inspectors they have because that is going to be the whole key. If you maintain only three inspectors, it is going to be impossible to get everywhere.

A lot of those, if they say, for instance, discovered some orebody in the middle of the wilderness, and they did, like the Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger) said, dropped a cat in there, built a runway, developed a community, developed the store. In order to access the ore that is found in that new community, will be the buildings of roads and draining of some of the lakes. A lot of those lakes and stuff that we now enjoy, we have to make sure that we take all the steps that are necessary to preserve that for our future.

Also, another thing is, when we talk about the great outdoors. Part 15 of the bill sets out requirements for the operations of mines, of course, in a manner in which it does not endanger the public safety and the environment. That is why I say, about the construction of roads and the draining of the lakes, and also when you look at some of the

huge open-pit operations that we have in Manitoba and right across Canada, you will see where they have excavated the ore, the gravel and the soil.

Everything is excavated and you are left with a huge, huge hole. A lot of times that hole will go thousands of feet and the only way you start at the top and you start excavating down, and what you have is a huge hole and you have a road that spirals all the way down to the bottom. That is where your turning point is to pick up another load, and you spiral all the way up again.

The whole rehabilitation process of an open-pit mine I look forward to seeing because I cannot imagine how that hole would ever be filled and the soil and the trees the way they were before. That will be an impossible task. So that is where the people and the community, I feel, should have some responsibility of coming up with ideas and initiatives in order to benefit the community that those open-pit mines or the rock quarries or what have you directly affect. We have a rehabilitation process, and whether it is a community that wants to maybe make a miniature Butchart Gardens or snake pit or what have you, let the community decide that and let the community implement the work. That way, they can employ a lot of the local people in those communities and also the whole quarry.

The collection of levies for quarry collection, that will be increased. Well, it will be doubled, and half of that will be used to rehabilitate quarry pits that we have now in existence. Those will be evaluated on a year-to-year basis, and who will collect that? Who will ensure that the proper rehabilitation takes place?

I would encourage the government to look at passing over some of that responsibility to municipalities to do the collecting of those levies and also being the watchdog over the rehabilitation and also the extraction of those quarries.

This would make a lot of sense because if you are in a northern remote community, how often are you going to have government officials or inspectors fly up there to inspect, say, a quarry or a pit? I cannot see it happening too often, and what you will have is, right at the end of a project you will have this massive attempt at rehabilitation of these rock quarries, and where in the bill, which is very encouraging, is that ongoing rehabilitation that will be evaluated on a yearly basis?

If you give that responsibility I mentioned earlier to the communities, they could go out, inspect it and say, hey, you are veering off too far here, or you do not need to excavate here because of this or that. Also, if a community says, well, we want to maybe make a pond out of that rock quarry and put fish stocks in there and maybe where some communities do not have adequate fishing, they could put fish stocks in so that children and adults and the women and the men could have a fishing spot that could be used on a yearly basis. Even a lot of the communities that do not have—it could be done in Swan River, it could be done anywhere. Also, with a rock quarry, I know some areas where a dug-out pit in a lot of the communities is the only swimming hole in that community.

* (1510)

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would encourage the government to let the communities take some responsibility and come up with some of their ideas and also to have the advantage to utilize and hopefully develop new recreation opportunities for people in remote communities.

If you look at some of the dug-out pits that I have seen in the past, they are excellent swimming holes. They are deep and they are flat. There are no hidden boulders. It is excellent nice, clean water because it is rainwater and a lot of them are flowing in from the spring. You would not need to invest in swimming pools and stuff in communities because a lot of the communities are very happy. They do not have the tax base, and they do not have the resources that we have here in southern Manitoba.

A lot of the communities that you have in northern Manitoba are—like the majority of the population are of aboriginal ancestry and I know with this bill, Bill 6, they will be very encouraged because of the rehabilitation that is part of the bill.

I know, like myself and my colleagues, we might make a few amendments to it but in principle we support this bill. It is an excellent step in the right direction, but also we have to make sure that the people and the communities are well maintained and they have their input.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 8—The Vital Statistics Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), for second reading of Bill 8, The Vital Statistics Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les statistiques de l'état civil, standing in the name of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Agreed.

Bill 12—The Court of Queen's Bench Small Claims Practices Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), second reading of Bill 12 (The Court of Queen's Bench Small Claims Practices Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le recouvrement des petites créances à la Cour du Banc de la Reine), standing in the name of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Stand? Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 19—The Local Authorities Election Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Downey), second reading of Bill 19 (The Local Authorities Election Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'élection des autorités locales), standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Stand? Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 20—The Animal Husbandry Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) to resume debate for second reading of Bill 20 (The Animal Husbandry Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'élevage), standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk).

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Deputy Speaker, from time to time it is necessary to amend legislation to fit in with the needs of the people. In this particular piece of legislation, municipalities have identified certain areas that they requested to be amended. What is happening with these amendments is the right thing that should be happening, particularly in the area of changing the definitions of animals and poultry to those that are only used for livestock purposes.

I am also pleased to see that municipalities will now be relieved of the responsibility of providing compensation for animals that have been killed on the road, because individuals have the opportunity to have insurance. If an individual's livestock gets out, it should be that individual's responsibility to compensate and look after the costs of accidents that result in that.

Also, Madam Deputy Speaker, the section of the legislation that deals with electronic identification is legislation that deals with modern times. I am pleased that this is coming in, because there are types of identification that—certainly this is a more humane type of branding and identification of animals. I am pleased to see that is in the legislation.

However, since the minister was making amendments to the legislation, I am surprised that he has not made amendments to the section of the legislation that deals with the production and distribution of animal semen. Since the government has found it within its power to decide to sell, privatize, the drug and semen centres in Manitoba, I am surprised that they have not amended the legislation to deal with that as well, instead of taking the sneaky way out and just letting it go. They know there would have been an outcry from the public if they would have tried to amend this legislation.

Unfortunately, they have chosen to let the semen centre go into the private sector. I am very disappointed in that, because I am sure it is going to mean much additional cost to farmers, particularly those in the dairy industry. We have heard from people who are involved in the veterinarian clinics who are concerned with what has happened. They are also very concerned that they have not been consulted. They had a meeting, a veterinarian meeting across the province, and nothing was mentioned about the veterinarians' clinic being privatized and turned over to the vets.

The government has chosen to do this, but if they were doing it, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think they should have had the nerve to also amend the legislation to cover it and let the public know what their intentions were and deal with it in that way.

As I say, I think this is going to be very regressive work for the farming community, particularly people who are dealing in purebred stock. We have had people call us on this, in particular, several veterinarians who are concerned about this service and also farmers who are concerned, because they are now saying that they will not be getting the services.

People who now have the business are saying, well, there is not enough business in this particular area, so we are not going to provide the service here. That is exactly what we were afraid of would happen, that the service would be reduced once the service was privatized.

However, Madam Deputy Speaker, this bill is dealing with amendments that deal with animals and municipalities. Unfortunately, it is not dealing with the semen centre and the veterinarian clinics which could have been dealt under this legislation.

So in conclusion, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to say that, yes, these are good amendments to the legislation. We will be supporting them. However, I would hope that the government would reconsider and also look at those parts of the legislation that cover the drug semen centre which, if they were going to change, it should have been covered as well.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Swan River has concluded her time limit.

* (1520)

Mr. Cliff Evans (Interlake): I would like to make some comments on this very important bill and would like to have the patience of the Assembly as I am not 100 percent with my voice and not feeling that well and appreciate the effort.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to begin by making comments on Bill 20, referring back to what the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) made comment on when he presented this motion and the bill. He made comments to the fact that the way it was introduced back in 1987 and this government at that time shows evidence that we do not consult with people and organizations to put a bill in place and to make amendments to it.

I would like to—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

The honourable member for Interlake and all members of the House, I would like to draw to your attention that we have some technical difficulties. Hansard is down at the moment. What is the will of the House? A 15-minute recess? A 10-minute recess? Agreed and so ordered.

* * *

The House took recess at 3:22 p.m.

After Recess

The House resumed at 3:41 p.m.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. We will resume debate on second reading of Bill 20.

Mr. Cliff Evans: It is a pleasure for me to stand and make some comments on Bill 20, The Animal Husbandry Amendment Act. Beforehand, I would like to make some comments in response to the Minister of Agriculture's (Mr. Findlay) comments, and I quote, that it was introduced by the government, an amendment, back in 1987, in that he was making some changes to it and saying another bit of evidence that this party at the time and the minister at the time, who happened to be my predecessor, Mr. Uruski, saying that he did not consult with groups and people before making the amendments.

Well, the act was first amended in 1976 by Mr. Uskiw, and at that time from the original bill in 1933. In 1976, Mr. Uskiw, along with the times, did consult with people, made the amendments, made the changes. As time goes on and things change, in 1987, Mr. Uruski again made another amendment to the bill, and the Minister of Agriculture claims that the different groups that they consulted with are in agreement with the amendments.

I must say that Mr. Uruski, at the time, and his government at the time, as Minister of Agriculture, did consult with the same groups that this minister claims to have consulted with and got input from not only the municipalities and from Keystone Agricultural Producers and others, and the people and the farmers themselves, he did also consult with them on the amendments he made in 1987 as amendments that were at the time needed, as changes to the act that were recommended by the people. Now we have in present times that this government has again made amendments to the act as per the requirements and the needs of the

farming communities and of the people and the different groups and the municipalities that have wanted these changes.

So I would just like to make that comment, that it is not the fact that we on this side did not consult with anybody in the last two amendments. It was, in fact, that the amendments were made in consultation with the groups and the amendments were made as per the times of the day.

I would like to make some comments on some points of the act, the point of changing the definition of animal and poultry, so that the definition clearly represents that we are only talking about livestock that are used for agricultural purposes. We are not talking about pets. Madam Deputy Speaker, I think that was included also in 1987. An amendment to that was made and again now it has to be changed because of the time and for the protection of the farmers and for the protection of the people who use animals and some livestock as fowl for purposes just for hobby, for having them on their premises and such. It is an important part of it. I believe that clearly defined part of the act will benefit those people who know exactly what—and can state what they are using their livestock not for agricultural purposes but for their own benefits.

Another part that I would like to stress on is that the municipalities, of course, do agree in regard to the Section 2 changes where the sections require that damages have to be paid to people who actually experience some damage to their animals or poultry by animals, and the compensation had to be given by the municipality. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think that change, and the deletion of that, is a beneficial amendment. Municipalities now, and the way times are going for municipalities, could not afford to compensate farmers or livestock owners for damages, loss of limb, loss of life or any other accidental happening—or not accidental so much as just destroying. We can appreciate the fact that UMM and MAUM do appreciate these changes.

As I mentioned, we are having some tough times with municipalities and with the offloading that is occurring towards municipalities for different things. The taxes and such are higher. The tax base now for municipalities and such is so low, Madam Deputy Speaker. When a farmer comes and brings a bill to a municipality for a couple of thousand dollars, the municipality has to adjust their budget and work on the fact to be able—or had to at one time—to compensate this farmer for his loss. If you take a

good example, perhaps a farmer loses two or three or four cattle and comes to the municipality and says, I have this bill here for this amount of money that I would like you to cover. Under the law, it requires that you cover me and compensate me for this loss.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, I imagine that at the other times that the amendments were made, there was not that great of a concern with that. As I have said earlier, amendments made in '76 and '87 to the act were made as per a requirement, and at that time perhaps municipalities felt that there was not that great of a cost to them that they should ask the government, or ask the people of the government, to change the act so that they would have to take care of it.

Now, of course, there are greater losses, and municipalities have said to this government and to us—and we have lobbied ourselves. I have spoken to many of the farmers and the municipalities since election. This was a concern of the different LGDs, municipalities and villages who required a change in the act so that it could protect them against having to dish out all kinds of money for losses to the farmers' livestock or to whatever he brought forth on the bill.

Now, of course, the compensation—this act will provide the alternative for compensation. When an animal has been destroyed on the road or for whatever reason, the farmer can either provide insurance for himself on that or use private insurance to cover these kinds of damages, probably for very little cost, and be able to get a full return for his losses, whether it be just for one livestock animal or for 10.

* (1550)

The municipalities felt all along, I guess, in the past few years that this responsibility to them was something that had to be looked at. I believe that the minister in his amendment in this section did what he felt was right to make the amendment, to make it more feasible for the municipalities not to be able to have that responsibility and put the responsibility on private insurance or coverage for this type of loss.

Madam Deputy Speaker, staying with the municipalities and such, the cost to them was getting perhaps out of hand in certain situations and, as I had mentioned earlier, we all feel the fact that municipalities do have only a certain budget that

they can handle, that they can take care of things like that. They have other important things to look after within their municipalities, their roads, and other dealings with municipalities.

I am sure that the consultation with UMM and MAUM was well taken and, now that we do have it in place, it will relieve the municipalities of having to take care of these types of compensations.

Another portion or part of the act that I would like to comment also on is branding and legalizing electronic identification instead of traditional branding.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as a much younger fellow, I did spend many, not too many but some, years out on the farm in southeastern Manitoba, took care of and helped with all the farm chores. One of the things that I found distressing at that time was the fact of having to brand—my uncles and my grandfather had to brand their cattle—and to me I wondered how we would feel if we were branded with a hot iron and sent out. It bothered me at that time. -(interjection)- It would hurt, it would hurt. I always asked my Grandpa why they did that, that way. Of course, at that time there was no other way of doing it, and he said that is the only way that we can keep track of our cattle and our livestock and know just exactly who belongs to whom.

I feel that the part of the amendment putting in the legalizing of electronic identification is a good one. Today's technology, we have to—again, as I have mentioned about the amendment changes in '87 and '76, it is a show of the times, Madam Deputy Speaker. We have to go along with the times. This type of amendment allows for the farmers to place whatever mechanism in the animal painlessly. There is no undue damage to the animal.

A big factor, I guess one of the factors that will help, is for rustling. Even in southeastern Manitoba, in those earlier days, there was the loss and the rustling of cattle and of hogs and what not, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am sure that if technology had been advanced at that time, farmers throughout this province, not only my grandparents but my uncles, would have saved many, many dollars on the fact of losing cattle, someone coming up and taking it away.

It is a good part of the act, the prevention and the help and the aid taken away from rustling within the province. Presently now within the Interlake, especially in the Moosehorn and Ashern area where

cattle are more in abundance than what they are on the eastern side of my constituency, it is a big problem, has been a big problem.

Without any way of identification, without any way of finding out just which cattle belonged to whom, farmers are losing enormous amounts of money, losing money to the fact that at night or whenever, over a period of time, the cattle would be out and the cattle farmer would start with perhaps 300 or 400 head and over a period of time when it was time, let us say, to count his cattle, he would maybe lose 10 or 20 at the time and absolutely no way of finding out how and where they are, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The fact there, again, is not only are we going to be saving farmers money, we are going to be able to prevent them through inspections. We will be able to get a basis of where the cattle are, who has them, what has happened to them. Perhaps they have strayed. Perhaps they have just strayed, Madam Deputy Speaker. With the electronic identification, I feel that it will be a big plus to the cattle farmers in times that are tough. A loss, even one, nowadays is a tremendous blow after you have spent many dollars and time raising these cattle for your benefit.

My honourable friend from Transcona (Mr. Reid) agrees with me there. Of course, we always agree on everything anyhow, both being from Transcona. So on that part of it, again getting back to the fact that now we can have identification, we can have better control for the farmers, we can work around it, take away losses from them, help them in the way of not only saving them money now, now with amendments to the act we are saving municipalities money for compensation as I said earlier. We are saving the farmer money for being able to protect his livestock better.

I must agree with the minister's amendment here that it would allow for procedure of collecting fees and developing cost recovery, if needed, for administering that part of the act. Well, I feel that is part and parcel of everything, to keep better control and to aid and benefit the farmers for that.

Again, to stay with the legalized identification or electronic, I can see myself 25 or 30 years ago as mentioned, seeing the animals being branded the old hot iron way, and my grandparents losing many dollars in the fact that they lost their cattle through either straying or rustling.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we do want to include the fact that when the amendment was made in '87, Mr. Uruski, had the times been needed at that time, then I am sure these amendments, or parts of them, would have been enacted into the bill, into the amendment at that time.

At that time, too, in referring to his amendments in 1987, he asked the members of the House, if there were some further suggestions that honourable members would make during the debate, that he would be pleased to enter these suggestions. Well, I would gather then that in 1987 there were no problems from the members in the House and from the government in place now, from the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) and from other members from across the way, so the bill was amended for the times, for 1987.

* (1600)

I say to you, too, and there are perhaps other amendments that could be made, but we will have to wait and see whether the times and the needs are going to be there for amendments to this act. We constantly are getting requests for changes to this bill and that bill and we have to be able to provide not only for the people and the farmers of Manitoba, for the livestock people, but for everybody in this province when it comes to making amendments to an act.

Another part that I would like to comment on, the Manitoba Sheep Association, and I will go from the act itself and the amendment. It has a fair bit of concern about dogs and stray dogs killing their sheep. This act does still contain—and this section was not changed—the ability for any livestock owner, that if a dog is destroying their sheep or any other animals, they have the right to destroy that dog.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, we can get arguments about that one. There are people who—or perhaps it would show a better control for farmers around the areas where there may be sheep or any other livestock. Having two or three dogs in their yard and allowing them to go out and wander around and attack the different livestock, I would say that retaining that part of the act was perhaps the thing to do. We are saying that if you are going to let your dogs stray and go two, three, four or five miles and kill a sheep, mangle a sheep, who is going to pay for that? The sheepherder can say, well then, either you pay for it, or I destroy your dog, or I get

compensation through private insurance. When it comes to stray pets, dogs and cats, there is no need for that to be in the act. The Municipal Act has its own ways to develop.

I remember as mayor, one of the biggest concerns of many people was the stray animals within the community. It was up to us to handle it and we did so, not only for the protection of the people, but for the protection of the farmers, the livestock. Right around Riverton itself there are farms with cattle. We had to go out and act, as a village, as mayor and council, to be able to protect these people from stray dogs and such killing their livestock. It is not like we were having dogs wander around right here in Winnipeg, Madam Deputy Speaker, where there is no livestock or such, or chickens or sheep. In rural communities there are all types of dogs. Dogs are a common part of the farm. Stray dogs that go out and destroy other animals should be dealt with in the proper manner.

The fact, Madam Deputy Speaker—on closing, the one part that I find strange is that nothing was mentioned in this act of the semen being included, the government saying, well, there is no sense putting that in, the protection for the farmer on that point. We do not want to just out and out take it away from the farmer, so we might as well privatize the semen production and the semen regulation.

We wonder why this government would not include part of the act to improve the situation for farmers in that regard. We wonder how privatizing this part of the farmers' ability to receive a reproducing system—I feel that the farmers are getting jilted by this. It is now going to cost them that much more. It is going to increase their costs.

The government on the other side says, it is not going to, but if you look at the fact of the service, the service that was there running it through the government side of it, the service was there, the availability was there for the farmers. Now they have to go out and go to a private organization for this, and it is going to cost them more. It is going to cost them more in the long run.

Madam Deputy Speaker, again, in 1987, when Mr. Uruski did do the amendment—now I would like to make a comment or quote from him from the amendment at that time. The artificial insemination part of the act has also been amended to confirm the custom that has evolved and is practised regarding designated areas or area protection and

technician commitment to provide an opportunity for all producers to obtain semen and embryos for -(interjection)- if I may continue, Madam Deputy Speaker—to allow for the improvement of livestock breeding and government purchase and sale of livestock and to regulate the use and sale of semen and embryos for artificial insemination and embryo transfer purposes.

In 1987, the powers that were in force then were needed at that time. It gave the farmers, as I mentioned, protection. It gave them service for artificial insemination. Now it is going to cost them, and it is going to cost them more. I would like to think that the present government—on closing, I would like to make comment that the amendments to the act are perhaps in place for improvement and have been an improvement to the act. I would like to see perhaps any further amendments that this government, in listening and consulting with people and municipalities and such organizations, follow the needs and the requirements of all the people of Manitoba. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

* (1610)

Bill 35—The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst), Bill 35, The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg, standing in the name of the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand. Is there leave that this matter remain standing?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. Agreed.

Bill 36—The Legal Aid Services Society of Manitoba Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), Bill 36, The Legal Aid Services Society of Manitoba Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société

d'aide juridique du Manitoba, standing in the name of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak).

Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave? Agreed.

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure today that I stand to speak on Bill 36 put forward by the government, spoken to just a couple of weeks ago by the Minister of Justice. Of course, this deals with the Legal Aid Services Society in this province, a society which offers and administers a legal aid program for impecunious individuals who find themselves faced with either grave consequences as a result of legal proceedings, most notably criminal proceedings, or indeed those who do not have the means to fund cases which appear to have some likelihood of success in the civil field, and there is a sense of justice on their side, which the Legal Aid Society funds them for.

The other aspect, Mr. Speaker, of the Legal Aid Services Society, in recent times, has been the Public Interest Law Centre. The Public Interest Law Centre arose in 1982 and has been spearheaded by a very capable individual, Mr. Arnie Peltz. That has been a very significant new addition to the portfolio of services offered by the Legal Aid Society.

Mr. Speaker, that is not to say that the Legal Aid Society has been without controversy in the past; that is not to say that it proceeds today without controversy. We have in Manitoba a system, which I think we can be proud of and which has served us well. That is a dual-track system. That means that we offer both in-house duty counsel services from lawyers employed full time by the Legal Aid Society. As well, we offer access to the private bar through a certificate system, and that is indeed a very effective, very fair way to offer Legal Aid services.

I was disturbed in September of 1987 when the report came forward and Mr. Sloan was the author of that report, which, while it stopped short of recommending pulling back on the dual-track system, the private bar system, did make some comments which could lead the policymakers to conclude that it might be more economically efficient to handle all Legal Aid cases in house by staff lawyers.

Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge that there may be, and I say "may" be, some economic advantages to doing all Legal Aid cases within house counsel, but

if, and it is a big "if," it is more cost efficient, it is hardly worth the cost of losing the significant advantage that we offer in this province to those people who are forced to turn to Legal Aid to be able to choose their lawyer, and that is a right that everyone else has in society, yet those who come before Legal Aid panels in other provinces do not have that right. We have consistently maintained that right in this province, and I think we should be proud of that, and I think we should be willing to invest any additional funds to a reasonable amount if indeed that is the case to preserve that dual-track system.

Mr. Speaker, I say it as a big "if," because I have read the Sloan report of 1987. I am not convinced that the conclusions therein were based on thorough and appropriate criteria for determining which is more cost effective, which is more efficient in terms of serving Legal Aid clients. Given that principle, the principle that I ask all members to accept and which I believe the government of the day does and presumably the former administration, now the official opposition, also does because they instituted it, that is the dual-track system of offering Legal Aid services, that we want to preserve that as much as possible, there is some work to do with respect to Legal Aid. There are some problems.

The system in place in dealing with the private bar which serves a large number of Legal Aid clients—I do not believe it is quite half, 50 percent, but it is close—is a very, very poor system indeed. It is totally ad hoc. When there is a problem between the private bar and the government of the day that funds Legal Aid primarily, it has to get to a crisis before anything happens. The private bar has to turn to its association, the Bar Association, and the Law Society to advocate on their behalf with the government most notably overtime for tariff increases in Legal Aid fees. If that does not work and if those pleas fall on deaf ears, then they have to do drastic things like threaten withdrawal of services. That is truly unfortunate.

What we need is a regular process by which any of the grievances of the private bar about the Legal Aid system are allowed to come forward in an organized, regular fashion, and that was, I think, a significant defect in the original plan, that that process was not put into place, and, if need be, a process of appeal to some body to determine what the appropriate rate would be.

We have advocated from our party the establishment of an arbitration process for doctors.

I do not suggest that the Legal Aid services are the same essential services, but I do suggest that there should be some formalized process in place.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for St. James has the floor.

Mr. Edwards: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There should be some process in place. The former Attorney General, now the Dean of the Law School, under the former administration, never did that. He never put in a formalized process to deal with the concerns of the private bar. The private bar on a regular basis had to, because it was a crisis situation, threaten withdrawal of services, and that is not an appropriate way over the long term to deal with those on the Legal Aid panel.

I have spoken at length with Mr. Fineblit, who is the Executive Director of Legal Aid. We have canvassed this issue. He tells me that many, if not all, of the board members and most of the staff would prefer a regularized system in which the government was a participant to deal with concerns of the private bar, so that it did not take a crisis for these matters to come forward.

If we look at what is happening around the country—and I have with me today some excerpts from the National magazine of April 1991 which is entitled at the top of the page, Legal Aid Crisis. Then it proceeds to go through a number of provinces and talks about Quebec, Alberta, Newfoundland and B.C. and, finally, there is an article in here about Manitoba. It talks about the latest uncanvassed reduction of the tariff.

Mr. Speaker, when I say uncanvassed, I mean that the government of the day made no efforts to consult with those in the community, those who provide the services, before they reduced a tariff fee. Now I do not suggest that the Bar Association was likely to agree to that reduction. I do not suggest that, but that is not an excuse for not consulting.

The advantage of consulting and of putting your cards on the table and saying, we do not have enough money, we have to find some ways to reduce the cost; once the objections are dealt with, the cost is worth it and there should be further expenditures. Once that hurdle is gotten over, then I think you can trust that the participants would, at the very least, come forward with some alternative ways to cut some money.

I do not think they would have turned their back on that offer. I think they would have in good faith tried to find other ways to cut fees; but to slash fees in one area of the Legal Aid tariff, which makes very little sense at all without any prior consultation, can only further inflame the private bar, who are on the Legal Aid panel, some 800-and-some lawyers in this province. It can only do further damage to the long-term ongoing relationship between the private bar and the province if we are to maintain a dual-track system.

* (1620)

My suspicion, and I say suspicion because I hope it is not true, is that the hidden agenda, in doing this kind of slashing without consultation, without much sense, is to force the private bar to come to another crisis situation, to threaten withdrawal of services, and then to allow them to do that and to turn this into a one-track system that would not allow those who come to Legal Aid to have any choice of their lawyer. They would go to in-house lawyers and in-house lawyers only who may be not lawyers they get along with, not lawyers they have confidence in. That is not to discredit any Legal Aid in-house lawyers, but the ability to trust and have confidence in and choose your lawyer is a right which we have always afforded to individuals in society, and it cannot be justified to withdraw that right from the impecunious who find themselves in trouble with the law.

I suspect, and I take some comments from the Sloan Report of 1987, it may be that the hidden agenda of the government is in fact to move that way, to inflame the private bar and ultimately cut them out, and do a disservice to those who come to the Legal Aid panel in order to ostensibly cut some costs. I do not believe that costs would be cut by moving to a one-track system, but, in any event, I suspect that the government may believe that costs might be cut.

Mr. Speaker, those are some general comments, and I think it is important at the outset in discussing this act. I will be looking at the committee stage to gain commitments from the minister to the dual-track system. Those are some comments which outline the biggest issue, in my view, facing Legal Aid, which is the continued commitment from the politicians to the dual-track system and the recognition that the most effective way to preserve that is to entrench in legislation preferably a system of consultation on a regular basis with the private

bar, whereby the grievances can be dealt with so that there is not a crisis.

They do not have to threaten to withdraw all services on a regular basis. That is the way to do it. Anyone who has had any length of experience with Legal Aid, including those who today sit on its board and administer the plan, I believe would support such a process, indeed have been begging for such a process for many, many years. The politicians of the day have never listened, and I must say it is with some disappointment that I have learned that this minister as well apparently does not believe in a consultation process before dealing quite harshly and quite summarily with the Legal Aid plan. -(interjection)-

Mr. Speaker, the comment from my fellow members is, does it surprise me. I had hoped, because I had listened to the words of the minister and I had hoped, listening to them that they were credible and that they came forward in good faith, that he was in fact going to be different from the prior Attorney General in dealing with the plan. He has not been. He has in fact turned a blind eye again to the dual-track system and to the maintenance of some semblance of a rational relationship with the some 800-or-so lawyers on the private bar who sit on the Legal Aid panel and agree to take Legal Aid cases.

Mr. Speaker, the situation has been reached today in Manitoba where quite legitimately it can be said, quite factually it can be said that those who choose to go to the private bar with a Legal Aid certificate will inevitably be sent to lawyers at the very lower end of the experience rating. It will go to junior lawyers because the fees one is allowed to collect on Legal Aid simply are not enough to cover overhead in most cases.

It becomes a case of taking on Legal Aid cases out of the goodness of one's heart because one simply does not believe that impecunious people should be turned away, or it is because someone simply does not have replacement work and they take Legal Aid work because even though it only pays part of overhead, Mr. Speaker, it does not—they have the time to do it.

That cannot be a way to preserve a dual-track system for the future. It cannot be on those terms. You cannot bludgeon and blackmail people into taking reduced rates, in particular in hard economic times. We have to deal, I believe and I suggest

again, on a rational basis with the bar. I do not suggest, as I believe Mr. Orle, the former president of the Bar Association did, that you should jump from \$45 to \$70 an hour. I do not suggest that, Mr. Speaker.

I do suggest that there has to be a formalized process in place. There have to be regular increases in place, however great or little they are. There has to be a dealing with the issue of the real cost of practising law and the real cost of delivering these services. If you want to have them delivered, you have to be willing to sit down with the service deliverers themselves.

Mr. Speaker, the bill before the House, Bill 36, I think has some parts to it which should cause some concern. I look forward to this going to the committee stage. As the minister has indicated in his comments of May 15, he will have some further details at that time about the bill generally. He indicates in his comments that he is going to be preparing a spreadsheet with a listing of old sections, new sections and the rationale for what has happened, and I look forward to receiving that.

Let me just take from his comments—so he can know when it comes to committee stage some of my concerns—certain parts that cause me some concern. He indicates that, and I am quoting from his comments, in recent years the Legal Aid Board has faced a small number of cases in which the current right of the applicant to choose his or her counsel has created difficulties. Then he goes on to say, specifically, where the parents of a young offender refuse to provide their child with legal counsel even if they have the means to retain private counsel, the board has adopted a policy of using a staff lawyer specializing in youth work to deal with that individual.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the pleasure and the challenge of representing children in court, and I have had the pleasure and the challenge of having the judge specifically decide the child wanted counsel and appointing me. It is a great challenge to act for children, that is, those under the age of 18 and in most cases over the age of 14. It is important, I think, always to recognize the difference and the line between individuals that age, giving instructions which are rational and which make some sense and which should be respected, and simply statements which perhaps come from some immaturity. What I think cannot be said about children, in those years

in particular between 14 and 18, is that they should have no say in who their counsel is.

* (1630)

Mr. Speaker, the first thing that I have always done, and I assume most counsel do, is when you sit down—and particularly with someone that age, and if you have been appointed by the court they may not know you—is discuss with them some general issues, what is going on and explain to them who you are, what you do and what the process is. Then ask them and tell them that they have a right to seek someone else. Ask them if they have confidence in you. They must have confidence in you if they are going to tell you everything and if you are going to do a good job.

What seems to be proposed, and I have great concern about it, is that children who come to Legal Aid will be assigned to a Legal Aid lawyer. I have some concern about that. I do not think we can say *carte blanche*, across the board, children should have no rights to determine who their counsel is. Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge it is not being said here that they should not have counsel. It is being said that they should not, apparently, have a right to determine who that counsel should be. That, I have grave concerns about because I think that many children, in particular in those years between 14 and 18, should have a say in whether or not they have confidence in the counsel who is appointed to them.

Some of these young offenders are facing gravely serious charges. We know that in recent times in Manitoba, young offenders who come before the courts under the Young Offenders Act for very serious crimes are bumped up to adult court. They are facing life sentences. They, surely, should have a say in their counsel and whether or not they have confidence and trust their counsel. I do not support and will not support any, whether it be a board policy or not, but any entrenchment of a process whereby young offenders have their right to determine who their counsel will be taken away.

Mr. Speaker, another part of this which gives me some concern, and perhaps it can be cleared up by the minister at the committee stage, is he indicates that the government is introducing a provision that will allow matters to be dealt with expeditiously and avoid the time and expense involved in dealing with applications that have no merit. He specifies prior to that in his comments that what he is talking about is an application for Legal Aid that is turned down.

The appeal process is gone through, and then at the end of the day another application is launched and the appeal process has to be gone through again. I see some sense in that, in that the same application comes forward, it is turned down all the way in the line—you do not have to deal with the same application just being regiven the next day.

There is some sense to that, but in most cases, in most administrative cases, what is done is not to create an absolute bar. You do not say, you can never apply again. What you say is, if you are turned down all the way in the line you have to wait X number of months, or a year or whatever, before you reapply. Putting in an absolute bar to reapplying if you have been turned down, an appeal had been turned down, would cause me great concern. I am not sure whether or not that is being proposed, and I look forward to the minister clarifying that at the committee stage.

The other concern that I have is that the society is asking for an expansion of the circumstances in which Legal Aid can be provided. It specifically indicated that there will be provisions, and there are provisions put forward which should provide for a streamlined procedure allowing Legal Aid to register a lien against properties to secure the recovery of its fees.

The only concern I have is that the recovery of fees through liens on property, caveats on property, is sparingly used because we have a—I am concerned that the government in its zealotness to cut costs may say that the criteria for getting Legal Aid should come down, that is, the amount that a family can make before they qualify for Legal Aid. What they will say is, look, we know you do not make much, but we are going to register a lien against whatever property you have to recover at the end of the day.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the program of putting liens on property works well when people are legitimately above the criteria and the criteria is fair and says, if you make X number of dollars or less, you get legal aid. If you make more, you do not get legal aid. We have to keep those figures realistic.

The cost of living is very high. We all know that in this House. People who are faced with legal situations in which they require a lawyer, most often do not come to it on their own. They have been criminally charged. They deserve a fair trial. If they are convicted, so be it. They should be sentenced

and punished and everything else, but we live in a system where you are innocent until proven guilty. If you believe in that, you have to provide counsel. You have to provide people with a chance to defend themselves with counsel. That is essential to the system. The Legal Aid system has to be able to respond effectively to that need if our sentencing is going to have any credibility.

This is not—and I will not name other nations around the world—but there are many where you are guilty until you prove your innocence. It is the other way around.

We have resisted that in the common-law world of which we are a part for hundreds and hundreds of years. We have resisted the cries for blood of the masses, which always comes when there is a crime—always.

We have resisted overreacting to that by taking away people's rights to be presumed innocent. It is a good thing, because at the end of the day when we punish somebody and send them to jail, we know that person had a right to counsel and to defence, and they were still found guilty.

Our imposition of punishment can have credibility because we know, that as far as we could go, we have allowed that person to claim their innocence and prove their innocence. If they are still found guilty, they should go to jail. We have proven that beyond a reasonable doubt, and we can feel secure in the knowledge that, as much as possible, we have found the facts. We have made the right decision based on the laws of the land.

What I am concerned about is that increasingly the government will ask Legal Aid to cut back the income levels with which people qualify and on the services provided and increasingly ask them to go to the nth degree to recover the fees, Mr. Speaker. That would not be appropriate in my view.

However, having said that, I am a firm supporter of expanding the Legal Aid plan to higher income levels, that perhaps people cannot come up with retainers to hire their own lawyers, perhaps they do not fall strictly within the guidelines, but they do own assets, and they may be able to pay some day, and that is the whole point of registering a lien on property.

People often have some equity in their homes, and they face legal difficulties, and they need legal services, they do not have the funds to pay the lawyer at the time that they need the services and

Legal Aid has a real role to play. I am very supportive of the work of Mr. Dunn at the Legal Aid Society to bring in this heretofore untried program. We are unique in North America in putting this program into place, and it is truly something to apply, that we have done this in Manitoba.

I believe that it should be extended, and I understand from Mr. Fineblit that at the end of the day the actual recovery rate of these loans through placing liens on property is pretty good. At the end of the day, down the road, when someone sells their home, Legal Aid gets paid. It is actually working very well, Mr. Speaker, and I think that it should be expanded. It should not be used to reduce the income level criteria, it should not be used as an excuse to cut out more people from full funding under the Legal Aid plan because our income level criteria can hardly be called generous.

I do not say that it is far too low, but I do say that it is hardly generous. It meets the need, but Legal Aid is always in a need for more funds and I think Mr. Fineblit puts it quite eloquently in the annual report of last year. He oftentimes worried because there were many people who did not meet the criteria who he knew could not afford legal services, who he knew needed them, but he simply could not afford to fund them out of the plan.

To that extent, the ability to place liens on property and pay for it down the road and thereby expand the number of people who can get Legal Aid is of great consequence to the system and, as I have indicated, is a very progressive move. I am sure that other jurisdictions are watching it closely and will duplicate it in their jurisdictions.

Other concerns that I have about the Legal Aid plan generally would pale in comparison to my foremost concern which is that there is some move afoot, there is some agenda to move from the dual-track system and that part of that agenda is to ignore and thereby inflame members of the private bar who offer their services through the Legal Aid panel. That is a grave concern and whether it is in the Department of Justice Estimates or indeed in the discussions we have in committee stage over this bill, those will be canvassed at length with the Minister, at least by myself. I hope that he understands that and has some explanations ready, in particular an explanation for his most recent unilateral act to reduce one of the tariffs, Mr. Speaker, without any consultation, without any

warning and without a lot of sense. It did not even make sense where he took the money from.

* (1640)

Mr. Speaker, finally on this, I also want the minister to know that I have great concerns, and I think many do who practise domestic law, that domestic matters are underfunded when compared to some criminal matters, because there is a block fee system whereby you do not get paid by the hour by Legal Aid, you get paid by the event. If something is settled, or there is a plea of guilty, you get X number of dollars in a criminal matter.

The application of block fee funding to domestic matters does not work because, and to give you an example, Mr. Speaker, block fee funding would say, you spend so much time in court, you get so much per day, a few hundred bucks per day—I am not sure what it is. That is how you are paid. You are paid for the trial or you are paid for the event, but what that does, and in particular in domestic matters, is it totally discourages settlement. It discourages negotiation, mediation, not going to trial, which not only costs the Legal Aid plan for a lawyer, it costs the courts. We are paying for court time. We are paying for court reporters. We are paying for all the trappings of the courthouse in the judicial system when something goes to court.

It is very inefficient to have things go to court. It is far better to have an amicable settlement always. Mr. Speaker, by saying you get paid so much per day in court, you as a Legal Aid lawyer, look at that and say, well, I might spend an extra 10 hours trying to work out a settlement, trying to get the parties together, which would avoid a trial and help everybody, but I will be financially punished for that. Far better for me just to let it sit, no settlement, let us go to court, because I will get paid per day in court. That is a very backward approach to funding.

I have grave concerns about block funding, in particular in domestic matters, because having had, not much, but some experience with Legal Aid domestic clients, you are encouraged to sit back and do something else, wait for the trial, because you are going to get a week in trial and you will be paid per day for the trial.

Mr. Speaker, lawyers know that settlements are the result of efforts. You have to open the dialogue and usually in domestic matters the parties, by the time they come to the lawyers, are ready to scratch each other's eyes out, are certainly not talking, and

are looking to seize things from the other party and to find ways to gouge money from them. They are certainly not talking. The inspiration for settlement most often comes from the lawyers. If they do their job, they sit down with their clients and they say: This is costing you and everybody a lot of grief and a lot of money. We should become rational about this. You never have to see this person again; let us just get it over with. Why go through a trial?

Mr. Speaker, if you are not being paid for that time, if you are only being paid for the time you are actually fighting in court, you are not going to be too inclined to make the extra effort to settle the matter. That is a real problem, and a lot of domestic lawyers have brought that to my attention and, I assume, the minister's attention. I will be looking for some explanations on why increasingly the Legal Aid plan is moving to block funding in domestic matters.

I have other concerns about the Legal Aid plan generally but, Mr. Speaker, I will look forward to a general discussion both in the Department of Justice Estimates and in some specific discussion when this bill comes to committee stage. I am willing at this point to recommend to my caucus members passage of this on to second reading with those concerns having been expressed and those reservations on the record about the details of this bill which, as I say, I look forward to hopefully some further explanation at the committee stage from the minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I would like to contribute a few words to this debate, if I may, with the understanding that it continues to stand in the name of the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak).

I would like to put a few remarks on the record about Bill 36. I am not a lawyer, as my learned colleague for St. James is. I was very interested to hear his remarks. He is obviously one who is well versed on the problems of running a legal aid system in Manitoba, how it impacts on the community in general, how it impacts on clients, how it impacts on lawyers who are practising in this province.

There is no question that Legal Aid has become a very significant part of the system of justice that we have in the province of Manitoba. I guess Manitoba has joined with other provinces in developing a legal aid system over the years. I know from doing a bit of research that the major

adjustment, the system that we have today of legal aid essentially goes back to work done in 1970 when a fact-finding committee was set up by the Schreyer government. They spent a great deal of time in looking at what was going on around the world, and they came up with a report on what the essentials of a good legal aid system should be and also pointed out the defects of the system that was in operation until that time, up until 1970. As I look at this report, I cannot help but think that although the system we have today has many defects, nevertheless it is far superior to what was in existence before 1970 and '71.

I guess one of the problems that has been stated about the whole system, the whole basis of Legal Aid, is a problem that was espoused way back when it was established in this province as we know it today about 21 years or so ago, and that is the whole question of fairness, where the government, the taxpayers, federal and provincial, finance a lawyer, either a private lawyer or someone who is a lawyer with the Legal Aid office, to help them fight their case in court, a civil case, against another Manitoban who has to pay the whole shot himself or herself.

In other words, there are many Manitobans who are not eligible for legal aid; nevertheless, maybe they find themselves in court on a civil case, having limited resources, being definitely at a disadvantage with the person or persons who are able to be eligible for legal aid because they are under a certain income limit. So that is a problem.

We do not have the same problem, of course, in criminal cases, because we are involved with the Crown versus a particular individual who finds himself or herself in court. When we are into the area of civil litigation, there is always this nagging question as to whether we are operating in a way that is as fair as can be. I do not know what the solution is. Maybe it is a refinement of the extent to which legal aid is available to people.

Maybe we should go a step further and have Lexicare, something along the lines of medicare. Maybe we should say everyone is entitled to legal assistance, given the fact that they may have to go to court for some litigation or other, and that Lexicare should be part of the social security system just as medicare is and Pharmacare is, as we know it, a universal program, whereby we get over this problem, this inequity; where one group in society has its legal costs paid for by taxpayers, and the other group has to pay it out of their own pockets.

* (1650)

Of course, I think I could read into the remarks made by the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) and from my own brief observations, there are a great number of lawyers in Manitoba today who are very dependent on the Legal Aid system. Legal Aid does provide a source of revenue for a great number of lawyers. There are many statistics on that, Mr. Speaker.

I note that the bill that we have before us, Bill 36, The Legal Aid Services Society of Manitoba Amendment Act, as the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) himself has stated, is really a bill filled with a lot of technical changes, a lot of technical amendments. Perhaps many of these technical changes might best be discussed at the committee stage.

I understand, too, that the minister did provide a spreadsheet to the opposition Justice critics with an explanation of the provisions of the bill and allowing comparisons with existing provisions in the legislation that we now have. Apart from one or two changes that the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) refers to, I cannot help but come to the conclusion that the driving force behind a number of these more important changes is money, that is, the desire of the Minister of Justice and his government to squeeze spending, to have less spending in the area of legal aid; because there is a tightening up being proposed in these amendments which will presumably reduce the pressure to spend by the Legal Aid Society. Certainly, if you read the Legal Aid Society's reports, they believe that they are very much strapped for funds.

At the present time, Legal Aid is restricted from recovering its full costs, even in circumstances where the society is aware that the client will be able to meet those costs eventually. Therefore, steps are being taken. It is suggested that this bill change the circumstances under which Legal Aid can be provided, so that ultimately some recovery could take place at some future time.

Other references are made here to introducing a streamlined procedure allowing Legal Aid to register a lien against property to secure the recovery of its fees, again, a procedure which we do not necessarily oppose, Mr. Speaker, but which obviously is being put in because the Legal Aid Society is being squeezed for revenue, is being squeezed for funds.

At any rate, there are other amendments here that obviously are driven in the first place by the government's general thrust of cutting back wherever possible and, in this case, restricting the flow of funds through and to Legal Aid. Even the matter of the number of times a person might apply for Legal Aid is being restricted, Mr. Speaker, by this amendment.

At the present time, the act governing the Legal Aid services in Manitoba allows or provides for no restriction on the number of times a person can go to apply for assistance. I gather apparently there are some people who are turned down once or twice or perhaps thrice but still go back because they are driven to seek Legal Aid. I gather in each instance the Legal Aid staff have to go through the process of servicing that application. They have to do the paperwork. Apparently it does take a lot of time, but nevertheless, this is what is going on.

This amendment would restrict the number of times an unsuccessful applicant can apply for assistance, particularly where there is no change in the facts or circumstances. Again I repeat, Mr. Speaker, this is a method of reducing the expense involved. I think maybe this is not unreasonable. I am not saying it is unreasonable, but again it points to the fact that the society, the Legal Aid Services Society is being squeezed for funds.

At any rate, I am sure when we get to the committee stage there will be a representation made by various persons and bodies who might wish to comment on this. I think, generally, the thrust is to be less generous with the Legal Aid services that are now being offered.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, there is an increasing demand for Legal Aid in this province, and there are ever increasing costs associated with those services. I note from the latest figures we have available provided by the Legal Aid Manitoba organization—this is for the year ending March 31, 1990—that the number of certificates issued to the private bar increased by 8 percent, although the number of refusals also rose by almost 7 percent.

There are ever-increasing costs associated with Legal Aid. The applications increased in excess of 7 percent, particularly, the area of civil cases. The cost per case dealt with by the private bar and the cost per case dealt with by the staff were both increasing for all kinds of reasons, including

increases in lawyers' fees, including increases in staff salaries.

In order to try to offset the costs, we have this type of legislation before us. Also, I note that the organization itself is trying to introduce various cost-saving measures. They are trying to reduce the cost of operations and I believe that they have been rather successful in this. At any rate, Mr. Speaker, even though they have been successful in containing costs, there is every expectation that the demand for Legal Aid service will only increase in the years ahead.

There was a recent Supreme Court decision, the Queen versus Brydges, requiring that persons in custody be clearly advised of the availability of legal aid. There is no question, therefore, Mr. Speaker, that there will be even greater pressure put on the Legal Aid Services to provide required counsel.

Another decision of the courts, a Manitoba Court of Appeal decision of the Queen versus Doerkson increases the likelihood of the accused being incarcerated for impaired driving charges. Therefore, again, there is going to be a significant impact on the demand for the services of this agency. There is going to be a significant impact on the number of Legal Aid certificates issued.

Then again there is another cost that we are faced with in this area, and that is the infamous goods and services tax. As of January 1, 1991, the GST came into effect and it too has had an effect on the operations of the Legal Aid Society. The Legal Aid Services will be subject to the new tax, adding a strain to the cash flow in respect to certificates issued to the private bar. So again, therefore, Mr. Speaker, we have another example of costs going up.

The Legal Aid Society, I know, is very concerned about the financial eligibility guidelines which they have had to use for a number of years. They have been using guidelines which equate the 1988 Statistics Canada poverty levels. Certainly, in the year 1991, these levels are totally out of date, and they are not appropriate for establishing assistance for people in need today. Unfortunately, because the government has not given enough funding to the board of directors of the Legal Aid Society, because of the budgetary restraints, it has been impossible. On the one hand, budgetary restraints; on the other hand, increasing demand for the volume of service. It has just been impossible for the board to change

the guidelines, to change their criteria for assisting people.

So we are out of date by a good three to four years—

* (1700)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) will have 25 minutes remaining.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 5 p.m., time for private members' hour.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 22—The Manitoba Energy Authority Repeal Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr), Bill 22, The Manitoba Energy Authority Repeal Act; Loi abrogeant la Loi sur la Régie de l'énergie du Manitoba, standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld).

Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave? Agreed.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I stand here today to speak on this bill, the bill that I had seconded. It is a bill that I believe the government actually supports.

Really the biggest question is, will the government be big enough to accept this bill and allow it to pass this Chamber? This bill was -(interjection)- Bill 22, to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). He is looking for the title. The Minister of Health does not know the title of the bill. It is The Manitoba Energy Authority Repeal Act, so I would encourage the minister to read it. It is a very, very short bill; but I am sure that the Minister of Health could support this bill, because I do believe that the current minister likely will support the bill. It is just a question of, as I say, will the government allow it to come to a vote?

I would hope, or I would like to see—I know it has been sitting now on the Order Paper ever since April 9 when the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr) had introduced it, but we have yet to have a minister respond to the bill to find out what the government position is on this legislation, Mr. Speaker. So I

would encourage some of the government members to, in fact, stand up and speak on this bill.

The bill itself will save the government a considerable amount of money. The bill will prevent duplication, needless duplication, in our opinion. If we take a look at the Energy Authority and its mandate, we look at three different points, if you will, to ensure that we have energy for our future. That is something that is hotly debated virtually day after day, it seems at times inside this Chamber, especially with what we have going on with the Conawapa development.

That is part of the mandate. Another item is to promote industries that are energy dependent. Again, this is something that we support. We want to see industry come to Manitoba. If we can provide them energy which would make it more feasible for the company to locate in Manitoba because of our hydro developments, then I would encourage that, but on the condition, of course, that there is no impact on the rates that we as Manitobans have to pay. That is part of the question that we have put forward, in particular the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) has put forward in terms of the Limestone issue.

There is a question mark in terms of who is actually paying for the development of Limestone. Even though we see export agreements and the governments in the past and the governments today, in terms of Conawapa, are saying that these developments are for the betterment of Manitoba, but it is not necessarily better for the province of Manitoba if our Hydro payers here in Manitoba end up subsidizing industries or power sales that are made to the U.S. or in fact to Ontario, wherever it might be.

We also find that part of the mandate is to alleviate the effects of any possible energy shortage. I think that is a responsible objective to have, but there are different boards. The member for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr), in his opening remarks, had addressed those boards and talked about some of the duplications.

If we look at what it is that the Energy Authority's mandate is, and we compare it to what we have in place, such as the Treasury Board, our cabinet, the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld), being of the department, board of Manitoba Hydro, Crown Corporations Council, and to some degree the Public Utilities Board, in fact we find there is a lot of

duplication, that that mandate that has been assigned out to the Energy Authority board is in fact being covered through different other corporations, if you will, other boards, through the minister's office, cabinet and so forth.

Mr. Speaker, this is the type of a bill that looks and addresses that whole question of the duplication. I would be interested in hearing if the government can actually say something that the Manitoba Energy Authority board does that none of the other organizations that I have listed has as a mandate.

The member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) says, cut the board. I was here when he had spoken on the bill, Mr. Speaker. I will tell you something, the NDP's position on this issue is to leave it alone. Following the member for Point Douglas' argument, he was talking about jobs. If you cut this board, you are cutting jobs.

So, if there is duplication, the member for Point Douglas says, there is no problem, let us leave it. -(interjection)- The member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) says, where is the duplication? I was just telling him where the duplication is. I talked about the mandate, and what the mandate is of the different organizations. The member for Flin Flon should have been here. He likely was here when the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr) had introduced it. He had talked about the duplications.

Mr. Speaker, we could argue indefinitely with the New Democrats on this issue, because they feel that this is a form of job creation. We have seen their past record when it comes to job creation. So this is an issue that the New Democrats are on the wrong side, because, in fact, there is duplication. We did not hear the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) stand up and say where there was not duplication.

I encouraged the member for Flin Flon, in particular, because he was the former minister, to stand in his place and to say where and what the Manitoba Energy Authority did that is not being covered by any other board. The member for Flin Flon says he will. I look forward to him doing that.

The government, Mr. Speaker, has said and I believe the current minister agrees in principle with what the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr) has suggested and that is, in fact, that this act be repealed. If we take a look at the board members of the Manitoba Energy Authority, you will see that there is John McCallum, who is also the board member of Manitoba Hydro, is the chairperson of

this particular board. There is a lot of that duplication whether it is deputy ministers or members from other boards.

* (1710)

So I would argue, and I believe correctly argue, that the government can save money and can prevent duplication by accepting this piece of legislation. The government, on numerous occasions, has requested the opposition parties to come forward with positive ideas. The member for Crescentwood has done just that.

I would encourage the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld) to speak to the bill and let his position be known to both opposition parties as I am sure, no doubt, the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) will speak to the bill following me. I will give him a copy of it if he does not have it right with him. It is a one-line bill that says repeal.

So that is why I say, I will make sure I can supply the member for Flin Flon a copy of this bill. I look forward, after I sit down, for him to stand up and detail what it is that the Manitoba Energy Authority does that no other, whether it is the Department of Energy and Mines, whether it is the board of Manitoba Hydro or the Crown corporations or in fact cabinet or Treasury Board, do not cover.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my comments. Thank you.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I would like to join this debate at this point. Unfortunately, I think a decision by the government has really pre-empted the member for Crescentwood's bill, the intent of it, and although the government has not made clear how it intends to fulfill the functions of the Manitoba Energy Authority, I wanted to put on record our position with respect to the Manitoba Energy Authority and the role that it has played historically in the province of Manitoba.

I would begin by noting that the Manitoba Energy Authority was a creation not of the New Democratic Party, but actually a creation of the Lyon administration. The former member for Riel, the former Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro, the Honourable Don Craik, was actually the minister who introduced The Manitoba Energy Authority Act.

An Honourable Member: A wee bit of a relative.

Mr. Storie: A wee bit of a relative, yes, Mr. Speaker. Don Craik was a cousin of mine, and I am proud to say he and I were related. He was an exceptional

member of the Lyon government, a very hardworking individual. I have said so on other occasions, and I respected him as an individual very much. He also happened to agree with me on the importance of the Manitoba Energy Authority and the potential it had for developing our position as an energy producer.

The Manitoba Energy Authority, unlike Manitoba Hydro, had a very broad mandate. The member for Inkster seems to fixate on the fact that there were representatives from Manitoba Hydro, the Department of Energy at one time, other government departments, as members of the board. The fact is that the members of the board, like other boards, were not the body responsible for conducting the business. The fact is that the personnel at the Manitoba Energy Authority were responsible for laying the groundwork and doing the work of the Energy Authority and not the board.

Certainly there needed to be and there should be some connection between the Manitoba Energy Authority, which was responsible for marketing energy, for attracting energy-intensive industries into the province, and Manitoba Hydro, because there is obviously a link there. The fact is that the work of the Manitoba Energy Authority was not the work of Manitoba Hydro. They are not, necessarily at least, always the same.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that if the member for Crescentwood or the member for Inkster had taken the time to read The Manitoba Hydro Act, they would understand that The Manitoba Hydro Act gives Manitoba Hydro very specific functions. Their mandate is to provide hydro-electric energy to the province of Manitoba at the lowest possible cost. That is their primary mandate. Over the years, The Manitoba Hydro Act has been amended from time to time to include other objectives, but Manitoba Hydro has historically believed that its role and its board has supported this, that its role was to provide energy to the province of Manitoba at the least cost.

The creation of the Manitoba Energy Authority in 1979, and its continuation until the present time, was developed in the belief that we needed a separate organization, a separate entity, that could not only expand the horizons in terms of opportunity at least for Manitoba, but also an organization that could negotiate, provide a vehicle which could operate in a corporate environment, could operate and move quickly without being tied down to an unnecessary

chain of bureaucracy and a very limited corporate agenda as defined in The Manitoba Hydro Act.

So you needed a body that could go and negotiate in essence on behalf of the province rather than on behalf of Manitoba Hydro, a body that could negotiate deals as a separate entity, a body that could expend money in a way that would not have been considered appropriate under The Manitoba Hydro Act. So that was the purpose.

Manitoba Hydro had no capacity at that time to explore energy intensive opportunities in Japan or Hong Kong because that was not in their mandate. That was not part of the Manitoba Hydro mandate.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Energy and Mines is the policy analyzing body. They were charged with the responsibility of analyzing the energy needs of the province of Manitoba. They were not a negotiating arm. In fact, if the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) had any government experience, he would recognize that very few, in fact, no department is given authorization to operate as a corporate entity. In fact, the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation was created so that it could operate at arm's length and in a way as a corporate body.

The Manitoba Energy Authority functioned quite differently from Manitoba Hydro. It functioned quite differently from Manitoba Hydro because it had to operate in a business environment. It had to be able to negotiate, to change, to alter its course very quickly to respond to the groups that they were dealing with. Again, I guess it has to come from first-hand experience, that government tends to move very slowly, working through the normal bureaucracy, working through government departmental channels, does not allow for the kind of quick response that is required to conclude deals, whether it is with Dow Chemical on a pilot project for a ceramics plant in Selkirk or—

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): The Liberals were against that.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, the member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) reminds me that the Liberals were against that. The fact is that the bill by the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr) is another example of the complete lack of experience of Liberal members with government. They simply do not understand the difference between a department and a Crown corporation. Obviously, they do not understand the difference between a Crown corporation which

operates within the bounds of a very strict act, and a department which has a great deal more flexibility.

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

Mr. Acting Speaker, I do not know whether the member for Inkster was in attendance, but I had this discussion, essentially, with the new chairman of Manitoba Hydro. We did discuss the need for the Manitoba Energy Authority at committee, where the standing committee was reviewing Manitoba Hydro.

* (1720)

Mr. Acting Speaker, for the information of the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), the chairman of Manitoba Hydro agreed with me -(interjection)-no, he did not say there was any duplication. He agreed with me that, in fact, a body like the Manitoba Energy Authority was necessary. He said that somewhere this specific task has to be undertaken. Now the member for Inkster and some other members in this Chamber, including the government, may believe that function can be performed by departmental personnel in the Department of Energy. I am here to tell you that is not the case.

We have seen what happens—and the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) will confirm this because he and I agree on one thing, at least. That is, for example, the community colleges that buy and sell certain products and make a profit on those products. Their book centre and their cafeteria were encumbered, so encumbered by the bureaucracy in the Department of Education, that they could not even go out and buy milk for resale at a profit without a, at least, six-week Treasury Board process. Well, you cannot operate a business like that.

The Manitoba Energy Authority is, in essence, a corporate entity. It acts like a corporate entity. It was structured like a private corporate body so it could respond to specific needs. It could negotiate. It could conclude negotiations and do so in a very businesslike fashion.

Again, Mr. Acting Speaker, I reiterate that one of the largest, the most important, factors in all of this is the very limited mandate that Manitoba Hydro was given when The Manitoba Hydro Act was introduced. We are going to have to, certainly, be looking at amendments to The Manitoba Hydro Act if this piece of legislation succeeds, because we are not going to have anybody out there looking after

the best interests of the province when it comes to utilization of our energy.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I want to say again that our party believes that our energy advantage, our ability to generate copious quantities of electric energy, is a significant business advantage. We have in many ways tried to take advantage of that over the past number of years and, unless we have an entity that can continue to pursue those opportunities, we are undoubtedly going to be the losers as a province. I still believe, in the long run, either from the direct export of our energy or, preferably, from the use of our abundant energy in the province of Manitoba for manufacturing purposes, particularly, we are going to strengthen our economic base and provide jobs for the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I also want to dispel any doubt on the part of the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) that somehow when my colleague referenced the jobs that would be lost by the elimination of the Manitoba Energy Authority, he was only referencing the jobs in the Manitoba Energy Authority.

There is no one on this side who believes that if the Manitoba Energy Authority has no other purpose, we should keep the Manitoba Energy Authority. The fact is, what we are disputing is the suggestion that somehow what the Manitoba Energy Authority was intended to do is being done in some other quarter.

The Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld) knows as well as anyone in this Chamber that there have been serious reductions in the capacity of the Department of Energy and Mines to do the necessary analysis to make sure that our energy requirements are going to be met, that there is an energy conservation strategy within the province of Manitoba apart from Manitoba Hydro.

There is very little capacity remaining in the Department of Energy to do any of the things that the Manitoba Energy Authority is doing or was doing. Likewise, Manitoba Hydro has no capacity to act in the same way that the Manitoba Energy Authority has.

Manitoba Hydro does not have staff available to travel to other parts of the world, to solicit, to investigate, energy intensive operations and see if we can attract them for the province of Manitoba. That is not within their mandate. To my knowledge, it has never happened. If the Minister of Energy and

Mines is encouraging Manitoba Hydro to do that today, I would be very, very surprised, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Manitoba Energy Authority was created because there was a perceived need to have another entity promoting our energy advantage. I believe that the reasons for establishing the Manitoba Energy Authority are as great or greater today than they ever have been. I believe that the introduction of this legislation, this piece of legislation by the Liberal Party, simply shows a lack of understanding of (a) how important energy is to the province, (b) how government and government Crown corporations operate and (c) Mr. Acting Speaker, a complete lack of understanding of the history of the Manitoba Energy Authority and a history of the development of our position as an energy exporter.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I do not think that it is an accident, that until the province of Manitoba—the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) is ignoring this and it is unfortunate. The member for Inkster is ignoring this because he probably does not want to know that until the Manitoba Energy Authority was created there was never a single firm export of power.

In other words, Manitoba Hydro -(interjection)-well, the member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) may not want to believe that. Certainly there have been power exchanges, there had been the intermittent sale of power or spot sale of power, secondary power, but until—a 50 megawatt power sale to Minnesota, I believe, was the first one in about 1983; 1985 there was this northern states power sale which was the first power sale which was extremely profitable for the province of Manitoba and Manitoba Hydro and without it the Manitoba Energy Authority would not have happened.

Mr. Acting Speaker, this is an ill-conceived piece of legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): As was previously agreed, this matter will remain standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld).

Bill 23—Manitoba Intercultural Council Amendment Act

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): On the proposed motion of the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), Bill 23 (Manitoba Intercultural Council

Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Conseil interculturel du Manitoba), standing in the name the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson).

Is there leave to let this bill stand?

An Honourable Member: Stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): Thank you. (Agreed)

Bill 24—The Business Practices Amendment Act

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): On the proposed motion of the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), Bill 24, The Business Practices Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les pratiques commerciales).

Is there leave to let this matter stand?

An Honourable Member: Stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): Stand. Agreed.

Bill 25—The Environment Amendment Act (2)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): On the proposed motion of the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), Bill 25, The Environment Amendment Act (2) (Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur l'environnement), standing in the honourable Minister of Health's (Mr. Orchard) name.

Is there leave to let this motion stand?

Point of Order

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): On a point of order, how many times has this particular motion been stood by the member, and is there a limit?

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Hon. James Downey (Acting Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, just to remind the member of the rules, the member for Brandon East, who should know by this length of time in the House that it is not appropriate to ask questions of the Speaker.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Although I doubt quite seriously whether the member for Arthur had a point of order, the fact is that a number of these bills have now been on the Order Paper for months. If the government expects the opposition to deal in a forthright manner with debate on the bills introduced by the government, I think, out of courtesy, that we should be able to expect the same kind of

co-operation from members opposite. As my colleague indirectly pointed out, many of these pieces have been standing in members opposite names for a long time.

Mr. Speaker: On the same point of order raised, the honourable acting government House leader is quite correct. The honourable member for Brandon, I am sure, is aware of the fact that we do not direct questions to the Speaker.

* * *

* (1730)

Mr. Speaker: There was leave to allow the matter, Bill 25, to remain standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Health. Leave? It is agreed. Is there leave?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. Agreed.

Bill 26—The Environment Amendment Act (3)

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), Bill 26, The Environment Amendment Act (3); Loi no 3 modifiant la Loi sur l'environnement, standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave. Agreed.

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Mr. Speaker: Are we proceeding with Bill 16 (The Motor Vehicle Lemon Law Act; Loi sur les véhicules automobiles défectueux)? No.

Are we proceeding with Bill 17 (The Consumer Protection Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection du consommateur)? No.

Are we proceeding with Bill 27 (The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-maladie)? No.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS—PRIVATE BILLS

Bill 32—The Mount Carmel Clinic Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms.

Wasylycia-Leis), Bill 32, The Mount Carmel Clinic Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la "Mount Carmel Clinic", standing in the name of the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld).

Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave. Agreed.

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Res. 17—Privatization of Manitoba Telephone System

Mr. Speaker: I must draw to the attention of the House that at the beginning of this session when private member's Resolution 17, to be moved today by the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), was printed and reproduced in Notice Paper No. 3, at the same time as a large number of other private members' resolutions, three words, "that this Assembly", were inadvertently omitted and should appear immediately after the words "BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED" in the final paragraph. Therefore, I am asking for unanimous consent of the House to insert the words that were inadvertently omitted.

Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos),

WHEREAS the goal of the Manitoba Telephone System since its inception in 1908 has been to provide a universal, affordable communications network in the province, with a belief that establishing telephone lines to every business and residence in the province was good for the people, good for business and good for the economy; and

WHEREAS private business interests are now demanding access to the most profitable areas of the telecommunications network, namely interprovincial and international calls and the sale/lease of business terminal equipment; and

WHEREAS the deregulation that has taken place in the United States and elsewhere gives us a clear picture of what happens when this course is followed; local rate increases 10 times the rate of inflation, people at lower income levels no longer able to afford a telephone in their home, serious degradation of services and massive lay-offs in the industry; and

WHEREAS the provincial government broke its campaign promise to oppose allowing the federal

government to take control over telephone regulation in this province; and

WHEREAS the federal cabinet has overruled CRTC decisions several times over the past few years, opening up the Canadian telecommunications system to competition.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record as opposing the continued privatization of the Manitoba Telephone System and the telephone rate increases that will result to local customers from this privatization;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly join with antipoverty groups, churches, band councils and other Manitobans to fight the federal government's attempts to Americanize Canada's telecommunications system.

Motion presented.

Mr. Dewar: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak, to seek approval from this Legislature on this important issue that is fundamental, of course, to every Manitoban. That, of course, is a threat to our Telephone System by the continued privatization of our publicly owned Manitoba Telephone System.

For 83 years, since 1908, Manitobans have enjoyed and they have benefitted, in fact all Canadians have benefitted, from a government-owned and a government-operated telephone and telecommunication system. The current system provides service to all Manitobans. It is accessible; it is affordable; and it is universal. It links Manitobans north and south, and east and west.

It has been estimated that over 98 percent of Canadian households have at least one telephone, with 21 percent of the Canadian households having three of them. The average Canadian made 1,400 calls in 1987, with Manitobans ranking second with an average of 1,900 calls per person in 1987. So it is very apparent that Manitobans are heavy users of the telecommunication system.

Of course, in many cases, the telephone is often the only link that individuals will have with the outside world. For people who are disabled, confined to their residence, it is the only link that they have for emergency or any sort of outside communication.

As I was saying, Manitobans are heavy users of the telephone system, and this is both for social and

for business purposes. Universality of telephone service, affordable residential rates for rural and northern Manitobans, of course, should be the priorities of MTS. We would have to maybe question that after the fiasco of the old Community Calling when it was brought out.

When the minister first brought out the Community Calling system, it was criticized by the opposition, and it was criticized by rural Manitobans. Though we do support improved service for rural Manitobans, we are opposed to the high increases that this Community Calling program brought in. The protest, of course, was strong. It is a sad situation that certain areas do not wish to communicate with other areas, Oak Bank with Selkirk, for instance; but the strong protest by rural Manitobans forced the minister to reconsider, to bring back a new system of Community Calling which is probably a lot more acceptable. The public hearings, of course, are still not held and there have still not been policies, as such.

I was stating that affordable rates for rural and northern Manitobans must be a priority goal of MTS. MTS, of course, due to the public ownership nature of the corporation, often will provide service to areas that would not be accessible had this service been run purely for profit. MTS now, of course, has assets of over \$1.6 billion, provides service to 98 percent of the households in this province. It employs over 5,600 Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

Our system, of course, remains both universal and affordable basically due to the fact that local rates are subsidized by long distance revenues. I will just refer to the Annual Report here from the Manitoba Telephone System, where they say that revenues from all sources amounted to \$570 million, an increase of \$32 million from last year. Long distance service provides 52.8 percent of the company's revenue, and this was up again over \$7 million of their previous year. Thirty-six percent of long distance revenue was derived from calls outside of Manitoba and undertaken in conjunction with other member companies of Telecom Canada.

*(1740)

By allowing long distance competition, revenues from long distance would fall, thus eroding the base which helps maintain lower subscriber rates. The profits on long distance revenues can be as high as 70 cents on the dollar, and they have been used traditionally to keep basic rates low. Now if CRTC

allows companies such as Unitel to skim off these profits, this will have a negative effect upon local rates. The inevitable result will be rate hikes for residential users, particularly rural customers who will unfortunately be hardest hit.

This government, which supported both the federal Conservatives and the federal Liberals, has once again acted in the interests of big business and against the residents of this province who will pay dearly, of course, for this change.

In 1984, during the CRTC hearings, again debating a similar situation, CNCP were seeking approval to compete on the long distance revenues. MTS was then operating as a Crown corporation, rather than a corporation run by the province, and was strongly opposed to deregulation. MTS rightly concluded that rates would rise for the vast majority of subscribers, particularly those in rural Manitoba.

I will again refer to a study that was made in '87, a federal task force study by Bud Sherman who concluded that deregulation and competition would mean increased costs to approximately 90 percent of Canadians. Only 10 percent of Canadian subscribers would benefit and, of course, this 10 percent, as stated in even the government's own document, were mostly large corporations. They are the ones who used most of the long distance calls between provinces, and this says 63 percent of long distance revenues were derived from calls outside the province.

Local rates for 90 percent of Canadians would increase, while only 10 percent would decrease. MTS again pointed out that over 56 percent of Manitobans then made absolutely no long distance calls out of province in an average month, and another 36 percent spent less than \$25 per month on such calls. As a result, at that time, over 90 percent of telephone users would see absolutely no benefit to deregulation and ended up paying more.

The number of benefactors of such service would be less than 1 percent of all MTS customers. As they stated at the time, MTS, with reduced revenues, would have reduced capacity to extend and improve service. It would be again unbalanced, a detriment to 99 percent of all Manitobans.

I would like to refer to—this has happened where they allowed deregulation in the United Kingdom. The privatization of British telephones in November of 1984 by the Thatcher government was one of a series of public sector services that were

deregulated and privatized in the 1980s. The privatization and deregulation of British Telecom resulted in a number of changes which the public immediately felt. These were delays in getting telephones installed, crossed lines, calls being cut off, more noisy or faint lines. In short, the United Kingdom experience has been a negative one when viewed from the perspective of the general public.

Of course, the United States example is probably more glaring and probably would affect us just as much. The break-up of AT&T in 1984 has been a disaster for the average American consumer.

An Honourable Member: You got that right.

Mr. Dewar: Thank you. Each decrease in long distance rates has meant a corresponding increase in local—again, I will quote from this article dealing with the break-up of Ma Bell: Since the biggest company in the world, American Telephone and Telegraph, was forced to break its hold on the United States telephone industry, the U.S. phone users have been subjected to the largest economic and social experiment in history. U.S. phone bills have increased an average of 37 percent. Homeowners have to wait up to 45 days to have private phone lines installed. Businesses that live and die by the telephone have to wait between four to six weeks to get telephone lines. Bills have become very complicated. Phone repair costs have rocketed. Services have fallen. If you need to have your telephone repaired, you have to take it down to the centre. House calls are a thing of the past.

Of course, MTS in its presentation to the CRTC hearings in 1984 drew this conclusion: There would be few demonstrable benefits for Manitoba and its telecommunication industry if the commission grants—at the time it was a CNCP application—and removes restrictions on the resale and sharing of services. A decision of this kind would represent a major restructuring of the industry. On the other hand, there are distinct possibilities that such authorization removal will result in the deterioration of benefits Manitobans presently enjoy under the existing industry structure. The effects of such a restructuring would be immediate and serious, leading to the erosion of the financial strength and the integrity of MTS, and thereby, undermining its ability to meet its obligations to its shareholders, customers and the people of Manitoba.

MTS concluded: MTS therefore urges the commission to deny the application and retain

current restrictions on the resale and sharing of services. Few Manitobans, of course, would benefit.

Now, this minister endorsed the application of Unitel to allow competition in MTS, the long distance rates across this province, with a weak attempt to explain to Manitobans the negative effects of any competition allowed in the long distance rates. So I urge the Legislature to approve my resolution and to stop the further deterioration and the further privatization of our Manitoba Telephone System. Thank you.

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): I have a few minutes here to put some comments on the record about this resolution. The member does touch on the significant event way back in 1908 when the Manitoba Telephone System initially was formed, and I would like to maybe remind him of the fact that Sir Rodmond Roblin was the Minister of Agriculture at the time who later became Premier of the Province of Manitoba.

He was Minister of Agriculture for 10 years, and in 1908 he brought in the Manitoba Telephone System. I want to read, maybe just to remind him of a little bit of history, from People of Service, a brief history of the Manitoba Telephone System, which maybe he should read some day.

Between 1906 and 1908, provincial authorities enacted the necessary legislation to set the stage for the establishment of a long distance telephone system covering Manitoba. The government system would also assume the installation and management of local exchanges in the rural lines. The Bell operations which served some 14,000 of the 25,000 subscribers in the province were to be taken over by the government in compensation of \$3.3 million, and this was initiated at 12:01 a.m. January 15, 1908.

I again remind the member: by a Conservative government. Over the course of time since that has happened, a lot of things have changed in terms of the use of the telephone system. It has evolved fairly rapidly over the last roughly 80 years, and I have to tell the member over the last 10 years it has evolved very substantially.

The member in his comments constantly uses the word privatization. I think it is a misuse of the word because I am not aware that we have sold any component of the Manitoba Telephone System and that is my interpretation of privatization.

The member in his resolution, if I can quickly go through it, covers a number of things, talking about services for people, serving all Manitobans. This government, back in 1988, introduced Service for the Future, which allows all rural and northern Manitobans to have individual line service, something his government did nothing about in six and a half years in government, and 15 out of the last 20 years they were in government they still did not help rural Manitobans and northern Manitobans in terms of having individual line service.

We have some 47,000 customers who are being upgraded to individual line service over a seven-year period, and I am pleased to report at this point some 8,800 customers have been switched over to ILS. That is some 19 percent of the customers to be done over the seven-year period.

* (1750)

I want to tell the member that the rural Manitobans who have had that opportunity are very pleased with that service improvement that we have put in place. We are also replacing all the mechanical switches with digital switches throughout Manitoba, a considerable improvement in quality of transmission and reliability of service.

The Community Calling program that the member likes to get negative on, is also part of service for the future. The program was initially introduced, taken to the Public Utilities Board, out for hearings and received no objection, and I would like to tell the member that some 21 communities in southern Manitoba, southwestern Manitoba, were very pleased with the expanded calling areas they received and this program was never withdrawn, as the member used the word in his introduction today; the program was put on hold.

Some further improvements were introduced for rural Manitobans and I am pleased to hear the member actually acknowledge that it is a very good program. If he ever went outside the circumference of the city of Winnipeg more than 25 miles he might find out what citizens of rural Manitoba think about the improved telephone services that they are receiving.

He talks about concern about different elements of Americanization. I want to tell the member that the changes that we are introducing to the telecommunications business in the province of Manitoba and the country of Canada, are called Canadianization of the telephone system.

I want to remind the member, he makes comments about the CNCP application back in 1985 which the NDP opposed, which the unions opposed, which the Consumers' Association opposed. Now we are in 1991, we have a new application from Unitel and the member may pay attention to the fact the Consumers' Association of Canada has now reversed their position and say the competition is good because the customer wants the broader range of services available from competition.

We as a government also support competition. We support on the basis of provided—and the member calls our submission weak. Our submission is very strong, supported by many of the other people who went forward and made representation. We are requesting that if competition comes into being, it be open and fair and on a level playing field, and that any carrier of long distance make the same contribution to the future as is presently being made towards the support of local service.

We are requiring that the consumer be a winner on both sides of the issue. They have the choice of a broader selection of services offered by competition, and at the same time the contribution from long distance to keeping local rates low, be kept in place. We have covered all the bases. Consumers' Association supports that and the member should pay attention to that and respond to that rather than always take the negative approach. He is not really concerned about trying to improve the services to rural Manitobans or to any citizens of the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba Telephone System has done a lot of things in terms of trying to make services better and maybe that member over there—once in a while he likes to say that competition is not good—does not realize that the NDP government, back in the early 1970s, introduced competition in private home telephone sets. Private citizens are quite happy with the ability to buy their telephone sets from whomever they want to.

Back in early 1988, the NDP government passed an Order-in-Council to set up competition for the cellular system and the cellular system is working well in competition. The NDP Leader of today, in 1987 endorsed competition in private line interconnect and we have introduced private line interconnect.

He never got around to doing it, but we have introduced private line interconnect competition. We have also introduced competition in business terminal attachments, all things that the citizens of the province of Manitoba want.

Mr. Speaker, the ability to have choice of service in telecommunications and built-up competition is deemed to be very desirable in terms of keeping business here and attracting new business to come to locate here because they have these services elsewhere.

Most businesses look at the costs of running a business now and telecommunications are a very important cost. Labour and capital are the two most important costs, but telecommunications is now in third place for many businesses because the ability to transmit voice and data and image, and particularly the use of fax, is significantly important in terms of running business nowadays. It is high cost, it is high tech, and they want the competition that is available in other areas of this country and in other parts of North America. We have to supply it here if we are going to attract these businesses here and keep them here.

The members once in a while make comments that long distance competition is bad. Well, I want to remind the member that we have always had long distance competition whether he noticed it or not. We set rates here for calling outside the province, but Bell Canada sets rates for calling inside, and they have lowered those rates over the last few years. We have responded by lowering the rates for calling from Manitoba out by some 50 percent over the last three years, and the actual revenue for long distance has continued to grow. That pent-up demand, we reduced the rates by 50 percent. That you have greater revenue means that you have more than twice the number of calls. It is not only businesses making those calls; it is the private citizens too.

I mean, in terms of the larger calling areas we have put in place throughout rural Manitoba, the rural customers are actually seeing a reduction in their cost of telecommunications. They had to pay long distance charges to make calls across the road or 10 miles, that is to call the school or the R.M. office or the hospital—it was long distance. Now, by Community Calling we have reduced that substantially, reduced the amount of long distance calls that they are having to pay for in the province of Manitoba. So we are reducing their phone bill.

That member comes from an area, he may be paying a phone bill of \$9 or \$10 a month, basic rate. I come from an area where basic rate is maybe \$7 a month, but our total phone bill runs \$100 a month quite easily because of intraprovincial long distance calls. We have had to find a way to reduce those, and we have done it by the Community Calling program which that member so often wants to object to. It is a good program, well received by the citizens out in rural Manitoba, who have had the unfortunate situation of having to make long distance calls to call their neighbours. That does not have to be the case in the future.

Mr. Speaker, given all these improvements that we have brought in for telecommunications in the province, looking at this resolution which does not adequately reflect the improvements in this system that we have brought in place, I would like to introduce an amendment to this resolution. I would like to introduce this amendment after the first WHEREAS,

WHEREAS the Manitoba Telephone System, under the present government, is embarking on an \$800 million modernization of the telephone system known as Service for the Future, to provide individual line service for 47,000 rural and northern subscribers and larger toll-free calling areas for rural callers; and

WHEREAS Manitobans enjoy affordable universal access to telephone service; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba government has presented a submission to the Canadian Radio-Television Telecommunications Commission hearing regarding the Unitel application requiring that all carriers of long distance make the same level of contribution to local service that is presently in place; and

WHEREAS the Consumers' Association of Manitoba and Canada agree with the government of Manitoba when they say that competition provides a broader range of service and choice for consumers.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba congratulate the government for its continuing efforts to improve the telecommunication services and choices available to all Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce this resolution, seconded by the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard).

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Given the time, I will take this matter under advisement, and I will report back to the House when this matter is again before the House whether or not this amendment is in order.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Friday).

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Thursday, May 23, 1991

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