



Second Session — Thirty-Second Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

31-32 Elizabeth II

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable D. James Walding
Speaker*



MG-8048

VOL. XXXI No. 15B - 8:00 p.m., MONDAY, 28 FEBRUARY, 1983.

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Second Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

Name	Constituency	Party
ADAM, Hon. A.R. (Pete)	Ste. Rose	NDP
ANSTETT, Andy	Springfield	NDP
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BANMAN, Robert (Bob)	La Verendrye	PC
BLAKE, David R. (Dave)	Minnedosa	PC
BROWN, Arnold	Rhineland	PC
BUCKLASCHUK, John M.	Gimli	NDP
CARROLL, Q.C., Henry N.	Brandon West	IND
CORRIN, Brian	Ellice	NDP
COWAN, Hon. Jay	Churchill	NDP
DESJARDINS, Hon. Laurent	St. Boniface	NDP
DODICK, Doreen	Riel	NDP
DOERN, Russell	Elmwood	NDP
DOLIN, Mary Beth	Kildonan	NDP
DOWNEY, James E.	Arthur	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert	Emerson	PC
ENNS, Harry	Lakeside	PC
EVANS, Hon. Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
EYLER, Phil	River East	NDP
FILMON, Gary	Tuxedo	PC
FOX, Peter	Concordia	NDP
GOURLAY, D.M. (Doug)	Swan River	PC
GRAHAM, Harry	Virden	PC
HAMMOND, Gerrie	Kirkfield Park	PC
HARAPIAK, Harry M.	The Pas	NDP
HARPER, Elijah	Rupertsland	NDP
HEMPHILL, Hon. Maureen	Logan	NDP
HYDE, Lloyd	Portage la Prairie	PC
JOHNSTON, J. Frank	Sturgeon Creek	PC
KOSTYRA, Hon. Eugene	Seven Oaks	NDP
KOVNATS, Abe	Niakwa	PC
LECUYER, Gérard	Radisson	NDP
LYON, Q.C., Hon. Sterling	Charleswood	PC
MACKLING, Q.C., Hon. Al	St. James	NDP
MALINOWSKI, Donald M.	St. Johns	NDP
MANNESS, Clayton	Morris	PC
McKENZIE, J. Wally	Roblin-Russell	PC
MERCIER, Q.C., G.W.J. (Gerry)	St. Norbert	PC
NORDMAN, Rurik (Ric)	Assiniboia	PC
OLESON, Charlotte	Gladstone	PC
ORCHARD, Donald	Pembina	PC
PAWLEY, Q.C., Hon. Howard R.	Selkirk	NDP
PARASIUK, Hon. Wilson	Transcona	NDP
PENNER, Q.C., Hon. Roland	Fort Rouge	NDP
PHILLIPS, Myrna A.	Wolseley	NDP
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
RANSOM, A. Brian	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Burrows	NDP
SCHROEDER, Hon. Vic	Rossmere	NDP
SCOTT, Don	Inkster	NDP
SHERMAN, L.R. (Bud)	Fort Garry	PC
SMITH, Hon. Muriel	Osborne	NDP
STEEN, Warren	River Heights	PC
STORIE, Jerry T.	Flin Flon	NDP
URUSKI, Hon. Bill	Interlake	NDP
USKIW, Hon. Samuel	Lac du Bonnet	NDP
WALDING, Hon. D. James	St. Vital	NDP

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, 28 February, 1983.

Time — 8:00 p.m.

BUDGET DEBATE

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

The Honourable Minister of Housing.

HON. J. STORIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is obvious that I am attempting to compete with the final episode of M*A*S*H and in the ratings game, it's apparent that I've lost. However, undaunted, I will pursue my original intention and make my comments nonetheless on our Budget and, as well, indicate that I intend to make some comments on the comments that have been made on the Budget to date.

First of all, I would like to indicate that, contrary to the assumption in the statements of some members opposite, this government is all too aware of the fact that we are not only facing a difficult recession but, in less polite terms, probably a depression . . .

MR. C. MANNES: That's the first time I've heard that from over there.

HON. J. STORIE: . . . and one, Mr. Speaker, that has been pursuing us relentlessly over the last number of years. Certainly although we were aware of the difficult position the province was in back in December of 1981 we, along with many others, were convinced that it was simply a recession; that in fact the trough of the past six or eight months was at its end and that we could expect some kind of turnaround in 1982 and 1983. Over those months, we have become increasingly aware that not only is this recession going to continue on through 1983, but that the long-term view is that, if in fact we begin to show some improvement in our economic indicators, that they are going to be slow; that the increase is not going to be as dramatic as we would hope or that we've come to expect when economic downturns occur. The fact is we're painfully aware of the difficulties of the turmoil, of the trauma that's being created by the unemployment that we're experiencing in Manitoba and that's being experienced across Canada.

The fact that there are 50,000 to 60,000 Manitobans unemployed is of great concern and the Budget that we have introduced and our Estimates of spending for the year 1983-84 are an indication of our concern and the difficulty is that while the opposition is in a position to rub their hands in glee and although they claim they aren't doing that, it is certainly difficult to tell from some of the speeches from members opposite that we haven't seen very much by way of constructive suggestion. We haven't seen very much by way of constructive alternatives to some of the things this government's attempting to do.

When we talk about - and I don't hear, Mr. Speaker, any statement, either in this Chamber or out of this Chamber to the effect that unemployment is not our

first and our most pressing problem. The Bishop's statement at the Conference of Catholic Bishops announced recently, talked about the cost of massive unemployment. It talked about the fact that unemployment deprives people of their dignity. If I can quote from the Budget and a quote from the Bishops themselves it says, "It is also a major economic problem since high unemployment rates are accompanied by lower productivity, lower consumption of products, reduced public revenues and increasing social welfare costs."

Mr. Speaker, in my last speech when I spoke in the the Throne Speech Debate, I listed a number of things that this government had done in the 1982-83 year to prevent the kind of deterioration of spending that's in the pockets of the average person. I had outlined that we had deliberately taken that course to ensure that the average person had something left to spend and the effect that had on the economy was significant. The Conference Board of Canada has indicated by its statistics - and we've certainly read them in this Chamber - which indicates that our economy has not suffered as much as some other economies.

Mr. Speaker, it was a deliberate strategy. There were and there are a number of things that a government can do and we have a difficult situation on hand when we're damned if we do spend and we're damned if we don't, and we're caught in between. We have two options, Mr. Speaker. We can decide to invest in the economy of this province by spending, by refusing to implement the Draconian kinds of measures that have been implemented in other provinces, in other jurisdictions around the world, with very little success. We don't have to look very far to find economies that are in a deteriorating condition because of the government's failure to recognize a fundamental principle that a dollar in the hand of the average person is going to be spent. The opposition would like to suggest, from time to time they do suggest that we have ignored - not that we intend to ignore - but that unintentionally we ignore the private sector. We recognize that the private sector has an important role to play in this economy but we're also not as naive as perhaps the Member for Pembina who would like to suggest that without . . .

MR. D. ORCHARD: You've never mentioned the private sector once. He's a wimp, they've never mentioned . . .

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Sure we did, we'll show you.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

The Honourable Minister of Natural Resources on a point of order.

HON. A. MACKLING: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I have refrained from rising despite the very loud statements from the Member for Pembina, but when he starts using words

in this House that are audible to everyone like wimp and personal accusations, I think it's high time that the honourable member be called to order. During the time that an honourable member is speaking in this House we should be endeavouring to listen. Well-directed heckling adds, Mr. Speaker, but personal accusations and derogatory terms takes away from the dignity of this House. So, Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to admonish the Honourable Member for Pembina to either refrain or leave the Chamber.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable Member for Pembina to the same point.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Yes, Mr. Speaker, since the Acting Government House Leader has brought to the floor of this House on the record of Hansard the name "wimp", he might possibly identify to whom the name refers.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

HON. A. MACKLING: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member gets up and confirms that he is using that kind of language and that takes away from the dignity of this House and he should be admonished from that kind of personal insult here.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for La Verendrye to the same point.

MR. R. BANMAN: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the Minister of Natural Resources is acting as House Leader for the first time in the many years here, but I would point out to you that in the ten years that I've been here, the House Leader, nor any member of the Chamber needs draw any matter - as far as heckling or that - to your attention. That comes within the responsibility of your responsibilities in this Chamber and I don't think we have to have someone getting up on the other side of the House and trying to do your job.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order please. I thank those honourable members who have given me their wisdom on this matter. I do not find the particular word objected to within that list of unparliamentary expressions within Hansard —(Interjection)— Order please. Order please. The Honourable Minister who had the floor was entitled to be heard, to be given the same opportunity to speak, as other members wish in this House. I would ask members not to disturb the decorum of this House by language which could be objectionable to other members.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MR. SPEAKER: While I'm on my feet, I wonder if I could introduce members to a group in the gallery. We have some 35 brownies and guides from Anola under the direction of Mrs. Perry. The troop is from the constituency of the Honourable Member for Springfield. On behalf of all of the members, I welcome you here this evening.

The Honourable Minister of Housing.

BUDGET DEBATE CONT'D

HON. J. STORIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was about to conclude by suggesting that it was not the position of this government that private industry had no role to play - quite the reverse.

We recognize that private industry has a significant role to play but what members opposite seem to fail to recognize is that private industry at this point is in no position to contribute to the extent, or in the way, that probably they would like and we would like to contribute to it. The fact is, we will talk about the payroll tax, we will talk about the taxation system and structure in Manitoba in a minute.

However, it's important to note, and I'm sure that members opposite are aware of this fact, although they may be loathe to admit it, and that is that the present industry, the present state of industry is such that the productive capacity of the majority of the industries in this province, particularly the primary industries, is running at 60 percent or in that neighbourhood. So the argument that tax incentives are going to invite additional expenditures by private industry to invest in this province by suggesting that it's going to create overnight the kind of economic stimulus to create the thousands of jobs that are needed is naive.

Mr. Speaker, any number of jurisdictions have attempted, through tax incentives, through grants, through giveaways, to entice business, to entice the industries to their particular locales and it has not been successful, simply because most industries are not in the position. They don't sense either the kind of internal financial security or see the long-range kind of security that provides the stimulus for them to invest. So that while we may go around thumping our breasts, and the opposition does, about the fact that there have been very few new private industry initiatives in the province, the fact is that there have been very few anywhere in the western world. We could look to the provinces to the east or west and ask, where has private industry been in those so-called bastions of Conservatism where the tax incentive and the tax credit is the be-all and end-all of economic policy.

The fact is that there have been as few successes in any of the rest of the provinces of Canada in attracting industry as there have been in Manitoba. There is no difference. The suggestion from the Honourable Member for Pembina that it is somehow the investment atmosphere of the province that is keeping private industry away in droves, is patent nonsense.

MR. J. PLOHMAN: Nonsense.

HON. J. STORIE: Mr. Speaker, we'll talk about the fantasies of the Leader of the Opposition later. Mr. Speaker, it was only last year when the Minister of Finance, I believe, tabled in this Legislature a study which showed that in terms of costs for employees and costs of doing business in the province that, contrary to the myths that are perpetuated by members opposite, Manitoba in fact has a very competitive basis for attracting industries to this province.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

HON. J. STORIE: Mr. Speaker, the members opposite seem to enjoy spouting a litany of taxes that face industries that come to this province. Mr. Speaker, they would only have to move mentally to adjacent provinces and see the same kinds of taxes. In fact, if we're to believe the Finance Department study, we don't have anything to put us to shame with respect to our taxation system. It is as competitive as any other in Canada and the suggestion that that is what's keeping private industry from investing in Manitoba is naive and dangerous and silly and shows the kind of philosophical dinosaurisms that are represented by members opposite.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have on the one hand the outdated notion that somehow providing tax giveaways, tax incentives, tax expenditures is the answer, is simplistic and unworkable given not only our economy, but the economy of the western world. The alternative to doing that, as they see it, is that we should be controlling our spending; that, in fact, somehow the government should be in a position to control its deficits by cutting back on services.

We had an example here this afternoon, Mr. Speaker. We had the typical example that comes from members opposite when they're concerned about the deficit. What we have is the front bench arguing and presenting the case for cutbacks in government spending; we have members of the backbench standing up and suggesting that their particular constituencies need more incentives; that the businesses in Roblin-Russell need some concessions on the part of government. Well, Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order please. I'm having some difficulty in hearing the Honourable Minister. I wonder if members would co-operate so that we can all hear the words of wisdom.

The Honourable Minister of Housing.

HON. J. STORIE: Mr. Speaker, we see this dilemma; we were faced with this dilemma when we considered our Estimates of Spending and when we brought down the Budget. Unfortunately, the members of the opposition are under no such constraints to be realistic. They don't feel those constraints. The Member for Roblin-Russell can stand up and say, we need concessions, our businesses need concessions, the people need the service. On the other hand, the front bench can stand up and say, well, you have to cut spending, why this sweetheart deal so-called with the MGEA, why aren't we cutting back on spending?

Mr. Speaker, part of the reason for tabling the Estimates and the Budget together was to shake out the sheep from the wolves, so to speak.

HON. S. LYON: Because we told you what to do; we told you what to do.

HON. J. STORIE: That, in fact, the members opposite are going to have a much more difficult time when it comes to requesting services in their constituencies. They are going to have a little more difficult time suggesting that we cut back on spending without being a little bit specific about where those cutbacks could be, because they affect each of their constituencies,

whether it's the Natural Resources people that are in Turtle Mountain or whether it's the Education staff that are in Swan River or whether it's the Social Services people in the Member for Pembina's constituency.

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed simplistic for the members of the opposition to say that spending can be controlled by laying off, by leaving our options open with respect to the Civil Service, because \$100 million reduction in deficit by way of cutbacks in Civil Service means 5,000 jobs. I would ask what kind of logic is there in saying to fight unemployment, which we all agree is our prime target, by cutbacks in the Civil Service? We have taken the middle road, we have taken the realistic road.

The Leader of the Opposition referred to the steelworkers in Flin Flon who negotiated a contract and in the first year of that contract got no increase. Mr. Speaker, that shows a good deal of common sense and courage on the part of the steelworkers of Flin Flon and they're to be commended for that. But, Mr. Speaker, the steelworkers would not - they would be the last people to suggest that somehow the government should have either overrun the Civil Service, that we should have completely disregarded the agreement that was legitimately agreed upon and mutually accepted by both sides.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that the kind of reaction that we get from members opposite, with respect to that deal, is all too typical of their attitude towards the average working person. It's all too typical of their attitude towards the Civil Service. It is all too typical of their attitude towards labour in general.

HON. S. LYON: You don't have any average working people - you don't give a damn about the average working person. Tell him to get on track.

A MEMBER: Tory transients.

HON. J. STORIE: Mr. Speaker, perhaps this is - the Honourable Leader of the Opposition referred to the contract in Flin Flon and what the steelworkers had done. The steelworkers would not have been opening a contract to negotiate a new one, which the MGEA did, and for that, they deserve a lot of credit. The fact that this government approached them, the fact that they had the confidence of this government, indicates the kind of relationship that we need to have in these times.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Right, right on.

HON. J. STORIE: Mr. Speaker, the kind of information that is provided in the view that the opposition takes with respect to the MGEA Agreement is in effect hypocritical. We've heard the word "hypocrisy" and words and synonyms of hypocrisy used with a great deal of flourish by members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, the particular issue of the MGEA is one of those examples where hypocrisy was not only seemed to be done, it was done by members opposite on this issue. We have any number of examples, Mr. Speaker, of an attempt on the part of the opposition to distort what is, in essence, the real issue. The MGEA contract is one. We were not negotiating a new deal. We were going from a position

where in 1981 we had legitimately agreed upon a contract. We were under the impression as were many economists, as were many so-called experts . . .

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

A MEMBER: Brian, your member is getting out of hand again.

HON. J. STORIE: We were taking the advice, the considered . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable Minister of Natural Resources on a point of order.

HON. A. MACKLING: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'm having difficulty hearing my own colleague on this side of the Chamber through all of the interruptions that are coming and I admit there's the odd reply coming from this side, so I caution my colleagues to restrain themselves as well.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Roblin-Russell to the same point of order.

MR. J. MCKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, I've had problems since the House reconvened. These hearing pieces are actually not much value to us that sit on this side - we can't hear the member either.

A MEMBER: No, and we're trying hard.

MR. SPEAKER: I thank the honourable members for their advice. Order please, order please. I hope that all honourable members will restrain themselves. If they feel the urge to heckle over-loudly, perhaps they would do so outside of the Chamber.

The Honourable Minister of Housing.

HON. J. STORIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are any number of issues besides, we could go through and I could outline again, for members opposite, what exactly the MGEA deal entails rather than have continually spouted that it's a 27 percent agreement as if from this day forward the MGEA had that agreement, the fact was that the opening of that agreement, in itself and by itself, was a significant event. The fact that the average MGEA employer ends up contributing back into the Manitoba economy \$600 is the second factor. The fact that in total it comes to \$10 million which we have agreed should be placed towards the Jobs Fund, is another factor.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, it would have never occurred had the Leader of the Opposition been Premier at that time. In fact, what we would have had is the kind of confrontation that has virtually destroyed the morale of the public school system in Quebec, that probably will go on to continue to demoralize the public service of that province and, Mr. Speaker, the effect of that hostility, the effect of the distaste that the Quebec Government has shown and the disdain they have shown for the workers of Quebec will do that province no good, not in the short term or the long term.

Mr. Speaker, we could continue to talk about . . .

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, order please. Order please. The Honourable Minister of Housing.

HON. J. STORIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are other issues that we could confront the opposition on. We could talk about their distortion of the deficit which was incurred in 1982-83. Mr. Speaker, we continue to hear about government spending being out of control. The fact is that government spending was 1 percent above what it was projected to be in the Estimates - the 1982-83 Estimates - which were tabled last year. Mr. Speaker, we have some examples of this government's ability to not only manage but control the spending and we have done a lot better than provinces to the west of us, including the Tory stronghold in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of management is continually brought up. The issue of management of the economy is continually brought up, thrown in our faces, as if for some reason we are the black sheep of the western provinces. The fact is, if you look at the record, not only has our spending been controlled but the fact is that the bottom lines of our deficit have not varied nearly as much as Alberta or Saskatchewan or B.C.

A MEMBER: That's right, it's not as much as the Lyon government.

HON. J. STORIE: Mr. Speaker, if we take as an example the ability to control our spending beyond our Estimates, the fact that we have a Special Warrant this year, which is half of what it was last year, indicates that we were controlling our spending far better than that bunch of misfits opposite.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition continues to harp on the fact that the deficit is up \$150 million. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition should look at the figures from the Province of Saskatchewan, or the Province of Alberta.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Yes, the revenue.

HON. J. STORIE: In relationship to those provinces we have done a marvelous job.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: The way you did with your Special Warrants in your government . . . your \$105 million.

HON. J. STORIE: Mr. Speaker, we could dwell on those difficulties which are presented from time to time by the members opposite, but frankly I don't think it's worth spending a great deal of time fighting ghosts, fighting mistruths, and fighting some of the half-truths that are presented as fact from members opposite. I think the more important issue and the issue which was focused on in the Budget and which we, I think, should be spending our time focusing upon, is the effect that unemployment has on the province, the cost that it has to the people of Manitoba in human terms. We recognize the fact that unemployment is a social evil, that it costs the economy - the suggestion is that it costs somewhere between 35 billion and 40 billion in terms of output for our economy and we have to tackle

that head-on. We have contributed, we have attempted to deal with that problem in a rather unique and creative way.

The MGEA settlement is just one example of a new approach to providing some funds for job creation. The other is the amount mentioned in the Budget which is \$200 million and we seem to have been unable I guess, to relay to the opposition the fact that this \$200 million is there, it is the most significant figure. Mr. Speaker, there's also the recognition on this part that a \$200 million Job Fund is not going to overcome the very real and difficult unemployment level that we have.

However, Mr. Speaker, we recognize that the \$200 million that we're prepared to contribute is only part of the effort that's required and the other part of that effort is going to have to come from private industry, from the Federal Government, from municipalities, but it can have a real impact. We also, through the Estimates process, have done some paring on various aspects of the government spending in order to contribute to that fund.

Mr. Speaker, the wall between Craighton and Flin Flon is no greater than the wall, in the Conservative mind, between imagination and progressive.— (Interjection)— Progressive and Conservative.

Mr. Speaker, the kind of initiatives that the \$200 million Jobs Fund can be put to, the kinds of projects that we can undertake are really limited only by the kind of co-operation we get from business, from our other levels of government, it's limited only by the imagination and the will to overcome the problem that's displayed by all sectors of our economy. The projects that were outlined by the Minister of Finance on the Budget are really only the beginning. There are any number of projects, similar kinds of capital projects that we could undertake. The only significant thing that we can say about those projects is that they have to (a) provide some kind of infrastructure, some kind of lasting capital asset and (b) that they have to be labour-intensive so that we get the biggest bang for the buck as it were.

Mr. Speaker, the various departments are going to be expected to contribute with their ideas on various projects. The Department of Housing has allocated it for its spending in the 1983-84 year additional funds for the Homes in Manitoba Program, an example of a program that uses provincial capital to provide employment, a program which in effect in the long run is neither a significant draw on the borrowing power of the province nor on the deficit position. We expect that over the next eight months the Homes in Manitoba Program will have contributed some 2,000 more jobs to the economy of this province. Those are the kinds of programs we wish frankly there were more of.

Those kinds of initiatives are few and far between. However, they're simply one of the examples, one of the kinds of projects that a government can undertake if one isn't afraid to have the public sector involved in job creation and if one believes that the public sector actually has a role to play in the economy.

This government as I said earlier, recognizes the role private industry has to play, however, we also recognize the reality of the economic situation and that is that private industry simply is not in a position at this time to provide the investment, to provide the capital that's needed to provide the long-term jobs that we all seek in the province.

At the same time recognizing those limitations and those realities, I don't think that we should be afraid to contribute both capital and operating expenses where there is a worthwhile project and a project that will have some lasting benefit to the province.

Mr. Speaker, preparing the Budget and preparing the Estimates was a difficult task. Obviously it isn't made any easier by members opposite being unwilling or unable to contribute in any constructive way, to provide suggestions.— (Interjection)— Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition suggests that we don't know how to prepare Estimates. I will admit that we didn't take a double-edged axe in to prepare the Budget as the Honourable Leader of the Opposition did in 1977-78. We didn't invent a slogan, "acute protracted restraint," and we certainly don't believe in it.

However, Mr. Speaker, the preparation of the Estimates was an effort to do two things. One is to free up some money for job creation and the other is to maintain what we see as essential services. We did that for two reasons: One, the people of the province deserve that those services be maintained and that doing otherwise would neither contribute to the well-being of the province's economy, nor would it provide the kind of atmosphere that would attract businesses or that would keep the people of the province in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I suppose that in the final analysis there will never be any consensus on the Budget that was brought down. However, the bottom line for us is that it is an effort and I think an important one to maintain the level of jobs in the province and to create employment where it's possible.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie.

MR. L. HYDE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate this opportunity to enter the debate on this Budget delivered to this House last Thursday evening. I suppose one should feel that he would be in a good position to congratulate the Honourable Minister, but in my case far be it from me to even think of congratulating him on the Budget that he presented last Thursday evening.

Mr. Speaker, it bothers me to think that we have a government of people, elected to office by a small majority, incidentally, of the voters in this province, who have really bungled the business affairs of Manitoba to the extent that I and my children and, I expect, my grandchildren - it may be my great-grandchildren - will be paying dearly for God knows how long, meaning of course the deplorable financial position this province finds itself in today. For the life of me, Mr. Speaker, I just can't understand how the Minister could let himself screw up this economy of our province to the extent that he has in just 18 months.

Sir, why didn't the Premier and his Cabinet stop and assess the favourable position that the province was in when they accepted the office just a few months ago, instead of racing off in a socialist rampage of spending money like drunken sailors; money, Mr. Speaker, that the Province of Manitoba, the people of Manitoba, do not have or wish to be indebted to. I say, Mr. Speaker, this government destroyed the faith that the business world had in the future of this province.

Sir, when the government took over the affairs of the province in November of 1981, never in the history of this province has the future looked as bright. The private sector was ready to invest large sums of capital to the future of this province. The philosophy of the socialist government stopped all that. Instead, the investors put their money elsewhere, somewhere where they felt they could have some co-operation with a provincial government. Mr. Speaker, I say the people who elected the socialist government to power in this province are regretting that move today.

The Minister of Finance, the other evening, started out his delivery of the Budget emphasizing the need for jobs. Mr. Speaker, we all know that unemployment is the No. 1 concern not only in Manitoba but across the entire nation, and where was their thinking when the jobs were going to be made available - permanent jobs, I might say - by the private sector, by Alcan, just to mention one, the largest private corporation in Canada - jobs - I say, jobs for the workforce of Manitoba? Mr. Speaker, they destroyed that. Well, Mr. Speaker, I could go on and mention the Power Grid, the potash development, the Limestone Power Development. These projects all meant permanent jobs for thousands of Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, this socialist government destroyed all that. For what? Mr. Speaker, to give us the largest number of unemployed people this province has ever experienced. Why? Because of their bullheadedness thinking. They couldn't, Mr. Speaker, accept the fact that the progress of this province was going well and looking very promising. Mr. Speaker, the N.D. Government of Manitoba, they destroyed all that. The fact that the private sector had in the future of Manitoba - yes, they did - and they destroyed all that.

Mr. Speaker, I think of this Budget as the "If Budget." The Minister of Finance said, if we can do this or if we can do that and if the Federal Government agrees to this or agrees to that. I say it's a very iffy Budget.

Sir, I was not at all surprised at the increase of the retail sales tax. I expected it to go higher and the people of Manitoba expected it to be raised higher than it was. I would think, Mr. Speaker, the economy of our province would be better off today if the NDP Government one year ago raised the sales tax two percentage points instead of the one and-a-half - imposing that unfavourable 1.5 percent payroll tax on the employers in this province. The payroll tax proved to be a very unpopular move by the government on the business people of Manitoba.

The President of the Chamber of Commerce of Winnipeg has openly condemned the NDP party for maintaining this tax and his remarks are worthy of being recorded in this House and I quote, "Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce President Lloyd McGinnis said a 17 percent hike in spending represents 1970 thinking in 1983. Mr. McGinnis condemned the NDP for maintaining its 1.5 percent payroll levy raising corporate taxes and spending millions of dollars for questionable job projects." He went on to say, "The Pawley Government seems to have the philosophy that it can create jobs without the help of the private business." Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses spokesman, Brian Gray, echoed McGinnis' words, "The government doesn't think the private sector has any role to play in creating work. They have adopted a very unfortunate

strategy," he claims. Gray said, "Long-term meaningful employment can only be created by stimulating businesses." He said, "Government taxes and policy seem to be aimed at destroying small businesses."

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Did Sterling write that for you?

MR. L. HYDE: I mention the fact, Mr. Speaker, this is an article that just came, the Winnipeg Sun, December 10, 1982. "Municipal taxpayers may have to bail out rural hospitals that are being swamped with red ink because of the province's payroll tax. Several hospital administrators said yesterday that the payroll tax is swelling their deficits and they don't know where they're going to get the money. They say all the fat has been sliced from their operations and local municipalities may be asked to increase property taxes to help reduce the deficit. 'The 1.5 percent payroll tax is killing us', said one administrator who did not wish to be identified."

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that may very well be coming from the words of our hospital administrator from Portage la Prairie. The taxpayers aren't going to be happy about seeing the hospital taxed. What is frightening is that the hospitals can't live with the government guidelines and that people could eventually find that large portion of their taxes are going to local hospitals.

It goes on to say, Mr. Speaker, "Carman Memorial Hospital is typical. They have to pay \$1,000 each month in the payroll taxes." And that only adds to the burden of the deficit hovering over the range of \$50,000.00. The Neepawa District Hospital shells out \$1200 a month to pay that payroll tax that was subject to our businesses in the Province of Manitoba. Then there is another article, "Why payroll tax must go," and this was down from the Professor, Faculty of Administrative Studies at the University of Manitoba, John McCallum. He goes on to say that it is hurting this province's economy by adding this payroll tax to us.

Mr. Speaker, both large and small businesses in my area of the province have had to cut back on staff and have agreed to take reductions in their salaries in order to do their share towards the cause at this time. The Portage Co-Op, for instance, and Macleods, they voted no increase in their salaries in order to keep the staff on the payroll.

MR. R. BANMAN: What did these guys do?

MR. L. HYDE: Yes, what did these people do? Our vegetable growers, Sir, the farmers, the food processing firms, small businesses, people are certainly ready and waiting for the opportunity they will get in two or three years down the road. They will get that opportunity to tell these people across the way just what they think of that payroll tax.

I'm sure, though - in fact, I know, Mr. Speaker - that the Minister of Finance has received many many many . . .

MS. M. PHILLIPS: You're a year behind, Lloyd.

MR. L. HYDE: . . . letters from my constituents in Portage la Prairie asking him to reconsider that payroll

tax that he had imposed upon us people in Manitoba. It is going to break many many businesses in this province of ours. The payroll tax imposed by the NDP Government of Manitoba has backfired on them, I suggest, and will continue to give them trouble until they have removed that tax.

Mr. Speaker, thank God the Minister of Finance made it clear during question period last Friday that the gasoline and diesel fuel tax imposed would not affect the farmers while producing that food that we all require.

Well, I know that the farmers will appreciate that but it is sure going to hurt them and all automobile owners when they pull up to that gas pump and have to shell out that extra 1.1 cents per litre to drive to their jobs - that is, if they have a job - and on Sunday morning when they want to go to church or take that Sunday drive we all like to do, we will certainly remember who imposed this tax on the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, at this point it is difficult to determine the total effect the added fuel tax is going to have on the working people and their families when it comes to travelling to and from their places of business or jobs or to purchase the week's groceries, or to take, as I said earlier, that Sunday morning drive just to see what the other people in the province are doing and how they're making out. People are not going to forget, as I said, are not going to forget the abuse they are getting from this government in order that they can continue to fritter away our tax dollars.

Sir, the truck firms are having a hard enough time of staying alive in these times as it is, and I expect we will continue to hear of small firms having to fold up or move from the province on account of the additional taxes that have been imposed on them, whether it be fuel tax, payroll tax, or whatever other tax the government can think up next.

Mr. Speaker, it would be wrong of me to say the tax on liquor and tobacco was a bad move, what with the reported health hazards and abuse to our bodies, to tax the use of cigarettes and alcohol. Personally, Sir, I don't use cigarettes but I do enjoy sociable drinking once in a while. So, Mr. Speaker, I am not at all upset about this tax but, I believe, Sir, if we as the elected people continue to increase taxes on some of the pleasures left to us, the practice will eventually backfire on the government with the results of less tax revenue for the coffers of governments.

A MEMBER: Back to the stills.

MR. L. HYDE: Yes, it might easily mean the hiring of extra police force to comb the bushes of our province and the basements of our province for those hidden stills that, I am sure, are in operation if not today, they will be, Sir, in the near future —(Interjection)— a cottage industry.

SOME HONORABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

MR. L. HYDE: Mr. Speaker, I mentioned and referred earlier to the Budget as an iffy Budget, meaning if the Federal Government will fall in line with the 200 million job funding program or if the Federal Government turns thumbs down and refuses to agree to some or all of the proposals of the NDP Government of Manitoba,

where are we going to end up, I suggest? With nothing, only one more broken promise to the people of Manitoba and the people of Manitoba holding the bag with a big debt over their heads.

What future, Mr. Speaker, is there for the young people of Manitoba coming out of high school and the young people completing their university education? I say, Mr. Speaker, the outlook is very bleak for the youth of our province at this time. The future of Manitoba looked healthier and brighter 18 months ago under the leadership of Sterling Lyon and the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba. It looked better then, Sir, that at any time in the history of this province. The present Premier and his colleagues blew it but good and threw away the opportunities of employment for hundreds in this province. This I will never understand, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, up to now, I have mentioned little about the farming industry but, Sir, I can assure you that you will be hearing plenty about what we, on this side of the House, think of the legislation the Minister of Agriculture intends to have passed during this Session when he talks about taking the rights from people. Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the Minister of Agriculture has got a big battle ahead of him. It should be the right of any Canadian to own property, whether it be in Manitoba or any other province in Canada.

MR. H. ENNS: And right about the 15th of August, he'll begin to realize it.

MR. L. HYDE: There is no doubt in the minds of the majority of my constituents, Sir; that right should be maintained.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to make mention of the second annual Century Farm Awards Dinner, sponsored by the Portage Industrial Association in Portage la Prairie. This program was initiated by the Member for Arthur, the former Minister of Agriculture, a program that I hope future Budgets, Sir, will be able to support. At this meeting, Mr. Speaker, there were four families honoured, bringing the total numbers of families honoured to date to something like eighteen.

The McKenzie family farm was established 115 years ago in 1867; the Munro family, this was established in 1872; the Fulton family farm established in 1875; and, finally, the fourth family who was honoured just last December, the Edgeworth family, which was established in 1882. This award, Sir, goes to families - I'm sure you are aware of this - who have owned and operated their farms over 100 years. I trust, Mr. Speaker, that Budgets in the future will allow this practice to continue to honour the families of the pioneers of our province.

Mr. Speaker, it is going to be very interesting during the next few weeks to hear how the Minister of Community Services and Corrections tries to justify the millions of dollars he intends to spend on new construction in his constituency when the rest of the province are expecting new personal care homes and hospitals and etc. Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to say that Brandon is not in need of upgrading the old personal care homes. In fact, new personal care homes for Brandon were in the books when our government was in power, but so was the upgrading or replacing of the Holiday Retreat in Portage la Prairie.

This care home, Sir, has been, for a number of years, operated by a private operator, giving, I must say, good care but the place became run-down to the point that today, Sir, it is a firetrap. Our government forced him, the private operator, to reduce the occupancy from 50 beds to 25 beds. It did help but it is still a firetrap. The owner, under our government, was given the authority to build a new 15-bed personal care home. For one reason or another, he felt, he did not - well, he did not pick up the offer.

Mr. Speaker, I have been approached by a local service club, who want desperately to assist some way to remedy this problem in Portage la Prairie and they have the money to back up their talk. This service club's record is excellent. They were responsible for initiating the project, the present Lion's Manor in Portage la Prairie, and are ready to take on another similar project.

Mr. Speaker, realizing that the NDP Government do not believe that the private sector should be in the personal care home business, I am hoping they will be sympathetic to the cause and give some thought to the Portage Lion's Club's proposal.

I would like now to just talk for a moment about the Portage Manitoba School for Retardates, the need for their recreational complex, which was approved by the Progressive Conservative Government, with construction to start in the spring of 1982.

I have an article here on the day that the announcement was made in Portage la Prairie and the heading read, "Portage M.S. Gets Indoor Pool" and there is a picture of the Premier of the Day, and my local Mayor and I'm the happy man in the centre there, that was there when this announcement was made for the benefit of Portage la Prairie and the 400-some-odd, 500 patients of the Manitoba School for Retardates.

This is the announcement - "Construction will begin sometime next spring, on a multi-million dollar indoor recreational complex on the grounds of the Manitoba School for Retardates, for the use by Portage la Prairie residents, as well as the school and other provincial institutions in the city. Plans for the 40,000 square foot building were unveiled Thursday by Premier Sterling Lyon and Mayor Elmer Greenslade, at a press conference held at City Hall Council Chambers. The new facility will be located a few hundred yards inside the Third Street, north-east entrance to the school grounds which will house both the city-operated public school pool, measuring 75 by 45 feet and a smaller, self-contained recreational and therapeutic use by residents of the Manitoba School. The school portion of the building will also include a gymnasium, a multi-purpose room for therapy programs. An assembly area, a small canteen for visiting families and friends of the residents. You might say the Chief Executive Officer of the Manitoba School was elated by the account. He wanted to go out and shout 'Yahoo' as he says. So, this —(inaudible)— a thing of the past for the residents of that home for retardates."

—(transmission inaudible)—

Just think that what this move would have meant to those patients and to the parents and the guardians of those 400 or 500 people. It's a shame. It's a shame, Sir, that project was cancelled or shelved, as the Minister of Corrections has put it to this House many times.

I've taken it up in the House since, well, back to March of last year and on more than one occasion,

Sir, I've been told this House, this House has been told, that they are reviewing, Sir, and we're still waiting for the results of those reviews. Mr. Speaker, it would be a happy day for me, for the residents of Portage, but more particularly, those residents and the parents of those children and adults, incidentally, who are patients in that Home for Retardates. — (Interjection)— That's right.

Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude by saying, the Premier and his Cabinet were warned one year ago, about now, they were told that they would be wise, for the sake of the people of Manitoba, to curb their spending; that the results would be disastrous. It is evident to me, Sir, that there is a lack of positive leadership on the part of the NDP Government to the people of Manitoba; therefore, Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to be able to support the amendment that my leader, the Leader of the Opposition has tabled in this House.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER, Phil Eyles: The Honourable Member for Thompson.

MR. S. ASHTON: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

It's my pleasure once again to speak in Budget Debate, and I want to say that it's significant at any time; it's a significant part of the activity of this Legislature. I think it's a bit more significant perhaps this year than most.

In this regard, I point out that the fact the Budget and Estimates were tabled simultaneously hasn't been seen in this Legislature since 1967, and I think it has given the opportunity for the government to give the people of Manitoba and the representatives in this Assembly a clear and overall picture of the government's policies and plans for the upcoming year. I must say in this regard, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it outlines rather well. I think, a number of specific measures designed to tackle the basic problems we face and, also, an overall thrust which is rather unique to this present government as compared to previous governments in this province and as compared to other governments throughout Canada.

Specifically, I would point to the fact that this government recognizes unemployment as the basic problem facing Manitobans and outlines a new thrust to tackle that problem. I must say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think the realization that unemployment is the major problem in Canada has been slow in coming from other levels of government and from other provincial governments throughout the country. But, I must say that I'm very pleased to see that many politicians of many different political affiliations at different levels of government throughout the country are now saying what the NDP is saying for a number of years now, that unemployment is the major problem facing Canadians today.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Budget, as I said, outlines our plans to fight unemployment, both in general and in specific; and I must say that I had hoped that the Budget Debate would provide the opposition with a chance to make some suggestions about what they would have done if they had been reelected to government, or perhaps in the new role they are in today, that of being the opposition - what they would

complain about perhaps on the one hand, but also what they would do instead - but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they haven't done that.

Well, we've heard a few minor suggestions. The Member for Portage wants some more construction in his area, a few more programs for Portage, and I'm sure we're going to be hearing much the same sort of shopping lists from other MLAs. That's fine, Mr. Speaker.

The Member for Kirkfield Park, I think, though, typifies the kind of approach which many of the members in this House have taken in the Budget Debate thus far, and that is when asked a question by the Member for Springfield about the specific taxation measures on tobacco and alcohol, she said that wasn't her position to comment on that. Well, really, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if it is not the position of an MLA representative of the constituency which he or she represents to comment on issues of public importance, to comment on the Budget item in Budget Debate, then what are they doing here? What are they doing?

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think any objective member of the public who was to listen from the gallery or to read the accounts of these debates in Hansard would answer quite clearly that what they can see coming from members opposite is nothing more than rhetoric, and rhetoric of the often very cheapest kind.

Now, the Leader of the Opposition typifies this kind of rhetoric. You know, I've never heard so many colourful and archaic phrases coming from one individual. In fact, I would say that the Leader of the Opposition has, in the space of one-and-a-half years that I have been in this House, quoted more of these ridiculous twisting and turnings of the English language than anybody else I have seen, certainly, in my lifetime.

MR. A. ANSTETT: It's 19th Century vocabulary.

MR. S. ASHTON: Well, a member on this side suggests that. In spite of the 19th Century vocabulary, I think that the Leader of the Opposition is basically in Wonderland. There was never even this kind of rhetoric in the 19th Century.

Now, just to take a couple of examples, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I remember a few phrases that he used. He kept talking about kooks; he kept talking about that bastard child. Well, I suppose we could reply in kind on this side. We could come up with some smart remark like, well, it takes one to know one. But, you know, really, is that the kind of thing that we expect from the Leader of the Opposition to stand in this House and talk in such twisted distortions of the English language? Well, I think not, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

As I said, what we're getting is rhetoric from the opposition. It takes different forms. The one most commonly heard specifically from the Leader of the Opposition is rhetoric of a personal nature. There's another word for that, Mr. Deputy Speaker - it's called character assassination - and anybody who has sat in this Chamber tonight and heard some of the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition about particular individuals who are defenseless, who have no opportunity to get up in this House and defend themselves, members of the Civil Service and others who are continuously put under the Leader of the Opposition's fire, well, I think it's shameful. I think it's

absolutely shameful, but if it were to end there I suppose we could tolerate it, but it doesn't.

It goes a little further and this is also, I think, typified by the Leader of the Opposition. It gets into partisan rhetoric; specifically, NDP bashing. Now, the Conservative Party is quite used to this, Mr. Deputy Speaker. For many years, that seems to have been one of their basic approaches in politics, and that is to adopt a negative position on virtually everything. Now, they're going further. They're getting into criticism of the government. They're saying basically, if I understand them - well, they're hinting anyway, I think - that they feel the government isn't being run properly. Well, Mr. Speaker, what experts are they? They can't even run a party.

Look federally, Mr. Speaker. Look at the 66.9 percent fiasco. Here they are, a party which is leading in the Gallup poll 49 percent, and they have no leader. Well, they say they have a Leader of the Opposition who originally was going to perform both the duties of the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader, but now he has distributed that to another individual, and they have a leader of their party who apparently is not really leader of their party. He is only leader of the party for electoral financing purposes. So here is a party, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that votes 66.9 percent against leadership review and has one, that is at the top of the opinion polls, and has no leader. I mean, it's rather strange; but I think if one looks at their recent convention, one should realize that what has happened the last few months, the Federal Conservative Party is not that unique at all. In fact, it's quite typical of the party in its general approach to politics.

You know what they spent time on at their most recent convention, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Discussing policy? No, not at all. There were three things they did.

There were three things they did. First, they hatched their leader in the good old Tory tradition. Second of all, they had a - I think it was a \$200,000 media display backed up with pamphlets - I have a copy of it here for members who are interested in it - called "Fighting the NDP." They also had a similar thing on beating the Liberals.

As for policy, Mr. Speaker, as for positive suggestions - well, they did have a document called "Campaigning to Win." You'd think that might include some policies, none at all. The headings, just to give the flavour of the document, say, "Get to Know your Riding". That's one of the original, initial instructions. "Recruit and Nominate Your Candidate" - well, that makes a lot of sense. "Sign up Supporters" - well, can't disagree with that. Well this is the most interesting one, it's probably the most original item in this particular leaflet, it says, "Raise Money" and it indicates ways in which you can get around The Electoral Financing Act by spending money prior to a campaign.

A MEMBER: Steve, how about getting votes?

MR. S. ASHTON: Well, one of the members on this side suggests that perhaps they should have had something in here about getting votes. I think they will need some instruction in that, the way they've been handling themselves recently in public. But it's all too typical, Mr. Speaker, of the way they've conducted themselves in recent years.

In fact, if one looks at this leaflet, it's got a rather interesting graphic, which I think typifies their approach. It shows a clenched fist punching through a paper, which I presume is supposed to represent the NDP, because it has the NDP logo on it —(Interjection)— Well, I look at this way, Mr. Speaker, perhaps that does typify the Conservative Party - a clenched fist. I would suggest, perhaps, that for the Liberal Party we could have the raised finger and we can replace all the other symbols of the various parties, because I think the clenched fist and the raised finger typify what the Liberals and Conservatives have been doing to this country for the last 100 years. But that's federal - that's federal, Mr. Speaker. —(Interjection)— Oh, pardon me, one of the members on this side suggests that, you know, what would our approach be. I would rather think that we would have a helping hand on our leaflet rather than any clenched fist.

But, Mr. Speaker, as I said, that's federal. Let's turn to the provincial scene. Let's give the members opposite the benefit of the doubt. Perhaps they don't really have anything to do with the federal party, perhaps they can't be blamed for the hatcheting of Joe Clark, or the lack of a clear alternative in the federal party, but let's look at their provincial party.

First of all, hatcheting leaders is nothing new to them. The present Leader of the Opposition got to his position by hatcheting Sydney Spivak, but I would suggest that if he hadn't had the foresight to resign, he would have been hatcheted himself. He certainly would have been lucky to get 66.9 percent of support from anybody after his performance in government over the last few years, and his performance as the Leader of the Opposition.

What about policy? Mr. Speaker, they had a recent convention. Was there any discussion of policy? Well, no, the Conservative Party in Manitoba has learned that could lead to bad publicity. You know, it's not good, it's not the kind of thing that wins votes. And why? Well, I quote in this regard from a recent article in McLeans, a report of a recent questionnaire, which was handed out to 650 delegates who attended the Party Policy Convention, so-called Policy Convention in Toronto in 1982. It received the response of 60 percent of the delegates, and it provided a rather interesting picture of the average Conservative delegate. Well, apparently the average Conservative delegates see a need to cut spending on day care, unemployment insurance, family allowances, Medicare, hospital care, post-secondary education programs for the poor. What is more, Mr. Speaker, they also say it needs a cut in expenditures in the inner-job creation, which I found rather interesting.

Now that's what is shown by survey data. I know it's rather cold and calculated surveys. You know, perhaps that's being unfair to the members of that particular convention. Perhaps it was not a reflection of what normally goes on, but I would ask members of the public, perhaps to think back on some of the clips they've seen on T.V. of PC Policy Conventions, particularly when you get some of the Neanderthals who hide in the dark closets of that party coming forward with some of their brilliant suggestions about the way to solve all our problems here in Canada. Well, I remember a couple. I remember the talk about compulsory military service - this was from PC Youth Delegates, a very progressive bunch. I remember about

a few delegates talking for public corporal punishment of criminals. Now, Mr. Speaker, that doesn't go back to the 19th Century, I don't think we've seen that since the 16th Century. Perhaps that's where the Leader of the Opposition and his mentality is coming from, I don't know. But it shows how out of touch the Conservative Party is, but okay, I will give those members opposite even more benefit of the doubt.

Perhaps their federal party doesn't represent them; perhaps their provincial party doesn't represent them; perhaps we should judge them on what they have said in this House. Are they different? Well, Mr. Speaker, I think not. In the one and one-half years that I've been in this Assembly, I've heard much of what they're against and certainly Budgets bring out this particular comment from members opposite. We've heard what they're against. Some have indicated they're against certain of the tax changes; they've also said they're against the deficit. So what would they do, Mr. Speaker? They're against taxes, certain kinds of them, but they're also against the higher deficit. Well, they don't explain that, rather conveniently, I think.

Much as the same is true, I think, of their criticism of the recent removal of the hydro freeze. Now here is the party which for years has told the Canadian public that they are in favour of balanced budgets. Balanced budgets, Mr. Speaker, and yet when they were in government, imposed a hydro freeze, which basically prevented Manitoba Hydro from having a balanced budget for the period of that freeze and we were left with a tough decision. While initially the shortfall between revenues and expenditures of Manitoba Hydro could be made up from a revenue fund which had been accumulated over the years, it was clear that couldn't happen in the next few years. We had to make a tough decision. And did you hear anything from the members opposite, indicating a concern about a balanced budget? Well, not at all, Mr. Speaker, all they were against was the removal of the hydro freeze.

Well, what do they propose as an alternative? Well, the normal Conservative reaction is government cutbacks. That's what they proposed in 1977-78 in the form of acute protracted restraint, and I suspect that's what some of them would propose now. But in this House, Mr. Speaker, I've heard nothing of what they would cut, I've heard nothing. I've heard what they would add; I've heard each MLA give his or her "wish list". Now what are we, as a government, what are the people of Manitoba supposed to take from this when on the one hand we hear all sorts of rhetoric about cutting government expenditures, but no specifics. And I say, Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek on a point of order.

MR. J. JOHNSTON: I wonder if the honourable member would give the time and place that I, in this House, gave him a "wish list". He referred to all honourable members of the opposition giving a "wish list". I would like to have the member name the time that I did so as the Member for Sturgeon Creek.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Thompson.

MR. S. ASHTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, if the Member for Sturgeon Creek wishes to tell this House that he has no programs or policies which he would like added in his constituency, I will defer that - I'll be very interested to see what the next NDP candidate in Sturgeon Creek has to say on that same subject.

As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, there is a certain lack of reality, an air of unreality, I would say, arising from members opposite on this very important issue, but I say that they should face reality and tell us what they would really do. Well, they don't say it, Mr. Speaker, for good reason. It doesn't make political sense. But I think Manitobans know what they would do; I think Manitobans have a pretty good idea what the Conservatives would have done, for example, if they had been reelected in 1981.

The first thing they would have done is they would have gotten out the axe and they would have started to slash away at health care, education, employment programs, and of concern to myself, Mr. Speaker, northern programs, because that was what acute protracted restraint was all about in 1977-78. If it was acute then when Manitoba's revenue position was far more favourable than it is today, when Manitoba's economy was in far better shape than it is today, well, you can imagine what it would be like now in 1983, but that's what they would do on the one hand.

What about their economic policy? Well, we saw it for four years what their economic policy was, Mr. Speaker. It basically consisted of two components: first of all, do nothing; second of all, blame the NDP, and not just for the last years of the Schreyer Government. I heard criticisms going back as far as 1969-1970 for the poor performance economically of the previous government.

Mr. Speaker, I think that would have done them very little good; it would have done the people of the province very little good. We would have ended up in a far worse economic situation, far worse fiscal situation. We would have gone back to where we were for the four years of Conservative Government, and that is at the bottom of the pile economically in Canada.

In the time I have today, Mr. Speaker, I would like to perhaps dispell some of the specific myths that have been emanating from the members opposite and their party here in Manitoba; myths which I'm sure they're going to continue to try and sell to the people of Manitoba in upcoming months. You know what their first arguments they try and use is that we're somehow being spendthrifts, that our spending is out of line with other provinces, well, that's not true, Mr. Speaker.

In an interprovincial comparison of government expenditures, Manitoba ranks as the third lowest, and that is using statistics which compare the per capita expenditures in thousands of dollars, and we ranked very close to Ontario and B.C. The highest is Alberta at 4.1, and a fair number of the other provinces, most of which have Conservative Governments which are significantly higher than Manitoba's record in terms of government expenditures, and that's a trend, I think, which has transcended partisan differences over the last years.

Generally, I think Manitoba has ranked about that level in government expenditure over the last 15 or 20 years, certainly. It's the same thing in terms of the number of government employees. Using the figure of

employees per 10,000 residents, it's apparent that Manitoba has the third lowest number of civil servants on an interprovincial basis of comparison. So we're not big spenders here in this province and we don't have a bloated bureaucracy, which also indicates to me, I think, Mr. Speaker, that there just isn't the room to slash and cut in the way that members opposite would suggest.

Well, let's look at other statistics then - one which has been banded around quite a bit the last few days in this debate - let's look at the statistics as to the size of the deficit.

Well, Mr. Speaker, over the last year there has been a considerable increase in deficits across the country. This once again transcends regional differences, transcends party politics. For example, Alberta is well above the \$2.5 billion level. British Columbia is well over the billion dollar level, and others have also experienced major increases.

So, the next point that is often brought up is, well, there was an increase in our bottom line estimate as opposed to the actual deficit in the last year of \$154.9 million. Well, Mr. Speaker, that trend is certainly not unique across Canada. In fact, we fared far better than other provinces over the last year in terms of our actual final bottom line figure. For example, in British Columbia their estimate was out \$669 million; Saskatchewan was out \$427.6 million; Ontario, \$326 million; Quebec, \$185 million; and only New Brunswick and Newfoundland amongst those who reported were under our figure. I might mention for the interest of the members that Canada was \$13 billion over their initial estimates. So, I think \$154.9 million is fairly reasonable.

These are all rather academic statistics for the average Manitoban, Mr. Speaker. What counts to them, I think, are the bottom line figures of economic performance, and we have a concern and I would hope that is shared by all members of this House, about the level of unemployment. But for the members opposite to suggest that we somehow have single-handedly made that problem worse over the last year and a-half just flies in the face of facts, Mr. Speaker - flies in the face of reality. We have maintained our traditional position as the third lowest in terms of unemployment across this country; so we're not doing worse than other provinces in that regard.

In terms of GNP, we are doing comparatively better. Instead of being 9th or 10th out of 10 as we were for many years under the previous government, in the last year the most recent figures indicate that we were either first or second, using most traditional means of measuring the economic performance.

So, in other words, Mr. Speaker, all this rhetoric, all this partisan rhetoric about how this government has somehow created this unemployment or made things worse is absolute and utter nonsense. If anything, we've shown that through an active economic policy we can start turning things around, that we can go from the bottom of the pile at least up to the middle and upper levels in terms of economic performance that we should be at.

So as I said, Mr. Speaker, it's clear from looking at the federal, provincial, and the MLAs in the Legislature who are on the Conservative Party, that they have little to offer but myths and rhetorics; but I'm not totally disappointed, because I feel this provides an interesting

contrast to our approach. You know, we have expressed that approach quite succinctly in recent months. We have expressed our overall principles, compassion and consultation. We have expressed our overall concern about the No. 1 issue of the day which as far as we are concerned is unemployment, and we have indicated that our overall approach in tackling this, in putting our principles in action is through an active economic policy and I've seen it, Mr. Speaker, in Thompson. I've seen how much of a difference this can make.

Specifically, I would point to the Thompson Improvement Projects, which was a short-term job creation program which is funded by both the provincial and federal governments. It has created to date and I should mention that some projects are still continuing so it's not a final figure, it's created 370 jobs, there are approximately 72 projects and close to \$3 million in assets have been produced as a result of these projects.

Now there has been little doubt, in my constituency this has been a great success, virtually everybody connected with the program has indicated that. Virtually everybody in town is aware of it. You know, and I could indicate perhaps to the members of this House that a good part of it was from the individual efforts of a good number of people who made it a success and I would be remiss if I didn't mention John Harkness, the project manager, if I didn't mention John Mann the project co-ordinator from the USWA Local 6166, and other co-ordinators Ken Lacroix, Ray Froude, Darlene Spears, Cliff Morton, and Morgan Svendsen. If I didn't mention the fine efforts of the staff of the Canada Employment Centre in Thompson under the management of Liz Grew, but beyond any specific individual contributions, Mr. Speaker, it was a success because of the community spirit and co-operation that it typified right from the beginning.

You know, we sat down on the organizing committee, myself and the other people who are involved in the organization and we put aside our previous differences, we sat down as provincial and federal government. We sat down with the city, we sat down with Inco and the United Steel Workers of America, Local 6166, and we pulled in people from areas which could provide these jobs, which could put this time and effort to valuable use. And the result I think of anybody who's talked, anybody connected to the project was a resounding success and I would certainly recommend it to other areas of the province, to other MLAs because I think it's a fine contribution to any community but as I said, Mr. Speaker, those are short-term job creation programs.

We also have to look at long-term job creation. I'm pleased in this regard to say that it's part of the \$200 million Job Creation Fund announced in conjunction with the Budget that a significant portion of money will be put towards long-term job creation. I would note in this regard the list of suggested projects for federal and provincial involvement which includes a number of great interest to myself specifically the upgrading of the rail line of the Port of Churchill, upgrading of the port itself; a number of hydro developments particularly the development of the hydro line to Churchill. I think those would not only provide jobs, Mr. Speaker, but provide a real boost to us economically when the economic recovery comes.

But that was only one part of the Budget of course, Mr. Speaker, that was the job creation side.

I think we also have to address the revenue side, the tax changes which were announced in the Budget because there certainly were a number of tough decisions that had to be made and were made, decisions which we as legislators should be accountable for to our constituents.

There was a tax increase. I don't think it was unexpected and I must say I'm glad to see that it was not too great an increase because I feel that would have only hurt the economy rather than helped it. I guess on that particular item the feelings of my constituents is probably summed up best by a number of people I spoke to at my local legion where people agreed that something had to be done but the tax increases were reasonable.

Now as I've mentioned before, Mr. Speaker, in reference to members opposite, in relation to constituency concerns I've got no hesitation in saying that there were a number of items there I would prefer not to have seen, most particularly the increase in the gas tax. Not that I have any objection to the increase itself, I think it's in line with the amount of tax paid by other provinces, certainly in Ontario, and a number of other provinces, but I think given the fact that we in the north are paying so much more for our gasoline that this might be one area where we could get a break and we're paying the same gas tax as people down south. I think it would be really appreciated if perhaps that gas tax was decreased a bit to decrease the difference.

But as I said, Mr. Speaker, I consider lobby on issues of concern to my constituents such as this be a major part of my role as MLA and I'll be lobbying for changes in this and other areas in the future, but having said that, having indicated that I do have some disappointments about some of the specific measures - I wouldn't want to give the wrong impression, Mr. Speaker - I feel over all it was a good Budget, I think it's good for the north, especially because it indicates that this government will be taking active economic policy, that it will be showing concern for unemployment because that's certainly the major issue of concern to my constituents and those in the other northern seats and as I said I think it's a fairly clear document which gives people of the province a chance to judge our policies.

At this time before completing my remarks I'd like to once again make the same plea I made previously in the Throne Speech to members of the opposition, and that is that while perhaps a co-operative approach can't be adopted here in the Legislature, perhaps there is a role for partisan disagreements, for legitimate disagreements in debate or out in the hustings. Perhaps there is a legitimate role for that. I will concede that, Mr. Speaker, but if they don't offer us co-operation as an opposition the least they could do is to offer us their suggestions. What they would do, Mr. Speaker, which is so different from what we are doing because if we're to take any cognizance at all of these partisan differences surely there must be something radically different. Day in, day out I hear from the Leader of the Opposition about the demon socialists. Well if we're the demon socialists . . .

HON. L. DESJARDINS: That's when he's polite.

MR. S. ASHTON: . . . that's when he's polite, that's correct. But if we are the demon socialists and we're doing everything wrong, let's hear what they would do right. I think that the people of this province would appreciate a bit more of a reasonable approach in that regard, Mr. Speaker. If there every was a time for this kind of approach in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, it is today when we're facing perhaps the most significant economic crisis in 50 years.

You know, when there's war on you end up with coalition governments, everybody pulls together, they fight the enemy. Well I think we have a problem in Canada today, Mr. Speaker, which is as equal in concern as any war and that is the social tragedy of unemployment. Why don't we all, New Democrats, Conservatives, Liberals whatever, why don't we all at least put aside this ridiculous rhetoric, these artificial differences, find our common ground and fight unemployment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Roblin-Russell.

MR. J. McKENZIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I feel sorry for the honourable member that just spoke, Mr. Speaker, I really do feel sorry for him. He doesn't understand what government means yet, he's fairly new around here and what governments are supposed to do.

Mr. Speaker, he secondly doesn't understand what the word opposition means and what an official opposition's supposed to do in the parliamentary system.

Mr. Speaker, it looks like it's going to be a little noisy when I'm on my feet but may I first of all congratulate the Clerk of the House. This is the my first time that I've been on my feet in the debate. I didn't have an opportunity to speak on the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, but I was one of the fortunate Manitobans in this Legislature who had the privilege and the honour to visit the Northwest Territories this past summer for a parliamentary conference and I can vouch for the warm hospitality and the great things that those people in the Northwest Territories provided to us while we were there. In fact, I have in my caucus, Mr. Speaker, a fish that I caught. I have had it stuffed and it's on a board. I am not a fisherman, I'm not a known fisherman, I don't think I have fished for maybe 40 years, Mr. Speaker, but the hospitality and the goodwill of these people in the Territories got me to go up to

the Arctic Ocean on this certain evening, 12:00 at night, and I threw a hook and I caught a couple of Arctic char. I am most grateful to our Clerk and the great people of the Northwest Territories for the way they treated us there this summer.

Mr. Speaker, now to get back to the Budget and to respond to the honourable member opposite that just spoke in his place. The problems that we're facing in this province today and the reasons for these last two Budgets that we have faced in this province are quite simple. During the 1981 election campaign, we, on this side, said the following things, this is the Tory prediction in the 1981 election - If the NDP were elected, they would scrap the megaprojects. True? Absolutely true. If the NDP were elected, Mr. Speaker, there would be no new jobs. True? If the NDP were elected, there would be no new opportunities. True? That's what we predicted. If the NDP Government was elected, there would be no growth for Manitoba. That's what we predicted. True? We said taxes would go up. True, taxes go up. Hydro rates would soar again. There it is, loud and clear. True. And the opportunity to build a decade of prosperity would be lost. True. That's what we said.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what did this Minister over here and these guys say? What did they tell the people of the Province of Manitoba? Great people, great future.

A MEMBER: We're sitting on a gold mine.

MR. J. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, Howard Pawley, the Leader of the New Democratic Party said we can build

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, order please. Order please.

I am having some difficulty in hearing the Honourable Member for Roblin-Russell. The honourable member.

MR. J. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, let's call it 10:00 and I'll speak tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House to call it 10:00? (Agreed)

In that case, when we next reach this item, the honourable member will have 35 minutes remaining. The House is accordingly adjourned and will stand adjourned until 2:00 p.m. tomorrow afternoon (Tuesday).