

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, June 26, 1989.

The House met at 8 p.m.

### SUPPLY—INTERIM SUPPLY DEBATE ON SECOND READING BILL NO. 29—THE INTERIM APPROPRIATION ACT, 1989

**Mr. Speaker:** Continuing debate on Bill No. 29, the Honourable Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) has seven minutes remaining.

**Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to wrap up. I had begun, I guess, by attempting at least to clarify a number of areas where, despite the support that the New Democratic Party has offered for the Budget, and particularly because of a couple of measures which provided some respite for the lower and middle income taxpayers in the province, there are some serious concerns with the overall spending priorities of the current Government.

We will be watching with interest, as the months roll by, as to whether the Government can come to grips with some of the cutbacks in services that are being experienced across the province. These are cutbacks that affect the daily lives of Manitobans, whether it is the Motor Vehicle Branch in Flin Flon or a Natural Resources officer in The Pas or an Alcoholism Foundation worker in Flin Flon, or what you will, the fact of the matter is that the Government is in a relatively sound financial position, and we are also debating in this Legislature the establishment of a Fiscal Stabilization Fund. We have argued that the idea of establishing a rainy day fund has some merit, but there are those of us who believe that it is raining in Manitoba today.

As young people leave the province by the hundreds, as the numbers of the unemployed grow daily, there are some crying needs. Cutting back on job creation, as we have seen the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) do by some \$3 million, is not the way to go.

Finally, I had spoken about the tax policy of the current Government. We are about to approve the interim spending plans of the Government. Clearly, the flip side of spending is revenue. The provincial Government has established some very questionable practices when it comes to taxation priorities in the Province of Manitoba.

The first example that I want to quote, Mr. Speaker, is the whole question of tax on mining companies. Some two years ago, when the then New Democratic Party Government decided that it was going to implement a 2 percent increase on mining tax, bringing the mining tax from 18 percent to 20 percent, there were loud cries from Members on the then Opposition, the Conservative benches, which said that this was an undue penalty, that it was another tax grab on the part of the NDP Government.

At the same time, the NDP Government had made it quite clear in its Budget document of March 1988 that it had no intention of channelling that additional 2 percent into general revenue. The fact of the matter is that along with the additional 2 percent mining tax was the establishment of a Mining Community Development Fund. That Mining Community Development Fund would have had as targeted revenue a total of 5 percent of the mining tax collected by the Province of Manitoba. It would have created a fund that would have been available to mining companies as they attempted to utilize new technology in their mining and their mine processing in Manitoba. It could have been used by communities who were adjusting to downsizing in a mining community. It could have gone to support individual workers who were laid off or who were the victims of mine closures.

\* (2005)

However, the Government chose not to do that and of course perhaps wisely, because they experienced a windfall of more than \$117 million in revenue from that additional mine tax. The Government then chose in its Budget Address of June 5 to impose an additional 1.5 percent tax for the 1989 fiscal year.

I have no hesitation in supporting the additional 1.5 percent. I think that mining companies in the province have enjoyed what would be described by most people as a banner year. Inco Metals enjoyed profits of more than \$750 million in its operations in 1988. With the continuing good prices of nickel and copper, it is expected that mining companies will have another exceptionally good year.

I do not think Manitobans, and I know that northern Manitobans, cannot stand idly by and watch the province reap undue reward from the mining of minerals in northern Manitoba, have their services cut, have Flin Flon lose its Motor Vehicle Branch and have projects that should be under way, could be under way, held in abeyance and stalled.

It seems to me it is some inconsistency in the approach of your Government to tax on the one hand and then provide the residents who are most directly affected little or no benefit. In fact, what we have seen is quite the opposite. It is cutting back on services that people have come to expect and, in a community the size of Flin Flon, I would suggest need.

We also saw the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) announce with some pride the reduction of the obligations of certain middle-sized businesses with respect to the payroll tax. The Minister of Finance could not be more wrong in his estimation of the impact of the payroll tax on the business community in the Province of Manitoba. We now have two major manufacturing provinces, Quebec and Ontario, with a payroll tax—both Liberal Governments, incidentally.

The fact of the matter is that those Governments deemed it appropriate to apply a payroll tax. Quebec

had one previous to the implementation of the payroll tax in Manitoba, and it stood at that time at 3 percent of payroll. The Minister's decision to further reduce the payroll tax, with the full support of the Liberal Party I would suggest, is really counterproductive. It is taking money away from Government that could be used to support education, could be used to support health. I can tell you categorically, there is no evidence whatsoever from the Economic Council of Canada or the Fraser Institute that the elimination of the payroll tax is going to create one additional job in Manitoba. The fact of the matter is that it will not.

So we will be watching with interest as the Government follows through with its spending plans for the year, because we want to know in northern Manitoba that our share of the resources of this province are going to provide services to the North and to the rest of the people of our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Herold Driedger (Niakwa):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased also to enter into debate on this Bill on Interim Supply. I would like to begin my comments by hearkening back to the comments made by the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), not so much in his defence of his position as Minister, but rather to take a look at the suggestions that he made to us with respect to the fact that in our questioning, in our criticizing, we tended to take things in isolation, that we were taking something out of context, as it were, to point out deficiencies and difficulties that we had in the delivery of the Health field.

He also referenced, and I think that none of us are going to question the fact that there is a delay, that there are waiting periods, that there are waiting lists, that there is a problem in the health delivery field, that people are expecting a certain level of service and are not able to get this level of service right now without laying any kind of fault, but there are problems in the entire system. It is these problems that bespeak a certain general malaise in the entire health delivery system, in the entire health delivery field.

When it comes to health, it is the one aspect of our life upon which Government, by its action or inaction, can impact upon us directly even more so than in its assessment or levying of taxes.

\* (2010)

Health care is a matter that affects each one of us personally, if not immediately then we know someone who has been impacted by either a health system that has delivered its service well or by a health service that has not done so. I am sure each one of us here has received calls from constituents who state that either the waiting list for this particular thing is too long, or they are saying that this particular test cannot be done, except we have to wait six or seven months and my health is important to me now. If we do not get at this now, then actually what we are doing is cutting back on the prospects of my quality of life or the prospects of my continued existence. People tend to get very upset when the health system, which we have implemented to deliver to our well-being fails us. We

tend to be very critical of this failure. Consequently, when we point out weaknesses in the system, it is actually to demonstrate that this is a general malaise, that it does permeate the entire system. We do have criticisms to make.

The charge back to us is made that we should then come up with constructive suggestions as to how to fix this so that we do not come across negative all the time. Whenever we do come up with a constructive statement or we state that the Government is doing a good job, we are applauded. When we decide to point out something negative, it tends to be something more like hoots of derision. We are told we do not know what we talk about and yet by the same token, just previously, we ended up doing some applauding, some giving of credit. This give and take in this forum tends to have us focus on the weaknesses of the other side, and I do not think we have to make any excuses for doing so.

We are told to tell of solutions, to give answers. I believe we have. We have referenced that there are several areas in which policy could be instituted through the implementation or through the provision of more resources which would focus on preventative health. I think all of us by now are very cognizant of the fact that prevention is a least-cost option when it comes to health care. Nobody is as rigorous as defending the rights of the non-smoker as a new convert, because suddenly they recognize that there is a tremendous amount of second-hand smoke inhalation which impacts upon them directly, and they feel this is not right. They would like us to go much further in the preventative area and actually give more significant warnings, and also to create a system which would enable us to implement a preventative system, prevention as a health delivery model. Prevention is an investment.

Now, I think again, if we take a look this reference briefly, the financial stabilization fund, which was introduced by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), trying to liken our affairs of Government like we order the affairs of the household by stating that the stabilization fund becomes a savings account, and saying that when you look at it as a savings account this permits you to actually understand the concept we are saving, as the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) said for, "a rainy day." He is saying it is raining now, we should use that money. That perhaps is very true.

I ask the question, are savings really an investment? We normally would say, yes, depending upon the kind of vehicle that we invest in, depending upon the kind of security we are putting our dollars into. If I may just ask the question, if you were to take a small sum of money and invest it in a guaranteed investment certificate, yielding say 10 percent on an annual rate of return, after inflation this may have reduced itself to 5 percent. Then on top of all that, because of changes in the federal tax laws, we now have to pay tax on that interest. Suddenly, we find that rather than seeing the wonderful 10 percent as a return on the return on the investment, we may end up with a very small percentage, or if we do not plan very carefully, we may actually find that we are in a negative rate of growth.

We have actually lost money by saving money, and that suggests we have to be very careful with the kind

of analogies and the kind of investments we make. I say that if you are cognizant of some of the financial investment vehicles, you probably will make a real investment either in equity investment or in some sort of fund whereby there is real growth.

\* (2015)

With that I would like to come back to the health analogy on the prevention. Prevention is an investment and perhaps some of the dollars which have been set aside in this savings account, in this financial Stabilization Fund which we still do not know if it is truly saved or if it has been borrowed to be invested or whether it actually exists at all, but we do know we have had a surplus that if we took some of those dollars and actually placed them in a better investment vehicle—I know we are told that sometimes it is a case of philosophy, whether we reduce the deficit, bring down the total debt or whether we are investing in health, it is actually a moot point.

We probably can argue considerably at length to determine whether or not one particular method has merit over another. Perhaps all three have some degree of merit and perhaps all three should be visited in equal amounts. When we come to, as we do in Health budget, and when we come to, as we do in this Interim Supply Bill, where we are debating a Bill that is going to actually give over to Government spending authority for 75 percent with three-quarters of its Estimates for the year and of that three-quarters, of that \$4 billion something, one-third of that is going to go to health care—we have a tremendous amount of money that is being allocated here.

I think that one of the things we should keep strongly in our mind is that as we approach the next decade, as we approach the first decade of the 21st Century, we are going to have to look at programs initiated now, proposed now, which will enable individuals, seniors, people who are able to be independent to remain independent and in their homes longer. The longer we can keep people out of acute care facilities, the longer we can keep people out of acute service delivery, the cheaper is the long-term dollar spent on health and the greater is the actual investment in the quality of life of the people of the province.

We are, in about 20 years time, going to see 20 percent of our population as being senior citizens, senior citizens enjoying a longer period of life and a more healthy life. But to maintain that and not to have that 20 percent become a very, very heavy drain on our health care dollar, we are going to, right now today, have to think in terms of much stronger commitment to preventative health, a much stronger commitment to the creation of chronic health care facilities as opposed to acute health care facilities because the dollar spent on a patient in the former is a lot less than the dollar spent on the patient in the latter. We need this kind of philosophy and that is something that is being addressed by our Health Critic when he raises the problems in the health care system that we have today.

\* (2020)

Ultimately, it is the prevention model. Ultimately, it is the chronic care delivery system model that is going to provide for us a greater return on our health dollar investment. For that reason, I would suggest strongly that the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) listen to the questions and try to develop long-term proposals which will overcome these. I understand he does say that he is doing so, but as long as there are problems, leave it to us to make the criticisms and prove us wrong by demonstrating that the policies are going to solve the problem.

If I may hearken back briefly to some of the comments that I made about two or three weeks ago when I spoke on the Budget document itself, I did reference in my address that the Fiscal Stabilization Fund was, to my mind, very much a document that lent itself well to being a document used for re-election purposes as an election document that lent itself very well to being utilized to put the best foot forward, the best policies forward of a Government on its way to re-election, and I still do not change my view from that statement.

Document the creation of a fund which permits discretionary spending on the part of Cabinet at will, which suggests to me undue power to be able to manipulate finances, undue power to be able to manipulate policies because you will be able to dip into a fund too quickly to haul out dollars which you can then apply where you want them. I still maintain that this particular Fiscal Stabilization Fund does lend itself to that criticism and rather will be used for those purposes, rather than to be used as the Minister of Finance stated, as a savings account for some future rainy day.

We have already seen the creative accounting that is demonstrated when the projections for next year, as in the affairs of the province, come through in a deficit position because we have actually brought down the projected deficit by actually forward averaging, if you want, the dollars we have had in our account two years ago.

I still have to ask whether this particular fund can be called real money and can be used today, or is it borrowed money and should be showing up on our books as a credit item where we actually have costs accruing to the province; or if it actually is no money at all because the money has been used elsewhere. We did actually have, in real dollars, according to the calculations, a \$48 million surplus, and that money has to have gone somewhere.

One of the things that the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) mentioned in his address was the Free Trade Agreement, which I suppose now should be called the Free Trade Act because we now actually have a document in place that is causing major dislocation in many sectors of our economy, as the different industries, as the different areas of the country attempt to try and wrestle with what it actually means that we have entered into in this agreement with the United States.

We have referenced the FTA, and I think that we should really consider that with two documents, with the Free Trade Agreement and with the Meech Lake Accord, the Federal Government we now have has

actually set this country on some very, very different tracks that it had been up to those two points.

Now, I have always maintained that the Free Trade Agreement, as such, is not all bad because it will benefit many part of the country. My opposition to the agreement always was as a Manitoban. How is that agreement going to impact upon this province and will it be positive or will it be negative? I think we have, as we have asked questions, the Opposition has asked questions, the Second Opposition has asked questions pointing out some of the problems that we already see as with plant closures, as with harmonization with our regulations, with American law, as we see the implementation of a "level playing field." I feel strongly that Manitoba may be levelled right out because, historically, we are not ideally situated to enter into an unlimited, unfettered Free Trade Agreement with our neighbour to the south, for some very, very significant factors. All we need to do to look at those factors is to examine the geography of our province. We have talked at times that our province is, and I have heard it referenced, a have-not province. Of course, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) has often said that the criticism is invalid because we are not a have-not province. Well, I have to agree with him in that we are not a have-not province by virtue of the fact of people living here.

\* (2025)

When you compare the economy of this province with the economy of others, we do not do as well, and our equalization payments come flowing in. By definition, we have less; therefore, we need to have some equalization grants. We have a province that has a tremendous amount of potential, we are a great province with great resources. Unfortunately, for Manitobans, Manitoba situated as it is, in the centre of the continent, puts it at a tremendous disadvantage vis-a-vis other places. Now, usually when you hear an argument about geometry, we are told that the centre of the circle is the closest point to the circumference, that no place is as far from the centre of the circle, or is it no place is closer—like all places are equidistant from the centre of the circle—using that to demonstrate that it is a short distance, but I think that if we take a look realistically at our province we know that it is realistically to be looked at differently.

Manitoba, being the centre of the continent, is as far away from the circumference, as far away from the coastlines as you can possibly get, and that is strictly because we are an inland province and a central province. It is the factor of geography that makes it difficult for us to then compete equally with places that are more populous or have access to larger markets. We always will have to overcome tremendous transportation difficulties. We will always have to overcome tremendous dislocation transportation costs because we do not have easy access. We do not have cheap access.

The FTA, in that respect, then puts Manitoba at great disadvantage. It maximizes our geographic disadvantages and we can just reference a few things that, just as mentioned recently in the paper, the potash potential mine in Russell. The concept is becoming and

I quote "strictly as tarnished as time passes and no development on the proposed potash mine takes place." The reason this is not taking place is largely a factor of geography. Our markets are far away. Any transportation factors that we build in are far away. We have to pay these costs and these costs will never help, will not be at our advantage, until we can find such things in this province which will put us at an advantageous position with respect to this transportation.

That means we need to do with whatever we do here, so that the product that we ship out is one that will absorb the cost of its transportation very, very, very easily. To explain what is meant by absorbing the cost of transportation, I simply ask you to conceive of the Japanese, who ship to us in large quantities empty space. All you need to do is take a look at a television set that you buy. It comes in a carton that is packed with styrofoam to keep the TV set within from rattling around, and that styrofoam makes the entire carton larger and the carton itself square, easily stored, but you are paying for the shipment of that cubic space of the carton, not the contents interior.

At any rate, that is the kind of thing that we need to be looking at economically in this province to try and capitalize on something so we can ship something that will absorb the cost of its transportation.

If we could have something produced here such as— we see this with the Dow Corning initiative which is looking at utilizing a high-tech metal which, if it is borne out utilizing the fact that we have the natural resource, we have the energy, we may be able to produce a substance that then will be able to absorb the cost of its transportation. That is a positive initiative and one that I encourage.

\* (2030)

However, contrary wise there are other aspects within this economic development that put us at a tremendous disadvantage, as I said earlier. With respect to this Government's policies itself, recall that we do have two windfalls. We have called them windfalls. I do not think they are called windfalls by the Members Opposite but nevertheless there are two aspects of income which were unprecedented in size. One, as referenced by the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie), is the Mining Revenue Tax and the other one was in the larger-than-anticipated federal equalization transfer payments.

I take a look at the intentions of this Government. I take a look at the intentions as expressed in the Throne Speech, and I take a look at the intentions as more clearly defined in the Budget. A large part of the income comes from the northern part of our province. This is the area that has the least number of seats, the least population. Furthermore, it has no Tory seats. So does this lack of recognition of the value of the North to the province reflect the desire that perhaps an investment there is not going to return an electoral windfall? I just leave that as a question. I am not going to anticipate an answer.

What I would like to focus on instead is that this windfall should, in one manner, shape, or form, be set

up in such a way so that it can return some value back from whence it came. When it comes to future development in the North, are we going to have to borrow money to return present revenues, or would it be wiser today to set aside some of our windfalls and return them in some form whence they came?

I heard the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) talk about a mining community development fund. The concept has a great deal of merit. In Alberta, I believe the knowledge of the fact that much of the revenues of that province came from the sale of a finite resource, a heritage fund was established. Most of the windfall in the mining revenues have also come from a finite resource. I do not anticipate and no one anticipates that this will continue at its present rate, that it will be declining. Perhaps taking a little bit of that today and setting it aside for future development would have been a much wiser course to take.

When I take a look at the northern part of our province, when I examine the department itself and just simply harkening back to some of the statements made by the Provincial Auditor with respect to the Department of Northern Affairs, he actually highlights three things that he would like the Legislature, I suppose, to focus upon. One is that the department's planning, reporting, and controllership practices need improvement. I assume that during this year this Government is actually going to be doing those things, and that comment will not be in the next year's Auditor's general report. We will wait and see though.

Taking that into account and taking also the comment into account that he says the department still needs to develop detailed result statements identifying key departmental responsibilities, goals and objectives, suggests to me that this Government and that department should have some rather long-term view as to what it intends for the North.

Thirdly, the Auditor wishes the department to have a clear link between planning and budgeting and to develop annual operational plans for each organizational unit. I realize that in referencing this last statement, the Auditor is pointing out to the present structure of the Department of Northern Affairs which actually highlights what its present role is, which is almost like a glorified municipal Government where it is taking care of some rather community needs, organizational needs and administrative needs, that it is actually largely functioning as an administrative body.

I think for that department to continue in that way, without considering what is happening in the Department of Natural Resources, without considering what is happening in the Department of Energy and Mines, without considering what is happening even in the largest Crown corporation we have, Manitoba Hydro, without taking into consideration some of the specific needs of all of the people, is rather shortsighted. I am thinking what we need here is a department that expands its mandate, or its outlook at least, to start examining some of the specifics of what that North actual is to us.

We have a tremendous mineral resource north of 53; we have a tremendous forestry resource north of 53.

With time, and even now being implemented, we are going to have the national and provincial parks established which will provide a cultural and recreational resource north of 53, and all of us would be foolish beyond measure if we were not to recognize that our energy resource is essentially north of 53.

Taking into account that the development, all of these, seems to be taking place in one department here and one department there without any of the interrelationship or the interdisciplinary aspect necessary to do this in a comprehensive fashion so that all people who are impacted by these developments, all people impacted not only by, but also for these developments, do this together in some spirit of co-operation and consultation.

I use as an example the recent Repap sale where the aboriginal people wished to be involved actually in the management of the resource level. They did not wish to be simply hewers of wood, they wished to be managers of that wood as a community resource, because that resource means a great to them, not only as a potential source of income but also as part of their heritage and of their lifestyle.

I would like to therefore see the Department of Northern Affairs take a larger interest in developing a cohesive policy for the North through which things such as environmental concerns, mineral development, energy development, forest development could be vetted so that we end up having a development which is cognizant of the people, a development that is socially responsible, not only to the people for whom the development takes place, but also on whom most of the negative impacts of those developments accrue.

I have just a few more comments I wish to put on the record. I think it was mentioned by our Member for Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans), particularly when he was outlining the problems that he saw in the Budget with respect to the agricultural interests of the Government, he felt that it probably could have spent a little bit more of their resource dollar in underwriting a sector of our economy that is so very important to us. In so doing, he referenced obliquely the end result of what will happen if we do not take care of our agricultural part of our economy, if we do not take care of rural Manitoba and, if I go back to the previous remarks, do not take care of northern Manitoba.

As we have all seen in the recent debate upon the Electoral Boundaries Commission, the fact that we now have changed the weighting in this Chamber to be more urban than it was before, and if we do not do something soon, that is going to reverse this trend without any action or without any kind of contrary movement, without doing something to overcome what is now happening, we are going to have a time when Winnipeg will become to the province what central Canada is to the rest of the country.

\* (2040)

It will be the overwhelming power base. It will have the overwhelming number of seats. I am sure that if I was to predict at some future point in time, 20 years, 30 years, 40 years, I am not sure about the actual

numbers of years, but we could foresee a time when in this present Legislature of 57 seats, 50 would come from Winnipeg and seven from the rest of the province, and that to me is repugnant. I do not accept that idea. I think what we have to do, the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) suggests we should make Thompson a growth centre, that it is a growth centre. I would like to underscore that. It must become a growth centre as must other areas in this province become growth centres.

Action must be taken to enhance not only the quality of life, which is good in rural parts and northern parts of the province, vis-à-vis some of the quality of life we have here in the province, although I am sure that some of the specifics can be criticized because I know that ambulance services were criticized by the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie). We have to enhance the economy of rural Manitoba, enhance the economy of northern Manitoba so that some of this unnatural, unprecedented flow to Winnipeg can be halted and perhaps even reversed.

Perhaps what we must do here in this Chamber is decide that decentralization is more than just rhetoric, is more than just something we attempt to do on a catch-as-catch-can basis but actually becomes a philosophy of economic development, that it becomes an economic policy. To understand that we need to do two things. We need to weigh both the negative and the positive aspects of that statement, because I think when one talks to an efficiency expert, decentralization is the anathema to an efficiency expert. He wants everything or she wants everything centralized so that lines of communication are short, are quick and that people can communicate very quickly and you do not have some of the time lags, that this is negative and that this is going to be costly. Then we take a look at the positive aspects of decentralization though and consider that perhaps some of the present day costs in extra health costs, some of the costs in extra transportation costs, because people do not have the services nearby, perhaps those costs can be measured against the fact that by investing in decentralization we end up creating other growth centres which will then overcome the negativity.

Perhaps we need to just look a little bit into the future and consider that we are now today entering into a kind of information-sharing age, an information-sharing economy, where if we think ahead and do some kind of futuristic thinking and actually using technology that is available today, we can predict that—if I may use the term because it does not actually fit quite correctly—a shop floor worker entrusted with stamping out on a tool and die machine—if we could take a look at this person viewing the work he is doing through a computer terminal perhaps removed by safety glass or removed by a safety glass, a wall and a room or removed from that same tool and die by not only that same safety glass, the room and the factory but also by cities, that he can actually oversee what is happening to that machine from a distance away, I think we can start seeing that there is technological ability to enable the decentralization philosophy to be implemented economically.

We can do this now already with some of the financial transactions. For example, a stockbroker working in

New York, with the time changes, can start hop, skipping around the world making trades on all kinds of stock exchanges without leaving his own office. The bank manager in Winnipeg can check on a loan applicant who is perhaps residing in Miami, Florida.

We can do the same thing with long-distance teaching if we just start looking a little bit ahead at what is presently available, still not quite economically, shall we say, with satellite uplinks and with some of the equipment necessary, still may not be economically deliverable in the small business, in the small shop, but something that could be looked at by Government. I think that is what we need to look at. That is the kind of forward thinking we have to do to try and actually see to it that this province becomes what it always should have been, something with equal rating for all areas importantly, and that each area does not feel it is unfairly done by, by any other. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** Mr. Speaker, I look forward to speaking on Interim Supply, because it gives us the opportunity to address some general matters of concern, some general policy issues. It is also an interesting opportunity because this is the last week of this part of the Session.

We will soon be on summer recess for the first time in quite some time. I must say I believe, amidst all the insanity that we see on occasions in this House, there is some element of sanity in the sense that we finally agree that there is very little to be gained either for ourselves politically or the public of Manitoba through sitting in this House through the summer and sweating it out, as we have done in previous years.

I cannot count the number of years we have spent sitting throughout the summers. The eight years I have been here the majority of the summers—six, pardon me. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) advised me it is six out of eight. It certainly seems at least that. I am glad that this year we have some element of sanity by recognizing that no one listens during the summer anyway to what we are saying in this place, so why should we be wasting our energies on debate when we can come back in the fall and continue at that point?

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, there is a double opportunity here. There is an opportunity for each and every one of us to go back, as are many students across this province at this very moment finishing their studies or their school for the year, perhaps look at our performances, individual politicians and as Parties, and look at areas where we could see some improvement as we come back in September.

I was struck by—pardon me, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) is at it again—I was struck by how we could perhaps take this opportunity. I was sitting here looking at the Government's performance and the performance of various Parties in this Legislature, and it struck me, a report card. You know, students receive a report card at the end of the year. One of the reasons is to judge their progress thus far, but one of the other reasons is to give some indication whether there could be some improvement in the time to come.

I intend, and I just did this so I must admit it is rather rough and it is certainly not definitive, but I would just

like to propose what I would consider is to be a rough sort of report card on—let us begin with the Government. Here is what they have done.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) may be surprised but I do not give the Government a failing grade in each and every area. There are some areas I would say they are very close to failing or nearly dealing with it.

Let us begin on the fiscal side. I would say the Budget that was brought in previously, I would give the Minister of Finance a good solid B, a good solid B, because the Budget did provide tax relief for individual Manitobans. It was weak in some other areas. I really think that it was lacking in terms of a general approach in terms of its fiscal . . . , but when you can bring in a Budget that does provide tax breaks—I know it is something we in the New Democratic Party felt was necessary as well. That is why we supported the Budget. I think one has to give that element a good solid B.

I am glad the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) was applauding for his mark on that, because some of his other marks may not be quite so complimentary. I would suggest on the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, I would give the Minister barely a C, if that, because the Minister, who I might say has become an instant convert to Keynesian economics, I find it rather strange that he is talking very elementary Keynesian sort of philosophies when he talks about this Fiscal Stabilization proposal. The reason I would say that the—there is some merit to having a fund put aside. I would like to see it spent for different purposes, not really as a savings account.

\* (2050)

One of the problems of the fund to my mind is that the concept itself is not totally faulty. The problem is it is like an individual Manitoban going to the bank and borrowing money to put into a savings account. That is essentially the mechanism we are dealing with at this point in time. If one looks at our fiscal situation - (Interjection)- Well, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) disputes it. I think that is essentially what is happening in terms of it. I think there is an element of that. Now whether that is legitimate or not depends on your financial situation. For an individual who requires liquid capital, there may be some merit in having that set aside. We often do that. We often do not have an across-the-board strategy in dealing with our own finances. Many people, for example, do not pay down their mortgage. To a certain extent, one could argue they should because they are borrowing money—right now it is probably about 13 percent—to pay for that mortgage. In many cases they have the money in a savings account where it is collecting 9 percent.

**Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance):** What happens when it is reversed?

**Mr. Ashton:** The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) says what happens when it is reversed? I think it is very rare that is the case.- (Interjection)- The Minister of Finance is referring to the unique situation we are facing right now in terms of short-term and long-term interest rates, in terms of that situation.

What I am suggesting here is the talk of this great analogy to a savings fund is greatly overstated. I am not opposing the fund totally. There are some elements that could be used for constructive political purpose in Manitoba. I will be addressing that on Bill No. 27 when we debate it, but I still believe that there is an element of symbolism to the Minister's approach rather than economic pulse. I think even the Minister of Finance would be ready to admit that is much of the theory and philosophy behind that particular Bill.

Where I start getting into a more negative approach is in terms of the economic side. I think in terms of job creation, one can only give this Budget that we saw previously on the Government's approach a "D." I say a "D" because one might argue it is a failure. I think only time will tell. The only positive aspect in terms of job creation—I think the Minister is correct to a certain extent—in terms of the tax decreases by putting tax revenue back into the hands of Manitobans, that will have a positive impact in terms of job creation. That is I think a fairly established economic principle. However, I really believe that the Minister in particular has failed in the terms of economic history.

I heard during the Budget Debate a lot of the Conservative Members say, well, your approach on job creation did not work. That is why you, the New Democratic Party, are in Opposition. I can say there are many reasons why we are not in Opposition, Autopac is probably one of the main ones, and I think in terms of concerns, in terms of taxes. I think we, in the New Democratic Party, got the message. I can tell you that in terms of what Manitobans wanted to see, that is why we have been arguing for the tax breaks.

One of the issues when I went door to door in my constituency was not job creation. I would say in fact that the record of New Democratic Party Government is considered to be fairly positive on that score, even by many people who would not consider themselves New Democrats. I have already begun to hear people talking about one thing, when the New Democratic Party was in power there were jobs. There was job creation through the Jobs Fund or through hydro development. I think that is going to become increasingly the case, Mr. Speaker, as this Conservative Government strangled job creation in this province, as it puts the breaks on hydro development.

I really urge the Minister responsible for Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld) to move ahead with the Ontario sale which is that close. I really believe that there is going to be a real potential for Manitoba. I really believe that—I am being bombarded with notes here, a lot of people are very interested I know in my comments. I certainly will be continuing for some time, although not perhaps up to my full 40 minutes today in terms of Economic Development. I mentioned hydro development, this is going to be the Achilles' heel of the Conservative Party, the Conservative Government, because I do believe that we are headed for a recession in Canada. The current indications are that it may not be as serious as the recession in the early 1980s, but I do believe we are headed in that direction.

When the Conservatives were in power in 1977, we had the dubious distinction of leading Canada into that

recession. That is what I am concerned about now, is that history will repeat itself, and this Conservative Government will lead Manitoba into the recession ahead of the rest of Canada. The signs are already there in terms of the lead indicators, whether it be in terms of construction, whether it be in terms of retail sales, the signs are there in terms of unemployment which has increased in the period of time since this Conservative Government is in place.

I really believe, Mr. Speaker, that those who have refused to learn from history are condemned to repeat it. That is what is happening. The Conservatives have convinced themselves that the approach that the New Democratic Party had, of positive, active job creation did not work when the facts are different. They have convinced themselves of that, but I do not believe they will be able to convince Manitobans. As I said, I would give the Minister very poor marks in that area, the Government generally.

Let us talk about some other areas. Health care—I would say that the best one could see out of the current Conservative Government's approach to health care is a barely passing grade. I say that because there is some recognition, if one looks at the Estimates, of the needs in the health care system. I believe there is a 7 percent increase in funding and certainly that is required, but I do believe that this Government is proving daily that it is incapable of dealing with a growing crisis in our health care system.

I raised earlier, in fact last week, the concerns in Thompson related to doctor shortages and hospital funding and various different items. One of the problems I have had is getting recognition from the medical bureaucracy in Winnipeg and this Minister of the fact there is a problem. The Minister, in response to my letter, has said there is no problem. I would contest that. In fact this week the Thompson General Hospital has written to the MHSC requesting additional funding for staffing, for maintenance, for programs in that hospital pointing to the great difficulty. That is clear proof that there are problems. If the Minister does not believe that, he should go on a tour of the facility. There are many other facilities, I am sure in other Members of the Legislature's constituencies, that are in dire need of additional staffing and funding.

I make the same reference to the situation in my own constituency in terms of doctors. Sure, there has been a generalized problem of lack of doctors, but only two years ago we had as many as 13 and 14 doctors in our community in Thompson. We currently have five people for a community of 15,000 and a surrounding area of 40,000. That is a crisis; something has to be done. I have made a number of specific proposals to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), and I look forward to seeing some direction. I know there was an announcement but, once again, unless there is clear recognition of the problems, we are going to be dealing with a crisis continually in the health care system.

As I say, that is why I could not see the Government getting much more than that. I would hope the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) would take some time over the summer to go and look at the situation our health care system is in in this province and move quickly to deal with the growing crisis in a number of areas.

Let us talk about another area of policies, and this is a matter of particular concern to myself as Labour Critic for the New Democratic Party. I would say, in terms of policies for working people, this Government has failed completely. I looked at the agenda, Mr. Speaker, of this Government. They are bringing in one item of legislation in this front part of the Session which really deals with working people, and that is in terms of final offer selection. They are trying to dismantle it despite the fact that it worked, despite the fact that it is getting increased support from people across this province.

There have been unions of all affiliations that have been supporting this as working in this province. This Government, supported by unfortunately the Liberals, is moving ahead with dismantling final offer selection. Is that their agenda for working people? What about plant closure legislation, Mr. Speaker? Will this Government support Bill No. 17, the Bill that I introduced on behalf of the New Democratic Party, calling for increased notice and protection for workers? No, this Government will not.

In fact, neither they nor the Liberal Party, which has refused to support this, will take a stand for workers affected by plant closures and layoffs in this province, whether it be the result of the Free Trade Agreement or the general recession that we are heading for in this province. We have had 22 major plant closures and layoffs in this province, 22 major plant closures and layoffs since January, and there has been no action from this provincial Government. That, Mr. Speaker, is a major failure on their part.

We have mentioned in this House, I know Members of both Opposition Parties have mentioned the growing problems in terms of Workers Compensation, Mr. Speaker. I raised that the first week we were in Session, the fact that there is a dire need for legislation to enact many of the provisions of the King Task Force Report to deal with the growing problems with delays, and it is a growing problem, for the Minister of Workers Compensation (Mr. Connery), he should be talking to injured workers, to people who are dealing with injured workers, and he will find that there is a growing problem that is taking place in Workers Compensation with delays and with people not receiving their just dessert.

This Government gloats a lot about how it has "improved the books" with Workers Compensation. I ask the question, Mr. Speaker, at whose expense? Are the books of the Workers Compensation Board going to be improved? If it is at the expense of injured workers and their families, then I will oppose that because that was the philosophy of the Conservative Government under Sterling Lyon. There were no deficits in the Workers Compensation Board, but injured workers throughout this province were denied their rights. Injured workers and their families suffered financially as a result and I do not want to ever see us return to that position in Manitoba again.

\* (2100)

I can say we in the New Democratic Party will fight tooth and nail any attempt on the part of the



Conservative Government to impact negatively on the rights of injured workers and we will be pushing them to enact legislative provisions that are outlined in the King Task Force Report. Many of the recommendations were unanimously supported by both Mr. King and by both the employer and the employee rep. It is two years since we have had that document, they have not moved yet on legislative changes. It is time to act, Mr. Speaker, it is time to act on behalf of injured workers and their families.

I also want to talk about some other areas that show their true bias in terms of working people, the Labour Education Centre, one of the more petty cutbacks we have seen from this Government. Just over \$200,000 worth of funding that goes towards programs that provide education to working people, also in some cases to companies who have taken advantage of the Labour Education Centre's Programs.

I want to urge the new Minister of Labour (Mrs. Hammond) to take another look at that, because I really believe that there is room in the Government's Budget. Last year they said there was no money. This year, they are putting away the extra money in the savings fund. I believe there is the money there for the Labour Education Centre, and I really would urge them to rethink their approach on this.

I think last year they went with their initial bias, their initial reaction, which certainly is not one of great sympathy with labour, but I think if they look at the programs and look again, and the new Minister, not being tied to the decision previously made, I think the new Minister may be able to see some way of providing some sort of funding to the Labour Education Centre, a valuable service in this province and I would certainly urge her to do so -(Interjection)-

Similarly, and the former Minister of Labour is obviously quite defensive about this, he is talking from his seat, as he often does and I would hope that the Minister would admit the error of his ways and take up the cause of the Labour Education Centre with the Minister of Labour (Mrs. Hammond) and point out that was a wrong decision that should be overruled. I realize that sometimes there is a matter of pride on the behalf of people when they do make an incorrect decision. When we were in Government, the New Democratic Party, certainly we made mistakes and it is difficult to recognize them sometimes. Here is a mistake, clearly, something that was wrong in terms of public policy. Surely this Government can listen to the concerns and reinstate the support for that valuable program.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Chornopyski, in the Chair.)

Let us deal with the Unemployed Help Centres. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is growing need for the kind of assistance provided by the Unemployed Help Centre. We are seeing the federal Conservative Government dismantling, bit by bit, program by program, the rights of the unemployed in this country through the Unemployment Insurance Commission and that is why we need doubly this type of program.

One only has to talk to the people in Brandon and the rural areas around Brandon who have been helped

by the Unemployed Help Centre. One only has to talk to the people in Winnipeg who have been helped by the Unemployed Help Centre to realize it is a valuable service and one that should be continued. I urge, once again, in this case the same Minister, the Minister responsible for Family Services (Mrs. Oleson), I believe still has responsibility or would have responsibility or perhaps the Minister of Labour (Mrs. Hammond), it really does not matter to me who has jurisdiction over that, to rethink that decision.

I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they should see the value of the service it has provided and provide that sort of funding. I could continue in this area, but I would really urge the Conservative Government to rethink its attitude towards working people and also urge the Liberal Party, because the Liberal Party, unfortunately, on many of these issues supports the Conservatives.

On final offer selection, they have supported the Conservative approach of dismantling that particular proposal. In terms of plant closure legislation, not only has the Liberal Party opposed the Bill put forward by the NDP, it has led the charge. It was the Leader of the Opposition who said that it was too draconian on business, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition opposed Bill 17 before the Conservatives did. I find that absolutely incredible from a Party that claims to talk for Manitobans, is attempting to establish itself here in Manitoba and, really, I believe the record speaks for itself on that particular issue. Similarly, I believe there is that general philosophy running through the Liberals.

Quite frankly, I was amazed at their action on the provincial Budget. How they could vote against tax breaks for working families, I really do not know. I believe that if one looks at the approach of the Liberals since the Budget one can see that they are smarting from that decision because they are smarting from that decision because the Liberals have got to the point they are attacking the New Democratic Party again, they are flailing at the Government at every opportunity, and it has become more furious, if less focused. The bottom line is I really believe the Liberal Party is having difficulty in explaining what it did to the members of the public.

As a New Democrat, when I went and said I voted for the Budget which brought in tax breaks for the working family, people said exactly, we do not want an election and we want the tax breaks. Now, what are the Liberals going to say? Well, we sort of want the tax breaks, but then again we sort of do not. We want an election, but we do not really want an election.

In this Chamber I believe that one votes on what is put before you. Quite frankly, one can check the record, and there are Members of this Legislature who have been here a number of years. I do not think it is that often that I am voting in the same way that the Conservative Members of the House. I think that is a legitimate—I do not think that has happened very significantly in this House, and is it not because it is usually a difference of philosophy?

When there are tax breaks for working people, I will vote for it no matter whether it is brought in by

Conservatives, Liberals, or New Democrats. If it is a good policy, I will vote for it. It is interesting, because in the Budget Debate the true view of the Liberal Party came out, I think best expressed by the Member for Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans). They try and suggest that by voting for the Budget I am somehow not voting for a matter of principle. It is a matter of principle to have those tax breaks, to my mind, and it is a matter of principle to support them and not play games.

The Member for Fort Garry got up and said actually he really had far more in common with the Members of the Conservative Party and then went on a tirade and attacked those demon socialists, the New Democrats.

What are we seeing in this province? A Liberal Opposition that to my mind is frustrated by one basic reason. That is not that it disagrees with the policies being put forward by the Conservative Party. I really do not think that is relevant to their considerations.

What the Liberal Party is concerned about is it believes it should be in power in this province. That has been made quite clear. The Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) has announced to Manitoba that she is ready to govern. Unfortunately for the Leader of the Opposition, I do not think Manitobans are ready for the Liberal Party to govern them. If she continues and the Liberal Party continues with this unfocused approach, I do not think that Manitobans will be ready for the Liberal Party to govern them for quite some time.

When we are dealing with the issues of the day, political opportunism should not be the driving force. I believe in this particular case that we should all as MLAs be trying to make this minority Government work. That is the approach that I have taken. I have talked to my constituents. They are fully in support of that.

That action we took on the Budget, as I said, is clearly the case. We are not voting for the Conservative Party. We are voting for a Budget that was a relatively good Budget. I was the first one to indicate that. It took many of the proposals that had been made by the Member for Concordia, the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer). The \$61 million in tax breaks is virtually identical to the \$58 million tax break that we argued for in the election campaign. How could we not possibly vote for that unless we were driven by some other motive such as political opportunism?

As I said, I really believe the Liberal Party has a lot of explaining to do to Manitobans today with its conduct over the last number of weeks. It set itself up with a strategy. It voted against the Throne Speech which is a nothing document. The Throne Speech is a nothing document in the life of a House. It is really just a general statement of intent. It has voted against the Budget. Is the Liberal Party now going to vote against every line on the Estimates? -(Interjection)- The Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) asks, are we going to vote in favour of it? When we come to the health care Estimates, are they going to vote against the health care Estimates? Is that their strategy? Is this a strategy of Legislative terrorism? Is it a strategy of huffing and puffing until the House comes down?

I really believe that is the strategy behind the Liberal Party right now. I am surprised, because a year ago the Liberal Party was trying to pretend that it was almost not a Party, that it was somehow different. I remember the statements by the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) herself. We are not going to play games, she said, we are not going to play games. We are not going to participate in the normal political goings-on. What are we seeing this year? We are seeing the Liberals voting against the Throne Speech, voting against the Budget. As I said, they are probably going to have to vote against every set of Estimates to be consistent with what they are doing. What they are doing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is they are playing games.

What happened to the Liberal Party over the last year? I think they discovered that not only are they a Party, they are very much a Party. Their record is clear. The Liberal Party has been part of the landscape in Canada since before Confederation. Just because there have not been Liberal Members in this House for a number of years does not mean that they can try and pretend that there is not a background. They will be judged on that background, as we all are. There are people who I know in this province who will never vote Conservative or never vote New Democrat, and I think there are an increasing number who are saying they will not vote Liberal, certainly will not vote Liberal again. I have run across a number of people who have told me they voted Liberal last time, but they will not do it again because they thought they were voting for something but they did not receive that.

\* (2110)

I think that is going to be an interesting thing to watch throughout the Session, to see the machinations on the side of the Liberal Party because as I said, there is a real contradiction in terms here. As I said, there may be a number of Members of the Party, there may be many Members of that Party who are individually progressive. As I said in my contribution to the Throne Speech, I could probably sit down with many individual Liberals and have a fairly general agreement on some general principles in terms of public policy, but the Liberal Party as a Party is quite a different matter. What history shows is that the Liberals talk like New Democrats in between elections but when they get power they act like Tories.

I would suggest, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this province, that what we may see happen, while the Tories squirm at that suggestion, I suspect that the Tories are probably going to be running against the Liberal Party in the next election by saying if you want real Tories elect us. I would say I will use the same argument too. If you want real Tories, elect the Tories not the Liberals. If you want a real alternative, elect the New Democratic Party. I think essentially that is going to be increasingly the situation.- (Interjection)- Well, the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) I think should talk to many of the people in the North End who are increasingly saying that. They are seeing on issue after issue after issue that if you are concerned about issues affecting working people, the only Party that is going to fight for you day in and day out is the New Democratic Party and not the Liberal Party which has already shown its true

agenda in less than 15 months in terms of issues affecting working people.

I am sure on the Conservative side they are going to be arguing that if you support the Chamber of Commerce view of the world that you should vote for the Conservatives, the real Conservatives instead of the let us pretend Conservatives, which I think we are seeing in terms of the Liberal Party. I think that is the dilemma of the Liberal Party. No matter what it talks, if you cut it down to its bottom-line position—and no matter how progressive some individual Liberals are, and many are progressive on an individual basis—the Liberal Party is an old-line Party. It has been around many years in this country, its record speaks for itself. I am going to continue to let its record speak for itself because I think, as I said, already only 15 months into this Legislature we are beginning to see cracks develop in that plaster facade that we saw put forward as part of the Liberal Party. I think increasingly, the Liberal Party is going to be called to account for its actions in this House as is already happening on the Budget.

I ran through some of the criticisms that I have on both, in terms of the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party. I am sure that other Members will be more than willing to indicate their own criticism in terms of the New Democratic Party. I can tell you, over the last 15 months, there has been a process I think of examination of what happened under the New Democratic Party within the Party. I think that is important. I think it is important to look at what went right and what went wrong. Certainly all political Parties make mistakes and certainly the New Democratic Party made a mistake. One thing I can tell you quite frankly is on election day last year we got the message. It was a very clear message and we take in that message. I think the fact that we have come out and we fought for tax breaks for working people is a clear indication that we heard the concerns of Manitobans. I really think that is something all Parties have to be looking at is listening and being willing to learn from their mistakes.

As I said, I believe the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) should be talking less about economic philosophy which is what he usually talks about when in response to answers to questions from this side, and should be talking about what to really do in terms of job creation in this province. Really looking at the record, the true record of the New Democratic Party years, because I believe as I said they did work.—(Interjection)— Well, the Member for Seven Oaks (Mr. Minenko) talks about bankruptcy. I know I have seen various suggestions by the Liberal Party about their view of job creation. I know that the Liberal Party opposed the Jobs Fund. I know that the Liberal Party opposed Limestone, but surely in retrospect they can recognize that those policies work. I mean the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) said that Limestone was going to cost \$5 billion. It cost \$1.8 billion. The Liberal Party talks about competence in their election slogan. How competent is it to argue against one of the most important developments in northern Manitoba and then come in with a figure that is three times the actual figure? I can show the Members of the Liberal Party, if they are not aware of that, where the Leader of the Liberals said that right in Thompson. It is in the

record in the newspaper, the Thompson Citizen. She said \$5 billion and it cost \$1.8 billion. I do not want to continue to hammer away at those points because I believe to a certain extent history will speak for itself.

We are in a situation in Manitoba where we are going through a situation of rapid political changes. I believe people are shifting their political allegiances very quickly. I have no doubt that for a certain period of time last year that many people might have been willing to try out the Liberals. They were untried, many people had forgotten about the previous record of the Liberal Party. I believe the number of people willing to do that is growing less and less each day because of the agenda of the Liberal Party, and what it is showing itself for.

I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, similarly that there will be people who will be willing to give the Conservatives a chance in this province, but I do not believe that the people of Manitoba want an election. I do not believe the people of Manitoba want a majority Conservative Government in place. I believe we are in situation of political flux.

It is interesting as I look at this date, and I should be speaking on June 26, 1989, because 20 years ago marks the date of the first election of the New Democratic Party to Government in Manitoba under Ed Schreyer, 20 years ago today, June 26, 1969. It is interesting —(Interjection)— Well, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) says it was a fatal day. It certainly was because in that situation you were, once again, in a situation of political flux. You had a Leader that came out of nowhere, Ed Schreyer, came back as a federal MP. The NDP at that time was a third Party.

The Liberals were led by Bobby Bend, they were in the position of probably being more right wing than the Conservatives. I am sure the Member for Lakeside, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), could outline the interesting situation he must have been in, in the 1969 election because I believe he ran against Bobby Bend, as I said, and beat him. Bobby Bend, the Liberal Leader at that time was very right wing, probably more right wing than even Duff Roblin and later with Walter Weir, the two Leaders of that time period. I think he was certainly as right wing at that time.

I believe that there are some disturbing signs that the Liberal Party is repeating history in that sense because, quite frankly, on health care, on job creation, on economic issues, no matter what the position of individual Liberals might be, I believe the position of the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) is probably as right wing, if not more right wing than that of the Conservative Party.

How can I reconcile a Liberal Leader who wants to bring in user fees for non-essential items in hospitals like food, when the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) who, I am sure, would be a self-acknowledged right-winger? I think that would be insulting to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), in his own political outlook, if I was to refer to him as anything other than a very strong right-winger. I notice there is no objection to that label by the Minister of Health. Even from the Minister of Health, who is a very strong right-winger, we are not hearing suggestions of user fees in hospitals for food.

I think that is an interesting situation we are seeing develop in Manitoba. I quite frankly wonder how long individual Members of the Liberal Party can stand for these right-wing positions, a Liberal Party that opposes final offer selection, that opposes plant closure legislation, that supports user fees in hospitals, that opposes job creation, that opposes hydro development, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is in favour of means tests for home care. I can run through the checklist of the position of the Liberal Party and, as I did in the Throne Speech, if you took a piece of paper, wrote the position of the Liberal Party on and took the name "Liberal" off and showed that to people, they would be amazed because most people would not expect that to be the position of the Liberal Party.

They might expect it from the Conservatives and, in fact, the interesting thing is that on some points they are even more right wing than the Conservatives and that just amazes me. It amazes me how long the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) or the Member for Seven Oaks (Mr. Minenko) or the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), the Member for Radisson (Mr. Patterson), the Member for Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo) or the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema) can take that type of approach from their Leader. Do they support that? I hear some suggestions from that side, from the Liberals, that they fully support that. If that is the case, that is fair enough.

If they want to run in Manitoba saying that they want to replace the Conservative Party on the right wing of the political spectrum, that is their prerogative, but they should not be going around in the North End of Winnipeg or in northern Manitoba suggesting they are fighting for working people. The evidence just is not there on the agenda, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Whenever we fought for working people, the Liberal Party has been opposing it.

So let us put all our cards on the table as political Parties and let people know where we truly stand because I think they expect it from us. When we come back in the fall I hope there will be that level of honesty that we do require and maybe some self-analysis. If the Liberals want to come back in September and say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they were wrong on final offer selection, they were wrong on plant closure, they were wrong on user fees in hospitals, or means test for home care, they were wrong on the Jobs Fund, or they were wrong on hydro development, and they have reformed and they are truly different, then I think we may be in a new different political situation in Manitoba. You know, I suspect they will not.

\* (2120)

I suspect that when we come back in September, despite the report cards suggesting the people look at their records and come back in after that period of time, that we will be back to much of the same. That is fine, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I can say that, as a Member of the Legislature, as the New Democratic Party Labour Critic, I will be pointing to each and every situation of where the Parties truly stand, because I do not mind fighting an election on where the New Democratic Party stands.

I am sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker -(Interjection)- for the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), I do not mind going to my constituents and saying, I disagree with the Chamber of Commerce on workers compensation, the experience rating system, that I disagree with your agenda on final offer selection. I have no difficulty in outlining where the New Democratic Party stands and where I stand. I came into this Legislature a number of years ago. When I first got elected, I was elected by 72 votes.

**Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation):** A landslide.

**Mr. Ashton:** The Member for Emerson (Mr. Albert Driedger) points to my original nickname in this House and I have learned one thing. There is no such thing as a safe seat, so whether one is elected by 72 or 720 or 1,720, one always has to be willing to take a stand and put one's convictions on the line and face the people of Manitoba, and I am willing to do that.

I can tell you right now the people of Manitoba have said, give this minority Government a chance. That is the clear message. It is not just for my own constituency but across this province. It is all over, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I will say I am willing to give the Conservatives a chance. I am even willing to give the Liberals a chance. If they can prove me wrong on their agenda over the years I will be glad to see that. I mean I would rather see, for example, the Bill I have introduced on plant closure legislation passed than be here today criticizing both the Conservatives and the Liberals for dealing with it because I think it is important for Manitoba.

I think it is important that we be willing to take a stand in this. I am willing to take a stand on the New Democratic Party agenda. I am willing to give the Conservative Party a chance to govern as the people of Manitoba expect, but we will be keeping them accountable. I am outlining today a number of areas where I feel this Conservative Party is headed for particular difficulties, especially on the health issues and especially on the economic issues. If action is not taken to correct it, we may be debating just among the Liberals and the New Democratic Party about their positions. When it comes to the bottom line there are a number of areas that I think will determine how long this Government does stay in office, in health, economic policy or a couple of the key areas, the approach of this Government to the working people. I am not putting this forward as a threat or a warning, just as an observation, a political observation. I can indicate that we will be pressing them on these issues.

I think the length of this minority Government will very much depend on the willingness of people to look at their policies, yes, re-evaluate those policies, all three Parties. I think all three Parties have to go through this in this position of political flux, because I think the Parties that will suffer the most are those that are not willing to listen to the people and adjust their policies, will go on with rigid positions. I think that will be the interesting thing over the next year. I think the extent to which we are going to be listening to Manitobans will very much determine the structure of this province

politically for many years to come. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Mark Minenko (Seven Oaks):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to address the contents of the Bill 29, The Interim Appropriation Act, 1989.

Earlier this afternoon, I had the opportunity of chairing the committee which began consideration of the matter before us this evening. One of the things, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I was struck by is the sheer numbers of \$3,241,346,100, and what I find incredible about this figure is just the size, and that is as a first-year Member of the Legislature I found interesting, and last year in my Deputy Speaker role I found interesting and just the enormous figures that are used in Government.

We believe that in a role of an effective Opposition is to review this Bill, review the direction as set out in this Government's plan of action, their Throne Speech and their Budget, and to be prepared to comment on various sections of it to—as we hear from a number of Ministers across the way say—a little bit of constructive criticism. I can well assure them that we in the Liberal Party have paired off for that, not into the diatribes as suggested by the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

It is an incredible act that we see here day upon day upon day when we look to our left and the Government looks to their right and what do they see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, emptiness. I think should that be pointed out to Manitobans across this province, that is of concern to Manitobans. When we look to those benches and who do we find? I think that is the message. Is that how concerned they are about Manitobans? Is that how concerned they are? It is incredible. I think I find it just incredible. They can indeed be assured that I will be pointing that out to the members of my constituency, the constituents across this province.

With respect to the Bill before us, I certainly welcome, as I mentioned earlier, being able to comment on this Bill and perhaps from my role as the critic for Industry and Trade, which ties into the Rural Development Department, now that the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner) has the regional development corporations as part of his stable, and being able to look at the business climate in Manitoba, under the ravages of six and a half years of the New Democratic Party, it is incredible that—and I realize the great mountain that the Government has to climb. In climbing that mountain, I would certainly expect the Members of the Government to have a better plan of action than they seem to be saying.

After six and a half years in Opposition, when they come into Government, I am a little surprised when in the first Budget they present to this House and in the Supplementary Estimate books they have not only many of the same numbers, but many of the same letters written by the previous Government. I will certainly, as an Opposition, be looking to this Government to see if they have even changed those letters at all and to see whether they have struck out in their own directions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in today's Question Period when I asked some very specific questions of importance to

many different elements in our Manitoba community, I was surprised, maybe not necessarily surprised, but extremely disappointed in the responses I received. I heard the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) comment, "Well, that is another federal issue they are talking about." Yes, indeed, and I certainly hope that the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, if it was indeed that Member who shouted from his seat during Question Period, that he should have an opportunity of reviewing the entire federal Budget and checking out which provisions will additionally affect his own constituency.

I think it is important for us to indeed review what is happening at the federal level, considering the impact that they can have with a short speech, a short comment, as we have seen, for example, and as the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) is experiencing as a result of the closure of the base, so clear his town, and the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and the effect it will have in his own constituency. Yes, it is important to ask those questions even on federal matters because they definitely have an impact on Manitoba.

I was also somewhat disappointed earlier this year when in answer to my speech on the Throne, the Honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst) had suggested that he would set out an answer in reply to some of the comments that I put on the record. I was indeed looking forward to it, because certainly a Minister has a much more research capability, capacity available to him to be able to provide some of those facts and figures that we need in this House to be able to make those decisions that are needed.

I was a little disappointed in that there were things that I wish he would have responded to and even more so I was concerned, not necessary surprised, but concerned to his response to my questioning of June 8 on the Business Start Program, one of the jewels of this Government's policy for business development. He was not even prepared to tell me how the program was going to be in place until he said after the Budget was going to be passed or words to that effect.

\* (2130)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with the support of their friends to their right and just about everybody else's left, we have a Budget that has indeed been passed. Yet, I wait anxiously for the Minister to make some announcement so that some of these businessmen and businesswomen across this province can begin setting up those businesses and taking advantage of those programs. Yet, nothing is heard from this Government. Just where is it all going to? Is there any direction? Is it only fancy words, black on white?

I think all Manitobans are indeed getting a little concerned about that. If he and this Government indeed had a program for Business Start in this province, why was it not announced the day after the Budget was passed? He must have had some idea of how it was going to work.

I go on to ask the Minister of Industry and Trade (Mr. Ernst) about the Wang Imaging Centre. How about

the Manitobans who could well provide those sorts of services? Again, no answer. Then asking about the promises from the 1988 election that this Tory Government made about regional development corporations, what kind of answer does the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner) give? He talks about expanded programs. All right, but why not take a look at your campaign promise? Why not look at the support that you guys said that you would give to the regional development corporations? When we look to the grants, we have got cutbacks.

We looked at every section under regional development corporations and it is down. Some kind of support! Some kind of change to the business climate in this province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the concerns that I raised earlier in the House was the whole issue of not necessarily providing and setting up these nice programs but ensuring the delivery of these programs. At the time, I mentioned to the Minister of Industry and Trade (Mr. Ernst) and to this House that I have had the opportunity over the last several months to visit with quite a number of corporations, companies, from the corner store to some of the larger aerospace industries in this province.

A common characteristic among the smaller and medium-sized companies that I have found was that they were not aware of Government programs. I asked this Government about this. I asked, how were they going to make sure this information goes beyond the realms of this Chamber, beyond the realms of this building and other Government buildings across this province when they are cutting back in several of the areas that provide the people to tie in to the possible and potential and present entrepreneurs in the Province of Manitoba? Again, no real answer to that question. I was hoping that the Minister would address that problem some place, some time.

If the people to our left, who are again participating in this debate the only way they know how, ask us why we voted against this Budget, there is another point. It is like that lemon meringue pie where you look to the meringue, anybody can make a good meringue and you know it is going to be sweet. That is those tax cuts. When you cut through that meringue, when you cut through it and check out what that filling is, you have to consider what kind of filling, and we are concerned about that filling. We are concerned when we look past those positive tax cuts to Manitobans, we look past that and what do you find? This is what Members of the Opposition Party have been setting forth over the last several weeks.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that of course leads to the greater issue of the Fiscal Stabilization Fund or slush fund or slurpee fund or whatever the words we hear about this Chamber. I would leave that to another opportunity when I have a greater opportunity to speak to that Bill, setting that fund in place.

One of the other areas I would like to bring to the attention of this Government, though I am sure each of the individual Members, especially from outside the City of Winnipeg, are well aware of this issue of off-farm income.

As a barrister and solicitor in this province I have had, in the past, opportunity to represent clients who have appeared at various stages before the various levels of the Income Tax Department, at the assessment level, at the federal court level. One of the things that I learned several years ago, and certainly was reinforced through our northern trip earlier this year, was that off-farm income is becoming an integral part of farming today where I had clients who told me, and from the information they presented to the Income Tax Department, showed that they indeed required that off-farm income in order to sustain themselves in the operation of that farm, the endeavour that they have chosen for themselves.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I consider the promises of this provincial Government and I look to the Throne Speech, last year and this, I look to the Budget, last year and this, where is that support? When you add up many of these items, it is indeed some concern that we have, as the Official Opposition Party, about the direction of this Government. It is all well and good and very easy as we hear various Members of that other Party speak about why they supported the Budget. Indeed, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) provided them with an easy avenue for that support but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we, as elected Members of this Chamber, have a greater duty than to simply accept an easy straw that is presented to us. We have a greater duty to Manitobans and to the future of the Province of Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, under the tutelage of various Ministers in this Government, we are indeed concerned as to what direction that vote is going in. Thank you.

**Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am as pleased my colleagues are to have the opportunity to present a few of my concerns to the Assembly, or put it on the record.

\* (2140)

I am grateful more for the fact that there are several statements that I would actually like to make, more for the chance to applaud the Government for the incentives, or lack thereof, that they are providing to the people of Manitoba. It becomes increasingly obvious, I think, to all of us that the so-called good news that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) thought he presented to us was more a case of political rhetoric than it was actual political will.

I think Manitobans are waiting for good things to happen. They have been waiting for a long time for good things to happen because for so many years we, and I say "we" because I have been a Manitoban all my life, have suffered from the inept, the costly management of the NDP Government, the invisible NDP Government, and now we are unfortunately suffering from the all-talk and no-action Tory Government.

As I said before, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is my province. I am proud to be a Manitoban. I was born in this province and have lived all but one year here. Perhaps some would say that is a rather boring existence. The one year that I spent out of province

was in the Province of Saskatchewan, not a great deal of difference as far as the geography is concerned.

Travel is wonderful. I have done a little bit of it in my day and I must admit I enjoy going to places far and wide. I have often thought about living in a country or a climate where you had wonderful sunshine day in and day out, where you had minimal rain or rain in the evening and sunny wonderful days from January to December. I think that in fact would be very boring. There is nothing more stimulating to me than a darn good blizzard in January to have the chance when you are housebound, as long as you are fortunate enough to be at home when the blizzard begins. I think we have the good fortune in this province of having four different seasons, and I think that variety is the spice of life. I think we in Manitoba are very blessed.

Because of my love and belief in this particular province it is rather tragic to witness the continuing deterioration. I have heard others, on all three sides of the House if you will, declare their allegiance to Manitoba either because of their lifelong residency or because they have chosen to live in this particular province. This has been the place that they have selected as their home. To hear it referred to as a have-not province as sort of a derogatory term bothers me but I have had Members, a couple of Members from the Government side, come over and say, yes, Manitoba is a have-not province. When I hear them tearing my Leader apart, I find that the typical hypocrisy that we hear from both the Government and from the NDP.

Of course, often these comments are made off the record, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which they consider to be safe. I will say anything off the record or on the record, any of my beliefs. This is typical, I believe, of the consistency of the Liberal Party.

When I look at education and the Budget for education I thought, yes, there is an increase of about \$75 million.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Can we have some order, please? Order, please.

**Mrs. Yeo:** Last year we had some \$792 million from the Department of Education and this year we have something like \$857 million. Now the department includes the training component and I find that an interesting concept. Certainly training does go along, if you call it training. I have said before I believe you train a seal or you train a dog, but I hate to think of training a human being. If you are going to plug the training component in with education and increase that Budget then to \$857 million, then there is one Minister, one department looking after all of this when another Minister has part of his territory removed from him, so what he is left with is a \$7-plus million portfolio to look after.

I think of \$197 million from the Universities Grants Commission plus the other funding for the various community colleges. It seems to me it would be far more logical and far more reasonable to establish a second department so that you would have a Department of Education that would be from perhaps

nursery to Grade 12, and another separate area that would include post-secondary education and re-education, if you will, or another term other than training.

Education is a high priority. I think all of us in this House would certainly agree to that. We must be assured that continuing increases do continue at the same time as responsible, innovative ingenuities are utilized. New initiatives have to be looked at. I have serious concerns with more the way in which some of these funds are allocated than with the actual dollar figure that we see. You know, the universities, sure they got an increase. The Government pats itself on the back and says, we have increased funding to the universities. The Honourable Minister says and I quote, "four fairly important universities." Seven percent but when we look at that 7 percent the Minister says that is a very significant

**An Honourable Member:** Fairly significant.

**Mrs. Yeo:** Fairly significant, I would say fairly significant when you realize this includes the amount for pay equity, pay equity that the NDP Government initiated without any dollars or cents attached to it, but said oh yes, we from above are saying you must have pay equity but we will not help you with the funding.

I think if there is money in there they must also include more money for the ongoing operations of the universities, for the ongoing maintenance of the universities—\$30 million the University of Manitoba claims that they need to get their buildings, their infrastructure, their windows, their leaky roofs in place, so that they can maintain that particular plant. It also includes the ACCESS Fund, and I am waiting for chortles saying, ah, but you people would destroy the ACCESS Fund. No, we would not. We would not destroy the ACCESS Fund. We would include the amount for the ACCESS in with the funding to the universities and let the universities decide. How would they spend that money? Who would they want to allocate that funding to?

We would not be standing in judgment and dictating who would receive the funds. You know the universities, Mr. Deputy Speaker, operate at a higher inflation index than the general population. I do not think that was taken into consideration. At a time when the general enrollment at our universities is increasing and we are pleased with that, the general enrolment is up and up and up, the dollar spent per pupil is actually decreasing. It is going down. The faculty positions at the universities that have been lost through attrition, many of them have not even been replaced since the 1970s.

I have talked to students who have said, you know, we really are not as opposed to the increase in tuition fees of 10 percent, 11 percent. We are not opposed to that. We are willing to spend that 10 percent more, but we want to get 10 percent more in value. They are not seeing that they are getting 10 percent more in value. They have not got the student aid places to turn to, although I will grant that student aid did go up, the amount of dollars. Last year it went down, so this year they are getting it back up into position again, but the amounts, I believe, have remained about the same—

the actual grants—since 1983. That is six years. What is happening with the inflationary aspect? The Faculty of Management at the University of Manitoba has come on bended knee and has presented a good argument. So they are getting an increase, not out of the Education budget, so they will juggle it so that they will get their increase, but it will come from somewhere else.

\* (2150)

The University of Brandon would like to have a Faculty of Management Program. We have not heard anything. We did hear that the University of Brandon was going to get a post-basic education program, and I would support that. I would hope they would work very closely with the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg so there would be some co-ordination and some help there.

What about the CCW III, the Child Care Worker III, letter after letter pleading with some reconsideration? The consortium, the Computer Assisted Learning Centre at the University of Manitoba, is that back on track? Is there funding coming from the Faculty of Education to assist the Computer Assisted Learning consortium, the one that was going to give the Canadian content computer programs. Wonderful programs—I have seen a couple of them.

What about St. Boniface College? What about the Child Care Worker III Program there? Are they going to be able to continue providing French language programs for the increasing number of French language students who are coming from the French Immersion classes?

What about research and development? Is there help from the Department of Education? The NDP Opposition are constantly clucking away about the lack of funding. Where were they when they were in Government? Where were they when they were running the show?

Individual taxpayers believe that the Government of Manitoba is actually causing increased burden because of the property tax, the cost of education. The costs are going up and up and up. Some municipalities, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are actually rebelling. They are rebelling against this regressive form of taxation.

We look at capital. School construction in various parts of the city and various parts of the province are going on; \$27.6 million. How do they reach that figure? Do they just pull that out of the air, and we will call it \$27.6 million? I am not sure.

Inner-city education, I think there was an increase. I think if you calculated it, it is something like 0.58 percent for inner-city education. There is a lot of concern with the inner-city area. There are a lot of very unique situations in the inner city. The Winnipeg No. 1 School Division has great difficulty in allocating the funds to the certain areas.

Adult education, we believe in education from birth to death, we believe in that concept. Has the amount allocated to that particular area gone up? I suggest that we have another look at that. Job training, down. Student Aid, as I said, is up but the actual funds, the actual amounts are down.

Literacy, yes, we have had a task force on literacy and we are looking forward to something to address the 187,000 Manitobans who are illiterate in our province. I talked to a lady this afternoon who said to me that half that number is caused because of difficulties in our public school system. Half that number is because of new Canadians, but when I heard the half is due to the problems in the schools, that really bothered me.

The High School Review, we waited and waited and waited, got answers, and now we have another review. You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are elected to make decisions, not to keep passing the buck from committee to committee to committee.

I can say that parts of the Budget had merit, parts of it, but most parts do not.

The \$200 million slush fund bothers me terribly, when I hear about the Municipal Hospitals and the need there, when I hear about the speech therapy problems, when I see the difficulties in the inner-city schools, when I hear concerns raised about teachers for the Child Care Worker Programs. There is a lot of rhetoric and there is not a lot of action to address it.

The other thing that bothers me, seeing my time is running out, is the darts that come across saying the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) is power hungry, the Leader of the Opposition wants to lead her struggling Liberals into another election, and the Leader of the Opposition is not ready, etc. I laugh at that, because I applaud this Leader that I have followed for the last many, many months, and I applaud my colleagues, who I do not believe voted against the Budget without taking that concern very seriously, and without taking a very good look at the very blatant political Budget that was presented to us. I think about a poem that I read, and it reminded me of our Leader.

If you think you are beaten; you are  
If you think you dare not; you won't  
If you live to win but don't think you can,  
It's most certain you won't.  
If you think you'll lose you're lost  
For out in the world you'll find  
Success begins with a fellow's will  
It's all in a state of mind.  
If you think you're out-classed, you are  
You've got to think high to rise;  
You've got to be sure of yourself,  
Before you can ever win a prize.  
Life's battles don't always go  
To the stronger or faster man,  
But sooner or later; the man who wins  
Is the fellow who thinks he can.

I suggest to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the fellow who thinks he can is a she. I would suggest to you that the she is the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs).

Thank you.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema), that debate be adjourned on Bill No. 29.



**MOTION presented and carried.**

**Mr. Manness:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am trying to decide whether we should call Bill No. 27, seeing as how we took an hour off between five and six o'clock, or whether we could call it ten o'clock. There is probably an overriding desire that we call it ten o'clock.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The hour being one minute to ten o'clock, what is the will of the House?

**An Honourable Member:** Ten o'clock.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Call it ten o'clock? (Agreed)

The hour being ten o'clock, the House is now adjourned and will remain adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow afternoon (Tuesday).