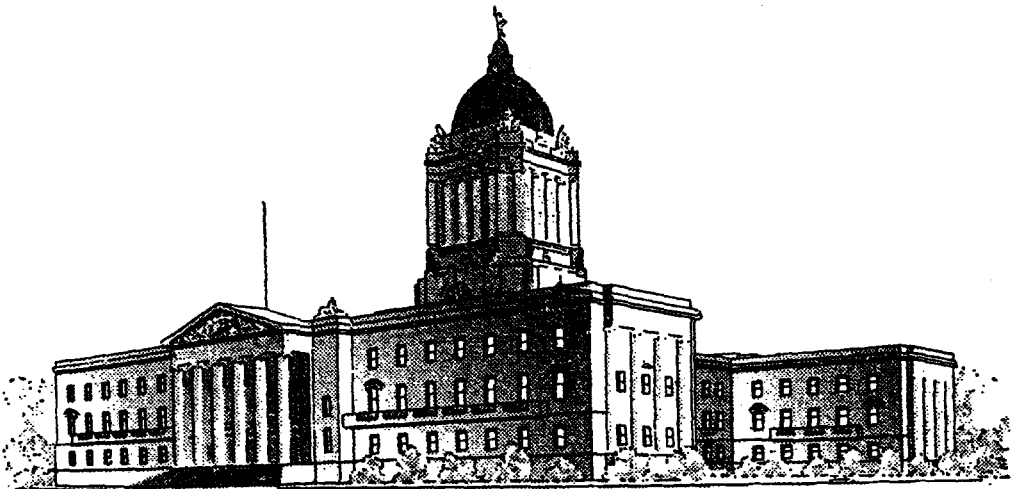




Fifth Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(Hansard)

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	NDP
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	Liberal
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	NDP
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	Liberal
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Cliff	Interlake	NDP
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	NDP
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Liberal
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
GRAY, Avis	Crescentwood	Liberal
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	NDP
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Liberal
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Liberal
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	NDP
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	NDP
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	PC
McCORMICK, Norma	Osborne	Liberal
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	PC
PALLISTER, Brian	Portage la Prairie	PC
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
REID, Daryl	Transcona	NDP
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	PC
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	PC
ROBINSON, Eric	Rupertsland	NDP
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	NDP
SHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	NDP
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	PC
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 12, 1994

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

APM Incorporated Remuneration and Pharmacare and Home Care Reinstatement

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of George Stevenson, K. Barnwell, J. Lowies and others requesting the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to personally step in and order the repayment of the \$4 million paid to Connie Curran and her firm APM Incorporated and consider cancelling the recent cuts to the Pharmacare and Home Care programs.

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of D. Fundytus, C. Fundytus, Patricia Lucas and others requesting the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Premier to personally step in and order the repayment of the \$4 million paid to Connie Curran and her firm APM Incorporated and consider cancelling the recent cuts to the Pharmacare and Home Care programs.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, pursuant to The Regulations Act, a copy of each regulation registered with the Registrar of Regulations since the regulations were tabled in this House in December of 1992.

Also, I am pleased to table the Annual Report 1992-93 of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board; the Annual Report 1992-93 of the Seizure and Impoundment Registry; and the 1992 Annual Report of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery where we have with us this afternoon from the Linwood School, forty Grade 5 students under the direction of Mr. Brent Hume. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine).

Also this afternoon, from the Churchill High School, we have twenty-five Grade 9 students under the direction of Mrs. Terri Gartner. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Osborne (Ms. McCormick).

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

* (1335)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Community-Based Health Care Government Commitment

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier (Mr. Filmon).

Last year, we saw under the government's policies reduction in services to patients in hospitals and reductions in services in the home care field in Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the Chamber when answering questions to the concerns we had on home care, the Minister of Health indicated that his government was in favour of enhancing services to people in the communities and the preventative services in the communities.

We have learned that there has in fact been a reduction in support to community clinics and I would like to ask the Premier: What is the actual reduction? Why is the reduction taking place in our community health clinics, and what is the impact on patient care?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, the activities of the government in the area of health care have been indeed to enhance services to our fellow Manitobans throughout Manitoba in the community. The honourable member need only look at the acceleration in the rate of the organization of support services to seniors organizations throughout Manitoba to see that people are being provided services at home so they can have a quality of life that goes beyond that which you can receive when the only option you have available is acute care.

The honourable member will also note the construction or the ongoing construction or already constructed over 500 units of personal care in the province of Manitoba. The honourable member will no doubt refer in his comments to something other than an enhancement when what you see is an enhancement of services in the community happening in Manitoba. None of the questions so far have dealt with the shift of mental health services from institutional services to services in the community, as well as other services.

Mr. Doer: The minister did not answer the question. He did not answer our questions on Monday. He did not answer the questions on Friday on hospital care.

I asked the minister: Why did they reduce the support for community-based health clinics, and what is the impact on patient care? I would like to ask the minister a specific question: What will be the impact on counsellors working in community clinics that are providing preventative health services, AIDS education, and what will be the impact on people, for example, working with HIV patients and AIDS patients in our community-based clinics?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, as we deal with the budget which is going to be coming down soon, we will have lots of opportunity to discuss the various services provided in the community or by the government in the community as well as services provided in institutions by the government. The honourable member will see that, unlike what was about to happen, had there not been a change in the

way we deliver health services, the honourable member, if we stayed with what he is suggesting and his colleagues, that is to go back to the way we once had it and ask the people what to do next, we would be behind some five years.

What we have done is we have consulted over 13,000 Manitobans with respect to what they want in health care. Those are the people who deliver health care services and those are the people who receive them. Those are the people we have already consulted so there is no point going out promising to consult, because that has been done and is still being done. So the honourable member will have ample opportunity to raise questions about the individual programs of government and in the community at the appropriate time.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, we used to get denials of cutbacks from the former minister, but at least he knew what was going on in his department. This minister has not answered one question in three days.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon) this question: Why did the former minister maintain zero funding to the community clinics and why has this minister already notified the community health clinics in Manitoba that they are going to get a reduction in support from the provincial government, and what will be the impact to patients that go from community clinics and doctors on salary to walk-in clinics and into the hospitals? What will be the impact of your policies?

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member should remember that the Manitoba Nurses' Union voluntarily took a 2 percent rollback in wages, voluntarily we have entered into with the medical profession in this province a five-year agreement which takes large amounts of money out of the amounts of money accruing to medical practitioners in the province.

* (1340)

Infrastructure Works Agreement Northern Manitoba

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, northerners were extremely concerned when the

first announcements were made last week in terms of infrastructure. Northern communities received only three out of 131 projects for a total of 0.4 percent of the initial allocation.

They are even more concerned now following comments made by the First Minister that, quite frankly, are nothing more than a throwback from the 1950s.

I would like to ask the First Minister: When will he recognize the fact that he as First Minister has an obligation to fairness to all areas of the province? When will the First Minister take action to ensure that northerners are not ignored in the remaining intakes for the infrastructure program?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the member for—

An Honourable Member: The whole province.

Mr. Filmon: If the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) would like to answer the question, he can answer it. Do you have an answer, Oscar?

Mr. Speaker, the member began to answer his own question in his preamble when he talked about initial allocation. This is a program that does involve some \$205 million of spending by the three levels of government in Manitoba; the announcements covered some \$131 million of spending.

In addition to that, of course, we, as a province, chose to have involved representatives of communities throughout Manitoba, and so we chose to have a tripartite exercise, a true partnership that involved representation from the Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities and the Union of Manitoba Municipalities. On that committee representation was in fact the councillor for Thompson who represented the Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities.

So the input received was one of through all levels of government and a true partnership exercise.

If the member opposite is suggesting that we somehow should overrule the good legitimate advice and politically interfere with the process,

then he is wrong. He is absolutely wrong, Mr. Speaker.

That is not the way to do it. This is a better process and a process that we believe will result in allocations that will satisfy needs throughout this province. As I said earlier, all the allocations have not yet been made, and I just invite him to participate in a positive way instead of talking about political interference with a trilevel process.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, the Premier cannot have it both ways. He says one thing blaming northern M.P.s, MLAs and municipalities for not lobbying, and today he turns around and says a totally different thing.

I would like to table some letters, Mr. Speaker. I have a letter to the Minister of Finance—

Point of Order

Mr. Filmon: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I did not say anything different today than I said in the article in the paper. I would continue to be critical of the fact that nobody has heard from the Liberal member, federal member on this issue— [interjection] And MLAs, Mr. Speaker. They did not get involved in terms of letting their municipal representatives know about the urgent priority—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable First Minister does not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

Point of Order

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, if the First Minister would simply check with his ministers, he would know that what he just said was completely false—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for sure does not have a point of order. Again, it is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table some letters. I have a letter to the Minister of Finance, a copy which also was sent to the federal minister Lloyd Axworthy supporting the Burntwood trailer park. It was written this year.

I also have a letter that was sent to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Praznik), Elijah Harper, M.P. for Churchill and Lloyd Axworthy, supporting the inclusion of Northern Affairs communities for infrastructure. I even have a response, an acknowledgement of the letter I sent to the Minister of Northern Affairs that was sent to me on March 25.

My question is: When will the Premier stop playing this kind of politics and ensure that northern communities are not subjected to 1950s pork barrel politics and the real infrastructure needs in those communities are met under the infrastructure program?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, the only people who are playing politics with this issue are sitting in the NDP benches in this Legislature.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that I have been advised today that there were only two applications from NACC communities for this particular infrastructure program. There have been hundreds of applications from communities throughout Manitoba. [interjection] You have your facts wrong.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, when will the First Minister talk to his own minister who told our members that the existing capital applications in Northern Affairs communities would be included for consideration for infrastructure?

Infrastructure Works Agreement Northern Manitoba

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I will ask the minister one final question since the minister is concerned about contact.

Perhaps in terms of doing one's jobs, will the minister ensure that the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), who was phoned by the mayor of the city of Thompson, the third largest city in Manitoba, last Wednesday, finally gets a response to his phone call? Is that the way this government treats northerners, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has put his question.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Northern Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the member for Thompson should put away the self-righteous indignation because we have gone through a first round. There were two applications specifically for the program from NACC communities. The municipalities in northern Manitoba had a representative, the president of the Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities on that committee. The member should talk to that individual as we did today.

I would also point out to these very self-righteous members that it was this government that put electricity into the last community in Manitoba in Herb Lake Landing this year. I have to ask members opposite who are so, so concerned why we had a community in Manitoba that had no electricity until this year. Where was their concern through all the years they were on the government side of the House?

* (1345)

Shoal Lake Watershed Committee Co-management Agreement

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Environment.

This morning I was visited by two senior officials from the Ontario government, who had just come from a meeting with senior officials with the minister's department, and they briefed me on a Shoal Lake Watershed Committee agreement that is, they think, perhaps going to be ratified by the five First Nations and the Province of Ontario even in the next six weeks.

That agreement sets up a committee between the five bands and the Province of Ontario to control and to develop a co-management scheme for the entire watershed area. Fifty percent of the watershed is in the province of Manitoba. In addition, I was advised that in fact the Province of Manitoba had been briefed all through this process.

My question to the minister: Why is Manitoba not represented on this all-inclusive committee which is being set up to co-manage the entire

Shoal Lake watershed? Has the minister dropped the ball again? Why are we not on this committee?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, I do not know if the member was at the same briefing that our officials were at or not, or if he was getting a different phone call than what I have been receiving, because Ontario explicitly excluded Manitoba from these discussions until they had developed a better understanding with their First Nations people. I must admit that it was to some disappointment and frustration on my part that we were not involved from the beginning.

I can tell you unequivocally that it was Ontario's desire and their action that we not be included at the early stages of these discussions because they wanted to establish a relationship with their First Nations people.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, that completely contradicts the information which has come from the Province of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, let me table a draft version of that agreement supplied to me by the Province of Ontario which states in part that this agreement will commit the parties to negotiating co-management and watershed management arrangements for the Ontario portion of the watershed or preferably for the entire watershed with the involvement of Manitoba.

Why did the Province of Manitoba not insist on doing what the parties themselves wanted to do, which was to make this an all-inclusive agreement with the Province of Manitoba?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, either the Leader of the Second Opposition totally misunderstands the statements that were coming from Ontario, or Ontario was deliberately misleading me. It cannot be both ways.

The Ontario government wanted to establish a relationship with their First Nations people. They received a couple of phone calls from the minister. We have been in touch with them directly. But the insistence of Ontario was that they would continue with their discussions independently with their people.

* (1350)

Interestingly enough, I believe the genesis of this approach goes back to a meeting that I asked for, and met with the leaders in Ontario, then Minister of Environment Ruth Grier, to talk about the fact that we needed a basin-wide management plan which was first initiated by our two Premiers meeting and saying that was what they wanted to do, establish a basin-wide plan based on the principles of sustainable development.

Mr. Speaker, they chose to start by reaching an understanding with their own First Nations people, and Manitoba will become involved as quickly as they will allow us.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, the agreement itself says that it was preferable for both parties to have included the Province of Manitoba.

Will the minister table a letter, anything, proving that in fact he did put it to the Ontario minister that we wanted to be a part of that? Can he table something in this House indicating, proving that in fact he did want and insist to be a part of this committee which is going to govern the entire watershed, 50 percent of which is in this province? Of course, the entire city of Winnipeg takes its drinking water from that very watershed.

Mr. Cummings: A draft management plan was developed by the Manitoba Department of Environment in conjunction with the Ontario environmental authority, and it was put on the back burner by the Ontario government. [interjection]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Leader of the second opposition party, you have already had your opportunity.

Infrastructure Works Agreement Northern Manitoba

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, my questions are directed to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon).

We are witnessing once again how this Premier is once again ignoring parts of the province in order to practice his politics. This is totally

unacceptable and is certainly not in the best interests of this province.

All northern MLAs did their job, contrary to what the Premier is saying, working with local organizations, with community councils, town councils to lay out priorities for the infrastructure program. Is the Premier not aware of the rate of unemployment that exists up north?

My question is: Why is this Premier not doing his job and lobbying the federal government to put areas with the most need highest on the priority list, and why is this Premier ignoring the North, anyway?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Northern Affairs): Mr. Speaker, this government has not ignored the North. As I told members opposite earlier, there are many projects. We have done a lot of work in the North.

If you look at the initiatives that this government has taken, my predecessor, the Deputy Premier, the work in settling outstanding issues on Northern Flood, on treaty land entitlement, we have moved farther on many of these than any government before in the history of the province of Manitoba.

Infrastructure Works Agreement Northern Manitoba

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, I remember the Minister of Northern Affairs after the last provincial election telling this Chamber about how the North did not know how to vote. I am reminded of that same thing this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, my second question is again directed to the First Minister.

Why was it a priority of this Premier to spend \$40 million on paving one road in Winnipeg and less than \$1 million in northern Manitoba, when many communities in the North have high unemployment, no sewer and water, and they have roads and highways that are in dire need of repair?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the member has a very short memory or else really is deliberately attempting to not put forward the accurate picture.

This government has not only settled with a number of the communities on the Northern Flood Agreement—and we are talking hundreds of millions of dollars—this government is the first government to settle a treaty land entitlement with the Island Lake group of communities, a considerable investment in the North. This government has put into construction for \$117 million, the North Central Transmission Line to service seven communities in the North. This government has put \$55 million into the new zinc pressure leach facility at Flin Flon to ensure the viability of that community.

Mr. Speaker, this government has done more in six years than we had done in 16 years under New Democratic administration in the North. That group was all talk and no action, and that is exactly what they represent even to this day as they stand up piously and try and take credit for things that they never did in the North.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Speaker, could I ask the Premier one more question?

Mr. Speaker: You sure could.

Mr. Lathlin: That question is: For the remainder of the program, will the First Minister tell the House what priority he is prepared to give or place on those projects that will be submitted from northern communities?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, the member has already been told that there were only two NACC community projects that were put in. In addition to that, the member has been told that there is a process that involves representation from MAUM, including the president of MAUM who is a councillor from Thompson. That is a person from the North who is part of the decision-making process. That process will prevail.

* (1355)

Grain Transportation Proposal Method of Payment

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture.

Since the topic of changing the method of payment to pay the producer was introduced, farmers have many concerns. They raised these concerns with the government about what the cost would be to them. The previous Minister of Agriculture, even though studies said that this would be an expense to Manitobans, supported the change to the method of payment.

I want to ask this new Minister of Agriculture what his position is. Does he support pay the producer, even though the interim report indicates that Manitoba stands to lose millions of dollars in this method?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, the issue that—[interjection] Mr. Speaker, I am just having trouble in this politically correct world. You know, sometimes your chair is occupied by somebody else.

Mr. Speaker, the issue that the honourable member for Swan River raises is one that occupied some time at the recently convened Ministers of Agriculture meeting in Regina two weeks ago on Monday.

There is a divergence of opinion with respect to how that payment should be made. If she is asking for a position that I favour, I in fact favour that the payments should be made direct to the producer acknowledging that there are problems particularly within Manitoba on the overall pooling question.

But, Mr. Speaker, my biggest concern is that while we in the grain industry continue debating this point, that long established support for the movement of grain known as the Crow benefit is in fact disappearing. It was started by the previous administration, which I acknowledge, and in the last budget brought down by the Honourable Paul Martin. He took another \$36 million out of that agriculture support program. So it is with some urgency that I urge my colleagues as I did on Monday that we should resolve the issue and make sure that some of the benefit that we enjoyed as grain producers be in fact in the hands of the grain producers that grow the grain.

Ms. Wowchuk: It is unfortunate that the federal Liberals chose to continue to dismantle the Crow

benefit even though they promised not to. But I would ask the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), does he support changing to pay the producer even though it is going to cost Manitoba millions of dollars, it is going to hurt the Manitoba economy?

I ask him, does he support the change to pay the producer or is he proposing that it stay as it is and keep that money where it is—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has put her question.

* (1400)

Mr. Enns: I appreciate that the word “change” drives fear into the hearts of honourable members opposite, particularly on the New Democratic Party benches. Let me assure her of something: change there will be.

This program has been identified with some legitimacy as being unfair in terms of our growing major trading partner, namely the American market, and Mr. Goodale has acknowledged that he will make changes to this program. I am only urging him to make them in the interest of all producers, and I cannot see quite frankly any other way as we sort out some of the other problems that the bulk of those monies be put in the hands of the producers who will be faced with higher transportation costs in getting their feed grains, principally barley, to market.

Compensation Package

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Manitoba proposal put forward by the advisory committee of this government speaks of compensation to the producers in eastern provinces. How is this minister proposing to compensate farmers for increased costs, and how is he proposing to compensate rural communities who will lose jobs and lose branch lines? What is the proposal of—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has put her question.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, one should always look at every challenge to change as an opportunity, and there are in fact the opportunity of thousands of jobs to be created in the expansion of the livestock

industry if we concentrate. Instead of putting our energies to trying to export something that is worth three and a half or four cents a pound, let us concentrate our efforts in exporting something that is worth a dollar or \$2 a pound in the area of pork or in beef.

Transcona-Springfield School Division Layoffs—Teaching Positions

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, in the last session of the Legislature the previous Minister of Education stated that her department would review the funding shortage for the Transcona-Springfield School Division since the division essentially had no reserve. Now we have learned that the division is going to cut some 30 jobs, including teaching positions. It will be announced later today.

My question is for the Minister of Education.

Can the Minister of Education explain what action he has taken to help the Transcona-Springfield School Division, considering the promises that the previous minister made, and what options, either verbal or written, has this minister given to division No. 12?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of promises that a previous minister has made.

Let me say, with respect to the announced funding that came forward in late January, the impact of 2.6 percent reduction was shared by way of equalization formula and indeed funding formula across all the divisions and districts across this province. This government has chosen not to rush in with ad hoc measures like the former government did to drive basically every division off the formula, and instead has tried to practice the purity around the funding formula.

Naturally, Mr. Speaker, by coincidence some of the divisions, who of course had done very well under the formula over the first two years, find themselves maybe below the average now with some negative impact. That is the very nature of the law of averages.

Beyond that, we are trying to look at which divisions are going to be impacted most severely,

and we are trying to find a way, if possible, to deal with one or two of those divisions.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, this was the same promise that was made last year, and still to this point nothing has happened.

Can the Minister of Education explain how the loss of these teaching positions is going to improve or help the education of the children of the Transcona-Springfield communities?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I do not need to stand here to answer that question, because if the member is saying that the provincial government should take over the responsibility then of all school divisions to make these types of decisions and therefore be answerable to that type of question, I would say that would not be in keeping with what the people of Manitoba want.

We provide funding to the tune of \$750 million across the province of Manitoba. It is allocated under a funding formula, relatively fairly, across all the divisions. Some divisions over the course of the last three or four years have chosen not to listen to the words of my predecessors who indicated what was coming and now find themselves in some difficulty.

We are trying though, with respect to one or two of them, to find some area of relief.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, since there are going to be less teachers in classrooms, can this Minister of Education explain to the people of Transcona how it is fair to give a 7 percent increase to the private elite schools of this province while at the same time cutting back nearly 5 percent in funding to the public education system in our province? How is that fair to my community and the other communities of the province? How is this going—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has put his question.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, the last person in the world that should stand and ask a question about fairness in policy is somebody from the NDP party.

With respect to increased funding to the independent schools, as I indicated on a number of

occasions, enrollments are increasing within the independent school side. Indeed, as we fund only two-thirds of the per-pupil cost in the independent school system as compared to the public school system, and because there is a higher call for places in the independent school system, we naturally as a government have to provide an increase in funding to take into account that increased demand.

Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Lease Agreement

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Foundation Act): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) raised a question in the House with regard to a lease that the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation in fact had entered into. I indicated yesterday that I would look into this matter. I can tell him that the lease is a commercial document and will not be tabled in the House. I can however provide some information respecting that lease.

With respect to that document, the space was first leased in 1985 by the Western Canada Lottery Corporation. Subsequent to that, additional space was taken on in 1987 in two different sizes, one by the Western Canada Lottery Corporation, one by the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation. In 1991, by agreement between the partners of the Western Canada Lottery Corporation, all activities of Western Canada Lottery Corporation housed in that space were then taken over by Manitoba Lotteries Corporation, and the space is leased until July of 2001.

Youth Crime Prevention Programs

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, I rise for the first time in this Assembly to ask a question of the Minister of Education.

I recently asked young Manitobans for their input into how we can cut down on youth crime. Over the weekend I held a forum where about 60 young people, including several young offenders, attended. The message I received was that this

government is putting too much emphasis on punishment and not doing enough to attack the root causes of youth crime. Education cuts were specifically singled out as one of the causes. They told me that the large class sizes and a decrease in extracurricular activities lead to a sense of isolation. That is one reason why they join gangs.

Given the direct link between youth crime and education, will the Minister of Education reconsider his 2.6 percent cut to public school funding?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the question from the member for The Maples and his representation on educational issues over the course of the session.

I am not aware of all of the contributions that were made by those in attendance at the forum held by the member opposite, but certainly I can think of an article that was in the Free Press, I believe it was yesterday or at least on the weekend, and there were some young people who were calling for much greater discipline in order and structure within the classroom. I do not know if they were the same people who were in attendance at the event hosted by the member or not, but let me say if funding is the issue, I do not know of a community, I do not know of a nation on the face of the earth that spends more on education than Canada. Within that context, I do not know of a province, other than maybe two, that spend more on a per capita basis than the province of Manitoba. That has been the case for I dare say the best part of 20 years. So if we have a violence problem, it is not because of a lack of funding in the public school. The member should understand that and, indeed, members opposite should understand that.

I say, Mr. Speaker, as the community calls forward with respect to education reform, all the representation made to me with respect to violence in the classroom is not in any way associated with the issue of funding.

Mr. Kowalski: Well, I think the students who are in the classroom know better than anyone else what is happening in the classroom.

* (1410)

Prevention Programs

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, cutbacks in the departments of Health, Family Services and Education have added an enormous burden to our justice system. The elimination of Student Social Allowance is only one example of a cutback which has an impact on youth crime.

My question is for the Minister of Justice. Will this government provide funding to these departments to address the root causes of youth crime?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, in six budgets this government has put an extra \$500 million, one-half billion dollars into Health. We put an additional several hundred million dollars into Family Services. Into Education, we put an additional \$250 million in the course of six budgets. Nobody, nobody can attack this government for not putting enough funding within all the areas mentioned by the member for The Maples. This is not a funding issue that we are talking about.

Youth Crime

Prevention Programs—Co-ordination

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): We could talk about dollar amounts or percentages which is more real. Mr. Speaker, addressing the real causes of youth crime will only come about co-ordinating delivery of services to some people. Some of the young people I spoke with on the weekend felt that they were lost in a maze of government departments, each one having a different responsibility.

My question is for the First Minister: Has the First Minister asked his Ministers of Health, Education, Justice and Family Services to co-ordinate the delivery of services to our young people so that the needs of Manitoba's young

people can be met more efficiently and at a lesser cost to Manitoba taxpayers?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker— [interjection]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable First Minister has the floor.

Mr. Filmon: The question of co-ordination is one that is an ongoing issue that we are looking at to ensure that we have better co-ordination, and Human Services Committee of Cabinet will address that issue as we proceed through the course of this coming year.

Mr. Speaker, I just want the member for The Maples to understand that in all areas of the social safety net there has been not only increases in total dollars being spent, but an increase in the percentage of budget that is allocated to that area. For instance, in the area of Family Services it has gone from 10 percent to over 12 percent of our entire provincial budget. In Education, it has gone from 17.2 percent to 18.7 percent of the entire provincial budget. In Health, it has gone from 31.6 to 33.9 percent of the entire provincial budget. This government has not only allocated more total dollars, but made it a greater priority of all of our provincial spending in every one of those areas.

Mr. Speaker, I would say that the member opposite ought to come to this House wanting to ensure that we do more with the dollars that we are spending and giving creative ways of doing that. As a result of simply going into his community meetings and talking about cutbacks, which is not factual, which is not accurate, then he should correct them. [interjection] Oh, yes. No, that is not helpful to go and preach cutbacks when none exist.

Education System Consultations—Youth

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, it is the students of Manitoba and specifically the Transcona-Springfield School Division that are experiencing the direct result of the cutbacks and the dismantling of education from this government, and it is their learning and their skills that are being jeopardized.

I ask the Minister of Education, why is he ignoring youth? Why is he not including young people as partners in education, along with their parents, in his consultation process that he has initiated for this session?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I am not excluding students. I think that was the essence of the question. I have met with a number of young people, both formally and informally, but ultimately those of us who were elected in positions to make policy and government decisions, whether indeed provincially elected or elected locally as trustees to boards, are forced under the restraints and constraints that are in place to make certain decisions.

I find it unfortunate that obviously the local school division senses that it has no alternative but to arm members opposite to try and make this a political spectacle by trying to force out more funding through questioning in this House.

I have tried to find a solution to a very real problem with respect to School Division No. 12, and I will continue to try and find one, but it has to be in keeping with the same formula that applies to all the 195,000 students in the public school system, because be damned if this government is going to end up in a situation like the government opposite.

Mr. Speaker, when we came to government, there was a funding formula in place and there were two school divisions left on it—two. Everybody else had been grandfathered. Everybody else had more money thrown at them when they had a little problem. If you have got a little problem, we will shovel a little bit more money at you. That is not a fairness and a purity that this government embraces. Maybe the members opposite want that type of government, but this government does not.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the

Second Opposition (Mr. Edwards) challenged me to table my phone calls. I would like to table a letter as a result of a phone call last summer.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) have leave to table said document in response to a question? Do the members want it? They want it. Yes, you can just table the document.

NONPOLITICAL STATEMENTS

New Year Celebration, Laotian, Cambodian, Sri Lankan and Tamil Communities

Mr. Jack Reimer (Niakwa): Do I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for Niakwa have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Reimer: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to draw the attention of the members of this House to the forthcoming celebration of the New Year in the Laotian, the Cambodian, the Sri Lankan and the Tamil communities.

It is a time of great pride for these Manitobans as they mark the continuation of their ancient and honourable cultures.

Manitobans deeply respect the rights of all cultures to maintain and observe their customs and their traditions. This respect has strengthened our communities, raised our self-esteem and created an unshakeable foundation for our diverse multicultural society.

While each ethnocultural community may have its own unique or customary method of inaugurating a new year, we do find many similarities. Perhaps the most common theme between these observances is the wish for peace, health and harmony in our coming months.

As we look at our current world events, these aspirations take on a very poignant meaning for Manitobans of all origins. Manitobans of Laotian, Cambodian, Sri Lankan and Tamil heritage can understand the sorrow and the pain associated with living in nations which do not cherish the concepts of freedom and multiculturalism as Canadians do.

This understanding adds an extra strength and spirit of joy to our celebrations in this community.

As the Laotian, Cambodian, Sri Lankan and Tamil communities begin their festivities, I ask the members of this House to join with me in wishing them a very prosperous and a very happy new year.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for Wellington have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition, I would like to share as well our congratulations to the Laotian, Cambodian, Sri Lankan and Tamil residents in the province of Manitoba as they celebrate their new years.

As the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer) stated, these individuals are indeed fortunate, I am sure they would all agree, to be in a country where they are free to celebrate their holidays without fear of repercussion or repression.

I again congratulate them and wish them well in their new years and hope that there continues to be, in the province of Manitoba and the nation of Canada, the understanding and acceptance of all ethnic groups, all cultures and all people from throughout the world so we can continue to be a haven for the people who come to us for health and prosperity. Thank you.

75th Anniversary Opening of Shoal Lake Aqueduct

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable First Minister have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I want to make a nonpolitical statement with respect to this being the 75th anniversary of the opening of the aqueduct to Shoal Lake, and I say this from a perspective of an engineer.

As an engineer, I remember learning in my classes about this project as being one that was touted in engineering journals throughout our country and North America for the kind of visionary understanding it had at the time of its establishment.

Here was a city, Winnipeg, which had plenty of water within close proximity to it. The decision-makers of the day chose to go a hundred miles away and build an aqueduct to take a source of water a distance of a hundred miles to the new and developing city of Winnipeg, which at the time was about 175,000 to 180,000 people.

* (1420)

They found a source of water that was so ideal for the application of municipal water that it did not need any treatment in any respect. In fact, up until many years later, it did not even require anything such as chlorination or, eventually, fluoridation which it today receives. It is not softened in any way. It falls within the range of ideal softness of water supply that you want in a municipal system. It did not require any major chemical treatment or analysis. All it required was just a course screening, and the water flew by gravity so it did not require any energy in order to transmit that water 100 miles to the city, the then burgeoning growing city of Winnipeg which was, of course, the Chicago of the North.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is well that we have marked this occasion by recognizing the visionary leadership that people in public life brought to the formation of our city in making decisions such as this. I am happy to stand up on a nonpolitical basis and make mention of that today.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for Flin Flon have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I would also like to join the Premier on this auspicious occasion and mark the 75th anniversary of the construction of the aqueduct. I want to acknowledge the importance of that decision some 75 years ago. It was a good and a thoughtful and a farsighted decision on behalf of the citizens of this city and, obviously, it has been good not only for individuals, but for our community collectively.

I think we recognize that the engineering feat behind this is followed and modelled on something that the Romans did 2,000 years ago. So I do not think that the engineering—and I know that the

Premier referenced his own profession—it is not the engineering that I think we should be commending so much as the willingness of a community to do something of that scale that was that farsighted, that was going to serve us for so many years.

It strikes me as something that is more and more difficult for governments to do, Mr. Speaker, to do projects of that scale that have that long-reaching a significance, and we should remind ourselves continually that there is a method to that madness, that we should never shy away from doing the project that needs to be done regardless of the circumstances, how difficult it may seem, how expensive, if we know in the long run it is going to serve us.

Mr. Speaker, we on this side join with other members of the House. We want to congratulate those visionaries, those people who were prepared, perhaps put their political careers on the line to make a decision that was in the interests of the long-term benefit. We need to do that more and more with more limited resources at our disposal. Hopefully, we will have the foresight that our forefathers did.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for River Heights have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join with the First Minister and the member for Flin Flon in paying tribute to those who 75 years ago had the foresight to build a project which in those days must have been considered to be somewhat of a fool's paradise.

It is interesting as we look through historical activities in provinces and in our nation, and look back on what turns out to be some very positive things for our society and know that those positive decisions were, at that time, quite controversial in nature. When we first decided, for example, to build Canadian parks or to in fact describe land that should be Canadian park lands in a nation which was so vast and so underdeveloped, those who tried to do that kind of development were

looked at with, quite frankly, strange concepts. The questions that were asked of the day were, why in a nation like Canada would you want to designate vast land tracks to be used for park land? What foolishness! The whole nation is a vast land track which has been barely developed, so there seems little or no point in designating some of it park land.

Yet, today we know that had we not designated that land for parks the parks would not exist. Now with great difficulty we are trying to expand our park land. We are trying to expand that park land because we are under pressure from development which has already taken place, activities which have already taken place.

The same is true for those who said 75 years ago we should bring our water to the city of Winnipeg into this community from so very far away. The vision that it must have taken to recognize that this community 75 years ago was to become a community of 600,000 people is really quite mind boggling.

What is very interesting of course is to go back and read studies of the city of Winnipeg and realize that real estate prices at the turn of the century in Winnipeg were in some parts of the city more valuable than they are today, because that was where the impetus had come for Winnipeg becoming the giant of cities. We often forget that in terms of Canada, until World War II, this was Canada's fourth largest city. It is no longer. For a short period of time it was in fact Canada's third largest city.

We have a situation in which those who had such vision 75 years ago to realize that this would be a great and exciting city, and the city would require the construction of this aqueduct, and this province would benefit from such a clean source of water is something that we should not forget.

We should indeed challenge everyone in this room and all those who hold political office at all levels of this nation, and at the municipal level as well, to be visionary, to say every now and then take a leap of faith, justify to yourself, to your great-grandchildren or your great-great-

grandchildren that the idea you are fermenting and you are debating and you are discussing is not for now. It is for the future. That is what these individuals should receive tribute for.

Thank you for being there 75 years ago so that we today benefit from what you have accomplished.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Just prior to Orders of the Day, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the gallery to my left where we are graced with the presence this afternoon of Earl Backman who is the Clerk for the City of Brandon.

On behalf of all honourable members, I would like to welcome you here this afternoon, sir.

ORDERS OF THE DAY THRONE SPEECH DEBATE (Third Day of Debate)

Mr. Speaker: On the adjourned debate, the third day of debate, on the proposed motion of the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), for an address to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, in answer to his speech at the opening of the session and the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer) in amendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable member for La Verendrye, who has six minutes remaining.

Mr. Ben Sveinson (La Verendrye): Mr. Speaker, in coming reasonably close to a close in my presentation on the budget, I was talking about the framework that was laid out for growth and prosperity in Manitoba.

There are no miracle solutions and there are no instant jobs, as the NDP and Liberals would like people or lead people to believe.

The only real growth in our economy and our workforce will come as the result of very hard work. It will involve the encouragement of further investment, co-operation from labour and sound fiscal and taxation policies.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP still have not learned that the old tax-and-spend policies do not work. That is

one reason why their colleagues have had such trouble in other provinces. You can look to the east and to the west of us.

As far as the Liberals are concerned, their ideas are little more than promises they know they will never have to keep. That is a dangerous practice, making all kinds of promises. The Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Edwards) should ask the NDP about that. They have had a habit of promising everything to everybody and in the end they find it impossible to follow through. They also leave you with debts and interest rates, interest costs that eat away at the money that we use each year to pay for our programs in this province.

* (1430)

There is an old saying: Vote for the person who promises least because they will be the least disappointing. Well, in years past that saying really did not fit, I mean perception wise. That is simply because if you go back 10 to 15 years, there was much room yet to move. After the NDP were finished with the province and with the monies, the resources, in this province, there indeed was not much room left to move, and so this saying does start to make considerable sense.

Mr. Speaker, the throne speech is an outline of realistic plans for the future of Manitoba—common sense, down-to-earth ways of bringing our fiscal house in order and creating an atmosphere where business will provide long-term jobs to our people.

I look at my constituency, and I just start out in the area of St. Adolphe or in the R.M. of Ritchot. Looking back on the last year and a half, the town, along with some help from the province, have refurbished their sewer systems. They have also, with the tripartite agreement with PFRA, which is federal, with the provincial and again municipal, have brought a water line from the New Bothwell springs to Ste. Agathe.

They have applied also for a grant of money, and again it is a tripartite affair, in our infrastructure program to extend that water line again from Ste. Agathe along the river up to St. Adolphe. There is no doubt that water line is serving many, many

people with fresh, potable water, and it is also helping the situation in the New Bothwell springs area. It was an environmental problem where there was a lot of flooding going on. I commend those people for the work that they have done, truly hard-working people with a sight to the future. Indeed, this will help that community along the way to more residential building and also business moving into the area.

I would just like to take a step over to the Landmark area. Their infrastructure programs that they have put forward—in the first round—I do not believe they received anything in the first round on the infrastructure program, but they are looking at increasing volume or adding a cell to the lagoon in that town. Again, it will let them have the room for growth residentially and business accommodation. Again, Mr. Speaker, this community, hard-working and very good people.

I would like to take you next to the town of Lorette. Lorette again has taken on infrastructure possibilities that will enlarge the lagoon and add to their possibilities of residential and business opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, just in closing I would say that our policies have guided us through difficult times and positioned us well for the exciting times ahead. You have to get off the ground before you can fly, and I say it is time to fasten your seat belts. Thank you.

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, due to my having some allergies today, as I am sure you can probably tell from my voice, I am going to keep my comments relatively short. Now I know that will be a great disappointment to some, but I am going to have to curtail some of my comments. I have tried to streamline my notes and will try to be brief.

Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour to be back in this Chamber again for the Fifth Session of the Thirty-fifth Legislature. Again it reminds me as we come back of the necessity of protecting the integrity of our institutions in this country and in this province. Since we last met last July we have seen nations around this world and peoples all over

the globe struggling for what we have, struggling to achieve a democratic system which for all its warts, as we well know who serve in this Chamber, serves us well.

I am always reminded of Churchill's comments that democracy is a terrible system, but there is no better one known to man, and I think we all know that. We understand that the many hours we spend here, there is lots of wasted time, there are lots of things that are done that people regret, that people should not do. Oftentimes it leads the public to be cynical, but it works. I believe it works, and we should be very thankful in this country, and in particular those of us who serve in this Chamber, for this institution as we see so many in this world of ours killing and going to war with each other in order to achieve what we already have.

Mr. Speaker, I want to comment on your presence again, leading us, guiding us in our deliberations here in this Chamber. You have served as the Speaker for the same time that I have been a member, since 1988 when you were first made the Speaker after the 1988 general election. You have served, I think, not only with competence and ability and a fair hand, but with dignity. I think you have given the Chair a certain sense of character, if I may say, true to your own character, which has done the House a great service.

Mr. Speaker, I wish you well in this coming session.

In addition, I want to specifically acknowledge and welcome the new members to this Chamber, who have joined us since the by-elections of September 21, 1993. First, let me congratulate the two new members to our caucus: Norma McCormick, joined us as the MLA for Osborne upon the resignation of Reg Alcock, who has gone on to be the Member of Parliament, as we all know, for Winnipeg South.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): He is sitting a row back this time.

Mr. Edwards: The member for Thompson says he saw him sitting a row back in a chair that was a lot sturdier than the one he used to sit in in this

Chamber. We all remember the day; it was right over there I think that he went right off the edge. He was a real character, and I hope they build those chairs well in Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure for me to have Norma McCormick join us as the MLA for Osborne. She has been a personal friend of mine for a number of years prior to running for our party and her contribution to our caucus deliberations and serving her constituents are already known and noted. I believe she will make an equally good impression and contribution to the deliberations of this House.

It is also a great honour that we have, joining our ranks, another woman. I note that the percentage of our caucus, the female percentage, is the highest in the Chamber and that is—

An Honourable Member: It used to be higher when Sharon was the only Liberal.

Mr. Edwards: That is true. We have been 100 percent and now we are still doing very well and that is important for all of us. I know all parties are committed to working towards a good representation of the House, not just in terms of geographical and economic and ethnic background but also in terms of gender. It is a great honour to have Norma McCormick join us from the Osborne constituency.

We also have had elected Gary Kowalski, whom you saw today arise in Question Period for the first time, who has joined us as the member for The Maples and we welcome him. He has come from a 20-year career with the Winnipeg police force and brings with him a wealth of world experience which most in this House will not have had occur to them. I think his contribution will be extensive in the operations of this House. We welcome him and congratulate him on an election last September and I might just say, not just in the three where the New Democratic members were elected but also in the two where our members were elected, these were well-fought contests.

* (1440)

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to recognize that with the five all going at once, in all of those

five, the voters were given a very serious, hard-fought campaign from all parties, and I think the voters were well served by that. Obviously, the tenor of the times, they made their choices as they did, but I felt that the campaigns—and I had the opportunity to work and to visit in all of those locations in those campaigns as I know the Premier did, and some of his ministers I saw from time to time on the campaign trail. I think the voters were served well by good candidates really in all three parties in all of the contests.

I also want to specifically welcome, of course, Mr. Schellenberg, who joins us from Rossmere, and, as well, Mr. Robinson joins us from Rupertsland. In addition, Gordon Mackintosh—how could I mistake Gordon Mackintosh? I blocked it out. He is a former colleague of mine at the bar, and he joins us—[interjection] Well, I will not name the bar, but he is a practising lawyer as I was. I know him well and welcome him to this Chamber. He is a very fine gentleman. I know he has also had the experience previously of serving in this Chamber, and so we welcome him back to the House in a different capacity.

Mr. Speaker, finally, I want to acknowledge the fact that the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) has announced in the last few days that he will be retiring, and he—

An Honourable Member: It was sort of leaked to the press from the way I understand it.

Mr. Edwards: Well, yes, perhaps he did not announce it, but anyway, he has acknowledged it. He joins our former leader Mrs. Carstairs, who announced some time ago that she would be stepping down as leader and that she would not be seeking re-election as the member for River Heights.

Mr. Speaker, I think that it is important to recognize the extensive contribution that really both of those members have made. I know, of course, most personally the contribution of the former leader of our party. It will be, I believe, a great loss, not just to our party but to the House, the fact that she is not seeking re-election. She has, in my view, done an enormous amount for the people

of this province, serving over the years as she has. So I will very much regret her not seeking re-election in the upcoming election, as she has made her intentions known.

In addition, I recognize the long service of the member for Flin Flon and the fact that he has made an extremely important contribution for the communities in his riding and indeed for northern Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, it is a situation where on many if not most occasions there are grave disagreements in principle and in policy, but I certainly have always respected the integrity and the good intentions and the hard work of the member for Flin Flon, and we wish him well in his new venture.

Mr. Speaker, finally, I want to recognize the new Pages who have joined us and formally recognize their contribution which will come in this coming session. Early indications are that we have an outstanding group of young people who have come again to this Chamber to serve us. I noticed in the first vote how professional the young woman who was our Page read out the names. It was an extremely able performance and one that I venture to say a lot of members of this House perhaps could not have done quite so well. She did a very good job, and I am sure that the rest of the Pages this session will serve equally well.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to this Speech from the Throne, it is premised on the belief that it is okay to stand still. It is premised on the belief that where we have been is good enough and okay, and if we just wait the base and the groundwork that has been laid will mean that we can flourish in the future. The tone and the premise of that Speech from the Throne, as I think most will recognize, is precisely the same premise and the same tone as we have seen every year, every session of this government over the last six years. It strikes the same chord, and that is a fundamental belief in the, for lack of a better word, invisible hand of the marketplace and that it is going to do what we need to be done in this province and create jobs.

Well, Mr. Speaker, what we have learned in the last six years is that the invisible hand is indeed invisible, and government, I believe, does have a

role to play more than the Conservative Party, the government, believes that it does. That is a fundamental philosophical difference, perhaps, between these parties, but to see it reflected again in the face of the past record, the past six years and the current situation that Manitobans find themselves in, I found quite dismaying that again the government would choose to reflect on their past with a very shallow light, not in fact recognizing the true situation in this province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are some good things in this Speech from the Throne, some things that I want to indicate that I was pleased to see. Firstly, recognizing that the primary initiatives in the Speech from the Throne are federally driven, I think we should take some comfort, and I think it is worth noting that at least the provincial government is not going to stand in the way of the federal government doing what is right for this province.

Mr. Speaker, that is important because I think that the federal government in the last six months, while of course making some difficult decisions which many in this Chamber have already made known that they disagreed with, the fact is that they have put into place instruments for change, instruments for growth which this government has at least recognized as positive for this province. Given that the people of this province overwhelmingly supported that new government, I think that is appropriate, and I was pleased to see that whether it is the infrastructure program or an attempt to sign a new Winnipeg or core area agreement, the review of the social safety net, the information highway, the forestry review and the approach to training and employment information, the one-stop shop approach, those initiatives of the federal government were specifically mentioned in this Speech from the Throne as ones the provincial government is prepared to co-operate on.

Mr. Speaker, that is positive; that is good. I look forward to those two levels of government co-operating to achieve those things for the people of this province.

I recognize that politically many have asked me, well, but if the federal Liberal government does

these things and the provincial Conservative government rides along and gets some of the credit, some suggest that that would not be good for my political fortunes and that of our provincial party.

Mr. Speaker, we are not here, any of us, in any party, to stand in the way of progress. If the provincial government is prepared to co-operate in good faith, as I believe they are and I take them at their word, on those initiatives, that is a good thing. They will have our support on those initiatives, and I believe they will have the support of Manitobans in achieving those federal initiatives.

Let me spend one moment on the infrastructure program. Everyone recognizes, including of course the current provincial government and the current federal government, that this is not some panacea for job creation in this country. It is not; it has never been cast as that. It is a short-term impetus in the economy which is greatly necessary. It gives a lot of people work, and it builds the infrastructure, which I think most of us in this Chamber recognize needs to be done not just here, but all over the country.

So, Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to see that last week there was an announcement where a good portion, I believe over half of the money under the program, was set out in projects. I was very pleased to see that come forward. I was very pleased to see that there is a commitment to the extension of natural gas, rural gasification, that there is a commitment to intermodal transportation links with a view to the future and our ability in this city and in this province to be a transportation hub, because it is important to build on what is here.

* (1450)

I was very pleased to see that there was a commitment to the rural communities in this province to respect and work with the local governments in those areas to do what is best for those communities because, truly, those communities, the people who live there, do know best, they are closest to it, and we must work with them. So it has been a good example, I believe, of

tripartite negotiation, and I look forward to a successful completion of the program as soon as possible.

Not everyone is going to be happy, no question. I am told that there were applications which added up to many times the amount of money that was available. I think everybody recognizes that. You could not make everybody happy. You cannot build every project, but I do have faith that the three levels of governments working together will choose the best projects, and I look forward to a continuation and a finalization of that program. It is a short-term program.

We must in this country and in this province deal with, of course, the more pressing problem: unemployment and the need for economic growth. That truly, in my view and our party's view, is the touchstone of modern government. The government that should be elected, the government that will best serve the people is the government that can provide a framework and provide an environment where economic growth can occur, because we will all watch it in the next election.

We will all, the three parties will say, we best defend health care and all of the good things that we want. We can best deliver high quality public education, the things that people want from government. We will all compete on those issues, on the expenditure-related issues. The government that I believe should be elected is the one that will tell the people not how we are going to save those programs to the next election but how we are going to save them to the next century, because this is going to be the 19th year in a row of a deficit in this province.

That has become chronic and is on the verge of becoming a crisis, not so much in the overall debt load—there are many other provinces with higher overall debt—but the chronic nature of the deficit in this province is indeed reaching a stage where we must deal with it and see it for what it is, in its repetitive nature, as a crisis. If we go another 19 years, if we are committing 24, 25 percent of overall budget to paying interest and not just 12 percent, it will be taking money away from future generations.

I want to just say that I do not view social responsibility and fiscal responsibility as opposites. They are the same thing, Mr. Speaker. I believe we have been led, in a large part because of the dogmatic ideologies of these two parties on either side of me, we have been led in this province to believe that you have got to have one or the other. You can be socially responsible and throw money at everything, or you can be fiscally responsible. That is the dialectic, that is the choice that Manitobans have been offered. Well, throwing money at everyone and everything endlessly gets you to the next election, maybe. Today, I hope it does not. Today, I hope the public is smarter than that. Maybe it gets you to every election, but it does not get you to the next century.

How do we know the challenges that our children and grandchildren will face in the coming years? How can we say that they will not need the money more than we need it now? We do not know. It is fundamentally dishonest and wrong to continually borrow on the future, and that is a fact of life which governments all over this country are recognizing. Whether they are New Democratic in Ontario and British Columbia and Saskatchewan or Conservative or Liberal, they are recognizing the fundamental truth that we need to deal with government in a different way and make it sustainable, not just to the next election but to the next century.

So, fiscal responsibility and social responsibility, to me, Mr. Speaker, are the same thing. Having said that, there are two ways that have been put forward to deal with that problem. One is by cuts—expenditure cuts, expenditure related. We have seen both Mr. Mulroney and Mr. Filmon, in this Chamber, attempt that over the years—cut, cut, cut—cut expenditures and solve the deficit problem. It does not work. It drives up unemployment, and unemployment is the biggest engine behind the deficit in the province. People who do not work cost us millions and millions and millions of dollars because they do not have any money to spend. Secondly, they are mostly on one form or another of direct payment, unemployment insurance or welfare or other forms of direct

assistance from government, two ways that they cost us money.

The third way that they cost us money is that almost every service we offer has a higher incidence of use tied to unemployment. Those who are unemployed suffer the indignity of that and sink inevitably into depression and despondency, and they do draw more heavily on our health care system and our social safety net and all of the other things that government offers. Unemployment is a root cause of virtually every social service we offer. So, Mr. Speaker, unemployment, in my view, on all of those counts, is the significant contributor to the provincial debt. You cannot cut your way to a balanced budget alone. It is a part of the solution.

Clearly, there are efficiencies in government. Clearly, there is a need to rationalize government, to rethink government, and to revitalize government in this province and in this country. That is something we are not doing in this province, but we should be doing, and that is part of the solution.

The major part is revenue. Mr. Speaker, we need to have growth in this province at a reasonable rate. I suggest between 3.5 and 4 percent. A normal, healthy economy grows in the range of 4 percent. That is what we need. Our growth has been consistently less than that under this government.

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

I think it is important to note when one looks at the overall record of this government that in fact the growth record in terms of gross domestic product—the Filmon government predicted 3.5 percent growth in 1989, we got 1.1. They predicted 2 percent growth in 1990, we got 1.6. They predicted minus .3 percent growth in 1991, and we got minus 2.1. They predicted 2.4 percent growth in 1992, and the estimate is .9 percent. Madam Deputy Speaker, they predicted 2.7 percent growth in 1993, and the estimate is 1.2 percent.

They have never been right, not even close, about the growth that was going to occur in this

province. They have consistently in their budgets told Manitobans next year. It is going to happen for you next year. It is all going to be roses. It is going to grow. You are going to get a job. The economy is going to grow. It is going to be great. It is all going to take off. Next year has come and gone many, many times and that has not happened. It is time for this government to do more than simply point back to selective statistics. It is time for them to recognize that some of their premises, some of the fundamental things they base their policies on are wrong. You cannot stand back and let the invisible hand run the economy and do what is best for the people in this province.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there are some other things in this Speech from the Throne which I want to acknowledge, I believe and our party believes are positive. The review of The Municipal Act, I think it is important to recognize, is something that we all look forward to. It is interesting that it comes after they have consistently over the last six years offloaded responsibility but not the financial resources to the municipalities in this province to do what they need to do. Nevertheless, I look forward to a review of that act. I think it is high time, and I think that most in the rural municipalities and the rural urban communities recognize that it is appropriate to review that act. They have come from time to time with a number of specific concerns and complaints, and I truly hope that they will be, and have been long before now, brought into that process of consultation so that we do have an act which represents the result of a consensus-building approach.

* (1500)

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is important to, I think, acknowledge that western provincial co-operation is mentioned in the Speech from the Throne. I am happy to see that. I have always been a proponent of that as a very effective way of reducing the cost of government. That is an idea which Lloyd Axworthy pioneered in this province and has been touting for many, many years.

The interesting test case in this country unfortunately is not here. It is in Atlantic Canada. New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward

Island and, in some cases, Newfoundland, but basically those three provinces have in the last three years made substantial gains in signing joint co-operation agreements in areas like purchasing goods. They are co-operating at the level of universities and community colleges, understanding that they need to have regional centres of excellence. Moving towards a more rational use of the limited resources which all provincial governments have make sense to everyone and is long overdue.

Madam Deputy Speaker, these borders between us and Alberta and Saskatchewan and even British Columbia, but most notably those three provinces, they are lines on a map. No one is suggesting that we tear down the Legislatures and have one big jurisdiction. That is not what this is about. This is about being sensible and making less of those borders and working together to save costs because we are all basically trying to do the same things. We are trying to serve massive rural and northern regions. We are trying to offer a level of service within reason to our people. It is important for us to get together, to cross party lines, both within provinces and between provinces, and to work with each other to achieve what is best for the taxpayer.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the First Minister has persistently said, I am all for it and I am going to do it. We just do not see any progress. We just have yet—and I saw a long list of areas where they think they can have agreement. Where are they? Where are they?

The Premier consistently mentions the veterinary school that is a great example. That was many, many decades ago. When are we going to move on? It is going to take one of the western premiers—one of the western premiers is going to have to stand up and drive this debate, similar to what Premier McKenna did in Atlantic Canada. I welcome the commitment, at least in words, at this point from the Premier on that issue. I think it is an important one.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I note that one of the things in the Speech from the Throne which got the most press attention was the issue of drivers'

licences being revoked for those under 18 if there was a criminal charge or record or conviction. I recognize that that has some merit, that we certainly want to deal sternly with youth crime, youth violence—

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): They should go to bed earlier.

Mr. Edwards: The Leader of the Opposition says they should go to bed earlier. I note one of the commentator's comment that, yes, that is a great idea, and then we will tell them there is no dessert and off to bed. I am not sure how realistic this is in terms of solving youth crime, but we will wait and see the legislation. It is a drop in the bucket, believe me. This is not going to solve our problem. It made for good press one day.

I dare say, the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) must know this has got to be a very, very small part of an overall plan which we have yet to see.

What we have seen is boot camps. Where boot camps have been tried, pioneered in the United States for many years, they are in disgrace. Nobody supports them in any position of influence or knowledge across the border where they have been tried. There is nothing wrong with isolation, protection of the public, there is nothing wrong with discipline. If you teach violence, you get violence. If you run a militaristic camp where the fundamental relationship is fundamentally one of abuse and disrespect that is what you get.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that is not in the best interests of the public safety, because those kids who come out will be worse off than when they went in.

The minister indicates, say that tomorrow in Brandon. I will. I have said it, I will say it. There is no justification for running an abusive style of corrections in this province for our kids. Our kids need discipline. That is not militaristic boot camp and violence.

I know that there is a political agenda at work and I know that the members opposite want to play to it and want to pander to it. The fact is, the long-term solution does not lie in teaching violence and abuse and disrespect, and that is

exactly the premise of the boot camps that they are proposing.

Isolation, fine. Why did they close down the wilderness corrections camp? They already had that. There is nothing wrong with training and disciplined training but give people something to do, something to hang onto, something to plug them into society. If you do not want them to commit crime you have to give people a reason to want to be a part of society, and only training and education, only those things can ultimately achieve that.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I was also pleased to see that they were thinking of beefing up maintenance enforcement. It is interesting to me that after all those years, whenever you sort of run a test case and phone over there, you never get an answer. You notice that? You never get an answer. It is a busy signal or there is a recording, we are not answering the phone.

Consider the plight of a single woman with children at the end of the month not getting the maintenance check. They rely on that. The stress level of those people is unconscionable and we are running a system that does not adequately address their needs on a regular basis. If this means that that is going to change, which I doubt, but if that is what the words mean then that will be a good thing and it will be high time—six years too late but a good thing.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there was also mention of judicial accountability changes. I greatly look forward to seeing those. We have lots of problems in judicial accountability and how it is run and how it is not working.

We have had the Law Reform Commission work on this. We have to make this system accountable to the public. I do not say that just for members of the public who are disgruntled in their day before the courts. I believe that the system currently in its relatively confused and prohibitive state works to the disadvantage of the judges. I think that it works to the disadvantage of the public and the judges and everyone in the system. We need a better system of judicial accountability, and

I very much hope that the legislation that will come forward will be the product of working with not only members of the bench, members of the bar, but also members of the public, and will represent that compromise, because it is there, but the system right now is relatively confused and, I believe, does not serve any of those interests. I look forward to seeing that legislation.

The parents' forum on education in the member for Sturgeon Creek's (Mr. McAlpine) riding coming up. Curious why it is in his riding, but I am very pleased that it is in the St. James-Assiniboia area which I also have the pleasure of representing. My very great hope is that this is not some kind of PR campaign. You know, I do not want to prejudice it. No, no. I want to give it a fair chance, but I remember a meeting in Brandon attended by teachers and trustees, and I believe even parents, tripartite. I remember—[interjection] Well, very few parents, the minister says. I remember a meeting there where I think over about a day and a half, I think it was a two-day session, there was more good will, there was more progress made, according to the people there, from all camps. I spoke to teachers and trustees about it. They were making incredible gains, and the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) just wiped out. He came at lunch and he just wiped out, and he killed the spirit of co-operation, the spirit of progress at that meeting.

This, I am afraid, is not a man who is given to consensus building, to supporting people to find their own solutions. Now, I hope I am proven wrong. Madam Deputy Speaker, so far there is no indication that he has changed any of his approaches.

Mr. Doer: The John Stuart Mill approach.

* (1510)

Mr. Edwards: Well, the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) says, the John Stuart Mill. It is basically a my-way-or-the-highway approach. That is what he took at that meeting. It does not matter what you are saying, this is what is going to happen. I am looking forward to the parents' forum, but I am going to be judging it from that

experience, and I want to see not just a nice big public relations exercise but true consultation, flexibility. The minister should go understanding that he may actually learn something there, and maybe some of the assumptions he has made and the plans he has got need to be modified. I hope he will do that.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, we look forward to that forum. I am certain that the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) will be there, and I as a representative of that region will also be there. I am probably not quite the same profile as the member for Sturgeon Creek, but I will certainly be there and I look forward to it. I want to thank the minister for putting it in the St. James-Assiniboia area of our city. I think we will prove good hosts.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the comment on page 8 of the Speech from the Throne, while we are dwelling on education, I found particularly interesting. The comment is that the government is going to be moving towards a province-wide system of uniform standards of achievement. The Speech from the Throne goes on to say: "Curriculum development will be guided by standards to be established, and actions will be taken to improve the relevance and quality of teacher training"

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, what has yet to be answered is who is going to establish those standards, given that the Curriculum Branch has been cut. And "actions will be taken"—what actions will be taken to improve the relevance and quality of teacher training? I look forward to the curriculum coming. My fear is it is going to come right out of the minister's office, and that it is not going to reflect the expertise which is in this province and which is prepared to contribute to the curriculum process.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): As a matter of fact, that is what we are doing on a western basis. We are sharing that development with the other provinces.

Mr. Edwards: The minister indicates that we are sharing curriculum development across the western provinces. Madam Deputy Speaker, given

that our own Curriculum Branch has been cut, perhaps we will be using some of the other province's. So be it. I look forward to seeing that curriculum development. There is no indication so far that there has been any commitment to curriculum development by this government in the last six years.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there is also the comment that they want to enhance the relevance and quality of teacher training. This is the government that through its actions took away teacher training days all across this province. What are they talking about? Why do they not walk like they talk? There are lots of lovely words, nice phrases: we are going to improve curriculum, we are going to improve relevance in teaching. Everything they have done speaks against those commitments.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Roblin Commission is mentioned and there are certainly a lot of very good suggestions in the Roblin Commission, however, I feel I must indicate, having read that report I am not convinced that the Roblin Commission fully understood the role of universities. They certainly understood community colleges—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Edwards: No, Madam Deputy Speaker, they certainly understood the community colleges. They came up with all kinds of very good recommendations. Everything, all forms of post-secondary education, should not be market driven, and that is the fundamental philosophy, in my view, behind that document and this government's actions. If you cannot justify it in the marketplace, it is not worth it. If we cannot produce something that we can sell, then do not do the research. That seems to be the attitude, and that is wrong.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that is going to mean, over time, the destruction of that post-secondary institution which I believe ranks as one of the finest in this country. Despite what Maclean's magazine says, I believe that institution, on my criteria, ranks as one of the finest in this nation and

has some outstanding academics working as well as at the other universities, the University of Winnipeg and the University of Brandon.

We must understand that universities cannot be measured by the same yardstick as other post-secondary institutions. They must have free rein to some extent at least to pursue the academic and professional studies which make this a richer community and make this province a better place to live for all of us and for our children should they choose to study in those institutions.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I bring that caution to the members. I detect amongst those ranks a barely hidden, anti-intellectual bias which says repeatedly in this Chamber and in the communities that the universities are filled with underworked and overpaid academics. That kind of tone and that kind of indication does two things. First of all, it is wrong. Secondly, it acts as a very debilitating message to the people in those institutions who are working very hard, perhaps not on things you can sell but on things and studies that you can put into people's heads to make them better educated, to make them better thinkers, to make them better citizens, and that is a very, very valuable thing for any society.

I also noted that at page 9 of the Speech from the Throne a very interesting quote, very interesting statement about home care: "Bringing health care closer to home means better care." Nice time to realize that.

Seven or eight months ago they cut the Home Care Program. "Expansion of community-based health, including support services for seniors in Winnipeg"—they just cut Handi Transit and they are talking about support for seniors in Winnipeg, Madam Deputy Speaker?—"and self-managed home care in rural and northern Manitoba, will be confirmed this year." What does "self-managed home care in rural and northern Manitoba" mean? My suspicion is it means: you are on your own, manage it yourself in your home.

Madam Deputy Speaker, those comments are entirely at odds with the past record of the government, but hey, let us let bygones be

bygones. Let us see if this session there has been a change. We have a new minister, the Mr. Rogers of Manitoba. Everything is great, come on in, we are all friendly, it is happy. We have a new Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae). Maybe he is going to bring a happy, friendly way of doing health care in this province.

But we will let him work his course. Given the Pharmacare cuts, I have a lot of misgivings about his true intentions. He is pretty much an apologist so far for the same agenda which was at work in the last session, but that may change.

Madam Deputy Speaker, on page 10 of the Speech from the Throne, I notice that there is going to be a streamlined drug program information network, which is going to save lots of money for our Pharmacare system. Well, why did they cut the Pharmacare two months ago? Why did they not wait to see how this worked? Maybe it will work. I think it will. This has been being worked on for a long time by the Manitoba Medical Association and other people, including the Department of Health. Why was the deductible put up for Pharmacare and the percentage of recovery put down for seniors in the Pharmacare program prior to letting that program work and see what it did?

I believe it will work, and I believe it will save money. When you take away the ability to purchase necessary medications, you in fact fundamentally erode universal health care. What is the point of being able to go to a doctor if the prescriptions that are prescribed by that doctor cannot be purchased? Madam Deputy Speaker, it makes a mockery of the process. These drugs must be affordable to the people in this province. Again, there is not a commitment in action to working towards intelligent ways of cutting costs.

There is also an interesting turn of phrase here. This will be the initial step toward developing an integrated smart health system. There was a lot of effort put there not to use the words smart card because, as the minister knows, there have been resolutions about smart cards for some time in this Chamber, but they were proposed by the Liberal Party, so I am sure that there were pains to say we

want the word "smart" in there, but do not for Heaven's sake call it the smart card. Call it the smart health system.

Now, having said that, it is a minor point. It is a good idea, we should do it, and we are very pleased to have the government take our recommendations. They can call it whatever they want as long as they do it right.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there is also a very interesting comment, and it gives me a lot of concern. The statement at the end of the health care portion of the speech says, my ministers will also continue to be active in forging new co-operative partnerships with users and the full range of health care professionals.

* (1520)

If they are going to be continuing to forge these new relationships as they have in the past, we are indeed in trouble, because the legacy of the past in forging these new relationships is that absolutely no new relationships are forged.

This government consistently alienated every partner in the health care sector in its tenure. To say in a Speech from the Throne that somehow that was all wonderful and we are just going to continue on the same path again does not reflect what is obvious to every Manitoban in looking at the past and the past six years under this government.

Given the past record of this government in not forging those new relationships, that potentially is the most dangerous comment in that speech. If they are going to continue with the same approach to these relationships, there will be no relationships. Madam Deputy Speaker, the legacy of health care reform in this province as it was botched by this government is that if every nurse and if every health care worker does not agree with me and resents you and does not trust you as they did not this government, you can never implement health care reform. You can never manage change. Madam Deputy Speaker, that has been the legacy. This government fundamentally does not understand how to manage change.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that has been the legacy. This government fundamentally does not understand how to manage change.

Change must occur. That is why we supported the health care reform package. We know that change must occur, but the most important aspect is the ability to manage change and be flexible and understand that you are going to have to work with people, not against them.

You want to be very careful in today's complex modern world in punishing and abusing people and lying to them. That has been done and that has been done for a number of years. The result of that is, it will never occur. Yes, I call signing a collective agreement and then three months later unilaterally revoking it, I do call that a fundamental misrepresentation to the people of this province and those who sign those collective agreements. I do call it that.

Madam Deputy Speaker, how do you ever go back to the bargaining table after you have done that. It does not just affect the collective agreement that you signed at the time. It destroys the relationship of trust which is necessary between a government and its civil servants and the professionals who give their lives and their careers to service in this province.

There is need for change and there is need for improvement but if you go out and you try to hack down and you try to beat down the teachers, the nurses and the health care professionals, you will get nowhere. That is what has happened. The government has no idea how to manage change.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there was also a very interesting comment in here. I noticed a couple of weeks ago the government stood up and said, and they put it in their Speech from the Throne, it is awful we did not get the North American Centre for the Environment. They have harped on this and the minister came running out of his office and said, it is CF-18, it is CF-18, it has happened again.

It was very regrettable that Winnipeg did not get the North American Centre for the Environment, but to compare this to the CF-18 is laughable. This is the same government that gave the telephone

directory production to Quebecor in Quebec, that transported jobs down to Quebec through the production of the telephone directory, not to mention the jobs they have sent south and everywhere else. They played the worst kind of politics with that issue. They say, every dollar should be spent here. We should have won. It was obvious, no question. I would have liked it too, but do you know what? There were 24 cities in this country that were upset. One of them, one of the competitors that was at the top of the list was the city which the Minister of Environment represented. They did not get it. They were upset in Edmonton and Hamilton and Winnipeg and 24 other cities, and it is too bad.

Where was the Premier three days earlier when 230 jobs were saved at Gemini? He did not even come to the announcement. He did not even show up at that press conference.

Point of Order

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Deputy Speaker, on a point of order, the announcement that was scheduled for Gemini had been scheduled on fairly short notice, and I had two long-term commitments for speaking engagements publicly during the course of that morning. I changed my schedule to allow myself to meet with Mr. Harris, Mr. Morrison and the vice president of finance of Air Canada, to meet with them personally in between my two speaking engagements that morning so that I could speak with them and thank them personally for the follow-up to the visit that I had on the 20th of December 1993 in Mr. Harris's office in Montreal in working towards that Gemini announcement.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable First Minister does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Edwards: We are not talking about cheap political points, we are talking about the Minister of Environment, who walked out of his office and totally ignored the 230 jobs that had been saved three days earlier and compares 10 jobs for

Canadians to 230, to a multibillion dollar CF-18 contract. That is cheap politics.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this First Minister had no problem throwing everything aside and spending \$7,000 of taxpayers' money to run down to Ottawa to see the new Prime Minister sworn in, Kim Campbell. He was thrilled to do that. I bet he cancelled all kinds of things to make that trip. Not only that, he took an entourage. He made them cancel everything. We have to be there. We have to fly down at taxpayers' expense to see a woman sworn in for five months, and he does not lift a finger when a guy gets sworn in for five years.

Do you want to talk about cheap political points? He goes at taxpayers' expense to see the swearing in of the person that he supports in a very partisan race. He sends his Minister of Environment out the first opportunity they think they have to play this game, Quebec versus Manitoba. This is great. What are we going to do? How are we going to use it? Let us go out and call it CF-18. Talk about irresponsible, Madam Deputy Speaker. Talk about not in the best interests of a good relationship with the federal government. Talk about not being realistic.

The great tragedy was that the Minister of Environment also said at that occasion, oh, but you know, and it is so bad because we have such a good environmental record. That was his comment. We have done so much, he said. The only people who think Manitoba has a good environmental record are over there, the same people who wrote this speech. That is the sum total of the people who think Manitoba has a good environmental record are over there, the same people who wrote this speech. That is the sum total of the people who think Manitoba has a good environmental record.

* (1530)

Madam Deputy Speaker, how do you defend The Wildlife Act which does not even protect wildlife in this province anymore? How do you defend a parks act which is the weakest and the worst in the country? How do you defend a government that says it is committed to forestry management, and the first bad decision they get

from the Clean Environment Commission, they override it. Done, gone, forget it; I do not care what you said.

Madam Deputy Speaker, to add insult to injury, we are going to have a new sustainable development act, they say. Now, again, let us see it. I am looking forward to seeing it. But I can tell the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) that I am stacking it up and right now I have at least a couple of feet of real nice looking documents, and as far as I can tell, they should have saved the trees. All the books and all the reports, they are nice, that flecked paper and they always have the little recycled sign and they say this is great and everything is in there.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the truth is that the people in this province now see sustainable development, because of what this government has done, has become a term of mockery. All this government knows is in every speech, every Speech from the Throne, everything they do has got to be laced with sustainable development. It sounds good. They do not know what it means. They never have.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is high time that we actually did something to protect the environmental integrity of this province. If this act is different, has some enforcement powers in it—which, by the way, are never used by this government. That is one of the chronic problems. There is a lot on the books, but it is not enforced.

We are going to wait and see this bill and if it is a good bill it will get our support. It better reflect a change in attitude and it better reflect a change in commitment to sustainable development and what it really means. What it really means is very simple: it really means stewardship. It really means protecting the environment for future generations. That is not a difficult concept, but it is difficult to implement, apparently, for this government.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the consistent failure to enforce the environmental standards by this government, I want to add, have led I think many in this community to believe that the government

is not committed to the fundamental principles of the acts they have already put in place, whether it is The WRAP Act or the ozone layer deficiency act or all of those acts which came in in 1988 and '89. We all remember them. They sounded great and there was a whole package, but there has been a fundamental lack of enforcement of any of those and lack of action. Who remembers those acts anymore, because they are all there?

I remember, at the time, we raised that concern. I think the NDP did as well. Well, this says nice stuff, but what is actually going to happen? We were told at the time, this is enabling legislation. It is enabling legislation. We are going to come forward with all kinds of regulations and protocols. It has never happened.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I also want to say, on the issue of the environment, the third biennial state of the environment report is going to come down. I look forward to that, but I remember the last biennial report. It was a nice thick document and indexed, and you know, it had all of the accouterments, a very impressive document to look at on the table, but anyone who actually read that report was shocked at what it did not include. It represented a directory, apparently, of the environmental assets of the province. It said nothing about the environmental problems, the challenges that this province was facing and that this government was being called upon to deal with. If the third biennial report is going to be anything like the second biennial report, save the tree.

It is also good to see that there is a strong commitment to recycling in this Speech from the Throne, but we do have some concerns and have expressed these, that relying only on industry controls and industry direction in recycling is not the ultimate answer. We know from the soft drink scenario that industry ownership of the recycling function is not ultimately highly successful.

Page 11 of the Speech from the Throne, I also notice that—[interjection] Page 11. Now, here is the commitment on First Nations. The First Nations commitment is that "My government will continue as well to work in partnership with the

aboriginal community" Heaven help us, Madam Deputy Speaker, if they are going to continue to work with the First Nations community in the same way that they have.

It goes on to say my government ". . . will also implement resource co-management agreements to provide communities with a more direct role in the day-to-day management of the resources which are essential to their livelihoods." More direct role in day-to-day management—how many days were spent avoiding use of the word "self-government"? No, they had to come up with ". . . more direct role in the day-to-day management" If that means self-government, if that means they are committed to self-government, then that is fine, say it. What is wrong? Say it. There is a choke response, I think, on the opposite side for those words "self-government." It is too scary. It is too problematic. No, we have got to call it ". . . a more direct role in the day-to-day management"

There is a fundamental misunderstanding of the First Nations communities on the other side. That was no more clearly pointed out than the day that the new federal minister Mr. Irwin indicated that Manitoba had been chosen, of all the provinces in this country, to be the province where we took apart the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs federally. That was a great credit to the First Nations leaders in this province, and it was a great credit, I believe, to the leaders in this community who went to the federal government and impressed them to the extent that they chose this province to lead the country in doing what we should have done decades ago and take apart the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs.

What was the response of the minister at the time? He came out, and he said, oh, no. We have to be careful. There might be provincial implications. We have to go very slowly. Those were his words. We have to be cautious. We have to go slow. How many centuries is it going to be before they understand that we need to give self-determination to our First Nations people in this country?

There was no more telling incident of the true misunderstanding that this government has of First Nations people and where they are going. The

aboriginal justice report and all of the past were summed up in that line on that day of celebration for this province that we were actually going to move forward together with our First Nations people, and the minister from this government walks out in the hall and says no. Let us go slow. Let us be cautious. I do not really like this. Let us not do it so quickly. He talked in terms of delay. How much delay? How many decades? How many centuries will it be, Madam Deputy Speaker, before we actually achieve what these people have waited centuries to get, to regain?

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to say a few words about the civil service and the approach of this government to the civil service because they are an easy target. The government knows that. They go out and they push the same rhetoric, oh, the civil servants are overpaid and we can cut them back—

An Honourable Member: We never said that.

Mr. Edwards: That is the subtext. That is what they are meaning when they stand up and say do more, we can cut them back and we do not have to respect the contracts we sign with them. Madam Deputy Speaker, actions speak louder than words. They wonder why the civil service is not producing to their expectation. This government consistently beats them down and then asks them to rise up. You have to work with people not against people. Whether it is the teachers, or the nurses, or the workers at Manitoba Telephone System or at Hydro, we have all sat through hundreds of hours of committees and seen the fundamental disrespect that this government has for its civil servants.

It is true in virtually all of the actions that they have put forward. Their words are a different matter. I acknowledge that, but actions speak louder than words. Dealing fairly with civil servants is not the same as rolling over and playing dead. There must be mutual respect, there must be good faith, and there must be some integrity in the relationship. It is another indication that there is no ability on the other side of the government to understand not just the need to change but the need to manage change.

* (1540)

Madam Deputy Speaker, I was interested to read the comments about the social safety net, the welfare-to-work policies, and I look forward to the pilot projects that are going to be brought forward to try to get some of that \$800 million. I note that there is a comment in here that we might sign one in the summer, and we are working with the federal government to develop other major pilot projects designed to test promising options. New Brunswick has already signed one of these and I think has four that are on the table ready to go.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker—[interjection] Well, the minister mentions \$80,000, there is \$800 million to be had. There is \$800 million in this country to be garnered by innovative creative provinces that put forward pilot projects. Why are we not leading that? The minister responsible for that is from Manitoba. We have every reason to lead and we are not. The pilot projects which are at this point promising options, I think we all look forward to seeing in some detail.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, I also want to talk about the International Year of the Family. This government has made a lot of saying that we are going to have the International Year of the Family and there will be great things. Well, I was very interested to see the big initiative of the Year of the Family and as I see the list here is what you can buy; nice sweat shirts, nice shirts, nice little pins, nice little stuff like that. I got a nice little brochure about all the things you can buy. They have an office here and a staffperson.

Again, you talk about the family. Everything they have done works against the family. Who is the family that they are talking about? [interjection] Well, the minister asks where is our credibility. You slash education funding, you slash student social assistance, you slash Handi-Transit, you cut back the Family Violence Court, you cut back welfare. What family are they talking about? The Conservative family, Madam Deputy Speaker, obviously means you have to be perfectly healthy and you got to have lots of money and if you are lucky your kids are in private school, because everything else they have done works against the

families who cannot afford those things, who are unhealthy, who do have needs.

If you want to help the family, you will pass legislation and you will do things which support families and not just the elitist definition of a family which is borne out by the policies of this government. Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, the challenge to this government is to expand the definition of the family and to stand up for all families whether they have one parent or two, whether they have healthy children or unhealthy children, whether they can afford private schools or not afford private schools, every family deserves protection. That is what the International Year of the Family should be about. Let us see some policies which reflect a commitment to families, every family in this province, not just a family that is defined by those who can afford the best and for those who happen to be fortunate enough to be healthy.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am concerned. The final statement indicates, the final paragraph, *Securing Our Future*, and there is no thinner part of this document than that final paragraph, *Securing Our Future*. Here is the statement: "Manitobans are fortunate to have established a path to long-term security which has spared us the severe adjustments faced by many of our neighbours . . ." If that is the premise, and that is the premise that runs through the speech, that all that has been done is good and it is all coming up roses. Just wait, it is going to happen for you. That is the premise that underlies all of this.

Let us look at the facts. Let us look at the fact that since this government took over its majority government in 1990, Madam Deputy Speaker—let us look at the facts. Since that time, since they got the majority government in 1990, the annual capital investment in this province has gone down by half a billion dollars per year. In 1990, \$3.8 billion capital investment in this province; in 1993, \$3.3 billion. That is the fact.

Now, they select out manufacturing investment for 1993. Yes, that small part of investment went up for 1993 and that is good, but overall, tell the whole story, shed light on the full economy and

you will see that half a billion dollars in direct investment has been sucked out per year since this government took over.

There is one other critical indication of how well we are doing on the path to prosperity, as the Conservative government calls it. That is, since they got the majority government in 1990—let us look at real numbers, let us not look at percentages. Let us look at the people in this province who are working. In 1990, 505,000 working; February 1994, 489,000 working. Madam Deputy Speaker, that is a drop of 16,000 jobs since this government took over; 16,000 people are not working in this province who were working when they took over a majority government. If you look back at the 1990 Speech from the Throne, it also talked about the perils of a recession and the fact that next year was going to be better, next year was going to be great, everything is coming up roses and it is going to be better.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, 16,000 people are not working in this province, and since they took over a majority government in 1990, 30,000 people net have left this province. That is in addition to the 16,000 who are still here who do not have jobs.

Those are the facts, and this province, according to the people on the street, the people who are trying to pay their mortgages and are worried about their jobs, they know that this province is not keeping up. They know that this government has no vision, has no creativity, and has no plan to give the people, in particular the young people of this province, hope.

We are losing an average of 6,000 or 7,000 people a year from this province. There is no greater tragedy than the loss of those people. The people on the opposite side who come from rural Manitoba know that better, know that more painfully than even the people in the city, that the loss of young people from those communities is the single biggest export of our province. It is not wheat. It is not nickel. The single biggest most valuable export from this province is our young people.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there were three things that I was looking for in this speech. I made that clear. There were a number of things I put forward that I would like to have seen, and we put that forward in a legislative package. There were three things which were of critical importance to be in this speech. One of them was to have come forward with a plan to retain the capital loss from this province.

The Deputy Premier, the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey), is listening intently. I am glad he is because, in the last year, in 1993 we lost \$340 million from this province in direct investment, mostly through RRSPs. We lost another \$270 million in investments in pension funds which were invested outside of the province—\$640 million of our own investment dollars in this province left the province. You want to talk about a lost opportunity. You want to talk about a failure to deal with growth. That is the single biggest problem we face, retaining our own investment dollars, the hundreds of millions of dollars that leave this province every year.

Madam Deputy Speaker, on one day, March 1 of this year, the last day of RRSP purchases in this year, it is estimated by those who control large mutual funds in this province that over \$100 million left this province in one day. Can you imagine what that could have done, what a fraction of that could have done to create jobs and provide venture capital in this province?

* (1550)

Now six years into the term of this government they are coming up with a committee to look at sources of capital. Where have they been? That money has been leaving every year over the past six years. We need to retain the investment dollars of our own people.

Where is the majority of that money invested? It is invested on stock exchanges in Toronto and New York and London and Tokyo. It is invested in mutual funds and bonds and stocks.

If a Manitoba small business wants to get investment income, that company, to get listed on those stock exchanges, if you are looking for under

\$10 million, do not bother, because to become listed, if you are floating a share offering on those exchanges, that is almost the buy-in level at this point in terms of the prospectus requirements and in terms of the costs associated with floating a share offering.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we are a province of small business, as this document points out. Our businesses do not need \$10 million. Most of our businesses need a half million or a million. They need substantially less money. That is why three years ago, when I first sat down with the business people in this community who have been proposing a prairie stock exchange, people in this community who run investment houses, who have investments themselves, business leaders—let us be honest, most of them Conservatives. I was at that meeting. Most of them there were Conservatives at the time. [interjection] I said, at that time they were Conservatives. I do not know what they are now.

When I sat down three years ago, they said to me, we have already been in contact with the Alberta stock exchange, we have already been involved with business people in the three prairie provinces. It can happen and we can do it. I recognize it is not something that can unilaterally be done in this province, but you need somebody to drive that process, Madam Deputy Speaker. That should be the mission of this government, to provide vehicles for local investment to keep our investment dollars here. They will invest.

The Crocus Fund and the Grow Bonds are good ideas. No question. They had my support, our party support. They will continue to. They are a pittance compared to the need that is there to provide investment vehicles to retain those dollars.

I was looking for a plan to retain that money because that to me is the biggest lost opportunity in this province.

An Honourable Member: You cannot do it under NAFTA.

Mr. Edwards: You cannot set up a stock exchange under NAFTA in the prairie provinces.

Is that what the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) is saying?

Madam Deputy Speaker, you can control capital flow. What you have to do is provide vehicles for people to invest in, and they will invest— [interjection] It would be great to keep tax rates low, but you know what, tax rates, no tax rates, 640 million bucks left this province last year, and that, according to the early indications of those who run those mutual funds, is an all-time record. It is not getting better; it is getting worse.

The second initiative that I was looking for was a training initiative that would have linked the private market, those who are hopefully going to employ these people, the people that we want to retain in this province, linking them to the trainee, the person looking for the training, linking them to the educational institutions that we have. The Roblin commission talks a lot about that.

An Honourable Member: What about a job?

Mr. Edwards: Well, the minister says, what about a job? Madam Deputy Speaker, that is the whole point, and do you know what, if this minister thinks there are jobs out there for all those thousands of people who are unemployed, he is living in technicolour. The fact is there are not jobs. People need training and they need training that is relevant. The biggest loss, the biggest tragedy is when someone is trained and we spend this money, and then they get out and there is no job and they cannot get experience. They are despondent. They are depressed. We have wasted the money. It is a tragedy.

Now, my position, my suggestion, our party's suggestion was that you do what was tried in Ontario a number of years ago. You link the prospective employer at the beginning of the training. You get them into an arrangement at the beginning of the training program to essentially buy the training and, in return for that, provide employment at the end of it. That provides three things: It provides experience for the trainee; it provides relevancy for the training because it is market driven; and thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, it provides an enthusiastic trainee

who knows that he or she, when they finish the program, are going to have employment. That is the single biggest challenge that we face is not just the training itself but channelling the training so that it is relevant to the needs in the marketplace.

We know of the \$8 billion this country spends on training. Our own government reports federally tell us that a lot of that is simply wasted, is not properly directly and not properly spent.

The third initiative which I felt was critical and I would liked to have seen, Madam Deputy Speaker, was some creative impetus to the economy, specifically—and I have been taking a lot of my economic guidance from Sterling Lyon, but he did do some things right. I think even the members opposite have said—I remember them saying, oh, Sterling Lyon, we did not agree with him, but they always applauded him because he never touched the labour laws.

I do have something good to say about Sterling Lyon. He had a good idea in 1979 and '80. He went through a short-term reduction in sales tax as a one-shot kick-start to the economy. If you look—

An Honourable Member: It did not work.

Mr. Edwards: In fact, it did work. I want to refer members to the facts about sales tax revenue and the facts about that program. It did work. I think they are saying that on the opposite side because they probably did not vote for it at the time and now they have to try to maintain some consistency. [interjection] Yes, see, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) knows that.

Now, if you take the reduction in sales tax revenue for that year and you set that off against the increased amount that was actually spent in the economy and apply the multiplier effect to that amount of money which was all spent in Manitoba to get the sales tax rebate, you will find that it was revenue neutral at worst, and according to some financial analysts, it was in fact—[interjection] Well, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) asks, what about next year?

Madam Deputy Speaker, the financial analysts will tell you it was revenue neutral at worst, and in all likelihood, resulted in higher tax revenues for

the province. Now, that depends on what multiplier you apply. Various economists will apply different multiplier factors. [interjection]

I know that the Minister of Agriculture was there at the time and I appreciate his comment that he is with me on this one, because I think he was there, and I welcome his support. I hope he will use his considerable influence in cabinet to see this done.

Let me also add to the suggestion that there be that short-term impetus, an increase in the minimum wage. The average minimum wage in this country is \$5.52. Our minimum wage has not gone up in three years; it is currently \$5 an hour. It is necessary to take the minimum wage up; that is a reasonable increase.

I guess what I would most like to see, and I doubt if there would be disagreement on this in the House, and I hope that the government does it, is to come up with some kind of a formalized way of increasing the minimum wage. Why is there a haphazard approach to increasing that? It should be done on a regular basis and tied to the aggregate wage increase in the province or whatever the measure may be. It should be raised on a regular basis.

I look for the support of the New Democratic Party on this in particular, because I remember the 1990 campaign when the members of the New Democratic Party were out campaigning on the streets—minimum wage to \$7. Who remembers that cry, Madam Deputy Speaker? Right in the midst of the campaign. [interjection] Yes, misquoted, yes, by design. I think, subtext, maybe later, some dark room, oh, yes, over a few years. Well, the message was \$7, and I remember that very well. I was on the streets, as we all were.

* (1600)

That was the third initiative that I was looking for, some creative impetus to the economy and economic growth and also to respecting the rights of people to make a decent wage and giving the people on welfare some incentive to work. Surely that has to be the focus of our restructuring, an incentive to work. You cannot do it at the end of a stick. People on welfare will be responsive to

incentive to work just like anyone else in the economy is receptive to incentive based on the profit motive. They are not people who are out of sync with the way we all feel. They need incentives, and raising the minimum wage is an important part of giving people that incentive to work.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I appreciate very much the opportunity to address members at the opening of this session. I want to cut my comments short, as I indicated, because I have been suffering from a sore throat. They have been relatively concise, as I am sure honourable members will agree.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Mr. Speaker, I want to end today by proposing a subamendment. Therefore, I move, seconded by the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray),

THAT the amendment be amended by adding thereto the following words: And further regrets that:

(1) this government has failed to address the needs of Manitobans by not formulating a strategy on capital including public bond expansion and the establishment of a prairie stock exchange;

(2) this government has failed to address the needs of unemployed and underemployed Manitobans by failing to create training initiatives to encourage Manitoba business to offer training to workers and has failed to offer programs to train our young people;

(3) this government has failed to offer any initiatives to kickstart Manitoba's economy such as a 3 percent break on provincial sales tax for three months or an increase in Manitoba's minimum wage to at least meet the national average;

(4) this government continues to fail students at all levels through cutbacks to school divisions, weakening of curriculum and underfunding of community colleges; and

(5) this government has failed to provide leadership in managing health care change and continues to allow the citizens of Manitoba to be shortchanged in the provision of health care.

Motion presented.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, I would like to first of all begin by welcoming the new members and look forward to their contributions to the debate in this Assembly and, as well, a special word of recognition to our new Pages. I am sure by the time they have had a month or two of this debate they will have formed some very strong opinions about how they think the democracy is unfolding in this province.

I was endeavouring to take the high road until I had been listening for the last few minutes to the speech from the Leader of the Second Opposition (Mr. Edwards). Nevertheless, I always take this opportunity to remind myself and everyone else that it is certainly a privilege and a duty to serve and be elected to serve in this Chamber. I think our biggest challenge is to make sure we know the difference between the two and handle ourselves accordingly.

There is no question about the priorities that government needs to bring to governance in this particular time in our province and in our country. Frankly, I guess I get a little disappointed about this process in itself inasmuch as we take the time far too often to divert from what are the real important issues in front of the province of Manitoba and in front of the country and probably, in a large degree, in front of the world as a whole in making sure that we are able to have a fair and practical economy that has a future for not only the young people that will follow us but for taking care of business today so that the type of economy and opportunities that we have been afforded, and the generation before us has been afforded, is not squandered under a mountain of debt. Of course, we have talked for years about that coming rolling down the hill towards us, if you will. Frankly, the last two or three years, both provincially and federally, we have seen the results of what a massive debt accumulating year over year will do to the ability of the economy to recover.

Mr. Speaker, I have been listening and attempting to listen with some care to members of the opposition as they respond to the Speech from

the Throne. While occasionally there were some glimmers of hope inasmuch as they appear to understand the real needs of dealing with what are some very difficult economic times, they do not seem to grasp the fact that the economy of this province has a firm foundation that is now starting to return some of the rewards that have been predicted for a considerable length of time.

* (1610)

I get a little bit disturbed, in fact I get a little more than disturbed when I hear members of the opposition talking about job creation. I know that the type of jobs that are returning to this province, that are being created internally within this province today are the type of jobs that will give us long-term stability and provide the capabilities to have a lifestyle and a future for this province, a lifestyle for ourselves and for our future generations, but more importantly, a stable future in terms of economic opportunity, Mr. Speaker, because we have started to deal with the issue that other provinces are only starting to deal with in more recent times.

The dramatic events that are occurring in other provinces all of a sudden become very remote from this Chamber when we start to look only at our own opportunities and our own actions here in Manitoba and not at least in the national context. It seems pretty clear to me—you only need to look at some of the rather dramatic disagreements that occurred in Liberal Newfoundland and the very dramatic events that occurred around settlement of wages with teachers, the restructuring of their school system, the dramatic fall of their fishery and the problems that they are still dealing with there.

If ever there was a demonstrated case in point that sustainable development and long-term planning are in fact the key to survival of a country such as Canada where we are so dependent on our natural resources as well as the people and the talents that they bring to our economy—we cannot get away from the fact that we are dependent on our natural resources both in Newfoundland, as I said, and almost all jurisdictions of this country, and Manitoba is no exception.

Mr. Speaker, I will be dealing with some of the challenges that go with addressing the need to develop natural attributes and natural resources that we have in this province and, at the same time, protect them and enhance them where possible for the use of future generations.

I take some personal umbrage at the comments from the Liberal Leader about him not being particularly proud of the environmental record of the City of Winnipeg. Of course he would try and make that a reflection on this government, but I think that rather than being critical of the City of Winnipeg and saying that it does not have an environmental record comparable to Montreal, maybe he should be standing up and talking about the work that this city is doing. Maybe he should be talking about the fact that any sewage that is discharged in this province, Manitoba has a higher percentage of sewage outfall that is treated than any other jurisdiction in this country. That relates largely to the fact that we have one very large urban centre which has a very high percentage of its waste that is treated.

I have had this debate many times with the City of Brandon and all of the other jurisdictions across the province. They are saying make sure that you apply the laws evenly across the province. That is what is happening, Mr. Speaker. When the discussion arose and the Liberal Leader wanted to make some issue about whether or not my response to Manitoba not receiving the NACE office was an appropriate response, I think my response is far more appropriate than his which was, what is the big deal? Because at the same time as he is saying what is the big deal, Paul Martin is in Montreal saying that the establishment of the NACE office will make Montreal the centre of activity for environmental regulation in North America, that this is where the action will be. If it is only 30 jobs and that is where the action will be, then is Paul Martin wrong? I think not.

I think, unfortunately, Manitoba made a good case. Winnipeg made a good case. It was a supportable case, and all we are asking for is the support of the opposition in trying to bring these types of initiatives to this city and this province.

Stand up and be counted on behalf of Manitoba. Do not say, no big deal, we have other fish to fry. The point is, every job that we bring here, every time that we make this province the centre of activity under the North American free trade issues, then there are spin-offs that are beneficial to this province for business, spin-offs that are beneficial to the people of this province for the knowledge that they will gain, the opportunities they will gain to trade, the opportunities that they will gain to open doors in Mexico and the United States. Do not turn your backs on it. The free trade debate is over. Let us get on with doing business, and part of doing business would have been very beneficial to have had that NACE office here in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately that is not to be, so let us get on with the next portion of our efforts to make sure that Manitoba does remain as a leader in environmental issues, a leader in economic issues, because we have a dozen natural attributes or more that anyone who wants to sit back with a little pride and look at this province can say, yes, Manitoba is the place to be, this is the place to invest. This is where we want to do business, this is where the activity of the future is going to occur.

But let us context that. We have to be able to continue to attract investment. We have to be able to improve our competitiveness, and whether the Liberal Leader thinks that competitiveness is a nonissue when you are talking about education—I believe that is what he said. He said, you cannot judge educational activities by whether or not there is anything to benefit competitiveness associated with it. He can take that view if he wants, but if Manitoba is going to take advantage of its central location, take advantage of the north-south trading possibilities that we have, then we have to make sure that we can improve and enhance our competitiveness. One of the ways of doing that is through the educational system.

Mr. Speaker, the locational advantage of this province must not be underestimated. We have the time zone, we have the air connections, we have ground connections that would be envied by any other jurisdiction in this country. What we do not

have is close and ready access to some very large markets, but if we look south, we quickly can access Minneapolis and into the midwestern United States, and that is an opportunity that leaders in this province will ignore at their peril.

I think that it speaks well of the fact that this province and this First Minister (Mr. Filmon) has spent some fair bit of time developing those north-south relationships because, frankly, whether the Liberal Leader (Mr. Edwards) or whether the NDP opposition want to disparage the efforts under sustainable development and under improving trade relations, frankly those are areas that Manitoba is known and respected for far more outside of its boundaries than either one of the opposition parties are prepared to admit.

With the communication and transportation possibilities that we have in this province, Mr. Speaker, we should then be proud of the opportunities that we present not only to our citizens but for the future of this province to trade and to develop trade opportunities.

When I talked about our natural production advantages and our need to be competitive, everyone knows about our natural products. Everyone is aware of our forestry, our livestock and our grain products, but every time we start talking about the opportunities that are involved in the development of those types of industries, we start to hear all sorts of concerns being raised across the floor.

When we look at the motives behind raising those concerns I have to ask: Are the members of the opposition looking to score points or are they looking to improve the competitive opportunities in this province and make sure that the opportunities that are many times going to be based in the opportunities associated with natural resources, are they wanting to make sure those opportunities are not developed now in some vague hope that they would be able to seek that opportunity in the future?

* (1620)

I have to ask them what their motives are in that respect, because I think we have seen an example

this afternoon. First of all, in the comments made by the Leader of the Second Opposition (Mr. Edwards) when he wanted to talk about whether or not Manitoba was involved in the Shoal Lake management discussions that the Ontario government is presently involved in, let me point to a few of the facts. I am sure he does not want his line to be besmirched with the facts, but let me make a shot at it nevertheless.

I would think that would be one of the higher goals that we could seek to try and interfere with the political agenda of the Liberal Party by inserting some facts.

I am reminded when the Leader of the Second Opposition decides that he wants to make a case of Shoal Lake basin management that going back to 1989 and 1990 this province proposed a management plan for the Shoal Lake basin to cover both jurisdictions. In fact, the official opposition will recognize the debate that occurred at that time. It was a rather long and heated debate at times about whether or not Manitoba's interests were being protected in relationship to Shoal Lake water.

First of all the Ontario government of the day, a Liberal government as it turns out, was not particularly interested in having the province of Manitoba constantly calling out about their potential to not maintain the water quality of that very good source of drinking water for the majority of the residents of this province. They made it very clear that it was not going to be the Province of Manitoba that would call the shots. It was Ontario jurisdiction.

Nevertheless, we proceeded to develop regulations as a model, to show how you could implement a regulatory regime on the entire basin in order to protect water quality. I would suggest that may have even received all-party support in this House if it had ever come to an issue to be voted on in this House.

What happened was, the aboriginal interests on the Shoal Lake borders indicated very clearly that they wanted an opportunity to be involved in self-management. They wanted an opportunity to

have more say about how the resources, about how the basin as a whole would be managed in order to protect the water quality. Having made that very clear, and having made their case with the Ontario government, they came to my office, to this office and they suggested that Manitoba hold in abeyance its water quality objectives and its regulatory regime for the Shoal Lake basin while they had an opportunity to develop co-management opportunities and plans for themselves.

This government, as it turns out, has had some considerable discussion with different bands and different interests across the province about the opportunity for self-management of their resources and co-management. Therefore, at direct request of Band 39 and Band 40 the regulations on the Manitoba side of the Shoal Lake basin are now proclaimed. It would take about two days to get them proclaimed.

Mr. Speaker, following on that the Ontario government decided they would proceed with discussions with the five bands that are all resident on their side of the border and they would enter into discussions regarding co-management, which was the objective of the bands, and the opportunity for a basin-wide management structure that the bands could buy into.

Manitoba has been a little bit more than uncomfortable. We would have been quite unhappy about the fact that we were not involved in those discussions. There is certainly nothing legally, legislatively or otherwise that would allow Manitoba to force itself to the table when Ontario chose to sit down with the aboriginal governments within their own jurisdictions.

I think the Leader of the Second Opposition (Mr. Edwards) might well take some caution as he approaches the Shoal Lake issue, because as I recall, the present Prime Minister, Jean Chretien, in his resurrection as a lawyer in private practice, made it very clear that he was quite prepared to see some 600 condos built on the shores of Shoal Lake in order to teach Manitoba a lesson. That is not the kind of activity I would think any of us would promote going on the shores of Shoal Lake, and I would suggest that Manitoba's involvement with

the Province of Ontario will ultimately lead to a basin-wide management plan where we do not have to sit with threats.

Mr. Speaker, another issue that is leading some considerable divisive debate in this Legislature is the pending application by Louisiana Pacific for a development of an oriented strand board plant in the Swan River Valley. One of the things that continues to puzzle me is that the Swan River Valley, by and large, is very anxious to have this plant located in the valley. What we are talking about harvesting is poplar, trees that are well known for their rapid growth and their ability to reforest. [interjection] I am fine. I will get their attention if I need it.

Mr. Speaker, as I look at the concerns that are being raised across the way about Louisiana Pacific, I have to say that I have some difficulty deciding whether or not there is support for the concept of putting that plant there or whether there is not. [interjection] Well, frankly, I was a little concerned, maybe unwarranted, but I was a little concerned when I see that March 28, 10:30 a.m., the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) booked Room 68B for a press conference. Now that was quite appropriate if that is what the member for Radisson wanted to do. [interjection] I am offended. Now they are accusing me of sleaze, and I have not said anything about this.

An Honourable Member: No. I said we are waiting for you to get into the sleaze.

Mr. Cummings: Well, now he is waiting for the sleaze.

An Honourable Member: I hope we do not have to wait too long.

Mr. Cummings: Now they are saying they do not want to wait. Well, Mr. Speaker—[interjection] You see, it is not hard to get their attention.

Mr. Speaker, what interests me is that the Environment critic for the NDP party leased [interjection] Yes. Well, the truth doctor is standing across from me. I will repeat it again. It was on Monday, March 28 at 10:30 a.m. in Room 68B. There was a press conference where a group of activists expressed their very grave concerns

about that operation, concerns which will go to the Clean Environment Commission and will be straightened out at that point. The answers will be supplied or we will find ways of making sure that they are able to comply with appropriate environmental regulation. [interjection] This is no laughing matter inasmuch as I am afraid that if the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) has those concerns, then I would hope that she would come to the House, stand up and ask those questions in the House, not go to the—[interjection]

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

I would like the member for Radisson to come to the House and put those questions so we can answer them here on the record. We do not need to have backdoor politics being played with the future opportunity of the Swan River Valley.

Let us get on with dealing with the questions, because not only that, there are a whole lot of people out there who are trying to play both sides of the issue. Let us at least make sure that the debate is on the facts and not on fiction. Let us take those facts to the Clean Environment Commission and let us put the fiction to bed because the jobs, the opportunity to go with this, either have to be decided that it is a go or that it is a no-go, based on the Clean Environment Commission rulings. Let us stop fearmongering out there and let us talk facts. That is one of the concerns that bothers me the most.

* (1630)

As I look down the list of issues that I expect will continue to be raised in this House around environmental issues, on the one hand, I have the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Edwards) saying that we are not imposing environmental law, we have not fined enough people, we have not put enough people in jail over environmental flagrantcies or environmental abuse. Yet I look at the list where we are now on the verge of releasing, I think, one of the more comprehensive regulatory regimes for control of animal waste in this province, so that we can take the opportunity that hog production should bring to this province.

The central location, the production of feed stocks, the breeding stock that we have, the technical knowledge of the communities that are here, there is a virtual boom of potential in the beef and hog industry.

The low dollar that has now occurred, you could sort of say, the Liberal government, how do you like it so far? Well, the dollar has dropped just about 10 percent. That makes exports worth 10 percent more, and hogs and beef are two of the bigger trade dollar items that we have in this province. If we are going to take an opportunity and look it in the eye, then let us not look away. Let us proceed in a sustainable development manner. Let us make sure that we proceed so that we are regulating the industry so that it cannot damage our environment, but let us not stifle the industry to the point where everyone is saying they do not want it.

When we look at the number of people who are fighting the construction of livestock operations in this province today, then we really do have to look at where we want to take this province. Obviously there is no one requesting to establish large livestock operations inside the Perimeter, but in rural Manitoba, we have to look at where the future of this province is.

We know, with or without the present government's good intentions, that very likely freight assistance to move grains out of this part of the continent is not going to grow and it will in all likelihood shrink. We know, going back to the Trudeau years, that an inflationary factor was tied to the devaluation of the transportation assistance, that it is going to shrink year over year by the rate of inflation till it will ultimately eliminate its net benefit.

So in dealing with this issue, again I am asking the opposition to bring their questions to this forum, bring them to this House. Let us debate the facts. Let us not allow the industry to be riddled with innuendo, with false information and with fear.

That is the concern that I bring to this House today in terms of development of some of our

opportunities that are associated with use of natural resources, whether it be farm land or whether it be some of the cutting rights that are under debate or whether it be water rights. Let us debate the facts. Let us question the information. Let us make sure the information is adequate. Let us make sure that the information is verifiable, and then let us allow the decision-making process to proceed without fear being put into the hearts of those who have not necessarily had access to the information.

I think that there is no greater potential for misunderstanding than some of the issues that have been raised obliquely sometimes but, unfortunately, with considerable impact I would suggest, when we talk about some of the issues that surround the Ayerst plant and the PMU operations that feed that plant.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I do not think there is anyone here or anyone who would want to be quoted on the record who would in any way not have an abhorrent view of any kind of mistreatment of livestock. One of the first premises of livestock husbandry is that if animals are cared for properly, if they are treated with respect in the manner in which they are housed, that they are given adequate health protection, that they are not allowed to have their health deteriorate because of the premises they are being kept in, that those are the only situations where livestock production is profitable. Mr. Acting Speaker, if anyone would contradict that then I would suggest that they have never had the opportunity to work and earn their living from working with livestock.

I suppose this is very much of a rural issue in many respects, but the problem is that if misinformation is put on the record or misinformation is presented, or if unsubstantiated fears are raised, then it becomes an urban issue as well. As I said, no one in their right mind would support or agree with any kind of mistreatment of livestock. That is an issue that because of the large amount of livestock production that contributes to the economy of this province, it is an issue that

everyone in this House, regardless of their political stripe, is going to have to deal with.

Again, I would challenge the members on all sides of this House to bring forward the facts, deal with the issues straightforwardly and bring the facts to this Assembly so they can be debated. It is important that we understand the ramifications and the importance in many cases that the public places on statements that are made by members of this Legislature. We are expected to be responsible in the presentation of our statements.

Mr. Acting Speaker, there are a number of the environment-related issues that I have touched on. All of these issues need to be dealt with with integrity and with all of the facts on the table. The issues need to be debated so that a proper compromise in some cases or certainly a suitable solution can be put forward where issues are in some cases unanswered. That is a challenge for this House because those are some of the issues that will be debated. They will be debated because of the initiatives that are before us and because of some of the opposition that is being expressed to certain activities that are contemplated in rural Manitoba. That does not mean that there are not a number of environmental issues within the city of Winnipeg and issues that spill out across the entire province.

* (1640)

Mr. Acting Speaker, I will only spend a minute touching on the issue of recycling, because rightfully there have been questions asked from time to time on how quickly will the recycling program that was proposed last summer start to kick in. As the debate has gone forward, every time there is a decision to be made, that debate has been slowed down because that decision has to be related back to a national program that hopefully will be implemented across the country.

As we slug forward, we are going to be questioned constantly on that basis, but we are very close to a decision point. That decision point will be driven by a number of items, but most importantly the agenda of the province in terms of getting the agreement in place between the

responsible corporations that will be funding the recycling efforts, those that are producing recyclables and adding waste to the waste stream. Mr. Acting Speaker, it will also depend on the type of relationship that can be reached with the City of Winnipeg and with other municipalities.

Mr. Acting Speaker, in the end it will be the regulations that the government will impose that will drive the recycling program that will unfold this summer. I look forward to the support actually from the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) when those regulations are published. I am sure he will stand up on a motion of support in order to get this program in place, because it will in fact be seen as an initiative that will probably set a new direction for recycling and will be observed very closely from a number of other jurisdictions.

I could touch on a couple of other matters, and I heard the member for Flin Flon—I think he just mentioned the family issues again, and certainly the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) raised it earlier. I take some considerable umbrage when it is mentioned that along with educational matters and justice matters and family matters, Year of the Family issues are all rolled together and it is said that justice is not necessarily part of that equation.

Mr. Acting Speaker, this morning at the MAUM meeting in Brandon, I had the opportunity to point out that the Public Insurance Corporation, the automobile insurance corporation, will be looking at further opportunities to deal with the loss of property, the vandalism and the claims that can be assessed against that. If they are in fact juveniles that are involved, and their involvement can be proven, the corporation does have the opportunity to pursue those dollars. In the pursuit of those dollars, when young people reach the age of sixteen and are looking for a driver's licence, they can in fact be denied their driver's licence until they have cleared their debt off with the corporation.

Mr. Acting Speaker, that is a tough enforcement position, but at the convention this morning, I can tell you that was the one issue that was quite warmly received by the delegates. It does demonstrate a broad feeling in the public that

issues of freedom are important, but freedom is also tempered by justice, and justice unfortunately has not been seen always to have been done where people have had to deal with extreme vandalism.

Mr. Acting Speaker, those are the kinds of issues that when our Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) talks about the initiatives that will be taken in this province and that were mentioned in the throne speech, it points out very clearly a direction that I believe the public is, in some respects, a good distance ahead of us in their thinking.

I could encourage the members opposite, particularly the Liberal caucus, to talk to their colleagues in Ottawa and encourage them to deal as expeditiously as possible with the Young Offenders Act, because there are many people who still see that as an issue that needs to be settled and needs to be dealt with, because there is a great division of opinion on whether or not that is the appropriate way to deal with the young offenders in this province.

Mr. Acting Speaker, this is the Year of the Family. Our government has committed itself and it can be shown year over year where the support to the family and to the community has in fact grown through health, social services and education.

Mr. Acting Speaker, as I wrap up my comments I would only put it in this context—and the Romanow budget in fact pointed out these figures. I would encourage the members opposite to jot these down because it is an important watermark by which to judge a government. Manitoba is virtually the cheapest place in Canada to live, the least costly place to live in Canada if your income is under \$25,000. When they talk about an appropriate cost-of-living structure and tax structure to support those who are least able to support themselves, that is a good watermark to look at. Conversely and supportive to that is, if your income is in excess of \$50,000 a year, it is the fourth lowest place in the country in which to live and raise a family.

Mr. Acting Speaker, those are the kind of watermarks by which I am proud to have our government judged. Thank you.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Acting Speaker, I want to begin by welcoming our five new colleagues to the Legislature. I want to welcome the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski), the member for Osborne (Ms. McCormick), the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson), the member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg) and the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh).

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

I hope that the last week, few days, almost a week now of debate have not frightened them off of their duties and their responsibilities as MLAs. I am certain that all five of them were a little despondent after reading the throne speech. There was very little in it, but I am sure that they will get over it. I am sure that their spirits will pick up as they have the opportunity to join the debate.

I want to begin, I guess, by welcoming as well the Speaker (Mr. Rocan) back in his role as the emotional and spiritual leader in this Chamber. I was just shown the words of the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) about the role of the Speaker, and the member for Lakeside was asking forgiveness for his transgressions.

I, like the member for Lakeside, would like to apologize for any past transgressions and assure you that none of that was intended to impugn any shortcomings on your part. It was all my wrongdoing, and I pledge to redeem myself by better behaviour this particular session, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Sounds like your swan song.

Mr. Storie: The member for Inkster says it is my swan song. I have not resigned my seat as MLA for Flin Flon yet, and I intend to participate as fully in the debate as ever in this Chamber. The member for Emerson, Steinbach—I could never get that right—the member for Steinbach (Mr. Driedger) says that I am going to resign after I give my speech. I will be resigning after I give a speech, but it will not be this one, so you can wait for that.

I usually begin by commenting on the throne speech and the relative merits of the throne speech.

This is our seventh throne speech, and all that is left is the cover page at this point. That is actually the meat. It says right on it, throne speech. That is pretty much as much meat as we got in this particular document. Mr. Speaker, I was sort of reviewing the promises that were made in the throne speech, reviewing the language which is always an indication of the state of the government's enthusiasm.

* (1650)

Mr. Speaker, the word "continue" or "continuing" with respect to government programs, government initiatives, appears in virtually every paragraph in the throne speech. Now what that tells you, if the government is saying, we continue this initiative and continue that as an issue and continue this program, is that they have no new ideas. We on this side, I think mostly Democrats, at least are not surprised that the government has no new ideas. They have only had one new idea and that was in 1988, and since that it has been pretty much a rehash of everything that has been tried by every discredited Conservative government in the western world.

There are very few new and innovative things in this throne speech. There are a couple of new initiatives, and I want to commend the government for those. I think that what they have done is attempt to usurp some of the imagination from other throne speeches that have already been tabled across the country, but it is very limited. But what it is, what this throne speech really reminds me of is that we are on the eve of an election, and I remember the member for Steinbach (Mr. Driedger), who used to sit in this particular seat behind me, reminding us when we were government about the precarious nature of power. The power resides with the government only for so long, and it resides with the government only so long as it commands some sort of moral authority. The moral authority that this government may have had when it got its majority in September of 1990 has slowly but surely been stripped away.

The credibility that the Premier had as the Leader of the government, that he had in 1990, following on the heels of the Meech Lake debacle,

accord, whatever we want to call it, has slowly but surely ebbed away. We are left today with a Leader of a government that has no imagination, no energy, no initiative and no credibility. Absolutely true. There are reasons for that.

Mr. Speaker, as the member for Steinbach (Mr. Driedger) reminded us when we were in government, that governments do not win elections, they lose them. This government time after time over the last three and a half, going on to four years has made a series of mistakes. It has compounded mistakes with additional mistakes and with denial when the people of Manitoba wanted the truth and wanted the government to be straightforward and they wanted them to respond more directly to their needs.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I say this throne speech is a good indication of the state of mind of the government, because this throne speech is really a repudiation of everything this government said it was going to accomplish beginning with its first throne speech after the majority government was elected in 1990. I want to begin by talking about a few of the promises, the new thread that the government has sewn into its throne speech that announced quite clearly to anyone who wants to read this that the government is, in fact, changing direction dramatically, that what they said was impossible is now possible. What they said they would not do, they are now doing. What they have said could not be done now will be done.

Mr. Speaker, that is what this throne speech is about. Let us talk about the first issue. The New Democrats have always believed that public policy and government in particular have a strong role to play in providing leadership both in terms of the economy and also in terms of the services that are delivered to Manitobans. We believe in the role of government, an active, proactive government, a government that believes in doing things, but the government of the day and Mr. Filmon—the Premier, I should say—referenced it, that the government was going to stand aside.

In 1988, when the Premier was the Leader of a minority government, and in 1990, he said that the best response of a government was to stand aside

to let the private sector, the engine of growth take over, to let Manitobans fend for themselves in effect—that is what he said if you read between the lines, but what did the Premier say in the throne speech this session? The throne speech referred to public sector leadership. All of a sudden the government viewed itself as having a role in the planning of our economic future. Suddenly it seems the government is now saying that the government has a role in determining an economic strategy, an economic plan, an economic blueprint somehow for our development.

Mr. Speaker, that is not what the government said five years ago or four years ago or three years ago, and why is the government now suggesting it is going to take a new course? There is only one reason, and the reason is that Manitobans, one by one, community by community, have told this government they are not going to get re-elected unless they change course. So, contrary to what we heard from the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney of the Conservative government—

An Honourable Member: A fine gentleman.

Mr. Storie: Fine gentleman. He has his rightful place in history. He took the Conservative party from a majority government to two seats. He has his rightful place in history. Fine gentleman.

An Honourable Member: But as the phoenix from the ashes they will rise again.

Mr. Storie: Did you say from the ashes, Mr. Speaker? The point I make is that the Premier of this province is about to fulfill the dream of every New Democrat and lead the Progressive Conservatives to exactly the same place as Brian Mulroney led the federal Conservatives. That is where you are going, just so long as it is clear.

Mr. Speaker, we have four times as many seats federally as the Conservative Party, more than four times as many seats.

An Honourable Member: Jerry, at least the federal PC caucus has gender equity.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, it is nice to see the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) now so concerned about gender parity. He is delighted. A

couple of years ago the member for Lakeside did not want to talk about gender parity. He still does not want to talk about pay equity. He still thinks that that is somehow a concept that is foreign to Canadians in Manitoba.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to the issue of public leadership. I for one have on a number of occasions, and the members opposite, the members of the front bench will acknowledge this, commended the government when it made moves that looked like it was going to recognize the role of government in planning and supporting economic development.

When the Premier (Mr. Filmon) announced back in 1991 that he was going to create this new Innovations and Technology Council, I said it was a good idea. He appointed some thirty-five people, finally, outstanding Manitobans, and I acknowledged that they came with credentials that were impeccable. That is fine. But, Mr. Speaker, I said at the time that this body was not a decision-making body. It was a facade. What the government had done is, it eliminated the Manitoba Research Council, it cut its budget by one-third, transferred responsibility to this new body with 35 members.

I said, they will not spend the money, the \$10 million that was set aside in the innovation fund; they will not spend dollar one.

Mr. Speaker, we had an opportunity to meet with Mr. Russ Hood, who is the chairperson of the Economic Innovation and Technology Council not more than a couple of months ago. He acknowledged that he had read my words and my prediction that nothing would be accomplished by that group. I, unlike the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), attended the Economic Innovation forum, which was an absolute sham. It was a fore-ordained, preordained, orchestrated effort on the part of the spin doctors of this government to provide the illusion that the government was consulting or that it believed that it had a role to play in economic development.

Mr. Speaker, it was a wasted day for 400 very important Manitobans, and I have seen the results.

So we have seen flip-flop No. 1. The government was a stand-aside government for the first six years, and now it believes in "public sector leadership." I really wish, and I think most of the Democrats wish, that in fact the government did believe in public sector leadership on economic matters, but it does not. It is a sham and the voters are not going to be convinced. I think that the leopard trying to change its spots at this point in the government's mandate is not necessarily reprehensible; perhaps it is more some sort of attempt at salvation.

* (1700)

Mr. Speaker, I want to deal with the second issue, small business. Here is one that strikes me as so odd from a group that has such support from the Harry Mardons of the world, the chambers of commerce across this province supposedly. When I was Minister of Business Development and Tourism in 1985, I established a task force chaired by Lloyd McGinnis, who was then chair of the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce. Gordon Mitchell, who was the mayor of Flin Flon, or who was later to be, was also the past president of the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce. They were, along with two other individuals, to review the process by which government regulates business in the province.

In 1986, after I had moved on to the Education portfolio, this task force reported. They made some exceptional recommendations for streamlining business regulation in the province.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): What did you do with them?

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) says, what did you do with them? Since 1988, this government has been in office. The question is more appropriately put to them. [interjection] That is right, for about a year and a half. We did begin the process of co-ordinating the accumulation of regulatory efforts in various government departments, but the point is that this government has been in office since 1988 and has

ignored, absolutely ignored the needs of small business.

Mr. Speaker, what do we see the government doing after it realizes that that particular horse is out of the barn? After the New Democratic Party has spent several months discussing this issue with Manitobans, travelling throughout the province, trying to get a sense of what they want us to do, the government announces the creation of this new task force on small business regulation. The government, again, shows some sort of death-bed repentance, acknowledging that they have done nothing for six years. We do not see small business regulation mentioned for six years. Now it is very important.

But I want to talk a bit more about things that are more practical for the average Manitoban. Mr. Speaker, we keep hearing that, and it is quite true, in the last decade the vast majority, some say as high as 80 percent, of the new jobs created in the province, created nationally, come from small business. So we had the Premier (Mr. Filmon) in the throne speech talking about the healthy foundation that has been created for the creation of new jobs in the province of Manitoba. Well, unfortunately, the facts do not support that.

The Premier may feel content to put this kind of rosy rhetoric in the throne speech, but the facts do not support it at all. In fact, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, a group with which this group over here is very familiar, did a survey in January and February of 1994, a survey this winter, of 634 businesses in the province of Manitoba, and 80 percent of them said there was going to be no increase in employment, 80 percent of them. Now we are talking about the small business sector that the government is now apparently so concerned about. Mr. Speaker, 80 percent of them are not going to create any new jobs; 80 percent of them did not see themselves investing new money. So where does the Premier get his information that he puts in the throne speech about the basics, the fundamentals being so healthy?

Never mind the small business sector, what about all of the other economic indicators that tell

us whether in fact there is any strength in our economy? Mr. Speaker—[interjection] No, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. They did a survey of 634 members. The member for Steinbach (Mr. Driedger) wants to refer to polls. If the member for Steinbach is so confident of the polls, then let them screw up their courage and call an election—anytime the member is ready. Although I may not be seeking re-election in Flin Flon, I would put something on the record right here, a New Democrat will be returned in Flin Flon whether you call an election now or six months from now or a year from now.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to put on the record, however, that the real positions—and the member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) talked about putting on the record some facts, the real position of Manitoba's economy. I want members of this Chamber to recognize where we stand relative to the national economy. Now, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) keeps talking about and using statistics selectively to tell us how well we are doing. Well, how well are we doing? Let us look at one of the statistics which tell us how well our small business sector is doing. Retail trade: we are going to see some growth projected in the retail trade in Manitoba, but we are well below, about 20 percent below, the national average. Manufacturing shipments: again, on the part of our economy that is very important, that gives us strength and diversity.

The national growth in manufacturing shipments is almost twice what it is projected to be in Manitoba; the GDP, also below the national average; the average weekly earnings, below the national average; population, capital investment, private investment—

An Honourable Member: Enough of this. You told us you were going to be boring. We did not believe you. You stop this. We want the real Jerry. This is Len Evans' speech, not your speech.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, I am being chastised for putting too much on the record. I know that the unfortunate fact is that statistics are boring. The only thing that matters out of all of this is that the economy that this government has supposedly

been in charge of for the last six years is in disarray.

The consequence of that, of course, is that this province has 60,000 people unemployed, another 100,000 people on welfare of one form or another across this province. The consequence, of course, is despair across the province. The consequence for the government is going to be the demise of the Conservative government in the province of Manitoba. If the government does not have the courage to call an election after this session or next spring, they can wait out their mandate, they can wait till the fall of 1995, but it is not going to change the outcome at all.

I want to move onto another area where the government has shown its complete willingness to flip-flop, its willingness to have no principle. In fact, the more I look at this throne speech, the more it could be a Liberal document. You can really never tell. I always admired that about the Conservative Party, that although I did not always agree with them, at least you could responsibly predict where they may lie on any given issue. When I read this speech it could very well be a Liberal document. They are talking about public sector conversion, the conversion of the Conservatives to the importance of the public sector, the conversion of the Tories in the importance of small business.

Now we have another one, the electronic highway. Here is a government that dismantled the Distance Education and Technology branch, that dismantled the staff, the expertise, that dismantled the InfoTech Centre, which was a consortium of five of North American's largest computer product manufacturers, a consortium, basically dismantled it, basically ignored all of the evidence that the information technology was going to be important in the next decade and dismantled it.

* (1710)

The new conversion, of course, happened this year, the new conversion. Distant education is now a buzzword that members opposite are using, a new conversion.

Mr. Speaker, we now have in the throne speech document a commitment on the part of government to attempt to get people off welfare. This from a government over six years that attacked the only component of the welfare budget which actually moved people off of welfare and gave them some dignity and offered them some hope of supporting themselves. The Student Social Allowances program is probably the best example. All of a sudden the government has this magic conversion. Another example of flip-flop. What could not be done will be done. If that does not foretell of an election in the offing, I do not know what does.

Mr. Speaker, I want to also reference the newfound importance of personal care homes. The former Minister of Health, the much discredited Minister of Health, sits in his chair, and I am sure he had a hand in crafting this particular document. He is now saying how important personal care homes are and the government is going to get on with the very important job of building personal care homes. Since 1988 the Flin Flon personal care home has not moved one stage in the planning process in the Department of Health. [interjection] The minister acknowledges I have a point. Well, unfortunately the government has no point. The government generally has had no point. It has been drift from one issue to another, and this magic conversion, this activist approach to government in 1994 in this particular throne speech, is not going to cut any mustard with any Manitoban whatsoever.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that the government has failed on virtually every task that it has set for itself, virtually every task. We heard the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) today defending his suggestion that the trials that are being experienced in school divisions throughout this province, and basically he said that they were the fault of the school division trustees, the school divisions themselves. Let us face facts. This government, certainly in my remembrance, is the only government in the province of Manitoba that has cut support to public school systems in two consecutive years. To my knowledge, in the

history of this province, that has never happened before, and we have the spectacle of the Minister of Education standing up and saying that none of the cuts, none of the concerns that are being expressed by parents, by students, by teachers, by trustees, are the responsibility of the provincial government.

Mr. Speaker, if you cut funding year after year, if you refuse to accept your responsibility, your role in the provision of educational services, I guess you will look for a scapegoat, and the trustees may be the likely scapegoat and in this case they are.

Health—provision of health care. Mr. Speaker, this is one of the perhaps most amazing conversions where we have the Conservative government, the Conservative government traditionally going back 30 years fought against a universal medicare, who have not supported it, we have the spectacle of this group inviting an American, inviting Connie Curran in to restructure our health care system. If there has been a more politically naive, politically suicidal, politically stupid move on the part of the government, I do not know when that occurred. For the price of \$4 million they undermined every shred of confidence any Manitoban ever had that this particular Conservative government cared about medicare. Mr. Speaker, not to mention the fact that of course the government was too afraid, too reluctant—and I am talking about the former Minister of Health—to admit they have made a political mistake, never mind a practical mistake.

I do not believe for a minute and most Manitobans do not believe that Connie Curran was going to ever offer us any practical advice that would be useful in terms of managing our health care system. But the Minister of Health, whose ego is as big as this Chamber, could not admit that he made a mistake, could not go to his cabinet colleagues and say, I made a mistake, let us bail out of this.

So what happens now? Well, Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Kildonan who has attempted to get the government to at least withhold the last 20 percent that is sitting in a bank account

accumulating funds, instead of doing the right thing and at least trying to salvage some pride as well as a few taxpayer dollars, the government has simply abandoned it and said nothing. I even heard the current Minister of Health attempt to defend Connie Curran's contract.

Mr. Speaker, you know once a fool makes a mistake, at some point it shows some intelligence to admit you made a mistake, but it never occurred to the former Minister of Health and it does not look like it is going to occur to the current Minister of Health to make that acknowledgment to say we made a mistake, to acknowledge the job is not going to be done and, in fact, to acknowledge what Manitobans now know is that very few of Connie Curran's recommendations are implementable or will be sustained in our health care system at all. In fact, we wasted the money and squandered what little public support may have been out there for Conservative-style health care reform.

Mr. Speaker, there will be health care reform, and unlike the Liberals, unlike my colleagues to my left here who absolutely blindly—[interjection] Well, Mr. Speaker, if the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) could read, if he would have picked up the Health Action Plan and read it—[interjection] The member for Inkster could not be more incorrect. It took a very simple reading of that document to recognize there was no plan for reform, there was a plan for health care cuts.

Unfortunately, the previous health care critic who was also a practising physician, who may have been in a conflict, we do not know, the fact of the matter is—[interjection] Mr. Speaker, that is the point I will deal with a little bit later. The point is that the Liberals in 1980 when they first got elected were naive and gullible. In 1990 they were naive and gullible. They have not progressed at all since the 1988 election. In fact, today was the first time—and give the new Liberal leader some credit—the new Liberal leader did acknowledge the fact that there were some shortcomings in the Health Action Plan.

Manitobans know who is going to defend medicare. Manitobans know who can, because of their philosophical commitment, manage the

change that is required in our health care system. That will be an issue in an election, and the words of Gulzar Cheema, the former Health critic, will come back to haunt the Liberal Party, because the Liberals bought hook, line and sinker the Health Action Plan, and they have been remarkably silent on the decision of the government to hire Connie Curran. In fact, I do not know that I have ever heard them stand in this House and repudiate that contract, not once. So they have no credibility on this issue.

You know, when it comes to the Liberals, they are going to have less and less credibility in this Chamber, less and less credibility. Well, the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) touched on it just briefly when there was a little bit of political manipulation in the selection of a site for the NAFTA environment centre. Where were the Liberals, where was the Liberal Leader, where were any of the Liberals with a conscience, any of them with a conscience? Where were they when the Liberals decided to reduce the taxes on cigarettes? Where were they when the Liberals are going to undermine everything we have done in this country for the past 35 years to suppress and to stop young people smoking in this country? Where were they going? Did they have anything concrete? Did they have anything intelligent to say on the issue? No, Mr. Speaker. I wrote to Mr. Chrétien. I personally wrote to Mr. Chrétien and said I had never seen any more cowardly act than the Liberal government's capitulating to smugglers and the government of Quebec.

* (1720)

An Honourable Member: What is Bob Rae doing?

Mr. Storie: I do not care what Bob Rae does.

But I will tell you one thing. Bob Rae did not initiate this idea. Bob Rae did not initiate this and Bob Rae knows what the consequences are going to be. Bob Rae has spoken his mind on this, but I have not seen any Liberals speak their mind. Do they have a conscience? It is a question we will have to answer in another chapter.

Mr. Speaker, that is only the beginning. When I just casually suggested that the throne speech we just read could have been written by Liberals, I was also thinking about the unemployed in this province. There is no reference to the 60,000 people, who are unemployed, in the throne speech, but as soon as we elected a federal government Liberally, as soon as we got the federal government elected, you would be convinced that the 1.5 million who are unemployed disappeared as well.

What is the first thing that the Liberal government federally did? What is the first thing that the Liberal government did federally to deal with the problem of the unemployed? Well, what it did, it blamed the victim. What did Liberal Lloyd do? What was his first act in the big chair when he had a chance to deal with the fact that 1.5 million were unemployed? He attacked the unemployed. He reduced the benefits for those people who were eligible to collect. He increased the length of time it took someone to be eligible, and he reduced the benefits on top of that.

Does that sound like a government with a conscience? It sounds like the same government that made the decision on reducing the taxes on cigarettes—no conscience whatsoever. Mr. Speaker, how much time to I have left?

Mr. Speaker: Not much. Five minutes.

Mr. Storie: As it turns out, just enough time. Mr. Speaker, I want to also reference something else that causes me some concern, and it relates to actually the First Minister's (Mr. Filmon) nonpolitical statement today. We talked briefly in this Chamber earlier about the vision that was required when we built the aqueduct into the city of Winnipeg, the vision that was required.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say, I share my concern with my northern colleagues who were wrongly accused of not supporting and defending and providing support to our communities in northern Manitoba to take advantage of the infrastructure program. That is totally false, and for the Premier to make that suggestion is unfortunate.

What I want to suggest is that when this infrastructure program was first announced, I wanted to believe that the government both federally and provincially and the municipal governments and those officials who were involved in the selection process would have taken the opportunity to do that visionary thing, to think about the long term.

There is one aspect of the infrastructure program that I think has some element of that vision in it, and that is the rural gasification program. I think members opposite will know that one of the promises that was made in 1987 when we considered for some time to take over Centra Gas was the prospect of rural gasification, and I remember the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) was the only one who was then on the opposition side who showed some courage and stood up and said, that is not a bad idea.

The member for Lakeside has a socialist streak in him. It is not very wide, but once in a while it shows, and I commend him for that, because it does show some elements of vision which are greater than just the next election.

But I want to say that we have missed an opportunity, and I do not just mean in terms of developing the infrastructure in the North, but I think it is a sacrilege that we would spend \$1 million on an indoor pool in Southport when there are whole communities in northern Manitoba that do not have water and sewer, that do not have an adequate water treatment system.

Mr. Speaker, there is something that is lacking in that kind of decision making. Now, I know that there are many, many projects out there in smaller communities that certainly from some perspective could be supported, although I question the indoor pool and I question 1,600 feet of sidewalk. That is not what we need, that is not taking the long view, that is not looking at infrastructure that is going to be over the long term of benefit to the province. It may be needed, but it is not implementing the program the way it could have been implemented. Now we get to another project that the government has not announced but we anticipate, and that is the spending of some of that resource, some of those

infrastructure funds on this new information highway.

Well, I was the Minister of Education and was responsible for creating the Distance Education and Technology branch, who believed in 1987 that the future was going to involve communication, two-way communication, interactive communication between centres throughout Manitoba, that that was the wave of the future. But I challenge the government to be somewhat visionary when it comes to investing our dollars and dollars out of this program in the Distance Education and Technology program, Mr. Speaker, and I want to caution them to begin with that one of the fundamentals that has to be in place before they begin this process is the question of who is going to own the information highway.

We have the beginning of the information highway within the Manitoba Telephone System. What we do not need in this province is a piecemeal approach to developing this highway. We do not need Cantel and Unitel and AT&T and others involved in the development of this highway. If we are going to invest infrastructure dollars in this highway it better be a public highway the same way as our Trans-Canada is and our national railways. This infrastructure, even though it is the next generation of infrastructure, had better belong to the public highway.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): We tried that in Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) may be losing that visionary thing. I hope not. I still believe that we have to have some way of controlling and regulating access or it is going to become a service that is available to a few. We have to remember that this infrastructure—[interjection] I did not say that. That is the problem. I said, it should not be piecemeal.

The point I am making is, unless that is done the residents who live in northern Manitoba and the communities that I have represented for 13 years are going to be left out. If they are not left out, they are going to be faced with servicing costs that are

insurmountable. Mr. Speaker, we have a public telephone system and, because we have a public telephone system, the cost of basic telephone service is uniform throughout the province. That is what we want to happen on the information highway, and if that does not happen we will have failed again and we will have failed with an opportunity to spend those taxpayers' dollars that we intend to spend on this particular infrastructure program. We will have spent them unwisely. So there is some advice on that.

An Honourable Member: What about your future, Jerry? We have yet to hear about your future.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, I will make my future known in the fullness of time. As a former Canadian leader once said, thank you for the time.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by welcoming you back, Sir, to your position as Speaker, and—

An Honourable Member: Were you away, Mr. Speaker?

Mrs. McIntosh: I know you were not away in that sense of the word, but we are pleased to see that you continue in your Chair. I know that the honourable member opposite has indicated he does not like to see us continuing in our good efforts, but I am sure that is one he will agree on.

Before I begin my remarks on the throne speech itself, Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few comments about the process we are going through right now in this Chamber. It is an unfortunate truth that in our system we have devolved into a system that seems to foster animosity, bitterness and in fact on some occasions intense dislike bordering on hatred for the other parties.

* (1730)

I say, that is very unfortunate. We have an adversarial system, and there is logic behind the reason for having an adversarial system in that we always will ensure in that sense that we have a critic, we have an evaluator, we have a devil's advocate to examine the things that are coming out of the government, to seek out things that could be

improved or a different angle that could be taken to approach a decision or a different ideological perspective on how to get to an end.

One of the previous speakers said that there is no ideology that would say that they do not want to see a community safe. So we all would have a common goal in that sense. How to arrive at keeping a community safe, we might decide to arrive at that goal through different routes. So it is important that we have these different perspectives able to be brought forward and the close scrutiny that is essential to a democratic system. In some countries people are not allowed to criticize the government, and that would be a terrible thing. We would never want to see that happen in Canada, which is a free country.

Unfortunately, along with free speech often comes a bad side effect. I am not talking about the Chamber specifically now, but we have seen out in the world beyond this Chamber where people will under the guise of free speech slander, libel, promote hatred, genocide, a number of very negative things under the guise of free speech. So we have to be very careful when we exercise our freedom and exercise our responsibilities that we do not tread over the line the wrong way.

I mention that only because we have had in this Chamber one instance that I am familiar with where there was an opposition member whom I had the privilege to work with who actually worked in a cooperative, constructive way with a government member on this side. I believe that something very good happened as a result for the people that benefited from the results of that dialogue and that decision. Not only did they benefit, but they benefited very quickly, because the usual rough and tumble, insulting and bickering did not occur around that specific instance.

I am not saying I am naive enough to think that that would happen all the time, but I am saying what everybody acknowledges, and that is that the opposition sometimes feels, rightly or wrongly, that in their roles as critics they can only criticize in a negative fashion and that they do not dare offer criticism of a constructive or positive kind for fear

that it would reflect badly on them and hurt their electoral chances. That is reality. We all know it.

But, Mr. Speaker, one thing that does trouble me—and I saw today the children from Lindenwoods School sitting in the gallery. Later this week I will have children from one of my schools sitting in the gallery. We meet with the children after, and one of the first questions they invariably ask is, why do all the ladies and gentlemen yell at each other all the time? My reply in the beginning was defensive, and now my reply is because we do not have the good manners that you children have. We do not follow the same rules of courtesy and politeness that you are required to follow in your schools.

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

It does not mean we do not like each other. If truth be known, one on one, some of us have actually made friends with individuals in other parties, but the minute the cameras come in and the minute the microphones go on and the minute Hansard is recording, we can never be positive or constructive about each other's moves and each other's positions on issues. I think it is a shame.

Mr. Ashton: That is not true.

Mrs. McIntosh: The member for Thompson says, that is not true, and the member for Thompson will recall the one instance, I think, that I was referring to earlier where we had a co-operative venture which I think benefited both the opposition and the government but, most importantly, the people of Manitoba. I liked that. I would like to see more of that, but I think the member for Thompson will agree with me that, unfortunately, it is not always the norm. And it would probably be the same if we were on the other side of the House. I am not quarreling with that.

I just say that, Mr. Acting Speaker, because I am about to say some positive things about this throne speech in the light of a whole series of negative things I have heard. I cannot feel in my heart that all the negative comments that have been made by the opposition are truly felt deep in their hearts by each member that has spoken. I think that there is a

tendency to feel that they have to play a role and that this is a theatre we are in. It is a theatre of sorts.

I think that is very fair. I think it is a reflection of reality. It is not a condemning statement; it is just a recognition of the way things are. And I regret it, because one of the things that I was taught growing up, as many families are taught growing up, was to be very, very grateful for this country in which we live. We travelled extensively as children, my sister and I, lived in many other lands and saw the way many other countries function. One thing that was always important to us was that this place where we were born and this place where we can live is free. It should be cherished, and it should be nurtured, and we should do everything we can to make sure that every day this place becomes better and better for the people who live here.

I am trying to do that in my role as one of the members of the party that happens to be governing this province at this time. I have certain philosophical beliefs, and I hold them very deeply, and I believe in them very strongly. I have done some studying and observing of things that have happened in the past and things that are happening elsewhere, and I do believe that we are on the right track. I do believe that we need to stay that course.

One of the members was indicating concern that we said we were continuing in a direction. I am saying that I feel it is good that we are continuing in a direction. One of those directions has been to try to foster investment and growth in this province through holding taxation down. That has been very, very important, and I think we are seeing good results from that. I will not go through the list, but members here know the areas where new jobs have been created and members here know the kinds of response we have had to the fact that it is one of the best places in North America to conduct business. That has been said by experts not only outside of this Chamber, but outside of this province. That has been said by people who are moving here. We wish to continue in that vein because we feel it is important, and I believe the throne speech outlines some of the areas that we

intend to follow and continue working in to ensure that those good things do happen in Manitoba.

We ask for and hope that we can receive from our colleagues who have been elected by their constituents in the seats opposite—we hope that we can count on their co-operation for those things that in their hearts they can support, regardless of our differing partisan positions, and that we will not feel forced or obliged simply because we are different parties to always, always be at odds with each other.

We can legitimately talk about issues. I have no problem at all with members opposite pointing out issues with which they disagree and the way in which they would do them if they were on this side of the room.

My only problem is that from time to time I will hear the criticism of the issue but with no alternative suggestion. I will hear a comment that we do not like it that you are doing this or we do not like it that you are doing that, but there is nothing that goes along with it that says you should be doing it this way. Or we will hear contradictory statements that say in the same breath: you should increase services and lower taxes; you should help small business and raise the minimum wage. You should do this and at the same time implement a contradictory policy that will make this impossible to achieve, so you cannot have it all. It is not possible.

Members opposite who have sat on this side of the House in the past know that you cannot cut it both ways, you cannot be both up and down, you cannot be both left and right, you cannot be both free spending and watching the expenditures. You have to have a direction, and you have to go towards your goal and be consistent.

* (1740)

I would like to respond to a couple of the comments that have been made about some of the government initiatives and just correct a couple of things that I have heard said that I believe do need correcting. I believe it was the Leader of the official opposition who was concerned in his comments on the throne speech about the war on

drugs and indicated that no action had been taken as a result of the war on drugs. The minister who at the time was chair of the task force on war on drugs indicated that the opposition members who felt that way should talk to the various ministries about what they have done about the war on drugs.

She did not mention me, but I can tell you, and I think I should tell you, that last year I was Minister responsible for the Liquor Control Act, and we did several things that were a direct and absolute outflow out of the war on drugs. We brought in liquor control amendments to tighten up abuses for underage drinkers; we made penalties with major offences for people who serve minors; we made it a major offence to use a false ID and to lend an ID for falsifying the purchase of liquor based on age; we made hotel owners responsible not only for the inebriated people within their premises but also on their parking lots.

We did a number of things in that act in response to presentations that had been made to the war on drugs committee. That is just one small act, but I think if you talk to Ministers of Education who have programs now on drug and alcohol abuse, if you talk to the justice system, if you talk to Minister of Family Services about all the initiatives we put in because of that particular task force that you would not be able to say with any degree of accuracy that we have not responded or taken action on the war on drugs, and I would encourage you to do that.

I suppose we could come out and make big fancy announcements about all these things; we have just gone and done them. We assume that you are watching what we do. The liquor debate was well attended; a lot of people spoke on those particular amendments; and it was said in that debate that these were a response to the war on drugs. So I just mention that as one little thing when statements are made, as they frequently are, to score a point or try to make the government look bad. There should be a little research done first to make sure they are accurate statements and not just ones that can float in the air, be heard one day, and the response the next day not be picked up.

I know that there is sometimes a desire to ask a question in such a way that no matter what the answer is, the question will get the headlines and the headlines will condemn. It is called being damned by the question; it is a very good technique that is used in a lot of circles to discredit other people. I say good; by that, I mean effective. I do not necessarily mean good in the sense of good versus bad, but effective. It is an effective technique.

The knowledgeable observer recognizes the damning-by-the-question technique and deplors it. The innocent observer is often taken in by such questions and that is unfortunate, but I believe that truth rises at the top like oil rises to the top on water. Eventually, if we continue—and I use again the word “continue” because I think we have to continue and be consistent—if we continue in our direction that that oil rising to the top will be noticed by people and the truth will eventually triumph and not rumour and not innuendo and not questions that damn by virtue of being put, regardless of what the answer happens to be.

I would also like to point out some inconsistencies in the approaches being used to some of these replies to the throne speech. I think it is important to point out because if we want to achieve credibility as politicians as a group—I am not talking now about politicians on this side of the House—as a group, you will often hear members of the public say, well, politicians have no credibility. We do not believe anything politicians say. You are saying that you sound just like a politician. Why do politicians have no credibility?

Politicians have no credibility when they are so focused in on the destroying the integrity of the party that is not theirs that they ignore issues. The people are not stupid; the people are clever. The people can spot that, and they do not like it. It eventually backfires on the person who does it. I think when you try to make your point so vehemently that you forget what you said before you really do yourself into trouble. The Leader of the second opposition party, for example—and I do not know whether he realizes he did this; I do

not think he realizes he did this—in his remarks he did two things.

First, he condemned the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) for the forum she had on youth violence and the actions that would come out of that with the wilderness camps, the boot camps, whatever terminology people wish to use to describe putting the children into a disciplined situation and having them learn work ethics and value systems and discipline. So he criticized her for doing that, and knowing, of course, she had done that as a result of the forum she had called where the people came in. She said, I will listen to you. Tell me what you think we should do and, insofar as I am able, I will do what you, the people, want.

Five hundred, first come, first served. There was no preselection or anything of that sort. Those people said, first and foremost, we need camps of this sort. Take the children out of this bad peer group situation they are in, teach them to work, teach them values, teach them discipline, teach them their scholarly work and so on. So we are doing that.

That is fine if the Leader of the second opposition party disagrees with that; he has every right to say so. I have no problem with that. But later on he said that the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) was having a forum, and he hoped that the Minister of Education would not just make this a PR exercise but that he would actually listen to the people and try, insofar as possible, to do what the people wanted.

What I am trying to say is, you cannot have it both ways. If he does not want the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) to listen to the people who have come before him, then how can he say he wants the Minister of Education to listen to the people who come before him? It is an inconsistent message. Those kinds of inconsistent messages take away from our credibility as a group because they come across as just trying to make points, to discredit as opposed to seriously trying to get at the root of an issue, which we can do together as a group. You can tell us what you think is wrong without always, always trying to destroy.

I know why it is there. I know why the system operates that way. I am just saying, I do not like it. I think it is ultimately counterproductive.

There was also a comment made about that meeting being at Sturgeon Creek School. That is sort of a snotty little comment in a way. I do not know why it is at Sturgeon Creek School. I am very glad it is, because it is not far from where I live. I can get there easily. So I am pleased about that.

I also should indicate that Sturgeon Creek School has an incredibly, incredibly large auditorium. It is on a main bus route. It has an enormous parking lot. It has incredibly good acoustics and sound equipment. It is a place that a lot of people rent to hold public meetings because it is a very good auditorium and easily accessible from a lot of places in the city. So maybe that was the reason it was chosen. I do not know. I thought the implication in there somehow made it seem like it was a nasty choice.

Maybe these are small things. I am trying to point out that if we are petty in here, we downgrade everything we do as MLAs, and we are not representing our people the way I think they want to be represented.

I just want to make those few comments. I believe that some of the initiatives in the throne speech will be to the best benefit of Manitobans. I am pleased that we are staying the course. I like the environmental things that are included in the throne speech. I think anybody who reads them would like them.

The Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) has worked very hard in his tenure. He is one of the most respected Environment ministers in this nation, and I think even opposition critics will acknowledge that they have heard from their counterparts in other provinces that the Environment minister in Manitoba is highly respected for his integrity and his caring about the environment. I am pleased to see that these initiatives are ongoing.

*(1750)

I was very disappointed when we did not get the office here that we had maybe naively, nonetheless genuinely, expected to see come here. I understand that there were other pressures on the federal government that perhaps led them to select another site. I think there is one thing that is important to note, and that is that Winnipeg's air access is superior to Montreal's from Mexico and much of the United States of America. We have 210 connecting flights per week to Mexico City compared to 29 from Montreal. Since that was cited as one of the main reasons for us not getting the office here, I think it is important to point out the difference in those numbers of flights.

I think it is also important to indicate that having a consulate or a trade mission here, putting that forward as a reason, was not a good thing to say because the senior Mexican officials Manitoba was dealing with said that simply was not a factor and was not a problem. Those were the only two reasons given. Certainly Montreal's record on clean environment cannot come close anywhere to Manitoba's. We have all of the other environmental initiatives going on in Manitoba in a way that should have led it to be the place that office came.

So we are very, very disappointed about that. I know that some here have said—

Mr. Ashton: It sounds pretty critical.

Mrs. McIntosh: I think it is. The member for Thompson says it sounds pretty critical and I know that he means that. I am pleased that he agrees with me on that, because it is not just that office with 30 jobs that would have come with it. It is the kind of industry we have been going after for many years. We have set targets on certain types of industries for Manitoba: environmental, pharmaceutical, clean technologies, aerospace industry. Those industries we have been working to build and develop in Manitoba, and we have had a great deal of success. To lose this particular office is to do exactly what Paul Martin said it would do is to lose all of the side things that that office would attract.

Montreal, as the federal minister has said, will now become the hub. That same thing happened

when the Air Canada office was taken out of Winnipeg 20-some-odd years ago, taken out and moved to Montreal. Montreal became the hub. When we have this wonderful time zone, two hours to the West, two hours to the East, we are on the straight north-south line down to Mexico and all of the intervening cities, it seems incredible to me that we would lose that opportunity to have that hub here with all of the things we have done and to not only have those 30 jobs, but to have the future side things that would have come along with that as we grew and became more aware in sustainable development. So it is I think a very important issue.

We traditionally do not scream and stamp and whine and yell. On this one we are very, very disappointed and we felt we had to say that we were.

I look at the NDP across the way and I say to them as they have said to us a little earlier—I think the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) indicated that governments come and go, and indeed they do. That government came and went. With all due respect, because I know there were lot of good intentions in the spending that went on and some good initiatives in the spending that went on. But there was a tremendous amount of spending that went on. Between the years of 1981 and 1987, the debt in Manitoba doubled. It doubled. Because it did, the interest on that debt and all of the other things that go with it are left for this government to come in and deal with. That means if you know anything about compounding interest, and I would hope by now that you do, that there is not as much money left to spend on initiatives as we would like. I believe that right across this country you are seeing governments face that situation in every province and, indeed, in the federal government.

In the last two decades governments of every stripe, and I do not care if they were socialist or capitalist or something in between, went through a period of excessive spending, high borrowing and a lot of mismanagement. Governments today everywhere across the country are coping with the results of that.

The Leader of the official opposition said he wanted us to be like Saskatchewan and British Columbia in terms of our health care. Saskatchewan is closing 52 hospitals. British Columbia is closing a major hospital, an urban major hospital, and doing a number of things that the opposition would claim if we were doing them would be draconian. They are doing those things. Why? Because they want to hurt patients? Because they do not have the money, and they will all tell you that they do not have the money because of the spending that went on in the years of the '70s and '80s.

The federal government is facing the same thing. They are having a terrible time getting control of the deficit. There is a big irony there, because if you look at the spending patterns and you look at what happened federally, they may be now in a position where they are now having to cope with the fruits of their own mismanagement. When the current Prime Minister was Finance minister under Pierre Trudeau was when a lot of our problems with finances came into being.

I note in the paper on Saturday a very disturbing article saying that Moody's put the foreign currency debt rating of Canada on review for a possible downgrade on Friday. That is a very, very serious article, buried of course, because it was in the Free Press and the federal government happens to be Liberal right now, in a fairly nondescript part of the paper, but nonetheless a very disturbing news story.

I know that it is difficult for federal Finance ministers. It is difficult for the current Finance minister. He made a little slip. He said something he should not have said, and as a result a lot of people were scurrying around trying to reassure the international money market that it will be all right. I hope that it will be.

We see our dollar going down. We see our interest rates going up. We see our young people who were hoping to buy houses now seeing those starter homes becoming out of their reach. That is a big problem, it is a big worry, and it should concern us all because as the federal government suffers, as our neighbours in Ontario are suffering,

we will see problems occurring to us because of that.

So our policies and our directions, while filled with hope and optimism and good direction, still have to take into account that whole setting that we are in. We have to build independence and strength. We have to build initiative. We have to get into industries and areas that are new, that are on the cutting edge, that will sustain themselves, that will not be dependent on government for their existence, but that will be strong enough to thrive on their own. We need to encourage business not discourage business, because business will create the jobs that we need our young people to have, our neighbours to have, our friends to have, and the current unemployed people to have.

We have been making good progress in that, regardless of what members opposite want to say. The statistics are there to show that we have very good growth in this area and we are expected to continue to do well in terms of our investment in Manitoba, in terms of our business expansion, and in terms of the numbers of people who are coming on stream in terms of employment.

I heard recently that one of the good news items that has happened is that more people have registered now seeking employment. People who

never showed up in statistics as unemployed before because they were just sitting at home not looking for work are now out looking for work. They are now being counted as amongst the unemployed because they now have enough optimism to be out there seeking a job and letting people know they are available for the workforce. That, along with our welfare-to-work initiative, with the work we are doing on the infrastructure, and I commend the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey) who for many years has been promoting the expansion of natural gas in Manitoba, for pushing on that initiative. I commend our colleagues in the federal government for accepting that as a project and for working with us to see that that comes to reality.

There are some good partnerships that are emerging between different levels of government and that is hopeful—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Minister of Urban Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) will have eight minutes remaining.

The hour now being 6 p.m., this House now stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m. (Wednesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 12, 1994

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