



Second Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(Hansard)**

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The Honourable Louise M. Dacquay
Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

<u>Name</u>	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Party</u>
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise, Hon.	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary	Concordia	N.D.P.
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	P.C.
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	N.D.P.
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	P.C.
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	P.C.
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane	Osborne	N.D.P.
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	P.C.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn	St. James	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	P.C.
NEWMAN, David	Riel	P.C.
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
RADCLIFFE, Mike	River Heights	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack, Hon.	Niakwa	P.C.
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Gladstone	P.C.
SALE, Tim	Crescentwood	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin	N.D.P.
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	P.C.
TOEWS, Vic, Hon.	Rossmere	P.C.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 9, 1996

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Retention of Hogs Single-Desk Selling

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Edward Barrow, Ethel Brown, Leo Spitzke and others requesting that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) consider reversing his decision and retain a system of orderly marketing for hogs in Manitoba under Manitoba Pork.

Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Kyle Foster, Scott Sigvalaason, David Jacobson and others requesting that the Minister of Agriculture consider reversing his decision and retain a system for orderly marketing of hogs in Manitoba under Manitoba Pork.

Licensed Practical Nurses

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Alanna Hardy, Kristin Cornock, Gwen Kindzierski and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to recognize the value of LPNs and to consider reversing the decision to cut LPNs in Manitoba.

Home Care Services

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Meta Kreiner, Evelyn Majzels, Kathryn Stenler and others requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to reconsider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Stuart Gustafson, Grace Gustafson, A.T. Flexman and others requesting the

Premier and the Minister of Health to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Svava Arnason, Arlene Lindal, Harold Lindal and others requesting the Premier and the Minister of Health to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of John Hardy, D. Dasilva, F. Anania and others requesting the Premier and the Minister of Health to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Retention of Hogs Single-Desk Selling

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Yes? The Clerk will read.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS the provincial government announced its intention to move to an open marketing system for hogs in Manitoba without consulting producers as it promised during the last election; and

WHEREAS a majority of hog producers support single-desk selling under Manitoba Pork, the marketing board; and

WHEREAS the hog industry in Manitoba has doubled

under an orderly marketing system; and

WHEREAS processors who will contribute to Manitoba's value-added industry have publicly expressed their preference for orderly marketing because it is easier to deal with one agent rather than 2,300 producers.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Minister of Agriculture consider reversing his decision and retain a system for orderly marketing of hogs in Manitoba under Manitoba Pork.

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Yes. The Clerk will read.

Mr. Clerk: The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS the provincial government announced its intention to move to an open marketing system for hogs in Manitoba without consulting producers as it promised during the last election; and

WHEREAS a majority of hog producers support single-desk selling under Manitoba Pork, the marketing board; and

WHEREAS the hog industry in Manitoba has doubled under an orderly marketing system; and

WHEREAS processors who will contribute to Manitoba's value-added industry have publicly expressed their preference for orderly marketing because it is easier to deal with one agent rather than 2,300 producers.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Minister of Agriculture consider reversing his decision and retain a system for orderly marketing of hogs in Manitoba under Manitoba Pork.

* (1335)

Manitoba Telephone System

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Yes. The Clerk will read.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT the Manitoba Telephone System has served this province well for over 80 years providing province-wide service, some of the lowest local rates in North America and thousands of jobs; and

THAT MTS has made over \$100 million since 1990 and this money has stayed in Manitoba; and

THAT MTS contributes \$150 million annually to the Manitoba economy and is a major sponsor of community events throughout the province; and

THAT MTS, with nearly 4,000 employees including more than 1,000 in rural and northern Manitoba, is one of Manitoba's largest firms, headquartered in Manitoba and is committed to Manitoba; and

THAT the provincial government has no mandate to sell MTS and said before and during the 1995 election that MTS was not for sale.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) not sell the Manitoba Telephone System.

Licensed Practical Nurses

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT many LPNs have been eliminated from most acute care facilities in Manitoba, including St. Boniface, Seven Oaks, and most recently HSC; and,

THAT the LPNs of this province are valuable members of the health care system, providing professional, competent, skilled and cost-effective services; and

THAT staffing cuts will only result in declining quality of health care and potentially tragic outcomes; and

THAT it will not be long before the negative results of this shortcut effort are realized, including higher costs and poorer services.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Health to recognize the value of LPNs and to consider reversing the decision to cut LPNs in Manitoba.

* (1340)

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): I would like to table the Actuarial Report on the Manitoba Municipal Employees Pension Plan as of January 1, 1995.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery, where we have this afternoon thirty-five Grade 11 students from Neepawa Collegiate under the direction of Mr. Bob Ferguson. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings).

We also have seventy-five Grade 9 students from École Pierre Elliott Trudeau under the direction of Mr. Rondeau. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Home Care Program Privatization

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Acting Premier.

Madam Speaker, 30,000 petitions were received today by people across our communities urging the government to reconsider their ideological position on privatizing home care and asking the government to keep home care as a nonprofit program. This follows on letters the government has received that we tabled last week to the government asking the government not to proceed with the privatization of home care.

In fact, the Manitoba seniors say they have very serious concerns about it. In their newsletter this week, they talk about the fact that home care is working well as a nonprofit entity in the province. They further say in their letter that they are going to resubmit material to the government and ask the government whether they will put their ideological decision to privatize on hold until the Manitoba seniors and other recipients that rely on home care can respond to the government so that we can have an open debate about the merits of the government's decision.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, if ideology guides decisions around here, it is decisions taken on the other side of the House when it comes to lack of support for clients in the home care system, lack of support for patients in our hospitals from honourable members opposite.

I refer not only to the patients and clients of today but those of the future. Honourable members opposite, their ideology, the blinkers that they put on do blur their vision very badly when it comes to looking ahead to the future.

The honourable Leader of the Opposition suggests that home care is working well and it is hard in a general sense to disagree, but there are some very specific problems with the way our home care system has been run and they have been brought to our attention by honourable members opposite.

It is in this area where I remind them they cannot have

it both ways. They cannot conjure up all of these problems that we have with our home care system and then be critical when we try to fix those problems.

Mr. Doer: We are aware of a proposal from the McMaster family that owns the We Care home care program, and the minister is aware of this company and this family that has proposed changes to privatize the home care system here in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, the last independent report conducted on home care was the Price Waterhouse program. It indicates that the program is cost-effective, and in fact it goes on to say that it is the best continuing care program in all of North America.

I would like to ask the Premier, does he have another independent study besides the McMaster proposal that would indicate that Manitobans would be better served by proceeding to privatize a system right now that is publicly run, publicly owned and publicly managed?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, it is difficult to engage in a discussion about home care in Manitoba with the Leader of the Opposition or the Health critic for the New Democratic Party, the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), when they fail to acknowledge that spending in home care has increased so substantially in the last eight years. They argue that no additional services have been laid on so, therefore, where is the cost-efficiency if all of those dollars that are recorded in our budget documents year after year and expenditures made—if all of that has happened and there is no increase or no improvement in the service, then honourable members, the onus is then upon them to demonstrate that the argument they make is correct, which is quite impossible for them to do because they fail to acknowledge these very, very significant expenditure increases.

I put on the record last week the number of units of service that have been added to the service over the years, from \$4 million on an annual basis back in 1988 to \$5.5 million today, the fact that we had some 24,000 clients back in those days and 26,000 today.

Well, if we are not serving enough new clients, it is because there are not more clients to be served. But, Madam Speaker, there will be very, very significantly

more, and there have been incremental increases in the number of clients served as well.

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, the minister did not answer the question about putting the decision on hold to listen to the submissions that would be forthcoming from the Manitoba seniors society. He never answered the question of whether he has an independent report that Manitobans could review to study his decision.

Members of the Legislative Assembly Wage Freeze

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I would like to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon) a further question.

How in this House, how in this Legislature, how can MLAs in this House take an increase in pay for the MLA's salary and cabinet minister's salary and Leader of the Opposition's salary at a time when the government is proposing close to a 30 percent wage cut for people working now in home care? How can we in all conscience do this?

Should not the Premier (Mr. Filmon) propose a wage freeze for all MLAs and cabinet ministers, as proposed by our House leader a couple of weeks ago?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, the honourable Leader of the Opposition continuously fails to recognize some realities that we are working with in the present environment, and one of those realities is that the demand on the Home Care program will continue to increase very, very significantly as we address the inappropriate use of acute care in our hospitals and as we address the issues that will arise with a population that will continue to age. The honourable member should be aware that what we want to achieve is something that will be affordable and cost-effective, that we can provide more services to more people.

The honourable Leader of the Opposition does not have to look ahead to the future, because he is not going to be on this side of the House ever. He does not have to deal with that, but the honourable members on this side of the House have to look beyond the ends of our noses.

Mr. Doer: I have a new question, and perhaps we should treat our nose the same way as we are expecting to treat other people's noses if we are talking about providing leadership.

Health Care System Advertising Campaign

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, my new question is to the Premier (Mr. Filmon). We have been informed that the government is proceeding with a massive advertising campaign in health care, that the campaign will be costing over a million dollars. It will include four TV ads and a direct mail to every home in the province.

I would like the Premier to confirm whether his government is proceeding with a major advertising campaign dealing with health care and how much is it going to cost.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I do not know how many times the honourable member has been involved in discussions like I have, but I have been told many, many times that if there is any perceived problem with respect to home care it is the fact that we do not have everyone in the province of Manitoba being aware of what the issues are, everybody in the province of Manitoba being aware of what the challenges are that we face, Manitobans not aware that we are working with diminished resources in our province.

I have made no secret for some months now that I fully intend to include the people of Manitoba in the discussions. I fully intend to keep Manitobans informed the best way I know how. Indeed, if there has been criticism, it has been that there has not been enough public information distributed to Manitobans, and that will be happening.

Mr. Doer: How can the Premier (Mr. Filmon) justify spending close to a million and a half dollars on Tory feel-good propaganda ads on health care that will be paid for presumably by the taxpayers? I cannot imagine why the Tory party would not be paying for these ads.

How can the Premier justify this propaganda campaign that they are embarking on run by Barb Biggar and many

other communications staff of the government at a time when they are cutting home care, they are cutting Pharmacare, they are cutting acute care hospital care?

How can he justify the priority of having propaganda campaigns paid for by the taxpayers for the good health of the Tory party rather than the good health of Manitobans?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, for the honourable Leader of the Opposition and his friends everything that gets done is a partisan thing. I happen to know from talking to Manitobans of all political persuasions that health is a matter that transcends all political persuasions. We all care about our own health and we all care about the health of our fellow Manitobans. So, if the honourable member wants to make something political that is not, let him go right ahead. The people of Manitoba just want to know what is going on and I think they are entitled to know what is going on.

Mr. Doer: Can the Premier confirm that the ads will be on nurse-managed care, day hospital programs, laser surgery and breast screening programs and will not be educational ads on issues that are changing and being cut back like Pharmacare and home care and acute care hospital beds at Seven Oaks and Misericordia, that it will not be dealing with the needs of the public to have public education on the Tory cutbacks, it will be merely a propaganda campaign for the Filmon government?

Will the Premier admit today that these ads should be paid for by the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba and not by the taxpayers of this province?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, what I can confirm is the hypocrisy of the Leader of the Opposition, because I recall as a member of this Legislature how during the years of the Pawley-Doer government here in this province they spent millions of dollars on advertising the Jobs Fund and in fact had one campaign which was just simply to publicize Limestone for their re-election in 1986, where they spent \$3 million on that campaign alone.

That is the hypocrisy of the people like the Leader of the Opposition, and Manitobans know about his hypocrisy and they know where he is coming from on issues like this.

* (1350)

**Health Care System
Advertising Campaign**

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Premier.

How can the Premier justify spending \$1.5 million of Manitoba taxpayers' money when you do not have money for Pharmacare, when you are closing hospitals, when you say that money cannot be used for eye examinations and you are using it for Tory party propaganda in order to talk about the feel-good Conservatives?

How can the Premier justify that in light of these cutbacks to our health care system?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, there are people who hear news, for example, about the Pharmacare program and changes in that program and they ask themselves, well, now, why is this necessary?

If you listen to the honourable member for Kildonan and his Leader, the member for Concordia, those people are not going to get the answer from honourable members opposite because by their own admission as demonstrated in their questions, everything they do is political. So they are not going to get a straight answer from honourable members opposite.

The people of Manitoba need to know that there are opportunities here in addition to challenges, and we look for their partnership. It is an effort to ensure that Manitobans are at least informed about the changes, informed about the facts as we have them today and the need for change, the danger that we face if we do not change, the fact that they will have no health care system to pass on to their children.

If we listen to honourable members opposite that is where we would be. We cannot abide that, and we need the people of Manitoba to know what is going on in health care.

Mr. Chomiak: My supplementary is to the Premier.

Can the Premier confirm how it is that this health expert, Barb Biggar, the Premier's former press secretary,

the person who did all of the Tory campaign ads, is the person who has prepared and headed up all this entire advertising campaign? Why is it that Barb Biggar, the Premier's former press secretary, is heading up this campaign? [interjection]

Mr. McCrae: I guess "fraudulent" is a new word for honourable members opposite, and they have decided to use it as often as they can remember to do so.

Madam Speaker, there was a proposal call with respect to this particular contract. The vendor who achieved the contract achieved the contract because they met the criteria. That vendor was appropriate and the bids were appropriately evaluated, and the decision was made as a result of that.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, will the Premier undertake today that the province will not spend the \$1.5 million, will not produce these TV ads by Barb Biggar, will not mail out to the householder, will bring the information to the Legislature and have an all-party committee of the Legislature review this information prior to distribution so that it does not become anything more than Tory propaganda which has been launched by the very person that ran the Tory campaign in the last campaign?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, I keep listening to honourable members opposite in a sincere wish that they might offer some help, and I cannot remember the last time they did, but I am sure they have some useful suggestions to make along the way.

The trouble is, their agenda, as just admitted by them just a few minutes ago, has nothing to do with people's health. It has to do with their own political future, their own partisan approach to things, and so that is where they are coming from. Their partisan approach could not be demonstrated better than their condonation of people who go around telling senior citizens in Manitoba things that are incorrect with respect to home care such as that, with the changes that we are embarking on, there would be user fees or that there would be changes to the core services that are delivered under the Home Care program.

If I waited for honourable members opposite to inform the public, there would be, indeed, what they have suggested on occasion—chaos.

* (1355)

**Pharmacare
Income Statement—Student Loans**

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health.

The government has now released what the Premier (Mr. Filmon) calls its new, improved Pharmacare application form which enables some benefits based on this government's definition of income.

My question to the minister is, where an applicant has no tax return or where income changes more than 10 percent in a year, why are student loans considered as income, not mortgage loans, not personal loans, for example, even from parents to children?

Why take Pharmacare away from the neediest students while turning a blind eye, for example, to inheritances, to lottery winners?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, as I outlined to honourable members opposite last week, every effort was expended during the process to develop the new Pharmacare program to ensure that those who need help the most get the most help and that it is available for them.

With respect to how these forms work and how income is arrived at, I am sure we can discuss that during the Estimates process or, if it is important for the honourable member to know sooner, he can raise that question with me privately and we will get the response for him.

Mr. Mackintosh: Would the minister just tell Manitobans who need to know now, is including student loans as income just meanness or is it incompetence? A constituent was told by an official of Pharmacare last week that it was in fact just a big mistake.

Is this minister going to get it right maybe on the third time?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, as I told the honourable member, the intent as we developed our new Pharmacare program was to provide the most protection for those least able to provide it for themselves, those who need the most drugs, those who have the lowest incomes.

What is included in a calculation of income is what is included in a calculation of income, and I can look at the specific case the honourable member is referring to and discuss it further with him.

Income Statement—Information Release

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Would the minister then explain why applicants for Pharmacare must consent to the release of information from federal income tax if they are going to receive any benefits, without so much as anything in these new regulations to protect that information from other uses by whether it is his department or other departments of this government or indeed pharmacists?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, the honourable member I think understands what the concept of income-based assistance is all about and why it is necessary to have an income from which you can calculate what your deductible is going to be.

Surely the honourable member understands that.

* (1400)

**Home Care Program
Privatization—Tender Process**

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

Earlier today both the Leader of the New Democratic Party and I were provided in excess of 30,000 signatures on a petition that opposes this government's general direction on home care services, and I would like to table the ones that were presented to me, Madam Speaker, for the Minister of Health.

My question to the Minister of Health is, as of today there has not yet been an issue of tender for these private companies, nonprofit organizations such as VON to participate in what the government plans on implementing effective July 1.

My question quite simply is, when does this government plan on issuing the tendering to ensure that companies will have the criteria to be able to make a submission?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, that will be happening soon, but I remind the honourable member that tenders were let last year with respect to back-up services for our Home Care program and a number of vendors bid on that and the Central Health Services company achieved the contract to provide back-up services in an effort to be able to provide services on a 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week basis.

I remind the honourable member also that tenders were let recently by the St. Boniface General Hospital for the expansion of their home intravenous therapy program. In that case, bids were received as well and in that case the Victorian Order of Nurses was the successful bidder.

So as I say to the honourable member, I expect shortly to see these tenders going out, but it has been done before and so far it appears the results have been beneficial, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Lamoureux: I talked to the Victorian Order of Nurses earlier today, and my question to the Minister of Health is, when is this minister prepared to give a commitment that the process is in fact going to be started in terms of the criteria released so that people know what the core package that this government constantly talks about is?

No one appears to know what the core services are. When can we see those criteria?

Mr. McCrae: I have spoken with the Victorian Order of Nurses, too, about these matters and others, Madam Speaker, and surely the honourable member is not suggesting that one vendor ought to be given some advantage over the others. I hope that is not what he is suggesting.

Strike Contingency Plan

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I am wondering if the Minister of Health can tell us what contingency plan he has if in fact there is a strike by home care service workers.

Does this then mean, for example, that we are going to see more individuals in our health care institutions such as hospitals?

What is the contingency plan of this government, or does it really have a contingency plan for the clients that rely on home care services?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): It would be my profound wish that a contingency plan would not be required. It would be my profound wish that people who provide services to their fellow citizens in Manitoba would not withdraw their services from them. That seems to me the appropriate course for the honourable member to be advocating and for honourable members in the New Democratic Party to be advocating instead of condoning such things as withdrawing services from people who require them, people who need help with their most personal of personal matters in their day-to-day life.

Honourable members opposite would condone the taking of a strike vote with regard to withdrawing services from people in those circumstances. I certainly have a problem with that. If that is where honourable members are coming from, let there be no secret about whom they are working for around here, whether it comes to their union boss friends or the clients in the home care system. Let us be clear about that.

But, unfortunately, yes, we do have a contingency plan should it be necessary.

Repap Manitoba Inc. Environmental Licensing

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): My first question is for the Minister of Environment.

Since 1992, Repap has been permitted to harvest millions of hectares of trees without the required environmental impact statements and public hearings. Although we welcome the jobs Repap provides, there is concern that the environment may be placed at risk because licences are routinely rubber-stamped.

Can the minister tell the House which year Repap will be required to fulfill the conditions of The Environment Act?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Madam Speaker, I recognize the sincerity with which the member asks the question, but he represents a party that

allowed this harvesting to continue in the North for 15 years without environmental review. Now he is wondering when we are going to get on with the job.

The fact is, it has been done yearly, and their full, long-term plan will be reviewed shortly.

Treaty Land Entitlements Negotiations

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): My supplementary question is to the Minister of Northern Affairs.

Given that this government gave Repap cutting rights to areas under treaty land entitlement and these concerns were raised as far back as May 1989, why has this government still not acted to resolve outstanding TLE issues in these cutting areas?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister responsible for Native Affairs): I think it is important for the honourable member for Flin Flon to recall that the provincial obligation is to provide unoccupied land. There has never been an obligation on the part of the province to set aside specific land.

We have in fact some time ago offered to the treaty land entitlement chiefs interim protection zones to do just that. None of those were acted upon.

I am pleased to tell the honourable member negotiations in TLE have made some progress in the last while. We are confident that a process will be in place very shortly to deal with these specific areas, but at no time in the specific area that we have seen discussion with has a specific land been requested within that general area.

Mr. Jennissen: My final supplementary question to the same minister is, what role is this government playing in negotiations between Mathias Colomb First Nation and Repap over disputed areas right now?

Mr. Praznik: First of all, let us understand that there is not specifically a specific disputed area. The company Repap is operating under valid licence. That obviously has been dealt with to some degree by the courts recently. One has to appreciate that the amount of land in which

Mathias Colomb is entitled is a very small area in a very large area in which there are many cutting areas.

We have certain lands that Mathias Colomb has requested, specific land selections. We had some discussion on those. Two of them in fact we have agreed to and have been prepared to transfer to the federal government. I think the answer in this specific case and one that we are attempting to facilitate—and I am pleased to indicate that there will be some discussions beginning tomorrow specifically with the band and the province—is for that community to get on and select specifically in that area the land that they are interested in and negotiate a fair selection to which everyone can agree.

To date in that area Mathias Colomb has not done that. They have done it in other parts of their treaty area. I am confident that if people are of good will, this can be settled in a reasonable fashion in a very reasonable period of time.

Sustainable Development Act White Paper Release

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Madam Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Environment.

Madam Speaker, whether it is Louisiana-Pacific's environmental review fiasco or the \$20 million lost by this government in the failed attempt to develop a hazardous waste management system in this province, Manitobans have very good reasons not to trust this government when it comes to economic and environmental sustainability. Concerns have been raised that the government's proposed sustainable development act will not adequately protect Manitoba's environment.

My question is, if this government is indeed sincere about openness and accountability, which it claims that it is to the public of this province, will the minister release a white paper on the proposed sustainable development act in order to allow all Manitobans input on this very important piece of legislation?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Yes.

Mr. Dewar: I want to thank the minister for that quick response to our question.

Madam Speaker, my next question for the minister: Will he provide to the House a timetable for the release of this white paper?

Mr. Cummings: Yes.

Child and Family Services Act Amendments

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Speaker, too many children have died in the care of a Child and Family Services agency in Manitoba recently and too many died after recently being in the care of an agency, requiring the Chief Medical Examiner to write a report with recommendations to the Minister of Family Services.

My question to the Minister of Family Services is, will she amend The Fatality Inquiries Act and The Child and Family Services Act so that these recommendations will be made public, so that the public interest will be protected and particularly the lives of children will be protected, so that we will know what recommendations are made and so that future deaths do not occur?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Madam Speaker, I do thank my honourable friend for that question, because it does provide me with the opportunity to indicate that we take very seriously the death of any child in the province of Manitoba, particularly when those children are in the care of the province as a result of an apprehension for reasons of abuse or neglect in their own families. I take very seriously the question, the comments that have been made by my honourable friend.

We are in the process of undertaking a comprehensive review of The Child and Family Services Act, and that will be one question that we put to the public of Manitoba for their consideration. I do want to indicate also that in the manner that the reports are presented to government and to the ministry, at this point in time there is sometimes confidential information that cannot be released. We are presently looking at how we can pull out the information that could be made public, to make it public to all Manitobans.

Mr. Martindale: Will the Minister of Family Services amend the legislation since she knows that the reports could be made public with confidential information such as names left out and that this is a recommendation of the Children's Advocate, who was set up to provide independent advice to the minister? Will she now take that advice?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Speaker, again, I thank my honourable friend for that question.

We do take very seriously the recommendations that have been made by the Children's Advocate. In fact, it was our legislation that put in place a Child Advocate for all children in the province of Manitoba. Those recommendations have been put forward, and I have indicated quite clearly that we will be going out to the public with a comprehensive review of The Child and Family Services Act and the specific question that he is asking today will be addressed through that process.

Petroleum Exploration Assistance Program

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy and Mines.

The recently announced Petroleum Exploration Assistance Program will be handing over a million dollars in a program that the oil industry spokespersons admit is virtually unknown these days.

My question to the Minister of Energy and Mines is, will the minister explain to this House and to Manitobans how a million-dollar giveaway to the oil industry can be justified when essential services such as home care, Pharmacare and eye examinations are being cut?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Energy and Mines): Madam Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank the member for St. James for her public comments in support of a very similar program in the mining industry which she offered. I imagine the same logic holds true there if she is making the argument against one program in petroleum, while on the one hand in supporting the other in minerals. It does beg the question as to where actually she sits in policy.

But the member should be very well aware that one of the difficulties we have with our oil patch is that we are

in essence at the end of the Williston basin and that in order to kind of attract the development that we want to see, this incentive program was one that was viewed as a method of getting that kind of exploration activity.

As the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey) pointed out to me the other day, because of this program we have activity in a number of areas of the southwest that we otherwise would not have. I can tell the member, last year, just for example, in our oil leases, we brought in some \$2.6 million, if memory serves me correctly, and we had only budgeted for \$600,000. So we are getting a very good return on this investment, and that is needed to support the social programs of the province.

Ms. Mihychuk: Madam Speaker, if the minister has time, I will explain to him the difference between mineral exploration and oil exploration.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for St. James was recognized for a supplementary question.

Ms. Mihychuk: Madam Speaker, my question to the minister is, can he explain to us the basis for this so-called investment and how it was derived, given that he has eliminated the whole energy policy section of the Department of Energy and Mines? Is this decision based on this tabloid where the long-dead prophet Edgar Cayce predicts that Manitoba will discover a huge oil field this year?

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, I hate to answer a question with a question, but it leaves me—given the member bringing this forward, it sounds to me like that was the tabloid in which Mr. Pawley as Premier of this province set up the Manitoba Oil and Gas Corporation, which was supposed to bring millions of dollars of investment and, quite frankly, ended up in a very significant loss to the taxpayers of this province.

That point underlines a very different approach. The New Democrats in power had Manitoba Mineral Resources that year after year spent money on exploration and never produced one mine in the province, and we had ManOil which was a small corporation that only consumed taxpayers' dollars.

In both situations, they were disasters for those industries, and we as a government are now in the process of rebuilding both the mining industry and the petroleum industry in this province and will continue to do so, Madam Speaker.

Provincial Parks Seasonal Camping Fees

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources.

Last week's budget falsely bragged of no tax increases while this government has increased seasonal camping fees in every provincial park in the province.

How can this minister justify gouging Manitobans with, in some cases, almost 100 percent increases in seasonal camping fees?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Yes, there are increases that we have announced for this year for seasonal campsites as well as for the nightly campsites. There have been no increases since 1989.

In doing our assessment in terms of trying to provide better service for our campers throughout the province, we have adjusted the rates, which had not been increased, and basically adjusted the rates on a formula. Where people have showers and cold and hot running water, things of this nature, they will be paying more. Where we had a standard rate before we now have differential rates, and in some cases, there is a substantive increase.

We hope that the people by and large will not find it too difficult to do that. I have discussed this before.

The cost per night basically worked out to an average of between \$2.29 a night up to \$4.58 including GST. That would be amortized over the usage of 30 nights, so it is a good deal.

Mr. Struthers: The services did not correspond with the increases in the seasonal fees.

Can the minister explain, in this new spirit of Tory openness that this government boasts about, why he surprised seasonal campers with this announcement?

Why did he not seek their input before announcing this drastic tax grab?

Mr. Driedger: I do not think it was the intention of myself or the department to surprise anybody with the increase, but there is increase.

Madam Speaker, I do not want to repeat my answer that I gave before, but I just want to say that I think that the majority of Manitobans who enjoy the outdoors, as I do myself, will find that anywhere from \$2.50 to \$4.50 a night to camp out there on a site—which basically where we maintain the total park—is not unreasonable.

Madam Speaker: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

* (1420)

Speaker's Rulings

Madam Speaker: I have three rulings for the House.

Order, please. On November 1, 1995, the honourable member for Thompson, the opposition House leader, raised a matter of privilege and moved: THAT the question of freedom of speech of members of this House be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

The central point in this matter of privilege, I believe, is the question "Is restriction on language used by members an infringement of a member's privilege of freedom of speech?"

What then does constitute freedom of speech? In the work *The Procedure of the House of Commons* by Josef Redlich, the author states on pages 44 and 45 that "Speech is the element which gives life and power of action to a parliamentary body as air does to the natural body; pursuing the metaphor, we may say that in the world of parliament, speech is the elastic, free, all-pervading and mobile element in its composition. But clearly this element, so free in itself, must be subject to some form of regulation." "There must be rules and standards before a succession of speeches becomes Debate, the characteristic form in which speaking appears in parliamentary proceedings." "There are two features which give to debate in Parliament its unique legal

nature: first, its being under the protection of the great constitutional principle of unrestricted freedom of speech, and secondly its being subjected by parliamentary law to definite rules and standards indicating how to apply the principle of freedom and partially limiting its operation." "There seems to be a contradiction in terms between the principle of unrestrained liberty of speech and a strict adherence to rules of speech and debate; but it is easily resolved by tracing the historical origin of freedom of speech in the oldest of parliamentary bodies, the House of Commons."

"Freedom of speech is, in England (and throughout the Commonwealth), one of the original and fundamental privileges of the members of both Houses of Parliament, but it is a privilege intended in the first instance as a protection against attacks from without." "Freedom of speech, looked at from the point of view of the House as a whole, does not mean boundless license of speech, but equal freedom to all in the House, and equal latitude in the application of all rules as to speech to all members."

Commenting on Article 9 of the 1689 British Bill of Rights which reads "That the freedom of speech and debates or proceedings in Parliament, ought not to be impeached or questioned in any court or place out of Parliament", Redlich observes. "The legal proposition, therefore, was undoubtedly laid down as a measure of protection, as one of the conditions necessary to the existence of Parliament in its conflict with the Crown and the subservient courts of law. The statement in the Bill of Rights shows the limits within which the principle is to be applied; the claim made is not for absolute freedom of speech; speech is only to be independent of every authority except the private jurisdiction of Parliament over its own members. The autonomous jurisdiction of Parliament is the reverse side of the shield which protects the principle of freedom of speech, in the technical sense of the word." The struggle for freedom of speech was waged to emancipate the action of Parliament from all influence of Crown, courts of law and Government; it was never a fight for unbridled oratory, for freedom to each member to say exactly what he (or she) pleased. From the earliest days there was always strict domestic discipline in the House and strict rules as to speaking were always enforced. The House could point to its autonomous regulation of the conduct and speech of its members, and to its enforcement of its rules; its power of so doing enabled it to claim and to win for its members

the right of exemption from all responsibility at common law for what they said in its debates. Thus, theoretically speaking, the principle of parliamentary freedom of speech is far from being a claim of irresponsibility for members; it asserts a responsibility exclusively to the House where a member sits, and implies that this responsibility is really brought home by the House which is charged with enforcing it."

These principles are echoed by J.A.G. Griffith and Michael Ryle in the work *Parliament: Functions, Practice and Procedures* at page 88 where they state "Although the original challenge to freedom of speech in the House came from the Crown, the terms of Article 9 not only protect members from action by the Crown but also prohibit action of any kind, and by any person outside the House, against members for what they may say or do in Parliament." "The main benefit of Article 9 of the Bill of Rights, as far as individual members are concerned, is to enable them to speak freely in the House or in committee without fear of actions for defamation. Although Article 9 prevents attempts by outside bodies or the courts to limit freedom of speech in Parliament, it does not mean that members can say whatever they like at all times, because the House itself, and the Speaker on behalf of the House, can restrict the content of speech in debate and other proceedings."

The Supreme Court of Canada in 1981 held that Article 9 of the British Bill of Rights of 1689 is undoubtedly in force as part of the law of Canada.

Maingot on page 31 also speaks of the scope of freedom of speech when he states "Freedom of speech cannot be a true freedom to a member if he is not able to speak free of all constraints save those imposed by the legislature itself. Erskine May in the Twenty-First Edition of *Parliamentary Practice* on page 84 indicates again the limitation on freedom of speech by stating "Subject to the rules of order in debate, a member may state whatever he (or she) thinks fit in debate . . . (and) . . . he or she is protected by privilege from any action for libel." At the same time May stresses "the authority of the House is preserved to restrain members." Sir John George Bourinot's *Parliamentary Procedure and Practice of the Dominion of Canada* (Fourth Edition) on page 48 in writing about freedom of speech states "Yet while a member may not be subject to penalty out of parliament, he is liable to censure and punishment by the house itself if he transgress the rules of the house."

The 1993 Canadian case of *Donahoe versus the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation* pointed out that underlying the doctrine of parliamentary privilege is the justification that privileges are necessary for the conduct of the Legislature's business and that, to be effective, it must enjoy a certain autonomy from control by the Crown and the courts.

What I draw from all of this is that freedom of speech is the protection of members to say what they wish in the House without interference from outside bodies or agencies or fear of repercussions from outside agencies, but it does not guarantee members the right to say absolutely anything they want in the House. The House, through the Speaker, can impose limits or rules. A Speaker should not be absolutely interventionist, but in those rare cases where language impinges on the dignity, decorum or the sensibilities of the House, the Speaker does have the authority to request the withdrawal of unparliamentary language.

I understand that members have strongly-held views and I certainly do not wish to prevent them from raising issues. However, I request that language be carefully chosen.

To conclude, in my judgment, the honourable member for Thompson has not established a *prima facie* case on his matter of privilege.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, I challenge your ruling.

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has been challenged. All those in favour of sustaining the ruling of the Chair, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Madam Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Formal Vote

Mr. Ashton: Yeas and Nays, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: A recorded vote has been requested. Call in the members.

The ruling of the Chair has been challenged. All those in favour of sustaining the ruling of the Chair, please rise.

Division

A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas

Cummings, Derkach, Downey, Driedger, Dyck, Enns, Ernst, Filmon, Findlay, Gaudry, Helwer, Kowalski, Lamoureux, Laurendeau, McAlpine, McCrae, McIntosh, Mitchelson, Newman, Pallister, Penner, Pitura, Praznik, Radcliffe, Reimer, Render, Rocan, Stefanson, Sveinson, Toews, Tweed, Vodrey.

Nays

Ashton, Cerilli, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Evans (Brandon East), Evans (Interlake), Friesen, Hickes, Jennissen, Mackintosh, Maloway, Martindale, McGifford, Mihychuk, Reid, Robinson, Sale, Santos, Struthers, Wowchuk

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Yeas 32, Nays 21.

Madam Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has been sustained.

* (1500)

* * *

Madam Speaker: On December 11, 1995, during Question Period, the opposition House leader raised a point of order about language used by the Premier. I took the matter under advisement in order to review Hansard and in particular to look at the context in which the words complained of were used.

Having now had the opportunity to peruse Hansard, I am ruling that indeed the opposition House leader did have a point of order. The words in question were "I implore the member for Crescentwood, if he is a man of principle, if he is a man who has any integrity whatsoever . . ."

I note that in June of 1989, Speaker Rocan requested the withdrawal of a similar kind of phrase. Also,

Beauchesne Citation 491 tells us that language used in the House should be temperate and worthy of the place in which it is spoken. As I and earlier Manitoba Speakers have reminded the House on previous occasions, we are all honourable members and we should refer to each other and treat each other in a respectful fashion.

Therefore, I now call on the First Minister to unconditionally withdraw the words he used in reference to the honourable member for Crescentwood on December 11.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I am happy to withdraw those comments.

Madam Speaker: I thank the honourable First Minister.

* * *

Madam Speaker: During Question Period on December 14, 1995, the Leader of the official opposition raised a point of order about language used by the Premier and said that the comments imputed unworthy motives to members of the opposition. I took the matter under advisement to review Hansard.

The words in question used by the First Minister were "he is not interested in the truth, he is not interested in facts, he is only interested in innuendo."

In my opinion the Premier came very close but what he said does not constitute imputing unworthy motives. However, I would caution the honourable First Minister on his choice of words and request that all honourable members exercise caution and discretion in choosing their words when referring to other members of the Assembly.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

RCS Greenhouses

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Madam Speaker, I want to thank you for the opportunity to put a brief statement on the record. I had the opportunity yesterday to visit a new industry in Arthur-Virden constituency known as RCS Greenhouses. I have been able to bring forward to the members some of the fruit of the vine which is being produced in that community.

A couple of points I would like to note, Madam Speaker, No. 1 is that we have two young people, Roy and Candice Consi and family, who as young entrepreneurs have taken very seriously the need to diversify and create employment in their community, and they have done so. I believe they have some 13 part-time and full-time employees in their operation in a small community.

As well, they are using a product off the gas plant system in southwestern Manitoba which is basically a waste product to be used as energy as well as the solar energy that is available to them to produce this fine product which I do not know where else you would find in Manitoba on Easter weekend, the first part of April, vine-ripened tomatoes which each of you I hope enjoy. Remember who produced them, a young couple in southwestern Manitoba who have put their commitment into making Manitoba a place to live and to produce. Thank you.

Parole Revocation—Dwayne Archie Johnston

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupertsland): Madam Speaker, I too have a statement for the House.

On April 3, in Abbotsford, B.C., the National Parole Board revoked the day parole of Dwayne Archie Johnston, the convicted murderer of the late Helen Betty Osborne of the Norway House First Nation. Now Helen was murdered in 1971, but the four males who were involved were only charged in 1986, with Johnston being the only one convicted in 1987. The delays in bringing these men to justice and the results that the trial itself precipitated, the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, now Volume 2 of the AJI was devoted to this issue and also the murder of J. J. Harper.

Last summer, Manitobans were shocked to learn that Johnston was granted day parole. As a result, a petition campaign was launched, gathering thousands of signatures. The Women's Wellness Circle of Norway House worked with Helen Betty's mother, Justine, who then launched the Walk for Justice that occurred in November. The Walk for Justice, 800 kilometres from Norway House to Winnipeg, gained support from communities throughout northern Manitoba and indeed across this province as it travelled to the Manitoba Legislature. The Walk for Justice helped make the plight of victims of crime a national issue.

In December, the chief of the Norway House First Nation, Ron Evans, Freda Albert of the Women's Wellness Circle in Norway House and myself travelled to Abbotsford to discuss this matter with the parole board. As a result of this meeting, the parole board agreed to review the decision to grant day parole and agreed to hold a special hearing in Norway House.

The testimony released at the hearings was very important and relevant to the case. In deciding to revoke the day parole, the parole board overruled previous decisions of the same board due to questions raised at Norway House, the audit and in the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry report which had not been considered previously. The decision last week was not only a vindication for those concerned over the injustice of this particular case, it is also a significant victory for victims of crime throughout this country. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

* (1510)

Media Response to Budget

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in the House today and address the members. I say that it is my pleasure because I am delighted with the response that our government has received on the budget tabled one week ago today. I enjoy reading the newspaper and had more than enough to read on Saturday in the Free Press. Fred Cleverley said, and I quote, "Accumulated debt is the greatest threat to Manitoba's future prosperity, and the way to deal with this threat is by combining balanced budgets with an orderly reduction of that debt."

Lest the NDP, according to our Saskatchewan neighbours under Roy Romanow as an example of the NDP also balancing their budget, Mr. Cleverley quickly reminded his readers that Mr. Romanow could not only balance his current budget because of the hefty tax increases his first year in office. So significant were those increases that an average family of four in Saskatchewan pays close to \$700 more in taxes than the same family does in Manitoba.

Also in Saturday's Free Press, Mr. John Douglas's article which announced that the PC fiscal policy is paying off. He said that the Tories have lived up to their promise to get their fiscal house in order in spite of the shape it was left in by the previous NDP government.

Finally, Madam Speaker, the bottom line. Mr. Douglas and Mr. Cleverley focused on the budget per se, but another article boiled rhetoric into reality—jobs. The opening line, “The Manitoba economy has created 9,000 jobs in the first two months of 1996, posting the strongest growth of any province so far this year.” Aron Gampel is from the Bank of Nova Scotia and has just completed a trip through western Canada. He suggests that the economy in Manitoba is reacting to the government’s tax freeze and the balanced budget legislation. A lot of good news, but news that was generated because this government has chosen to build for the future instead of borrowing from it. Thank you.

RCS Greenhouses

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to commend and applaud the efforts of those individuals who were involved in providing us the tomatoes we have here today.

You know, it is interesting, here we are in Manitoba, a lot of snow outside, still somewhat cold and we have these wonderful Manitoba-grown tomatoes. What this demonstrates is that there is a lot of entrepreneurship out in rural Manitoba which we have to capitalize on by providing the tools that will assist rural Manitobans in coming up with good ideas and see a strong, vibrant, rural Manitoba. Hopefully, this is just a sample of things to come. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Pharmacare—Seniors

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Madam Speaker, I want to make a statement on Pharmacare and its impact on seniors.

About this time a year ago, the Filmon government was publicly campaigning on the election promise that there would be no cuts to health care, including Pharmacare. Breaking such an election promise, this Filmon government cut Pharmacare by about 34 percent. This is a \$20-million cut to Manitoba’s Pharmacare program. Moreover, Pharmacare has now been changed by basing it on one’s income and without ceiling. As a result, approximately 100,000 Manitobans have lost Pharmacare coverage. The government is taking away benefits from the sick, the poor and the elderly. Since the government is boasting about a \$120-million surplus in

this budget, this cut to Pharmacare arises not out of budgetary necessity but of conscious, rational choice.

What this government promises to do, not to tax directly, it is doing it indirectly. This government promises—[interjection] and breaking its promise has led to a sleazy but blatant taxation on the sick, the poor, the seniors in this province. This Filmon government has betrayed the seniors by reducing the benefit level from 80 percent coverage to 70 percent coverage. Despite the Conservative’s promise in 1988 that they will tie and link Pharmacare deductible to the levels of inflation, the Pharmacare deductible had not risen to more than 52 percent.

Let me conclude, Madam Speaker, by asking the Filmon government, what do you mean that you beat the people to pieces and grind the faces of the poor? Why do you oppress the afflicted, the sick and the elderly?

House Business

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, pursuant to the new rules that were adopted last week, I would like to announce that the start date of the fall sitting will be September 16, 1996.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUDGET DEBATE (Fourth Day of Debate)

Madam Speaker: To resume debate, on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), this House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government, and the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer) in amendment thereto, and on the proposed motion of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) in further amendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona who has 10 minutes remaining.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise again to continue my remarks that I had started last week wherein I had left off dealing with the issue of education and the impacts that this government’s budget is having upon the school division for the community of Transcona.

I have put many issues on the record with respect to education. One of the areas that I had not really dealt with to any significant degree was the issue facing teachers and what this government's intentions are with respect to teachers, the salaries of teachers, the education of teachers, et cetera. I know I have had the opportunity to attend several of the recent school board meetings and had discussions with teachers teaching within the community of Transcona over the last several months, and they are quite distressed by the fact that the government has released by way of their white paper, if we can call it that, or document, talking about forthcoming changes that the government plans that will seriously impact upon teachers, those that are employed within the teaching profession.

I find that the government has also left out options that could have been readily available as substitutes, if the government so chose, with respect to the binding arbitration issue. I know that the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews), just some time back, during the month of March, when he was at the University of Manitoba, referenced the fact that final offer selection was an issue that could have been a substitute, even though the Minister of Labour now shakes his head. He says, no, it is not an option, so I am not sure where he stands on that issue.

I guess he is opposed to binding arbitration, and I guess he is opposed to final offer selection. He would prefer to see people go out on strike and to disadvantage our students. I do not think that is a reasonable way to react to the difficulties that they may be encountering as a government in dealing with some of these situations.

Madam Speaker, further dealing with education, I reference back to the time last fall—I am happy that the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) is here to hear this—when he was supposed to be dealing with the difficulties that the University of Manitoba was encountering during the strike at the University of Manitoba. It was the issue at that time, and we are happy that it is resolved and that the professors have returned to the classroom, that the students are back being instructed to continue their education.

At that time, it was an issue that was very fundamental to the professors, to the teaching staff at the universities, not only the University of Manitoba but other universities

in Manitoba and throughout Canada, for that matter, wherein there was the ability to have some academic freedom to teach and to instruct without any political interference from governments.

It was interesting to note that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of this province at that time who said—and I know, Madam Speaker, because I asked him several questions with respect to this, why he did not instruct the board of governors, since the Premier appointed more than half of the board of governors at the University of Manitoba, to take the steps necessary to invoke binding arbitration that had been requested by the faculty association, why the Premier did not instruct the board of governors. The Premier at that time said quite clearly he had no influence over the board of governors at the University of Manitoba.

Well, lo and behold, here I have in my hand a letter addressed from the vice-chair of the board of governors of the University of Manitoba, addressed to Professor A.G.W. Cameron, Department of Astronomy at the Harvard University, saying that she is aware of and has copies of and is disappointed with a letter that the Premier received from Mr. Cameron some time earlier during the strike.

This person from the University of Manitoba Board of Governors is writing on behalf of the Premier (Mr. Filmon), on behalf of the government, wherein the Premier had said earlier that he does not have any influence over the Board of Governors, so I find it strange now that we have the vice-chair of the Board of Governors writing on behalf of the Premier. [interjection] Yes, I believe she is now the chair of the University of Manitoba.

At the same time, the Premier of this province, the member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon), writes a letter to the same person, Professor A.G.W. Cameron except, Madam Speaker—and I just relate back to the fact that the member for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk) raised an issue here today talking about crystal ball gazing—it appears that our Premier of this province was doing a little crystal ball gazing himself when he wrote the letter to the Department of Astrology at Harvard University.

Well, I am not clear, Madam Speaker, if the Premier (Mr. Filmon) was referring to something else, but it is my understanding that Professor Cameron at Harvard University is involved with astronomy, astrophysics, and he was not part of the Astrology department, as the Premier has indicated. So we would like the Premier to get his facts straight when he attempts once again to interfere with the academic freedom of professors. I see that there is probably not going to be any change of heart on the part of this government as they move forward with what we anticipate will be legislative changes that will impact teachers in this province and take away some sense of freedom that teachers have to instruct the curriculum for our own children in this province.

I refer now, Madam Speaker, since I only have a few moments left in my time, going back to some of the promises that were made during the last provincial election campaign in the spring of 1995, just about a year ago. We are in, and I know my leader has referenced this document in the House, and I have a copy of it here with me, where it says, regarding health care in our province, regarding hospitals and Pharmacare, it says: There is a better way, the Gary Filmon way, and it goes on to reference 700 new personal care beds opening, Pharmacare deductible just \$230 per family, home care funding doubled, and a greater share of total budget to health care than any other province in Canada. [interjection]

My colleague the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) references that perhaps this is one of those documents that could be deemed by some to be somewhat fraudulent as a document itself in that it makes certain references or claims and this information I know was distributed to many homes in, I am sure, Tory-targeted constituencies throughout the province. Now we find that, contrary to their promises that they made during the election campaign, lo and behold, the government has embarked on a program to privatize home care. They have slashed the Pharmacare plan, totally eliminating it or effectively rendering it ineffective for most of the families of this province, and I can assure members opposite, whether they like to believe it or not, this is going to be their downfall in the future. This is one of those issues that will not go away. We know, we have talked to many thousands of Manitobans, and this is the single issue that is raised the most with us, and I believe that this is the issue that will be the government's Achilles' heel in the

future, and there will be an ongoing problem for the government as a result of their decision to eliminate the Pharmacare program.

Not only did they eliminate it this year but they had reduced it in the prior two years. They have reduced it, I believe, from some \$60 million down to \$50 million, and, of course, this year they have effectively eliminated that program. I know for my own family, if I wanted to make use of the Pharmacare program, like a lot of young families in our province, we would now have to pay a deductible of over \$1,200 before we would ever be able to use the Pharmacare program. In past years that would have been in the range of a little over around the \$300 mark. So there has been a fivefold increase in the Pharmacare cost.

So, Madam Speaker, this government has cut the Home Care program, which they promised to maintain, they have cut the Pharmacare program. They have eliminated the eye examinations, all preventative programs to help the seniors, the young families, the young, growing, the young, struggling families in our communities and those people that require eye examinations to maintain the health condition for their eyes and their vision. I find it deplorable that the government would embark upon this after the Minister of Finance said that we have a growing economy in the province of Manitoba and gave a glowing report on how well we are doing considering that we have a \$120-million surplus this year and that we have a \$22-million surplus anticipated, if their numbers are correct, and probably a lot higher than that next year, that they would cut essential human service programs, including social assistance, that my colleague the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) has referenced often in this House.

With those few words we ask the government to reconsider their disastrous plans to tax the sick, the poor, the disabled and the young, growing, struggling families in our province, to reconsider those drastic cutbacks that they have sown because with those seeds that you have sown, so shall you reap the results of the things that you have sown. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Ben Sveinson (La Verendrye): Madam Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to rise today and respond to the budget. I want to begin by welcoming back Madam Speaker to the resumption of the session. I also

recognize the other honourable members of the House, as well as the Clerk and members from his office. Finally, I also welcome our Pages back and thank them for looking after us so faithfully.

The matter at hand today, Madam Speaker, is the budget delivered a few days ago by the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Eric Stefanson. That budget speech resumed the second session of the Thirty-Sixth Legislature, but it by no means signalled a new beginning. Instead, it very clearly demonstrated what we have been doing since we were elected in 1988. That was when this government began down a path that members opposite ridiculed and said would never work. The only paths that lead to nowhere are the paths followed by the members opposite, as demonstrated by their time in office from about 1981 to about 1988.

Our path and direction has passed the test of time to demonstrate that our path has been the right one and the one that restores confidence in this province. I stand here today and am proud to be a part of a government that has demonstrated vision over the last nine years, a government that has balanced the books even in the face of massive cuts in federal transfer payments, a government that did so without raising taxes and a government that will actually reduce the debt, not just talk about it.

Madam Speaker, it is time for all governments to live within their means. Furthermore, it is important that government do so on an ongoing basis, and our balanced budget legislation will ensure that this happens in this province. The reality is that the direction this government is taking is providing a future for our children, whereas the direction of the previous government did not provide Manitoba's children with a future at all, and there would be no hope if we continued to mortgage their future by spending beyond our means. I am pleased to inform the members opposite that because of this government under the direction of the Honourable Gary Filmon, our children will have a future.

It is fitting, therefore, Madam Speaker, that I open my response to the budget speech by giving due recognition to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) for tabling yet another budget that will attract more investment which means more jobs in Manitoba. I recognize the minister for introducing fiscal policies that let Manitobans know

we are working for their future and not just for a quick fix to buy their votes. Finally, I acknowledge the Minister of Finance for continuing to place the needs of Manitobans at the forefront of this government's policy. Vision like that often results in change, and this government has not been afraid of change. It has not been changed for the sake of change, but instead it has been changed with a purpose, and it has been changed in consultation with the people of Manitoba.

After all, it is Manitobans who have told us time after time that we have to get our fiscal house in order. It is Manitobans who are telling us that like themselves we can no longer spend beyond our means, and, Madam Speaker, it is Manitobans who have given us the mandate to take the necessary steps to ensure that this province has a future.

The changes we have implemented have brought about positive changes that are being recognized both in our province, across Canada and beyond. Quite frankly, I am thrilled to read that just a month ago the McGill Graduate Business Conference selected Manitoba as the best example in North America of government doing the right thing right consistently.

I want to speak to that for just a moment.

To do the right thing now and again is easy. We have seen that in the past. To do the right thing consistently means that our house is in order. That is why the government is receiving the high level of praise such as given by the McGill Graduate Business Conference. I am also interested in the wording of that praise. It is not only that we are doing the right thing consistently, but we are doing the right thing right consistently.

There was a good deal of speculation prior to the release of this budget that it was going to be a bad-news budget. Not so. Imagine, if you will, a government in their first year of a new mandate tabling a good-news budget, a budget that protects priority social programs while at the same time demonstrating our commitment to living within our means, a budget that delivers the first back-to-back surpluses since 1971.

* (1530)

The bottom line is that this budget holds out the promise of better things to come. This budget is part of

this government's direction which has and continues to create an atmosphere which attracts investment, which develops businesses, which results in jobs, meaning we have fewer people on unemployment and social assistance.

As you know, Madam Speaker, I represent the constituents of La Verendrye. They are good, hard-working people who want to know that the elected officials that gather in Winnipeg are mindful of their needs. Prior to this budget being presented by the Honourable Eric Stefanson, this government was already acting on that with a seven-week rural task force and cabinet tours throughout rural Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, this budget demonstrates the continued commitment to developing the communities that make up rural Manitoba. I meet with my constituents on a very regular, almost daily basis. To date, they have been impressed with this government and its desire to come and meet with them to hear what their needs are and to be proactive as a government by holding cabinet meetings with them.

I am told by my constituents that they truly appreciate the efforts of this government, that this government makes to come and meet with them. They tell me that this is the way government should operate, that they appreciate that government comes into their communities to discuss the many issues that are unique to their communities. The message I am receiving from my constituents is that they want this government to continue to work with them, as we have to this point, to attract investment and to help expand and develop existing projects and businesses within their communities. It will be my pleasure to inform my constituents that in addition to that which has already been done this budget has increased the level of commitment to rural Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, we are building on the success of the past eight years. For example, through our rural development Grow Bonds Program, over \$7 million in investments has been raised, leveraging additional investment of more than \$21 million for rural development. That it has already worked can be seen in the estimated 450 jobs that have come as a result of the program.

Add to this, if you will, 1,300 jobs in rural Manitoba through the Rural Economic Development Initiative, which also generated more than \$170 million of investment, and the rural development youth programs by means of the Green Team and Partners with Youth, which resulted in over 3,000 jobs for rural youth since 1992. It is small wonder, then, that it has been the province of Manitoba that had the lowest unemployment figures for youth in all of Canada last year. Rural Manitoba benefits from this government's fiscal policy, as we have just heard. However, because of our success in the past, we are now able to increase our provincial municipal tax sharing payments by 6 percent, resulting in gains for those municipalities of over \$23 million.

Other benefits of this budget include financing programs through the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation that encourages diversification into livestock and value-added products and processes. This is another example of this government asking rural Manitobans what rural Manitobans need and seeking their input by visiting with them in their municipalities and then helping them to meet their goals.

Development in the field of agriculture continues to place a strain on the supply of water that is available and accordingly this budget announced the establishment of an irrigation initiative.

Madam Speaker, in spite of continued cuts in transfer payments from the federal government, this government has announced an increase of funding for rural development so that we can expand on the success of our programs, such as Grow Bonds, REDI and other rural initiatives. To promote continued growth in these programs, this budget has announced an increase of over \$19 million for rural economic development, and that represents a 10 percent increase from 1995 to 1996. Again, it will be my pleasure to communicate that to my constituents.

Madam Speaker, this budget is for all Manitobans. It is a budget that seeks to meet the diverse needs of the people that make up this wonderful province we call home. It is a budget that promotes our province. It is a budget that will continue to make Manitoba a desirable place to call home, to visit, to invest in and to buy from.

I have seen the fruit of this government's policies firsthand throughout my constituency. I hear from people who have made use of our programs and who have done so in a climate that encourages economic development. They are telling me that we are doing the right thing by not raising taxes. As a result of the tax freeze, these same individuals are able to invest more money into their communities and businesses. Again, this is not a one-trick pony. No, this is the ninth year that we are not raising taxes, and that is what produces confidence in those who live in this province and those who plan to invest here.

As you may recall, Madam Speaker, when the Speech from the Throne was read on December 5, 1995, this government announced that it was pleased to reaffirm its commitment to Manitobans by not raising taxes or any major taxes. With this budget, this government has proven once again that it not only talks about creating a sound, predictable fiscal base, it delivers on those promises.

Madam Speaker, I was just leafing through a number of leaflets that I had here the other day, and I came across the release from the Conference Board of Canada. I would just like to touch on a few of the points that were mentioned in this article.

First it starts: Manitoba economy is steamrolling ahead.

If you look through the rest of the conference leaflet, it will note a number of other provinces and what they feel is happening in most provinces. At any rate, I would just like to touch on a few points. In the first paragraph, the construction sector grew by 15.4 percent in 1995 outperforming the other provinces. Strong growth of 22.4 percent in the housing starts is expected in 1996 in conjunction with improving consumer confidence and a satisfying of pent up demand.

Going on to agriculture, all factors point to a buoyant agriculture sector in Manitoba this year as market conditions improve on the demand side.

In manufacturing, the manufacturing sector performed well in 1995 posting growth of 5.4 percent. You go on a little bit farther in that same paragraph, overall manufacturing in 1996 and 1997 will continue to grow at

a buoyant pace as several large projects are completed. Stronger growth of 8.4 percent is expected in 1996 as many large plants begin production and much of this production will coincide with 1996 harvest.

* (1540)

In mining, after poor performances in 1993 and 1994, Manitoba's mining sector rebounded in 1995 posting growth of 6.8 percent. Going a little bit further it notes a few of the different mining projects that are underway. Rea Gold announced that it would invest more than \$40 million in upgrading the old Bissett mine, and production should begin in the first quarter of 1997.

A little bit further on construction, construction in the province was expected to peak in 1994; however, 1995 results show that this sector has not yet lost its momentum and as growth reached 15.4 percent. As well as these new projects, there are several plant expansions; as a result, nonresidential construction investment increased 31.5 percent in 1995. Strong growth of 5.9 percent and 11.9 percent is also expected in 1996 and '97 respectively. In this sector, as projects spill over into the next year new projects are scheduled to start. For instance, J. R. Simplot company has announced that \$200 million expansion of a fertilizer plant that will triple its current capacity. At present Simplot has been dismantling an existing plant in Italy and moving it to Manitoba. Going a little bit further, therefore, growth for 1996 is forecast at 22.4 percent for the housing sector.

In services, the service sector grew by 1.8 percent in 1995. The transportation sector was strong in 1995 posting a 5.3 percent gain partly due to strong exports of grain and oilseeds as world prices climb. The transportation sector should also perform well over the next two years as prices remain strong and continue to fuel exports—a lot of good news, Madam Speaker. I just hope my time does not run out.

Income and demand conditions, approximately 10,000 new jobs mainly in the manufacturing and construction sectors were created in 1995, which resulted in a 2 percent increase in employment for Manitoba. As these sectors expand in 1996 and '97, employment growth should continue. The unemployment rate is forecast to decrease to 7 percent in 1996 and 6.6 percent in 1997 in response to relatively weak labour force growth in both

years. Personal income is expected to remain firm in 1996 at 3.2 percent.

Consumer spending is expected to grow by 4.4 percent in 1996 and 3.2 percent in 1997, while retail sales are forecast to grow by 4.7 percent and 3.2 percent over the same period.

Madam Speaker, there is so much good news in all these different articles, and you can just kind of pick them up from almost any newspaper and different situations. [interjection] I will touch on that one a little bit later.

It is only through the creation of wealth, as I have spelled out earlier, that all Manitobans can continue to enjoy all the services that we all hold dear to us. These services, of course, are the health, education, and child and family services. A criticism that is often directed at government is that it is too big, which means it costs too much to keep the engine running. What this budget has revealed, Madam Speaker, is that not only have we reduced the size of government to the size it was before 1980, but we have been successful in providing the lowest overall government in all of Canada.

Madam Speaker, I enjoy meeting with my constituents and they enjoy meeting with me because they know that I look them straight in the eye and answer their questions truthfully. My constituents support a government that is keeping their fiscal house in order. When I informed my constituents that 10 percent of our total expenditures are used to service the debt, they are not impressed. However, what they are impressed with is a government that has not raised their taxes and which is working proactively to balance its budget and cut the debt. After all, to take approximately \$650 million to service a debt is not a pleasant task. That is how much we paid last year, well over half a billion dollars just to service the debt, a debt which we for the most part inherited from the party seated across the way, a debt that has harmed all Manitobans and threatened our most cherished services. However, we have met the needs of this province even under heavy reductions from the federal government while at the same time working with our people in the creation of a long-term plan that ensures a future.

Madam Speaker, this government is here for the long term. We could not continue to keep spending in a way that would see the debt increase. Instead, we did what we

had to do to stop the flow of money towards servicing the debt, as it benefited no one in this province. By this time next year this government will begin to pay down the debt. In the years that follow, our government will contribute \$75 million per year to reduce a debt that was left to us when the NDP were thrown out of office by the people of Manitoba under the direction of one of their own members.

Where the former government did not have direction, we do, and it is our moves in the right direction that have built confidence in this province, but confidence, like respect, has to be earned, and I am happy to report that we have earned the respect of our fellow Manitobans.

I read with interest the editorial in the Winnipeg Free Press on the day following the budget. I say with interest, Madam Speaker, because the editorial looked at the big picture, which is something that the members opposite typically fail to do.

The editorial said that, yes, this government had lived up to its election promises and, more importantly, had done so in a way that was difficult to improve upon. Now, I know that the members opposite will pry and poke at various areas of the budget, and they are welcome to do so, but the message that has been sounded loud and clear from this budget is that this government has proven itself to be fiscally responsible even in the light of massive cuts in transfer payments combined with a crippling debt we inherited from the party and the members opposite.

We are making this province work. We are putting this province back to work. We are attracting investment and businesses to Manitoba. We have put our House in order, and that, Madam Speaker, points our people in the direction of promise, hope and a good future. This government has a proven track record, and we continue to add to our past successes in building even more confidence in this province, a province that I am proud to live in and proud to help govern.

Madam Speaker, I want to close by recognizing the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson). Not only has he accomplished the remarkable task of tabling a budget with no new taxes, with back-to-back surpluses and with a vision for the future, but he has also balanced our budget. Yes, he has balanced the budget of Manitoba

while taking on the heavy burden of helping the federal government to get their fiscal house in order.

Madam Speaker, I do hope that those who make up the federal Liberal government become good trackers and follow the tracks left by this Finance minister, this government and this province.

* (1550)

I see that I still have a little bit of time, so I think I will just kind of touch on an article—maybe I will read it. Obviously a good budget—just another one of these—I mean, you can pick them up anywhere. They are all over. You pick up a paper and there are a number of them in it. Anyway, I will have to read quite quickly here. I do not want to miss any of this, and I will not leave any of the article out. I will not take pieces out of it. I will read the whole thing.

When Finance Minister Eric Stefanson brought down his balanced and responsible budget last week, he followed a bit of advice once put forward by Winston Churchill. That advice was that it is the duty of the wise in troubled times to repeat the obvious. The clear message of the budget was a statement of the obvious in these troubled times. Accumulated debt is the greatest threat to Manitoba's future prosperity, and the way to deal with this threat is by combining balanced budgets with an orderly reduction of the debt.

It is almost following my speech here.

Mr. Stefanson's problem with the budget is political, not economic. His task will be made more difficult by people who do not recognize the obvious and who as Mr. Churchill suggested must be constantly reminded of it. We should all understand how easy it is for the NDP and other left-wing groups to attack a responsible budget such as the one Mr. Stefanson introduced. All these opponents have to do is represent themselves as being more caring than the Conservatives. All they have to do is to advocate their favourite remedy which is to throw money at any problem while hinting that somehow, as if by magic, the money does not have to come from increased taxes.

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

To succeed, these opponents need only one thing to happen, and all they need is for a majority of Manitobans to forget what happened just 10 short years ago and to start believing that anyone can balance a budget without cutting spending or hiking taxes. We will be doing ourselves no favours if we do forget that eight short years ago we tossed out the NDP because after years of increasing our debt at rates sometimes approaching \$600 million a year, the government finally bit the fiscal bullet and hit us with tax increases that shocked us into definite action. This is the same NDP which, if given the opportunity, would spend every last cent of what we have managed to save through responsible government for the past nine years. This is the same party that is arguing that we should look after today and that tomorrow will look after itself.

It is often difficult to sort out the rhetoric and the hypocrisy—oops, look at this, we have another party in here. Lamoureux, who would be king of the Manitoba Liberals if the party would let him, attempted to delay the introduction of the budget to allow an emergency debate on health care. This, after the federal Liberal government reduced overall support for provinces by 2 percent, but cut federal payments for social programs by 32 percent.

Politicians feed the selective memories of their supporters when it suits them, and the NDP will point proudly to Saskatchewan's balanced budget achieved, it will be argued, without the cruel cuts imposed in Manitoba. The picture that will be painted will be only partial in nature. You can bet there will be no mention made of the massive tax hikes imposed by Roy Romanow in his first year as premier, hikes that have resulted in an average family of four in Saskatchewan paying close to \$700 more in taxes than the same family in Manitoba. Nor will there be mention made of the day in Saskatchewan when Mr. Romanow closed more than 50 rural hospitals.

Manitoba's facts speak for themselves. Only Alberta and Quebec have lower total taxes than Manitoba. I will admit that the figures are supplied by Mr. Stefanson, but then I remembered that one of the criticisms levelled at our Finance minister is that he tends to underestimate revenue and overestimate expenditures. Why this should be a basis for criticism remains a mystery to me. Some things the government has done have annoyed me. I cannot say I was overly enthusiastic when I discovered

after returning from a winter trip that I would have to pay for my own prescription medication from now on, rather than have other Manitobans help me with the bill. On reflection, however, there is no real reason why other Manitobans should help me pay for my prescriptions. We should and we will pay prescription costs for those who cannot afford them. That sounds fair. We should brace ourselves to similar shocks in the future.

I can remember Clayton Manness telling me in one of his budgets, just after I retired—okay, I will wind her up here—that I would not qualify for the senior school tax rebate. I took the opportunity to ask him why. He replied that the province could no longer afford to pay the rebate. I remember suggesting that it could not really afford to pay it during the 20 years or so I was taxed to fund the program. We will hear lots of criticism about the latest budget. We should not let it affect us. We have a government that has not increased major taxes in nine years and one that has put in place legislation that requires our approval for future increases. It is not a perfect government or a perfect budget, but in my books it is a lot better than would be available from those who seek the power to govern. It is a government with a budget that states the obvious. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you too for the opportunity to speak today, although I think I must confess that I begin my speech with a heavy heart.

In fact, so different is my reaction to the provincial government than that of the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson) that you would have thought we had read different documents rather than just had different world views, different perspectives, different moral standards, different hopes and wishes for the people of Manitoba. I guess I want to add too at this point that we have very different opinions on Fred Cleverley.

I want to begin by quoting from T.S. Eliot's poem, *The Wasteland*, which begins with the line, April is the cruellest month. T.S. Eliot was wise enough to know that when the season that should bring hope, when the season that should bring rebirth brings only desolation, then April is the cruellest month. I want to apply this phrase to the Minister of Finance's (Mr. Stefanson) budget of

April 2. After having heard that budget, I can only say that April is the cruellest month, and I am not referring to the acres of snow and the continuing cold in the province of Manitoba. In fact what I am referring to are the millions of dollars in cuts to health care, to education, to social welfare, to child care. These mean that there is no hope in the province of Manitoba, that there is no rebirth, that there is no real spring this year.

I want to contrast April of 1995 to April of 1996. In April of 1995, of course, we had the hot heady promises of election year, and I want to contrast those promises with this year of broken promises. The anniversary brings broken promises. When we make this contrast we see here a government without compassion for its people and a government without commitment to its promises, a government indeed without very much honour.

When T.S. Eliot said that April is the cruellest month, he was referring to the moral bankruptcy of the years following the First World War. When I say April is the cruellest month, I am referring to the moral bankruptcy of the Filmon government. Before continuing, I want to step back and make reference to some statements made by the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Penner). Last week, Wednesday, April 3, in high bristling dudgeon the member for Emerson rose on the floor expressing indignation over a couple of words.

I know that the two honourable members that I want to make reference to, the honourable member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) and the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), are quite capable of defending themselves, but I am preparing another point. I guess the honourable member for Emerson ignored the theological subtleties that the member for Crescentwood was trying to communicate. I think the phrase that disturbed him greatly was the term "hellbent." I want to remind the honourable member for Emerson that "hell" is one of the words that frequently occurs in that great Protestant poem, *Paradise Lost*, where John Milton talks about hell. He tells us that hell is a state of mind. Hell is being separated from God. He goes on to say the mind can make a hell of heaven and indeed the mind often does make a hell of heaven.

Anyway, I suppose the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) did not understand the righteous anger of the member for Burrows, who was extremely

angry and I think used the words "bold-faced lie" because of his indignation with the content of the budget.

* (1600)

But let us set these points aside. Let us set them aside and move on. What I want to do is remind this House that this past weekend was a time of sanctity and celebration for many Manitobans and, indeed, perhaps even for most Manitobans. For Jewish people, the Passover celebrates liberation; for Christians, it was a holiday that celebrated Christian love, resurrection, and redemption. It is in this context, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I want to remind the member from Emerson that my honourable colleagues are not part of Christ's ministry in order to shilly-shally around with language, but because they cherish the love and teaching of Jesus.

I think the member from Emerson chose to chastise my colleagues for the use of a couple of words and at the same time he praised the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) for a budget that was written on the backs of Manitoba's poorest people. I can only say, in my opinion, that this is an insult to the basic principles of Christianity. I want to remind the member from Emerson that Jesus was a man of the people, a rough carpenter who turned the moneylenders out of the temple and who welcomed the children of Salem. He did not advocate cutting welfare and taking food out of their mouths. It seems to me the same lack of vision which we heard from the member from Emerson underpins the entire budget, the thinking of the Premier (Mr. Filmon), the Minister of Finance, and, in fact, the entire Tory party.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to remind government members of Saint Paul, that great man of the word, that speaker of truth, that apostle and leader, who knew the difference between Christian love and money. I want to refer honourable members opposite to 1 Corinthians 13: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."

Now I could continue, but I will not. What I would like to recommend to members opposite is that they go home tonight, that they immerse themselves in this text,

that they ponder the meaning of charity or caritas, that they ponder God's love for creation and our relationship with the divine, and I am certain that if they do this, I know that their hearts, too, will burn with the charity of Saint Paul and that tomorrow afternoon they will cross the House and sit with the party that truly embodies the principles of the Man from Galilee. Of course, I am referring to my party, the New Democratic Party; and we, of course, will welcome you.

To turn now to some details of the actual budget, I reread the budget this weekend, and I consider that an act of duty. I did do it. I was interested in what information and what language were foregrounded and what language and what information were shifted to the background, and what information was left unsaid. Of course, there was the usual boasting and swaggering and the usual braggadocio, the usual kind of puffery and contempt, the usual bending and slanting of truth and, I guess I could say, the usual cooking of books, but I will not really say that.

The minister bragged about the so-called balanced budget legislation. He bragged about his self-described prestigious financial and economic achievements, and he spoke as though he personally had invented the concept of economic and fiscal prudence. He did not acknowledge that his balanced budget was preceded by Janice MacKinnon in Saskatchewan. He spoke as though his government did not inherit an extremely healthy surplus when it assumed power in 1988, and we, along with the Dominion Bond Rating Service, of course, know that it did. He spoke as if he did not in 1994-95 drain the lotteries slush fund of \$145 million in order to give the appearance of a surplus so that the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson), as several others opposite have already done, can proclaim these back-to-back surpluses.

What I thought was interesting was tucked away in the corner, tucked away in the background of the budget. After all, of course, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) does not want the human eye or the human ear to wander into certain territory. Tucked away were the de-emphasized aspects of this budget, the cuts to social programs, to health care, to education. Clearly the poor and humble, even the middle class, are not No. 1 on the dance card of the Minister of Finance. He is too busy thinking of ways to stuff away grossly underestimated

revenues into a political sock so that when the next provincial election comes around, he can put a hand in this sock, he can draw out the cash. He can become a modern white knight or a King Midas. This political sock, the so-called Fiscal Stabilization Fund, is little more, I think my side of the House agrees, than a let-us-get-ourselves-re-elected bag of money. I guess I could talk about Freud and money, but I do not want to offend the delicate sensibilities of the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), so I am going to move on.

The Minister of Finance was quick and quite correct to point out that the federal government was shortsighted in its cuts to transfer payments, but what he did not mention in his federal bashing, what he neglected to explain was that the pre-election promises broken in this government were made when he already knew of the federal changes. So go figure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I cannot.

This kind of sleight of hand of bookkeeping, of course, is what completely destroys the credibility of the Minister of Finance.

I do want to say that there were moments of grandiloquence in the minister's budgetary promises. One almost suspects him of being a quixotic dreamer or a closet romantic. He did, after all, in grand biblical style, promise the people almost a new heaven and a new Earth right here in our time and in our place but, after sober second thought, I think that the minister's promises are like those that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) made in 1995, promises that will only be broken.

The truly operative phrase in the minister's budget was steamrolling ahead and, as several of my colleagues have already said, steamrolling right over the lives and well-being of many Manitobans, including those from the Osborne constituency, the constituency which I represent, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Looking ahead to 1997-98, I understand there will be an additional 2.2 decrease in provincial spending, so I cannot imagine what that will bring.

I want to refer, before moving on to talk about particular issues in my constituency, to an editorial from The Globe and Mail's April '96 Report on Business. Now notice, I did say The Globe and Mail's Report on Business, and they, of course, are not known for their financial radicalism.

*(1610)

This particular editorial takes issue with the corporate downsizing and government preoccupation with slashing social spending, saying that this paradigm is shifting. I want to quote from this document: "Throughout the United States, Republican governors, elected on business-knows-best platforms have abruptly retreated into small-bore liberalism. Connecticut's new GOP governor, John Rowland, who last year won legislative approval to remove families from welfare rolls after just 21 months, and cut their benefits by 7 percent, now rejects his own legislature's call for further welfare cuts, and promotes a costly program of urban renewal to reverse decades of urban decay. Former true believer John Engler, Republican governor of Michigan and a hero among GOP ideologues for his uncompromising 'tough love' approach to welfare reform, now proposes higher spending on child-care services and subsidized transportation for welfare recipients. California's Pete Wilson, New York's George Pataki, and even New Jersey's Whitman, big-state governors counted on to carry the colours of the GOP's campaign to rout liberal tendencies at the grassroots level, have abandoned pull-yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps rhetoric in favour of suspiciously liberal-sounding proposals to curb teenage pregnancy, entrench rental and prescription-drug subsidies—I hope you all heard that one—for the elderly and increase funding for job training and child-care support payments.

"Talk of balanced budgets, tax cuts and the wholesale dismantling of government programs for the disadvantaged no longer dominates political discourse, and the bestseller list is ruled by It Takes a Village, Hillary Rodham Clinton's treatise on government as benign caregiver, and liberal satirist Al Franken's Rush Limbaugh Is a Big Fat Idiot."

So put that in your pipe and smoke it.

I want to turn now to the Osborne constituency and some of the effects that this budget has on my constituents.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Osborne is a very diverse riding when it comes to income, age, ethnic and religious origin, but nearly every last one of the residents there and especially seniors will be adversely affected by the

decisions of the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae). It is clear that this Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) favours user-pay health care systems, and this is his agenda as well as the agenda, of course, of the Minister of Health.

I do not care what either one of those ministers says in the House, my side of the House has the numbers and understands the pattern. Let me review some of the decisions of the Minister of Health or the Minister of Finance—I do not know who makes decisions in the Tory caucus—deinsuring eye examinations.

You know, I remember many, many years ago, when I was much younger, listening to Tommy Douglas on the radio talking about the principles of universality. In his talk he said that the reason he instituted universality and the reason that he stood by it is that he knew, once universality went, that parents would not seek the medical treatment that they needed, that they would send their children. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am sure that is what will happen with the new regulations that deinsure people between 19 and 64 when it comes to eye examinations.

This makes a mockery of the whole concept of preventive health care. It is shocking, disgraceful, a betrayal of election promises made last year. What about the whole concept of comprehensive coverage as enshrined in the Canada Health Act? That is eye care.

Pharmacare: In speaking about Pharmacare, I want to quote briefly from the Manitoba Society of Seniors Journal April 1996 in a column entitled Reality is worse than nightmares. Here the writer Murray Smith puts it very eloquently—[interjection] Yes, Murray Smith, a proud member of the Osborne constituency and a man who should be a model of leadership to all of us, including the Minister responsible for Seniors (Mr. Reimer) over there. Anyway, Murray Smith says, and here I quote: Seniors and indeed all Manitobans have feared changes to Pharmacare. We were certainly right to do so for the reality fears to be far worse than our nightmares. The new leaner and meaner Pharmacare will be of value only to those who are very poor or very ill. The great majority will never exceed the new deductible.

For most of us, the plan we trusted has simply disappeared. Seniors who have for years counted on a lower deductible will be treated as harshly as everyone

else. For most Manitobans, the promise of 100 percent reimbursement above the deductible is a mirage like the luxury cars offered at \$5,000 by that mythical dealer who never has any of those cars in stock.

I want to add—[interjection] I do not know if people over here have questions for me. I will be glad to speak to you outside the House. I want to add that I find the minister's means test on this Pharmacare application form to be offensive and degrading. I find the prospect of the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) or even my pharmacist, charming though she may be—I find the prospect of these people's snooping into my personal tax records offensive, degrading and invasive.

Let me read what it says, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is what we have to agree to: I consent to and authorize the release of any documentation required to verify the information I have provided on this application form to Manitoba Health. I nominate the Minister of Health or his/her designate to obtain from Revenue Canada data that specifically pertain to the information given on this application. Well, I think this is an invasion of public privacy, and I think it is disgraceful.

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, clearly that much-vaunted phrase from that side of the House "less government" does not apply to the privacy of ordinary, average, everyday Manitobans. No, what we have to do is sign a waiver every year giving the Minister of Health access to our personal income tax records. By the way, let us all remember, members opposite as well as members here, to tell our constituents that they need to remit a new application every year, which of course sounds like a lot of red tape to me, which was the kind of thing that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) promised to get rid of.

So health care, Pharmacare, eye examinations, hospital closures, a moratorium on health-related capital projects like the children's cancer clinic, shame on you people. Where is this going to lead to? Where is the plan? Where is the leadership? Where is the compassion? Again, and all puns included, where is the vision? Where is the vision? Certainly the vision is not apparent in the new policies on home care.

Again, I want to quote from the Manitoba Society of Seniors Journal dated April 1996, and I quote: Health

Minister Jim McCrae seems to find it hard to live with success. No sooner do other provinces praise Manitoba's home care system than he shocks both providers and consumers by deciding to privatize it.

You know, last night I was doing some door-to-door work and I happened to encounter a woman who was telling me that she had worked in home care and she was telling me about a Japanese delegation that came to Manitoba last year to study our home care. I am glad they came last year, because this year it is being deconstructed.

Of course, the worst thing about the changes in home care is not its shock value, if this were only the case, but that is not true. No, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us consider the full results of this decision to privatize home care. Fourteen hundred people will be laid off and some, perhaps most, may be given the opportunity to return to work but at some 40 percent decrease in their wages. The same year as the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) is getting a 14 percent increase in his ministerial portion, we are asking home care workers to suffer a 40 percent decrease. This is absolutely insulting.

* (1620)

Let us take a little look at some of these wages, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I see I do not have all the time in the world, so what I want to say very quickly is, currently, the average home care worker, and that includes homemakers, nurses aides, LPNs and RNs, the average salary for a 37-1/2 hour week is \$29,500. The average in private care is \$18,900, and that is the average. The low end in the private industry is \$12,831. Well, try to live on that.

I am speaking about the results of the privatization of home care. One of the results, of course, as we all know, is that we will create four millionaires, including among them close personal friends of the Minister of Health. Another result is that we will introduce weaknesses and deficiencies into the quality of home care. What about workplace morale? How would the rest of us fare if we were suddenly given a 40 percent drop in our salary? One of the results is the disruption of the continuity of care, of personal trust. The confidence required to provide a quality program will most certainly be eroded by this program as surely as night follows day. The

result will be an incredible stress, incredible grief for the home care workers, 98 percent of whom are women, disruption in services for seniors, for the disabled, many who are probably women, too.

When the user fees come, as I am sure they surely will, then women will be the ones expected to leap into the breach and provide home care for their loved ones because many people simply will not be able to pay these user fees when they come. Lost and friendless people, people without friends or family, will suffer in lonely silence.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have said it before, and I want to say it again, the policy to privatize health care is implicitly sexist. It puts undue pressure on a distinct and recognizable group. That is the women of Manitoba. It is an insult to fair-minded men and women in Manitoba, and if this Premier had any commitment to human rights, he would ask the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to submit his resignation posthaste.

Can I ask how much time I have left, please?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Two minutes.

Ms. McGifford: Two minutes, well, I had many other things that I wanted to talk about. I think I will reserve most of those matters for Estimates or for Question Period.

I want to quickly turn to that phrase "our children" which I have heard so sanctimoniously bruted about in this House. I want to make the point that as legislators we are responsible for all children, for street kids, for the poor and destitute, for the sick and disabled, for the battered and abused. As well, of course, we are responsible for the comfortable and healthy. This kind of specious logic that we can somehow protect the future of our children by destroying their current lives is a betrayal of children, and it simply must stop. Thank you.

Mr. David Newman (Riel): Good afternoon, Mr. Deputy Speaker, honourable members and guests. It is both an honour and a pleasure for me to be here this afternoon to respond to the honourable Minister of Finance's (Mr. Stefanson) 1996 budget. This is a first for me to be able to respond in this House to the delivery

of a provincial budget, and it is truly an honour for me to respond to this budget in particular.

When I sought public office a year ago, I did so because I believed that it was important to do all that I could to ensure that the balanced budget legislation passed. I felt I could contribute, that I could work co-operatively with the honourable members to make tough and responsible decisions in the long-term best interests of Manitobans, especially the disadvantaged. I believe that the direction that this government has been taking was the correct one for the province of Manitoba. I supported and encouraged the strategy of this government which has evolved over the last eight budgets before the general election last April 25.

On Tuesday, April 2, the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) reaffirmed this decision for me. The budget he delivered is tangible evidence of this government's commitment to the future of our province. Gone are the days when governments can subscribe to the spend-to-be-popular model of budgeting. Governments would create huge deficits year after year needless of the eventual ramifications but eager to please.

I am reminded of Plato in his dialogues in *The Republic* whenever I think of the spend-to-be-popular governments in the past. You would compare them to those who, having no self-restraint, will not leave off their habits of intemperance, said Plato. And what a delightful life they lead. They are always doctoring and increasing and complicating their disorders and always fancying that they will be cured by a nostrum which anybody advises them to try. The charming thing is that they deem him their worst enemy who tells them the truth.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are telling the truth about our public debt and the threat to viable health, education and family services we are facing up to with this budget. Commenting on politicians appeasing the public appetites and being applauded for it, Plato goes on to say: Do not be angry with them, for they are not as good as a play, trying their hand at paltry reforms. They are always fancying that by legislation they will make an end of frauds and contracts and the other rascalities which I have mentioned, not knowing they are in reality cutting off the heads of the hydra. The hydra, as we all know, is that mythic water serpent with many heads, each of which when it was cut off was succeeded by two. Well, we are

now confronted with the consequence of the hydra-head choppers. Governments in this country managed to build deficits which we continue to pay for to this day. All Manitobans are facing the results, and they are asking us not to repeat the same mistakes. They want wise, courageous, strong and responsible stewardship and leadership.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a year ago when this government was elected for a third consecutive term, Manitobans sent us a clear message that they support our efforts, that they want a balanced budget, and that they felt that we are best able to provide a strong Manitoba for their children and their grandchildren. As the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) stated in his address, budgets are about setting priorities. They are also about making difficult decisions. As an elected government, we hold a position of trust. By forming the government, we have in essence been hired by the people of Manitoba to do a job, and, just as in any other job, we are mindful of our responsibilities and know that we must perform to the expectations of our employers, the people of Manitoba

* (1630)

In the face of federal reductions to our social programs and the necessity to provide a sound economic base for Manitoba's future, we have had to make difficult decisions. Manitobans know that the status quo was not working and change was necessary in order to allow for the continued high quality of life that most of us in Manitoba enjoy and have come to expect. Fiscal reform is the foundation for Manitoba's long-term strategy for economic renewal. This long-term plan consists of four key elements, the first being a competitive tax environment.

When we first took office, Manitoba was one of the highest taxed provinces in the country. During the years of NDP government in Manitoba we saw attempts to make up for the loss of job opportunities in Manitoba by increases in government jobs and by the creation of temporary jobs by use of taxpayers' money. All this money is drawn from taxes and in the final analysis was paid as a cost of business or by consumers in the price of goods bought. Such tax increases only increase the unit cost of doing business in Manitoba. For a government to try and make up for the loss of jobs caused by excessive business costs by increasing the tax load on business is

an unreasonable approach. It can only make matters worse. The government directly increased the tax costs of business in Manitoba higher than elsewhere in Canada. This resulted in the destruction of the jobs of the working families in Manitoba.

Since 1988, the Filmon government has tried to correct these mistakes. Now, after nine years of discipline, involving nine budgets without major tax increases, we compare well with other provinces. Mr. Deputy Speaker, for example, currently, for a single person with an income of \$20,000, only in Alberta and British Columbia would he or she have a lower provincial tax rate for a family of four. It is the lowest tax rate. For a family of four, the provincial income tax is the fourth lowest. By taking this route, we are ensuring that Manitoba has an environment which is conducive to business investment, investor and consumer confidence and, most importantly, jobs.

The second component of our strategy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is internal reform of government. This includes the creation of special operating agencies which not only mean better services for Manitobans, but also significant annual savings. Seven additional operating agencies were established by this budget: the Companies Office; Manitoba Textbook Bureau; Mail Management Agency; Industrial Technology Centre; the Public Trustee; Office of the Fire Commissioner, and the National Agri-Food Technology Centre. These seven agencies, together with the existing eight, means 3 percent of the civil service and \$65 million of government business are run in accordance with entrepreneurial principles and disciplines. This is the kind of civil service reform which is our hope for future accountability and civil service pride and confidence.

Thirdly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have moderated public sector wages. All Manitobans realize that we must live within our means, and, as public sector wages are \$3.7 billion per year, we must look at ways to control wages while minimizing the effect on employees. In this budget, we have stated that agreements based on a status quo framework would make this possible. The reduced workweek program has allowed us to keep 500 jobs which would otherwise have been deleted. A continuation of this program will be relatively beneficial to all. We will be able to maintain services for the province while minimizing the effect on public sector employees. The combination of controlling costs,

spending smarter and managing more effectively has made us the lowest-cost government in Canada. What a credible advertisement for anyone thinking of establishing a business in Manitoba. This means more jobs and more stability. We practise what we preach here in Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the first three aspects make the fourth one possible, the protection of our social programs. It is because our economy is performing so well and because we have set a record for prudent fiscal management that we are able to provide continued high levels of funding to the core areas of health, education and family services. We now spend almost \$3.5 billion in these areas, an increase of \$990 million over the level of spending in 1987-1988. In fact, 90 percent of our spending increases since we first assumed office in 1988 have gone to these key areas. However, even in light of these spending increases, we have had to make the tough decisions which will keep us on the path to sustainable economic and social programs.

We have to spend smarter. For this reason, we are targeting our programs to those who need them most. The changes to our welfare system are a case in point. They are geared towards moving able people off welfare and into jobs. We live in a province whose economy managed to create 10,000 new jobs last year. We have to encourage continued growth in this direction so that we may ensure that every Manitoban who is able to work has a job.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know that Manitoba is capable of sustaining such growth, and because this growth is possible, we have made changes to our welfare system so that all Manitobans will have the opportunity to benefit directly and indirectly from these new jobs. We will be focusing our resources on providing people in need with the necessary supports and training to secure employment. We believe that the best form of social assistance is a job for those able. These reforms should be looked upon as an investment.

Manitobans want to work, and we are helping them gain the dignity and experience which come along with employment. We are putting Manitoba's tax dollars to work to get Manitobans working. These reforms are a benefit to everyone, directly or indirectly. Those who are most vulnerable, such as single parents with children

under six, the elderly, the disabled, and women in crisis shelters, are not the targets of these reforms.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitoba's changing fiscal situation has meant that we have to make changes in our social agenda, but we are not doing so through massive cutbacks such as the federal government is making. Over a two-year period, the federal government will cut funding for social programs by 32 percent versus only 2 percent cutback for other federal program expenditures.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are meeting the challenge created by our federal government. We are diversifying our economy by developing the skills and potential which exist in all Manitobans. We have consistently stressed the need to put Manitobans to work, and we are putting the supports in place which make this possible. This government has budgeted for another surplus for the second straight year.

In their day-to-day lives, Manitobans set priorities for their spending. They save up for what they want. They determine their needs and the needs of their families, and they borrow money only when it represents a sound investment for them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are striving for the same responsible approach for our province as most Manitobans manage in their own homes. We are spending within our means. We have established spending priorities and have targeted our resources where they are most needed. We have invested in our province. I would suggest that just as individual Manitobans have to have flexibility in their budgeting to allow for unforeseen expenditures, so do we.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, forest fires last year, potential floods this year demonstrate our ability to provide for a budget surplus as a benefit to Manitobans, not a detriment, unless, of course, in addition to paying down the accumulated debt. If further explanation or clarification is necessary, let me put it in yet another light. I will use household finances, again, as an example. All households, be they single-parent household, young families, elderly couples, have something in common. None of them can forecast the unexpected. For this reason everybody tries to have something stored away just in case. Otherwise, a great deal more people would find themselves in the middle of

January with a broken furnace or a car that they did not budget repairs for. No government can guarantee these sorts of things, and, as a result, we have to be prepared.

* (1640)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in our ninth budget, delivered to the people of Manitoba, we have again clearly outlined our main priority, to create an economic environment which allows us to preserve our valuable social programs for those who need it most. There is no doubt in my mind that we are on the right course with our budget initiatives. We know that a healthy social agenda is not possible without a sound fiscal agenda. One clearly requires the other, like Siamese twins.

When I compare this latest budget with the other eight we have delivered to the people of Manitoba, a clear pattern is evident. Change was needed, and this government is making some difficult decisions about where change should occur. Our approach to the provincial budget is the appropriate one and is one which the people of Manitoba have supported since 1988. I am proud to be part of a government which has made difficult but needed decisions, the choices that have allowed us to achieve our goal of a balanced budget while maintaining vital social programs.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that change is not always easy but, in this case, change is essential. Our fiscal approach, which has a balanced budget as its foundation, is the most appropriate way to maintain and strengthen social programs and policies which we have put in place to protect society's most vulnerable. The budget provides in that respect \$2 million more funding for adults with disabilities and a further \$4 million for children in care. We have allocated an additional \$1.7 million to educational renewal in Manitoba, bringing our total budget commitment in this area to \$5.4 million.

We recognize the importance of providing our children with the education and skills needed to compete in a rapidly changing and evolving world economy. We have already introduced many changes to the education system in Manitoba intended to better equip our children for future challenges, and this budget will allow us to continue our initiatives in this area.

Further, we have put in place an incentive for young people to invest in their education via the Manitoba

learning tax credit. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitoba is the first province in the country to initiate such a measure, which will provide students with a refundable learning tax credit. We have consistently identified education as one of our priorities, and our budget is representative of our ongoing commitment in that area.

We are increasing funding to Home Care by \$8 million. Our goal is to enhance and increase home care services for those in need of that kind of care, and we all know that at the moment negotiations are proceeding with the home care workers and through the art and wonderful process of free collective bargaining things are being worked out, and this is as it should be.

In keeping with our commitment to help build safer neighbourhoods and homes, we will provide \$2 million in additional funding to put more police officers on Winnipeg's streets and have introduced the Urban Sports Camp Program, which represents a positive alternative to crime and violence for high-risk youth. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is only a portion of the good news that may be found in the budget document. We are all aware of the fact that this budget continued the longest running tax freeze in the country for the ninth straight year. Likewise, we all know the variety of initiatives contained in the budget that will create new opportunities to promote investment, protect vital social programs and keep our communities safe.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitobans are familiar with what we are doing, but I would like this opportunity to suggest to them why we were doing it. Some Manitobans will perceive that the hard choices we have had to make in this budget are directed primarily at them. That is only human. Many government employees, for instance, may feel that what we are proposing in terms of reductions of positions and the continuance of the reduced workweek program is unfair and is placing more of the burden of providing for economic stability on their shoulders. They have a right to suggest. The reality, however, is that for a long time public sector employees did very well in terms of wages, benefits and job security compared to the private sector. The public sector generally looked after itself first. Now, however, we as a government are committed to paying more respect to taxpayers' interests. Just as a corporation must pay heed to shareholders, creditors and consumers as well as employees in spending corporate dollars we must do the same in a

public sector monopoly. It simply must be done. The created pensions must be respected.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we fully appreciate how difficult these changes are and the extent to which they are affecting public servants in Manitoba. It is for this reason that we have worked hard to minimize the effect of change on Manitobans. We have effected change gradually over the past nine years, and Manitobans are now beginning to see the positive results of our efforts. However, our job is not yet completed. Although this is the first budget in many years which allocates more of Manitobans' tax dollars to economic and resource development than debt financing, \$580 million versus \$575 million, service charges on our debt still represent the fourth largest area of spending for this government. Only health, education and family services, only in those areas do we spend more.

Just think how much more we will be able to spend on programs and services for Manitobans once the debt has been taken care of. There is light at the end of the tunnel. Be positive about this. Our efforts to control spending, to live within our means, to target our resources where they are most needed and a plan for the future, not only for the present, are intended to be in the ultimate best interest of this province and every person who lives here.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitobans should and do recognize that positive change of the kind we are aiming for does not happen overnight, and everyone is going to have to do their part. We all, individually and collectively, have to be committed to the goal of paying down the debt in order to reap the rewards later. These are the end results of facing challenges. We learn from the challenges faced, and we can all ultimately benefit. Within the next four years you and all Manitobans will be able to see and measure the tangible results of what we are doing. Overcoming challenges through effort gives us sense of achievement. It builds self-esteem and morale. Honourable members would be doing a service to Manitobans by individually inspiring this discipline effort and ultimate achievement. In the words of Henry Miller, example moves the world more than doctrine.

Earlier I spoke of the people of Manitoba as our employer, in fact, they are more than that. They are the owners of the company of government as well as the consumers of our programs and services. As I said, Mr.

Deputy Speaker, they have a right to reliable performance evaluation. I am pleased to say that we have been getting favourable reviews. The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce believes we are creating the right climate for investment and job opportunities by holding the line on deficits.

This position has been echoed by the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce and the Canadian Federation of Independent Business as well. We are not just getting good performance reviews at the provincial level, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at the national level, as well. As was stated by the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) in his address, the Institute of Public Administration of Canada recently acknowledged the important role played by Manitoba in pioneering special operating agencies as an innovative way to deliver and finance programs. Furthermore, the McGill Graduate Business Conference recently singled out Manitoba as being the best example in North America of a government consistently doing the right thing. The Conference Board of Canada describes Manitoba's economy as steamrolling ahead. John Douglas in the Winnipeg Free Press wrote a thoughtful article on Saturday, April 6, explaining how the PC's fiscal policy is paying off for Manitobans generally. Fred Cleverley evaluated the budget highly in his column in the same paper of April 8. The Manitoba Taxpayers Association on March 15, 1995, stated, effective balanced budget legislation will produce high-quality government, competitive taxes, more investment and more jobs.

On September 27, 1995, it stated: The Filmon government's courage in backing the rhetoric of balanced budget legislation with the real thing is a turning point in Manitoba history. By putting taxpayers back in the driver's seat, it will force the long needed shift from low-performance to high-performance government at the provincial level.

Regrettably, the official opposition appears to take the side of negative emotion and socialist ideology against entrepreneurship, enterprise and individual responsibility. I prefer a principled, reasoned, pragmatic approach respectful of entrepreneurship, enterprise and individual responsibility.

We can all do better communicating factually and responsibly and with open hearts with the disadvantaged. We can focus on constructive communication and empowerment. In addition, I appeal to all honourable members to make special effort to reaffirm a positive relationship with teachers, professors, lawyers, provincial court judges, doctors, nurses and other professionals and public sector union members.

These citizens, in their independent, sometimes self-governing roles in the public interest, are extremely important to Manitoba far beyond themselves. These individuals, in their spheres of influence, have a measurable impact on the attitudes, habits, values and morale of Manitobans. I believe that the vast majority of them, when they understand the facts and choices we have to make, appreciate our decisions. We must rededicate our efforts to effective, good-faith communication with an emphasis on listening, team building, collaboration founded on mutual gains and trust. We must engender confidence that citizens' personal sacrifices in the public interest to date have been worthwhile and appreciated.

In *The Prince*, Machiavelli warned princes of the difficulty of implementing change. It ought to be remembered, he said, that there is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct or more uncertain in its success than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things because the innovator has enemies, all of those who have done well under the old conditions and lukewarm defenders and those who may do well under the new. This coolness arises partly from fear of the opponents, who have the laws on their side, and partly from the incredulity of men who do not readily believe in new things until they have had a long experience of them. Thus it happens that whenever those who are hostile have the opportunity to attack they do it like partisans whilst the others defend lukewarmly and such wise that the prince is endangered along with them.

The Filmon approach is for change to evolve gradually, to have faith in most Manitobans to understand and accept the changes, in short to rely on the good judgment of Manitobans. Manitobans who are members of unions and professional organizations have democratic means available to them to embrace positive changes. Some leaders of interest groups have shown a tendency during the Filmon years in government to be hostile to any

change that threatens those who have done well under old conditions. These interest groups team up with opposition parties in common cause to resist change. Far too often, only if they know resistance will fail do they help their members adjust to necessary changes. Both opposition parties continue to be pressured by powerful interest groups to resist our budget, programs and philosophy.

I hope that honourable members opposite will stand up to this pressure and educate these organizations to become positive agents for change in the long-term mutual interest of their members and the public at large. I hope that honourable members opposite and the public at large will not allow themselves to be manipulated by the rhetoric and tactics of these pressure groups.

Unfortunately, from time to time in this House I get the impression that some honourable members opposite are succumbing to this pressure. Attempts of honourable members opposite during this Budget Debate that portray us as heartless, self-serving and without virtue reflects negatively on them. I urge you to rise above this temptation and explain the benefits of debt reduction and our long-term plan to the people in your constituencies, especially the disadvantaged, who need the changes we stand for more than anyone else. I ask you to consider working with your constituents to help them adjust to inevitable changes rather than to fight them. Help them to face change with less fear and more confidence. Preparation and understanding empower them as self-responsible individuals. I subscribe to the belief that people want and need courageous, principled, credible, responsible and caring leaders acting in their long-term best interest. Provided these leaders are humble and show respect and appreciation for all Manitobans, their achievements will be recognized.

The people of Manitoba deserve such leadership, respect and courtesy. Honourable members on this side of the House are committed to providing it.

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased and anxious to join the debate on this budget, and I want to start off by saying that I have run into a number of people in the community lately that have said that very thing, when are you going to get in there and give them h-e-double hockey sticks? They have said, when are you going to get in there and speak up for

us, when are you going to get in there and tell them what is happening in the community? That is what people are saying about the effects of the Conservative Filmon agenda. We are calling it the greed agenda. It is the greed agenda on the road to the jobless, wageless economic recovery, on the road to user-fee government where fair taxation is being replaced by gambling revenue and by user fees.

I never thought that I would see the end of medicare but, unfortunately, we are witnessing the end of universal medicare, and it is going to create a community and a society that is unsafe, is uncivil, is undemocratic, is unjust, and I wonder how many members opposite know how much space is at the top of the hierarchy that they are creating. How much room is there at the top? Because the kind of disparity—I call this the disparity budget—the kind of disparity that this budget is creating in the community is going to create haves and have-nots in every part of the province. I had someone say to me the other day, you know, there are poor people in Tuxedo.

(Mr. Mike Radcliffe, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

I want to start off talking about a global context for this budget, because the members opposite will go on and on about the global realities facing us, and this is the competitiveness, greed agenda. I want to talk about what we are trying to compete with when we look at the kind of conditions in other countries that members opposite, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) are going around and Jean Chretien and the Team Canada peddling nuclear reactors, setting up trade agreements with countries that have slave labour, no human rights, no environmental regulations in force.

This is what we are competing against. We are competing against child labour. I went and bought a pair of running shoes last night. I have not bought a pair of running shoes for a couple of years. I could not believe the price of running shoes. These are running shoes that were probably made in Taiwan. I asked the sales representative. Yes, they were made in Taiwan. I asked, do you think these are made by child labour, because I think that we have to start taking this competitive agenda more seriously internationally. We are competing with children as workers in other countries who are working from 7 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. for pennies. That is not something we can compete with in this country.

But when we look at this government's agenda that they have with labour legislation to make it more difficult to form unions, when we look at their agenda in privatizing home care, in making Pharmacare less of a universal program and making it so that a lot of income earners, middle-income earners, will have to pay thousands of dollars—I had a fellow the other day tell me how he is going to use up his deductible in the first two months of the year. It costs him and his wife \$600 a month for medication, and they are on a pension.

When I look at the rest of their agenda in health care with closing community hospitals, and they go on and on about how health reform is about community-based care, and then they introduce the profit motive into home care, you have to sort of scratch your head and go, well, is community-based care only for people who can afford it? What about the people who cannot afford the fees of We Care and all these other companies?

* (1700)

When you look at what we are dealing with in terms of this competitive global agenda, I want to just put a little bit of information on the record, because I have been doing some research. I have been involved in a project to try and get more information out about what is happening with the global economy. I want to put on the record some statistics: that 3 billion people live in countries with an annual population growth rate of 2 percent or more; that we add nearly 90 million people to the Earth each year, 94 percent of which are in areas where there is already, what is the phrase, a destruction of the natural capital, which means there is no longer the environment to sustain and grow food and provide water for those people; that one of every 70 Canadians is a settled refugee; that there are 20 million people currently refugees, and that the number of environmental refugees is increasing steadily.

This is one thing that we do not talk about enough because, yes, there is poverty in Canada. It is horrible to think that a country that has such wealth has such abject poverty, particularly in the North. When you look at the fact that countries like Canada consume over 60 percent, some say towards 80 percent, of the world's resources, but we have 20 percent of the population, you can see that this cannot continue. What we have with these trade agreements is the ever ongoing search for the new market.

We just cannot continue to think that we can have countries like China have the same model for economic development as we do here, because the Earth does not have the carrying capacity. It cannot sustain increased burning of fossil fuel at the rate that we do in Canada and the developed countries. [interjection] We will talk about that in a moment. The Minister of Housing (Mr. Reimer) wants to talk about nuclear energy.

I want to talk a little bit first about military spending, because in this context that we are putting this global competitive economy into we have to talk about the amount of waste that is spent on arms trade. The research that I have done has talked about a trillion dollars every two weeks internationally spent on arms and military expenditures, and 25 percent of that would pay for housing and health care and education and food for all the people on the planet. So you have to wonder, governments like the one opposite that support this type of industrial, economic, military system, what they are thinking of. What are they thinking of? The idea that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) is participating in promoting the sale of increased nuclear technology to countries that have the kinds of government that have no accountability and have no regulations for human rights or for any of the other regulations that would contribute to a civil society is unthinkable, is reprehensible.

People may say, why is it that Canada is giving money to some of these underdeveloped countries when we have so much poverty here? What I think that people have to start looking at, if we are indeed going to consider ourselves as a global village, is that we have to start caring about some of those countries that have slave child labour and all of those other horrible atrocities. What it has become very easy for corporations to do is to transfer the jobs that would be providing a decent wage for workers here to those countries where companies can make huge profits. We know that is what is happening. I find it quite frightening that we have something called the jobless recovery, that we can have increases in the profit of corporations, in the growth of corporations, and that does not translate into jobs. Part of that is because of technology, but I think part of that is also because of the increased freedom with which capital can move around the world and where people can make huge profits on currency speculation. So this is the context that we are working in, and we have our little government here in Manitoba trying to balance its budget in the face of this

huge global shift to what I would call a less caring society for our global village.

I think that we have to stop fooling ourselves. It amazes me how the issues of sustainability and environment have been completely wiped off the public agenda and the government agendas and the media agendas across the country and here at home because nothing has changed. None of the real problems are being dealt with.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

All that we have is governments who think that they can fool people perhaps for a while that they are actually dealing with the real issues that face us. If the government is serious about dealing with what they call the real world and globalization, they have to start having trade agreements that are going to actually increase the protection and security for all those countries around the world who we are selling nuclear technology to, who we are selling arms to. We have to make sure that their quality of life is going to be protected, and that is the new security. It is not going to be about military spending. It is going to be about making sure that everyone has access to decent health care and decent education and the means to an income, and that is going to come from co-operation and dialogue and consensus. It is not going to come from economic competitiveness because, as I started out saying, there is not enough room for all those millions and billions of people.

I think what I would suggest is what I just said, that we develop a new way to have trade agreements and international agreements, and we have developed some. This government and the federal government have signed on to the International Declaration of Child Rights, a UN convention, and it mandates that every child should have access to health care and education and protection from violence. Your government signed on to that, and, rather than taking our society in a direction where that is going to happen, you are going back to the Dark Ages.

I made a note here as I was looking through the budget, and I can say this as the Sport critic for our party, but I am concerned that the department responsible for Sport has a budget greater than the entire department budget for Environment. Now, I know that the Pan Am Games are coming up, and I know how this government feels about

competitive sport. We saw that with their fanaticism about the Jets. But we have to start questioning the priorities of when—I would have to check to look at the increase in the budget getting ready for the Pan Am Games. Even though I support that kind of cultural activity, when you start looking at the priorities as they are represented in the government, you have to know that in a province like Manitoba, \$13 million is not going to provide the resources for a Department of Environment to do all the inspections and law enforcement and programming that is necessary to ensure that we are going to have our air quality and water quality protected and that industry is going to be disposing of its waste as it should and all the other things that the DOE is meant to do.

I look at the cut, almost a million dollars, about \$800,000 in Housing, in public housing in particular—and I do not know if the government is paying much attention to what has happened over in Ontario, where they have also made dramatic cuts to their public housing, and they cut money for welfare so that people are forced onto the street. Now, historically, Manitoba does not have a huge number of people who live on the street because they would freeze, given the kind of winter we just had this year especially, but we are, I think, going to start seeing increased unhealthy and unsafe situations as people try to deal with the cuts that this government has made.

* (1710)

It is interesting to note that last year, when we raised these issues around low-income housing and the way that the cuts were being made, the government was saying, well, people have to choose if they are going to spend money on housing or on food. It seems like now the government has made that choice for people when they have guaranteed that the welfare reductions are not going to affect landlords, but they are going to come out of food budgets for babies in families on welfare. I find that reprehensible.

The other thing that was interesting in the budget is to look at their comments about youth unemployment. They are trying to brag that Manitoba has the lowest youth unemployment rate in the country, and when you are involved in the race to the bottom with a province like Newfoundland and like Ontario that is being hit the way

that they are, I do not know if that is something to take pride in, but this government seems to think they can justify their backward and ill-conceived decisions here by saying, hey, look at Newfoundland or look at Ontario or look at some other province.

I think that the youth unemployment rate in Manitoba is misleading. It does not take into account all the young people that have just given up looking for work and are at home. It does not take into account the number of young people who have left the province. It does not take into account the number of young people who are on welfare. It does not take into account the number of young people who are working part-time and going to university, so they can avoid starting to pay their student loan and bring in a little bit of money. It does not take into account all those young people who have university degrees and are horribly underemployed, who are working, yes, but are working far below what they are capable of doing.

The statistics that the government will quote on youth unemployment is very misleading. It does not take into account the reality of the lives of a number of young people in this province or who have left this province.

I want to talk a little bit about just generally the unfairness of the cuts that this government is making and the way that they are budgeting. This budget is a very political document. The government is politicizing and manipulating the accounting of the finances of the Province of Manitoba in a way that I do not know if any government has ever done that before. We have had everyone one from the Dominion Bond agency to the Auditor saying that the way they have played jack-in-the-box with the public finances is unacceptable, and I think that that is unfair.

I think that misleading the public in that way, by hiding money in the Fiscal Stabilization Fund or saying that this money is going to go for the debt repayment fund and racking up a surplus one year but saying, well, it may not be that big of a surplus, and then saying that surplus that was left to you by the NDP government of '88 was not really a surplus and you moled it away. I think the way that they have used the revenue from lotteries has also been unfair because I do not think they are being straight with the public. It is a good thing that we have institutions like the public Auditor's office so that we

may have some clarity and disclosure of the real picture. But now we have a government that is saying, well, we may have a \$20-million surplus, we may have a \$100-million surplus, and they are not quite sure. They want to play games with the rate of growth projections, so they cannot have to really account for the increase in revenue. If there is such a great boom in the economy, as the minister said in his budget speech, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), then why is that not being translated into cash and revenue for the government?

I am really concerned about a trend that may be happening, and this is at this point simply a theory that I have. I am wanting to, I guess, do a little bit of speculating, and I want to relate this to one of the themes that I am talking about—the idea that there can be a jobless recovery or a wageless recovery—because as we have seen in Manitoba and in Canada, corporate profits have been reduced and corporate profits have gone up, yet there is no translation of that increase in profits into revenue for the government because the taxation is so low. I would suggest that this is contributing to the jobless recovery.

I think that a number of us on this side of the House think that the government is doing exactly the opposite of what it should be doing in areas like health care and care of seniors and services for young people, because that is an area where we can have job creation. There is much needed job creation.

The other thing about services in that area and jobs in those areas is they do not increase the strain on natural capital. This government on the other hand chooses to give away our natural capital. They choose to give away our forests, and I cannot remember if it is for hardwoods or softwoods, but we have one of the lowest stumpage fees in the world. So they continue to try and create jobs in this way by giving away our resources hand-over-fist rather than looking at ways that we can have jobs that are going to meet the needs, the ever growing needs, in our community. I would suggest that one of the ways that the real growth in the economy can go up, but there are no jobs, has to be translated into some type of economic indicator because it is not healthy to have the kind of gap that is growing between the levels of income of different citizens. I think that is the kind of analyses that we have to start taking if we are going to see the real picture. We cannot rely on growth rates that show increase in the

economy when there is no translation to jobs for people in our community.

I wanted to talk about what the government is doing in public education. The additional \$15 million that they are cutting from Education is going to translate into approximately 30 teachers being eliminated from the school divisions that I represent, and it is going to mean that there are going to be approximately 600 students that will be without a teacher next year. This is all happening at the time when the government is opening up the negotiations of teachers salaries for the strike option. Now, this has to be one of the most backward things this government is doing, and it is being done in a way to try and put the burden of debt on teachers, to say that you are making too much money and we want you to be forced into taking wage rollbacks.

I can tell you that this is incredibly unfair at the same time when they have given their senior staff in the Department of Education, who now earns almost \$112,000 a year, a 28.3 percent wage increase over the last three years.

So the majority of teachers in the province have had no salary increases, but the Deputy Minister of Education has had a 28.3 salary increase, just like the salary increases that this government has levied for us in the House here, and we asked questions on this today. I mean, what else could the government do to increase the cynicism and the distrust of political officials if not to ask civil servants and public-sector workers to take wage rollbacks and freezes and at the same time to give themselves the kind of increases that they have? I think it is the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) that has 14 percent, similarly across the board and the cabinet. So no wonder people are a little bit disparaging about the role and the contribution of elected officials when you take those kinds of approaches.

I know that many people on our side of the House have talked about health care and talked about the effects of the cuts on people in their community. I want to take a moment to read from a letter that I received today from citizens of Winnipeg about the effect that the changes in home care are going to have on them.

I hope that the government is going to look at this seriously. I know when we raise these issues in Question Period, oh, they sort of say, that is only one letter. I do not know what it takes to create the value system and attitudes that the members opposite have when they could abuse the power of government that they have to eliminate systems like home care and Pharmacare that have tried to provide some kind of decency in health care for people.

But, anyway, that is what they are doing, and this is what the public is saying. It is very difficult to leave the person you love in care of others, particularly when you do not know them. Believe me, I have suffered through it. You have no idea what state the person you leave behind will be in when you return. My husband's case has often been a most unhappy, depressed state. It goes on to talk about the history of that person's husband.

They go on to say, three years ago we were fortunate enough to have a lady sent to our house who fit like a glove. She is well trained and skillful. She is kind and considerate. She is conscientious. She is aware of his illness and his problems. She is able to report when things are not well for him, and this has happened more and more recently, as well as when he has had a good day.

We have built up a good, caring and trusting relationship, the three of us. We have been able to leave the house, knowing that there is someone there who knows how to move him, what to do when he cannot be moved, and who knows when to talk to him and when to keep quiet, who keeps a sharp eye on his ups and downs, as I do. You are about to take this away.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): No, we are not.

Ms. Cerilli: I would ask the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), since he says, no, they are not—how can you put a price tag on the kind of care that that person is getting by a known, trusted home care worker? That is the question, because I do not believe in a democratic and civil society that something like health care should be put for profit.

As I said earlier, there have been umpteen international agreements signed that talk about health care being a

human right, especially in a country like Canada. Health care is not something where people should make profit.

I can see that my time is almost up, and I think that that is a good message to leave on this budget debate for this government, that there are certain things that you cannot put a price tag on. There are certain things that have no business being for profit, and health care and education are two of those things.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Labour): I understand that it may be the will of the House to call it 5:30.

Madam Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it 5:30?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: The hour being 5:30, this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 9, 1996

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