



Fifth Session- Thirty-Sixth Legislature

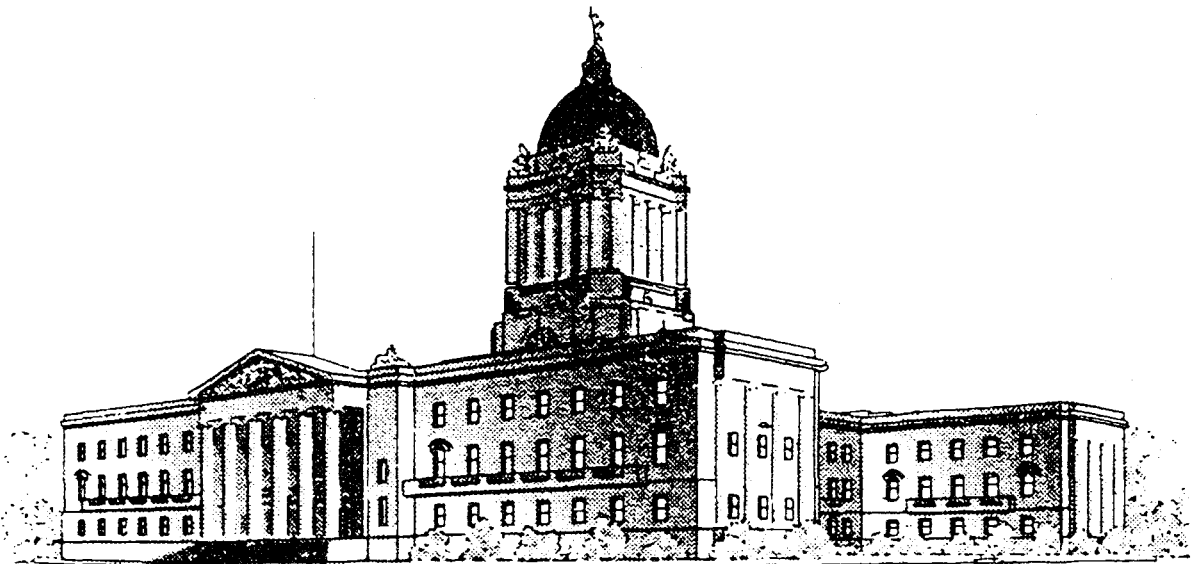
of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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The Honourable Louise M. Dacquay
Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
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	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
DRIEDGER, Albert	Steinbach	P.C.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	N.D.P.
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	P.C.
FINDLAY, Glen	Springfield	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	N.D.P.
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, Hon.	Riel	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank, Hon.	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
RADCLIFFE, Mike, Hon.	River Heights	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack, Hon.	Niakwa	P.C.
RENDER, Shirley, Hon.	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, Hon.	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.
<i>Vacant</i>	St. Boniface	Lib.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, April 9, 1999

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the 1997-98 annual reports for the Department of Rural Development, the Manitoba Water Services Board, the Food Development Centre, and the Conservation Districts of Manitoba.

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 morning forty-eight Grade 9 students from General Wolfe School under the direction of Mr. Herold Driedger. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett).

Also we have forty-two Grade 11 students from Churchill High School under the direction of Mr. Ed. Lenzmann. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford).

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

* (1005)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Political Advertising Provincial Auditor's Report

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, in 1993 the Provincial Auditor wrote the Minister of Finance, the now Minister of Health, stating that guidelines should be

developed to deal with the delineation of political ads that benefit political parties that should be paid for by political parties versus ads for the information of the public.

I would like to ask the present Premier (Mr. Filmon) or the Minister of Health: where are those guidelines that the Auditor recommended on political ads, in light of the proliferation of public funding going into ads on health care?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, again, I would gladly forward the Leader of the Opposition a copy of the letter from the Provincial Auditor at the time that talked about this matter should be reviewed, and certainly the matter was looked at.

My recollection is that no provinces in Canada have the kinds of guidelines that the member is asking about. The federal government, I believe, at the time did not. I think they have since certainly been reviewing the issue. But ultimately the whole accountability of whether or not a government crosses the line with information they provide, there are opportunities like here today, there are opportunities through the public, through the media, a number of vehicles.

Certainly our government believes in providing information to the public. The public wants information about how their finances are being dealt with, about how their health system is functioning and so on. They want accurate, correct information that is incumbent on governments right across this country—we are seeing governments right across Canada of all political stripes provide information to taxpayers.

Health Care System Funding—Guidelines

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, we asked the minister the other day about the number of patients in the Grace Hospital hallway. We know there are patients in

the hallways at St. Boniface. People in Manitoba want the patients in hospital rooms, not government spending money, their taxpayer dollars, on PR for the Conservative Party. I guess we can file this under page 16 of the Monnin report dealing with the encountering characteristics of certain individuals opposite, because on June 3, 1994, the minister in this House, this House, said to the people on record: we will come forward with a position on the whole issue of appropriate guidelines; we take this issue very seriously. Was he misleading the House in June 1994? It was another fast and loose with the truth with the Tories on coming forward with a position.

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): Not at all, Madam Speaker. In fact, quite the opposite. I have indicated that we did do a review. We looked at other jurisdictions. We were provided with information, and again, to the best of my knowledge, certainly at that time all other provinces did not have the kinds of guidelines that the Leader of the Opposition is referring to. Again I challenge him to go back to the letter from the Provincial Auditor and see exactly what it was that she recommended at the time, because the Auditor was Carol Bellringer at the time. I ask him to compare the information that has been provided recently on health care to Manitobans to what she suggested. I think he will find that the information is certainly of a nature that governments should be providing information on.

I remind him he did not ask me in this House in the last couple of days about beds at Grace Hospital. I do not know what he is thinking about. I want to tell him that is why we are putting in place over 600 more beds, personal care home beds, just to meet the pressure on the acute care system to take the relief and provide the acute care beds that are necessary and will be available for Manitobans.

Government Spending Guidelines

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I asked the minister and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) on Wednesday about the number of patients in the hallway at Grace Hospital because of the Premier's broken

promise on personal care homes. Of course, this minister built casinos and expanded casinos before he built hospitals and personal care homes. I would suggest this minister is responsible for his own words in this Legislature. Is he going to apologize, like the Premier did, for misleading this Legislature or is he going to bring in guidelines to deal with political propaganda ads paid for by the taxpayers that should be paid for by the Conservative Party?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): Again, it is interesting listening to this Leader of the Opposition, Madam Speaker. He talks about gaming. Who is the party, who is the government, who introduced the first casinos in Manitoba? The very member right across the way. So, as usual, as he does on so many issues, he tries to play both sides of all issues, flip-flop back and forth. Manitobans see him very clearly for what he is. There is no need to apologize. We are committed to providing more than 600 net personal care home beds. Those are the kinds of solutions that will create the opportunities for people in our acute care facilities along with the kind of money we are spending on our home care program. Those are the solutions to provide the kind of health system we want for all Manitobans.

* (1010)

Government Spending Guidelines

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, March 11, during office hours, at a gala anniversary celebrating the first year of operation of the Winnipeg Long Term Care association, there were no line-ups to get in for the 250 invited guests. There was no frozen food provided to the 250 guests. There were fancy hors d'oeuvres and fountains that produced a punch for the individuals to put their cups in and get the punch. To top it off, the minister nodded his head and a cannon shot out confetti and streamers into the assembled multitude.

I would like to ask the minister is that an appropriate expenditure of funding—while people wait in line-ups, while people get frozen food—to have a gala celebration where the minister

attends with a cannon that shoots streamers into the assembled multitude. Is that appropriate, Madam Speaker?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, the Winnipeg Long Term Care Authority had their one year of being in place to deal with consolidation of the provision of health care services.

I had a chance to speak to a gathering of several hundred people who are providing quality health care services to Manitobans right across Winnipeg. Certainly I do not know if the member for Kildonan has had a chance to speak to those people, in terms of the kinds of services they are now able to provide as an example, because we have taken a home care budget that back in 1988 was about \$45 million, and today that home care budget is about \$130 million, tripling the home care budget alone in Manitoba to provide the kinds of services to Manitobans in their home where they want that service and need that service.

Similarly, Madam Speaker, there has been increased funding for personal care homes, increased funding for personal care home beds, more than 600 net personal care home beds being put in place. Those are the kinds of initiatives that have the support of the hundreds of health care workers that attended that forum and that session that day. Those are the important issues for Manitobans.

Mr. Chomiak: I would like to ask the minister if he will answer my question and tell me who paid for the rental of the Italian Canadian Centre for the hundreds of people, for the punch fountain bowl, for the fancy hors d'oeuvres and not frozen food and for the cannon that shot out the streamers and the confetti. Who in Manitoba paid for that, while people wait in hallways, while people have to pay user fees for home care? Who paid for that?

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, I had the chance to attend for a portion of that day and to speak to 300 to 400 to 500 health care workers from all across Winnipeg who are providing the kinds of services that we all want and need in the health care system. Again, I encourage members opposite to talk to those people about the

positive changes they are seeing in terms of the entire health care system.

In terms of the events of the day, obviously those were put on by the WCA, the Winnipeg Long Term Care Authority. In terms of the specific elements of what happened for the entire day, I am certainly prepared to get that information for members opposite. In terms of the part of the presentation that I saw, it was a presentation to all of those workers in terms of what is happening in the system. It was also an opportunity for us to talk about the many changes in health care. Certainly those people that were in attendance, I think, should be complimented for the job they are doing in providing outstanding quality health care for all Manitobans.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, I am glad the minister confirmed that it was paid for by taxpayer dollars.

I would like to ask the minister if he thinks it is appropriate. Does the minister, given the circumstances in our health care system, given the controversy over providing frozen food to our seniors, given the fact that our seniors today are sitting in Grace Hospital in hallways because you did not build the beds, think it is appropriate to spend \$500,000 advertising the Tory propaganda, to put TV ads on, to send out a pamphlet and to spend taxpayer money on hors d'oeuvres, a fountain that provides punch, and a cannon that shoots off streamers. Does he think that is an appropriate expenditure for our government under these circumstances?

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, I certainly think it is appropriate for governments to provide quality, accurate information on what is happening in their province, whether it is in health care, whether it is in the area of how their money is being spent, whether it is in the area of education or whatever, and I believe that is something Manitobans want.

When I was out during the budget consultation process and other forums that we have been in, Manitobans want information on their health care system. It is incumbent on governments to provide that kind of information. It is also incumbent to bring together the people

who are working in the health care system to talk about the changes, to get their ideas for improvement and so on. Those are constructive things.

I know the NDP do not like to get out and listen to people. They do not like to see the fact that there are health care forums being held here in Manitoba. Those are all very important things to do. They pull together people who are either using the system, working in the system, have anything to do with the system to hear what their ideas are, to continue to build and improve a quality health care system here in Manitoba, Madam Speaker.

*(1015)

Taxation Pre-Budget Public Consultation

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): I know this government likes to brag about tax freezes, Madam Speaker, but the reality is that in the province of Manitoba the burden of property taxes has escalated enormously since 1988 and, as all should agree in this House, property taxes are the most regressive form of taxes that we have. Indeed, school tax increases since 1988 are equivalent to about an 8-point increase in provincial income taxes, all due to restraints and cuts in education by this government.

I want to ask the Minister of Finance why in the pre-budget consultations Manitobans were not given the option of reduced property taxes when they were asked what kind of tax decreases they would like to see.

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I am pleased the member for Brandon East recognizes the public consultations that took place right across Manitoba and gave Manitobans an opportunity to give ideas and advice to the government. Certainly they came through and said that they believed in reduced taxation; they believed in a balanced budget; they believed in a stabilization fund; and that they believed in our priorities for health care, family services and education. Individuals who attended those meetings had the opportunity to express themselves on any topic

they wished that would bring advice to government and help with the upcoming budget.

Mr. L. Evans: Very specifically, Madam Speaker, will this minister acknowledge that the \$75 cut in property tax credit by this government in the 1993 budget alone added another \$53 million into the property tax burden, which I understand is equivalent to an increase of 2.4 points in income taxes, and when you add it to the school division increases, it is equivalent to about a 10.1-point increase?

Mr. Gillehammer: Madam Speaker, I think we certainly have a defining issue here on taxation that our government has frozen major taxes for 11 budgets. We have brought taxes down, and I think that our commitment in the throne speech is to further reduce taxes, a very defining issue. I know that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) wanted to talk about taxes yesterday. The only taxes that we ever identify with the NDP governments is to hike taxes. I am sure that is what they would do if they ever form government again.

Mr. L. Evans: Well, Madam Speaker, I would like to know what this minister or perhaps what the Minister of Education has to say to constituents in Brandon, where property taxes for education added 14 percent to the burden of taxpayers in that city this year and 9 percent last year. What have you got to say to them? That is real tax increases.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Education and Training): The honourable member for Brandon East should be very careful if he wants to raise questions related to taxation in Manitoba. While the taxpayer at the local level and the provincial level, we are always mindful of their needs, the honourable member should be reminded that during the past 11 years on average the special levy for education has increased something over 8 percent on an annual basis. During the NDP years, when the member for Brandon East and the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) were in the cabinet of the government of Manitoba, increases averaged 14 percent per year for that special levy, in addition to all of the other taxes that that party imposed on Manitobans.

We ought not to be taking too many lessons from the honourable member for Brandon East when it comes to the pain involved in paying taxes in Manitoba. No one is more mindful of that pain than members on this side of the House; no one is more careless about that than honourable members opposite.

Jules Benson
Employment Termination

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, we now know from the Monnin inquiry that one Jules Benson was involved in preparing the Tory election budget in 1995 and negotiating with advertisers and preparing over a hundred cheques during the campaign, a campaign that was co-chaired by the member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey) and the future ethics co-chair of the Conservative Party, the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey), but the Premier and these co-chairs apparently saw nothing wrong with what was a clear violation of Mr. Benson's position as the chief civil servant of the province.

I would just like to ask the Premier why he allowed Mr. Benson to remain in his position for a full three and a half years after he had clearly violated his oath as a civil servant.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, as the member knows, that information did not come to the attention of anyone in this room until the Monnin inquiry.

* (1020)

Mr. Ashton: Well, Madam Speaker, if the two co-chairs and the Premier did not know that, will the Premier then explain, when he became aware of Mr. Benson's involvement in the vote-splitting scandal July 30, 1998, something he confirmed under oath, why it was not until October—I think he initially referred to him as a liar and told him not to attend meetings—but then in December when Mr. Benson left his position, the Premier claimed that he had retired when it turns out that Mr. Leitch had asked him to leave?

Why was he so concerned about his political friend Mr. Benson that even when he was

removed for violating ethics and morality in this province, he still tried to defend Mr. Benson?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, rather than try and manipulate the information of the report, I suggest that the member do what he ought to do, which is to use the resources of the Monnin inquiry and the conclusions of the Monnin inquiry, and he will know, if he does, that information came out step by step by step, and each step led to different decisions that were made ultimately and, again, I believe that the information that he puts forward is contradicted by the news reports that covered the issue. Mr. Benson was reported on one day to have said that he was forced to resign. On the next day he said that was not true, that he had indeed retired.

I have the letter from Mr. Benson in which he did indeed present his retirement to the government.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, will the First Minister explain how Mr. Benson, who was cited for improper behaviour in the Monnin inquiry, behaviour that the First Minister confirmed in the transcript of the Monnin inquiry, page 3254, that he was aware of as of July 30, will he explain why even today the Premier is now saying that this person who lied, who was involved in unethical behaviour, why he still insists that he is somehow retired, when in fact Mr. Benson, if he was not fired, should have been fired a long time ago by this Premier?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, appropriate decisions and actions were taken in accordance with information that was available, and it is all well and good with the benefit of immense hindsight to be able to say all these things should have been known or should have been done. But the fact of the matter is we could only act based on the information that was available to us at the time.

Agricultural Community
Throne Speech

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): Madam Speaker, my question is for the First Minister.

Any throne speech is meant to communicate the government's vision for all Manitobans.

Liberals understand why the Tory vision on health care and on education is unclear. Its poor performance over the past four years shows that it has no clear vision, but we are surprised that the throne speech fails to completely make any reference to Manitoba's agriculture community. Our primary producers and farming community also need to be included, particularly with all the economic adjustments and threats facing them.

Why has the government failed to include the mention of the agriculture community in its vision and throne speech?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, our government has worked diligently with our agriculture and rural community for 11 years that we have been in office. We have diversified to a greater extent the agriculture community than ever before in our history. I was just telling a group of people last evening about the tremendous diversification in our province where the value last year of the production of both canola and pork exceeded wheat, where we are now the largest edible bean producer in all of Canada, the second largest potato producer.

We ship over 700 million pounds of French fries out of this province. We have canola crushing. We have all sorts of value-added diversified farming to the extent that this province is not being impacted nearly as much as it was under previous downturns in commodity prices because of the work that has been done. We put forward back in 1993 a vision for rural development in this province that included two goals; one was value adding and the other diversification, and we have made tremendous strides on both.

The throne speech talks about the fact that we are now going to take that rural development strategy, and we are going to modernize and upgrade it through consultation with the farm and rural community of this province. That is the most important thing in that throne speech for rural Manitoba, that extension, and putting into the new millennium the new and extended version of the rural development initiative for this province, and I am very proud of that.

* (1025)

Centra Gas Purchase

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): Madam Speaker, why did the throne speech not mention the purchase of Centra Gas which could have a significant impact on the agriculture community but will mean additional debt of several hundred million on the citizens of this province?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, that particular issue has already, of course, taken place, the purchase of Centra Gas by Manitoba Hydro. We believe that it will indeed have long-term huge benefits for the people of Manitoba in an economic development sense, as well as in an opportunity to make Manitoba Hydro even stronger than it is today and better able to meet the needs of the future.

So we believe that that is well known, and we have certainly talked about that publicly. I am glad to have the support of the member for The Maples in that matter.

Mr. Kowalski: What part does the purchase of Centra Gas play in any Tory plan to further the interest of our agriculture community?

Mr. Filmon: Well, I believe that there is a better opportunity in future for Manitoba Hydro to be able to offer a diversity of products to the farm community which may include, of course, electricity and it may, obviously, include gas as an alternative. There may be a whole host of ways in which they can give better options to their customers, whether it be on the rural farms or throughout the province. It will be of course much more economic in many ways for them to offer both alternatives. I believe that every customer, but particularly rural Manitobans, will be beneficiaries of this more efficient combined approach that can be offered now by a merged utility.

Jules Benson Employment Termination

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, I want to ask a follow-up question to the Premier, because we are starting to see just how hollow the Premier's words were recently, that he did everything in his power to take responsibility for his top aides. We are now

seeing that certainly from July until December Mr. Benson was allowed to continue in his position collecting further pension credits on his gold-plated pension plan. We now have confirmed from the Premier that this same individual, who the Premier knew by then had been involved in what was later described as improper behaviour by Mr. Monnin, behaviour that should have resulted in his being fired, but this Premier let him resign I assume in order for him to be able to continue to collect his severance pay.

I would like to ask the Premier why he did not do the appropriate thing and fire Mr. Benson, why he was more concerned about protecting his friend than doing the right thing for the people of Manitoba.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I would like to make a number of comments in response to that, Madam Speaker. Number 1 is that neither I nor the Monnin inquiry knew in July the information that ultimately formed the—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, secondarily, there is no gold-plated pension. Mr. Benson will receive no further benefits from the people of Manitoba in terms of any pension benefits. Finally, the third part of the question was as to a severance, and there was no special severance given to Mr. Benson. I believe that he was entitled to receive his accumulated holiday time, and in accordance with civil service practice he received 15 weeks severance or retirement allowance for the number of years that he put in—15 weeks.

* (1030)

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, I want to get again to the question of the fact that the Premier knew in July. I would like to ask the Premier how his statements today reconcile with the fact that under oath we now have it established that Mr. Benson had indicated at the end of July that he was involved somehow in getting the money into the Tory campaign account, the answer to which was yes, proven at the inquiry, and that

we know that he had been involved and he had done so at the request of Mr. Sokolyk and that the Premier certainly was aware of this when the transcripts were available in October at the initial inquiry.

Why is it he allowed Mr. Benson to remain in place and why he still refuses to say what he should say, that Mr. Benson's behaviour was unethical, improper, and in fact he should have been fired in July?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, as I indicated before the inquiry, back in July there was some question as to whether or not the account to which the deposit was being made was identified. It was not until later that it was identified what that account was.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Thompson, with a final supplementary question.

Mr. Ashton: Once again, Madam Speaker, will the Premier confirm that the gold-plated pension plan I referred to was the 12 percent RSP contribution. By the way, MLAs have 7 percent. Will he also indicate that by allowing him to resign rather than the appropriate thing, to be fired, that he not only protected Mr. Benson for at least six months, including the allowance that was in there in that sense, but what he did is he allowed Mr. Benson to walk away from his position in government, one of the highest paid positions, without having what should have been on his record the fact that he was fired for improper and unethical behaviour.

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, the difference between the pension contribution that the member opposite refers to and those of members of this Legislature or other people who have an ongoing pension obligation is, once they retire, they get a pension forever from the government. We see it in the Public Accounts year after year of the amount of money paid out. In his case, no further money will be paid out to him, and that is the difference.

Life-Lease Condominiums Licence-Tax Exemption

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Madam Speaker, in June of 1997 the government rushed

through passage of Bill 60, which grandfathered 17 life-lease condominiums to receive an exemption on their property tax or their school tax portion. This bill was intended to stop luxury condominiums in the future from qualifying for an unfair exemption on their property taxes. I have been informed that since then at least six condominiums have received a licence under the passage of Bill 60, and three of these are in the riding of the minister responsible, the Minister of Housing.

I want to table this list. I want to ask the Minister of Housing: has your department given out licences for these life-lease condominiums as described in the list I am tabling?

Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Housing): It appears that the member for Radisson has asked me to comment on a list that I have not seen, so I am not too sure. If the member would like to rephrase the question, so that I can answer, then I will look at this list and ask her to rephrase her question so that I can answer it.

Ms. Cerilli: Madam Speaker, I would be happy to give the minister a chance to read the list. Three on the top are in his riding. Has your department issued a life-lease licence to these condominiums under The Elderly and Infirm Persons' Housing Act which exempt them from paying their property school taxes?

Mr. Reimer: Madam Speaker, The Elderly and Infirm or EIPH Act that the member is referring to is an act that is used when nonprofit associations appeal for the school tax exemption.

They have to meet certain criteria. The criteria have to be met before the licence is issued. It would not matter where the licence is issued. If the member would like me to find out how many in her riding have got licences, I can certainly provide that to her. I can also provide the list for the members that are—whether it is in Concordia or any of the other areas. These life-lease associations and the exemptions are throughout all of Manitoba.

The intent of the legislation though was to plug a loophole in regard to the applications that some of the units were using. They have been renewed, and some of them—they all have been

renewed on a three-year program. They will be reviewed during this three-year-program for the eligibility and the criteria that they have to meet. If they do not meet the criteria, their licences will not be renewed.

Ms. Cerilli: Madam Speaker, this is a very serious question. I want to table for the minister copies of advertisements for Villa Beliveau in his riding for luxury condominiums for seasoned citizens, where the square footage for a two-bedroom is 1,335 square feet.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Is there a question here?

Ms. Cerilli: Madam Speaker, I am also tabling the criteria for the licence where the maximum square footage for a two-bedroom is 840 square feet, so obviously these condominiums should not qualify. Did the minister's department issue a licence to Villa Beliveau in his riding?

Mr. Reimer: Madam Speaker, the member has to realize that when the regulations were brought in on November 15, 1997, there were projects that had qualified under the previous criteria. We were not in a position to cancel that licence because of the timing and the completion of these buildings because a lot of these buildings take over a year to complete. This is why the licences that have been issued to these units are on a three-year time frame. They will be reviewed. If the criteria are not met for the eligibility, the licence will not be renewed.

Ms. Cerilli: I will keep it very simple for the minister. Did your department issue a licence to Villa Beliveau since 1997?

Mr. Reimer: Madam Speaker, I have said that this unit did get a licence. It was licensed under the criteria at that time. It is a three-year licence. It is reviewed at that time because of the fact that when the application was made, it was made under the rules that were at that time. We tightened up the rules during that process, but the building was being built. The building was completed under the old rules. We grandfathered for a three-year period. It will be reviewed. If it does not meet the criteria, the licence will not be renewed. It is as simple as that.

* (1040)

Domestic Violence and Stalking Legislation

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, to the Minister of Justice. Yesterday when I asked him why almost two years after the Lavoie commission of inquiry had recommended that bail for domestic violence cases be moved into the Family Violence Court, and the minister has failed to ensure that, the minister said the following, and I will quote: "We are committed to taking every reasonable step to ensure, within the limits of the law, that women in this province are protected in whatever case . . ."

My question to the minister is: If this were true, why has The Domestic Violence and Stalking Prevention, Protection and Compensation and Consequential Amendments Act not yet been proclaimed, not yet put in force by this government, legislation that the government said would meaningfully add protection to the victims and survivors of domestic violence, almost one year after the law was passed?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I will certainly ensure that the member has a full understanding of the status of that particular situation, and I will get back to him. I take that as notice.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for St. Johns, with one very short question.

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, would the minister admit that—he has not been sitting in here the last nine months, Madam Speaker, and he has had plenty of time to move this bill—almost one year after the bill has been passed, almost two years after this legislation was recommended, would he admit that the government is simply waiting for election season to make a press conference on this matter?

It is putting its own political interest ahead of the safety and well-being of Manitoba women and children.

Mr. Toews: Madam Speaker, I can indicate that this government has been a leader in Canada in

terms of stalking laws. It was this government and the former Attorney General who lobbied the federal government for stronger stalking laws so that women in this country would not be harassed. We were successful in convincing the federal government to change the law to protect them in hundreds of situations where previously they had not been protected. This government takes no back seat on that issue. This government has been a forward-thinking, progressive government committed to the safety of all Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the loge to my left where we have with us this morning Mr. Herold Driedger, the former member for Niakwa.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

MPIC—Speed Kills Message

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Madam Speaker, today the Manitoba Public Insurance, the Manitoba Road Safety Coordinating Committee, Autopac agents and law enforcement officers throughout the province are joining together to remind Manitoba motorists that speed kills. This weekend MPIC is launching television, radio and print advertising carrying the Speed Kills message. Law enforcement efforts throughout the province will be stepped up, and in Winnipeg, members of the Sargent Park Parking Patrol will join the road safety partners to help spread the message.

Every year speed is a contributing factor in 22 deaths and 1,500 injuries in the province of Manitoba. MPI, the Manitoba Road Safety Coordinating Committee, Autopac agents and law enforcement officers throughout the community, programming education and enforcement are working together to prevent Manitobans from breaking speed limits. By driving roadwise and following speed limits, Manitobans can prevent the unnecessary and tragic deaths and injuries caused every year in

our province by speeding. We remind Manitobans that the chance of death or serious injury doubles for every 15 kilometres over 80 kilometres an hour. The faster a vehicle is going, the less time the driver has to react to an unexpected event. Excessive speed is one of the most common factors in fatalities, injuries and collisions in Manitoba, second only to alcohol.

Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to see so many of my colleagues wearing Speed Kills buttons today. By wearing this button, you are joining with Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation, the Manitoba Road Safety Coordinating Committee, law enforcement officers throughout the province, Autopac agents and the Sargent Park Parking Patrol as we remind Manitobans to be roadwise.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Orthodox Christian Easter

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, at the outset I would like to first of all wish everybody in the Orthodox Christian community a very happy Easter. This is Good Friday for Orthodox Christians and I know, certainly in our household, we look forward to the Easter weekend and, in our case, the Greek tradition of lamb on Easter Sunday. So I would like to wish everybody in Manitoba, many Orthodox Christians, a very Happy Easter.

I would like to put on the record, too, some comments on the Speed Kills campaign of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation. I would like to acknowledge, by the way, the fact that this is one of the reasons we are so proud of MPIC in our caucus, one of the lasting legacies of Ed Schreyer who saw, when he brought Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation into this province, the advantages of having a publicly owned corporation that could provide not only inexpensive automobile insurance rates but also a mandate to promote safety, road safety, a socially responsible mandate that you would never see with private insurance companies. And I say, Madam Speaker, I take great pride in seeing the fact now that Ed Schreyer's legacy, nearly 30 years afterwards, is now something that is accepted by all Manitobans, that even Conservative members stand up with pride and

talk about the great kind of campaigns brought in by the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation. MPIC has once again demonstrated its leadership. It has proven statistically, as the member outlined, the fact that one of the areas where we can make a difference in terms of road safety is in terms of keeping our speeds at safe levels. I say this because MPIC has been very active in this. In campaigns against drinking and driving, it has been very good.

I am very proud of MPIC and that great legacy of Ed Schreyer and the NDP. Thank you.

St. Norbert Community Centre

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to rise in the House and speak about a very special occasion in the St. Norbert constituency, as 1999 marks the St. Norbert Community Centre's 50th year of existence. That represents five decades of providing excellent service to our community in contributing and enriching quality in the life of the neighbourhood.

The St. Norbert Community Centre has consistently demonstrated community leadership and has provided a wealth of activities for residents and visitors alike. These include hockey, ringette, soccer, baseball, and it also serves as a gathering place for events of local interest. The St. Norbert Community Centre produces a valuable newspaper that keeps area residents informed about coming events.

It is our government that has been recognizing community centres across this province. I would like to congratulate our government on their success in this endeavour, because it is with this type of support to our local communities that governments will see an enrichment of a community through their community centres and the activities that the children have for tomorrow.

I would also like to extend my thanks and appreciation to the dedicated volunteers who work hard to ensure the success of the St. Norbert Community Centre. They are absolutely invaluable, and our community is enriched by their local efforts.

Fifty years is a short period of time, and I still remember the days when I first started skating there. It was not 40 years ago, but we used to have a little pot-bellied stove in the middle of the first shack we had. I think it was about 40 years ago actually. Jim is getting close. I am not quite as old as some of the members in the Chamber.

* (1050)

An Honourable Member: I think he just called you an old man.

Mr. Laurendeau: I think so.

So, Madam Speaker, on their 50th birthday celebrations, I wish them a happy birthday.

Frontier College

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Today it is my pleasure to rise and give congratulations to Frontier College, which is celebrating 100 years of service to our community with its 100th anniversary. Last night I had the pleasure of attending the celebration with my colleagues Oscar Lathlin and George Hickes, and we had the pleasure of seeing our mayor, Glen Murray, in attendance as well.

Madam Speaker, Frontier College is an example of what can be done in very tough times. In the early years, teachers and volunteer teachers went out and worked all day in mining camps, logging camps, to reach out to Canada's frontiers. Today our frontier is a different place. Today our frontier is in the inner cities of many of our cities. Today our frontier is here in Winnipeg. One of the programs that Frontier College has started here in Winnipeg is Beat the Street, and that is why we were honouring Frontier College and Beat the Street here in Manitoba. It opened in Manitoba in 1987 in Winnipeg and has been extremely successful.

Literacy is so fundamental to the empowerment of all people, in particular those people who were not successful in the education system. One in four Canadians, over 187,000 people in Manitoba, cannot read a simple brochure. At least half of these people went to high school and one-third graduated. One

person in three who started school in Manitoba will not graduate, and unfortunately we think that is climbing. In some native communities, nine out of 10 people who start school will not graduate. That is why we celebrate the work of Beat the Street, Frontier College, and all of those community programs such as the two that I have in St. James, Stevenson-Britannia and the program that I started at Orioles Community Centre, who reach out to provide adult literacy to our communities. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE (Third Day of Debate)

Madam Speaker: To resume adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau), standing in the name of the honourable member for Broadway, who has 38 minutes remaining.

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): I just heard earlier on the radio from Roger Currie of CJOB that in Portage la Prairie they are opening a museum of the Titanic. It even includes displays such as the chairs and the deck of the Titanic. I wonder if they will also include some of the artifacts from Broadway.

The Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba concluded his Speech from the Throne with an expression of trust that we as members of the Legislative Assembly may benefit from the guidance from the divine providence. Also, this morning when we opened the session the Speaker invoked the eternal and all-powerful God from whom all power and wisdom come that we may be able to frame the laws of this province, attend to the welfare and prosperity of all our people and for the glory and honour of God's name.

May it not be that we honour Him with our lips, but our hearts are far away from Him? If such a pious statement means something, it means that we acknowledge the existence of an all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-present being in our human laws and in our human institutions and in our private and public lives.

As King David said a long time ago, King David of Israel, he said: Thine, oh Lord, is the greatness and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in heaven and in the earth is thine. Thine is the kingdom, Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. So there is the Supreme Being no matter by what name we recognized Him, no matter by what different appellations may be attached to Him, in all the areas, cultural areas of the world, that directs the destiny of man and nation.

For us believers, we can say that the Almighty and all-knowing One, the ground of our being from everlasting to everlasting, the fact of our living is itself believing. Now, we ask, does this divine all-powerful One have anything to do with the affairs of humankind on this earth that we always invoke Him?

According to the Apostle Paul, there is no power but of God, and the powers that be are ordained of God.

We can now say on the authority of that statement that the institutions of government among human beings are established by the will of the Almighty One, maybe through the instrumentalities of human beings. Even the skeptic, and sometimes they call him—what is the name of a nonbeliever? Thomas Jefferson, agnostic, whatever appellation, even he, when he wrote in the American Declaration of Independence, said: "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights"—this is the important partiality—"governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

So governments are instituted among men. He did not say who institutes government.

Now why did he say this? If the source of all life, the source of all power, the source of all authority, the source of all values in human society is the Almighty, how can that be reconciled with the consent of the governed as deriving the source of just powers of government?

* (1100)

It appears that the key to the paradoxical problem lies in the nature of human beings and, more specifically, the ingredient that comprises a true human being, the basic ingredient of his being human, namely, the nature of human choice.

In speaking through the mouth of Moses, the Lord God Almighty states: See, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil. In that I command you this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments that thou mayest live and multiply. But—here is the choice—if thine heart turn away, so that thou will not hear, but shall be drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, I denounce unto you this day, that you shall surely perish, and that you shall not prolong your days upon the land wither thou passeth over Jordan to possess it. I called heaven and earth to record this day against you. I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore, choose life, that thou and thy seed may live.

Here is the right ingrained in us by the Almighty in our nature, in our being to make a choice. Why do we have to choose life? He continued: Choose life that both thou and thy seed may live, that thou mayest love the Lord thy God. This is mayeth—may. Unlike angels, the angels of light, human beings may or may not obey, but angels must obey. That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, that thou mayest obey his voice, that thou mayest cleave unto him, for he is thy life, and the length of thy days, that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, to give them.

From this we can say that ingrained in our nature as creatures of God, he has imprinted in us the power to make a choice between life or death, between good and evil.

An Honourable Member: Tory or NDP.

Mr. Santos: Tory or NDP, whatever choice. So it is for us to say, to be or not to be, to go or not to go, to do or not to do, whether for good or for evil and everything in between.

Now, if the authority and power of government, according to democratic theory, derives from the consent of the governed, do the governed make a choice that they come under the rule of other people? How can such a relationship between the rulers and the ruled be explained alternatively?

There is another group of political theorists. They are called the elitists, nondemocratic. Led by the Italian political scientist named Gaetano Mosca, he said that in all societies two classes of people appear, a class that rules and a class that is ruled.

The first class, that is to say, the ruling class, always the less numerous, performs all political functions, monopolizes power, and enjoys the advantages that power brings, whereas the second class, the more numerous, is directed and controlled by the first in a manner that is no more or less legal, no more or less arbitrary or violent.

As the British historian Trevelyan once said: When men collectively are very poor, few must be made rich if there is to be any accumulation of wealth for civilized purposes. When men collectively are very ignorant, progress is only possible through the endowment of an educated few. In such a world, organization can only begin through personal ascendancy and can only be rendered permanent through privilege.

Now, this is the alternative explanation. Whether based on the democratic theory of consent of the governed or the elitist theory of the privilege of the few, what is one plausible explanation why some people are ruling over other people? In every society there is a scarcity of material and other resources which people generally consider desirable. Every natural person like any one of us possessed of the will to power will try to mobilize human and material resources to promote our personal advantage. In the pursuit of our private benefits, which we may call self-interests, there are bound to arise situations of conflicts among individuals.

If the claim to certain aspects of the social and political environment to certain resources around us is commonly shared by some or few people, we may call that group interest so that

the actual and potential conflict of individual and group interest in society would generate a necessity to generate some normative rules and some mechanism in society for regulating and settling these conflicts through the making and enforcement of decisions that can be authoritatively enforced in effectively allocating these scarce resources, values, material and nonmaterial.

Such normative rules to govern our political interactions either are voluntarily agreed among us participants in that system of interaction or imposed upon us by some politically dominant group within or outside the given political system. The normal set of normative rules has been established effectively in allocating material and nonmaterial resources in society. The political system of interactions become in our parlance a system called political order, because there is someone now in charge of maintaining those rules and enforcing them, a mechanism that will effectively settle all conflicts within society. Where such transformation has taken place, the old, pervading institutional arrangement that assumed responsibility for making and reformulating those rules and the mechanism for settling of conflicts, we call it the government, other terms, the state, because only this entity which pervades all of society had the monopoly of the legal and legitimate use of coercion to enforce its will. That is why it is called the state. That is why we call it the sovereign state, sovereign government, as distinguished from other groups in society who have no legitimate or legal right to use violence.

* (1110)

We cannot allow the state to be overpowered by any other contending group in society, similarly exercising legal use of coercion to enforce their will upon others. There will be chaos. There should be one and only one all-pervading, all-powerful mechanism in society to effectively settle these conflicts. That is what is meant by the government. The political authority to govern is therefore a legitimate and legal right derived from the imperative necessity to create this political order, to maintain and enhance this order so that conflicts may be settled peacefully within society even at the

threat of the ultimate use of the powers of government to enforce its will by the use of coercion. But it will be legal because they are the ones who define the law and the procedures of the law and all the processes of the law.

So in our contemporary society, there is a variety of organizations and institutions, bureaucratic and unbureaucratic, inside and outside governmental institutions. These organizations, by the imperative of their size, the complexity of the tasks that they perform in society, the growing differentiation in all the areas of human activities in life, have their own rules in themselves, and they sometimes have their little governments in their own little sphere of activities. They are not only the political, the social, the commercial, economic, industrial, educational, religious. Every one of them have their own set of rules operating within their own sphere of activities but never, never interfering with the all-pervading political authority of the government representing the state. So we have such doctrines as separation of church and state according to tradition, but we have never had such a doctrine of separating the commercial business, corporate power groups, and the government. Indeed, there is this interpenetration of influence between these two sets of functions in society that should be really separate and distinct like the church and the state. That is what is happening and going on now in our society.

So an example par excellence of a powerful group in society other than the government, because it possesses economic power and financial power, will be the multinational, corporate, natural, artificial, as distinguished from natural persons, who can live generation after generation because they have a life longer than the life of any individual. That is just a creation of our mind when we created the corporate entity.

So, basically speaking, there are two grand models of organization and institutions in our society, the governmental and quasi- or semi-governmental organizations, which purpose is to provide basic services to all the people and the other nongovernmental but powerful, sometimes even more powerful than government, whose purpose is to provide the selling and buying of

commodities and other services for the purpose of making money.

If the government would like to engage in the buying and selling of goods and services and other commodities and descend to the level of the commercial world, they can do so by creating what we call a Crown corporation—Air Canada, whatever. They create these entities—MPIC, Hydro. They sell commodities. They buy, they sell. But then, when they descend to the level of that place called buying and selling, they, by definition, forfeit their basic right to be the sovereign, the ultimate, all-powerful authority. Therefore, they can be sued now in court, because they descended to the level of the ordinary citizen, if they persist in performing basic governmental functions. I do not think it is wise at all to allow the government to be sued in its own courts. Can you sue the king in the king's court without the king's consent?

So there are these two grand models, the governmental model, whose basic justification for its existence is to provide services. By definition, it has a monopoly of the function, because it is performing public service. Also, it should be tested by its effectiveness, the carrying out of its purpose.

On the other hand, there is the business corporate model, whose very existence is to make money by the buying and selling of commodities. By definition, and they say so, they operate in the marketplace by the law of supply and demand. There is competition there, they say, competition rather than monopoly.

Moreover, they are tested by the bottom line, the ability to make money, and therefore the basic primary criterion of their performance is efficiency rather than effectiveness, keep operating within an honest sphere without any interference and interpenetration over its other. There will be no problem in our society. The government will be performing its basic public service function and then collecting all the funds from all the participants in the political system in the form of taxes. Reasonable they will be.

On the other hand, the private corporate organizations will be raising and trading their own money by making a margin, a profit in all

their operations in buying and selling. The government says the government is the government. This other organization should be subject to the regulating power of the state. That is the justification why we have regulatory bodies that regulate the activities of these other entities in our society, because they operate under the economic laws of supply and demand.

Now, what has happened lately? There are these men of power in the financial and corporate world who cannot be satisfied with the wealth and riches that they already have, enormous as they are, greater than some of the sovereign countries in the world, and they begin to make agreements with governments and representatives of governments. They created private entities like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the North American Trade Agreements and, lately, the Multinational Agreement on Investments. What are all these agreements trying to do? They are trying to nibble and eat away that sovereign power of a state so that they can dictate how this government will conduct their own governmental function. Consider all the impositions of the International Monetary Fund on those debtor countries like Brazil, Mexico, other countries. They said you cannot do this, you cannot do this—all these restrictions on the power of government. Cut your social services, lay off your employees before we will lend you the money. This is the power of the love of money.

* (1120)

On the other hand, let us consider the operation of governments. The government because of the nature of their function which is the operation for the purpose of providing services to all the people, they are constrained by some moral imperative in the performance of their function. The functions of government include the provision of health services to all the people. That is not a commodity. It is a public service function. It should not be bought and sold in the marketplace. Health is next to life. It is not a commodity. Therefore, governments should have no hesitation promoting public health, but if they sell public health to multinationals as if they were commodities—

An Honourable Member: Which they are starting to do.

Mr. Santos: —and they are doing this. They are calling it health care industry. Notice now the change in the metalanguage. It is now an industry. It is a conversion of what is a public service into a private commodity, and therefore this is all for the name of money. There will be deals between those who represent government and those who run private corporate entities. Where that exists, are we living up to the moral constrain of our power to promote the welfare of all the people?

Education is not a commodity. It is a public service of government to its people. Unless all the people are informed and educated enough to understand the choices that are to be made in society, they will be those people of long ago who had been taken advantage of by the ruler. The only hope of the people is to be aware of all public choices that are being made in their name. What about social services, social welfare services to those who are needy, to those who are old, to those who are afflicted? Is it not a responsibility of government as well? It is. But the moment we started applying and transmuting these social services, considering them as commodities, selling them to some private operators who will then make their own profit and margin in these dealings, are we being true to our role as representatives of the people?

An Honourable Member: The old 30 pieces of silver—

Mr. Santos: The member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) selling your birthright for a plate of beans, selling your birthright for 30 pieces of silver. So there are certain moral codes in all of antiquity. Let us start with the oldest code, the Code of Hammurabi. You may not have heard of this, but I think it is one of these—[interjection] I do not know, who is he? I do not know who is more sincere. [interjection] This one maybe. Hammurabi was King of Babylon and he was a lawgiver. He gave edict and law, and one of the laws he gave concerns the health care of the people. What did the law provide? Here is one such law: If the doctor in opening an abscess shall kill the patient, the doctor's hand shall be cut off.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Santos: That is the law of Hammurabi. [interjection] He is the King of Babylon. But if the patient was a slave rather than a freeman, the doctor simply supplied another slave. See, there is a distinction already between slave which is considered property and a human being, a freeman. Even in the Greek city state (polis), if you are a freeman you participate in the marketplace in the making of the law; but if you are a slave you have no say, no rights.

How many of us have been slaves and were not given the right to vote and participate until so late in this century, to many of us? Why is that law in Babylon? Because in Babylon it was the custom to simply lay the sick on the street. They just lie there on the street and anyone with compassion can offer medical advice, can operate on him. You know everyone is an amateur physician, so if you dare and you do not know, you may risk cutting your hand if the person who is sick is a freeman. You have to ask him first, are you a freeman or a slave?

In most Christian countries of the western world, we inherited the Judeo-Christian religion and tradition, the Decalogue of Moses, the 10 Commandments.

An Honourable Member: I bet you it was easier on lawyers because they were the ones writing the law.

Mr. Santos: Well, there was a lawyer who asked the Lord, who said, what shall I do Lord to inherit everlasting life? He said, Go and sell all that you possess, give to the poor, come and follow me.

An Honourable Member: And he went away sad.

Mr. Santos: No, he went away. He said, I cannot do this.

So what does the Decalogue say? There are 10 of them. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make any graven image. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. Thou shalt remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it. Honour thy father

and thy mother. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour—that simply means do not lie. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife. Do not be greedy. Well, not one of us human beings can satisfy all these rules. In the first place, there are too many of them—10. We do not remember them all. And it is written: I say in my haste, all men are liars. That is written by David, King David.

* (1130)

An Honourable Member: That is sexist. What about women?

Mr. Santos: Well, it includes women, you know. Human beings, they call them men. So these 10 are too many, so what did the Lord Jesus Christ do about the 10 too many? He summarized them. He said, love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and greatest commandment, and the second one, like unto the first, love thy neighbour as thyself. It is so simple. Love God; love your neighbour. So the rule is love, but then we again misinterpret love, you know. I love you, therefore this and that. But what kind of love are we talking about? What kind of love are we talking about? The reference here is agape.

Do you know what the Apostle Paul said about this kind of love? I think I will sing it because that way you will remember it better. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Though I have the gift of prophecy so that I understand all mysteries and all knowledge and have not love, I am nothing.

There are more than that. Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned and have not love, it profiteth me nothing. Love is all suffering and is kind. Love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself and is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not its own; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil; delighteth not in iniquity, but delighteth in the truth; beareth all things; believeth all things; hopeth all things.

This is the kind of love that they are talking about.

Madam Speaker, am I done? This is the kind of thing that we should live our life for so that we may be true to the invocation of the Almighty in running this government. Thank you.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Mr. Ben Sveinson (La Verendrye): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I once again have the honour of addressing all of the honourable members in this House, the people of Manitoba and the residents of La Verendrye on the subject of our government's most recent throne speech.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to take a moment to welcome back all the members of the House. I am confident that my colleagues were out working diligently in their communities consulting with the residents and discussing the future of this beautiful province. I am certain that they are delighted, as I, to be back in this House and bring forth the valuable insight gained through speaking with the people they represent.

I would also like to extend a warm welcome to the Chamber's six new pages. The day-to-day activities of the Chamber are exciting and challenging. Your presence here is greatly appreciated. Your efforts and your help make the House run smoothly and efficiently, and I hope you enjoy this opportunity and gain valuable insight from it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the life of a treasured colleague and respected member of this House. I was deeply saddened to learn of the untimely passing of a friend and colleague, the late Neil Gaudry. Mr. Gaudry's desire to work for the betterment of his constituents in this province will be greatly missed. Mr. Gaudry was a legislator who believed in working together for the people of Manitoba. His sole interest did not lie in partisan politics but in a genuine spirit of co-operation. Neil's commitment to the people of St. Boniface is something all of us as legislators should endeavour to achieve. Mr.

Gaudry will be missed by the people who knew him best, the people he represented, the members of this Chamber and the people who strived to follow in his legacy.

I would just like to tell a little story of running into Neil once on my travels up north. You see, I was born in Spearhill, Manitoba, which is north out No. 6 highway, and it runs through St. Laurent. I know many people, including the Lieutenant Governor prior to his being appointed here, I knew him for a short period of time before that, and he came from St. Laurent also. On passing through St. Laurent one day, Milly and I, my wife and I, decided that we would stop in and see an old friend of mine who I had worked with at Community Chev, a fellow by the name of Clem Chartrand.

In looking for his place and finding his place, and then I did not know, but they were celebrating their 40th wedding anniversary when we drove in. There was just a tremendous amount of cars and a tremendous amount of people there. When I walked in and Clem recognized who it was, of course he and his wife came running over and gave us a big hug. Clem is a very boisterous person and so everybody knew that we had arrived. On looking around, I recognized a number of people who had also worked at Community Chev that I knew. Then I spotted this white-haired fellow sitting there; it was Neil Gaudry. Of course he got up and laughingly came over and shook hands and said how nice it was to see us. He said: But these are my people. I said: By the welcome you better think about that. It was very nice. We did have a lot of fun together, both here in the House and out there. Neil was a tremendous person and will definitely be missed.

Before moving on to the matters of government, I would like to take a moment to pay tribute to the Honourable Yvon Dumont. As I have said, he did come from St. Laurent also, and I knew him briefly prior to his being appointed. After his appointment in 1993, Mr. Dumont fulfilled his responsibilities and duties as the Queen's representative with genuine care and pride for Manitoba. I had the pleasure of knowing him, as I said, prior to his appointment briefly. He has served as a member of a number of boards and councils and especially as the

president of the Manitoba Metis Federation. I thank him for his service to this province and wish him well in his future endeavours.

* (1140)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to take a moment to speak of four of my members of our caucus who will be retiring from politics this year. During my nine years as an elected member, I have had the honour and pleasure of working with these members, who demonstrated their dedication and commitment to this province and government on a daily basis.

Twenty-two years ago Jim Downey was elected to the Manitoba Legislature from the constituency of Arthur-Virden. Since that time, Jim has demonstrated a sense of leadership in his role as MLA and in his various cabinet positions. As one of the longest-serving members of the House, his experience and guidance will be missed by his colleagues and the constituents of Arthur-Virden. I thank both him and his wife, Linda, for their service to this province and to this caucus.

In 1988, Glen Findlay was elected as a member of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly. Since that time Glen has served as Minister of Agriculture, Minister responsible for telecommunication, and also the Minister of Highways. The residents of Springfield will deeply miss the friendly, hardworking style of the Honourable Glen Findlay.

The Honourable Rosemary Vodrey was first elected as a member of the constituency of Fort Garry in 1990. Since that time, she has worked diligently to serve her constituency and to fulfil her cabinet responsibilities. Rosemary currently holds the portfolio of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, where she is well respected. I wish her and her family well in their future endeavours also.

Then we come to the Honourable Albert Driedger, first elected to the Steinbach constituency in 1977. Much of Albert's time was spent in the role of the Minister of Natural Resources and Highways and Transportation. He was a dedicated, very dedicated cabinet minister and representative of the people of

Steinbach. They really are truly proud of Albert and have always been proud of him. Fellow caucus members and friends will also miss him. I can tell you that having been the MLA for the constituency of La Verendrye and living next to Albert's constituency, where I represented him and the Premier and the government on many occasions in his constituency, the people really did have a healthy respect and love for Albert Driedger. So as I said, they definitely will miss him also.

Friends, I wish Mr. Downey, Mrs. Vodrey, Mr. Findlay, and Mr. Driedger the best of luck and continued success as they embark on their next chapter of their lives. Their dedication and commitment to the province will provide lasting benefits for all Manitobans.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to speak now on the matter of government and respond to the throne speech. I have to take you back to 1990, when I was first elected. It has been nine years now and has taken in many different changes. Whether it is health care, education, highways, you name it, there have been many different changes. But I want to point out exactly what happened during those years.

When the changes to health care were first introduced by Mr. Don Orchard, or the Honourable Don Orchard, the NDP then said that there were no changes necessary. Everything was great. Everything was hunky-dory. Do not make any changes. Do not do anything. We explained, or our minister and the rest of us explained, that indeed we had to make changes because our population, our baby boom, if you will, was indeed aging. The more the years rolled by, the more numbers of aging population we will have and aged people or people who are 50 and more indeed take more out of our health care system.

But there is one thing more, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we also know, and it has been publicized, if people have been paying attention, and that is that as much as we would like to believe we are, we are not in the best of shape. Now, I am not looking around the room anywhere or pointing at anybody in particular, but I could be in better shape. The point I make is that the people within the baby boom are not

in the best of shape and, again, not just being aged but the fact that people are not in the best of shape also takes money out of the health care system or is taxing, more taxing on the health care system.

That being said, explained to the NDP in those days and all the way along, they could not quite understand or did not want to understand, and so kicking and squealing they were dragged along year after year. After a year or two, they then said, their line was that, yes, indeed we do know that change has to take place, but they would point out different little things that they thought should not have taken place. So as the years went by, we also introduced the changes on education renewal. Once again, the same, familiar ring from the opposition benches, the same thing all over again. That was indeed that no changes were necessary. Do not make any changes, leave it as it was, no vision for the future or the needs of the future.

What I am trying to point out here simply is that had things been in the hands of the NDP, things would not have changed and, indeed, we would really be in trouble today. [interjection] My nursery is going great. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it seems that I have woken somebody up over there.

The changes that had to take place in the health care system have taken place in a very consultative fashion. That was pointed out right from day one, and it has. There has been more consultation done on health care in Manitoba than on any other subject in the history of Manitoba. Indeed, you can tell that those changes were consulted with the people working within the system and that indeed those changes were put into place.

We have and will have the best health care system in Canada, undoubtedly, by the end of the year. We will have something in the neighbourhood of 400 to 600 nursing home beds online by the end of 1999. Indeed, the NDP, I guess you might have even heard them today heckling from their seat, talking a little bit about cold food. My goodness. We have been playing that one for quite some time. They do not know it yet, but those particular little problems that we were having—and we did have some; any change

that you make you are going to have some problems—but those problems have indeed been fixed. [interjection] They have been fixed. The fact is that the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) asks if indeed they have been fixed. They have been fixed, but it is like they expect there are never to be any kinds of problems. I guess that, if you never change anything and if you never do anything, you will not have any problems, but that goes with the 1980s and the NDP that were in power in those days. The debt that they incurred is something in the neighbourhood of \$4.5 billion or \$5 billion worth of debt, is one of the extra things that indeed cost this province much of the needed monies that we could put into our health care system and our education system. That, indeed, was the responsibility of that NDP government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in Education, we have heard in travelling around the province, from school to school, from division to division, right now with the howling from the NDP caucus that indeed these things were not good. What I am hearing now from the teachers, and this I quote: The curriculum that is now being implemented is the best curriculum that they have ever seen. Ever.

* (1150)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I felt really good to hear that kind of thing, because as you go through all these different changes—and, yes, it was done on a consultative basis again—but, as you go through these many changes and every step that you take, you have the opposition, and now I guess it is the Winnipeg Free Press, but you have opposition who throw out comments. Yes, it does at times; it does, it does make you question yourself sometimes. So it is nice when you have people who indeed were not in favour of the changes that took place in the beginning now realize and see that indeed the curriculum that is being implemented now is in their words, not mine, the best they have ever seen. That really does fulfill, or completes, if you will, to some degree the work that we have been striving to complete.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have talked about Health. We have talked about Education. We have not talked too much about Highways and

many of the other departments, because what we have is Health and Education, Child and Family Services, where we have made strides, steps forward that are really quite incredible also. I have received many calls in my constituency office saying that indeed the changes to The Child and Family Services Act have been widely accepted also, and the changes that we have made within the department as a whole have been very good too.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is something here that we have to key in on, and that is for all of these things somebody has to pay. The economic development that has taken place in this province has not taken place just by accident. The atmosphere in Manitoba has been set over the years to where business people, entrepreneurs, have the opportunity and want the opportunity in Manitoba to start a business, to build a business. Many have come here and many have just started here through Agri-Food. It is endless the list. I do not have it with me today, but the list is absolutely endless.

That, indeed, is the reason why we can afford to have the health care system. It will be, it is not quite there yet, but it will be the best in Canada. As for the education system, which is not just of Manitoba but of the western provinces, that is indeed a tremendous step forward, and that is passing all stripes, if you will, of all governments right across the western provinces. So I give them full credit.

But indeed without that kind of economic development to drive forward in the creation of wealth, we would not be able to do the things that we want to do in this province with our people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I cut out a few articles out of the papers over the last year or so, quite a few actually, and I would like to touch on a few of them. I will just read a little bit out of a few of them.

The first one here in large letters says, Health authority gets major hike in funding. The South Eastman Health received a \$1.4 million booster shot from the provincial government last Thursday. This was in the Carillon News. The province announced annual base funding for the

region will be increased by \$1.1 million this year and \$1.4 million in future years.

Funding for the 10 rural regional health authorities in Manitoba will be increased by more than \$13 million. I have a little picture here and it happens to be of the Premier and myself, Roy Seedler [phonetic] and Guy LaCroix who happens to be the superintendent of Seine River School Division. The Premier and I had the opportunity to visit and tour a brand new school in Lorette. It was a very nice tour in a school that will take us and our children in Lorette area into the future where technology is really a part of this school system. It was nice to be there.

This next one here is Steinbach. I was there. It was Steinbach designates year recognizing older people. As everybody knows it is the International Year of Older Persons and I was there representing my neighbour, Mr. Albert Driedger, and was accepted very nicely there.

Once again we have the Premier here, and this was in Lorette, again in the collegiate, and what he spoke on was coming change need not be feared, as the Premier said, and had some of you been there, you would have seen the students and the Premier speak quite openly about what is happening today in education and how it will take them into the future.

I have another one here, a report from the Legislature by Ben Sveinson, MLA. I will not go through that, but I do these things just to keep my constituents abreast of the things that are happening here and, of course, in other parts of my constituency.

We have another one here, a Seine River tributary to be presented to the public. That was a fun thing to attend. Mr. Danylchuk, who happens to be the Reeve of the R.M. of Tache, and I, and the Reeve from the R.M. of St. Anne, have been working with our Resources people looking at a possible ditch along No. 1 Highway East so that indeed the waters will not go into the Seine River above Lorette and each spring flood them. We might bring it down the No. 1 Highway expanded ditch to put it into the floodway. It is a possibility. It is not something that is indeed there yet, but we are definitely

looking at it. That was very well received also by the people throughout the whole area.

Also, we have here another picture of yours truly. Whitemouth waste management facility up and running in the Whitemouth area. I believe Mr. Praznik was there at the time. I am not sure, the Honourable Jim McCrae might have been out there too. That was a facility that is one that many people around, many municipalities around could go there and take a lesson from this because there is very, very little of anything that ever goes into the ground to be buried. Most of it is recycled and reworked and so on. The composting part of it is there, and it is really something to see.

Another one we have got here is the opening of the credit union. That goes back to the summer months. The opening of the credit union in Landmark. Indeed, that was a well-attended opening. The people were really quite happy to see that happen, but it is something that was needed in the community. Although they did have a credit union, the building was one that is now their own. So it was nice to see, and I congratulate them for that.

We have another little article here. A Ste. Anne elementary schoolteacher is recognized for outstanding work and dedication. He just received another award, by the way. It is a project leader. Dan Forbes is the teacher's name, and doing a tremendous job in Ste. Anne. He just received another award for the work that he is doing. So I congratulate him also.

* (1200)

There are many, many things, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I have here, and all of these things are happening in La Verendrye. Pardon me. There was one there from Steinbach. However, many of our people do visit the Steinbach area, whether it is for shopping or different things or friends.

Oh, yes, we have another little article. It says here: MLA applauds hike in education funding. La Verendrye MLA Ben Sveinson says the increase in education funding announced recently by his government will benefit at-risk students throughout the province. Education

minister Linda McIntosh announced an additional \$17.7 million in funding, and in the 1999-2000 school year, an average increase again of 2.3 percent.

All of these things cannot be done without an engine that is really moving along. Our economy is perking well—[interjection] You are absolutely right.

Another one, and it just keeps going on. The reason why I am pointing these out is that if you really pay attention you will see R.M.s to receive 2.8 million. It is another one. Rural municipalities in Manitoba will be receiving an additional \$2.8 million in provincial municipal tax in addition. I mean, it just goes on and on.

I do have to go on and on, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I really want our people to understand what is happening out there. I am just talking about La Verendrye. This is happening all over Manitoba. Make no mistake. This is happening all over.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): And in Winnipeg as well. [interjection]

Mr. Sveinson: Well, they are doing for Burrows, too.

We have a little article here. Last month, Ben Sveinson, MLA for La Verendrye, had the opportunity to meet with Martha Penner and students of the Riverside School as they toured the Legislative Building. You noticed my school was in here the other day, and it was very nice to have them here. We have the advisory committee appointed for the millennium.

Oh, yes, and here was a nice one. Ben Sveinson, MLA for La Verendrye, was on hand for the greening of the Richer School in June. That was really a tremendous thing. You see the Richer School grades are from Grade 1 to Grade 8, and it was the younger students who were indeed working on this particular project. They did receive a little bit of monies. I believe it was Sustainable Development. That is right.

Mr. Enns: Sustainable Development Fund.

Mr. Sveinson: That is right.

Mr. Enns: I sit on that committee.

Mr. Sveinson: Yes. Right here, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns). I was there as you can see. I was there helping the young people plant these plants, and we had a tremendous morning at the Richer School.

We have another one here, Elite Swine hosts appreciation banquet.

An Honourable Member: Oh, boy, that was a dandy, eh.

Mr. Sveinson: Oh, this was something. Now all of us know how much the hog production has increased in Manitoba and the jobs that it has created in Manitoba. I would just like to touch on this just to show you how big this is, how huge this is. More than 700 people were in attendance for a sit-down dinner catered by Clare's Restaurant of Niverville when Elite Swine Inc. of Landmark held their annual customer appreciation banquet in the Landmark Arena. The dinner, of course, was followed by presentations for the best hogs in all the different categories that they have. What I am trying to point out simply is that when you talk 700 producers, you take that and you can multiply that by approximately five to even 10 for employees, that is incredible. That is incredible.

Mr. Enns: That is why in his constituency the rural population is rising.

Mr. Sveinson: That is right. Another one, and I am just pointing out the things that are happening. I am not making up any of this. This is all right in the newspapers here. Along No. 1 East—

An Honourable Member: This is like the gospel.

Mr. Sveinson: This is gospel. The No. 1 East Highway, if you go out just past No. 12, is where it mainly starts as far as the many different resort things that we have there. We have, for example, the Lilac Resort celebrates 40th year in the family-run operation. What began as a slight ponderance upon gazing at the construction of the Trans-Canada Highway has progressed to become a place of summer memories known as

the Lilac Resort. On July 4, 1998, the well-known eastern summer spot will mark its 40th anniversary.

Just to add to this, that was just last summer that they celebrated their 40th anniversary and right now this summer, they will be opening their second huge pool and slide and many things that they have added to make this an attraction that people will come to not just from the city but from many other provinces and even in the States. There are many different things that they have. They have a pond, for example, that they plant fish in, that indeed you can go there throughout the summer and you can fish, but you have to put them back, you see. Then before freeze-up, you are allowed to go there and they have a little fish derby as an end to the summer. It is really quite something to see and enjoy.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

Madam Speaker, I could go on and on and on with many of the different things. The money that indeed flows into—and I say not just my area but all over the province. For example, as you know last year and the year before were some hard times within my constituency be it with the flood, and one of the notes here is the R.M. of Tache adds \$235,000 to the flood relief account. I delivered a cheque to them for that amount of money, and that was only partial amount that they received at that time.

Also, there is another one. Community Places grants blanket the southeast. Look at this. Residents in La Verendrye will receive, what is it, \$82,000 in support for a number of different projects. I mean tremendous, tremendous things are happening all over Manitoba. If we would just take a moment to stop the bickering, the poking of fun, if you will, from opposition benches just to see what is really happening out there, it would really be a nice thing.

This year alone I have been talking to the Minister of Highways, our new Minister of Highways (Mr. Praznik). He tells me that there is going to be considerable roads fixed in my constituency, that indeed we are looking at a considerable amount of money. Although I do not have the amount yet, he told me there is a

considerable amount of money going on that 59 highway where Grand Pointe had flooded. They are going to make part of the dike around Grande Pointe as two lanes of the highway, so it is a very expensive thing to do. They will be starting some work on that this year, this summer.

Madam Speaker, I also have a resort area in my constituency known as the Whiteshell Provincial Park. A very, very pretty place to visit, to have a cottage, to set up a tent, to go fishing, boating, skiing. These last two years have been a growth time for what is known as Falcon Trails. It is an environmentally friendly resort area. We had the Falcon Ski Hill that indeed over the years, I do not know exactly what reasons, but the attendance there was dropping and the amount of cost to running that facility was indeed quite high. So we did pass it off to or sell it—lease it to some people who had run that ski hill for quite some time and worked around it for quite some time.

* (1210)

What they did was they visited a few other places in North America who have done the environmentally friendly thing, if you will. For example, there are no motorized vehicles or boats allowed in and around this area. Motorcycles, anything like that, are not allowed. So there are trails and nature hikes that will be set up for schools throughout the summer where they can come there, and they will take them through areas. They will be showing the many different types of flowers, trees and so on, a real nature hike and a real good time for our schools to come there.

In the winter time, of course, just so that this facility is operating year-round, schools have for many years actually attended the Falcon Ski Hill for skiing and having fun. Also, there are cross-country ski trails. It is just absolutely endless. There are mountain bike trails there. It is something to behold. I do not know how many of you or if any of you have been out that way yet this year or to visit the new facility, but please do. If you wish, give me a call. I would be only happy to meet you there, maybe even have dinner and then take a little hike of our own through that area. It is a beautiful spot. There

are canoes there that you can rent to go for, a little boating area. It is really something to see, and I welcome not just the Premier (Mr. Filmon) but all members of the Legislature to my constituency for a nice visit.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, back in 1988, I, along with a group of individuals, was elected for the first time, and an individual that stayed around and was extremely successful in elections that followed both in 1990 and 1995 was indeed a friend not only to me but to many members, if not all members of the Liberal Party. Of course, I am talking of the late Neil Gaudry. His contributions to this Chamber have been well noted by members of all sides of this House. His contributions to the Liberal Party have been noted at the annual general meeting. On a personal note, I had the opportunity to get to know Neil in many different ways in which many people had not had, and I was indeed quite privileged. I can recall many pleasant experiences with Neil; in fact, at the last caucus prior to his passing, I had seen a very happy individual with the prospect of a provincial election. I think Neil was about 95 percent convinced that he was indeed going to be running, and it was nice to see the energy and synergy that he was expressing.

On behalf of the Liberal Party we extend our most sincere condolences again to the family of Neil, and I would ask all of my colleagues inside the Chamber to show their condolences by having a moment of silence expressed.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave by honourable members in the Chamber to have a one-minute silence to recognize the bereavement of the former member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry)? [agreed]

A moment of silence was observed.

Mr. Lamoureux: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I thank all members of the Chamber. You know, in a very partisan way, how wonderful it would be if we had a provincial election tomorrow and 57 Liberal MLAs were indeed elected. Not only would I be ecstatic, but so would the Leader of the Liberal Party.

But on a personal note we would see a lot of friendships that I have been able to develop over the years—those friendships would continue but would definitely be missed in terms of some of the personalities and contributions that members have made. I have had the opportunity to gain some experiences whether it is from Jay Cowan of the past who stepped down to some of the individuals who are stepping down or who have indicated that they are not going to be running. I extend my best wishes to the family of the four Conservative MLAs, Jim Downey, Glen Findlay, Rosemary Vodrey and Albert Driedger, and applaud them in their efforts in trying to make Manitoba a better place to live.

Of course, I have a very good friend in Gary Kowalski, and I extend my very best wishes to a very—you know, in politics it is difficult to express it, but in politics you get to know a lot of people. You get to make a lot of political acquaintances. In my experiences, ever since I left the forces, every individual that I know has been a political acquaintance of one form or another. It is because of politics that I got to know that, and very few, and I would really have to stretch if I could find an individual who has gone as far as Gary has gone in terms of a personal relationship. He will be missed not only as a political acquaintance, Madam Speaker, but as a soul mate, as an individual who has been very supportive of me, an individual that I know who will do a lot in servicing his community, or our community, as a member of Winnipeg's finest. As a friend, I wish him the very best in whatever may lie ahead.

Having said that, I think it is fair to say that the Liberals in the past praised, and will continue in the future to praise, the government where it has made positive contributions, and it will criticize the government where we believe that the government needs to improve. We need to be aware that, in fact, this throne speech is indeed an election throne speech. They reveal a gap between Tory promises and performances. Perhaps you had a vision, that being the government of course in 1988 to clean up the mess created by the NDP, downsize government, eliminate deficits. It gave the government a purpose, but it is now gone. Essentially, we have a government that sees a limited role for government that runs away from problems like

child poverty, a health care system in crisis, a declining population base and an urban economic development.

We question the absence of leadership that is needed to create and communicate a vision. Where is the vision here? There is nothing but an emphasis on the status quo, pass some legislation, promise a little more because it is a pre-election throne speech. Liberals looked at the last pre-election throne speech brought down by this government. On December 1 of '94, this government offered us 11 pages in a throne speech with many promises. Then an election came in early '95. It got re-elected, in part, based on the promises of its throne speech, and they did not deliver.

* (1220)

On May 23, 1995, following the re-election, there are barely two pages in the throne speech with few promises and certainly no vision. If they had a vision following the '95 election, our province would not be facing as many problems in health care, infrastructure, child poverty, First Nations and Metis, education, and education of our children. If they had a vision now, this House would not have waited 250 days-plus before reconvening, and we would not be debating a worn-out throne speech. This throne speech goes on for 12 pages.

If they performed as poorly as they did last time and they form government after the election, we can expect two to two-and-a-half pages in the next throne speech, along with more broken promises. This is not acceptable to Manitoba Liberals and not deserving of the support of this House. We find it remarkable that a Tory throne speech could exclude any reference to the agricultural community, an important contributor to the Manitoba economy and this most important one in much of rural Manitoba. A Liberal vision would include agriculture because the application of technology in this field will make it essential to the well-being of a nonurban Manitoba health care.

An Honourable Member: Who wrote that?

An Honourable Member: Dr. Gerrard wrote that.

Mr. Lamoureux: Well, Madam Speaker, a most urgent public policy is in fact needed. No comprehensive integrated vision for health care in the throne speech. We need—

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for The Maples, on a point of order.

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): On a point of order. We are only two Liberal members, and we cannot shout as loud as the 56 other members here. So we would like to get our message across, and we would like the indulgence of all members to listen while my colleague for Inkster gives his message.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for St. Norbert, on the same point of order.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): Madam Speaker, on the same point of order. The honourable member does have under Beausiesne, the throne speech, the right to read his speech, but I do believe that is the only way Dr. Gerrard can get his words on the record. So let the honourable member read.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Leader of the official opposition, on the same point of order.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): On the same point of order. In the season of apologies, I want to apologize for my intervention to the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). I just wanted to make the point that when he gives his own words and his own thoughts and his own feelings in a speech, I always find them more interesting than reading somebody else's speech, but that is his call. I am sorry, and I apologize, I apologize, I apologize.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for The Maples did indeed have a point of order, and I thank the honourable Leader of the official opposition.

* * *

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, very quickly, I can assure honourable members it is

not completely a read speech. Every member has read some material into the record before.

Having said that, Madam Speaker, we need a health care system that is based on meeting the needs of patients and on respect for the care providers. We have had too many years of Tory mismanagement in health care, with the reliance on unproven economies of hasty reorganizations, of premature bed closures followed by more promises of additional bed closures, of important hospital food that passes the Premier's (Mr. Filmon) taste test, but does not for many others. Our corridors in hospitals are crowded with citizens looking for decent care, while there are empty wards without nurses on any floor.

The legislation proposed to update health care professional institutions and the government is to be commended in part for that at-last movement on requests from associations, but we need to offer them respect as caregivers in a decent work environment. The best policy to maintain our health care professionals in this province is to retain those we have already by offering decent compensation, and compensation that will encourage others to undertake the training here in Manitoba. We need to open up the health care system so that its operations are more transparent, so that it is less likely to fail as poorly as it has under this government in the past number of years.

The Liberal Party applauded the government's progress in applauding health services for Manitobans that require dialysis. It is reported that diabetes consumes up to a seventh of our health care budget dollars and particularly affects the aboriginal communities, but these few measures alone fail to reassure Manitobans that the whole health care system will work better.

In terms of Winnipeg urban development, Madam Speaker, Tory promises to act in the city of Winnipeg are not credible. If people refer to the March 31 editorial in the Free Press with respect to the Minister of Industry and Trade (Mr. Tweed), there is a great deal of concern in terms of what the government's intentions really are in terms of economic development for the city of Winnipeg, where the preference is obviously given to rural Manitoba.

Recently, a KPMG report confirms that the future prospects for Winnipeg are questionable without leadership and the partnership among all stakeholders. We know from in particular the Minister of Industry's comments that the Manitoba government under a Tory administration will not be one of the active leaders in that partnership. There is no provincial commitment to work with the City of Winnipeg on addressing the decay of our downtown.

The government has long recognized that the aboriginal issues in our urban centres need to be addressed. We are now promised in the throne speech both an aboriginal education strategy and an aboriginal health care strategy. Perhaps it is well to remind members of this House that this same government promised an urban aboriginal strategy in its first throne speech over 10 years ago. None has ever been developed, which explains why the aboriginal community should be very sceptical of this latest promise.

In terms of fairness in democracy, Madam Speaker, we think it is long overdue that we move towards an elected Speaker.

We believe that there is a need for fixed sitting days inside the Legislature, Madam Speaker, that would at least assure us 100 days in total in any given year.

The electoral boundaries, the government should be soundly condemned for its actions of not reconvening the session in order to pass

those boundaries. Equally, the New Democratic Party has been provided the opportunity to ensure that those boundaries would in fact have been implemented. There is an onus on all parties in this House to take responsibility and to pass these new boundaries prior to the next provincial election.

In terms of fiscal policy, Madam Speaker, lower tax commission is a window dressing if the government plans to reduce taxation prior to consultation. This consultation should address questions of equity and transfers to school authorities as well as the level of offloading taxation. The government has recognized that property taxes in Manitoba are too high, yet Tories reduced the minimum property tax credit from \$325 to \$250, a reduction of 23 percent. That was not promised in the Tory throne speech, but they did deliver it anyway. Is there more of this to come?

The government has failed to fund school divisions properly over the years, downloading responsibilities without funds and minimizing the general formula increases. School authorities—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The hour being 12:30, when this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) will have 25 minutes remaining.

The hour being 12:30 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. Monday next.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, April 9, 1999

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