

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, 20 May, 1986.

Time — 2:00 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER by Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER, Hon. M. Phillips: Presenting Petitions . . . Reading and Receiving Petitions . . . Presenting Reports By Standing and Special Committees . . .

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Economic Security.

HON. L. EVANS: Madam Speaker, I have a brief ministerial statement to make.

I would like to inform the members of the Assembly that I am announcing today the expansion and improvement of the Manitoba Supplement for Pensioners' Program. In keeping with our government's promise to Manitobans during the recent provincial election campaign, we will be making the following changes effective July 1: first, maximum quarterly benefits paid to low income Manitobans aged 55 and over will double; second, benefits will be indexed annually; and third, Manitobans aged 55 and over with certain income levels will qualify for benefits whether or not they have any pension income. Under the current program they must receive at least 50 percent of their income from pension sources to qualify.

Because of this last change, the program name will be changed to 55 Plus — A Manitoba Income Supplement.

The program budget will almost triple from \$3.3 million to about \$9 million annually, and we anticipate that about 27,000 Manitobans will now receive benefits — an increase of 9,000 from the present program.

I've asked that copies of the news release pertaining to this announcement and the new brochure for 55 Plus — A Manitoba Income Supplement be tabled for the members' information. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Gladstone.

MRS. C. OLESON: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I wish to thank the Minister for his statement this afternoon. The Minister is announcing a program which, of course, had been announced by the Premier during the election and it was to start on the first of July, so he's probably announcing it just a little early today.

This is the same government, of course, who has recently announced changes in the Pharmacare deductible which they did not announce during the election and which are not going across the province very well. Some seniors are finding it very difficult to cope with expenses and that adds another burden, so of course now the Minister gets up and announces something which will be of some bit of benefit to them with that.

This is the same government that altered the guidelines for the CRISP program so that there were many farm families who were taken off that program at a time when things are so very difficult for farm people and they could use that.

This is the same government that was going to change the Home Ec Directorate and eliminate positions causing further trouble to people who are on low incomes and having problems. They are also increasing the personal care fees.

So with one hand they take away and the other they give, and people are wondering just what is going on. I do believe though that this will be welcome news to some older women who are on very low incomes and who have no pension and I do commend the Minister for that. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

HON. L. HARAPIAK: Madam Speaker, I would like to table two reports: the Annual Report for the Department of Natural Resources for the year ended March 31, 1985; and the Annual Report for the Conservation Districts of Manitoba for the year ended December 30, 1984.

MADAM SPEAKER: Notices of Motion . . . Introduction of Bills . . .

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MADAM SPEAKER: Before we move to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery where there are 29 students of Grade 9 standing from the Gabrielle Regional College. The students are under the direction of Mr. Adrien Jubenville and the school is located in the constituency of the the Honourable Member for Springfield.

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Inquiry - former Minister Wilson Parasiuk

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question is for the Premier. In the wake of the resignation of the Minister of Energy and Mines yesterday, I wonder if the Premier is now intending to appoint an independent inquiry to investigate fully all of the actions and relationships of the Minister of Energy and Mines as a shareholder in the building known as 115 Bannatyne Avenue.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, what will be requested is an inquiry into the specific allegations that had been made pertaining to a contract involving the Limestone construction and one Mr. Davison.

If the honourable member has some other specific allegations that he wishes to make, let him make those allegations and that will be considered. We're not going to go on a fishing expedition.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, in view of the fact that as a member of the Treasury Board, the Minister of Energy and Mines had a role to play in the approval of contracts or grants that would be given to tenants in that building or to fellow shareholder partners in that building, I would ask the Premier if he does not think that the time is right to clear the record completely and to not place a narrow scope on the investigation as to this one particular contract, but rather to open up all of the relationships between Mr. Parasiuk and fellowshareholders and, indeed, tenants of the building?

HON. H. PAWLEY: In order to ensure that everything is looked into in a proper way, I have asked the Minister of Finance to request the Provincial Auditor to inquire as to whether or not all grants, all other payments made to tenants of the building in question have been properly made and also to undertake a special audit under Section 15(1) of The Provincial Auditor's Act.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, is that the extent of the investigation that we can expect then?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, I don't know what criticism the honourable member would have of a request to the Provincial Auditor to investigate all facts pertaining to whether or not there has been anything improper under the provisions of the act, which it permits him to do so, to provide us with a report — a report that certainly I am prepared to ensure, along with the Minister of Finance, is tabled in this Chamber.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, will the investigation be done in a public sense so that members of the public would not only be able to appreciate that an investigation has taken place, but would be able to see the nature of the investigation, the questions to be probed and to be asked, and the information to be solicited?

HON. H. PAWLEY: The inquiry that will be appointed insofar as the allegations involving the former Minister of Energy and Mines will be one that will be undertaken by an impartial, objective commissioner. It will be public, and that commissioner would have the power to subpoena witnesses and documents and anything else that might be necessary in order that that commissioner can carry out his/her responsibilities.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, if I may, I understand these are two separate investigations. There is one to see whether or not the bills were properly paid by the government, which is being done by the Auditor, and there is a second, an appointment of a commissioner that would investigate the whole relationship between Mr. Parasiuk and fellow partners in the building and tenants of the building?

HON. H. PAWLEY: There has been a specific allegation involving impropriety or a conflict of interest, one or the other, pertaining to a particular contract involving a Mr. Davison. That matter will be inquired into by a commissioner.

MADAM SPEAKER: May I remind the Honourable Leader of the Opposition that we address all honourable members by their constituency, not by their names. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question to the Premier is: does he not believe that it is important to ensure that the public knows that the matter has been fully investigated, that all of the relationships between the former Minister of Energy and Mines and other fellow owners of the building and other tenants in the building have to be made public so that we can ascertain and be satisfied that there was no potential conflict of interest in any of the relationships, not just the one contract between the Manitoba Energy Authority over which he has jurisdiction and the particular consultant who's also a business partner of his?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, as I've indicated, the one particular contract that is a matter of some controversy, arising out of some stories in the paper, is being inquired, investigated, into and insofar as the . . . — (Interjection) —

Well, Madam Speaker, we are dealing with the Provincial Auditor and I have the highest respect for our Provincial Auditor. The Provincial Auditor will be providing us a report in this Chamber.

If there is anything further that requires inquiry or investigation arising from the Provincial Auditor's report, then we shall undertake further action.

This is a government, Madam Speaker, that does not hesitate and will not hesitate to ensure that there's openness so that the former member of this . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

HON. H. PAWLEY: . . . government can ensure that he receives a fair hearing, not a hearing as a result of unfounded allegation or witch hunt.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, the Premier has referred to the fact that the matter is being investigated. Has the commissioner been appointed?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, a number of individuals are being considered. One has been approached, is considering same, and I would hope that in the next short period of time to be able, either myself or through the Attorney-General, to make an announcement of the appointment of a commissioner.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, would the Premier undertake to table the letter from the Minister of Finance appointing the Auditor to do his review, whatever that review involves, and would he also table the terms of reference that are going to be given to the commissioner to investigate this matter?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Both documents will be public documents, tabled in this Chamber.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, would the Premier consider allowing the Opposition to have an input into the terms of reference that are to be given to the commissioner, so that the matter will be investigated in the fullest sense so that all the shadows that currently hang over the former Minister of Energy's head can be removed by a fair, open and impartial investigation?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, what I would propose is this, (a) that we deal with any specific charge involving an individual.

If we want to go into a fishing trip, insofar as any member of this Chamber then let's enter into that involving all 57 members of this Chamber, if we want to enter into a fishing expedition.

If the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has a specific allegation, let him make that allegation either in public or in private and that will be dealt with.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, the specific articles in the Free Press over the weekend refer not only to a contract that was awarded by the Manitoba Energy Authority to a business partner of the former Minister of Energy and Mines, but they refer to over \$2 million in government grants and contracts being given to tenants in the building in which the Minister of Energy was a shareholder.

I refer specifically to the fact that as a member of Treasury Board, the Minister of Energy would be involved in the decision-making that led to contracts and to grants being awarded. I ask the Premier whether or not he would consider allowing those aspects to be investigated because they all come within the ambit of a potential for conflict of interest?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, all of those aspects will be looked into by way of a report from the Provincial Auditor as to expenditures including the fact that the Member for Lakeside, while Minister, approved a contract of \$963,000 involving No. 10 Architect which operates from that building which was responsible for the construction of the Court House — \$963,000 which I don't question. I think the architectural work was well done, but let it be understood when the honourable member proceeds on an expedition, that particular contract properly was awarded to a tenant of that building by the Member for Lakeside involving \$963,000.00.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, the Premier doesn't seem to understand that the Member for Lakeside doesn't have shares in that building, that he wasn't involved financially in any way, shape or form. We are talking about a Minister of his government who was and is a shareholder in the building, who was and is a member of Treasury Board, and he had authority and jurisdiction over this.

My question to the Premier, Madam Speaker, is, would he not consider allowing members on both sides of the House to have input into the criteria that are set for this investigation so that it is seen to be impartial, not as it would be if only one side of the House decided on the scope and criteria?

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, I certainly don't want to reflect on the Provincial Auditor. The Provincial Auditor has been requested . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. I am not reflecting on the Provincial Auditor. I am reflecting on the terms of reference that you're setting.

MADAM SPEAKER: That is not a point of order, as the Leader of the Opposition well knows.

The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: The Provincial Auditor has been requested, Madam Speaker, to provide us with a report insofar as tenants in the building, insofar as monies received by those tenants. If there are any irregularities, I am confident that the Provincial Auditor will point that out in his report to this Chamber. Upon receipt, that report will be made public so that all members can survey the report and to ask any questions they wish arising from the report.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, we're speaking about the terms of reference given to the Auditor; we're speaking about the terms of reference to be given to the commissioner to avoid the prospect of this being seen as a whitewash, as a cover-up.

Would the Premier not agree to have input into the terms of reference to be given to the commissioner?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, I will not chase phantoms. If the honourable member has a specific charge, a specific allegation, let him rise to his feet and specify his particular charge. If that charge is one of substance, it will be included in any terms of reference. But, Madam Speaker, I for one will not be a party to chasing phantoms.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, my question to the Premier is, did he have previous knowledge of the investment of the former Minister of Energy and Mines in the building known as 115 Bannatyne?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, in the letter that the former Minister of Energy and Mines forwarded to me in 1981, he indicated interest in the particular building.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, my question further to the Premier is, did he have knowledge previously of the investment in the building of Michael Decter, then former Clerk of the Executive Council?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Yes, I did.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, did the Premier have knowledge of the investment in that particular building of Ronald Bailey, a senior officer in the Department of Co-op Investments?

HON. H. PAWLEY: No, Madam Speaker.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, my question to the Chairman of the Treasury Board is, did the former Minister of Energy and Mines absent himself from discussions at Treasury Board on the awarding of contracts or grants to the tenants or partners of 115 Bannatyne?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. E. KOSTYRA: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As the Premier indicated, we have requested the Provincial Auditor to do a special audit with respect to any and all government grants or transactions related to that building and to determine whether or not those transactions were properly made, so all those items will be subject to the report of the Provincial Auditor.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, in view of the fact that minutes are kept of Treasury Board meetings, could the Chairman of the Treasury Board indicate whether or not the former Minister of Energy and Mines declared an interest in the building when any contracts or grants were being awarded to tenants and/or partners in the building?

HON. E. KOSTYRA: As I indicated, the Provincial Auditor will be reviewing all items related to any government transaction with respect to that building. In terms of the specific question, I will take that as notice and see if that information is available.

MR. G. FILMON: Will the Auditor then be asked to examine the minutes of Treasury Board in order for us to know the answer to that question or can the Chairman of the Treasury Board not just simply review that matter and bring us the answer?

HON. E. KOSTYRA: The review that will be done by the Provincial Auditor will be such that he will have access to all government documents with respect to any transactions with any businesses that are located in that building. I would suggest to the member opposite that he should await the report and investigation of the Auditor which will be tabled here for discussion and for follow-up questioning if it's deemed to be necessary at that time.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, in view of the fact that WMC Associates, over the course of the last two years, have had extensive government contracts — I believe in the fiscal year 1984-85 they totalled \$124,000 and prior to that they had a contract with the Department of Labour and this past year's included Co-op Development and the Manitoba Energy Authority — will the Premier undertake to table in the House all the reports prepared for departments of the Government of Manitoba by WMC Associates during the past two years?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, I will take that under review.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, the Premier has just given us a lecture on the openness of his government and their desire to ensure that everything is going to be free and above board and open to public scrutiny. Why will he not table the reports that have been done by WMC and Associates for three different departments, paid for by public taxpayers' money, why will he not table the reports?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, I regret that the Leader of the Opposition should choose to misrepresent and misinform. I did not say I would not. I did indicate that I — (Interjection) —

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, what I did indicate is I will be speaking to the Ministers that are involved to ascertain what reports they have received.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. H. ENNS: Madam Speaker, I want to assure the Premier through you that I too do not wish to chase phantoms, so I will address my question to the Minister responsible for the Community Assets Program.

The private Art Club which counts among its members the former Minister of Energy and Mines, received a \$50,000 grant to renovate the first floor of the building they occupy. That building is partly owned by the same former Minister of Energy and Mines.

My question, was the grant approved by Treasury Board at the time the former Minister of Energy and Mines was a member of that Treasury Board?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Economic Security.

HON. L. EVANS: Madam Speaker, those grants do not go through the Treasury Board process.

MR. H. ENNS: Well, Madam Speaker, I will examine that answer in greater form. It's my understanding that expenditures of a particular sum, \$5,000 or more all go through Treasury Board. Of course, that might have been changed under this group.

Did the Clerk of the Executive Council, Mr. Decter, or Mr. Bailey, or Mr. Davison talk to them about approval of that grant?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, the Auditor will be reviewing that and that will be part and parcel of the report.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, my question for the Minister of Employment Services and Economic Security is, did either the former Clerk of the Executive Council, Mr. Decter, or the former Minister of Energy and Mines speak to the Minister about that community

Tuesday, 20 May, 1986

assets grant for the renovation and restoration of 115 Bannatyne?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Employment Services.

HON. L. EVANS: Madam Speaker, the answer is no.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. H. ENNS: Just one more question, Madam Speaker, on the same subject. I wonder if the First Minister is aware of how many other members of the Treasury Bench are members of that private Art Club.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: I must advise you that some 1,500 Manitobans, I gather are members of that non-profit Co-op Arts Council. I regret I'm not one of those 1,500 but I am now going to join the Co-op Arts Centre. After all the publicity over the weekend, my membership will be on the way.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Opposition House Leader.

MR. G. MERCIER: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

A question to the Minister of Co-op Development. Would the Minister undertake to table shortly in this House tomorrow the itemized funding that has taken place under the Co-operative Loan and Guarantee Board for the past four or five years, will he undertake to table that itemized statement in the House tomorrow?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Co-op Development.

HON. J. COWAN: I don't know if I can have that much material available by tomorrow. I'd be pleased to answer any specific questions and I would be pleased to table that information as soon as it's available.

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, could the Minister indicate whether the Winnipeg Arts Club received a loan from the Co-op Loan and Guarantee Board?

HON. J. COWAN: Yes, it did.

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, could the Minister inform the House whether or not that loan is close to \$100,000 and could he identify for the House what the security is for that loan?

HON. J. COWAN: I can't do that right at the moment, but I'd certainly be pleased to bring that information to question period tomorrow.

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, could the Minister inform the House as to whether or not the original application for the loan was made by Mr. Decter and Mr. Bailey?

HON. J. COWAN: I can bring that information to the House. To my knowledge it was not but let me refresh

my memory by going through the files and bring that information to the honourable member tomorrow for question period.

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, could the Minister, when he's investigating that matter look at and determine whether or not Mr. Decter and Mr. Bailey applied for the loan and then were advised that the loan application should be made by some other person and that the loan application was then made by Mr. Mazur from Credo Communications with whom members opposite would be familiar?

HON. J. COWAN: I certainly have not heard that scenario previously in any conversation whatsoever, but I will check with the Co-operative Promotion Board to determine how that application was made and report back to the member tomorrow as to the full information as to who was in contact with them in regard to that loan and the decisions which were taken by them in regard to that loan.

MR. G. MERCIER: Could the Premier inform the House whether or not the Winnipeg Arts Club received any other form of financial assistance, loans or grants from the government other than the Community Assets Program or the loan from the Co-operative Loans and Guarantees Board?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: I believe there was a reference in the newspaper Saturday to a grant received from the MCAP Program. That is a matter that, of course, will be part and parcel of the review by the Provincial Auditor's Department, but we were advised by newspaper accounts of an MCAP grant plus a sizable grant from the Federal Government, if I recall correctly of close to \$30,000 to the Co-operative non-profit Arts Club involving some 1,500 Manitobans that are members.

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, could the Premier indicate whether Mr. Decter represented the province on an administrative committee along with the civil servants from the city and Federal Governments relating to the Core Area Initiative?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Yes.

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, could the Premier indicate whether or not Mr. Decter played any role in recommending or approving core area projects, particularly those that were close to 115 Bannatyne Avenue . . .

A MEMBER: How close?

MR. G. MERCIER: Well, the roadway and the park that are adjacent.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, this is what I was concerned about a few minutes ago. Honourable members do want to practice McCarthyism and a witch hunt.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

HON. H. PAWLEY: Yes, yes . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

HON. H. PAWLEY: . . . I can advise the — (Interjection) — however, I can . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

HON. H. PAWLEY: . . . advise the honourable member that insofar as the paving stones within a two block area that is referred to in the newspaper account of Saturday, apparently that was entirely the initiative of the City of Winnipeg.

I can also advise the honourable member that I'm informed despite the fact that Mr. Decter could have applied for Core Area Initiative funds in order to assist him in the renovation of the building on Bannatyne Avenue, he chose not to make the application because of sensitivity.

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, a question to the Premier, is he prepared to broaden the terms of reference to include the activities of Mr. Decter and Mr. Bailey in obtaining government funding for projects within and adjacent to 115 Bannatyne Avenue?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: I am afraid I didn't get that question — with respect to projects including and adjacent to . . .

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, would the Premier be prepared to broaden the terms of reference to include an investigation into the involvement of Mr. Decter and Mr. Bailey in provincial funding or grants to organizations within the building or to core area grants or to the Loans and Guarantees Board, etc? Is he prepared to include that within the terms of the inquiry?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, I don't see any problem with that question.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Honourable First Minister. Mr. Premier, I think we all felt, as members, some regret over the weekend at the allegations that were made. I think also we felt that the announcement of a public inquiry would clear the air.

Are you not concerned that the limitations placed on this public inquiry will, in fact, not do that and that our former Minister of Mines will still live under the burden of guilt?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, I'd like to know, guilty of what? There has been one specific charge.

We're dealing with that specific charge. If the honourable member, along with other honourable members, wish to bring forth specific charges, that will be dealt with too.

It's my understanding of the justice system that you deal with specific allegations of wrongdoing. You don't go on a large-scale witch hunt, attempting for — as appears to be the case across the way — a pursuit of — (Interjection) — well I regret very much, Madam Speaker. If the honourable members have specific allegations, specific charges, let them bring those forth.

We have asked the Provincial Auditor to look into the entire matter of the Bannatyne Avenue building. If honourable members now seem to be somewhat uneasy about the specific charge because they know that it may or may not stand up, then let them come up with some other specific charges they want to level.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: My question again to the Honourable First Minister, Sir, I don't think there's any question that your former Minister was a part owner of this building, and that the enhancement of this building came about through beautification and also through the tenants who were able to pay large rents to this owner of the building. Surely, the entire business affairs of that building should be part of this investigation.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, what the honourable member is doing is precluding the results of the enquiry to the public auditors as to whether or not there has been any improper or unfair enhancement or any gain. My own view, Madam Speaker — let me put it on the record — is that, if honourable members are alleging any gain, there has been no gain.

Radioactivity - level of

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Thompson.

MR. S. ASHTON: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Environment.

In view of the fact that there is concern in Northern Manitoba about the lack of information on levels of radioactivity following the Chernobyl disaster, and in view of the fact that the Federal Government has a testing station in Churchill, I would like to ask the Minister whether the Federal Government has provided the Minister with information on the levels of radioactivity in Northern Manitoba?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of the Environment.

HON. G. LECUYER: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the figures I gave last week were a composite for Winnipeg and Churchill. The air monitoring in Churchill for the 24-hour period for the 7th and 8th of May was at the level of .003 bequerels per cubic metre of air. I remind you that the background level is 20 bequerels per cubic metre. The information I just provided is again a composite which applies to a number of communities in the North, which include Churchill, Whitehorse, Inuvik, Goose Bay, Yellowknife, Hay River, Resolute Bay and Coral Harbour.

The period of May 1 to 7 showed no precipitation in Churchill and, if there was any testing of precipitation for the period of May 7 to the 14, I haven't got that result at the moment. I assume, therefore, that there was no precipitation during that period of time.

MR. S. ASHTON: As a supplementary, Madam Speaker, in view of the fact that the particular concern with levels of radioactivity does relate to precipitation, I'd like to ask whether the Minister could keep members of this House and the public informed of any results from the Federal Government in this regard?

HON. G. LECUYER: Madam Speaker, yes, as the results of these samples are provided to us, we will share that information. All samples presently are flown to Ottawa on a daily basis, except for Winnipeg's water supply, which is tested by Pinawa in Manitoba. All the others are flown to Ottawa and, as soon as they are made available to us, we'll gladly make it available to this House.

Inquiry - former Minister Wilson Parasiuk

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, my question to the Premier is: did Cabinet approve the Community Assets Program grant of \$50,000 to the Arts Co-op located in 115 Bannatyne?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Employment Services.

HON. L. EVANS: Madam Speaker, the procedure is that the grants are vetted from all organizations. As honourable members know, from around this province, we deal with hundreds of organizations who have received grants under this program, creating jobs for Manitobans and doing something useful for the organization involved. The field staff get the applications, vet them and make their recommendations. They're reviewed by a committee set up by the Manitoba Jobs Fund. I'm a member of that committee. The committee presents the minutes of approvals and disapprovals, etc., and those minutes go to Cabinet for approval or disapproval or modification, as a set of minutes.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, did the former Minister of Energy and Mines make Cabinet aware at the time that the approval of a grant was being made to a tenant in a building in which he was an owner; did he make Cabinet aware of his involvement in that building at the time of the discussion, and absent himself from the discussion or the vote?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, insofar as the building, a grant was not made to the building. The grant was made to the leasehold interest which involves

a Cooperative Arts Centre of Winnipeg. Madam Speaker, the honourable member is assuming, insofar as declaration of conflict of interest, that it would be an amount that would be required under the conflict of interest provisions. The conflict of interest provisions require a 5 percent interest prior to declaration.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, according to the information, he has more than a 5 percent interest in the building. The area that has to be examined with respect to this is, Madam Speaker, that the value of the building . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Question?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, on a point of order.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: The Minister of Energy and Mines does not have a 5 percent interest. I think that it would be appropriate for the Leader of the Opposition not to make statements in this House that are untrue and are unfair to the Minister of Energy and Mines. The Minister of Energy and Mines does not have a 5 percent interest in the building, considerably less.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, in view of the fact . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister was not on a point of order. A clarification of the facts is not a point of order.

I also would like to caution the Leader of the Opposition. Beauchesne, Citation 360(2) says that a question may not ". . . seek information about matters which are in their nature secret, such as decisions or proceedings of Cabinet."

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, in view of the fact that the value of the building is essentially based on the rental value, on the capitalized value of the rents being paid in the building, and the rents being paid in the building were, to a certain extent, predicated on grants being given to organizations within the building, it seems to me that the former Minister of Energy had a great deal to gain . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Excuse me. If the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has a question — question period is not a time for debate.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, my question to the Premier is: in view of the fact that the decision of Cabinet had the potential to enhance the economics and the finances of the former Minister of Energy and Mines, did he or did he not declare the interest and absent himself from the vote?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, I am not aware of any particular vote, if the honourable member is referring to a vote.

Madam Speaker, if there is any impingement or infringement in respect to any provisions or laws of

the Province of Manitoba, that will be inquired with. Let me assure the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, that will be dealt with.

There are provisions in respect to the conflict of interest provisions. If the honourable leader wants to make a specific charge of a conflict of interest, let him make that specific charge and it will be looked into. Let him make the charge though, rather than go on a fishing expedition.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, in referring to a case of a review of a conflict of interest allegation in Ottawa last week, the Federal Leader of the New Democratic Party said: "Such matters that do not involve the law, but questions of morality, ought to be assessed by Mr. Stevens' peers. We're not referring to a narrow definition of the law."

Will the Premier not agree to a wide open investigation of all the allegations, all the relationships between the former Minister of Energy and Mines and the tenants and partners in the building?

MADAM SPEAKER: May I also remind the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, Beauchesne Citation 362, says a question should not be prefaced by the "... reading of telegrams, letters or extracts from newspapers."

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, I was reading a quote from Mr. Broadbent, and surely that is a relevant preamble for a question. I wonder if the Premier would answer that question.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, as I indicated some number of minutes ago, an enquiry has been made to the Provincial Auditor to do a complete investigation in respect to anything that might be considered improper, if any, in respect to the tenants and the building in question.

I have also indicated the intent to establish an independent inquiry arising out of a specific charge that has been made, a specific charge of conflict of interest or impropriety dealing with a particular item. If the Leader of the Opposition wants to make another specific charge, let him make that specific charge, and that will be considered for inclusion in any terms of reference.

MADAM SPEAKER: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

MADAM SPEAKER: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Ellice and the amendment thereto by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. D. SCOTT: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I'd like to start my presentation today by congratulating you on the election to the highest office of this Chamber, as the Speaker of the

Chamber. It is a job I do not envy you for. It shall be, I'm sure, as Speakers have always found through time, a very trying position and one that requires a great deal of exactitude in your decisions, as well as a balance of fair play and the necessity of the administration of the affairs of the House.

I wish you well in your duties, Madam Speaker, as I'm sure the rest of the colleagues of the House do. We'll work on our best to make sure that your rulings and that your term of office as Speaker of this august Assembly shall be a comfortable one for you and one beneficial to the whole Assembly.

I would like, in particular as well, to welcome the 17 new members to this Legislature. This Legislature is an incredibly important place. It is the focal point of the political events for the people of Manitoba from the Whiteshell right through to the Saskatchewan border, from the southern border of the province, from Miami to Churchill. It's an opportunity for you, as individuals, to both represent your constituents on a local basis, as well as a responsibility to represent them and the province as a whole.

Your responsibilities go far beyond the individual constituency, as I'm sure you are all aware. In making your decisions, in your judgments, both personally and as a part of caucuses, I am sure that you will take the best interest of the province at hand and work through the legislative process to make our legislation that much more meaningful and that much more beneficial for the people of the Province of Manitoba.

Many of you have come to provincial politics from the municipal route. I, myself, very much appreciate the hours, days and years of service that people at the municipal level of politics put in, in this province and across the country. I'm sure that you will see a fair difference in the presentation, both in the process in the Legislative Assembly, but also the broader range of responsibilities one has at the provincial level.

In saying that, I don't mean it at all necessarily to be a superior level of government. I think every level of government, be it federal, provincial or municipal, is equally important to the citizens who have concerns within the jurisdictions of those levels of government. I'm sure that you will give the same attention to provincial matters as one did previously at your city or local municipal matters.

Entering into the House, especially with so many new members, somewhat over one-third of the members of the House being new members, it gives us an opportunity I think to reflect and for you to add, when you come into a House with that kind of numbers, an opportunity to make significant impact on to the legislative process itself, to make it perhaps more meaningful, to make it more interesting for yourselves as individuals, as well as the whole governing process. Perhaps, as you get more used to this place, one can work in a non-partisan manner on both sides of the House toward reforms, toward making the legislative process more reflective perhaps of the members present; to give the members in the Opposition, in particular, an opportunity to participate more in the formulation of the policy behind legislation and the implementation of legislation, taking the concerns across the board.

I don't think it simply has to be reserved to the actual legislative process of First, Second, Third Readings. I

think one can perhaps use our committee structure a bit more and using investigative committees to investigate areas of policy, of government direction or of economic policy for the province, social problems.

We've had a couple of members already make reference to their areas of interest, be it in health care, as the Member for River East brought her points to us on Friday afternoon and people on this side. Certainly the Member for Kildonan, has a great interest in alternative delivery of medical systems as well. Perhaps through greater use of a committee structure, establishing specialized standing committees, one could work through that process to make recommendations to the government.

I say that with some trepidation and that is because of the history and the tradition of the British parliamentary system which puts the prime responsibility and authority with the Executive Branch of government, being the Cabinet. I would not want to see that interfered with, but I do feel there is room in the process for a greater amount of participation by members of the Legislature from both sides of the House in this instance.

Madam Speaker, it would be remiss of me if I did not also express some regret in my first presentation before this new Legislature, on the passing of some members — or at least not exactly passing, but members who are no longer with us. Two in particular I make reference to: the Member for Turtle Mountain; I certainly appreciated the four and a half years I had in this House opposite him. I respected his opinions a great deal. I may have differed very strongly with the foundation of his beliefs, but I respected the beliefs that he came from, from what I feel was probably the clearest of the old Legislature's Opposition as far as bringing forth principles from, I guess one could call it a clear, or a pure Conservative philosophy. It's a philosophy which I don't necessarily take to wholeheartedly myself, to say the very least, but it is a legitimate economic and social philosophy as has been recognized by the history of our country, of our continent, and of British Parliaments or British-based Parliaments around the world. He had a way of putting his arguments forward; it was not belligerent, it was well-reasoned and thoughtful, and he made a tremendous contribution to the last Legislature. I'm sure we will all miss him, especially the members opposite in the leadership role he provided in debate.

Another member from our side, I would like to point out in particular, was the former Member for Springfield. As both our Government House Leader and Minister of Municipal Affairs, one of the most outstanding debaters this House has seen for many, many years. He, again, as the Member for Turtle Mountain debated things on a basis of philosophy and fact, so did the former Member for Springfield. Although members opposite may not necessarily have agreed with every point he brought forward, they certainly listened. He made a significant contribution to this House in the short four and a half years he was with us. I look forward to seeing him back at some point in the future. I think with some confidence that he will return and I hope he will return to a more active political public life.

I shouldn't miss in passing a former seat mate of mine, as well, the former Member for River East. He made, I feel, quite an impression on this Legislature

in one area in particular: he was a constant advocate for tax reform and for Manitoba to take more of a lead in pushing tax reform. That's one of the reasons it was dealt with as a resolution in the last Legislature. It was included in our election commitments this past time around and it's been included once again in the Throne Speech.

We will see more, I suspect, as this Session goes on, of various initiatives which we, as a government, with the support, I hope, of the opposition members for pushing for a true and sensible tax reform for this country. The tax system certainly right now is — if anything, it's not progressive anymore. It has shifted more and more of the burden of our taxation upon the middle class and the lower middle class. It has exempted huge pockets of accessible revenue through various corporate schemes, private schemes, whatever.

The whole taxation system has to have a thorough review to get us back to what I feel were the very sound principles of the Carter Commission back in the late Sixties, of 'a buck is a buck, and a buck should be taxed as a buck no matter how it is earned or where it comes from.' I don't hold much hope that that system will ever evolve as clean and as simple as that, especially with the present administration in Ottawa, with more or less its attitude that the only way you can get economic investment is to push strings of economic investment by offering tax incentives in particular.

Tax incentives are like pushing a string, because you have very little direction over them and over the use of the money that will be saved by the firms in particular cases. More often than not, as we have seen in various examples, in time, the intended program gets controverted by smart accountants and lawyers so that the essence of the program that may well have been intended is no longer present and it ends up being more of a scam than an actual vehicle for economic investment and incentive.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, I would like, as well, to express my gratitude to the good people who populate Inkster constituency for their support once again in this election. It makes one feel exceptionally good and somewhat gratified to see the level of support that was sustained in our constituency and once again — or at least this time — I had the largest majority for any New Democrat in the province and the second largest majority considering all people put together. I hope it reflects a little bit on my service this past four and a half years. But as important, if not more important than that, I hope that it also reflects the confidence that the people have, not simply in myself but in the legislative process and in our government, that we will offer the soundest alternative available for a reasonable government in this province. I think we were able to run to a large extent in the last election on our record because we had a very good, sound record.

Within my constituency of Inkster, I was particularly pleased to work with the residents. One community in particular was the western community where we got a residents' association started about three years ago. Since that time, we have become the first community to benefit from a brand new City Winnipeg program called the Manitoba-Winnipeg Urban Community Revitalization Program. This initiative is aimed at stimulating areas that are in large measure left outside the Core Area Initiative, where they were not eligible

for funding under the core, but still vital and important communities within our City of Winnipeg, communities that cannot be ignored, can only be ignored to the peril of the residents of the whole province because you cannot afford to have a section of a city or a small town — whatever — suffer and fall by the wayside.

We must continue to work with the residents of the area in developing plans and programs that will be effective for those areas to keep them from slipping and, instead, to build upon their strengths, and to build strong vibrant communities throughout the city. In Weston, in particular, is a part of the city that has, I think, not a unique situation, but it was built around the turn of the century, most of the homes are on 25- and 30-foot lots. Many are smaller homes. You have a diverse population, and particularly with older residents in the area, and it is exceptionally distressing for those people, who live in a community where they have been virtually all their lives, to see people coming into the community as absentee landlords purchasing properties which are still relatively inexpensive, turning around, renting them out and not taking care of the property, in many instances to people who can't afford to be landlords — because to be a landlord is not a cheap undertaking. It is something that takes a fair amount of investment by that person to make sure the property is maintained and working with the people who he has as tenants, or they have as tenants. In other instances it's their classic slum landlords and the community unfortunately has its share of them.

So we've got to work in developing programs with residents of communities like that, that they can maintain the pride of the older community, that they can be seen as a main part of the urban society that we live in today, and not as neglected centres of the city just because they are older and the homes perhaps aren't as modern as in the new subdivisions or as spacious. They are every bit as important for the people who live there.

For the people who have maintained ownership of their homes, who may be in their sixties, seventies or eighties, I feel we owe more to them, far far more as far as a commitment from the various levels of government, to enable them to live in a secure setting and a tidy setting than we do to any of the new areas of the city.

One other item I would like to speak on very briefly in regard to the city is the need within not only my constituency but other constituencies for an expansion of the Manitoba/Winnipeg revitalization program. In my own community, I also have the communities that are neighbourhoods of Brooklands, and Shaughnessy Heights in the part of the North End, which are all in need of some form of assistance now. I am hoping that before this term of government is up that we will have initiated this revitalization program in those neighbourhoods as well to help them along.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of my main hopes for the next four years is that in this term of office this government will be able to move towards a comprehensive and a new water policy for the Province of Manitoba. During the election campaign, and it also was mentioned in the Throne Speech, we had a commitment for the Red and Assiniboine Rivers over the next 10 years for a revitalization of those rivers. It's not just restoration of river banks, it's an important

part of it, for sure; but the most important part, in my mind, is cleaning up the quality of the water, getting rid of the raw sewage that still ends up in our river systems. I am not speaking simply of the Red and the Assiniboine but the smaller tributaries as well and other rivers that suffer some difficulties further in the south and the west of the province. In particular, the Souris River is another river that's threatened not this time by the Garrison Diversion project but by another project in Saskatchewan which could have, I think, a detrimental impact on the quality of the water in the Souris River basin.

In looking for a new water policy for the province as a whole, I would hope that we would have the active co-operation and participation of members opposite.

MR. H. ENNS: I think you're going to get it.

MR. D. SCOTT: And the Member for Lakeside says that we are going to get it. I am glad to see he's still here.

A MEMBER: And he's awake to!

MR. D. SCOTT: And that he's awake, although he doesn't very often catch too many catnaps in here I don't believe; he's too active a debater and a listener for that.

A MEMBER: With that speech you'd put . . . to sleep.

MR. D. SCOTT: Yes, I possibly could. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in setting up some principles that we should be following in developing a new water policy, and I'm not speaking simply of rivers and streams but also of groundwater and our lakes in this province, I think that it would do us a great amount of good to look to other countries that are northern countries that are in our, say, north of 50, north of 60 parallels, areas that have severe winters, similar climatic conditions to what we do. I think we can gain a tremendous amount by looking to the Scandinavian countries and what they have done in an effort to clean up their waterways in Norway, in Sweden, and in Finland in particular.

The Finns, several years ago, started to address this problem. I would like to maybe just quote a couple of their general objectives that they have set up for their document which was put out in 1974, and it was for 10 years ending in '85, called "The Principles of Water Pollution" that show up to 1985 for Finland, published by the National Board of Waters of that country. They talk of their general objectives — I think they are really admirable objectives — objectives that we should be trying to base in new policies that we develop as well. I will just read them to you.

One of the first, under the general objectives, they say "Operations polluting the water and other activities affecting this condition must be adapted to the natural equal system." They recognize they live in a northern climate. They recognize that waters in the northern climate can be under far greater stress than they can in other climates because of the amount of ice cover in the winter in particular.

They also call for the necessity ". . . and wasteful use of water resources must be avoided and hazardous

effects upon the water prevented.' These are statements of principle. But the most interesting part I find of them is that they have been acting on them very very effectively.

To go on, it says, "Effects on the waters must be examined as a whole, striving to minimize detrimental effects on the waters in the rest of the environment. Likewise, operations affecting the waters must be examined from the point of view of economy as a whole, taking all the cost and benefits into account."

They talk about the aesthetic aspects of water — "the healthiness and pleasantness of waters as an environment must be guaranteed" — something we have ignored until recent times virtually completely, and the aesthetic qualities of the water. If you protect the aesthetic qualities of the water, you will have the rest of your concerns taken care of because you cannot have an aesthetically pleasing slough, it's just not possible.

In the last one, that I think is very appropriate for us who live in the southern part of the province, at least a far dryer climate than they do, it states that, and I quote, "The needs for using water must be within the limits that nature imposes." We have at some time, in our cultural practices, we have got to recognize that water is not an infinite resource. We have to recognize that the water that we exist on has not necessarily been here for eons of time. It is replenished, but if you extract that water, if you drain a lake, the lake does not come back, the lake is exhausted. If you take a water policy based, as we had some people a few years ago, when we were discussing water rights legislation, that wanted to set up irrigation systems not on the capacity of the river to supply water but on the capacity of their pumps to pump the water, I think one has a profoundly wrong attitude towards developing any kind of a sensible water policy.

We can look to other examples; some of them have been really catastrophic in past years. Our neighbours to the south always talk about a shortage of water. They don't have a shortage of water but they have a gross misuse of water by trying to build up, be it agriculture — it is by far the largest use of water — in very arid, semi-desert conditions. The heat may be there, but if the water is not there you cannot necessarily sustain a long-lasting agricultural economy on just heat alone.

They have run into difficulties in southern California, in particular, but also in Colorado and other areas along the Colorado River, where they started with some power dams and some irrigation dams back over 100 years ago. They now have 57, I believe, dams on that river.

The river no longer even reaches its mouth in Mexico on the Gulf of Baja. They lose something like 10,000 acres a year of land that they brought into cultivation; is now lost to cultivation because of excess salinity in the soil because the irrigating waters they were using are getting saltier and saltier.

To try and rectify the problem to some extent they have built — again a technological solution — a nuclear power desalination plant on the Mexican border, with the United States, at the Colorado River to try to get water clean enough with a low enough salt level that the few miles remaining in the river before it just disappears into its old riverbed, miles and miles and miles from the mouth of the river, so the farmer on the

Mexican side can at least have some water that can be used for irrigation purposes.

It's an example, and just one example of thousands of examples of terrible misuse of technological projects — be it agriculture or fishing — I just clipped one out last week out of a paper written by a gentleman from the Washington Post; it was printed in the Manchester Guardian Weekly. It talked about a situation where the Norwegians, in assistance to the Lake Turkana in Kenya, the Norwegians saw the bountiful fish in Lake Turkana and they thought it would make a good stable base of income for the people living in that general area . . .

MR. J. DOWNEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER, C. Santos: A point of order is being raised.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was mentioned earlier in the day, as Native Affairs critic to compliment the Minister of Native Affairs for his moved to the second bench and I'm sure that before long he will have advanced to the first bench.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member knows that is not a point of order.

The Member for Inkster.

MR. D. SCOTT: Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this situation they built a multimillion dollar fish plant on the side of this lake only to find that soon after the fish plant was finished it went through a periodic cycle and the lake was now essentially, not drained, but dried up because of natural conditions that exist in the area and the whole thing had to be shut down. It was a poorly conceived project based on the notion that water will always be there.

Some members may wonder why I am trying to make reference to some things as far off as perhaps the Colorado River system and as to Lake Turkana in Kenya but they have a very direct relationship to us in Canada when we are moving in to talk about free trade, when we have as a person who is Canada's chief negotiator, a Mr. Simon Reisman, the distinguished former Deputy Minister of Finance in this country, but also an active proponent in the sale of water from Canada to the United States and I think it is really a hair-brained scheme.

Of all of the schemes that have been cooked up, now we have Premier Bourassa of Quebec wanting to build a dam across the James Bay and divert the water that flows into the James Bay south into the Great Lakes and into the U.S. and to the Midwest.

We have another scheme called the NAWAPA, which stands for the North American Water and Power Alliance — not just a multibillion — but tens and perhaps even into hundreds of billions of dollars of money in a totally wasteful scheme to try and reverse rivers flowing into the Arctic, send them south back through the Rocky Mountain trench, some 800 kilometres long, and then into the Midwest and even into Mexico. I mean, the lack of even consideration of the economic impact this would have on our country and as far as I am concerned

more importantly, is the environmental impact it would have by reversing the flow of those streams on the Arctic as well as to the Canadian landscape.

Some of these schemes, and we have more and more proponents now talking of wanting to sell water to the U.S. — it's not a renewable resource. Like I said earlier, once you empty a lake out, it's gone. The lake levels of the Great Lakes, in particular, the levels have fluctuated just 10, 15 feet per eons of time. There's very little of the total volume of water that flows into them on an annual basis; and for people who want to turn around and start pumping billions of dollars or billions of gallons of water from here to an area which is not short of water but is short of water because of their policies — their cultural policies — of trying to adapt essentially an economy, a water-based economy on an area that doesn't have any water. It really doesn't make any sense.

They should realign their policies instead of coming to Canada and for Canadians who think they're going to make money off this scheme of diverting rivers and pumping water by the acre foot into the U.S., it is sheer lunacy to think that we, as Canadians, can try and build any kind of an economy on the basic premise that we are just going to be shipping out more resources.

We are running down on our minerals; the oil price has gone down so it's not quite as attractive any more. But here, what are some of the great economic minds or Conservative think-tanks coming up with? Start shipping out your water. Pretty soon they're going to want our land as well. When they want the land, that perhaps is when the Member for Lakeside would be happiest, to have some sort of not simply an economic union but a political union and several of the other members opposite may be more satisfied with that. I certainly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, want nothing to do with it whatsoever.

In the Throne Speech, there is one item I would like to draw particular attention to, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I am very pleased is in there and This is the question of the elimination of liens against people who have been or are on social assistance. I think it is exceptionally cruel for us to ever contemplate the idea that when a person loses their place in the economic mainstream, is laid off or for whatever other reasons ends up on their own without economic self-support available to them, that we then end up putting a lien against that person's name, let alone their property, so that if they are ever able to get back on their feet again the first thing the government does is to come and say, give us our money back. That's a social cost, it's a cost to the overall society and it's not something that should be put upon the backs of the people who can least afford it.

I had a constituent who came to me some time ago with this situation. She had been, some 10 years ago, on social assistance for a period of about a year or year-and-a-half under very trying family circumstances for her. She then got herself some decent training, got a decent job, started raising herself and her small child, got to the point where she felt she could buy a house. She went out to buy a house, a small modest home, and before she could register that property she had to sign a lien to the City of Winnipeg that they had dibs on \$2,500 or \$2,700 of that house, then if she ever lost that house the City of Winnipeg would get

the first \$2,700 off it. I think it is absolutely foolish for our society to permit a situation to exist where an individual can have a lien put against their names, let alone against their properties, when they are down and out.

Some of the members opposite may take somewhat like to it. I'm glad to see the Member for Minnedosa is agreeing with this policy. It's not often I have his agreement, especially as a former banker — (Interjection) — Retired banker, sorry; he's mentally still a banker.

I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we need a complete re-look and rethinking of much of our social policy and social assistance programs. To me, one of the most debilitating things a person can have is for them to end up on social assistance, to lose the ability and the self-respect of daily tasks, of an income-earning ability. It is exceptionally debilitating to those persons. Simply paying money to somebody to stay out of the workforce, which in large measure was a major part of the social assistance policy as it has evolved over time — it is inconceivable for me to think that we can give those people any kind of an opportunity to move back into the mainstream of economic society by paying them to stay home and do nothing.

We should be opening up opportunities, be it through training, be it through work activities, even through volunteer coordination and using some of the people in providing valuable volunteer services assisted by the state. We should certainly be doing everything we can to encourage their re-entry into the mainstream of society, because that is where they will pay back their obligations to society through becoming contributors overall, through paying taxes like the rest of the people in a society, not through a system where as soon as a person gets back on their feet you go after them to try and collect what is considered to be a past debt.

Something mentioned in the Throne Speech as well, Madam Speaker, is fair reference given to the issue of free trade. I note that the chief U.S. trade negotiator says that Manitoba or Canada does not have a ghost of a chance without having concessions from the provinces, that free trade is dead without concessions from the provinces.

Well the United States is going to find out what a federated state really is or a confederation of Canada. They are going to find that, in this country, we have varying jurisdictions, and the provinces have a lot of responsibility for social policy as well as the Government of Canada. The Government of Canada is interlinked in those through funding mechanisms. They are trying to extract themselves more and more from the funding obligations they have had in the past, but the Government of Canada is up against one heck of a fight. I'm proud to see my government leading that fight in this country to make sure that the federal share of the costs of our programs is sustained, and not continue to be eroded as it will be under Bill C-96.

We have had many promises from the members opposite, and it's quite astounding to me, Madam Speaker, that the members opposite go into an election campaign and offer to the public something in the vicinity of \$300 million in election promises, and then come into this House and the first thing they start addressing is deficits and government spending. When they were going to put in \$150 million more into social

spending — and I think it was a slick slick move by them in the election campaign to try essentially to say we're going to buy you with your own money, but don't think that we're going to ever take away any social programs.

They made statements of having additional commitments to social programs, but watch, Madam Speaker, when you see what happens in the time, in the next couple of years in this Legislature. Watch how they will get up and they'll want to spend more and more money time and time again, and yet they will scream and they will holler at any increase in taxes; they will scream and holler at any cutbacks; they will scream and holler to the province because we have a deficit, even if the deficit goes down or if the deficit goes up any amount at all. They will be the first ones to complain.

But the public of Manitoba knows very well you can't have it both ways, ladies and gentlemen. If you want to become a main participant in the development of government policy, I welcome that. I welcome that with open arms. But I do have great misgivings of a party that can come forward in an election campaign and promise \$100 million or \$120 million worth of tax cuts and another \$200 million worth of expenditures, and then carp about deficits, about increased taxes and cutbacks.

Madam Speaker, in conclusion, I hope that this next Legislature will be a very productive Legislature, this new Legislature. I welcome the participation of all members of the House for a more active participation, for a greater role for the individual members. I hope that we can accomplish that. But when doing that, we have to accomplish it responsibly by acting in a responsible manner ourselves, and by acting as individuals and as political parties within this House.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for my time allotted to reply to the Address from Her Honour. I do welcome all new members to the House and look forward to four good years of government before the next election.

Thank you very much.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for La Verendrye.

MR. H. PANKRATZ: Madam Speaker, I too want to congratulate you on your appointment to the highest position of this Assembly. I believe you will fulfill your duties with dignity and honour. Madam Speaker, I wish you well.

It is indeed an honour for me as the newly elected member for La Verendrye to speak in this Assembly. I congratulate the new and re-elected members on both sides of the House.

It is apparently tradition that new members will give some background of themselves and of their constituency but, before I do that, Madam Speaker, on behalf of the constituency of La Verendrye, I wish to pay tribute to the former Member for La Verendrye, Mr. Bob Banman, for his 13 years of service that he so loyally dedicated to this constituency and also to the province. May we value his contribution, and apply it to help make this province a better place to live. I wish him well in his private endeavours.

The constituency of La Verendrye must be one of the best in the province, not only because it is P.C. but

because its boundaries start three miles east of No. 59 Highway. It is approximately 21 miles wide, and then all the way to the Ontario border on the east. Steinbach is the largest urban centre in my riding. It is also referred to as the automobile city. The town has a population of 8,500, which is surrounded by a highly diversified farming region. Steinbach has a trading population of approximately 50,000. It provides the community with education, recreation and health care services. It is unfortunate that the Minister of Health isn't in the House at the present, because we are still waiting for the expansion of that hospital. Steinbach is also . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

HON. J. STORIE: Madam Speaker, as a matter of information to all members and certainly new members, it is unparliamentary to refer to a member's absence or presence in the House.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister is certainly correct, and I would like to add my caution to the new member. I'm sure that in the whole four years, after being cautioned in his first speech, it won't happen again.

MR. H. PANKRATZ: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Steinbach is also the major employer in the southeast. Its industries manufacture windows, millwork, boats, printing material, clothing, concrete products and lawn and garden equipment. The latest industry to add to this list is Bycyrus Blade, which is under construction at the present. It is this town that I had the privilege of serving on council for 12 years, Madam Speaker, and of which the last six, I have been Mayor.

The Mennonite Village Museum is also situated at Steinbach. It attracts approximately 50,000 people annually. This is, for southeastern Manitoba, the largest tourist attraction that we have. I believe we must foster these attractions. After all, it is the existing facilities that have and are allowing Manitoba to enjoy the spinoff that it generates and attracted the people in the first place.

Madam Speaker, to the east of my constituency we have Falcon Lake with all its year-round recreational facilities like golfing, boating, downhill skiing, cross-country skiing, horseback riding and much more.

This has attracted people to establish small businesses to serve many tourists that come year round to enjoy the wonderful outdoors.

Madam Speaker, we as elected members, must help foster and encourage this kind of private enterprise and support the existing tourist attractions. A portion of this facility, namely the downhill skiing, is being threatened; the Department of Natural Resources is recommending closure.

I want to read you an article out of the Free Press, March 29, 1986:

"There can be no doubt that a commercial downhill ski operation does not fit well into the thinking of those who are at present in control of Manitoba provincial parks. Downhill skiers simply do not rate the same consideration as backpackers.

People who chose to ski have just as much right to consideration from park authorities as those who

choose to enjoy the park in a manner more in keeping with the thoughts of the bureaucracy. The skiers do deserve straight answers when dealing with the government and realistic accounting of the costs of maintaining their particular choice in park recreation.

The skiers who use Falcon Lake are getting neither equal consideration nor realistic accounting. The bureaucracy has seen fit to keep the future of Falcon ski hill in doubt from year to year, an action which effectively discourages any private investment in improvements to that hill."

Madam Speaker, I now want to go to a circular that was circulated to all party leaders before the election from the Manitoba Government Employees' Association.

The question is: "If elected to office, will you privatize the management and development of any one of Manitoba's provincial parks?"

The First Minister then stated: "No."

The second question: "If elected to office, would your government maintain the provincial parks funding level at the rate of inflation?"

"Funding for parks would be maintained to ensure our present level of service." This was his reply again.

Then east along the No. 1, approximately 50 miles, we have Hadashville, and it is noted for the Strawberry Festival, I'm sure, as most of us know. Other parts of the constituency are communities like Ste. Anne, LaBroquerie, Kleefeld and New Bothwell. These are smaller communities, but nevertheless much dependent on roads and proper drainage.

A number of roads were under construction five years, but the Government of the Day decided at the time to put them on hold. I truly wish that we would be able to reinstate them into the program for 1986.

Madam Speaker, this government is failing to take any real action to deal with the serious problems which exist in the agricultural sector in Manitoba to date.

Our assessment inequities must be addressed by this government. The assessment on land pays school taxes and the homeowner is getting a rebate to the extent that some pay virtually no taxes at all. Our party indicated we would remove 50 percent of the educational tax on agricultural land immediately, then review the structure.

The Minister of Agriculture indicates how much he is helping the farmers. The figures prove it — four times as many farm bankruptcies in the past four years. It is a combination of all these taxes, Madam Speaker, like the payroll, sales tax, and more, that drain thousands of dollars each year from the individual small farm and small business.

Madam Speaker, let us review Manitoba Hydro, a Manitoba resource which should be there for Manitoba. The rates have increased tremendously and will increase even more. Does that attract industry for jobs in Manitoba? Does that help keep Manitoba competitive? The demand billing for hydro you don't use? A scheme to generate revenue, once again, where does that leave the small business and the small industries? Madam Speaker, that does not attract business and create jobs.

To compound the problem, the community which supplies recreational facilities also is on demand billing. For example, an arena which is possibly used for half the year has to basically pay the rate for the full year. This, on the smaller communities, puts a tremendous strain on their financial budget each year.

My question is, how much does our hydro cost the people of Manitoba? This surplus hydro, which is paid and not used, then is sold at a loss to the U.S. who are in direct competition with Manitoba industries. Hydro is a Manitoba resource and, in my opinion, should be used to relieve the burden of taxes for Manitoba and not create the burden. We must not sell off the resources cheaply so as industries may locate downstream and not create jobs in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, records indicate Manitoba has 22,000 more unemployed today than five years ago. Jobs are most essential and jobs for the young people must be provided in this province. We need desperately to create jobs that will help pay our long-range debt. We must support private enterprise in creating productive, longlasting jobs so our young people can maintain their pride and dignity.

Manitoba has a reliable labour force. If we control our input costs we can be competitive with any province in the marketplace; but the province has one of the highest debts for capita; then compounded, also, with the different taxes, like sales taxes and other taxes, does not allow us in many cases to be competitive. We must be competitive and make Manitoba attractive to investors, then we will attract industry and create permanent jobs, in light of what has happened in the past four years, when our per capita debt has doubled, or increased by more than 100 percent.

That, Madam Speaker, I would recommend to this government we do a study on whether it would be appropriate to introduce legislation to abolish deficit spending on the provincial level, or at least set a limit, a guideline, that the people of Manitoba have an idea as to how much spending or how much into deficit this province will be within the next couple of years. I would like the Minister of Finance to explain to the people of Manitoba how he will remove the large burden of debt on each individual in the province.

Madam Speaker, I had intentions of talking about my constituency only, until I heard the Minister of Labour give his speech last Thursday. That's when I realized that I would not do justice to my electorate nor myself if I would not, in some small way, express my dissatisfaction. I won't read his speech because it's on the record.

I would suggest to the Minister of Labour, after his remarks from Korea and Japan how labour is misused and mistreated, that the Province of Manitoba possibly put a grant in place and send him one way to those countries to correct the labour injustices in Korea and Japan. Obviously he is more concerned about the Korea and Japan situation than Manitoba.

When the Minister of Labour has corrected the injustices in Korea and Japan, may we recommend him to Cuba?

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, would the honourable member please move his papers from the microphone. It's cutting off the microphone; don't get them so close. It won't get on Hansard.

MR. H. PANKRATZ: Madam Speaker, I can give them a copy of it.

My parents fled a socialistic country 56 years ago. That country has the richest soil in the world and the most of it, but to this day it cannot feed its own people.

It is unfortunate that this government has withheld information before the election. It is unfortunate that the First Minister has made statements, never with the intention of carrying them forward.

I want to go back to another one of the questions in the Manitoba Government Employees' Association: "If you are elected, would you 'contract out' any worker services now performed by Provincial Government employees? If yes, in what areas?" The First Minister indicated no, he would not. He would not contract out.

Then to answer that in more detail, "We believe it is more appropriate to use government employees than private contractors. For example in 1982 we converted a number of cleaning contracts for government buildings from private companies to government employees." Well, Madam Speaker, right after the election — I want to read it to you — first tenders that were in the Carillon News, right after the election: "Tenders. Notice of Tender. Tenders are invited for the maintenance and operation of the Pinegrove Halt Rest Area, Whitemouth River Wayside and the Dawson Trail Wayside. Deadlines for tenders is 4:30 p.m. Friday, April 4, 1986. Further information is available."

It is unfortunate that this Socialistic Government has members that will condemn almost everything that could make a profit but be the first at the trough. This weekend has revealed a lot and I wonder how much more will come to the surface shortly.

As a new member to this Assembly, it is unfortunate that these corrupt actions are the first that surfaced from this government. It is a government that was not governing the people but was governing to get re-elected only. We, Madam Speaker, need to bring back into this Assembly, honesty, integrity, trust and respect. Madam Speaker, my colleagues and I will do our utmost to achieve this.

Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate our Leader on the way he conducted the election campaign. I am proud to be a member of his team and I'm sure the public will not be betrayed again. On behalf of the constituency of La Verendrye, I, with my colleagues, will question, scrutinize, and recommend to the Government of the Day what we feel Manitoba people are entitled to receive and deserve.

In closing as a new member to this Assembly, I congratulate my colleagues for the support, cooperation, and dedication they have given me to date and together we will strive to give the people of Manitoba a better government.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Northern Affairs.

HON. H. HARAPIAK: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to participate in the Throne Speech Debate. As is customary, I want to offer you my congratulations. I know that as caucus chairperson you quite often gave us good direction and I look forward to you giving us good direction and leadership whenever it is required. I do not envy your position, but the direction you have given us to this point shows the training that you have received previously is going to give us good direction throughout this next Session of the Legislature.

I would like to congratulate the Mover and the Seconder of the Throne Speech, the Mover from Ellice

and the Seconder from Kildonan. I am sure we will be hearing from these members for many years to come.

I would also like to congratulate all the members of the 33rd Session of the Legislature for being re-elected and I especially want to welcome the new members. It is refreshing to hear many of the ideas and ideals that are coming forward from the new members. I look forward to implementing some of the suggestions that have been coming forward from both sides of the House. I think that we ought to listen carefully because some of the ideas that they have have merit and we should be acting on them whenever it is within our financial possibility of moving on some of these suggestions that they have been bringing forward.

I want to also share that I have always been impressed with the unselfish commitment of the members of the Legislature when it comes to dealing in the House. They have always made the concerns of their constituents the first concern and they have continued to give us that type of leadership that is required in this House.

I am especially pleased to welcome into new membership the Member for Swan River, which happens to be the constituency where I was born and raised and where my family was also — five children were born and raised in the Swan River constituency and I'm pleased that the voters of Swan River have finally become politically enlightened and have extended that boundary — the orange boundary line — they extended it to take in the Swan River constituency and I'm sure it's going to . . .

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

HON. H. HARAPIAK: . . . remain an orange part of the map for many years to come.

I would also like to congratulate the Member for Swan River for becoming the Minister of Natural Resources. I look forward to working cooperatively with him, as the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Northern Affairs cross boundaries in many areas. Of course, I know that all the Cabinet Ministers work very cooperatively and their first concerns are the concerns of their constituencies, not personal concerns.

Madam Speaker, I would also like to thank the people of The Pas, the constituency of The Pas, who have once again given me a very strong support, as they did in the last election.

Madam Speaker, the constituency of The Pas is a very diverse constituency where people are involved in many different trades and occupations such as Manitoba Forestry, the complex which is called Manfor. I'm sure that most members are aware that there has been extensive renovations done on Manfor in the last couple of years. We see the fruits of that right now, Madam Speaker, where the people, the management, the workers are cooperating, are working cooperatively to turn that company around and the markets are improving at this time, so it is clear that with the direction they are going in now and the improved market conditions, Manfor will be operating at a profitable level within the next short period of time. I'm sure that the members are pleased to hear that.

In my constituency, Madam Speaker, we also have many commercial fishermen and presently they are

going through the same type of difficulty that the farming community is going through. They are caught in the same cost-price squeeze that the farming community is caught in and I am sure that with some of the assistance that we're coming up with as a government, that commercial fishermen will continue to be a very important part of the industry in Northern Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, there are not many people that recognize the agricultural community that exists in Northern Manitoba. I know that there are a few members opposite who have gone to The Pas and have realized and looked at the farmland that exists there. I know that one, as the former Minister of Agriculture has been not only to the Pasquia Valley, which is the farmland itself, but he has had an opportunity to go to the Saskeram which has a lot of potential, not only for the farming community but for the wildlife as well. I think that we have shown with the cooperation that has gone on between the members of The Pas Indian Band and the Wildlife Association and the farming association that they can work cooperatively and develop the land to take advantage of all the opportunities that are there. The Pasquia Valley at this time is having more agricultural land brought into production by a drainage scheme which is part an ERDA Agreement, which is bringing more farmland into production. I think it's the direction that we have to move in, because the agricultural base has to be expanded in order to attract some of the necessary support systems that are so necessary for an agricultural community to exist.

We presently have some fertilizer suppliers located in The Pas, and we are hoping that there will be some machinery dealers locating. Because of the increased number of acres in the The Pas area, we're hoping that this will attract some machinery dealers that will provide some of the necessary support systems that are necessary for the agricultural community.

Madam Speaker, during the last period of time, we have also had some demonstration programs that were delivered by the Pasquia Grasslands Association. They have had a demonstration project which has put some research projects that have been carried on in other parts of the province. Now they've been delivered in The Pas area, which shows that it's possible to finish cattle on grass. Now they're having another demonstration project which is going to show the farmers the benefits of breeding young heifers to calf at two years of age, rather than at three years of age.

So there has been a lot of research carried out in this area, but now it is extremely important that the demonstration projects are also carried out. I know that there are a large number of farmers who are participating in this project, so I look forward to going out there and seeing how the demonstration is being carried on.

Madam Speaker, I also have a large Native population in my constituency, and I want to share with you an event which took place last year. There was an agreement that was signed by the three Band leaders in my constituency, the Moose Lake Band, The Pas Indian Band and the Chemawawin Band, and also the community councils of the areas involved, which have signed an agreement to stop hunting moose in the area because of the decline in the moose population. I want to share that hunting is a right that the Native people

have. They have a right to hunt for food, and they have voluntarily given up this right in order to show their responsibility as a people, to show that they are concerned with the moose population in the area. They are participating in voluntary programs which are dealing with the declining moose population, so there will be no hunting in Area 8 in The Pas area. I am pleased that the aboriginal people are showing that they are responsible, they are conservationists, and they want to preserve the moose for future generations. I am pleased with this.

I also want to share that the Native people are cooperating in the area of the education of their people. They have come in and made presentations on how improvements can be made in that area.

They've also come and made suggestions in the area of housing. There was a housing project built in Easterville last year, which almost all the material required for the house was taken right from the surrounding neighbourhood. There's a project right now from the community of Cormorant where they want to go back to their traditional housing needs, and that was log housing. They're willing to supply all the labour that is required, and all they want is some assistance for a sawmill to come in there and saw the logs that are required for the homes. So I think there are some real opportunities in there, and they show that they are willing to get in there and do their bit and supply the homes for their families.

In speaking of the last election, Madam Speaker, I am pleased with the support that all the northern MLA's received. I believe that Northern Manitoba has once more confirmed their choice that they made in 1981 to strongly support the New Democrats in their last election. I was surprised, during the last campaign, on how often my constituents and other Northerners had mentioned the previous administration when it came to speaking about services they received or lack of services they received.

The member is presently no longer here, but the point was quite often raised that the previous Minister of Northern Affairs said that welfare was better than some of the work projects that were being provided for Northerners. I want you to know that the communities have strongly supported us, because they see the difference in the levels of service that have been delivered by this administration compared to what was delivered under the previous administration. I know that under the MCAP Project, there are projects delivered throughout the North with long-lasting infrastructure which will be delivered to the communities, and also there were many jobs created for the people. Whenever there was an opportunity for job creation, the people willingly got off the welfare rolls and participated in any jobs that were provided to the community.

Madam Speaker, I look forward to the next four years. The peoples of Northern Manitoba have, once again, given us a strong mandate to represent them, and we want to tell you that we have delivered on the projects. Northern Manitobans want job creation and economic development, and I think that Limestone Project is creating jobs for Northerners. Also there are many spinoffs for the Northerners, including Native communities who were often ignored in past Hydro development projects.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased that the Member for Rupertsland has been appointed to Cabinet with the responsibility for Native Affairs. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to travel throughout Northern Manitoba as a member of the Northern Working Group. We travelled around to meet with more than 30 communities where we met with over 60 different groups, and where they gave us directions as to how they would see some improvements made so the people of Northern Manitoba would have an opportunity for the employment at Limestone which they didn't have an opportunity to participate in previously.

We were pleased at the direction that the Member for Rupertsland has given us, because he has that understanding of northern people. His understanding is that people need a better referral system, because they quite often are not available or there are no telephones available in the community for getting calls to Limestone opportunities. We have worked with not only the Northerners, but the CIC to develop a better calling procedure so that the people of Northern Manitoba would have an opportunity at Limestone.

This government, through the Northern Working Group, has carried out an extensive consultation process with all Northerners, not only with the Native people but also with Norman Development Agreement. Their membership is participating in the Limestone Development. They have also taken advantage of some of the opportunities that have come forward.

Madam Speaker, one of the things that we found when we went out around the communities was that there was a lack of training. There was an order-in-preference clause when the previous hydro developments were taking place, but the people were not trained for taking advantage of them. That is why we have created the Limestone Training Agency, which is training the people of Northern Manitoba, and the contractors are participating in this training process as well. They are relating what type of a worker they want coming out of the Training Authority, and many of the people are getting jobs. We recognize that all of the people who are applying for employment will not be able to take advantage of the Limestone training opportunities because there are more applications — there are over 5,000 applicants for the jobs that are there. Even at the height of the employment, there will be 1,800 people hired there, so it is not possible to take on all the people who are seeking employment at the area.

But I guess we, as a government, feel that we are meeting some of the needs that are out there, and I guess quite often we hear people being very critical of the training program that is being delivered. One person who has been very critical of the Limestone Training Authority went out to Northern Manitoba to see it first-hand, and although this particular person isn't very supportive of our causes often, on this occasion he was, and I am referring to Fred Cleverley, who is a writer with the Free Press. Fred went to Northern Manitoba and he had a tour of the facilities. It's unfortunate that some of the people who are skeptical of the results of the training that is going on at Limestone wouldn't take the opportunity to go out there and have a look at the training and the results that are coming through.

I would like to quote Fred Cleverley's article which was carried on December 18 and 19 in the Winnipeg

Free Press. I would recommend that members go back and read the articles published by Fred Cleverley in the Winnipeg Free Press. The titles of the articles were "Limestone works smack on schedule" and "Job training gets results." They were very informative articles, and I'd like to quote a bit from these two articles.

"It is turning out that graduates who are being hired at Limestone, and appreciate the training they have received, and what the program has done is to prepare the Native Northerners for work which the rest of Manitoba will recognize as productive in a southern white-dominated society." And these people are getting the jobs; they are getting the opportunities. They are finally getting an opportunity to take advantage of some of the training that has taken place.

Madam Speaker, not only are Northerners taking advantage of the Limestone Training Authority, or the Limestone construction, but there are also other small firms throughout Manitoba who are experiencing the spinoff effects of the Limestone production. It seems that almost every week you pick up a paper and there is some economic institution pointing out some of the benefits that are coming from the hydro construction site. Just recently, there was an article in the "Royal Bank" which shows that the Manitoba economy is probably one of the soundest of any of the economies of all of the provinces in Canada; they are showing that we have a sound performance and good leadership coming from this government, and Limestone is providing much of the interest for this.

I would like to take time out to commend my colleague, the Member for Transcona, who has provided strong leadership in regard to the Limestone training. I know that the Member for Transcona has not only provided us with strong leadership in the negotiations that have taken place with the United States power companies, but also with the training that has been taking place in Thompson. He has provided strong leadership in this area, and I know that he is also coming forward with legislation where 50 percent of the profit of the sales that are going to be flowing from the generating stations will be coming to the people of Manitoba, and it will be used not only for maintaining our hydro rates, which are presently the lowest in all of Canada, but would also be used for a heritage fund for Manitobans in the future.

Madam Speaker, when one thinks of Northern Manitoba, as I mentioned previously, one does not think of agriculture. There are many agricultural operations and the potential there is for many more opportunities in the Carrot River Valley.

Madam Speaker, I grew up on a farm as well, so I realize that the farming community is going through some difficult financial times. They are caught in that squeeze where the operations are expensive, yet the production in their products has gone down. I know that in the Throne Speech there was emphasis on our agricultural renewal and Farm Start, Farm Aid Programs, which are going to be of great assistance to the farming people in the Province of Manitoba. We realize that agriculture is the backbone of our economy, and when the agricultural community is suffering, then we as a province are suffering. So I look forward to the assistance that we are going to be providing to the people of Manitoba who are involved in the agricultural area.

Madam Speaker, the Port of Churchill is a commitment that our government has been working hard on ever since we formed government. I know that it's strongly related to the agricultural community. Recently, I had an opportunity to address the Hudson Bay Route Association, an organization that is composed of farmers and business people from across the Prairies who are more committed to the Port of Churchill than some of our colleagues from across the way, who have not recognized the benefits of a strong, viable Port of Churchill. Some of the members across the way have said that, although we recognize the Port of Churchill will be needed years down the line, it's a luxury that we cannot afford at this time. If we close the infrastructure down now, I am not sure where it'll be years down the line when we will require it.

When I was addressing the Hudson Bay Route Association, I was pleased to be there, because not only have I been a member of the farming community, I have also worked as a railroader. As a railroad engineer, I have had an opportunity to work in Northern Manitoba where I recognize that because of the relatively level terrain of Northern Manitoba, we are able to haul much larger tonnage than they can move to either the east or the west. I think it's important that we continue to give strong support to the Port of Churchill so we recognize - even the Opposition members recognize - we'll be needing it as an alternative — not as an alternative, but it complements the other shipping ports that exist in the east and west.

While I am speaking on this, I want to commend my colleague, the Member for Dauphin, for the strong leadership that he has given us in the Port of Churchill.

Madam Speaker, the Throne Speech also commits the government to greater fairness and an improved quality of life for all of Manitoba. I am proud of my ties with the New Democratic Party and I am proud of the ideals we stand for, ideals which have concerns for the betterment of human conditions, concerns for the equality of opportunity, and concerns for the quality of life in family and community, rather than in the self-centred concerns in which much of our world is caught up in this materialistic world. We are concerned for the quality of life for all of the family.

In Northern Manitoba, we have seen this commitment to our fellow beings carried out in a purchase of a life flight or a new ambulance service which is going to be giving greater access to people who are in need of emergency service. I have had an opportunity to see this new air flight when it was brought into Northern Manitoba, to show the people of the North, the nursing staff, the doctors of all Northern Manitoba, had an opportunity to give input to Life Flight service and it is the first dedicated aircraft of its type in Manitoba. I know the people who came out to see the facility when it was brought out were very pleased with the facility that's going to be and the area has been extended to where it will serve, it is serving all of the areas of Manitoba now. So I'm glad that this service has been extended and the people of Manitoba are going to be served. I've already heard of many instances where a life has been saved because of the availability of this Life Flight. In Swan River recently there was a person who was burnt very badly and they were saved because of the facility being available.

In summary, Madam Speaker, I want to be brief because I know there are several members who have

not had an opportunity to speak in this Throne Speech and we are running out of time.

I just want to support the First Minister in the Throne Speech. I am proud of the direction the Throne Speech is taking us, and our platform planks very clearly showed what direction we are going, and I am honoured to be able to be a part of this government which is contributing to the vision that we have as a government, a vision that all Manitobans share with us.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie.

MR. E. CONNERY: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

This being my maiden speech, I shouldn't have an objection right at the very beginning, but I do have one to the Member for Charleswood who suggested I should stand on the books. I'm not that short.

Madam Speaker, I want to wish you well in your duties as Speaker, and I would suggest that you have performed well up to now — a little shaky this afternoon, but it's been a long weekend.

I would also like to congratulate and wish well to all the elected MLA's and to the new Cabinet Ministers and I hope that we'll have a productive season. I have my doubts, but I would hope so.

I'm here as the MLA for Portage and with a lot of pride, but I'm also deeply concerned about the future of the constituency and the Province of Manitoba. As a resident for some 52 years, I've had the opportunity of watching this province develop and grow, but never has this province been in such a moral and economic mess. I would feel much more confident if I were addressing this House from the other side.

Madam Speaker, I would like to tell you a little bit about the wonderful constituency of Portage la Prairie. It's considered a rural constituency, but about 80 percent of the people live in the City of Portage la Prairie. It's a beautiful city; it's a well treed city; it has a beautiful lake and in the centre we have a nice Island Park.

Portage has an excellent school system and a very effective small city hospital and, thanks to the just retired administrator, Bill Devine, who did such a good job in making this a well-known and well-respected hospital.

We also have a very competent professional sector. At this point, Madam Speaker, we have a good service industry, but I stress at this point that the service sector is experiencing extreme stress due to the economic downturn in agriculture. We will lose some of our service industries and many jobs that they create unless this government stops blaming everyone else for our problems and starts taking positive initiatives.

I do not believe they have the imagination or the political will to do this. We have, on the opposite side, unfortunately, a good example of the 'Peter principle' at work. Madam Speaker, Portagers are an ambitious and energetic people. We have a wide range of sports activities. We have just recently completed the Republic of Manitoba Park, an expansive 50-acre park with baseball diamonds, football fields and soccer pitches. What Portage does not have is a swimming pool. For a city the size of 14,000, this is a serious shortfall.

The Honourable Sterling Lyon had in place plans for a swimming pool. Unfortunately Mr. Lyon was toppled in the next election and the First Minister, who was the First Minister then, and who still is the First Minister, cancelled that good project for the people of Portage la Prairie. Madam Speaker, that pool would have been therapeutic for the residents of the Manitoba Development Centre and a healthy recreational outlet for the citizens of Portage la Prairie. The people of Portage have not forgotten that act of injustice and it showed at the polls this year.

We also have a great senior citizens' sector, Madam Speaker. We have Lions Manor, Rotary housing, Elk Oak Tree Towers, a great number of wonderful senior citizens' housing.

We also have just recently opened the Herman Prior Centre for the Aged and this is a facility to enable the seniors to get together, interrelate, have activities, or to go for a meal with somebody else, rather than being alone at home. It's kind of unique that they would name it the Herman Prior Centre. This was a gentleman who lived to be just over 100 years old, and at 98 was still entertaining the elderly people.

I will take you now, Madam Speaker, outside of the City of Portage la Prairie to some of the most productive land in the world. We have the river silt soils along the Assiniboine River — just a little bit better than yours, the Member for La Verendrye. It is here that are grown some of the best vegetables in Canada. Portage la Prairie, Madam Speaker, is the vegetable capital of the Prairies. Vegetables are shipped as far east as Toronto and as far west as the Pacific Ocean. There are hundreds of jobs created by this industry.

The sugar beets are also grown on these soils. We all know that this sector of agriculture is in a crisis. We also acknowledge that the world markets are largely responsible, but the Federal Government in Ottawa is attempting to put together a program, in co-operation with the provinces, to enable the producers to get through this crisis, but the Minister of Agriculture will not attend meetings. He would not attend the one in Alberta and he wouldn't attend the meeting right here in Manitoba.

The First Minister says he's standing up for Manitoba. I say he should tell the Minister of Agriculture to sit down and get working on policy and programs for agriculture.

As we go north, Madam Speaker, we enter the Portage plains, renowned for producing the best grain crops and the adaptability to grow almost all the special crops, including potatoes. Crop failures are not known in this part of Canada. In fact, Madam Speaker, Portage has the most favourable climate and growing conditions on the Prairies but, while we are not having crop failures, there is a cloud of doom in the form of farm failures, good young farmers on the best land available going bankrupt or just quitting.

In fact, Madam Speaker, while I was working on my speech, a farm lady called to enquire about The Farm Land Ownership Act. They had just given up hope of making a decent living on the farm and they had an opportunity of selling it to a resident of Ontario. She is concerned that the act would prevent that sale. That act, Madam Speaker, The Farm Land Ownership Act, was poorly written and ill-timed. I'm told the other day, while I was out of the House, the Minister of Agriculture

said that I supported that program. The program, if there was to be one, should have been before the price of land went up, not now when it is going down.

It was brought in after the price has escalated beyond that which the productivity of land could pay for itself. All the act is doing now is to drive the price of farmland down and lower the equity in the farm to the point where the bank cancels the loan. Even Herb Schulz, their own beloved member of the Schreyer party, said it was ridiculous to put in The Farm Land Ownership Act when they did, and he was quite a revered member of their opposition.

It also prevents farmers selling land to Canadians outside of Manitoba, closing the barn door after the cows have gotten out. I wonder if that act would stand up if challenged in the Supreme Court of Canada.

The grains and special crop sector of agriculture is in the worst financial crisis, I believe, of all time, Madam Speaker. What is our government doing about it? - very very little. About all that comes out of the government led by a First Minister who says, agriculture is a priority with him, are crocodile tears and fed bashing. If it wasn't for fed bashing by the government in the last provincial election, they would have had little to say. But unlike the province, the Provincial Government of Manitoba, the Federal Government in Ottawa is listening and is taking action.

On May 1, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, Finance Minister Michael Wilson, Joe Clark, Don Mazankowski, John Wise, Jack Murta and Charlie Mayer met in Vancouver with the leaders of 17 farm organizations. When before has the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister and an entourage of prominent M.P.'s met with the farm community? All that Liberal Leader Pierre Trudeau would do was give us the finger. They are listening, but even more significant is the fact that they are acting.

We see a sugar beet program in place with little thanks to the province, extremely large and well-timed stabilization payouts, a freeze on grain freight rates, higher domestic wheat prices and a significant increase in the fuel tax rebates. These are just some of the assistance programs put forth by the Federal Government to aid farmers and the NDP shed more tears than fed bash.

Madam Speaker, I think it is important to observe what the two provincial jurisdictions to the west of us have done to assist farmers and I would like to remind the members opposite that they are Conservative governments. The Saskatchewan Government Estimates for the the farm programs for 1986 are \$1.5 billion. The reason of the large amount is their low interest money. These programs include — and the Minister of Agriculture here could take note — Farm Purchase Program, Farmers' Oil Royalty Refund Program, Livestock Cash Advances, Crop Insurance Adjustment, Production Loan Guarantees 6 percent money, Agricultural Credit Corporations, a total of \$1.5 billion.

Manitoba has a very high school tax. In the last provincial election, we vowed to remove a significant portion of that school tax and that is an option that this government has and could do today.

The Alberta Government also has a very significant program in place, not quite as costly as the Saskatchewan one, but for 1985-86 they had estimated

to spend \$513 million and for this coming year \$355 million, Madam Speaker. Those are pretty significant figures and I think our government here could take note and take some action before we lose our farm sector.

We now go to an area that is world reknown, an area that is written up by the Audubon Society, the Delta Marsh. We have at Delta, the Delta Waterfall Research Station. This station is also world reknown. People come from all over North America to visit or to conduct research. The University of Manitoba also have a research station on the marsh. It is interesting to note that the Delta Research Station is privately funded, but I am sad to say the marsh is dying. It would take far too long to detail all the problems and the cures, but much of the deterioration began with the controlling of the lake level at Fairford. The Delta station is working on possible solutions to these problems.

The marsh is a source of income for many people, people who fish in the winter and work elsewhere in the summer but use the marsh to augment their income in the spring and fall. Unfortunately muskrat trapping has virtually died out with the deterioration of the marsh. The other major source of income is lodges and guiding during the hunting season. Unfortunately this government, who is standing up for Manitoba and the ordinary people, cancelled afternoon hunting licences for non-residents. This literally decimated the lodges and the guiding industry. They did this just to get at a few rich people and they are prepared to sacrifice ordinary people in doing it. People, the little average person who makes a living out of guiding, they took it away from him.

There is a bright light though for Delta and Portage, Madam Speaker. The Central Plains Regional Development Corporation has proposed a wildlife interpretive centre for the marsh. This would be a world class tourist attraction keeping in the guidelines of the new Canada-Manitoba Tourist Agreement. This proposal was presented to the Department on May 1 in Portage la Prairie. This project would be an excellent source of summer jobs for students and be an economic boom for the accommodation and service industries in Portage la Prairie and surrounding districts. I ask the Minister of Business Development and Tourism to give this project favourable consideration.

After the long, pleasurable journey, it is time for a rest and refreshing swim - and it might be warm enough today even. We could have stopped at Delta Beach, Madam Speaker, where the sand is fine and the water is warm, but I chose St. Ambrose because of the excellent beach facilities which a lot of Winnipeg people take full advantage of. The employees, most of them who live in St. Ambrose, are very proud of this beach and it is reflected in the way it is maintained, but the beach is only a summer job. Many are guides during the hunting season but they have lost much of this opportunity.

In the winter months, many of the residents of St. Ambrose and Delta were commercial fishermen. Over the last few years, the catch has been so poor that most have quit. The few that fished this last season hardly made expenses. There are many theories why this decline in the catch has occurred, such as an inadequate fish ladder at Fairford to allow the fish back into Lake Manitoba in the spring. I ask that the Minister

of Natural Resources takes their plight into consideration, and I also think we need to examine the Freshwater Fish Marketing Board. At one time there was a large sale for rough fish, carp and the white fish in the lake and unfortunately the Marketing Board has lost this sale and when you watch fishermen pulling these fish out of the nets and just throwing them in huge piles on the lake, we see the tremendous waste of food. — (Interjection) — With some exceptions, Madam Speaker, I would agree, but he gets carried away.

Madam Speaker, you will have observed as we drove down Highways 249 and 227 that they are in deplorable condition, but when it is wet they are almost impassable. They are in such poor condition that it is dangerous for farm vehicles and downright treacherous for buses. I pray that we don't have a tragic accident costing the life or serious injury of children.

As you know, Madam Speaker, the elevator has been closed down at Oakland and farmers must truck their grain to alternate elevators like the new pool elevator on the main line just east of Portage. In the summer months, farmers often use rainy days, when they cannot work in the fields, to haul grain. Deterior road conditions often preclude that option.

While we are on the subject of highways, I would like to mention Highway 240 south of Portage la Prairie. While it is in the constituency of Morris, it is a concern for the merchants of Portage la Prairie because this road at its best is deplorable and for many days this spring impassable therefore preventing or deterring shoppers from coming to Portage. Portage is the shopping centre for people as far south as Highway 2. This road, or should I say trail, has been requested by the city, the R.M. of Portage, the Portage and District Chamber of Commerce, to be rebuilt. For over 20 years, they have been petitioning governments over Highway 240 and they are frustrated to say the least. I hope that the Highways' budget is not to be reduced this year. If this happens, it will be proof positive that this government has only disdain for rural residents and some of the comments I have heard are not that encouraging.

Highways are more important than riverbank cleaning and the Member for Ellice, I don't see him here, with his great pride in . . . — (Interjection) — he's not here, oh, sorry. Sorry, I withdraw it. No problem. Actually I was looking around to see if he was sitting talking to some of the fellows on this side of the House.

MADAM SPEAKER: Stop while you're ahead.

MR. E. CONNERY: Stop while I'm ahead, okay.

The province is collecting more revenue from Highways' related taxes than it is spending on the total Provincial Highways' budget. Portage, Madam Speaker, is a wonderful place to live. This is attested to by the fact that many retiring military personnel from CFB choose to remain in Portage, that is if they can find suitable employment.

We presently have a good processing, manufacturing and service sector, but we are not attracting sufficient new industry to keep pace with the workforce. We recently lost our largest manufacturer, Phillips Cable. Why are we losing some industries and not attracting others?

Tuesday, 20 May, 1986

John Bulloch of the Federation of Independent Business says, Manitoba's business climate is one of the worst in Canada. The Conference Board, Madam Speaker, predicts Manitoba's gross domestic product to increase by 2.9 percent. The national average is 4.3 percent. Only Newfoundland and P.E.I. will have a lower growth rate than Manitoba.

I would suggest that the government consider removing some of their regressive labour legislation and the 1.5 payroll tax. Pardon me, Madam Speaker, that should be the 1.5 health and education tax. These two items are the worst job creation barriers possible, jobs that are desperately needed in Portage and all of Manitoba.

Phillips Cable shut down their Manitoba plant. Why the Manitoba plant? Many Portagers lost meaningful and well-paying jobs, which poor labour legislation might have led them to leave.

We are fortunate to have an excellent Regional Development Corporation. Vicon has now taken over the building and, hopefully, will recreate those lost jobs.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to be the MLA for Portage la Prairie but, during the election, I ran into an extreme amount of cynicism and distrust of politicians. During the election, the Minister of Highways was soliciting funds from contractors, firms which hope to do business with the government. I wonder what we will find when we cross-reference political donations to contracts? We have a Provincial NDP Government that is opposed to quick-flip tax schemes, and then we find that some of them have been feeding at the trough. It is little wonder that politicians are distrusted.

It is the priorities of this government that worries me, Madam Speaker. I referred earlier that they exemplified the Peter Principle. I honestly believe that they don't understand the problems and, by their priorities, they just don't care.

The Member for Ellice is here and, in moving the Throne Speech, was so pleased with their 100 million riverbank cleanup. What a priority! When agriculture is desperate and areas are flooded because of inadequate drainage, and he wants to clean up riverbanks. I would suggest that the Member for Ellice go out there, and tell the people in those communities of his great priorities.

The Member for Kildonan was emphasizing pay equity. Well I also believe in pay equity. So do the farmers of this province believe in pay equity. I would suggest, because this government refuses to take any meaningful action for agriculture, that their salaries be reduced to that of the average farmer according to statistics, \$5,500.00. But you won't starve. You can do the same as the farmers are doing, borrow against whatever equity you have left and, until there is none, you still won't starve. Have a little compassion.

Madam Speaker, this government says they stand up for ordinary Manitobans. Why then did they close the School of Psychiatric Nursing at the MDC? A resolution to this closure has already been presented to the Legislative Assembly. It is my intention to remind you of the callousness of this government, a government, Madam Speaker, that has turned its back on the least able to speak or act on their own behalf. It is my belief that it was closed for political gain. We know the political stripe of the two MLA's that represent Brandon and Selkirk where the other schools of

psychiatric nursing are located, but let us not forget that those residents treat the mentally ill. The MDC was the only facility to treat the mentally retarded. This school also gave an opportunity for local residents to obtain a post-secondary education, people who did not have the economic capabilities of going to Winnipeg or Brandon.

Madam Speaker, I want to go over the resolution in point order and elaborate on it. The MDC School of Nursing in Portage la Prairie is unique in North America. There is no other school of its type available. The MDC treats the mentally retarded; as I already pointed out, Brandon and Selkirk only treat the mentally ill. By closing the school, students will lose their hands-on experience, and this is very important when you are working with the mentally retarded to have that hands-on training. If students are trained elsewhere, Portage will not attract the most qualified grads, because it is difficult to attract psychiatric nurses to work with the mentally retarded.

Poor training also may result in patient abuse, and this is a concern. With the increased lifespan of the mentally retarded, there will be a steady or increasing requirement for psych grads. The quality of the students and the quality of training at the MDC is reflected in the attrition rates. Between 1977 and 1984, Selkirk had an attrition rate of 35 percent; Brandon and Selkirk were both 35; and only 14.5 percent at the MDC.

Also, the graduates from the MDC are excellent in academic achievement. It is also doubtful that Brandon and Selkirk can graduate an adequate number of students to fill the demands of the future. There will be no financial saving by closing this school.

Madam Speaker, it took government 10 years to close down the dairy herd at the MDC, but they took only a few weeks to close the School of Psychiatric Nursing. They closed the school without consulting with staff at the MDC nor, Madam Speaker, did they contact Mr. Glen Lowther, who is the government's chief psychiatric consultant. According to a news article in the Daily Graphic, he is opposed to the closing of the school. They didn't consult the experts who know best. They went with some theoretical political appointees.

When the Member for River Heights asked the Minister about training of individuals for working with the mentally handicapped, she indicated they would be training people in the community. Madam Speaker, you can make quick-flip tax evasions, but you cannot quick-flip training for community workers.

I will read an excerpt from the O'Sullivan Report that states: "If registered psychiatric nurses are held out as being able to perform certain functions, they must have the capacity and skill to perform them. As with registered nurses, whether such is the case will depend, in large, upon the training and qualifications. Furthermore, it would be essential to the expansion of psychiatric nursing into new or expanded roles that proper educational standards and training be developed to ensure that the registered psychiatric nurses who are to practise in those roles will have the necessary skills and capacity." You are not going to do it with a quick-flip training program.

I would also like to quote from a memo from the MDC. I just received that one, and it says: "The conclusions do not state that the Selkirk and Brandon students will achieve the same proficiency with mentally

handicapped clients as the MDC students, but that certain critical areas, if they exist, can be strengthened.' So it is very obvious to the experts that, by not having the training at Portage at the MDC, we will not have the best training for the mentally handicapped. It is obvious that the mentally retarded will suffer because of this government's callous theoretical decision.

Madam Speaker, the Minister says no one will be forced to leave the MDC. Why then are they badgering people until finally, in tears, they sign over their dependents to go into the community? This, Madam Speaker, is happening. I was given the word from the Minister of Community Services that it would be a voluntary program. It is not voluntary.

Others are having to go to court to get committee membership over their next of kin, and at a very high cost. How many residents are wards of the court, and have no one to speak up for them? What choice will they have?

Madam Speaker, our party is not opposed to the Welcome Home Program. We are concerned though, in moving into the community, that they improve the quality of life, not just for the sake of moving them.

We see articles in the paper that depict deplorable conditions for some in the community living in squalor, and, for some, ending up in jail. Is this what we want for our mentally retarded? We must ensure that there will be an adequate infrastructure so that our mentally retarded will have the best quality of life attainable.

Madam Speaker, the Member for River Heights asked the Minister how they were going to release 220 residents in the next eight months, when only 64 were returned to the community in the last 14 months. Madam Speaker, the Minister did not correct the number of 64. Statistics released to me state that 25 of those 64 residents died in the institution. If those statistics are correct — and I have no reason to believe that they are not — then the Minister of Community Services has misled this House. Madam Speaker, that would be a most despicable act.

Madam Speaker, the moral at the MDC is so low that there is concern for the quality of care. I am told that the administration is out of touch with the staff. In fact, many of the top level administrators do not live in Portage la Prairie; they commute from Winnipeg. For a supposedly kind and considerate government, how can they permit the use of term employment to the extent that it is now being used? There are employees who are working on two-week extensions. They have been doing this for as long as two years. How can you perform your job properly when you only have two weeks notice at a time? That's inconceivable.

I believe, Madam Speaker, that the time has come for an all-party review of the mental health care in this province, especially health care related to the mentally retarded. We cannot see tragedy strike this unfortunate group in our society.

Madam Speaker, the people of Portage la Prairie constituency are concerned about our social infrastructure. They see that infrastructure being eroded and I'm talking now of day care; I'm talking of the shelter for battered women; and I'm talking of the Friendship Centre that helps the Native and Metis people to go through. The funding has been delayed. The Friendship Centre, fortunately, had federal money that came on time. The provincial monies have not come on time for them to carry on their programs, but

there's ample time to have \$15,000 for Andy right up front before he even does an ounce of work; but the Friendship Centre and other programs, money is withheld.

If the current waste and mismanagement of this government is allowed to continue, God help our children and grandchildren. They will have to work out their lives paying for our excessives.

Madam Speaker, I listened to the Member for Thompson as he tried to tell us it was only Socialists who had a concern for people. Let me tell you, Madam Speaker, in our constituency — and I would suspect it is the same in other constituencies — it is not the Socialists that are doing the community work, but it's those so-called "hard-hearted Conservatives" that give of themselves and put their hands into their wallets and give financially to projects. It's the projects that assist those in all walks of life, Madam Speaker. Where are the true Socialists? Feeding themselves at the public trough.

We saw an article in The Sun — I think it was last weekend — showing the three leaders and their income and I was quite proud that our leader earned the most because he's worth the most. I also noticed that he donated \$2,379 to charity. The Liberal leader donated \$851 — and wow — the great Socialist White Father donated \$185 — and I'll bet it was begrudgingly.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I want to say that I ran in the last election to do my best for the constituency of Portage la Prairie and for the people of Manitoba. I will devote my total time and energy to this end. Thank you.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister responsible for Native Affairs.

HON. E. HARPER: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

First of all, I would like to congratulate you upon your appointment and being elevated to the highest office in this Legislature, to be Speaker of this House. I have every confidence in your ability to rule impartially and also in a fair manner. I know you are already getting the respect of the members of this House and also, I might say, some of the members of the Opposition.

I regret, however, that some members didn't support you in your appointment to the highest office. I must say that I am disappointed for their actions, because they have no respect for the position itself, through which I have said before, knowing you, that you will provide that ability to maintain impartiality in the House.

I also would like to congratulate the Member for Burrows, being elected to the Deputy Speaker of the House. I'm sure that he will fit those shoes well.

I would also like to congratulate the Mover of the Throne Speech, the Member for Ellice, who is a new member in this House, and also the Seconder of the Throne Speech.

I also would like to congratulate the new members in this Chamber. I would also like to congratulate the members who have been re-elected in this Chamber.

I would particularly like to congratulate the — not congratulate myself — but I wish to express my gratitude to the members of my constituency. It is a vast

Tuesday, 20 May, 1986

constituency, predominantly Native people. I would like to maybe touch upon my constituency for those new members in the House and talk about the area and what it entails.

It is a vast constituency and it's northeast from here, and as the name indicates, Rupertsland, it has a historical significance in that we have been here sometime as aboriginal people and I might say that it's been a long journey after meeting with people from Europe and coming here, and finally stepping into this Chamber, which I might say is a non-aboriginal institution, but it is a place where decisions are made, where laws are made.

But I sometimes feel frustrated and sometimes I feel that I should belong in this Chamber more comfortably than most times. Normally I don't feel so comfortable because it is a place where I guess being the first Indian person being elected here, I feel awkward and at certain times I feel — I don't know what to use — maybe the example coming in and maybe feeling like Custer and starting to try and talk to the Opposition in terms of what our values are, what our traditions are, and try to tell them where we, as aboriginal people, are coming from.

Certainly, throughout the last few years, this has been highlighted through the constitutional conferences which have been held in Ottawa. I think the first one was 1983, and we have had one in '84 and '85, where we saw all the aboriginal leaders of the four national organizations, the Inuit organization, the Assembly of First Nations, the Metis National Council and also the National non-status organization — I forgot the name of it offhand. But the four aboriginal leaders met with the 10 Premiers, the two Territory government leaders, and also the Prime Minister. In total, we have 17 participants in the constitutional conference, and this is a forum where we are trying to achieve recognition and also the identification, definition of our treaty and aboriginal rights. It becomes a little bit impossible to start debating in such a forum when we have 17 different parties trying to agree to one term.

To give you an example, the word "self-government" or "aboriginal self-government," everybody doesn't know what it means. The treaty organizations would base it from their treaty and historical past; the Metis people would discuss it from a different point of view; the Inuit have a different perspective. At the same time, we have 10 different provinces that are trying to get a grip as to what we mean by aboriginal self-government. On top of that, we have the two territorial leaders of governments there trying to identify what it is. Also, the Prime Minister, of course, is there as chairman and trying to direct the debate as to what we mean by aboriginal self-government. It gets frustrating when you are trying to debate this issue, there's only one subject, aboriginal self-government, at the national conference highlighted by TV and all the media attention that it gets.

I have always felt that we do have a right to govern ourselves. I think that's been demonstrated by the historical past which the Canadian Government recognized, which the Indian nations assumed by signing treaties with the Canadian Government. I might say that the treaties at that time were made in good faith and always have been held sacred by our people. But when the treaties were implemented, or tried to

be implemented, by the Canadian Government, somehow some of the promises that were made weren't really written or lived up to as originally understood by our forefathers.

One of the things that we have always been led to believe — it's written in the treaties — is the right to hunt anywhere at any time of the season for food. Even hunting migratory birds, there were some articles in the newspapers a while back about some of the Indian people being charged for hunting migratory birds out of season, and that was based on The Migratory Birds Convention Act which is a federal act. This is what I am talking about when the Indian people were led to believe that they were being promised the right to hunt for food for their survival. In that course of implementing the promises, they went and legislated the federal act which banned, I guess all hunting for anybody, including Treaty Indians.

Treaties to me would ordinarily supersede a federal statute, but in this case, as the court rulings have held, that treaties are subject to a federal statute. The Indian people always felt that the promises that they made with the Canadian Government, they were promising, in return for exchange of land which has always been held in sacredness by our forefathers and grandfathers. The Migratory Birds Act is a classic example, we see, because treaties are a collective right they belong to the people as a whole, but we are being charged individually. How do you correct that?

One of the things that we can do is pursue that through the constitutional conference. Although we have achieved a constitutional recognition, because under Section 35 of The Constitution Act it states that "treaties and aboriginal rights are hereby recognized and affirmed". Sure they've got constitutional recognition, but we haven't got the constitutional protection, at the same time, we're going through the process of defining and identifying those treaty and aboriginal rights.

I have spoken to my colleague, the Minister of Natural Resources, how this issue might be resolved. One of the things that could be done is to talk about management of the resources. I don't see any problem in that. The Indian people hunt for food, they don't hunt for pleasure, they don't hunt for sports.

Let me tell you, there is an article here about hunting, about some of the hunting that's being done. I also had an article here that referred to hunting that was done by our neighbours. Here it is, it says: "Tourists Rob us Blind." The reason why I mention this is we always get blamed for hunting or violation of fishing. It is the native people that get blamed. I think the record should be put straight because it is a right that we have always held, and we figure that the Federal Government should always uphold their treaties and promises, and also the Provincial Governments. Here is an article — it's the Winnipeg Free Press, May 12, 1986 — "Tourists Rob us Blind." It's what Mike Bessey, who did a two-year study for Natural Resources on poaching in Manitoba, says about some of the goings-on in the Province of Manitoba in respect to poaching.

Bessey says, and I quote: "Attitude is the problem among many visitors. Breaking the law is fun and a challenge to the people from such places as Louisiana, Texas and Washington. Bureaucrats, lawyers, oil men, you name it, men with big bucks and no regard for fish and game." That's the end of quote. Those are

the kind of things that we get blamed for because they figure it's the Indian people that are destroying the resources. I might say that the Indian people, if they didn't have the resources, wouldn't be able to exercise their treaties because we have great respect for the natural resources, because some of our philosophies, some of our ceremonies are based on natural resources. We treat it as such because when we give, I guess, like tobacco, giving part of the ceremony to Mother Earth, giving that thanks for the land and resources that come with it; birds and animals, trees. Those are some of the traditions and beliefs that we have and certainly as Indian people wouldn't go out there destroying the natural environment. I think where the most concerns come from is the pollution, environmental damages that are being done to the earth, to the nesting grounds, to the habitat that the muskrat or the beaver live in. Those are the things that we should be more concerned about — the nuclear accidents that would have a longer term effect on our natural resources, rather than on just trying to nab a few poachers or blaming it on Native people.

Native people always get charged for not particularly hunting out of season, but also being charged for dangerous hunting or in a manner that's dangerous to others, or being charged where they have no access to occupied Crown land. Sometimes we'll get charged where we don't have access to the refuge areas. In this way, we, as Indian people view that as beginning to limit or restrict the rights or the privileges that were guaranteed under the treaties. That doesn't mean we have no respect for the law or no respect for property of other individuals.

I had mentioned earlier that there could be a way to accommodate the hunting rights of the aboriginal people. I think discussions are under way to alleviate that concern, and I believe my colleague, the Minister of Natural Resources, will be pursuing that with the Federal Government and also other interest groups. That's only one aspect of the treaty and aboriginal rights I talked about. I was mentioning about the Constitutional Conference. That is a very difficult process because we're dealing with 17 different parties, and to come into one mind is very difficult. Even a definition of aboriginal people which includes the Inuit, the Metis, and also the Indian people, no mention of the non-status Indians. They're not included as part of the Constitution, not even recognized. I have my critic from Arthur, Native Affairs, I don't know whether he knows the term a "status Indian" or a "registered Indian" or a "Treaty Indian," the difference between the two, a "Band Indian" — (Interjection) — I'll be talking to him and giving him a few pointers on who is who and what that means because that creates those confusions, rather as a creation of governments and the bureaucratic language, you know, start defining who we are and what we are, and that's something that we're trying to get a grip on with the Constitutional Conference. We want to start doing things for ourselves and start defining who we are, what we should be doing. We have a forum through the Constitutional Conference through which we will discuss our objectives, our goals.

We have as a government made some initiatives toward recognizing the treaty and aboriginal rights and in our statement at the opening of the first Constitutional Conference, the issue of aboriginal rights was

mentioned. We always believed the government. We've always believed that Indian people have always had self-government from time immemorial. They were here in place. They practised their own culture. They practised their own resource management. They practiced their own way of living. We've stated that in our opening statement, but some of the provinces didn't agree with the statement or didn't take the same approach as the Province of Manitoba did, didn't even want to recognize the Indian people existed prior to them being here.

When people try to amend the Constitution, we had some provinces like Alberta, B.C., that were blocking a recognition of self-government. Some people didn't believe under Section 35 of The Constitution Act that says, treaty and aboriginal rights are hereby recognized. Some didn't believe that was part of our rights, but I believe the treaty and aboriginal right that self-government is already there but it's just a matter of defining what it is. Self-government is an objective through which much of the decisions will be made by our own people rather than other people dictating to us what their rights are or starting to create some legislation that has no bearing whatsoever at the community level. An example is, for instance, child welfare. When I was here in 1982, I was very astounded by the fact that our Native children were being exported to the United States. I might say that over 90 percent or even 95 percent of children that were exported were Native children. It's sad for me to say this but the government had no recognition, no empathy or sympathy for Native children. I'm glad that this government took action and put a moratorium on the exporting of Native children into the States. We hear stories of the disastrous results of the Native children that were placed out of the country coming home, or else tragedy has struck somewhere in the States, because our ability to be concerned about the aboriginal children here in Manitoba did not exist.

Through the changes of The Child Welfare Act, we were able to change legislation, giving more control to the Native organizations. We have MKO, the Awasis Agency, the DOTC Family Services that are delivering some statutory services, prevention and child care, to begin to look after our own, because our children are the — it's been said before — greatest resource, and our children are going to be the leaders of tomorrow. They are going to be the ones carrying our traditions, our culture, our languages, and some of the things that we cherish.

More and more Native people are becoming concerned and more are developing the child care services to suit their needs, because the guidelines are the needs of the Native children. The needs of their parents were not being met, and the guidelines that were being used to address the Native children were not working, or the adoption guidelines.

Some of the guidelines were that, in order to adopt a child or place a child in your custody, you must have an income or you must have a house with a certain amount of square feet per child or, in a family, that you should be able to provide that kind of an accommodation. In Rupertsland, many of the people don't own their homes. They already live in crowded homes, and some of them are unemployed. We have reserves that have an unemployment rate of maybe 90 percent.

For instance, like I had mentioned, because the reserves are a federal responsibility, I can go back and elaborate on some of the Nielsen task force recommendations and some of the petitions I took to Ottawa to the Minister of Indian Affairs on Native cutbacks, at which time, personally, the Minister of Indian Affairs assured me that the Nielsen task force wouldn't be implemented and that, if any implementations or cutbacks were to be made, they would at least consult with the Native leaders. But that didn't happen.

As a matter of fact, this last fall they were starting to meet with some groups, with civil servants, on how they were going to cut back with the Department of Indian Affairs and how it was going to affect the Indian Bands. They never went to the bands or the chiefs at all. First, they went to the bureaucrats and had the meeting first. That was their first priority.

I can just give you some examples of the Nielsen task force, what they intended to do. I believe more and more of their recommendations are being met, and they are going ahead with the cutbacks. I constantly get complaints from some of the Bands that the Federal Government is going ahead on cutbacks. Certainly, the Federal Government has a major responsibility to reserves in Manitoba. As a matter of fact, they were going to cut back on housing, which would eliminate the incentives for Indians who stay on reserves which offer few economic opportunities.

In terms of health programs, they were hoping to discourage Indian people from staying on reserves so that they would go into the cities. We already have a large population of Native people in cities who aren't employed. They're just on welfare and not doing anything at all, and that problem has to be resolved. I don't know how we can start resolving that issue because, on one hand, the Federal Government is not encouraging people to stay on reserves but, at the same time, they're doing it purposely so that their responsibility would be lessened by having more people in the cities which becomes a provincial responsibility. At the same time, it becomes a municipal responsibility.

That is not proper planning at all. It's not addressing the needs of the Indian people at all. Rather than discouraging people, rather than enhancing the conditions on a reserve — as a matter of fact, in terms of health, it says, here health programs and institutions be eliminated where there is provincial duplication, and also a user pay principle be involved for uninsured services. There again, we should start paying for some of the services, as a matter of fact, that were also promised under treaties. We were promised health care.

So there are a lot of things that need to be resolved to start addressing what our treaty rights are and whose responsibility it is because, as a Provincial Government, we seem to be assuming some of those services. I don't want the Federal Government to get off the hook, because they have a treaty obligation, they have a statutory obligation, and a constitutional obligation for treaty Indians on reserves.

Indian people expect services from the province because we pay taxes and we are citizens of the Province of Manitoba, and also we take in the formation of governments in the Legislature. We pay taxes; we pay gasoline tax. I might say in Northern Manitoba, in Gods Lake, we're paying 91 cents a litre. I find it

sometimes incredible when the gas price goes up by 1 cent, and goes up by 50 cents in Northern Manitoba.

I haven't gone into the area about the northern area of the services that we lack, but I'm just talking about the Indian affairs, what they're going to do. They are gradually assuming less responsibility for Indian people and reserves. I find that astonishing and incredible because at this time, when we're talking about the constitutional conference, the right to enhance Indian participation, to enhance the goals and objectives of Native people, is an opportune time. I find it incredible that the Federal Government, at this time, is cutting back services to Indian people.

As a matter of fact, the Prime Minister stated that many people have made money on the backs of the aboriginal people. Yet I find that aboriginal people have not had their fair share. We are the lowest on the social scale of the ladder; we have no — actually we don't have any real employment on reserves. I can go on — no housing that's adequate to meet the needs of the families; poor health services; poor garbage facilities; sanitary facilities.

As a matter of fact, I might say that in those areas in which the Provincial Government has responsibility, you managed to place some water and sewage, water facilities, fire trucks, those small communities we were able to provide those through the Provincial Government. It is the Federal Government that has neglected the needs of the reserves.

How many minutes do I have?

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member has four minutes remaining.

HON. E. HARPER: I look forward to the contributions from the Opposition members. I hope they will make positive, constructive suggestions because the aboriginal people have not been a priority of any government and just because we're government, I think you, as an Opposition, have a responsibility because internationally, when you look at the conditions of the aboriginal people in Canada, it's shameful.

The first citizens of this country are at the bottom scale of the social ladder and I have always felt that the most well-off people should be the aboriginal people. They shouldn't have to go around begging for handouts.

I don't know how many of my colleagues — the critic that I have, I look forward to his suggestions and I don't know whether he has gone up North at all, whether he has visited any reserves or even has any friends who are aboriginal people. I look forward to the Opposition for their support on aboriginal issues and I expect some criticisms once in while but the aboriginal people need all the support that they can get because we need to get off the ground and start looking after ourselves. We need that opportunity because we have to start governing ourselves and we don't want to start placing the burden on other people to make decisions for us; we can do that ourselves very effectively.

With the conclusion of my speech, Madam Speaker, I congratulate you again and wish you very well in your position.

Thank you very much.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Ste. Rose.

Tuesday, 20 May, 1986

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Madam Speaker, being 23 minutes past, would you consider it 5:30?

MADAM SPEAKER: Is it the will of the House to call it 5:30? (Agreed)

The hour being 5:30, I am leaving the Chair and will return at 8:00 p.m.