

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, May 29, 1989.

The House met at 8 p.m.

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation, seven minutes remaining.

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation): Mr. Speaker, I realize I only have a few minutes left, so I will try to speak a little more quickly and get -(Interjection)- It could go on all night. Anyway, I just want to clearly come back to some of the decisions that have been made by this Government over the past year that are going to benefit all Manitobans.

I want to talk once more about the casino at the Fort Garry Hotel. It definitely will clean up the image of the City of Winnipeg. We have had a Liberal Leader (Mrs. Carstairs) who has been on both sides of this issue. She has indicated and I will quote, "that this will be the death knell for rural Manitoba," to take away casinos from rural Manitoba, and yet she does not want to see casinos run within the City of Winnipeg. She is saying it is a tax on the poor. She has indicated quite clearly that she does not know which side of the issue she is on. She is saying that if the Liberals were in Government they could not turn the clock backwards and they could not get out of lotteries or casinos, but she does not want to see the decrease of casinos, lotteries or gambling in rural Manitoba. So I have to clearly say that the Leader of the Liberal Opposition really does not know what she is talking about and she has no innovative or creative ideas on how to fix the solution. All she does is criticize.

Mr. Speaker, we also have a new initiative under the Lotteries Needs Assessment that is going to put \$900,000 into recreation in rural and remote Manitoba. We have \$500,000 that is going to go to conservation projects to improve our environment, and we have \$800,000 that is going to go to medical research throughout the province. I will tell you that the Liberals have indicated that they do not support these new initiatives. Obviously they have no concern for medical research which is going to create 20 to 30 jobs.

I will tell you we have spoken to those who are going to receive increased funding in the medical profession for research and they are ecstatic, as are the people of Manitoba going to be when we can keep the very highly qualified specialists in research here in our province, rather than having them move away. The Liberal Party is opposed to that, Mr. Speaker. I find it absolutely incredible. We are going to have a new lotteries system that is going to be more accountable to the public of Manitoba, and the Opposition obviously does not want to be able to ask questions in this Legislature and make lotteries funding accountable to the people of Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, I find it absolutely amazing to think that they do not want to see an

accountable system so that all the people in Manitoba know where the money is going and what good things it does throughout the province.

We have had a good year, a positive year in this province as Government in a minority situation. I will say we have made some tough decisions and we have made some right decisions, and I know that the people of Manitoba are happy with the decisions that we have made and they are looking forward to this minority Government serving and working on their behalf for several years to come. We could be here another three years in a minority situation, possibly four. Quite frankly, I know that Manitobans will be served well under this administration. They have been for the past year and they will be for years to come. I want to indicate that I am looking forward to next week, June 5, when the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) brings in our Budget. It will be a positive Budget, it will be something that the people of Manitoba can be proud of. I know that they look forward to years ahead of good Government under this Conservative administration. Thank you.

* (2005)

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): I am privileged to be able to join this year's version of the Throne Speech Debate and, as is customary, would like to begin by congratulating you on the job that you did last year. First of all, I think you provided excellent leadership to the Members of this Chamber. When we sometimes erred or strayed from the prescribed course, you were quick to correct us and did so with a certain degree of levity and humour which, I think, made all of us that much more amenable to your direction. You are to be commended for that.

While I am being so positive I should also congratulate, and I extend sincere congratulations to the new Members of the front bench, to the Member for Kirkfield Park (Mrs. Hammond) and the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns).

An Honourable Member: Not exactly the front bench.

Mr. Storie: Well, not exactly the front bench, for becoming part of the Executive Council and for assuming new responsibilities. I think it is always a challenge to have ministerial duties assigned to you. I expect the two new Members in the Cabinet will do an admirable job, probably outshine most of the existing Members of Cabinet, as it turns out, and that will not be that difficult.

Last year, I began my remarks by defining the word "trite" as a word which might describe the Throne Speech. I have had to add to that because as I stay in this Chamber longer, I find I can use more adjectives. I think "timid" and "trite" would be the best description of this year's version of the Throne Speech—timid and trite. I dread to think what would happen, heaven forbid,

should there be another Throne Speech delivered by this Government. We would be getting into full-blown alliteration—timid, trite and terrible, probably or some other like adjective. We will not worry about that for the time being. We will just deal with timid and trite.

I noticed with a great deal of interest the speeches of Members opposite of the Government and some of the comments that have been put forward by Ministers in response to questions from Members on this side. It is interesting because one of the oldest jokes that is told about a new Government assuming office is that every Member should prepare three envelopes. I would not presume on the intelligence of Members by telling that joke. Everyone has heard it, it is an old joke.

We have heard too many times in this Session already, the Ministers of this Government using the first envelope and blaming the previous Government. Today was a good example where the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) used the first envelope, he thought, to his advantage. He suggested that the problems in health, that the problems that exist in the Health Sciences Centre when it comes to the backlog of people waiting for by-pass surgery was the responsibility of the previous Government, this despite the fact it was given to him in black and white that the backlog had doubled in a year, that the previous Government did not have anything to do with the shortcomings in the Department of Health, that those shortcomings had to be due to the failings of the Minister himself.

* (2010)

When my colleague, the MLA for Churchill (Mr. Cowan), says that the Department of Health is in administrative chaos he is quite correct because there are decisions wanting to be made. This Minister has decided, for his own reasons, to short-circuit the usual decision-making process, decided he has to be involved in every decision at every level. The result has been and is that decisions that need to be made are not being made. This is only the latest public example of the turmoil that exists in the health care system throughout the province. This is only one example of the real cost of the kind of leadership that is being demonstrated by the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard).

There are other examples in other parts of the province and Flin Flon is not the least of which. There are capital projects being held up. There are services not being provided. There are staffing positions in northern Manitoba that should have been and are needed to be put in place on a long-standing basis. This Minister is not making those decisions. It is interesting that they continue to use the first envelope excuse. I guess we have come to expect it, but I think the public obviously will be tiring of that excuse shortly if they are not already tiring of that excuse.

Mr. Speaker, we are thankful as Members of the Opposition and certainly as Members of the New Democratic Party that we have a minority Tory Government, because one of the things that Manitobans feared the most going into the last election, and probably the principal reason we are not sitting here with a Tory majority is because the public was concerned

legitimately about a right-wing agenda a la Brian Mulroney or a la Margaret Thatcher, a true right-wing agenda much like that espoused by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) on occasion. The Tories, prior to the 1988 election, were aflamed, if you will, with right-wing rhetoric, the rhetoric of privatization and individualism and the right to work and a whole series of others, and certainly had shown themselves to believe in that right-wing agenda in their rhetoric when it comes to dealing with Bills as diverse as pay equity and final offer selection.

The circumstances we are faced with in this Legislature today is substantially different. If you look at the Throne Speech, it is an amazing blend of rhetorics, of progressive rhetoric and right-wing rhetoric. You can only attribute that to the fact this Government is very timid. It is a timid Throne Speech. It attempts to flag the jargon, the buzzwords of every single group in the province. In that respect, it does a remarkable job. It has flagged the buzzwords certainly of most of the interest groups in the province.

Mr. Speaker, that does not belie the fact this Government has missed opportunities. It does not, I guess, relieve them of their responsibility to stand up for Manitobans. That is a slogan that you have perhaps heard before but it is a slogan that has a ring of truth to it. Manitobans expect their Government to deal with the powerbrokers operating within the province and within the country, to stand up against those who have their own particular interests to serve the best interest of the people of Manitoba.

We have to, I guess, ask on behalf of Manitobans, why some of those opportunities were lost. Perhaps the most glaring example is the failure of this Government to stand up to the federal Conservative Budget that was introduced on April 22.

* (2015)

Mr. Speaker, there can be no doubt that the people of Manitoba quickly recognized the negative impact that this Budget was going to have on the people of Manitoba. I think there are many Manitobans, including many Manitobans who voted for individual Members on that side of the House, who are asking themselves, why did we not hear more? Why were our interests not protected in this process? I think those people have a right to ask that question.

We know, for example, that the federal Budget is going to cost families across Canada, and I say families, through direct taxation and indirect taxation some \$14 billion. We know that this tax grab is the largest single tax grab in Canadian history. We know that this tax grab is unprecedented in its unfairness to working Canadians. We know that the \$14 million they are going to take from families should be compared to the additional \$1 billion they are going to take from corporations. We know that this continues a tradition of Tory Governments and Liberal Governments in making individual Canadians bear the brunt of the tax grab in the country.

We have heard Members opposite and Members of the Chambers of Commerce and other business groups

applaud the Tories for their good management. In fact, the local Chamber of Commerce in Flin Flon supported the Budget and commented that it was an example of good management. If good management is imposing the largest single tax grab in Canadian history at the time the deficit escalates from \$28.5 billion to \$30.5 billion, if that is good management, that may be Tory management but there is a big difference between good management and Tory management.

The Member for Emerson (Mr. Albert Driedger) says, look at the record. I remember the Member for Emerson commenting on the Budget that was introduced in 1987 when he said this is the largest single tax grab in Manitoba's history. The difference is the deficit dropped by 60 percent over two years, from about \$585 million to \$225 million. It is even more than that.- (Interjection)-

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Morris (Mr. Manness) says from his seat, tell the truth. Well, the fact of the matter is I am telling the truth and the Member for Morris knows that is the case as well as anybody else in this Chamber.

The fact is that the federal Budget is going to take something like \$500 million out of Manitoba's economy. The federal Budget is going to cost the Town of Portage la Prairie and the City of Winnipeg, because of the closing of two Forces bases, some 1,500 jobs. The federal Budget is going to remove \$1 billion from the Established Programs Financing program which supports health and education in the Province of Manitoba. The federal Budget is a disaster for Manitoba. It takes some \$66 million out of the regional development programs.

It was interesting to watch the Premier (Mr. Filmon), I am sure with a good deal of prodding from the Member for Portage (Mr. Connery) and the Member for Morris (Mr. Manness), attend a demonstration in Portage la Prairie to protest the elimination of the Forces base in Portage la Prairie. There can be no doubt that the closure of that base is a significant blow to the community of Portage la Prairie and the Province of Manitoba. It is interesting that only that got the Premier's attention. There are so many other issues out there that need the attention of this Premier, need the attention of Ministers responsible for various portfolios that it is striking that only this got the Premier's attention. What about the cutbacks to the regional development programs?

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): It is not in the Throne Speech.

Mr. Storie: It is not in the Throne Speech, as my colleague for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) suggests. I represent an area which benefits significantly from the regional development programs. The northern part of the province benefits significantly from the Northern Development Agreement, which is \$186 million agreement signed by this Government in 1982 and extended. It benefits from the Forestry Development Agreement, the \$27 million agreement; it benefits from the Mineral Development Agreement, I believe it is \$25 million; the Transportation Agreement, which was used to support the Port of Churchill; the Tourism Agreement.

* (2020)

I know for a fact that this Government is still sitting on its hands when it comes to renegotiating those agreements. They expired March 31, 1988, some two months ago now, and this Government has really done nothing to protect the interests of those people, those parts of the province that have benefited from those federal-provincial agreements. Has the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) said one word? Has the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld) spread the word of his concern over the Mineral Development Agreement, the lapsing of the Mineral Development Agreement? Has the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) shared his concern with Manitobans over the lack of federal initiative when it comes to the Forestry Agreement?

No, the fact is that even the display of Members from Portage la Prairie and Morris and the First Minister in Portage la Prairie is window dressing. It is window dressing because these Members have applauded every single cutback of the federal Government since its election in 1984.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I ask you to pass judgment whether or not the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) was passing judgment on motives of Members of the Government in attendance at a public rally in support of maintaining the Forces base at Portage la Prairie? He seemed to indicate we were there only for the purpose of window dressing. I ask you to judge whether or not those words are impugning negative motives to our reason for being there?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would like to advise the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) that unfortunately I did not hear the remarks so I will take this opportunity to take this under advisement and I will report back to the House once I peruse Hansard.

Mr. Storie: I relinquish my portfolio. Mr. Speaker, I have been introduced as the Minister of Finance. If I had made the mess of it the Minister of Finance has, I would not own up to being in that portfolio either.

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

I had mentioned there were a number of issues which face the province which have not been addressed, I believe, satisfactorily by Members opposite, issues that are going to have an increasingly important and negative impact on Manitoba, its economy and its people over time. One of those, of course, is the trade agreement. I have heard and Members in the Chamber heard just the other day that the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) continued to purport to support the trade agreement and talk about, in glowing terms, its benefits for Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is one of the most interesting interpretations of the events of the last six months that I have heard. The Free Trade Agreement has been in effect technically since January 1 of this year. Anyone

who believes that the impact of the Free Trade Agreement has been felt to any significant degree on Manitoba yet is kidding themselves. The fact of the matter is that the federal Government and the Government of the United States is in a process of defining how the agreement is really going to affect us over the next five years, as they define what is meant by "subsidy."

We have had some interesting developments even in the first six months. The first and perhaps most telling was the imposition of duties on Canadian hogs. I stood in this Chamber, other Members stood in this Chamber, our national Leader toured across Canada during the federal election saying categorically that the dispute settlement mechanism, which purported to protect Canadians from the imposition of those duties, was a farce. It is a farce. It does not protect Canadian imported products at all. The first example we see is only a few months after the trade agreement is signed, is ratified by the Prime Minister and the President. We have the imposition of duty on hogs and the loss of 64 jobs at a hog-processing plant.

* (2025)

What a telling condemnation of the trade agreement. This is only the first step. What do we have following the imposition of duties? We know then categorically that the dispute settlement mechanism is not going to prevent the imposition of duties. It does not require, it does not obligate individual states from relinquishing their authority to impose duties as they see fit. The fact of the matter is that constitutionally the federal Government in the United States has even less power over individual states in the United States than the federal Government in Canada has constitutionally over the provinces. We are going to see individual states protecting their interests unmercifully against Canadian imports and Manitoba products. I predicted again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is only the tip of the iceberg. We are going to feel the impact of those non-guarantees over the course of the next few years.

After that, after the imposition of duties, then we had of course our concern that plants would close in Canada wherever duties were eliminated which would allow U.S. companies, Canadian subsidiaries to manufacture in the United States and export to Canada. What was the first victim—well, not the first victim, but one of the most, I guess, symbolic victims, the Toro plant in Steinbach. I read with interest the comments of Mr. Epp on the kind of corporate citizen that Toro was. He may be right in that, but the fact of the matter is that Toro was no longer producing its lawn mower parts in Canada, assembling those products in Canada because of the Free Trade Agreement. The fact of the matter is that the elimination of the duties between our two countries made it feasible for the company to manufacture in the United States, export into Canada.

Now, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is anxious that I should focus some of my attention on his colleagues, the Liberals. I intend to spend some time discussing the other nondescript Party in this Legislature, but I will save that for the end.

The Toro plant closed. We lost an additional 30 jobs, or whatever it was. We have the brewery industry in

trouble. We have closures across Canada. We have people in the textile industry closing their businesses. There needed to be a Manitoba Government willing to stand up and say, at a minimum, given the federal Government's constitutional right to impose the trade agreement on the Canadian people, at a minimum, the Manitoba Government should have said unequivocally on every occasion where it had an opportunity that we want some adjustment mechanism put in place to protect workers, to protect communities, to provide offsets to the province in one way or another. But nothing is said.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Throne Speech is long on wind and short on substance when it comes to the environment. In fact, if it had not been for the energy and the initiative of the previous Minister of Natural Resources and the previous Minister of the Environment, there would have been no legislation referenced in the Throne Speech. The fact is that when it comes to the environment, the Throne Speech references, and I quote, "The Environment Act, The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act, The Endangered Species Act, The Wildlife Act and The Ecological Reserves Act," all of which is legislation or was legislation put in place by the NDP Government.

But the new Liberal/Tory Government, the new timid, tepid Liberal/Tory Government wants to pretend it has the environmental concern at its heart and introduces an NDP legislative agenda. For that, we are eternally grateful. In fact, we will support these initiatives. On the larger question, on the question of when they had an opportunity to act on their own, how did they deal with the environment? That question remains unanswered.

We have some major concerns over the process that will be put in place to protect the environment when it comes to the Repap sale. We have witnessed the concern of the previous Minister of the Environment and the previous Minister of Natural Resources when it comes to the environment over the Rafferty-Alameda schmozzle. After the courts said, yes, there needs to be an environmental study, our Minister of Natural Resources then relents and says, oh, yes, that is what we wanted all along, after making a complete fool of himself for four months in the Manitoba Legislature before the people of Manitoba.

* (2030)

Well, thank goodness the Premier (Mr. Filmon) exercised some common sense for a change and removed both of those Ministers from those responsibilities because, if there is going to be an environmental agenda in this province, it is not going to come from those two gentlemen. I do not believe it is going to come from the rhetoric of the Throne Speech because I do not believe that anybody on that side has it in their heart. They do not really understand what protecting the environment really means. They do not understand their latest buzzword, sustainable development. We will watch vigilantly for some evidence of action on the part of the Government when it comes to the environment.

We had extensive lip-service paid to the principles of rural development. In fact, we have a new Rural

Development Minister (Mr. Penner) and, for that, we are eternally grateful. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the irony of that is that the only reference in the Throne Speech that could be really called rural development was a reference to the re-establishment of six Civil Service positions in Boissevain. Well, the people in Boissevain may applaud that loudly and perhaps the Member for Morris (Mr. Manness) may applaud that, but the fact is that while the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) was in Boissevain promising to decentralize Government services, his Minister of Transportation (Mr. Albert Driedger) was trying to close the Motor Vehicle Branch in Flin Flon and his Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson) was eliminating a probation officer position and the Minister responsible for the Alcoholism Foundation (Mr. Orchard) was trying to cut out an Alcoholism Foundation worker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this again is so transparent. It is transparently political. It is not a strategy for rural development. It is lip-service again to a buzzword of decentralization, but I can assure you this Government has no plan for decentralization. They are paying lip-service to the concept to engender support in rural Manitoba. We will watch, Mr. Deputy Speaker, their actions because actions speak louder than words and, thus far, we have only heard the boom of the cannon, we have not seen where the shell lands.—(Interjection)—Or smoke, as my colleague says.

The other great move in terms of rural development—and this was probably the brainchild of the Member for Rhineland (Mr. Penner)—the opening of regional Cabinet offices. What a new idea! —(Interjection)— Well, not since 1972, but that may be new to some Members opposite. This was a brainchild of some researcher who researched history and said, the NDP did that almost 15 years ago, maybe it is a good idea. It is a good idea. Unfortunately, the Members opposite criticized it at that time and they criticized it when our Government, when the Pawley Government Cabinet used those offices and served the people of Manitoba. My time is ebbing and I wish to address some of the shortcomings when it comes to northern Manitoba.

I said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) introduced his Budget last August that the elimination of the Mining Community Development Fund, the elimination of a fund which was going to extract an additional 2 percent of the mining tax and place it into a fund specifically for mining communities, mining workers and those affected by plant closures and plant downsizing, it was a fund that would have grown this year to the tune of \$12 million or \$15 million. Instead, this Government chose to do what other Conservative Governments have done historically and that is tap the wealth of northern Manitoba and use it to build highways in the Minister of Highways' (Mr. Albert Driedger) constituency or somewhere else. The fact is that an additional \$117 million, perhaps more, but something like \$117 million in additional revenue flew from northern Manitoba into the coffers of the provincial Government. There are many in northern Manitoba who were asking the question, why does not northern Manitoba get some of the benefit of those additional revenues? The answer is simple, and it has been on the mouths of northern

Manitobans for more than 20 years. They do not get any of the benefit because Conservative Governments view the wealth of northern Manitoba as a resource to be tapped for the use of Southerners.

The elimination of the Mining Community Development Fund is a perfect example. I say it is a perfect example because unfortunately one of the communities in my constituency was faced with exactly those kinds of circumstances that the Mining Community Development foresaw. In January, February of this year, Pioneer Metals, which is operating a mine at Puffy Lake, just outside of Sherridon, was forced to lay off workers. This fund should have been available to do more than this Government saw fit to do. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) says there is a fund, there is a Mining Community Reserve Fund, but it does not have the same mandate, it does not have the same resources and this Government is not committed to that process in any event. We believe that northern Manitoba has received too little attention, not only in the Throne Speech but in the actions of the Government over the year.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to spend some time on education because the education portfolio impacts on everyone's life in the province in every corner of the province. The newly created Department of Education and Training has a solemn responsibility that I believe it is not fulfilling. Many of the things that I talked about in terms of the federal Budget are true when it comes to the responsibility of the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) as well.

The Established Program Financing cutbacks announced the fifth set of cutbacks since 1982, which have seen the transfers from the federal Government for health and post-secondary education fall from a 50-50 cost-sharing, an equal sharing of the burden of health and post-secondary education costs fall to 36 percent, 64 percent share of responsibility with the federal Government assuming now only about 36 percent of the costs. This is an additional reduction of 1 percent of that cost-sharing, and its impact on the poorer provinces is going to be dramatic. It is going to be evident very quickly.

This Minister and this Government have chosen to be silent on that issue. They have chosen to be silent at the same time that they want to pretend that they are concerned about the problems facing universities, the chronic underfunding that they have identified. They pretend to be concerned when they learn of the increasing problem that students are having accessing university because of the rising tuition costs, necessitated again by the lack of federal funding. They did not say anything.

Where is this Government when it comes to the establishment of a northern university? Not one mention of the importance that the northern part of the province attaches to that kind of an institution. Where was the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) when the Throne Speech references the importance of distance education and using technology to make sure that rural students, rural high school students, rural adults, have access to educational opportunities? Where was he when the Manitoba Computer-Assisted Learning Consortium went down?

* (2040)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I was Minister of Education, we granted this consortium some \$250,000 so it could really begin in earnest to develop courseware, high school courseware, adult basic education courseware to service the needs of rural Manitoba and northern Manitoba, remote parts of this province. The Minister, without apparently considering the impact of not supporting this endeavour, has callously in my opinion short-circuited the availability of courseware in Manitoba. He has also eliminated virtually any possibility of the courses that are developed being relevant for Manitoba, because he has really relegated Manitoba educators to purchasing software, purchasing courseware from some New Jersey company or Swedish company or some other consortium in other parts of the world.

He misunderstands the length of time it takes for software to be developed. He misunderstands the length of time it takes for a local Manitoba company, and the MCALC was a local Manitoba entity, to develop a reputation across the country and internationally, but they were doing it. Its loss is going to be felt for generations in the province and is going to be felt most acutely in rural Manitoba.

I am not going to deal at length with the current interference of the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) in the affairs of the university and the Faculty of Management, but I am going to say that this Government needs to stand up on behalf of Natives in this province who benefit from post-secondary education opportunities offered by the federal Government. The E-12 guideline changes that have been talked about, and we have heard some eloquent testimony from Native people about the impact of these changes on their ability to get a post-secondary education, cannot go unremarked upon.

We need as a province an educated population, and the denial of access to educational opportunities by Native students and an increasing number of Native students, and their parents and families who recognize the importance of education, is a backward step. It is a backward step.

I do not care, frankly, whether Members opposite believe that educational opportunity, including post-secondary educational opportunity, is a Treaty right. Ultimately, that will probably be decided at some political forum or in the courts but, as an economic issue, it is so short-sighted to deny these people the opportunity for a post-secondary education. I cannot believe that there is silence on the part of Members opposite. I cannot believe it, because it is short-sighted, not only in social terms but in economic terms. It certainly was not mentioned in any of the Throne Speech rhetoric.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have spent considerable time, in fact too much time, being negative about the Throne Speech. On balance, the Throne Speech is a relatively innocuous document. Many of the things that I commented on reflected other opportunities the Government has had over the course of its short tenure to stand up for Manitoba, to take a position that reflects

the real needs and real interests of Manitobans, and they did not.

But I guess, before I or my colleagues make a decision about what to do in terms of supporting the Throne Speech, we have to ask ourselves a number of questions. The first one of course is in terms of Government action, how difficult, how important is the Throne Speech in terms of the plan of action or the actual plans of the Government? From a historical perspective, when the Conservatives introduce a Throne Speech, we find that very little of it actually gets implemented.

The second, is the Throne Speech per se worth precipitating an election? That is an important question.

The third question is, are there other important opportunities for Opposition, for the New Democratic Party to determine really what the implications of this Government's actions are going to be, such as the Budget, and the answer is yes.

What is more interesting to ask is why do the Liberals oppose this Throne Speech? What is there in the Throne Speech that might cause the Liberals to oppose it?

Well, the closest we can come to answering that question is the rhetoric of the Leader of the Opposition, the Member for River Heights, when she says Sharon Carstairs does what is best for Sharon Carstairs. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in and of itself is the motivation for the Liberal motion of non-confidence, not because there is anything in the Throne Speech which is fundamentally opposed by the Liberals. We have not heard one constructive alternative from Members opposite in their rhetoric of the Throne Speech, not one constructive alternative when it comes to the last 12 months, 13 months of Tory agenda, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The fact is that—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Member's time has expired.

The Honourable Minister for Portage la Prairie.

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Cooperative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I thought I was next. Well, what is the agreement?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Mr. Deputy Speaker, first of all, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as a Deputy Speaker, and I would like to wish all the Members good health, not necessarily political good health but real good health and wish you all the best.

Let me first thank my Kildonan constituents who wanted action when they elected me and they have seen action for the last one year. They have seen action they did not see for 20 years. They are proud of that and I am thankful for this continuing support.

An Honourable Member: Louder, Gulzar, louder.

Mr. Cheema: It will come. Just wait.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the last Throne Speech, that was last year, a lot of promises were made on health care issues. Let me go through them one by one. No. 1, it was to preserve and enhance the Medicare system. This administration has completely failed. The Minister is a crisis manager and everyone knows it.

They wanted to establish a Health Advisory Network. It took them eight months to establish the Health Advisory Network. They have spent already about a million dollars and the Health Advisory Network, no one knows how many times the network has met and what kinds of issues they are dealing with. No one knows in the public. The Minister has never indicated in this House the action taken by the Health Advisory Network. It is a shame. After spending one million dollars, we have achieved nothing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was a hospital program review and we have not heard anything from this administration and from this Minister.

There was a promise to retain physicians in rural Manitoba. Nothing has been done and it is clear today there are 32 communities that are without a permanent doctor.

An Honourable Member: What was that?

Mr. Cheema: There are 32 communities in rural Manitoba and northern Manitoba that are without doctors and this administration has done nothing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the AIDS campaign, it took them eight months to produce a simple brochure. It took them one year to produce the ad and they still have to do the outreach program. They have done nothing so far. These are all failures.

There was a promise to deal with youth drug and alcohol abuse. No new initiatives have been started by this administration.

That is the record for the last one year. There are failures in each and every category of the health care system in Manitoba. We saw a clear example today and for the last one week that the crisis exists, and the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) is not taking any responsibility.

Today there are 90 patients waiting at the Health Sciences Centre who need by-pass surgery, an operation which would save their lives. It will improve the quality of life. It will save taxpayers' money in the long run. No action has been taken by this Minister. He was told last year on September 2, 1988, that there has to be long-term planning to have by-pass surgery done at an earlier time. We were told it is summertime, it is summer holidays. This summer is one year old now. This is not acceptable and he will have to answer at election time to all Manitobans, all of you.

* (2050)

Mr. Albert Driedger (Emerson): Well, it is his fault, not ours.

An Honourable Member: Oh, you cannot disown him that easily now, Albert.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us go back to the Speech from the Throne. The Government states that my Government has prepared an active agency to fulfill its mandate of restoring the confidence of Manitobans in the province and in this Government. This statement has made a very important point but this administration has lost the confidence of the people of Manitoba. It was clearly evident from my Leader's speech and it was made clear to them, they have failed in a lot of areas.

I am going to discuss only health care today. Last year when the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) took over, we gave him now almost one year, and one year is enough, at least to have some plans—not even a single initiative. We have talked about the Health Advisory Network, and this is a major plot.

Let us go back to the utilization of lottery funds. The Minister of Culture and Heritage (Mrs. Mitchelson) stood up in this House and she thinks that there is a big plot and that plot is continuing to grow, and they can solve everything with that. Who is going to be responsible for the funds which other communities were receiving before she came in? The multicultural community is extremely upset and some other Ministers may laugh at this, but this they have to answer at election time too. The multicultural community has been irritated by this Government and they have lost the confidence of this Government definitely because you have taken a lot of things away from MIC.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us go back to the lottery funds here. It was said that the lottery funds should not be used for ongoing, continuing health care programs because the lottery funds had levelled off, and lottery funds are based on people with the lower- and middle-class income. You cannot subsidize the health care system on the backs of a few people. This is a shame. They do not like it and they are getting upset, but the public will judge them at the election day.

There is only one issue they have raised, important issue, which is a breast screening program, but that is our resolution. We put it forward about six weeks ago and now, all of a sudden, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) has shown some interest and we welcome that. That will save a lot of money. In the Province of British Columbia, you could go and have breast screening done for \$6 to \$8, and that will not only save money but that will improve the quality of life for women at age 50 and above the age of 50, and definitely, I think, this should have been started last year, but it is never too late to do a good thing and the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) should follow that.

They try to make an important point, let us make the Health Sciences a world-class teaching, education and research centre. We are not denying it, we will welcome that, but their action says nothing. Completely for the last year, not even one service at the Health Sciences has improved—all the surgical procedures. The Minister of Highways (Mr. Albert Driedger) is an

intelligent and smart man and he understands that if we need by-pass surgery today, I do not think any Member would wait for nine months. Why should the public of Manitoba wait for nine months? That is a shame.

When you are spending one-third of the provincial Budget on health care, we should not have to wait for this basic service, and that is unacceptable. What the Minister of Health is saying is it is expensive, but the quality of life, you cannot put a dollar value on the quality of life. These 90 patients are seeing their doctor, they are getting their tests done, they are going to the hospital and it is costing more money that it would cost to have the surgery done. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a failure and they must admit it.

The other areas at Health Sciences Centre, seven of the children's specialists are leaving. We made it clear on Thursday that they are leaving for various reasons. We are not saying that they are leaving because of one Minister. They are leaving for various reasons, but they have the responsibility to come up with a plan so that we do not end up losing more than seven.

Today the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) stood up and said, no, no, that he was right. Let me say that the Minister of Health was not correct today. He misled the House in his own way. He led, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in his own way with his circumstantial answer. He never answered the direct question, and I have learned within one year that he will never answer a direct question, but still the public will notice that this is something. He never took any action, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and if we do not take any action the same thing would happen that happened with the Manitoba health care. One psychiatrist left, followed by two and four and twenty, and if we cannot keep these individuals, you cannot make Health Sciences a world-class centre. That will be a disaster if we do not act now. Let us not make a political issue out of this. I think it is important that you should take notice and do something, to the Minister of Health.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the last one year, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) has used the term "partnership" numerous times. Almost every press release, there is the word, "partnership." Let us examine that word partnership in terms of his dictionary and his vocabulary.

* (2100)

If we have a partnership, why would we have 500 nurses at our door, at the Legislative Building, simply demanding a position on the Health Advisory Network? That is not asking too much. The message is going across that this administration does not have a long-term policy and that is what I am saying, and the Minister for Seniors (Mr. Downey) would agree with us that you have to have long-term planning for health care because we are spending one-third of the dollars and we have to save the health care system. It is the responsibility of all the Members of the House, it is not just one Minister, but now he is in a position to do it but he is not doing it. That is why we are blaming him, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Let us go to our proposal what we think during this Session. There are five to six areas where we think

that this Government must act. Let us start with the most important issue right now and which should be an issue for all the Members on the other side of the House. The rural communities are without doctors. Why? We have not heard a single question from your side. Why not? I think you have to stand for your constituencies too. Even though it is going to hurt your Minister, you still have the responsibility to do it, but you have not done it so far, and we will make that point at election time. Definitely, we will do it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we announced a program about eight weeks ago, very economical, very practical, and the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) admitted it was a good program.

An Honourable Member: What has he done about it?

Mr. Cheema: Nothing has been done. We wanted him to start the program as of July 1 so that as of next June 30, 1990 you could have at least doctors in rural Manitoba, but nothing has been done. Turn this \$6,000 per person, split in three with a partnership between the communities, local hospitals and Manitoba Health, but nothing has been done. The money is being wasted because the local hospitals do spend that much money to go overseas and bring doctors and they do not stay in Manitoba. They get their licence and they go to B.C. or Ontario and have a good time. Why Manitoba should be that breeding ground for licensing, and this is one way of stopping that, to have them sign five-year contracts.- (Interjection)-

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a Member on the other side—I am not serious—well, it is their way of thinking, but we think it is very important. We have not heard from this Minister and we would like him to do the right thing and follow our advice.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when health care costs are rising, the one best possible way to deliver a health care system in the most economical way is to have a community clinic concept, and that is being done in Europe, that is being done in Australia, all other places, but why are we not doing it in Manitoba? You know, this administration even has failed to fund the existing Klinik. Klinik has been crying for the last one year, please come and visit us, give us the funds to have a new building, but nothing has been done.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a shame. It is really a disgrace that Klinik has to suffer because of some political decisions. I am sorry to say that but that seems to be the reality and that is the perception in the minds of the public that this is a political decision not a rational decision. The community clinic concept could be very applicable for all smaller communities throughout Manitoba. Good examples would be Dauphin, Swan River, The Pas, Thompson, where you could have all services under one roof and it would save lots of money. The Finance Minister (Mr. Manness) should look at that and save money for the long run. We will be pushing for it.

Let us talk about our seniors. As the cost for providing health care is rising and our seniors are aging and the population above the age of 65 is growing, we need

more services for them. Right now in Winnipeg, at least 25 to 30 percent beds are occupied by seniors who could be either at home or in a personal care home or in an extended care facility, but nothing has been done. So if you multiply 30 personal beds by \$265 per day, you will save lots of money. That money could be spent for community clinics, for personal care homes and for extended care facilities, but nothing has been done. There was not a single word in this Throne Speech for the health care for seniors, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that is a shame.

Mr. Manness: Health care for all.

Mr. Cheema: The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), is saying health care for all, very good, that is what we want. When you are ignoring the 12 percent population, that is not health care for all. When you are ignoring patients at Health Sciences that is not health care for all. When you are ignoring AIDS patients, that is not health care for all. When they are lined up for everything, that is not health care for all. Let us have a practical way of thinking, a practical way of solving problems. I think we have to have a plan and you guys are liking the plan, definitely.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us review the mental health services. Mental health services have improved, to some extent, for the last month. They have improved for the last one year to some extent because of the pressure from both sides of the House. In Winnipeg right now, all the psychiatric beds are occupied by patients. There is not even a single weekend in a month where there is a shortage of beds. Patients are constantly being transferred from one hospital to another. If a suicidal patient is being transferred from one hospital to another, that is not a universal health care system at all.

We have proposed a practical way of dealing with mental health care. We have given a third proposal, economical proposal, but we have not seen any action from this Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard).

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): What is it again?

Mr. Cheema: Okay, let us go through them one by one. Right now, in the post-graduate training program, out of all the graduates in psychiatry, 20 percent leave Manitoba anyway for the last 10 years. Those are the statistics. About five to ten persons would be above the age of 55 in previous times, and we are short of at least 30 to 40 right now, depending upon which statistics you take. If we do not increase their number by at least 40 percent, we will be shorter next year and the year after that and the year after that. That step has to be taken by the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) in consultation with the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach), who said the other day that it is not his responsibility to look after the post-graduate education. It is the responsibility of the Health Sciences Centre.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the second step is to have a short six-month training period for family physicians who would like to work in psychiatry. It will not cost any money because there are already programs in

anaesthesia, obstetrics and gynaecology, and they are paid by the Standing Committee on Medical Manpower, the Manitoba Medical Review Committee, and partially by the Manitoba Health. Why can it not be done for that?

Mr. Orchard: That will cost money.

Mr. Cheema: How much money will it cost? The other day the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard)—Mr. Deputy Speaker, No. 3, to establish an audio-visual link between smaller communities and Winnipeg will save transferring patients from small little places to Winnipeg. It will decrease the cost of health care. Definitely it will help the mental health care, but nothing has been done.

The fourth proposal was to follow the example of Nova Scotia and Ontario. That plan is when you cannot have a psychiatrist in Manitoba and in other parts of the country, so what do you do? The other places are going overseas, Europe, other places, and they are bringing them and asking them to work in a given community for a period of five years. During that time, they are given a specific time to upgrade their education. This way, we are solving two purposes: we are upgrading their education to make them stay, and also looking after the mental health care in many parts of the country. Manitoba should follow that, but that has to be done in consultation with the College of Physicians and Surgeons. The Minister has to still take a decision and meet with them and have some decisions made. I think it will make his life easier because, until he does, we are not going to stop it. We will keep on asking him questions, but it depends upon how long they last.

* (2110)

Health prevention and promotion of a healthy lifestyle should be the milestone for the health care of the future. Programs for nutrition, substance abuse, alcohol abuse and prevention of communicable diseases must start at an earlier age and at an earlier time to save taxpayers' dollars, and at the same time to provide the best possible care. That is not being done. For the last one year, we have not heard even a single plan for a healthy lifestyle or a health prevention and promotion program. Mr. Deputy Speaker, people are scared of this administration. If they have the confidence in their actions, why do they not go to the polls? These are the few issues that we will be discussing and we will be pushing during this Session.

Let us look at the other areas where this Minister has failed. They have failed to provide any direction for the Municipal Hospital. The building is waiting for a decision and they not heard anything. That is again a political decision.

Your constituents go to the Seven Oaks Hospital and Seven Oaks Hospital suffered under the previous rule. The maternity ward was taken away after one-and-a-half years of operation, a silly decision and not true to any degree. They did not even study it for more than one year and they discontinued everything. What happened afterwards? The space which was supposed to be used for the maternity ward was now converted into a day surgery hospital. We welcome the day surgery

hospital but constituents of Kildonan, Inkster, Seven Oaks want their community hospital.

What kind of hospital will they have without a maternity ward? If you take a maternity ward away, you take other services also away, you take the children's care. It is costing taxpayers money, it is causing a lot of pain to the people who live in that area and they have been ignored for a long time, but we will not let that happen anymore.

Three weeks ago, another crisis was about to come but the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) took some action there. I do not know who took it, but some action was taken. The psychiatric wing was about to close the emergency care for weekends and that is because of the shortage of psychiatrists, but that is a Manitoba problem. The issue was not solved. It created the worst effect in that area. A lot of people are upset in that where would they go if they have someone to take to emergency care, or psychiatry—where would they go, to Misericordia, Victoria? They do not have a place for them anyway. Some action has been taken and we welcome that there is a solution for now. We hope that solution will work in the future and maybe the Minister should do the same thing in other hospitals too. It will probably save him a lot of questions in this House.

Home Care services in the North End are cut because the policy is not very clear. There is a confusion between home care with the cleaning services, no clear direction from this administration, and unfortunately the Leader of the third Party (Mr. Doer) sent a letter in our area saying that we were opposing the home care services. That was the most hypocritical thing from the Leader of the third Party to send to constituents saying we oppose the home care system. I think that is a shame. Still my area continued to suffer because of less home care available. I think they need more direction because, if we have to save money for the long run, the Home Care services must be provided so that we can have independent living at home, but that is not being done.

This administration continues to suffer from the do-nothing syndrome, continues to wait for crisis after crisis starting from the St. Boniface Hospital to the Health Sciences Centre, for the last year a number of crises, and the Minister is famous as a crisis manager. He is smiling, he is laughing, but look what he has done to the public, and he is still smiling.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, no action has been taken for St. Boniface Hospital. We have raised the question a number of times but no plans have been put forward by the Minister. Even last Saturday and Sunday, the obstetrical floor was again closed temporarily, but this time fortunately for only low risk. There were a number of patients who would simply phone their doctor and go somewhere else because no one was assessing them, so how do we know where is the low risk or high risk? It is creating a mess.

I think the day is going to come when—and we wish that day does not come—if someone delivered in the ambulance or in the car, I think it would be disaster for this Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard).

An Honourable Member: You know, he spoke nicely the other day.

Mr. Cheema: No, I am still speaking very nicely. I am bringing you the facts. These are some of the examples. They have clearly shown a lack of direction. They have failed and, in the judgment of the public, I think this administration has lost the confidence of Manitobans.

At the end of my speech, I would again like to thank my constituents who have supported me for the last one year. I will continue to work on their behalf, and I will continue to work on behalf of Manitobans to make sure that this Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) is accountable every day so that our health care system remains one of the best in Canada. Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I must apologize to the Honourable Minister. I could not find his title since it has been changed. However, I have it now, the Honourable Minister of Cooperative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

Mr. Connery: It is kind of ironic that tonight they want to play by the rules and by the program and yet last week, when they got caught with their pants down, did not have anybody to speak, then they wanted us to speak.

Anyway, I do want to congratulate the Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I also want to congratulate you in your new position. I look forward to a good association through the coming Session, and I know you will do a good job.

I also want to wish other people who have assumed new House duties the best for the season, the Member for Thompson, who is the NDP House Leader (Mr. Ashton), I wish him well in his duties, also to the Pages who are new. The first Page who had to read out the names made it a perfect go the first time around. So we look forward to working with these wonderful young people from across Manitoba. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to welcome into the Cabinet the Minister of Labour, the Member for Kirkfield Park (Mrs. Hammond) and also the Minister of Natural Resources, the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns).

I moved into Portage in 1964 and he ran for election first in 1966. Our political careers, while not in the same vein as his, worked together and many times worked for the Member to be elected, and once in a while when he stepped out of line we worked against him. I can remember one time when we jammed the Legislature with trucks to protest one of his moves. I do respect the new Members and especially the Member for Lakeside with whom I have had a long relationship and a very friendly one.

* (2120)

I do want to wish all Members well in this coming Session. I do wish them well for having good debate, and I do want to emphasize that word "good" debate. Over the time, we see a lot of debate that goes on. Some of it is excellent, some of it absolutely, I think, leaves a lot to be desired. I look for a debate that is factual and honest and represents the facts as they are. I do not mind being attacked viciously or determinedly if the facts are right, but when the fact are misrepresented, then I do object.

I can remember last year the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) who got up and tried to indicate that there was some variations made at the Portage dump and tried to say that being a Minister, therefore, there was some connection between favouritism to Portage. Obvious Captain Chaos, Manhole Harry, Boxcar Harold, whatever you want to call them -(Interjection)-personhole, personhole. Anyway he tried to misrepresent the facts -(Interjection)-

An Honourable Member: Personhole Harry.

Mr. Connery: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will save you the effort and I will withdraw the remarks. He tried to misrepresent the facts and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, those variations were done under the previous Government. It is that sort of thing of misrepresentation that I think we have to eliminate from our debate.

I do want to reflect a little bit on the Portage constituency that I represent. Agriculture is still the No. 1 industry in Portage and indeed all of Manitoba, and without agriculture we would have a much poorer province. But because of the severe drought conditions we have had in the last two or three years, the low commodity prices, the City of Portage la Prairie, along with other towns and cities in this province, have suffered because of that, having suffered financially. I think the service industries that service agriculture have taken a real beating over the last period of time. The merchants are having a difficult time because of the low amount of money that is flowing through the towns and so we see some very difficult times.

While I have had some very harsh words for the federal Government in recent days and recent weeks, I do want to say that because of the way that they have responded to the needs of the farmers and their helping in a time of plight, they have contributed tens of millions of dollars to the farmers of western Canada, Manitoba and the constituency of Portage. I think that we need to recognize where they have done well. I think that they have done an awful lot for the farmers of western Canada, unlike the Prime Minister Trudeau who only used profanity and his middle finger to describe what western grain farmers could do with their wheat. So we do see some good strong points coming out of the federal Government.

Also, we have to look to leaders from the Maritimes or from the West to start to be leading this country so that those areas outside of central Canada will start to get some of the benefits that are required. I would suggest that the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) should take a second look before she starts supporting another person from Quebec for leader, when they have a person right here in Manitoba who would like to run for leader. I think she should be supporting a Westerner for leadership.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do want to heap some praise upon our provincial Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) and the Government of Manitoba in the way they have responded to the needs of Manitoba farmers. Last year, when we had the severe drought, \$18 million was brought in by the provincial Government to help farmers. The Minister worked with the federal

Government to bring in tripartite stabilization plans for beef, lamb, beans and honey. I can tell you the farmers of Manitoba appreciate that sort of consideration and concern on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture and our Government to respond very quickly in a time of need.

An Honourable Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. Connery: I think that is very, very important.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, at the same time, we have also reduced taxation on farm land by some 25 percent. At a time when farmers are struggling, I think this is a very clear indication that the Government on this side really is concerned about the farmers, and I hope Members opposite also have that same interest. I think at certain times we see that sort of commonality where they are concerned with the farmers of Manitoba.

We also are looking at establishing a check-off program to fund a unified voice for farmers. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have been involved in farm organizations all my life and I know the importance of having a strong unified voice and having some funds to be able to go to the Legislature here in Manitoba or go to the House of Commons in Ottawa to present the concerns that we have as farmers and to present them in a unified voice that is well documented so that our case is well heard and received.

The Minister of Highways (Mr. Albert Driedger), I want to compliment him also. The prior Government politicized the capital works program for highways and this was an admitted statement that the capital projects went where it was politically expedient. I do now see a Minister of Highways who is putting highways throughout all constituencies in all areas of the province.

I can tell you that for once, after a long, long drought, the constituency of Portage la Prairie is seeing some highways being built. We are seeing Highway 240 south from the Trans-Canada Highway. For 50 years, the people in that area were struggling to have that highway built and now it is going to come to fruition. It will be built to No. 2 Highway at St. Claude by the end of 1990. That will bring in people into Portage to deal with the merchants so that we will be able to maybe siphon off some of the business that has been going on to Winnipeg.

We are also looking forward to Highway 430 finished off to St. Ambrose Beach. For the people of St. Ambrose who have driven on that gravel road, rutty road for many, many years, ruining their cars, they are really going to appreciate it. Also, I think of more value is the fact that it goes to one of the best beaches we have in Manitoba, which is the St. Ambrose Beach. It has beautiful sand, beautiful water, but it was a detraction because of the highway and people did not want to pull their boats and trailers over that bad piece of road. Also, it will give a lot of employment for people in that area. People who fish in the winter or maybe trap in the spring now will be able to augment more of their salary in the summertime when they do not have work.

We also are very pleased, the constituency of Portage, that the Government of Manitoba confirmed its

conviction and commitment to the constituency by continuing with the overpass over Highway No. 1. Not only is it a safety measure for those people travelling down the Trans-Canada Highway because it eliminates a traffic light, it is safety precaution and a safety valve for those people coming from the south and coming into Portage to shop.

I would like to suggest to the Minister of Highways (Mr. Albert Driedger) that the next project we will be looking at is a bridge over the Assiniboine River. Unlike the previous Government, this bridge has somewhere to go to and it will go to some of the finest farm land in Manitoba, to some of the finest people in Manitoba. They will also be doing, I gather, a lot of approach repair work going into the City of Portage la Prairie. So we look forward to this new road construction which is a real thrust, also for the businessmen around Portage and for the gravel haulers and the heavy equipment operators in the area.

In 1988, there was a severe storm that destroyed a lot of the fishermen's nets in the south basin of Lake Manitoba. The Minister once again, the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Albert Driedger) involved with that particular sector, provided money for those fishermen to replace their nets. I think it is that sort of concern and sympathy for people in the time of emergencies, as we are seeing right now, with the fires up in the Interlake that we have a Government that is concerned.

I think in most cases we have an Opposition that is equally concerned along with us, although I was quite disturbed by the comments of the Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles) and the Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch), who said it was time to quit wasting our time and energy fighting the fires and we should get on with helping those people who were burnt out. That is only a single-pronged attack. We had to stop the fires first. At the same time, those people were being assisted. In the Interlake, it was a very severe tragedy. I know one family who had everything lost, their home, buildings, equipment, all in one fell swoop. So it is very, very disastrous for them.

* (2130)

The business sector in Portage la Prairie is well served by the food processing industry. Portage la Prairie, as many people well know, has probably one of the best environments for growing vegetables in Manitoba. We have the longest frost-free days and we have the greatest heat units. Sorry, do not get mad and leave, it is the best area. I know the Altona area is also great. I hate to think the Member was leaving because I was talking about Portage. We do bring in produce from down in the Morden-Winkler area, Carman, which is equally good but we do have a very good environment within that area for food processing. We are looking forward to that.

One of the problems that we have in southern Manitoba and Portage really highlights the problem we have is with our sewer and water infrastructure. This is an area we have been trying to work with the federal Government for some period of time to bring in money

to help us, in a tripartite way, to solve these. It is unfortunate with the threatened closing of the base, which we do not think will take place, but if we would have had sewer and water infrastructure in place, we would have been able to attract wet industries into the Portage area, and any threat of closure of the Air Force base would not have been as severe. Hopefully, we will be able to get some sort of relief from the federal Government and hopefully they will do that very, very soon.

We also are very fortunate to have the Vicon Manufacturing in Portage la Prairie. It was a replacement for Phillips Cable. I know it is not quite as good as what Phillips Cable was but, with some effort on behalf of our Government and on their part, we hope to see it build into a very large farm machinery manufacturing which will help not only the Portage area but will have little satellite manufacturing all around, because Vicon basically assembles, paints and distributes and uses a lot of satellite people in all of the little regions around to manufacture their component parts.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I look forward to the new thrust that we are having in this Government for rural development, and I look forward to working with the new Minister to bring greater emphasis on the need to have some economic growth in rural areas. Our concern today, of the number of people that are moving into the City of Winnipeg—and I have had one MP say to us, well, you cannot stop people from moving into the City of Winnipeg, that is where the jobs are. If you create the jobs in the City of Winnipeg, naturally people will move there.

What we have to do is create the jobs in the rural areas and protect the rural economy from dwindling down because, as you lose people in the rural economies, as the Member was talking about health, the less people you have, your hospitals suffer, your educational system suffers, your service industries suffer, so it is absolutely crucial—and it is not healthy for the City of Winnipeg to have a poor rural climate. It is healthy for the city to have a healthy rural climate, so I think it is in the best interests of all people that we would do that.

I do want to thank the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and all of the people who helped me and the people of Portage la Prairie in fighting our cause to try to prevent the closing of the base at Southport. The Premier went to the wall for us. He went to Ottawa on two occasions, was out in Portage, gave staff, very competent staff, to help in presenting a brief.

I do also thank other Ministers who came out to Portage la Prairie, and I do thank Members opposite of the Liberal Party. The Member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) is shaking his head in agreement. He was in Portage la Prairie when we were having the rally, and the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema) who nods that he was there. I thank them for their participation, and also the Member from the NDP, the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) was also there in a tripartite way, or all-Parties way, to show support for the drastic reductions of the military in Manitoba.

It is kind of ironic, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if these changes do take place, heaven forbid, that a foreign

power would have the largest military presence in Manitoba.

I do also want to reflect a little bit upon the importance of the payroll tax reductions to not only Portage la Prairie businessmen but to all the businessmen in rural Manitoba and indeed all of Manitoba, including the City of Winnipeg, and in Thompson, Flin Flon, The Pas, the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) says, which are equally important. This is another way that we are helping the thrust of industry to survive in Manitoba.

I also want to extend my congratulations and praise to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) and the then Minister of Natural Resources for the soil and water strategy which is absolutely vital if we are going to have decent soil 30 to 40 years from now. In the last three to four years—it just breaks your heart when you drive out in the country and you see the good land blowing into the ditches and the bushes, and you know very well that land will never be reclaimed, that soil put back onto that land. It is land that has been damaged for all time.

Also, the need for water and the dams that we are looking at building, and I hope Members opposite would take a reasonable approach to the construction of dams because without the impounding of water this province will dry up. Sure, we know that they have to be environmentally sound, and we will accept criticism if we do not, but we hope that the criticism would be fair and be looked at in the proper way.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can say that, if it had not been for the dam at the Lake of the Prairies, the Shellmouth Dam, at our own particular farm, we would not have brought our crop to maturity because we would not have had the water to do it. That is somewhere in the area of three-quarters of a million payroll on our farm alone, and there are several large vegetable farms along that river that require water to bring their crops on, and the alternative source for that food would have come out of Texas and California. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the requirements of water on the Prairies is a very great significance.

I have also been talking with the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) to try to revitalize the Delta Marsh. As everyone knows, the Delta Marsh is probably one of the pristine marshes in North America, but because of the high water level maintained by Hydro on Lake Manitoba at the Fairford Dam, the marsh has not rejuvenated. It only happens through high and low cycles of water levels that the marsh can revive itself, and this has not happened for some years.

The muskrat trapping which people at Delta and St. Ambrose and in that area used to make their living in the springtime, they have lost it because there are no reeds in the middle of the water pools, and so the muskrats are freezing out. The duck hunting is not as good. We see lodges that are only half full and guides not getting very good work, which is another fill in for them.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are looking at the revitalization of that marsh and, sure, it will probably take 10 to 20 years to revitalize it, but if we start now

we will have something in the future. Portage is interested in developing an interpretive centre on the marsh, and if you have a live marsh, there are going to be people from all over North America and indeed from Europe and all around the globe will be coming to Portage la Prairie to have a look at the Delta Marsh.

They are going to stop in Winnipeg, in hotels, and there is going to be money spent. They will probably go up to Churchill and have a look at the polar bears, and we would encourage that—and the ports. Two boatloads of people came in last year to Churchill. I visited Churchill a couple of years ago and I really think it is a wonderful place.—(Interjection)—That is right. The new PC Member will, I am sure, be a very good tourist ambassador for that.

We are also looking, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to have a little marina at Delta so that indeed all of Manitobans can come to the southern basin and be able to launch their boats and enjoy that lake along with the people at the Delta.

I also want to really say a great thank you on behalf of the citizens of Portage la Prairie to the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson). Those monies were politicized by the previous Government. Those monies were politicized and not all constituencies got equal treatment. Now we are seeing all constituencies getting equal treatment, and Portage la Prairie is getting some of that money that they were not getting under the previous administration. But we are getting our fair share, and I reiterate, fair share, because that is the way it should be. We represent all of the people of Manitoba. We represent all constituencies once you are in Government, and it is our duty to represent fairly all constituencies and also the constituencies of Kildonan and St. Boniface and Thompson. They have that right to have that.

We must also remember, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in 1981 Sterling Lyon had promised the City of Portage la Prairie a swimming pool, and when the NDP got in under Howard Pawley that pool was immediately cancelled. We can see the amount of money that has gone into Selkirk since then. That is the sort of politicization that I do not think that we deserve to have in Government, and that is not the role that we are elected to do. We are elected to represent all Manitobans.

I would like to just make a few comments about my previous two portfolios which I enjoyed, and I think—is the Member from Thompson (Mr. Ashton) not feeling well? You seemed to be bent over, oh, okay.

I believe that in the Labour and Workplace Safety, that my experience in business gave me an opportunity to understand the departments and to be able to work with them. When you are dealing with labour and you are dealing with management, there has to be a very delicate balance. When you start to tip the scales one side or the other, you create a real severe problem.

* (2140)

The previous Government, trying to win votes, put in a lot of window dressing that looked to be like they

were supporting labour, which really in the true sense of the word they were not. Actually they were hurting labour because it had a backlash against business and we saw a lot of business head offices moved to Toronto, Montreal, Calgary because of the previous Government. The environment that they left here for the business community was not a healthy one. When you are dealing with Labour and you are dealing with Workplace Safety and Health, the first priority is the safety of the workers and their health. That is the first priority, but if you go too far and do things that really are not to the advantage of the workers, not going to help them, not going to protect them, but is detrimental to business, that is the sort of imbalance you get. You get plant closures and job losses.

I am very proud that our Government is moving in the Throne Speech. You see it, but of course we have been working towards these things long before the Throne Speech is put out, working towards worker retraining, a very important sector right now when we are looking at job changes. We are looking at harmonization, we are looking at amalgamation of businesses, we are looking at the opportunities of free trade with the U.S.A. We are going to have to export technology, we are not going to export goods that take cheap labour, it has to be by technology. That is where we have to have the retraining, so we have a work force that really can compete with the Americans.

Also worker relocation, as jobs and plants close in certain areas and others expand and get larger—and they will be in Manitoba—I am convinced that the net gain will be great, but there will be some harmonization and changes. We are prepared for that and, when plants do close, we have to have the ability to assist those workers, whether it be into retraining or to apply for new jobs. We are looking forward, as the Throne Speech says, to increase the thrust there so the needs of workers in the workplace are being met.

Sure, we can always spend an awful lot more and, as Members often say, you will spend more and more. Well, we can spend more in every department in Government and it would be well-spent money but at the same time we do have to balance our Budget. So I am very pleased with the thrust that we have in the Department of Labour.

Also employment equity, what is employment equity? I believe that all people have the right to a decent, rewarding and self-fulfilling job. All people regardless of gender, race, colour or creed must have the right to be gainfully employed in a non-discriminatory work environment. To me, that is employment equity, where regardless of who you are you have that opportunity and you should not be discriminated against.

I am proud of our thrust in pay equity. I see now the Director of Pay Equity has been promoted to be the Deputy Minister of Labour and I am very pleased with her promotion. She is a very competent woman, very capable, and will do an excellent job as Deputy Minister, but she was also doing a very good job in pay equity. As the Throne Speech says, we are going to continue on in the public sector but, even while we were doing that, we were having discussions with the private sector.

We had discussions with all the sectors that we have out there to teach them what pay equity is, to allow

them to make those changes in the private sector voluntarily, and I hope that the business community will. I am positive that we will see the private sector move in a very responsible way because most businesspeople are very responsible and are concerned, so we have had that discussion. We have had the consultation and I can see that happening in the private sector very quickly.

Affirmative action took an awful lot of discussion last year. The critic, I believe, in her zeal to try to embarrass the Government on affirmative action really—we had a thrust in affirmative action in the Civil Service, in the Crown corps that was second to none. We elevated the level of adjudication of affirmative action so that it was right into the workplace. Now, when Members opposite and the critic guffaw, it obviously shows that she is not aware of how the system works, and that is unfortunate. If she was aware of how it worked, she would be praising and working with us, making good suggestions, but unfortunately we did not see much in that way.

I think where we need the affirmative action most is in the private sector.—(Interjection)—The Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) says we realize that now. Had he been listening when we were having discussions and if he read Hansard, he would know very well that the thrust was in the private sector because that is where the jobs are, but if he chooses not to—and this is the sort of discussion when I said we needed to have honest discussion representing the facts clearly. I think this is the sort of comment that I resent because it is not factual. It has always been our desire to have a stronger thrust of affirmative action in the private sector.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitoba was built by immigrants. All of our relatives, except the Native people, came from some country. We, as legislators, must ensure that all newcomers to our country are treated fairly and are treated with respect.

I throw out a challenge to the Opposition to work and criticize constructively, not the shallow, shrill rhetoric we heard from the Member opposite in her criticism of affirmative action last year just in a plain attempt to gather votes and not what I consider to be good Opposition.

It is evident from the questions and comments coming from the Members opposite during Question Period that job creation is not their priority nor are they knowledgeable in how to go about doing it. Who on that side has risked their money to create jobs, and who has had to meet a payroll? Who has delved into their pockets to aid an employee in financial stress? We see very little on the other side.

When we listen to the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) and it is like roving through the mirror room at a circus, everything she says is distorted out of shape. It is stretched, shrunk, contorted and misrepresented. She has said what is good for Sharon Carstairs, Sharon Carstairs will do. Anything she thinks is good, that is what is good for Sharon Carstairs.

An Honourable Member: You mean she did not mention Reg Alcock in there?

Mr. Connery: No, she did not mention Reg Alcock in there at all.

If she thinks something is not good for her, she will walk it through the room of mirrors and try to misrepresent it to something she wants. She has allowed and encouraged her colleagues to do the very same thing. In fact to make them more effective she enrolled them in the adult day care centre and we see the results of that adult day care centre. A few weeks ago, she said they were an adult day care centre, and in a few weeks they have now graduated to where they think they are management and they can govern. I think the people will decide that.

I want to make a few comments on environment. When we took over office and I had the opportunity to be Minister of Environment, there was not one initiative on the table to bring forward. We had the soft drink recycling program but that was all there was. All of the legislation they said they passed was not all proclaimed. It was not all proclaimed because they did not—

Mr. Ashton: Remember The Environment Act.

Mr. Cummings: What about The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act? Sections 8, 9 and 10 were not proclaimed so you could license the generators of hazardous goods. You did not do it. Why could you not do it? Because you shrunk the department. Every year, the department got smaller and smaller.

This is changing with this Government. As you know, there was a report card done on the previous Government and, out of 10 provinces, they were No. 10. The ninth one was so far ahead that you could not even see them, so it was not even a case of a contest.

What did they do in Flin Flon, where the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) speaks so eloquently about environment? In November of 1987, they mothballed the air monitor so they did not care about the air in Flin Flon. We pulled those monitors out of the mothballs, recalibrated them and now we have them back in Flin Flon so we can gauge the air quality for the people of Flin Flon.

I am critical of the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) for misleading the people of Manitoba but if he really wants to learn how to do it, he wants to watch the Member for Flin Flon because he is a master. He raised a lot of fuss about products coming into Flin Flon from the States but the products that came in from the States under his administration—there were military batteries, there was a product from Calgon, there were circuit boards from computers—that is what made the workers sick—and also the bottom ash that came in from Palo Alto came in from them.

* (2150)

He tried to turn it around and successfully, I must say very successfully, to make it look like it was the responsibility of the current Government, where in reality it was us that put the stop-work orders on. It was us that made sure the companies would notify us

before any new product came in, was tested and approved by the safety committee. There are safety committees up there that will not allow a chemical to be handled that is not safe, that they do not know. We have worked with those safety committees to ensure that has happened.

PCBs was not an issue until there was a fire at St. Basile le Grand, which was a very tragic fire. Fortunately nobody was injured, but there was a tremendous cost. I think it is going to cost the Government of Quebec somewhere in the area of \$60 million to clean it up. It was not an issue until that fire and, all of a sudden, Members opposite of the Liberal Party found out about it. The Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) had known about it for two weeks, had been over to the Department of Environment asking about packaging of PCBs. When he was questioned by the staff, "do you know where there are PCBs stored improperly," he refused to answer. But also, the Member for Niakwa (Mr. Herold Driedger) knew about it for 18 months. Now that is Liberal environmental concern.

It was quite interesting the three capacitors in the boxcar in Transcona that raised all the fuss of the Members opposite. I asked the Department where those capacitors came from.— (Interjection)— That is the unfortunate part, you guys do not know, you do not do your research. But just be patient, and I am going to tell you. You are going to know, you are going to be a little smarter than you were this morning.— (Interjection)— well, I guess, it will take a little bit longer than until ten o'clock.

They came out of a unit on the rail lines that are welding rail, and there are 35 capacitors in that unit out on the tracks, not mentioned as being a hazard, but that is the concern of the environmentalist from Members opposite.

I can tell you that it was myself as Chairman of CCREM who asked for an emergency meeting in Ottawa and had all the provinces and the Territories in Ottawa to develop a national protocol. Manitoba has put in some of the stringent regulations for the storage of PCBs and that was done under our administration. We have also consolidated small amounts out of schools, out of the Convention Centre, community clubs. When it is at a public one, at no cost, they were done.

Radon was an issue that was on my desk when I took office. The previous Government had known about it for some period of time. There are regulations being drafted now to help people with the radon problem: in new homes, where we are going to have regulations to radon-proof new homes; and for second-hand homes or existing homes, there is a package of how to radon-proof.

The ozone layer has been my No. 1 concern since the day I took office.— (Interjection)— I hope that you are deducting this wasted time off my time, so that I will have the full time. I thank you.

The ozone layer should have been addressed very quickly. I asked to have it put back on the CCREM agenda in January, and in April we did. The Members do not realize that you cannot attack the ozone layer

problem from a regional basis. It has got to be done, first of all, on a national scene and then from the national scene, we have to convince the other countries of our planet to go along with it. I think the ozone layer now is being addressed by all the responsible countries, and Manitoba will play a role. I look forward to the new Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) who is going to carry on the thrust, and we will see one of the best packages of environmental controls that this country has seen.

Some Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Connery: Recycling is a very major concern. We will see some major thrusts in recycling. We have to. We cannot continue to be putting all of the material into the landfill sites. But before we do it, we have to make sure we have a market for that product. We can look at Ontario and Toronto where people are saying, "Wow, they have a great blue-box system." But what have they got? They have warehouses full of product and paper basically, where there is no home for it.

If we really wanted to take the time and if Members opposite were really serious about environment, we could take the whole eight days of Throne Debate to discuss the environment and we would still not complete it, but I will guarantee you that Members opposite would be a lot more familiar with recycling and the environment than they are at this point. I would just love to be able to get into a round table with it. The issues in environment are endless and have to be addressed.

I do want to thank my previous staff in Labour and Workplace Safety, Environment, Civil Service. Unlike the comments of the Member of the New Democratic Party who criticized Mr. Tanner Elton, I can tell you that gentleman worked as hard as any Deputy Minister has to do the job. I thank him and I thank the staff in Environment and Labour for the work that they did to bring in a good package that I am very, very proud of. But I would like just—what have I got, a couple of minutes, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Four minutes.

Mr. Connery: Just a few words to say that I am very, very proud of the new portfolio that I got in Cooperative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs. The Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) says it is only an \$8 million

budget. I guess her idea was, if you have a problem, you throw money at it. If it is not a big budget, it is not an important budget. Is she saying that Cooperative Development is not an important thrust for this province? Is she saying that Cooperative Development for fishermen up North is not important? Then you better believe that it is important because we will work with groups of people who need that sort of help.

I am very proud that my father was a developer of a co-op in 1946. Cooperative Development is a very major part of our family lifestyle. My part as a marketing board chairman knows the importance of working collectively for the good of Manitobans in the area.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, she also neglected to mention that we have Workers Compensation, neglected Workers Compensation. What is one of the most important things to a worker? It is to be protected when they are injured: first of all, to have money to augment their income; secondly, to be rehabilitated from that injury so they can go back into the work force and be a productive citizen of Manitoba. Obviously the Members opposite need to go back and regroup and take a hard look at the real realities of what we are doing here. All of us were elected, all 57 were elected to represent people, people of all ages, of all gender, of all colour, to try to make sure that everyone has a reasonable income and a reasonable way of life.

I hope to work in the next year, and I will work with Members opposite and I will work with anybody who is here. When they have a concern, they are welcome in my office at any time. I am looking forward to developing consumer legislation that will protect consumers, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I thank you for the opportunity that I have had in the Throne Speech. I look forward to working with Members opposite. Thank you for the opportunity.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): There might be willingness to call it ten o'clock, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: A motion that it be now 10 o'clock. Agreed? (Agreed)

The hour being ten o'clock, I am interrupting proceedings according to the Rules. The House will now adjourn and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Tuesday).