



Second Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

40 Elizabeth II

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, March 13, 1991

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Harold Neufeld (Minister of Energy and Mines): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the Annual Report for the Department of Energy and Mines.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 3—The Coat of Arms, Emblems and The Manitoba Tartan Amendment Act

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): I move, seconded by the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger), that Bill 3, The Coat of Arms, Emblems and the Manitoba Tartan Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les armoiries, les emblèmes et le tartan du Manitoba, be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 18—The Municipal Amendment Act

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mrs. Mitchelson), that Bill 18, The Municipal Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les municipalités, be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 19—The Local Authorities Election Amendment Act

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger), that Bill 19, The Local Authorities Election Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'élection

des autorités locales, be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

* (1335)

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery, where we have with us this afternoon from the George McDowell School, fifty-three Grade 9 students. They are under the direction of Brian Hyska. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Social Assistance Projections

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, of course Canada is experiencing, as the Economic Council of Canada describes, a made-in-Canada recession under the federal Conservative government. Of course, the same Conference Board of Canada is projecting that Manitoba is indeed 10 out of 10 and the last province out of the recession in 1991.

Beyond those statistics, there is a lot of pain for people who are hardest hit in our society and our province by a recession, the people at the lowest ends of our society, Mr. Speaker, in terms of their opportunities and their economic and social situation. We know last year that even though we were told the province was strong, the welfare rates in Manitoba increased 12 percent in the city of Winnipeg alone.

I would ask the Premier: What is the projected increase in welfare in the province of Manitoba for the '91 year given the very dismal economic situation in this province and given the fact that we are projected to be 10 out of 10 in terms of economic performance?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the information that was contained in last fall's budget was indeed accurate. This province was one of the last to be affected negatively by the recession. In fact, if you look at that same Conference Board information, he will find that last year, the year of 1990, Manitoba had the second highest growth of any province in the country. So indeed the factual information contained in that budget was there and was accurate.

Mr. Speaker, with the national recession ultimately eventually affecting Manitoba, and unfortunately when combined with a projection of very, very low prices and agriculture production for this year, which is the single major item that was indicated in that Conference Board assessment of our dismal projections for this year, obviously, we have difficult times to face this year.

With respect to specifics such as the projections of what potential increase there might be and those people on social assistance in Manitoba, I would invite the Leader of the Opposition and his critic to engage in a debate with the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) where they can talk about projections, talk about the outlook. He can give the New Democratic Party the purview that the department has as to what is happening out there.

Indeed, people's lives are being affected. We are concerned about that. We want to ensure that we continue to do the things that we are doing to protect the integrity and the foundation of our economy to keep taxes down, to ensure that we do not leave this recession with the huge debt load that the NDP left the recession of 1982 with that really crippled the ability to grow for such a long time, Mr. Speaker.

Recession Government Initiatives

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the Premier finally admitted that it is a dismal projection for the economic situation in 1991. He may not understand this, but when the dismal situation and the economic situation develops, then it trickles down into the people hardest hit in Family Services. So that is why I am asking the Premier the question.

Mr. Speaker, the first two months of 1991 we have a 15 percent increase in the welfare cases already filed with the City of Winnipeg. We have a situation where there is a 50 percent increase in the use of

food banks in the city of Winnipeg at the Harvest Food Bank. We hear about a 65 percent increase in the use of food banks in Transcona.

I am asking this Premier, what hope can he give the people of Manitoba that are being clobbered by this Tory recession? What hope can he give the people of this province that are being hit very, very hard every day in terms of their livelihood and their families?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I do not understand how it is that the Leader of the New Democratic Party can pick up a newspaper and come up with all of a sudden all of this incredible new information to him. The fact of the matter is that virtually every Manitoban has been aware of the difficult economic circumstances that face this province.

We are very concerned about the needs and the concerns of the people at the lowest levels of society in economic circumstances. We are concerned as well about the farmers. If he wants to know about economic circumstances, he ought to go out beyond the bounds of this city of Winnipeg and talk to some farmers, find out what it is like for people who face a real reduction in income of 25 percent, year upon year, 25 percent less expected in income, Mr. Speaker.

* (1340)

When he wants to talk about food banks, let him also pick up the newspaper of the Globe and Mail of March 13. There is a story headline, "Overloaded welfare system called strain on food banks." It talks about the fact and quote: "Almost 10 percent of Metro residents are on welfare . . ." That is the city of Toronto, Mr. Speaker.

So if by some chance, the Leader of the New Democratic Party is under the impression that the recession is only affecting Manitoba, I say, take off the blinkers; take off your ideological boundaries and look at the reality of what is happening in this country. It is, indeed, a made-in-Canada recession caused by exorbitantly high interest rates that have dampened the economy right across the country. We were fortunate last year when we had the second highest growth in the entire country and now we are part of the recession, regrettably, because it is affecting everyone.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, you are not just part of the recession, you are predicted now to be last in the

country, 10 out of 10, so I am asking the Premier of Manitoba, that is projected to be 10 out of 10, what hope can he give the families, and the people that are going to food banks, that are enrolling unfortunately in welfare programs, and at the same time his own government is looking at cutting back youth employment programs and other social services that are absolutely essential for people in the recession.

My question to the Premier is: What hope and what positive programs can he provide for the people hardest hit by this Tory recession so that they can start working and having opportunities in our country that all Canadians deserve in terms of the quality of our country and the opportunities that we should be able to provide everybody?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, what I can tell the people of Manitoba who have been regrettably hurt badly by the recession, which is a made-in-Canada and across Canada recession, is that this government will continue to support the social services of this province, will continue to place a high priority on health care in this province.

We have passed along to welfare recipients increases at inflation. We have also had them take in addition to that the payments that they are allowed to take now: the sales tax credit, the federal GST credit that was not deducted as in some previous times special payments have been. They have been allowed to keep that as well as getting increases at or above inflation to their social allowances.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, we are ensuring that those people in this province who are holding on to what they have, who are making the payments on their houses, who are continuing to make ends meet with their families, are not burdened by increases in taxes.

We have made a commitment that we are not going to have increases in personal income taxes, increases in major taxes in this province, and we need the help of the opposition parties instead of day after day telling us to do something about the protection of the economy, at the same time spend, spend, spend more, tax, tax, tax more, like was done under the NDP throughout the 1980s. We are not going to do that. We are going to keep faith with the people of Manitoba, and we are going to hang on and keep taxes down and preserve vital services.

Education System Funding

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Premier.

The minister chose to offload a significant portion of property tax on the ratepayers. There will be a ratepayers' revolt, and they will let this government know that all their posturing and rhetoric during the campaign amounts to nothing in terms of their credibility, because their actions speak louder than their words. Gary Filmon, in this House, 1982, after a 12.9 percent increase in taxes: Can the Premier talk to his minister—

Point of Order

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the member to address the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) in the proper fashion in keeping with the parliamentary fashion that we, of course, attempt to follow here at times.

* (1345)

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the honourable government House leader. I would remind the honourable member for Kildonan that we do address members of this Chamber as the honourable member and the constituency he represents or the ministry in which the member is responsible for.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I intended to quote the present member, and I believe the former member for Tuxedo, who made those comments in this House in 1982. I believe it was River Heights perhaps in 1982 when he made those comments.

My question for the Premier, Mr. Speaker, is: What actions he will take to direct his minister to deal with the impact that significant tax increases are having on the public of Manitoba as a result of this government's capping of education funds to school divisions.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I remind the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) that the party of which he is a part now, the NDP government of the mid-1980s, the Pawley administration, passed along a 2 percent increase to public schools in 1985 at a time when their revenues were increasing at 6.8 percent—6.8 percent—and they passed along 2 percent.

This year our revenues are increasing at zero percent, and we are still passing along 2 percent to the public school system. Under those circumstances, we have asked the various school boards of this province to hold hands with us and to walk through this difficult time together.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The honourable First Minister to finish his response.

Mr. Filmon: We have gotten zero percent increase in our revenues, and we have still passed along 2 percent to the public schools of this province. We have said you are going to have to make do with it because these are difficult times, the same difficult times that his Leader just spoke about in the opening questions. They affect everyone. They affect government revenues regardless of what level you are. Under those circumstances you have a choice, try and live within your means, try and make do for a short period of time, not have everything that you would like, try and make do, or else pass along massive increases. We have not passed along massive increases in taxes. School boards have the same responsibility, Mr. Speaker.

Education System Funding

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the Minister of Education.

Will the minister commit possibly for next year, and perhaps for next year, the \$7 million tax credit given to private companies and the \$10 million increase to private schools, since they have been in government, to the public school system to deal with this serious funding crisis?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, it is too bad that the critic for Education of the New Democratic Party does not understand what it is we are trying to do for workers in this province. Indeed, there is a partnership -(interjection)- there is a need for industry to become involved in training and retraining some of the work force in our province. Indeed, the money that has been destined in that direction is meant to ensure that people who are in the work force today can become retrained for new technologies and can become skilled in the jobs that they will require in the future. If the NDP is criticizing this kind of a move, I do not really know what it is

that they want in terms of a trained, skilled work force in our province.

Mr. Chomlak: My final supplementary is to the same minister.

Workers in St. Boniface School Division are facing a 10.4 percent increase, River East 7.9 percent. Will this minister do something about the Gary Filmon tax increase as a result of this budget—the GFT?

I will call it the member for Tuxedo tax increases, Mr. Speaker.

* (1350)

Point of Order

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I know probably the member is not out of order when he alludes to a tax increase and blames it on one person, but that was a government initiative, and indeed it should be spelled out as such.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable government House leader did not have a point of order.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. We are going to get through this with some sense of decorum here.

* * *

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, the Premier has just pointed out that we did not pass along tax increases to the people of this province this year. Indeed, when our revenues were zero, we passed along an increase for school divisions of 2 percent. The school divisions then had to make some decisions about their priorities. We have emphasized the fact that indeed this would be a difficult year for them to make some of those difficult decisions. The school boards indeed have the responsibility to set the special levies within their jurisdictions, and they have to be accountable for those kinds of decisions.

Indeed we have passed on a 2 percent increase when our revenues were zero. I think that is credible of this government.

Department of Environment Untendered Contract

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, since we came back into the session last Thursday, we have heard about how we must live within our means and how there is no money.

I would like to ask the Minister of the Environment how the Treasury Board of this province can approve a \$20,000 untendered contract to a company called Moore and Associates who have no business names registration in this province, no incorporation and not in the phone book. Who are they?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, they are put to work to design an old newspaper recycling intermediary and provide information to this department so we can get on with recycling the newspaper in this province. It should be remembered that one of the people who is going to be working with this organization is Mr. Fenton who headed the recycling program that was put in place, going back two years, brought in a major report, some 56 recommendations to this department on how we should get on with recycling in this province.

Mrs. Carstairs: The name of the company is Moore and Associates. Who is the Moore?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Moore.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mrs. Carstairs: Do we actually have a Treasury Board that gives contracts to people they cannot identify?

Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell this House why monies cannot be found in this fund for the Resource Recovery Institute which in fact already recycles waste paper, but we can find monies for a research contract of \$20,000 to a company they cannot even identify?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, one of the things that needs to be done across this province is to bring together a market for the newsprint and a capability of bringing that print into a location where it is marketable.

The Resource Recovery Institute received some \$60,000, I believe it was, from this fund—a total of two grants to get on with a pilot for curb-side

recycling in the city of Winnipeg. They did not successfully show that this was an efficient and practical way to provide collection of recyclables. They appealed to the City of Winnipeg. They were given an extension on their pilot to be able to bring their organization together to prove that it could operate in an efficient and practical manner. They are unable to do that.

We need to have an old newsprint recycling intermediary in this province that can efficiently and on a practical basis bring together all of the old newsprint in this province so it can either be recycled or reused and not necessarily have it done at an enormous expense.

* (1355)

GRIP Program Clarification

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, there is indeed a crisis outside the city of Winnipeg in rural Manitoba. Two days ago, I asked this Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) whether he supported the federal position that the farmers, this spring, could not receive a deficiency payment or transitional payment unless they signed up for GRIP.

The minister did not answer, but yesterday he traipsed off to Brandon and made a statement and revealed the details of premiums—in violation of the privileges of this House I might add—he made the statement outside this House of the premiums that would be paid and the benefits that he said would accrue under this program.

I ask this minister why he did not mention, at that time, whether in fact he had a position that farmers would not have to sign up for GRIP—to be blackmailed to sign up for GRIP in order to get a deficiency payment this spring. Why did he not clarify that issue, as I asked him to do on Monday of this week?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the member thought I had traipsed off to Brandon. I had an interview with the press right outside that door after Question Period. I think that is still in this House.

I have been asked that question several times. My answer has consistently been that the recommendation from the ad hoc steering committee has been that the payment, an ad hoc payment, an interim payment, if one is made by the

federal government, should be linked as much as possible to enrollment in the safety net programs.

I support that principle. I have said it repeatedly that it should be linked as much as possible, because the idea is farmers have to start helping themselves, and the idea that ad hoc is also ending, and farmers want it to end. They want a predictable program that they can enroll in so they have some security, both in terms of yield and in terms of price, year in and year out for a period of time.

The ad hoc payments will stop after this particular spring when we get phased into the GRIP program. We will try to give that message to the farmers as loud and clear as we can.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, what does "as much as possible" mean? He is saying the deadline for signing up for GRIP is April 30. He does not say that they will get a deficiency payment regardless of whether they sign up or not.

I ask this minister, is this his interpretation of giving the farmers a deal they cannot refuse?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, the member is very remiss in terms of understanding the process that has been in place: an open, public process for over a year. A task force in place consisting of 19 farmers out of 33 members had evolved the process of how the safety net should be put in place. Those farmer leaders are also on the task force to arrive at what the ad hoc process should be for this particular spring. They will report to the federal minister in the next two or three weeks time, I would imagine, and an announcement will be made in early April within that regard, long before the deadline of the sign up for the GRIP program.

Benefit Cap

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, I ask this minister, in view of the fact that his Premier (Mr. Filmon) and his Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) have consistently said that this opposition is only advocating spend, spend, spend, why does this minister persist in putting in place a program that ensures that funds will go into a bottomless pit? Why does he not put in place a cap of say \$50,000 or a thousand acres for this program, to ensure that there is not a bottomless pit and that huge amounts of dollars do not go to one corporate farm?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): That member, he calls the farmers a bottomless pit. That

is what he has called farmers. There are 25,000 farmers in rural Manitoba, and he is worried about one farm, some mythical farm he does not know anything about. Nobody has recommended a cap on benefits, and the president of the Manitoba Pool Elevators has just said he does not want to see a cap. Farm leaders have been consistent saying no cap should exist, because the cost per acre is the same for everybody. The cost per acre is the same for everybody and those people will pay higher premiums if they have more acres involved. He is totally off base when he calls the farmers a bottomless pit. I absolutely resent any comment that he calls farmers a bottomless pit. That is totally disrespectful on his behalf.

* (1400)

Crop Insurance Discrimination

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Manitoba women were the first women in Canada to get the vote. They have also been leaders in many other areas. However, such is not the case with crop insurance.

As we get into the new GRIP program—even though it has many inadequacies—will the minister ensure that all women who choose farming as a livelihood will be allowed to participate in the program and not be discriminated against?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): I have no idea what the member is referring to that they will be discriminated against. I have not got one piece of evidence to support what she has said. There is a woman on the Manitoba Crop Insurance Board or was, Susan Van De Velde. She has now resigned to get on the national committee that is looking at the Constitution, but if she has any evidence that there is any discrimination of women, I would like her to put it on the record.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, I have the names of some women who have been allowed to get crop insurance. There are other women who cannot get crop insurance, and because they cannot get crop insurance, they will not qualify for GRIP, women such as Pat Roth who have not qualified, although she has similar circumstances to other women.

What are the minister's specific plans to change GRIP and crop insurance to allow all farm women to participate fully?

Mr. Findlay: I do not know if the member knows the difference between GRIP and crop insurance. She is cross relating the two.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a policy in place for some time with regard to in-family contracts and the Crop Insurance Corporation has reviewed every case to make sure that there is separation in terms of ownership and responsibility between the two different people who are applying for contract. That has been a policy that is in place for many years, going well back into the '80s when a certain other government was in power. It was a policy they believed in.

We have also asked the Human Rights Commission to look at this. The Human Rights Commission has looked at the process that the Crop Insurance Board uses to assess whether women and husbands are separate, and the Human Rights Commission has approved that process.

Ms. Wowchuk: To the same minister, society has changed and women are changing their role in agriculture. What specifically will the minister do to redress the discrimination against Pat Roth when she applied for crop insurance, rather than have her apply under her husband's policy which takes away from her right to make her own decisions and impacts on her husband's policy?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, many women have applied to the Crop Insurance Board, and they have followed the policy of the application form that the Human Rights Commission has approved, so you have gone to the Human Rights Commission who approved the process that the board is using to determine whether there is clear financial responsibility separation, and that is, as far as I am concerned, not allowing any discrimination to occur.

City of Winnipeg Ward Boundary Review

Mr. James Carr (Crescentwood): My question is to the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst).

We are pleased that the minister is beginning to realize that the so-called independent boundaries committee has no business drawing new electoral boundaries for the city of Winnipeg.

Will the minister now admit that a mistake was made and will he return that function to the Independent Boundaries Commission where it belongs?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Urban Affairs): The member for Crescentwood clearly still does not understand the process that was put in place. Mr. Speaker, under Section 671 of The City of Winnipeg Act a committee was established. That committee is presently holding public hearings, but also under Section 671 of The City of Winnipeg Act, the Cherniack commission was established and they also reviewed a number of aspects of The City of Winnipeg Act. That is what is occurring right now. We will receive that report, hopefully by mid to late April, and after that we will make further decisions with regard to the process.

Mr. Carr: Mr. Speaker, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) in answer to a question on Friday, himself drew a distinction between the political decision making and the actual drawing of the boundaries. Why can the minister not make that same distinction himself and review the part of the mandate to that boundaries committee that gives them control over actually drawing the electoral map of the city of Winnipeg and cut his losses and restore some integrity to this process?

Mr. Ernst: In his excitement to get up and ask a supplementary question, the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr) failed to listen to my first answer. That answer that I will repeat for him is this: that the process right now is ongoing, that they are holding public hearings to determine the policy issues related to this particular initiative. Following their report, we will make other decisions.

Ward Boundary Review Costs

Mr. James Carr (Crescentwood): Backing off, centimetre by centimetre.

Mr. Speaker, with a final supplementary question, as the minister knows, the President of the University of Winnipeg and the Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench and the Chief Financial Officer of the City of Winnipeg refused to accept any remuneration when they did the job given to them by The City of Winnipeg Act. How much are these so-called independent members of his committee getting paid by the Province of Manitoba?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Urban Affairs): If the member for Crescentwood would understand, whenever dealing with a judge of the court, they are not permitted to take additional remunerations. Whenever a university professor, or president for that matter, takes on one of these kinds of tasks,

they are not allowed to take additional remuneration. With respect to the Returning Officer of the City of Winnipeg, that is his job, Mr. Speaker, to carry out those activities, and he would not receive any remuneration. With respect to the current commission, they are receiving a remuneration, the exact numbers of which I do not have with me today, but I would be happy to provide to the member.

Regional Housing Authorities Centralization

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, the new Minister of Housing, in one of his first actions as minister, via press release, with no public consultation with tenants' organizations, no public consultation with boards of directors of housing authorities, has abolished 98 housing authorities in Manitoba and centralized control of housing authority.

Will the Minister of Housing admit that his government's policy has denied local control, totally eliminated tenant representation on local housing authority boards and what could possibly be the rationale for such an undemocratic move?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Housing): Mr. Speaker, one of the main reasons and something that is probably quite foreign to the member for Burrows and his party is the fact we are going to save the taxpayer \$3 million.

In addition, the 98 housing authorities managed housing units from anywhere from four up to thousands of units with all kinds of inefficiencies and duplications of service. Mr. Speaker, that will be corrected under the Manitoba Housing Authority.

In addition to that there were inconsistencies across 98 housing authorities, as there will be, because they are all human beings, in terms of the application of government policies related to housing units. Under a single housing authority, that application will be uniform.

Job Loss

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): It is an interesting answer, it shows the government is more interested in efficiency than democracy. Will the Minister of Housing—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please.

* (1410)

Mr. Martindale:—concede that his policy of eliminating 50 jobs, mostly in rural areas, totally contradicts the government's policy of decentralizing jobs to rural Manitoba?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Housing): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately it is regrettable that the member for Burrows is not interested in efficiency, not interested in saving the taxpayers any money, not interested in doing the kind of thing that the public out there demands of its democratically elected government.

With respect to the question of the Manitoba Housing Authority, there will be efficiencies, and yes, there will be some job loss associated with that. Because what you have at the present time are many part-time housing managers spread across the province managing an inefficient number of units, so that while they are being paid as a property manager, they are managing perhaps four or six or eight units. An optimum number for that kind of property management situation could be as many as 200 or 300. What has to happen is we have to get to an efficient management scheme in order to operate those units in the best possible way and to provide as much of the available scarce resources that there are to the maintenance of those properties.

Minister of Housing Apology Request

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): This party and I are both interested in efficiency, but we are not going to get it by this short-term, shortsighted policy.

Will the Minister of Housing apologize to the House and to the public of Manitoba for deliberately misleading the public by announcing that abolishing 98 housing authorities would save \$3 million when he knows that the figure is not \$3 million, it is 1.5 million, and the Peat Marwick study said 1.25 million—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. I would remind the honourable member for Burrows to withdraw the remarks of "deliberately misleading."

Would the honourable member for Burrows kindly rephrase his question, please?

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the words, "deliberately misleading—"

Mr. Speaker: I thank the honourable member.

Mr. Martindale:—and ask the minister why he is misleading the public with the figure three million, when the true figure for Manitoba is 1.5 and the other 1.5 is CMHC money?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Housing): Mr. Speaker, I do not find it incredible that the members opposite would not figure out that the taxpayer of the federal government and the taxpayer of the provincial government are the same taxpayer.

Employment Services Elimination

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): I would like to ask a question of the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer).

Mr. Speaker, unemployment is rising and will get worse during this year. We have 9,000 fewer people working in Manitoba today than in 1987 before this government took office. I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services, why is he now considering or planning cutbacks and possible elimination of his employment and training programs in a year in which unemployment and welfare cases are on the rise?

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, the member is not operating with accurate information. I think the member was aware that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) met with MLAs and members of the media in January, and he explained the financial situation that the province was in, that we would be looking at all departments and having staff bring forward ideas, suggestions and working documents. It is a process that has happened every year, and I would try to discourage the member from fearmongering and putting out as fact some information that he may have found somewhere.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, specifically, is the minister planning to either scale back or eliminate the nine regional employment service offices in this province at a time when there are 51,000 people out of work, and 12,000 more people out of work than in 1987? Are you scaling back or eliminating those offices?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, I know the member is well aware that we are in the throne speech and some time following that the budget will be introduced and we will have an opportunity to get into the Estimates process, look at each and every

department line by line and have that discussion at that time.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, is the minister planning to either scale back or eliminate the six human resource opportunity centres in the province, thereby eliminating training programs and putting people on welfare, including single parents?

Point of Order

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, not only has the member been here for 20 years and knows that those questions should be appropriately put during Estimates through you, but also it is repetitive. It is the very same question he asked previously. -(interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The honourable opposition House leader, do you want to put your remarks on the record?

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of the government House leader, it is in order for the government not to answer questions. It does that on a daily basis. It is not in order for it to attempt to dictate what kind of question one of the most senior members of this House should be asking for the purpose of trying to obtain information. If the government does not want to answer, that is fine, but do not tell the member not to ask those questions.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised, I would ask the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) to rephrase his question, because his question was being repetitive. The honourable member for Brandon East to rephrase his question.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, I am specifically asking whether the six—not the employment offices—I am now talking about the six human resource opportunity centres in the province which train single parents on welfare who want to get off of welfare, and other disadvantaged people.

Will this minister now give a commitment to this House that he will not scale back or eliminate those six human resource centres that are scattered throughout this—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The first part is in order. The last part was not in order.

* * *

Mr. Gilleshammer: I respect that the member is one of the senior members of the House and has been here for some time. When we have the budget tabled and we get into the Estimates process, I would look forward to seeing him in the Estimates and we can discuss the decisions that are made, and those decisions will be brought forth at that time.

Health Care Emergency Services

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier.

During the last three years almost every Winnipeg hospital has been forced to close their emergency rooms, causing stress on the patients and their families and other hospitals, and possible risk to the patients.

Mr. Speaker, last night the closure of the emergency room at Grace Hospital clearly shows that no hospital is immune to the health care problems. Can the Premier tell this House what specific measures finally they will take to ensure that Manitobans are not put at risk again?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the member for The Maples of what is happening everywhere across this country.

We, as a province, are doing everything we can to preserve health care. We are making a firm commitment, a commitment which I believe he will be able to support when he sees it brought forward in the budget and in the Estimates vis-a-vis, given the circumstances we face, the massive cutbacks we have had, the zero percent revenue and the level of funding to health care.

I suggest to him that he read the articles that have been published in the last week about what is happening under a Liberal administration in Newfoundland, where they are cutting 2,100 jobs, Mr. Speaker, of which over 300 are nurses, and 360 hospital beds are being permanently closed. That is not what we are going to be doing in this province. We are going to be preserving the level of service to health care, unlike a Liberal administration of which he would be a part.

We obviously have strains. We obviously have stresses within the system, and where there is one of the smaller hospitals with only 18 emergency

beds, sometimes they are taxed to their limit, Mr. Speaker.

It is my understanding that Grace Hospital emergency has reopened now, that the strain of reaching their limit has been overcome, but we are having a full report prepared by the office of the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard).

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for The Maples has time for one very short question.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, in these tough economic times we must manage our health care dollars very carefully and day surgery and expansion of day hospitals have been proven very cost effective to manage the tax dollars.

Can the Premier tell this House why they are not expanding this innovative new community-based idea they have not done so far?

* (1420)

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, such things as day surgery and various other day procedures have been expanded. I know that the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) has made announcements, and I have been at Concordia Hospital and viewed some of the initiatives that they have undertaken which have been very, very successful in pursuing precisely that. That is a question about government policy initiatives in areas of health care that should more properly be discussed in the pursuance of the Estimates of the Minister of Health, and I invite him to do that when the Minister of Health has his Estimates before the House very shortly.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Nonpolitical Statements

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I rise to seek the leave of honourable members to make a nonpolitical statement.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable Minister of Justice have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? Leave? Agreed.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, I think all honourable members would be interested to know that Chatelaine magazine has another top 10 category. As a member from the city of Brandon, I am very pleased to note that Chatelaine magazine has included Brandon in its list of top 10 cities in Canada.

The magazine refers to Brandon as a safe, spirited community in which to raise a family and goes on to say that "When it comes to old-fashioned everyone-says-hello-on-the-street friendliness, few cities are in the same league with Brandon Residents gush almost embarrassingly over the community spirit, sense of caring and feeling of safety that prevail in Manitoba's second-largest city."

I did not want the day to pass without saying to all honourable members how proud I am to be a resident of Brandon. I will quote the Mayor of Brandon whose response was: They just confirmed everything we knew all along. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for Brandon East have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? (Leave).

Mr. Leonard Evans: Well, very briefly, Mr. Speaker, usually the honourable Attorney General and myself have differences of views on most things, but we do have something in common and that is the welfare of the city of Brandon. I certainly share the sentiments that he has just expressed. Brandon is a fine city. It is a safe city, and it is a city that has grown over many years. It has a lot of fine facilities and, in fact, even this morning someone was telling me how great a convention centre it was. In fact, I think the Liberals had recently been there, and they found that was true. Certainly, I am very pleased that it has finally been recognized by this good magazine. Thank you.

Mr. James Carr (Crescentwood): May I please have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for Crescentwood have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? (Leave).

Mr. Carr: Each year we look forward with interest to Chatelaine's lists.

An Honourable Member: . . . you never made it yet.

Mr. Carr: I doubt I will. Mr. Speaker, we would like to join the member for Brandon West (Mr. McCrae) and Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) in congratulating the city of Brandon.

We, of course, in the Liberal caucus are fresh from a wonderful weekend in Brandon where we had our annual general meeting. There were literally hundreds of Liberals from all across the province enjoying—

An Honourable Member: Not from Brandon.

Mr. Carr: Several of them from Brandon, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Nonpolitical.

Mr. Carr: We were first hand the beneficiaries of a wonderful form of hospitality. We add our voice to those who have risen already to congratulate the citizens of Brandon for this well-deserved honour. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), for an address to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor in answer to his speech at the opening of the session, and the proposed amendment to the honourable Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer), and the proposed subamendment to the honourable member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs), standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) who has 26 minutes remaining.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, I began my comments in the brief time I had yesterday outlining just how far we have come in such a short period of time since the last election. In merely six months, this government has stripped away the veneer of moderation and is now proposing a program of cuts—of acute protracted restraint, as the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) points out—that will not only match the record of the ill-fated Lyon Conservative government, but in my opinion from the almost daily reports we are receiving, will be of sufficient weight to qualify this government as being the most vicious and regressive government in Manitoba history.

I outline, Mr. Speaker, in my own particular area of the province, I compare it to provinces' northern constituencies and communities and the problems they are facing with the announcements that are coming forth from this government and the very real concerns that are being expressed about, for example, the prospect of Department of Northern

Affairs being eliminated, the Northern Youth Corps Program being eliminated, job creation programs being eliminated, ACCESS program funding being eliminated, the Northern Development Agreement being eliminated.

This government, on a daily basis, is living up to those immortal words of the so-called Minister of Northern Affairs who in this House, only in the last session, stated that the problem with Northerners was, and I quote, that they did not know how to vote right and that that, Mr. Speaker, was why they were being singled out for the type of treatment we are seeing on an almost daily basis from this government, treatment that is cut back, cut back, cut back.

Other MLAs have noted that it appears that other areas of this province in those immortal words of that minister did not vote right, because what we are seeing—(interjection)—well, name them. I will. I will name them for the newly found maverick member, and it may be his constituency. We may be hearing, Mr. Speaker, from his constituency in the Rhineland area that they may also be ignored, although I know the way this government operates.

I suspect—and I remember the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) the other day pointed out—I would expect that every last highway in his constituency will be paved, probably got four lanes, Mr. Speaker. I think the member for Portage is trying to set himself in the same category. Their constituencies may, indeed, be taken care of by this government clinging desperately, desperately, to its narrow margin of majority. On election night, yes, indeed, the Premier did say a majority, is a majority, is a majority; but their majority is not something I would boast about at this present time.

I am reminded, and this is about the only time, Mr. Speaker, I ever agreed with Sterling Lyon when he used to remind all governments of the day that they are only temporary governments. I look at this government and I say to them that they should be very wary of what kind of policies they bring in for this province, because if ever there was a temporary government, it is this government, because we have seen in record time, in six months, how they have shifted gears.

(Mr. Ben Sveinson, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

I look to the member for Rossmere (Mr. Neufeld), because I wish to be fair to them. I wish to track down for the debate today some of the comments that

were made by Conservative MLAs in the election. I have a leaflet from the candidate in Crescentwood, but I thought that was not particularly fair on the Conservative members. This was not an incumbent running for re-election. I did come across a leaflet from the member for Rossmere. It is even signed: Sorry I missed you, from the member for Rossmere. I wanted to be fair and see exactly what they were saying, Mr. Acting Speaker, only a few months ago.

Can anyone forget the Gary Filmon team and those immortal words: making Manitoba strong? Making Manitoba strong? We are tenth out of 10 economically. We have increasing welfare rates, increasing unemployment rates on a daily basis. Plants are being closed, but it says here, making Manitoba strong.

An Honourable Member: Read the rest of it.

Mr. Ashton: Well, I will read the rest of it for the member for Rossmere, because I found some of his other comments. This is, by the way, six months ago, and I know that somebody, I believe it was Harold Wilson, once said that a week is a long time in politics. Reading this, six months is an eternity, because this, it is hard to believe these were statements made by that member, whose honesty I admire, if not his political judgment, only six months ago. I might say that if this was circulated today and if politicians were subject to laws in terms of truth in advertising, this would most definitely be subject to criminal action based on misleading advertising.

I will read what this member talked about, what this government was going to do if he was going to be elected. An improved economy—oh, yes, Mr. Acting Speaker, they were going to improve the economy. Well, where are we today compared to six months ago? We have thousands more unemployed. We are tenth out of 10, and they were going to improve the economy.

What I find most ironic are the comments in this leaflet on improving, strengthening the health care system. Strengthening the health care system? With the kind of budgeting that we are going to be seeing, the kind of actions of the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), they were going to strengthen the health care system? We will be watching what they do in terms of Estimates.

* (1430)

One I really liked was, they were going to improve the education system. Just six months ago. Improve

it? With what? Zero percent funding? Cutbacks in programs. Cutbacks in staff. Elimination of special needs programming. Is that what they were going to do to improve the education systems?

This by the way is in the direct words of the member for Rossmere. It says on the top, an interview with Harold Neufeld. Why are you working so hard to be elected in Rossmere? To improve the education system, protect the environment, strengthen the health care system, keep taxes down. That is what he said six months ago, and I will be interested to see how he votes on this throne speech, because six months later those very fine words of that member, who indeed may be honest, if not have the greatest of political judgment in my view, are being repudiated on a daily basis, Mr. Acting Speaker.

I read further. So it talks about cutting taxes and this is a direct quote from the leaflet: City of Winnipeg taxes have skyrocketed. Mr. Acting Speaker -(interjection)- they skyrocketed for individual homeowners. It was because of the reassessment brought in by who? By this government. We warned them, and the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) warned them in committee repeatedly that they were going to send taxes for many homeowners skyrocketing.

That by the way is not exclusively the case in the city of Winnipeg. In my own constituency, homeowners faced increases in the range of \$500, while a number of businesses faced major reductions of up to 25 percent of their taxload.

What I find ironic now, Mr. Acting Speaker, is here we are and this government is cutting back in terms of education funding. What is going to happen? Municipal taxes, school board taxes are going to increase dramatically despite those cuts in services. So where is the member for Rossmere (Mr. Neufeld) today talking about city of Winnipeg taxes skyrocketing when only six months later there is going to be more loaded on top of those property taxpayers in the city of Winnipeg, including in his own constituency?

Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, I could read more from this leaflet, and I did not mean to single this out. I am not trying to single out the member for Rossmere. This just happened to be one of the leaflets I was able to obtain, and I raised it with him because I do believe he is a forthright individual. I believe that he may, even in this debate, stand in his

place and repudiate those statements. -(interjection)- Well, the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) suggests, he probably believes it. Maybe he does believe it. I suggest better, but I know -(interjection)- well, the member talks about increased spending. We know the minister's views on cutting back expenditures. We know where he would target. We do not agree with where he targets, but he must admit that those statements, making Manitoba strong, ring hollow only six months later.

Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, I reviewed in detail the campaign promises of the Conservatives in the past election. I could have gone back to 1988 and point to the broken promises—health care being the most obvious example.

Does anyone remember the Premier (Mr. Filmon), the now Premier, standing at his opening press conference, with one of his cornerstones of the election campaign talking about a health care action plan for 1990? Well, when I was Health critic I asked about it at the beginning of 1990. The Premier said, well, wait, there is still a whole year ahead. We are in 1991, and where are we in terms of a health action plan? Do we have one? What kind of action do we have in health care? We have confrontation. We have increased waiting lists for surgery. I received a call just from a constituent, only Sunday, desperately seeking to have her husband be able to be admitted to the Concordia Hospital for needed surgery, exploratory surgery.

We have seen, Mr. Acting Speaker, what is happening in the health care system, but let us look at what they said in 1990, only a few short months ago, in terms of education. This party talked about maintaining inflation-plus increases in terms of education. How can anyone forget their pious statements about improving the education system? Are they now going to honestly say to the people of Manitoba, only six months later, that what they said then was not true? Are they going to say that? Are they going to try and convince people that they had no inkling of what was going to happen only six months ago? Well, they have to deal with that major inconsistency in their views.

Well, I went further. I looked at their economic platform, if you can call it that. Well, we do know that in the election the government rejected what it calls job creation programs, and quite frankly, for the life of me, I do not understand why. They remind me of the words of the former member for Swan River,

Doug Gourlay, who was the Minister of Northern Affairs under the Sterling Lyon government, who was quoted as saying—and this is probably the sentiments of the current so-called Minister of Northern Affairs, Mr. Acting Speaker, that welfare was cheaper than job creation. That was a direct quote. I think it was a rather stupid statement to make, but it was a comment that reflected the philosophy of that Conservative government.

I believe that is their philosophy again. They say we cannot afford to have job creation programs, and yet we have had a huge increase in the number of people on the welfare rolls, which is going to directly cost taxpayers money. Yes, indeed it is cheaper to put people on welfare, Mr. Acting Speaker, but what about the human cost?

I recently was in many of the communities, Mr. Acting Speaker, just only a few days ago in my community, my constituency, which has 90 percent unemployment. The community of Thicket-Portage, for example, does not have all-weather road access. What were people saying? They were saying they are told by Income Security they should get a job. Yet there are no jobs in the community. They are saying they do not want to be on welfare. They want jobs. They want job opportunities. Now this government, Mr. Acting Speaker, is going to remove the programs that they have put in place. -(interjection)-

For the member for Portage, who has never set foot inside Thicket-Portage, Mr. Acting Speaker, let him mouth from his seat. He knows not of what he speaks. He talks about the experience of having to own a business or else one does not have the right to talk about the government in terms of economic policies, et cetera.

We remember his comments when he spoke, Mr. Acting Speaker, the member who is more concerned about the size of cabinet than he is about some of the major provincial issues. Let him speak if he wishes about the size of cabinet. I am talking about unemployment in the community of Thicket-Portage.

If the Conservatives want to know what was done, we had job creation programs. We started the Northern Youth Corps Program, and you are going to be cutting it. So, Mr. Acting Speaker, let them not talk about the people of the community of Thicket-Portage, because their record speaks for itself.

It might also explain why in the last election out of the entire population of Thicket-Portage, only one person voted Conservative—only one person voted Conservative. The people in the community of Thicket-Portage know the Conservative policies, and they did not buy the phony promises of 1988 and 1990. They knew about the kind of agenda that the government would bring in if it had a majority, and here we are today with that agenda, Mr. Acting Speaker. -(interjection)-

Well, what did they say to aboriginal people? They said to aboriginal people, generally, they are going to establish an economic development commission to deal with Native unemployment. Mr. Acting Speaker, they are going to start up a commission, and they are going to destroy all the programs, the job creation programs. There is a word for that. It is "hypocrisy." How can they say they are going to have an economic development commission? They said the same thing for the north, a northern development commission formed to outline a blueprint for sustainable growth.

They said they were going to allow Northerners to set their own priorities in terms of economic development. Six months later, what are they doing? They are cutting programs. They are hatcheting programs. They are slashing programs. What is happening is that the people of northern Manitoba are being singled out, I believe, because of the sentiments of the now Deputy Premier.

When he made that statement about Northerners not voting right, I thought that the Premier would discipline him or at least disown the comments to some extent, in the perhaps wishy-washy way he did with the member for Rossmere on multiculturalism. I thought there would be some sign that it was unacceptable. What did he do, Mr. Acting Speaker? He promoted the minister. He puts him in charge of Rural Development. He makes him Deputy Premier. He is one heartbeat away from being Premier of Manitoba.

* (1440)

I mean in the 1950s that might have been acceptable. In the 1940s, it might have been acceptable, but in the 1990s, it is not acceptable to single out northern residents, to single out core area residents in Winnipeg, and north end residents, to single out many rural areas which are now finding that they are also being singled out for cuts.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

That is totally unacceptable from this minister, and he will have to accept the responsibility because he had the choice. He could have kept the member for Portage in cabinet—(interjection)—well, perhaps I do not want to suggest I am arguing for that. He could have kept the member for Rhineland in the cabinet. He could have thrown out the Minister, or so-called Minister, of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), who was so categorically rejected in his approach by northern residents, Mr. Speaker, in the last election. The Conservative Party was so categorically rejected in four out of the four seats, communities such as Thicket Portage, but instead he promoted him.

Where does that leave me in terms of my conclusions about what is happening? I believe this government—and I have indicated that I believe it is going to be one of the most vicious governments in Manitoba history. It already is. I think beyond that they are just proving that they are following the philosophy—and I know they do not like to accept comparisons to their federal counterpart, but who could forget the immortal words of John Crosbie when, a few years ago in response to a question about what the federal Conservative government would do if they were elected, he said, well, if I tell you that, we would never get elected? Who can forget those immortal words once again? Not much political judgment but a fair degree of honesty.

You know, I have often in this House suggested that the Conservatives might have, and may I use the term, Mr. Speaker, a hidden agenda. Yes, and they have risen one after another, they have risen, and they have said, there is no hidden agenda. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) said all through the election, what you see is what you get and then, of course, what happened on election night? A Tory is a Tory is a Tory, and a majority is a majority is a majority. Well, Mr. Speaker, that is what we have been saying to the people of Manitoba.

Give him a majority and all of a sudden it is not the Filmon team anymore, it is the Progressive Conservatives, the PCs, the same party as in Ottawa, the same party here. I hate to say this once again, when we ever accused them of having the same philosophy, they said, no, no, we are different. I mean they did everything, I looked at this leaflet, and you need a magnifying glass to see the name Progressive Conservative. It does say Manitoba Progressive Conservative—

An Honourable Member: Did they not change the name, Steve?

Mr. Ashton: Yes, they did change the name. A few years ago they wanted to totally change the name. I do not know why they do not just call them sort of the whatever-you-want-during-the-election party because that is essentially what they were. Mr. Speaker, they tried to hide the label. What are they doing now? What is the difference between Brian Mulroney and the Premier (Mr. Filmon)? One is Prime Minister and one is Premier. There is one difference. There is no difference in terms of philosophy. Brian Mulroney is a classic Conservative. He has led this country into a recession and now we have the Premier with his majority acting like a classic Conservative. I would say it is no surprise to any of us on this side.

Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, R. B. Bennett would not be spinning in their graves today watching this government, they would approve. It is the same philosophy, the same discredited philosophy, that led us from a recession into a depression in the 1920s and 1930s.

For the life of me, I cannot understand it, Mr. Speaker. I cannot understand how this government could sit there and say, well, we are not going to have job creation programs but in the meantime can see welfare rates increasing. The amount of money that is going to be spent on family services generally just in terms of basic supports, not on programs but basic supports, is going to increase. Where is the logic? Where is the economic logic? Well, there is no economic logic.

Let us not forget the other similarities. The federal Conservatives supported free trade and the provincial Conservatives supported free trade. You did not hear that much about it in the last election, I will admit that, and for good reason. Why would this Conservative government want to get involved in any debate on free trade? Free trade has failed this country. It has led to major layoffs. It has led to increased unemployment. It has failed this province. It has led to increased layoffs and increased unemployment.

It is a failure. Why is it a failure? Because it is the same type of bankrupt ideology that the Conservatives always bring out when they have a majority. When they are in a minority, they are different, right? They are different. They know that their policies are not going to get support from the

people of Manitoba, but when they have a majority they are sitting here pretty smugly now, thinking they can sit this out, weather it out for another few years, cut back, cut back, cut back.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I have some news for them. If they think that during this session we are just going to sit back and watch them decimate 10 and 20 and 30 years of progress in this province, they are wrong.

I say to those members who profess to have an open mind, who say they will be voting with their conscience, to those members for whatever reason who have now stated that they will be voting with their conscience, as the member for Rossmere (Mr. Neufeld) will be doing, being faced with a decision of whether he is going to live up to his own words or the hollow words of this government, I say that this government is indeed a temporary government and there could be an election a lot sooner than they think.

An Honourable Member: No, no way.

Mr. Ashton: Well, I know the Conservative members say, no way. I would ask them not to have that arrogance that goes sometimes with all governments of a majority stripe that says that a government is somehow here, that is somehow more than what it is. Any government is only a temporary government. This government, by having betrayed the people of the province by changing from its stated words in only six months, is a government whose clock is ticking, a government where the time, the sands are running down on this government. It is only a matter of time before they have to be accountable to the people of this province.

You know what distresses me the most are the statements I have heard from some people that these are tough decisions, that somehow there is real agony on the Conservative government on these tough decisions. Well, that may be the case with some of the members of the Conservative government, but I will say publicly, I do not believe it is the case of all, in fact even a majority, because the Conservative party has always stood for cutting back the size of government.

I believe that this government is using the excuse of the economic recession to cut back on the size of government. It is getting rid of what it views as government waste. It is getting rid of what it feels is an oversized government. Let them be honest with

the people of Manitoba. What we are seeing now is Tory ideology and Tory philosophy. It is not agonizing decisions. The only agony for too many of the members of the Conservative government, particularly the cabinet ministers, I believe, is that they are going to face political consequences. They do not agonize over what is going to happen to the people who are going to be denied services. They are not agonizing over the people who are going to be without job opportunities, the people who are going to be forced on welfare. They are not agonizing.

You know, I say that is not the case of all members, but for those who do agonize, truly agonize, I ask them, I beg of them, to say to their own members in the government, particularly in the cabinet, that it is unacceptable, to say to the Premier (Mr. Filmon) that he should live up to his words of only six months ago that there will be more of the same, the supposed moderate Conservative philosophy that we saw when they were in a minority. They have the choice.

If they truly are agonized, if they truly are going to vote in terms of conscience, Mr. Speaker, they will not support this throne speech, because how can anyone, who in the last election talked about improving the education system, support the throne speech of a government that has a budget now that is going to result in school divisions, including my own area, getting zero percent, that is going to lead to major tax increases at the local level? How can they do that?

How can they talk about improving the health care system when it is being cut back, when it is being destroyed by the confrontationist policies of this Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard)?

How can they talk about making Manitoba strong economically when we are 10th out of 10?

I really look, in this session in particular, for those who truly consider themselves to be moderates in the Conservative Party, to separate themselves from the right wing ideology that is being adopted on a daily basis.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, what is happening is that we have a government that believes that misery loves company. We have a government that believes that the solution to unemployment is to create more unemployment through government cutbacks, the R. B. Bennett-Herbert Hoover style of government. I believe we have a government that

believes if you do not write, you do not get from the government, in the words of the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey). I believe we have a government that in only six months with a majority has become so cynical that its words of only six months ago are absolutely fundamentally 100 percent meaningless. And we wonder why people become cynical about politics and politicians. How can the people of Manitoba not be cynical, having read those words from only six months ago, only six months ago, about making Manitoba strong?

What we hear now, Mr. Speaker, that this government is in a desperate situation. Times are not all that good; we are not strong, we are weak. We have to make all these tough decisions.

Well, the people are becoming cynical, and I can tell the members of the Conservative Party that our party will be taking a different approach. We are talking to the people about what their concerns are. We are talking to people concerned about the future of education in this province, the massive cuts that are taking place. We are talking to the people concerned about the future of our health care system.

* (1450)

We were out there talking to the nurses when they were on strike about all their concerns—yes, wages, but in terms of working conditions, and the many excellent ideas they have, something I might add, I believe only one member, or perhaps one or two—if there are others who were on the picket lines, they should indicate. I know the member for Portage was out on the picket lines. Perhaps that is one of the reasons he got bounced from the cabinet. We are not sure, Mr. Speaker. I know that many did not take the time to walk the picket lines and talk to the people. There may have been a few, but I know many who did not, but I must say we are listening on that.

In terms of the economic policy, we are listening to northern communities and rural communities, with the agony they are going through, and there are many people in the city of Winnipeg who are faced with daily cutbacks and layoffs.

Those are our concerns, and we are not going to make hollow promises to aboriginal people as this government—talking about they are going to sit down and define self-government. Aboriginal people are defining self-government themselves; they do not need the patronizing attitude of this

Conservative Party to them and the kind of daily cutbacks in programs we are seeing.

The environment is the same thing as well. We are not going to sit there and piously talk about the environment, as does the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), and then ignore every recommendation of every environmental group that was made on the bill, the amendment act to the environment bill in the last session. We will not do that.

We will listen to the people. We will fight for the people of Manitoba. We will bring forward the people's agenda, an agenda that looks forward in this province, that is not going to support the kind of vicious cutbacks that are going to make this government—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member's time has expired.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I am very pleased to rise and speak on the motion to the throne speech as proposed by the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render) and seconded by the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson). I, once again, greet you, Mr. Speaker, and I congratulate you on your reappointment to the Chair.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you.

Mrs. McIntosh: Your record of service and dedication to the well-being of this Chamber stands you in good stead, and you have our respect, Sir, for the diligence with which you approach your duties.

It gives me pleasure as well to greet my colleagues on both sides of the House, despite the differing perspectives and philosophies found as one moves through the benches of the three caucuses. I believe—not all members believe this, the previous speaker obviously does not believe this—that all members do share one common goal. I believe we all do want to see Manitoba do well, and we all want to see the people of Manitoba do well. I do not question the motives of the members opposite. I question perhaps their naivety, but I do not question their motives. It is unfortunate that they impugn ours.

The throne speech, I believe, Mr. Speaker, outlines the thrust that government must take in the immediate future if Manitoba is to have the chance to do well that I believe all members wish it to have.

I sometimes feel frustrated, Mr. Speaker, when I consider the kinds of choices that I have had to make as an elected official. I ran for the school board locally in my home community in 1980 knowing when I ran that our overall student population was on a rapid decline for a variety of reasons and external influences that actually in reality had more to do with civic policies than educational ones, but whatever the reasons for the decline the issue had to be addressed.

I ran for the board wanting to do more for education, wanting to do more for the individual student, wanting to do more for the future. I did not want to see our programming suffer as a result of the decline. I wanted available dollars to go towards enhancing the quality of education as opposed to the maintenance of buildings.

During my nine years as a school trustee, I voted to close 10 schools. It was not an easy thing to do. The member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) knows that. He was Minister of Education for part of the time during that period. It was not an easy thing to vote to close the local neighbourhood school 10 times over. It was not a popular thing to do, but it was the right thing to do. By putting brains and books ahead of bricks and buildings, the board of which I was a member was able to add new and innovative programming for the exceptionally gifted and for those who have to struggle hard to learn.

We were able to do those things at a lower cost to the ratepayer. I know the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) will be very interested in this particular aspect since he does not know how school divisions can manage with less. We were able to do these things in terms of programming in our division at a lower cost to the ratepayer than any of the 11 school divisions in the Winnipeg area, because we were not afraid to be firm about reducing expenditures, waste and mismanagement. I am very proud of the fact, Mr. Speaker, that over 60 percent of the graduates in our division go on to post-secondary education as opposed to the average of about 20 percent in other parts of the province. I mention this little bit of history, Mr. Speaker, because I think it underscores the need for politicians to have the courage to do the right thing when the right thing needs to be done.

When I voted to close that first school, there was a terrific personal price that I had to pay. At one point, there was even an offer to bring in the police for personal protection. Neighbours attacked me in

the local stores and at the corner church where I was a lay reader, parishioners left the premises rather than to have to take communion from me. But I do believe that common sense ultimately prevails and that most people have common sense in abundance.

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

The citizens who were the most angry at the school closures were by and large the ones who cared the most. In the final analysis, they in fact became the ones who were the most helpful in ensuring the success of the consolidated schools. They returned me and the colleagues who stood firm with me on reducing expenditures to office over and over and over once again.

It is often mentioned by members on the benches opposite that the majority of the school trustees in my division are Progressive Conservatives. Indeed they are, Mr. Acting Speaker, but they do not run as Progressive Conservatives. I can only speak for myself, but I did not become a member of the Progressive Conservative Party until I had been a school trustee for quite a while and had the experience of having to work under one particular NDP Minister of Education.

An Honourable Member: Which one?

Mrs. McIntosh: Indeed, I will tell you. I might never have become a Tory had it not been for the former member for Logan under whom the Education portfolio languished for a period of time, enough time for me to experience the NDP philosophy in action, enough time for me to meet and become an admirer of the then Education critic of the opposition, now the Premier of Manitoba (Mr. Filmon), and decide to join the party to which he belonged and try to make a difference. The member for Logan had the opportunity to inspire me to join the NDP. I wanted to make a difference then and I am still wanting to make a difference.

I long for the time when I can run for office and do the kinds of things I really want to do, to use money for all kinds of exciting, meaningful things rather than be forced to collect it from people who have worked hard to earn it and cannot afford to part with it and then have the misery of watching the money we collect disappear like magic, Mr. Acting Speaker, into that misty, mystical thing called interest. The minute money hits the government of Manitoba coffers, it stops being money that you can use and

it turns into mist. I want it to become money that you can use again. It is no fun getting elected and having to clean up other people's messes, but I am not afraid to clean up other people's messes.

In 1988 when I realized that the provincial debt had literally doubled during the short time that the NDP had been in office to the point where \$1.6 million a day was being spent just to pay the interest on that debt I was shocked. I heard the member earlier today say that \$1.6 million, \$1.5 million was nothing to be concerned about. I am not surprised to hear him make that statement, because clearly it was nothing for them to be concerned about, and they were willing to kiss it goodbye into the moonlight, have it disappear across the waves as interest on the debt.

I know the opposition constantly tries to keep us from mentioning their record. They keep saying we cannot blame people for things that happened three years ago. They consistently mention Sterling Lyon, but we can never mention Howard Pawley who came after Sterling Lyon. The fact of the matter is that it is critically important that their record never be forgotten because their record plays a very large and significant role in putting Manitoba in the position that it is in today, cause and effect, cause and effect. In order for this House to understand why we have to do what we now have to do, they must never forget what brought us to this juncture.

* (1500)

The NDP, Mr. Acting Speaker, in six short years doubled a provincial debt that had taken over 100 years to accumulate, and I would like the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) to think about the fact, think about the magnitude of the wound—

An Honourable Member: What about Saskatchewan? What about Devine? What about Loughheed and Getty? What about Mulroney?

Mrs. McIntosh: What about talking about your own jurisdiction instead of constantly referring to Ottawa or some other provincial jurisdiction? Talk about this province—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Order, please.

Mrs. McIntosh: —this situation, your record, your performance, your legacy, then we can talk about things that you can actually do something about and impact something. I want you to think again, think

again about the magnitude of the wound that you inflicted upon this province.

The NDP in six years, and I am going to repeat it so you can hear it, because you were not listening the first time, and I will be quiet so you can listen. I will be quiet -(interjection)- and wait for you to be quiet, and then I will say it again. The NDP in six short years doubled a provincial debt that had taken over 100 years to accumulate. That is a massive achievement, awesome.

You want to introduce Devine or Wells or Premier Bob or any of the other Premiers, then you do not want to talk about the situation here. You cannot avoid the situation here by talking about situations elsewhere, much as you would like to. \$1.6 million a day Manitobans have to bring forward every day of the year. Every day of the year Manitobans have to reach into their pockets and pull out \$1.5 million just to pay the interest on the debt that you racked up on the opposite side of the House. That is every day, no holidays, no vacation, no weekends of rest, every day, day after day after day.

You know in the opposition benches what we know over here that that is \$1.6 million a day that we cannot spend on health care or on education or on family services or even, Mr. Acting Speaker, on the debt. We cannot even spend that \$1.6 million a day on the debt, because it is interest.

It is as useful to the people of Manitoba as swamp gas. The former government, with all the best intentions in the world, thought it could spend its way into the hearts of people making them happy in the short term and believing in all sincerity like innocent children that tomorrow would take care of itself.

The NDP had a wonderful time at the party, but now it is the morning after the night before, and the people have chosen us to come in and try and clean up the mess. The mess consists of first and foremost a massive debt. That party was expensive and it was all put on a credit card.

Contrary to the impression the opposition is trying to leave with the media, we have been consistent in the message that we have put out to the public. I knocked on every door in my constituency, every door except the cell doors in Headingley, and that was only because they would not let me in.

At every opportunity I told people that I wanted to try and get the burden of debt off our backs. I told them that a deficit was something to worry about. I

told them that a deficit is what you have when you have less than you had when you had nothing. The Premier told people that we were worried about the debt we carried and that he wanted to keep taxes down. -(interjection)-

Mr. Acting Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition thinks that having a mortgage is the same as having a mortgage and every credit card in town charged to the limit so that when the bill collector leaves there is no money left to buy food for the table, then he is making an analogy that I do not understand, which is why I am on this side of the House and he is on that side.

The Premier, during the election, told people that we were worried about the debt we carried and that he wanted to keep taxes down and that he was pledged to getting control of government spending, which is part and parcel of keeping taxes down. The opposition's problem is that they either do not understand that or they do not believe that or both.

They cannot conceive of a group of men and women being elected to this Legislature as they have been, who would not resort as they always did to taking the easy way out and just raising taxes again and again and again whenever they could not muster the courage to do the right thing, which is often the hard thing and the uncomfortable thing, but the necessary thing.

The Speaker has been known to say the Legislature is not a tea party. Neither is it a popularity contest. It is a place, I hope, where responsible decisions are made by people who care about the future, by people who look to tomorrow as well as to today.

We are committed to maintaining and, where possible, to enhancing our essential services. We may have to do without the extras for a while until we get things back on track, but I believe that unless or until we do get things back on track, we run the risk of jeopardizing those very essential services that we value so much. Like the family that I referred to earlier who borrows to the hilt and finds that after the bill collector leaves there is no money left for groceries, Manitoba has to pause and get its priorities straight.

The people have indicated their displeasure with the high-rolling high-spending habits of governments everywhere. We have kept personal taxes down. We have in fact decreased them by 2 percent. That is not an easy thing to do, but we have

done it, and we will do everything in our power to continue on that course for the sake of the people who for too long have had to pay and pay and then pay some more for things that have long since disappeared. -(interjection)-

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Order, please. Would the honourable members at the back please come to the loge and carry on their conversations there or out in the halls. Thank you.

Mrs. McIntosh: Is this counting? Are my minutes ticking by? -(interjection)-

They have heard this message. This message is for you to hear. Mr. Acting Speaker, I invite the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) to stand now and give his message.

An Honourable Member: Do you want me to take some of your time?

An Honourable Member: She said to put up or shut up.

Mrs. McIntosh: That is right. People have had to pay and pay and pay and then pay some more—

Point of Order

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Order, please.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Yes, I missed, Mr. Acting Speaker, whether the member wanted me to address some of the issues during her time and her speech. If that is the case, I would be glad to do that at this time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): The honourable minister, you have the floor. -(interjection)- It is not a point of order.

* (1510)

Mrs. McIntosh: It was not meant to be a point of order. I would prefer that if members have comments to make, they make them when they have the floor and not while I have it.

* * *

Mrs. McIntosh: I do not want my children and my neighbour's children and my constituents' children to have to continue paying throughout their lives for things that were used in the past and which have long since disappeared. I look at my own department, and when I listen to the needs of consumers and when I see how conscious they are

of costs and of trying to stretch their dollars, then I am more convinced than ever of the need to hold the line on taxes. Contrary to the tongue-in-cheek comments made recently in one of our local papers by one of our better known political journalists, this government cares about the consumer, perhaps most of all because we are willing to try and leave more money in the pockets of that consumer.

We are all consumers. We want to be able to buy what we need, and we want what we need to be available to us for consumption. That means there has to be a happy marriage in Consumer and Corporate Affairs. There have to be companies able to function—I know the members opposite do not want to hear this, but it is true—and produce products for sale, and there have to be consumers with enough money in their pockets to take advantage of the availability of produce.

We do no one a favour when we drive businesses out of Manitoba, taking away with them, when they go, jobs that are needed as well as affordable merchandise which can be purchased by the wage earners who are employed by the businesses.

Corporations and consumers need each other. They should exist in a symbiotic relationship which benefits both.

I want to thank the previous minister of my department, the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connerly). I want to thank him most sincerely for all the very good work that he did in establishing positive relationships that have been struck with the various stakeholders and interest groups who dialogue on a regular basis with my department.

They are excellent men and women, whose sincere interest in creating the partnership that is needed to strengthen our economy and the marketplace will be most helpful to me as minister in the Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs portfolio. So I thank my predecessor for establishing those lines of communication and for building the partnership that is required.

I have been meeting with as many people as possible during my first few weeks as minister, and I have been listening to their viewpoints. Indeed, if the opposition members wish to raise issues to me that for whatever reason they chose not to raise when they were in power, I would be very pleased to listen to them as well. I welcome their input if it would be useful to the people of Manitoba. I look forward to the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway)

at some point reintroducing his numerous private member's bills, which his government chose not to introduce when they were in power for six or seven years. I do not know why the member for Elmwood was not able to persuade his own caucus to introduce these bills when they were in government, Mr. Acting Speaker.

I am sure it must have been very disappointing to him to have his own caucus refuse to act upon his suggestions, but nonetheless I am willing to explore his ideas as he puts them before me to see if there is merit in them for the people of this province. I reject no source that might be helpful to the people. I look forward to a positive relationship.

I am proud to be able to introduce legislation of my own in this session, and again I must give credit to my predecessor, the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connerly), for the initiatives he set in motion regarding the lock-off legislation for Centra Gas. He started the process, and it is my privilege to follow it through to completion.

I was genuinely shocked yesterday to hear the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylcyia-Leis) referring to this legislation as legislation for our corporate friends. I sincerely hope that is not a caucus position. I cannot believe that a member of this Assembly, especially one who has been around for as long as the member for St. Johns, would show so little understanding of the complexities of this issue. This is an opposition, Mr. Acting Speaker, that purports to stand up for the poor and the underdog and the people who are burdened with the sins of others. I thought the member for St. Johns would care about the poor in this city, and I trust it is a personal opinion she was expressing and not the caucus position.

Perhaps the member for St. Johns would benefit from communicating with some of the citizens who have taken the time to contact me on this issue. I would be pleased to put her in touch with them, some of them anyhow, so that she could explain to them how she feels about this issue, so she can tell them how she feels that they should have to pay other people's bills, even when they have to make extreme sacrifices to make their own payments. I think they would be very interested to hear her tell them that it is to their benefit and their ultimate long-term good to pick up costs that they did not incur and that they cannot afford to meet because

the gas company, by virtue of a court order, has no other way to recoup its losses.

Perhaps she could have sat through some of the hearings held by the PUB on this issue to listen to the people of Manitoba express a view that is in direct opposition to the one she expressed in the House here yesterday. Maybe she did not mean what she said yesterday. I hope that is the case. Maybe she does not want to hear what the overburdened, honest, hardworking, fed-up people of this province have to say on such issues. -(interjection)-

Well, I care, Mr. Acting Speaker. Legislation that will allow Centra Gas to discontinue service to delinquent accounts will be introduced this session. Safeguards will be built into that legislation to ensure that no individuals or families will be put at risk during our cold winter months. This is not a favour to our corporate friends, Mr. Acting Speaker. Can you hear me, Mr. Acting Speaker, over the din from the benches opposite? -(interjection)- Good. This is not a favour for our corporate friends. This is sensible, fair and realistic legislation asked for by the people of Manitoba.

I have heard a lot of comments bandied about during this Throne Speech Debate, and I would like to just refer to a couple of them that I have heard because I quite frankly do not understand them. I pose questions that perhaps can be answered in other speeches as they come forward.

I keep hearing the NDP say they care about the workers and I would like to ask them, who are the workers? What do they mean when they say worker? Is a homemaker a worker? I will give them some specific examples, maybe they can tell me if these people are workers. Is a priest a worker? I do not want to do as the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) did and go like this to get the noes or the yeses coming forward, but feel free, if the urge comes upon them, I do not mind. Is a priest a worker? Is a small businessman a worker? Is a nurse a worker? -(interjection)- Oh, they finally answered one is a worker. How about a doctor? Does a doctor work? -(interjection)- A nurse works but not a doctor, okay. A plumber, does a plumber work? Does a truck driver work?

Who works in Manitoba? Do people who belong to unions work? Do people who do not belong to unions work? Is a teacher a worker? How about volunteers, do volunteers work? Do employers

work? Should employers be able to earn money from the work that they do? How much should employees be allowed to earn?

When the NDP say they care about the workers, do they mean they do not care about those who do not work, like the unemployed? I keep hearing them talk about the worker, Mr. Acting Speaker, as if the worker is a breed apart. I know a lot of people who work very hard. Some of them may be called workers by the NDP, and some of them may not be called workers by the NDP, but in my books they are all workers. Except by workers of the world, I include people in every strata and every station of life.

* (1520)

I keep hearing the opposition talk about the ordinary Manitoban. I even heard one the other day refer to the little guy. I do not know who that person is. I have never yet met a person who was not extraordinary and unique. Who is it that is ordinary? The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer), is he ordinary? If so, what makes him ordinary? If not, why is he not? If he is not ordinary, what sets him apart from the mythical ordinary Manitoban?

I have been raised to believe in the value of the individual human being to see each person as special, to see each person as having a gift to contribute, whether it is a nurse or a doctor. I do not and will not believe that a person should be considered a nonworker because the work that he or she does is not deemed by the NDP to be real work. I have trouble with the socialist philosophy. They talk about ideology from the other side of the House, and the only ideology I consistently see bandied forward is the ideology that wafts to us from the benches opposite.

I believe that the socialist philosophy in its pure form is a benevolent theory. It is a benevolent theory. It is a caring theory. It is a benevolent theory, and I only have one objection to it: it does not work.

There was a man named Cecil Palmer, whom I do not know, but he once made a comment that I think reflected some truisms. He said that socialism is workable only in heaven where it is not needed and in hell where they have already got it.

I do not like the ideology that makes everybody equal at the lowest common denominator. I believe, what I believe the members on this side of the House believe that does not seem to be apparent in the beliefs espoused by the members opposite, that an

individual can more wisely determine the outcome of this fate than can the state determine that fate for him.

Perhaps I have more faith in the individual wisdom of the extraordinary men and women of this province than the opposition has. Perhaps that is why I would like them to have some money left in their pockets after the tax collector leaves. I would like to see what they could do with that money if they could be permitted to keep some of it.

The member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) yesterday had suggested that we should spend our way out of this recession, and that is a wonderful wish. It is a wonderful wish but to make that wish come true, to spend our way out of the recession as the member for Flin Flon wishes, we would need to have some money. Why do we not have any money? We do not have any money because we have interest on the debt that goes away like swamp gas—every day \$1.5 million. There is no money to spend our way out, and that is the reality that the members opposite absolutely refuse to acknowledge.

They do not even want to hear us use the word "reality." Reality is the "r" word to the opposition. That is the "r" word that they refuse to say. That is the "r" word that they refuse to acknowledge. Reality is the opposition's "r" word, and they are afraid to say it. It even has more than four letters, they are still afraid to say it. They are like compulsive gamblers. They think that wishing will make things happen, and it will not.

I started off, Mr. Speaker, by saying that I believe that all members care about the well-being of our province and its people. They sit in the House and I sit in the House, we jab, we jeer, we heckle, we yelp and we howl like little puppies and kittens at play, but this is serious business that we are about. They know it, we know it, and we are all in it together. I know the members opposite care even if they do not care to listen. I know they care about what happens to the people of Manitoba. There are good people on that side of the House, and I do not question their motives or the depth of their concern. I do question their methods. I do question their ideology, but I do not question their goodness, and I do not question their motives.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

I honestly believe that we all have the best interests of our constituents at heart. I honestly believe that. Whenever the members opposite, as

did the previous speaker, rise and say that there are some in this House who do not care, who do not have the best interests of the people at heart, when the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) stands and impugns the motives on this side of the House, I will retaliate with angry words, but I will not retaliate with the same accusation that he puts over here because I do not believe it.

We care very deeply about the people of this province and the future of this province, but the NDP are hopelessly naive if they think that they hold the monopoly on caring. They do not like monopolies, but they say they have a monopoly on caring, and they are naive to believe that. We care enough about the future of this province and the people of this province that we are willing to do the things that need to be done without resorting to taking the easy way out, without caving into the requests of every special interest group that walks past our caucus room door.

We ask for the support of the opposition. We ask for their assistance. I do not think we will get it, but we ask for it in any regard, because their support would be welcomed not only by us but by the citizens of Manitoba who want to live in a province where people can once again grow and achieve and prosper, a place where success can be found, a place where pride and opportunity and independence exist, and a place which will not burden our children for generations to come.

I know there are members opposite with children. I know they care about people. I know if they stop and think they will not want to burden their children for generations to come with taxes that are being paid on the things that we enjoy today. I want Manitoba to be a place which will not burden our children but which will inspire them to greatness and to strength.

Mr. Speaker, I ask for support for the throne speech, and I thank you for your attention in this House.

Mr. Nell Gaudry (St. Boniface): Monsieur le président, premièrement laissez-moi encore une fois vous féliciter pour le beau travail que vous faites en cette grand Chambre.

(Translation)

Mr. Speaker, first of all, allow me once again to congratulate you for the excellent work you do in this great Chamber.

(English)

I would like also to welcome the new Sergeant-at-Arms and the new members who were elected in 1990 and would like to congratulate the two new members in cabinet, the honourable member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh) and the honourable member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Stefanson). I also would like to welcome again the pages. I am sure they will enjoy working with the members of this Legislature.

Monsieur le président, c'est toujours un honneur pour un élu parlementaire d'utiliser son droit privilégié pour s'adresser à une si auguste assemblée telle que l'Assemblée législative du Manitoba.

Membres du gouvernement ou membres de l'opposition, nous sommes avant tout des Manitobains et des Manitobaines dont la tâche primordiale est le respect intégral du mandat que nous a confié l'électorat de notre province, notre si belle province, le Manitoba.

(Translation)

Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour for any elected parliamentarian to use their special right to address such an august assembly as the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

Whether we be members of the government or of the opposition, we are above all Manitobans, men and women, whose primary task is to totally fulfill the mandate the electorate entrusted to us in our province, our such beautiful province, Manitoba.

Ce mandat va jusqu'à l'immense responsabilité de défendre les intérêts des Canadiens et des Canadiennes de notre province, que cela soit dans le chaos économique que nous vivons actuellement, ou que cela soit dans le tumulte constitutionnel de Brian Mulroney.

Car, disons-le franchement, Brian Mulroney a surpassé son désir assoiffé de voir apparaître son nom dans les dictionnaires et les encyclopédies. Dorénavant, il sera écrit à tout jamais dans les annales de l'histoire: "Brian Mulroney, premier ministre du Canada 1984-1992, instigateur du déclin de l'empire conservateur, artisan de la brisure de l'unité canadienne, comploter de la chute économique du Canada pour le plus grand intérêt des multi-nationales américaines".

Il est déplorable que le gouvernement conservateur de notre province semble se résigner

à cette réalité, en épousant une certaine nonchalance dans l'attente passive des prochaines élections fédérales dont les résultats balayeront, au grand probable, le Canada de toute cette pièce de théâtre ridicule.

* (1530)

Car, il n'y a rien ni de positif, ni de créatif dans ce Discours du trône.

Nous sommes maintenant à la deuxième session du deuxième mandat de ce gouvernement, et tout ce que l'on peut lire et entendre dans le Discours du trône, est que le gouvernement fédéral est le méchant et le seul fautif.

Je crois que le gouvernement provincial devra se regarder pour voir ce qu'il a à offrir au Manitoba.

Quand on réalise la hausse du taux de faillites et le taux actuel du chômage, il est curieux de se faire dire que l'économie manitobaine est la plus stable et la plus diversifiée de tout le pays.

Monsieur le président, il semble évident que les communications entre les conservateurs du Manitoba et les conservateurs d'Ottawa doivent être embrouillées.

Le Discours du trône prétend aviser la population que la récession et la baisse des paiements de transfert fédéraux ont de lourdes conséquences pour les finances de la province et compromettent les réalisations du gouvernement.

Mais Monsieur le président, tout le monde sait déjà que nous sommes actuellement en récession, tout le monde sait déjà que Michael Wilson, le ministre fédéral "conservateur" des Finances a décidé de baisser les paiements de transfert.

Ce que nous ne savons pas, par contre, ce sont les intentions du gouvernement pour remédier à la situation.

Ce sont des solutions, des idées et du leadership dont nous avons besoin dans notre province.

De menacer de poursuivre le gouvernement fédéral en justice ne réduira pas la liste d'attente pour les opérations cardiaques à l'Hôpital de Saint-Boniface; de menacer d'emmener le gouvernement fédéral devant les tribunaux ne réduira pas le nombre de femmes et d'enfants abusés sexuellement ou psychologiquement.

Monsieur le président, en ma qualité de député, une personne au chômage est un chômeur de trop,

une personne pour qui tous les efforts devraient être mis en œuvre afin qu'elle trouve de l'emploi.

C'est bien trop facile de blâmer le gouvernement fédéral tout en créant une politique si peu productive, afin de faire oublier à la population qu'après tout, même si on épouse la même philosophie car on appartient au même parti politique, Brian Mulroney et Michael Wilson eux, sont les responsables malveillants.

Ceci devient une comédie qui n'est plus comique du tout.

Certains membres du gouvernement provincial n'ont-ils pas contribué à cette pagaille en appuyant Brian Mulroney au congrès à la chefferie du Parti conservateur en 1983?

Quand on regarde Air Canada, Radio-Canada, Standard Aero, le CN, sans mentionner le cadeau au cousin "conservateur" Don Getty, avec le déménagement de la Division du marketing de la Fondation des Loteries en Alberta, on réalise alors que la prospérité économique de notre province est belle et bien en péril. Merci aux conservateurs, et merci aux néo-démocrates avant eux.

Encore une fois, aucune direction concrète afin de sortir de la présente récession n'est amorcée dans le Discours du trône.

Monsieur le président, je dois également soulever certaines inquiétudes en ce qui concerne le dossier du libre échange entre le Canada, les Etats-Unis et le Mexique.

Dans le Discours du trône, le gouvernement ne fait qu'en effleurer le sujet en mentionnant qu'il suivra de près les négociations afin de veiller aux intérêts du Manitoba.

Mais Monsieur le président, quel est le rôle d'un gouvernement si ce n'est celui de prendre des initiatives en vue de préserver les justes intérêts de notre province? Le rôle d'un gouvernement n'est pas un de spectateur silencieux dans une salle de cinéma à qui l'on distribue du popcorn à l'entracte; le rôle du gouvernement n'est pas de supporter le bon vouloir d'Ottawa.

Je reconnais que le proverbe patience et longueur de temps ne font que force et courage peut fort bien s'appliquer, face à toutes les bévues commises par les conservateurs fédéraux, mais enfin quand cela va-t-il finir?

Monsieur le président, j'espère de tout cœur que le gouvernement provincial a l'intention de faire beaucoup plus que de suivre de près les négociations sur le libre échange entre le Canada, les Etats-Unis et le Mexique. Il faut absolument que l'erreur ne soit pas répétée.

Nous voyons déjà trop clairement que l'Accord de libre échange avec les Etats-Unis n'est fructueux que pour les Etats-Unis.

Encore tout dernièrement, en Colombie Britannique les brasseries Labatt et Molson ont officiellement porté plainte contre certaines brasseries américaines qu'elles accusent d'exporter leur bière au Canada à un prix tel que des mesures anti-dumping s'appliqueraient.

Il faut agir et agir vite. Ce sont des emplois qui en dépendent; c'est le pouvoir d'achat qui en dépend; c'est notre avenir économique tout entier qui en dépend et le gouvernement provincial doit exiger une représentation manitobaine équitable lors des consultations du gouvernement fédéral sur ce sujet.

Monsieur le président, je trouve quelque peu ironique de la part du gouvernement d'admettre, dans le Discours du trône, que "L'impôt sur le revenu des particuliers au Manitoba se place en deuxième position parmi les plus élevés au pays". Et le gouvernement de rajouter que "Nous avons pratiquement tous les impôts qui existent dans le pays".

Tout en étant soulagé de savoir que le gouvernement a enfin réalisé quelque chose que tous les Manitobains et toutes les Manitobaines savent déjà depuis bien longtemps, parce que ces taxes et cet impôt sortent de leur portefeuille, je me demande quand même ce que le gouvernement a fait à date, et ce qu'il va faire dans l'avenir afin de transmettre un message clair à Messieurs Wilson, Mulroney et Compagnie, à l'effet que les Manitobains et les Manitobaines, non seulement paient bien au-delà de leur part d'impôt, mais qu'en plus, la part qui est supposée leur revenir au travers des paiements de transfert, en réalité ne reviendra pas du tout.

En résumé, le gouvernement "conservateur" fédéral collecte des taxes et l'impôt sur le revenu en disant à la population qu'une certaine partie de ces argents prélevés leur reviendra au travers des paiements de transfert aux provinces, et soudain, sans crier gare, à la suite d'une décision sinon unilatérale du moins arbitraire, annonce à la

population canadienne qu'une certaine portion de la portion qui leur revient déjà de plein droit, s'est évaporée en fumée suite au bon vouloir des dirigeants fédéraux.

* (1540)

Le gouvernement provincial n'annonce aucune mesure afin de rassurer la population manitobaine qu'il a dressé un plan d'action pour contrecarrer les projets d'ordre despotique d'Ottawa.

Monsieur le président, en ce que concerne le dossier des affaires urbaines, j'aimerais féliciter le gouvernement d'avoir endossé la politique du Parti libéral qui envisage la réduction du nombre de sièges au conseil municipal de la ville de Winnipeg.

Je ne pense pas nécessaire de réitérer ce qui a déjà été dit à propos du comité nouvellement appointé car le gouvernement sait maintenant qu'il avait bel et bien tort en faisant les appointements politiques qu'il a jugé mauvais de faire.

J'aimerais néanmoins apporté quelques préoccupations personnelles sur ce sujet.

A mon avis, le gouvernement ne semble pas réaliser que la question va bien au-delà de la réduction du nombre de sièges au conseil municipal. Je pense que la situation demande une restructuration autant électorale qu'administrative. Par exemple et ce, à la veille du vingt-et-unième siècle, le système municipal pourrait évoluer au point de voir les demandes de construction des perrons et des garages être traitées de façon administrative, sans pour cela être le sujet d'une présentation automatique et tout ce que cela implique, devant le comité communautaire concerné.

Mais personnellement ce qui me préoccupe le plus, Monsieur le président, est l'avenir des francophones et de Saint-Boniface dans tout cela. Nulle part dans le Discours du trône il n'y a mention de garanties de services en français pour les francophones et pour Saint-Boniface.

Cela me tracasse d'autant plus qu'il n'y a aucune mention des services en français en général dans le Discours du trône.

Rien n'est mentionné à propos de l'absence d'un francophone à la Cour d'appel du Manitoba; ou de la proposition de réunir de nouveau et à Saint-Boniface le Bureau de l'éducation française et la Direction des ressources éducatives françaises; ou de la nomination d'un autre juge francophone à

la Cour provinciale à Saint-Boniface; ou la création d'un centre de traduction juridique à Saint-Boniface qui, desservant l'Ouest canadien et les Maritimes, aurait de très bonnes retombées économiques; ou de mentionner ou en est le dossier sur la Maison Térésa; etc., etc., etc.

Encore une fois, rien de concret en ce qui concerne la francophonie au Manitoba et cela est, je le répète, très navrant.

(Translation)

This mandate includes the immense responsibility of defending the interest of Canadians in our province, whether this be in the midst of the economic chaos that we are currently experiencing or whether it be in the midst of the constitutional commotion caused by Brian Mulroney.

Let us be frank, Brian Mulroney has surpassed his overweening desire to see his name appear in dictionaries and encyclopedias. From now on, it will be written forever in the annals of history: Brian Mulroney, Prime Minister of Canada, 1984-1992; instigator of the decline of the Conservative empire; artisan of the rupture of Canadian unity; mastermind behind the economic fall of Canada, working for the greater interest of American multinationals.

It is deplorable that the Conservative government in our province seems to be resigned to that reality in espousing a certain nonchalance by passively waiting for the next federal elections whose results will, in all probability, put an end to this ridiculous comedy of errors in Canada. For there is nothing positive and nothing creative in this Speech from the Throne.

We are now in the second session of the second mandate of this government and all we can read and hear in the Speech from the Throne is that the federal government is the bad guy and the only one at fault. I think that the provincial government should look at itself and see what it has to offer to Manitobans.

When we see the increase in the bankruptcy rates and the current unemployment rates, Mr. Speaker, it is curious for us to hear that the Manitoba economy is the most stable and most diversified in the entire country. It seems obvious that communications between the Conservatives in Manitoba and Conservatives in Ottawa must be fuzzy.

The Speech from the Throne seeks to inform the population that the recession and the drop in federal

transfer payments are having negative impacts on the finances of the province and are compromising the government's projects and plans but, Mr. Speaker, everybody already knows that we are now in a recession. Everybody already knows that Michael Wilson, the Tory federal Minister of Finance, has decided to lower the transfer payments. What we do not know, however, are the government's intentions to remedy the situation. What we need are solutions, ideas and leadership in this province.

Threatening to prosecute the federal government will not reduce the waiting list for heart operations at the St. Boniface Hospital, threatening to take the federal government before the courts will not reduce the number of women and children who are sexually or psychologically abused.

Mr. Speaker, for me as an elected member, an unemployed person is one unemployed person too many, a person for whom all efforts must be made to find that person a job. It is much too easy to blame the federal government while creating a policy that is so unproductive in order to make the people forget that in the end, even if the same philosophy is espoused because they belong to the same political party, Brian Mulroney and Michael Wilson are the ones who are malevolently responsible. This is becoming a comedy that is no longer funny at all.

Did some members of the provincial government not contribute to this mess by supporting Brian Mulroney during the leadership conference of the Conservative Party in 1983? When we look at Air Canada, the CBC, Standard Aero, CN, without mentioning the gift given to that Tory cousin, Don Getty, by moving the Marketing Division of the Lotteries Foundation to Alberta, we realize that the economic prosperity of our province is definitely in jeopardy. Thanks to the Conservatives, and thanks to the New Democrats before them.

Once again, no concrete plan to get out of this current recession is broached in the Speech from the Throne.

Mr. Speaker, I must also raise a certain number of concerns regarding the issue of free trade between Canada, the United States and Mexico. In the Speech from the Throne the government merely touches upon this subject by mentioning that it will closely follow the negotiations in order to watch over Manitoba's interests. However, what is the role of a

government if not to take initiatives in order to protect the just interests of our province?

The role of a government is not to be a silent spectator in a movie theatre who is given popcorn during the intermission. The role of the government is not to put up with whatever Ottawa wants to do.

I recognize that the old proverb, patience and time lead to strength and courage, may very well apply here in the light of all the blunders committed by the federal Conservatives, but the question is, just when will it all end?

Mr. Speaker, I hope with all my heart that the provincial government intends to do much more than to closely follow the negotiations on free trade between Canada, the United States and Mexico. The mistake must absolutely not be repeated.

We can already see too clearly that the free trade accord with the United States only profits the United States. Just recently in British Columbia the Labatt and Molson breweries brought an official complaint against certain American breweries that they accuse of exporting their beer to Canada at a price that would cause antidumping measures to be applied.

We have to act and act quickly. Jobs depend on this and purchasing power depends on this. Our entire economic future depends on this. The provincial government must demand a fair Manitoba representation during the federal government's consultations in this area.

Mr. Speaker, I find it somewhat ironic for the government to admit in the Speech from the Throne that we have the second highest personal income taxes in the country and for the government to add that we have virtually every tax implemented by anyone anywhere in Canada. While I am relieved to know that the government has finally realized something that every Manitoban has already known for a long, long time, because these taxes come out of their pockets, I nonetheless wonder what the government has done to date and what it is going to do in the future in order to send a clear message to Mr. Wilson, Mr. Mulroney and company to the effect that Manitobans—men and women—not only pay much more than their share of taxes, but in addition, the share that is supposed to come back to them through transfer payments, in fact, will not be coming back at all.

In short, the Tory federal government collects taxes on income and says to the people that a certain part of this money will come back to them through transfer payments to the provinces. Then suddenly, without forewarning, after a decision that was if not unilateral then arbitrary at least, announces to the people of Canada that a certain part of the share that should rightfully come back to them has suddenly evaporated into smoke at the whim of the federal leaders.

The provincial government is not announcing any measure to reassure the Manitoba population that it has drafted a plan of action to counter the despotic measures coming from Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, regarding the issue of urban affairs, I would like to congratulate the government for having endorsed the Liberal Party's policy which supports a reduction in the number of seats on the Winnipeg City Council. I do not think it is necessary to reiterate what has already been said regarding the newly appointed committee for the government now knows that it was quite wrong to make the political appointments that it made so badly.

I would, nonetheless, like to express a few personal concerns on this subject. In my opinion, the government does not seem to realize that the question goes far beyond the reduction in the number of seats on the City Council. I think that the situation requires an electoral and administrative restructuring. For instance, and this on the eve of the 21st Century, the municipal government could develop to the point of seeing applications to build steps and garages processed administratively without being automatically subject to an official presentation, and everything that that involves, before the given community committee.

Personally, what concerns me the most, Mr. Speaker, is the future of Francophones and of St. Boniface in this respect. Nowhere in the Speech from the Throne is there any mention of guarantees for French language services for Francophones and St. Boniface. It bothers me even more so that there is no mention of French language services, in general, in the Speech from the Throne. Nothing is mentioned regarding the absence of a Francophone on the Court of Appeal of Manitoba or the proposal to bring back to St. Boniface the Bureau de l'éducation française and the French Language Educational Resources Branch, or the appointment of another Francophone judge to the Provincial

Court in St. Boniface, or the creation of a legal translation centre in St. Boniface which, serving the Canadian west and the Maritimes, could have major economic fallouts, and no mention of the current status of Maison Teresa and so on and so forth. Once again, there is nothing concrete regarding the francophone community in Manitoba, and that is I repeat very upsetting.

(English)

For seniors, Mr. Speaker, once again we do not find anything in the throne speech. The White Paper on Elder Abuse, which was promised in May 1989, nearly three years ago, in June 1985, while in opposition the now Premier presented a resolution calling for immediate action against elder abuse. What has he done?—nothing. The result was a condensation of a 1982 report which cost an additional \$16,000 for political polish, like I said last year in my question to the Minister of Seniors then.

It is three times now that they have changed the Seniors minister. -(interjection)- Nothing happens, right. Seniors Transport Service, a private service that has been refused provincial support but which is listed in the Seniors Handbook published by the Seniors Directorate, also it is suggesting that City Council manipulates, it is blocking the funding.

Monsieur le président, avant de conclure j'aimerais demander au gouvernement de poser un geste en accord avec l'histoire du Manitoba.

Tout au long des années, notre province a toujours occupé judicieusement sa place dans la Confédération Canadienne et ce, grâce à ses idées d'avant-garde qui ont démontré aux autres provinces que les bonnes initiatives peuvent être facilement suivies.

Evidemment, je fais référence à la commémoration du 75^e anniversaire de l'obtention du droit de vote par les femmes.

Je suis persuadé, Monsieur le président, que la série d'activités du 12 mai, annoncées dans le Discours du trône, seront très bien accueillies par les Manitobains et les Manitobaines qui célébreront par la même occasion le jour de la fête du Manitoba.

Personnellement, je suggère néanmoins Monsieur le président, que le gouvernement aille un pas plus loin et qu'il envisage de voir le 12 mai devenir une date décrétée "Congé statutaire provincial pour commémorer le jour de la fête du Manitoba" en souvenir du 28 janvier 1916, qui fut la

date qui vit la majorité de la population féminine de la province acquérir le droit de vote, et également en hommage aux contributions des femmes à l'histoire du Manitoba.

Monsieur le président, je dois dire en conclusion que le Discours du trône est comparable à un radeau abandonné, qui flotte sur l'eau, sans direction apparente, au gré des vagues d'Ottawa et qui espère que le vent du bon sens sera plus fort que les courants houleux provenant du 24, chemin Sussex.

(Translation)

Mr. Speaker, before concluding I would like to ask the government to make a gesture that would be in harmony with the history of Manitoba. Throughout the years, our province has always judiciously occupied its place in the Canadian Confederation, thanks to its avant-garde ideas that have demonstrated to the other provinces that good initiatives can be easily followed.

Of course I am referring to the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the granting of the right to vote to women. I am convinced, Mr. Speaker, that the series of activities to take place on May 12, as announced in the Speech from the Throne, will be very warmly received by Manitobans, both men and women, who will be celebrating, on that same date, Manitoba Day.

Once again personally, Mr. Speaker, I suggest nonetheless that the government take one more step and that it think of seeing May 12 become a date officially known as the provincial statutory holiday to commemorate Manitoba Day, in memory of January 28, 1916, which was the date that saw the majority of the female population of the province obtain the right to vote and also in homage to the contribution made by women to the history of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I must say in conclusion that the Speech from the Throne is comparable to a boat that is adrift, that is floating on the water without any obvious direction at the whims of the waves of Ottawa, and hoping that the wind of common sense will be stronger than the raging currents coming from 24 Sussex Drive. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Plozman: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to respond to one of the most dismal throne speeches that I have seen and heard in the last 10 years in this House. I say that sincerely. It truly is totally bereft

of any initiative on behalf of the government to relieve the serious problems facing Manitobans, particularly rural Manitobans, and certainly from my point of view representing the constituency of Dauphin, that is of primary concern.

I would, before I start to deal with the throne speech, Mr. Speaker, like to congratulate our new Sergeant-at-Arms and all of the officers of the House for their appointments. Certainly, the new Sergeant-at-Arms is welcomed in this House, and I know that he will represent that important position with great dignity in this Legislature.

I certainly want to compliment you again, Mr. Speaker. At times in my throne speeches and budget speeches in the past I have not adhered to the kind of formality of wishing the Speaker well, but I will do it this time. I want to sincerely make that statement, because it comes from my heart, and that is that I believe you have brought very unique and extraordinary qualities to your position as Speaker. You have done an excellent job. I think most members, if not all members of this House, agree. I just want to put that on the record, and I say that sincerely.

Now as I said earlier, it is a pleasure to respond, although I do so with a very heavy heart insofar as the future of our province with the government that we have at the helm here in Manitoba. The throne speech that we see is basically a do-nothing, throw-up-the-hands surrender of the government with regard to the real problems facing our province. It is a Tory government caught up in its right-wing ideology at last.

We see the true colours coming through of this government that we did not see during its time in minority government in this province. We knew that would happen, of course. I think a lot of Manitobans knew that, and that is why they gave such a very conservative majority. I think the member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh) would realize that, that having a very slim majority, even more precarious as a result of some recent decisions taken by the Premier.

I think that the members opposite are going to be very cognizant of that slim majority every time there is a vote in this House. As they look around, where is the member for Portage la Prairie? Where is the member for Rhineland? Get him in here. Where is he? Is he here? What is going on? They will be extremely nervous as the votes take place.

* (1550)

There will be a lot of votes as we get into the Estimates, because we do believe that we have to demonstrate to the government that truly those programs that they need to have and those expenditures in their offices and their staff and so on and travel plans, the expenditures they need to have and those that they would like to have, we want to differentiate for them on behalf of the people of Manitoba on every opportunity. They will have to come and vote, and it will be very difficult as they look around and see insufficient numbers. I am sure the Liberals in many cases are going to be supporting and as a matter of fact maybe initiating some of those votes themselves just to ensure that this government is indeed on their toes and coming in to their votes time after time and day after day in this House to ensure that we keep them honest and representing the true best interests of the people of Manitoba.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have seen a recession in this province initiated as a result of Conservative government actions. It is not unlike the recession that took place in the early '80s, late '70s under the Lyon government in this province. At that time, of course, Manitoba had the dubious distinction of being first in. It was a Manitoba-induced recession in a lot of respects. In this case it seems like we are going to be the last out. We are going to be 10th out of 10, as our Leader (Mr. Doer) has so correctly pointed out to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) during several Question Periods in this House.

A very similar type of circumstances again in terms of response by the Conservatives—it is not a surprise that they are resorting to acute protracted restraint and caught up in that philosophy and ideology in order to justify what they are going to be doing to those people who are most vulnerable in society. We are going to see that through the budget and through the Estimates that are tabled in this House.

We see the clues to that kind of action already in the insufficient funding for education that was announced recently, the leaked documents that show that the government is targeting those people most vulnerable in society with the single-parent job access programs and student employment programs, the employment centres, the human resources centres. All of these programs indicate to us that the government is targeting those who are

least able to fight back in society as opposed to those who already have sufficiently. I am speaking basically about those who are undertaxed in this province.

You know, the Conservatives are fond of mentioning the taxation rate in this province. They never refer to the fact that the corporate taxes in this country have, each successive year during the Liberal and Conservative governments nationally, contributed less to the total revenue of this country. As a matter of fact, it is under 10 percent at the present time, and it used to be over 20, 30 percent, at one time as high into the 40s, years past and several decades past. What we are seeing is a slippage in revenue from the corporations, and we see a much greater tax burden on the average working person in this province and in the country. That is deliberate tax strategy by Conservatives in the country.

We find this government blaming everyone but themselves, much like the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) did in his speech yesterday as to his fortunes, blaming everyone else, blaming the opposition, blaming the members here for targeting, blaming the media, but certainly not blaming himself.

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

The government should certainly look at themselves when they decide as how they got into this mess instead of blaming everyone else around, whether it be the former government or the Mulroney government. I want to tell you, Madam Deputy Speaker, that in the throne speech they mentioned the federal government cutbacks no fewer than 12 times, these Conservative bad guys in Ottawa who have caused all this problem for this government. Surely they have caused a problem, but is this government acting any differently? Is it responding any differently?

Yes, you know, we have to ask this question in the House. All those members out there who talk about these bad guys in Ottawa; I would be willing to bet that every single one of them voted Conservative in the last federal election. Whom did they vote for? They put them in there. They voted for those Conservatives. They cannot have it both ways.

They cannot say on the one hand they are bad guys and then they vote them in when it comes to

election time. Now they have to search their souls and decide when the next federal election comes along whether they are indeed going to continue to support those Conservatives who are harming this country and tearing our country apart, as the Mulroney government has done. Twelve times in this throne speech this government has chastised the federal government for its insufficient revenues to this province.

They are late converts to that battle, very late. As a matter of fact, they were fighting against the government when the New Democrats were in government when we were trying to take on the federal government for its cutbacks in transfer payments to this province. We took on that battle and we asked—we implored the opposition. We said, please join with us so that it is a united voice against what Ottawa is doing to us. The Johnny-come-latelies, now they are saying that is what we would say, too, six years after we have seen the terrible cuts that are taking place in health and post-secondary education funding and transfer payments from the federal government.

I want to tell you—

Point of Order

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker, I do believe that there are still honourable members on this side and not Johnny-come-latelies.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for St. Norbert does not have a point of order.

Mr. Plohman: Madam Deputy Speaker, I kind of thought that, too, and I am pleased with your ruling.

* * *

Mr. Plohman: I want to -(interjection)- I said Madam Deputy Speaker. Do you have a problem with that?

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to deal with the fact that this government has supported federal policies that have contributed to the recession. They have supported cuts except when it is to us in Manitoba, because they are practising this with their own government. They have supported deregulation. They have supported free trade, which has hurt our province dramatically over the last two years and continues to hurt in terms of jobs that are created and economic growth. In fact, it is resulting in decline in our balance of payments, an

increased deficit on our balance of payments with the United States. We see cutbacks in services, and this government endorses those. We see a tax burden for the working people in terms of income taxes and so on that they retain, but they cut taxes for corporations and they keep the corporate tax burden low. That is the policy of this government here in Manitoba, the same as the federal government. So they support all these programs and these policies and yet they say they are bad because that is the thing to say, politically right now.

As I said earlier, they voted them in, in Ottawa. They endorse their doctrine and their policies and their ideology. They really should be a little more honest with the people of Manitoba when they criticize, and say: We are the same guys; do not vote for us either; just like the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of Manitoba tried to have Manitobans do last September when he removed Progressive Conservative because he understood that. He understood being an astute politician, the Premier understood that people would make that connection as they rightly should. So he attempted to remove themselves from that association by taking Progressive Conservative off the ballot and that was a devious action.

* (1600)

Let us take a look at what happened during the last number of years. You know the member for Assiniboia—well, the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) wants to get personal. Let us deal with these issues. Now I want to indicate to the member for Assiniboia who talks about the debt load, and even the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) when he was answering questions on Monday said, well, Saskatchewan and Alberta do not have the debt burden we have and they can enter into all kinds of agreements with the private sector to stimulate the economy. He said, we do not have that luxury here in Manitoba.

Well, the fact is that according to the information that is provided from various sources, the net public sector debt per capita in Manitoba is not the highest in the country. As a matter of fact, Saskatchewan is higher and Quebec is higher and the federal government are higher.

Now you look at Saskatchewan, and this all happened in the last eight years and this is what so deplorable about what has happened in the mismanagement in Saskatchewan, because only

eight or nine years ago, the New Democratic government had a surplus in Saskatchewan. Along came the mismanaged Tories—and they would like to say those people, those men and women who know how to manage the economy, the business people—and they threw Saskatchewan into a sea of red ink unprecedented in this country. As a matter of fact, they have the highest per capita debt per person in Saskatchewan.

We cannot remove ourselves from that as the member for Assiniboia would like to have us do, from that reality that governments across this country incurred huge deficits over the latter part of the '80s and during the '80s to get out of the recession. This happened right across the country, including at the federal level, and so it was not unique to Manitoba. So let her not say so self-righteously that it was the NDP government that made all this mess because in fact it existed across this country, let us face facts. The deficit has increased across this country over that period of time. Quebec, Saskatchewan, Canada are all—even though we are a have-not province in this province, we are a relatively poor province compared to the richer provinces in this country, those are all higher.

Even though we are a have-not province, their debts are higher. -(interjection)- We are a have-not province. You know the members do not even seem to understand, Madam Deputy Speaker, that Manitoba is not a wealthy province and that is not a derogatory statement about the people. The fact is we do have less wealth in this province than we have in those other provinces, in Ontario, in Alberta, in British Columbia.

So those are the realities and yet our per capita debt is lower than several provinces in this country. That is a point that must be recognized by these members of the government and particularly those members and newly elected members who like to think that they can go and criticize with impugny the previous government, that they did not know what they were doing and we know. The self-righteous attitude that comes out of some of these new members, it will be tempered with time. Responsibility will certainly temper that attitude and we will see a changed attitude over a period of time as they realize. As those members realize the burden of government, as they realize the difficult decisions that they have to make, they will start to realize and appreciate what has happened before them.

Let me indicate the confusion on the part of the Filmon government at the present time, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and his ministers. Only a few short years ago, during the Estimates process, the opposition was questioning the Department of Finance. At that particular time, they identified the fair share office, which the Minister of Finance in the New Democratic government had established in Ottawa in an attempt to overcome and defeat Bill C-96, which was the bill that would reduce transfer payments to the province. The fair share office was established as a catalyst and as a nucleus to develop a grassroots lobby effort, a coalition, against the actions of the federal government.

The Conservative opposition at that time, led by the Finance critic and later joined by the now Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), the member for Pembina, and the member for Arthur, the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) at this time, and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) himself joined in chastising the government and moved a motion to delete the fair share office because they said we did not need it.

That is why Frances Russell, who is a reporter that I am sure is close to the hearts of all Tories, said in her article just last week: "Manitoba Tories are late and opportunistic converts to maintaining federal funding for health and post-secondary education. When the cutbacks got rolling five years ago, the Conservatives, then in opposition, were the first to applaud them.

"As late as November, 1989, Premier Gary Filmon told Prime Minister Brian Mulroney ' . . . your government has taken some promising steps (on health services and health care financing) and we want to work with you to make them as effective as possible.'"

Now, they certainly were late converts in the battle against cutbacks in Ottawa, and we only have to look at the Hansard of Thursday, July 10, 1986, when this motion was made, when the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Eugene Kostyra, at that time, was being questioned by the Finance critic, the member for Morris who is now Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). He says, does this government believe that they can be successful in convincing Ottawa, and I say successful? He did not think that the office had to stay open if it would not be successful obviously, so he wanted to take it out because we could not guarantee that it would be successful in the battle against Ottawa.

He said, I feel the best way to object to the government, firstly allowing itself to be involved—allowing itself to be involved—in a system where they begin to bring together people to convince them of the colossal fear of some change and try to have them take forward the battle on the government's behalf. Now here is the member for Morris, who is now the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), saying it is reprehensible. He says, I find in a sense reprehensible that the government would try to gather together a coalition of people to fight what Ottawa was doing to this province in our health care system and our post-secondary education system that we all believe is so important to our province and that is the best, has been described by many, and I believe it, the best in Canada, the best in the world.

We have a Finance critic who stands in this House and said he finds it reprehensible that the government would try to coalesce support for the fight against Ottawa by having the fair-share office in place, and so he moved that this office be deleted. Following that, I was in the Legislature and I expressed my dismay at the fact that the opposition would actually make such a motion that would save money for the taxpayers of Manitoba, that would provide income to the people of Manitoba. Following that, the following ministers, who were not ministers at that time when they were in opposition, the member for Arthur, the member for Pembina and the Premier stood up one after another and said that that \$50,000 for that office was a waste of money and that we should not be spending that money. We should be lowering our deficit with that \$50,000 and not having that force to bring people together in coalition to fight Ottawa there. It did not need to be done.

They said it one after another. We have those, and I quote, Madam Deputy Speaker, we have these ministers go flocking off to Ottawa. Manitoba was the only provincial government, despite the fact that they said that every other government agreed with their position, was the only provincial government that went to make representation on the bill in Ottawa.

Can you imagine? They were criticizing Manitoba, the government, in addition to having that office, criticizing the government, the ministers, my colleagues at that time, the Minister of Education, the member for Flin Flon and the Minister of Health, the member for St. Boniface at that time, for going

to Ottawa and making representation on Bill C-96 that would cut transfer payments to this province, and they chastised the government and the ministers for doing that.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that is what they did when we took on the fight in 1986 to stop the transfer payment cuts to Manitoba. Now they have identified, they have finally woke up and said, oh, this must be serious. They said, and the Premier at that time, we do not need a fair-share office. He said it over and over and over again that we were misrepresenting the fact that in fact Manitoba was getting more money.

The Minister of Health at that time said, he pointed to the document that was provided, that was printed and developed by the Manitoba government at the time when we were in government, to show how the cutbacks would affect, he said, we see, I just simply point to you the chart in the middle which says, by 1990-91 a projection of 14 percent cutback as a percentage of total health and higher education costs. No Department of Finance could put this out, because it is simply not factual. That is what the Minister of Health said.

* (1610)

I challenge him now to show that that was not an underestimate, if anything, of the cutbacks in transfer payments since 1986, that in fact the cutbacks have been even more severe than we were projecting in those documents. And they say we were fearmongering and we were trying to encourage all this bad feeling towards Ottawa. What we were doing was try to mobilize the people of Manitoba as they must do, as they have now set up a cabinet committee to do and as they have not been doing over the last three years. They have been doormats in terms of diplomacy with the federal government. They have been walked all over. They have not accomplished anything in standing up for Manitoba. They do not have the backbone to do it, and that is why Manitoba has suffered so badly in opposition. They did not stand behind the government in our battle with Ottawa. They chastised us, and now we can see the actions and the results of it, and they continue to make apologies for the federal government despite the rhetoric, the rhetoric we see in this Speech from the Throne, which now is going to put the blame on Ottawa.

Well, is that not something, that they finally woke up? Do they mean it sincerely? Are they really going

to take on the fight? Are they going to stand up for Manitobans now, even though it is almost too late? I think that the Premier, if he will admit that he made a mistake, this is one time he should admit it, because in fact he should have been supporting the government of Manitoba regardless of political stripe in 1986 when we were engaging this fight with the federal government to stand up for our province.

I wanted to talk for a few moments—Madam Deputy Speaker, could you tell me how much time I have left? -(interjection)- Thank you.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about agriculture and what is wrong with the program that this provincial government is putting in place. There is a very serious situation in rural Manitoba at the present time. People are in despair. I have received numerous letters from farmers across the province expressing their deep concern about the lack of action, the lack of a realistic program to deal with the problems in rural Manitoba.

I received one from a 35-year-old farmer who said he had been farming for 17 years with the help of his father. I will quote from him. He said, "Dad is 72 now and is finally retiring. That leaves me, my wife and four children on our own. We have always wanted to be independent, and we were doing very well until the 1988 drought. As things are right now, we are sitting with a high debt load for machinery and land, bins full of grain and very little cash. The farm has been our life. It is not an adventure one can jump in and out of. This is a way of living that requires diligence, patience, creative ambition and most of all a continuous conviction of hope. That hope is slowly grinding down due to circumstances beyond our control. As farmers, we are used to living with uncertainty, but it is difficult to maintain a positive outlook in today's world."

Then they go on to talk about the GRIP program and some of the other programs put forward. They said, "Crop insurance does not pay total input costs and premiums are too high. In fact, GRIP stinks. According to the info we have to date, we need more than input costs, and in fact many farmers are going to get less than input costs under this program."

He says, "I farm 880 acres and will need \$170 per acre for the next five years to pay off all my debts due to the 1988 drought." He said, "We were doing well until the 1988 drought, but it is impossible to lose a possible income of over \$100,000 and bounce back unharmed."

You see, the debt load is out there for young farmers who have attempted to make a livelihood in farming, who want so desperately to retain the rural way of life and to stay on the land. They cannot do it even with this program, because this program is a prescription for loss. It is designed so that farmers will continue to lose money.

I received a call from District 1 Crop Insurance area where they indicate their cost of production is \$102 and they will only get \$96, based on a \$2.65 per bushel for market value for wheat. They will only get \$96.80 from GRIP, and so they will continue to lose money. Farmers even in the first year when the formula is supposed to yield more than in any other time because the rolling average will be the highest in the first year, they are going to lose money under this program, many of them.

The government has not seen fit to ensure that there is at least a minimum payment per acre to ensure that costs are looked after, cost of production. They refuse to recognize cost of production. They refuse to recognize the reality of costs for this program. They are basing it instead on a rolling average which has no relevance to the actual costs of production.

In addition to that, the program lacks in fairness because what it does is it pays out the least to those hardest hit by natural disasters over the last number of years because it is based on crop insurance data. So those who are in areas that have had low yields because of drought and because of natural disasters are going to get less out of this program instead of more.

Those who need it most, those who are hardest hit and struggling the most at the present time are going to receive the least under GRIP. That is an intolerable situation in this program because in fact where the areas of the province that have been doing well, they are going to receive profitable returns from the GRIP program and some larger farms are going to receive huge amounts. The government refuses to put a cap on the total benefits in those areas so that it can beef up the program for those in the poorer areas so in fact all will have some chance of survival under this program.

We are not asking for more and more money. In fact, we are doing quite the opposite. We are saying cap it so you do not give \$250,000 to one corporate farm. The maximum you can give is \$50,000. You have five more farmers that could be helped to the

maximum \$50,000 for every one \$250,000 pay-out to an individual corporate farm. Why are we not doing that? It is eminently reasonable to do that, but they refuse, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Now I say as well that there is real serious problem with the premiums. Farmers are going to have to pay the premiums in September or in late summer. They are going to have to pay it based on production estimates and levels that they would like to insure, but they are not going to get any returns until they sell their grain. Therefore, they are not in many cases going to even receive the money back that they paid in premiums unless they sell their grain.

I say and we propose, Madam Deputy Speaker, that in fact the government should change the program so that the premiums are deducted at point of sale so that they are not faced with this tremendous burden of paying those additional premiums before they receive any income. Compounding this whole situation is no deficiency payment announced by the two levels of government for this spring when they need it most. They need it now to make plans for putting in their crop and there is no announcement made. As a matter of fact, the minister seems to support the position that there should be linkage between the GRIP program and signing up for it, and receiving any short-term deficiency payment at this time. That is completely and totally wrong insofar as this minister in representing the best interests of rural Manitoba, so I say, Madam Deputy Speaker, that these are serious concerns.

* (1620)

As a matter of fact, what we say to the government is that they should get on with that payment that is needed this spring. They should go back to the drawing board and improve this program rather than rushing into it causing huge confusion, a great deal of confusion, amongst producers out there and forcing them to sign up for something that they are unsure of at this time, to give it more time, to develop the program and go with another ad hoc payment, which the government says they will not do at this time.

Now I look at the other ways that this government has failed rural Manitoba. The most blatant one is in their flagship policy or program for rural areas, that being the decentralization plan. Decentralization was going to guarantee the future of rural Manitoba.

It was going to provide all of these jobs, and they had the Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities and Union of Manitoba Municipalities all buzzing at this announcement that finally there was going to be all of these jobs moving out of the city. Finally, we got what is coming to us. Well, I will tell you, this government has not delivered a thing on that. Now they even refuse to reflect on it in the throne speech. There is nothing there. There is no further commitment that they are going to continue to implement and expand.

Remember, they talked about Phase 2. What a joke, Phase 2. If it was not so serious, it would be funny. They talked about a massive Phase 2 for rural Manitoba and decentralization, and they cannot even do Phase 1. They are backing off from that commitment; it was just to get votes before the 1990 election. Now we do not hear anything of it. All of the sudden it is too costly for rural areas, so they have let rural Manitoba down terribly with that program, with abandonment of that program. That was the only thing they had. They had a rural development committee of cabinet for two years already, but there is nothing to show for it. There are no policies; there are no programs put in place for rural Manitoba, no strategy, no planning, nothing. Over two years of having that committee in place and now what do they announce in this throne speech? A task force on rural diversification—now they are going to go and start studying this stuff all over again.

What are we going to see, another two years? They are going to say, well, maybe we will get through to the next election yet. We can continue to leave the impression we are going to do something, that we care about rural Manitoba, but there is not going to be anything there, just smoke and mirrors. That is precisely what rural Manitoba has seen out of this government. As a matter of fact, they are going to see much worse than that. They are going to see regressive steps, conscious negative steps in terms of employment in our rural areas rather than growth. We see the evidence of that in the social programs that they wish to cut in Family Services. We see it in the housing authorities that they have cut, which are hurting our small communities. What a policy! After announcing that they favour and that they are in support of the principle of decentralization, they turn around and centralize. They centralize the housing authorities, take away the jobs that are in those small rural communities.

They talk about savings; I would like to see it. They are going to have to contract out all that work that is now being done by a modestly paid maintenance person. That was being done in those communities. They are going to send out from a central community, where there is a large contractor, send them out to go and fix a door or do some painting or replace a window. Either they are going to not do it, and they will save money by not doing it and the houses will fall into disrepair, or else they will do it at enormous costs. In fact, there will not be any saving, as they announced that there would be under this program. I believe there will not be any savings, and I will wait to see if that prophecy comes true, because I am certain it will.

Madam Deputy Speaker, when we get to rural economic development, we see this government talking about diversification, about value-added processing and so on. Well, you know, we need to have processing of our natural products, of agricultural products, of rough fish and of forestry products in this province. We do need that, but while they are talking about that, they are going out of business right beneath their noses. Parkland Feeds in Dauphin has just gone into receivership. Parkland Feeds, the implement dealers that provided some good jobs in rural areas under Co-op Implements, they are going out of business under this government. They are oblivious to that. They are not even recognizing that in the throne speech. They are ignoring it.

They say that the private sector is going to pull this province out of the recession. That is what they say is going to happen. It is all going to happen on its own, just like Sterling Lyon was going to have it happen in this province. We saw what happened, acute protracted restraint, a lack of a partner for the communities, the failure of this government to renegotiate these ERDA agreements, which stimulated economic development in so many different sectors in forestry and minerals, in tourism and transportation, communications. They have not been renewed by this government. The funding has dried up for the province of Manitoba. There is no partner any longer in this province to work, as the Premier (Mr. Filmon) says, hand in hand to bring us out of this recession and restore the economic growth that we need in this province.

That is what we are not getting by a do-nothing government. We cannot get any growth. There is no partner there, and it will not happen by itself. As a

matter of fact, the old trickle-down theory that they talk about, cutting taxes for the corporations in order to stimulate the economy, has proven to be a failure over and over and over again by Conservative governments in this province and in this country. When will they ever learn?

We can only hope, Madam Deputy Speaker, as we go through this session of the House and bring forward to them our ideas and suggestions as I did on this agriculture program, concrete ideas and recommendations as we bring those forward and as we press the issues with votes time after time so that they drag their members in here and stick to their chairs and vote as we do that, they will come to their senses and realize, after a long, hard session—and several of those before the next election.

Maybe it will not be so many. We do not know how the member for Portage is going to vote, and the member for Rhineland, but indeed we will ensure that they are going to vote in this House on every issue to show these members of this government that in fact they have to make a decision between what they need and what they would like to have.

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Madam Deputy Speaker, first of all, I would like to offer my congratulations to the Speaker on his reappointment to the office of Speaker. I look forward to him continuing to preside with the competence that he has in the past.

As well, I take this opportunity to once again welcome the pages. I know that they will benefit importantly from their experiences in the House.

To the new Sergeant-at-Arms, I say welcome and I wish him well in his new position.

I always wish to again thank the people of Kirkfield Park constituency for their support. I will certainly do everything I can to serve them well.

At this time, I would like to thank Premier Filmon for the confidence he has placed in me by appointing me Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism and Minister responsible for Fitness and Sport.

I also want to offer my congratulations to the new Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs, the Honourable Linda McIntosh. I wish her well with the many challenges that lie ahead.

I would be remiss, Madam Deputy Speaker, if I did not pay tribute to my colleague, the Honourable Jim Ernst, who preceded me in the portfolio which I now hold. Over the past few weeks, I have been

made aware repeatedly of the many excellent things he did while minister.

Finally, I want to thank the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) for the kind words he expressed yesterday. He also mentioned that I am originally from Manitoba's Interlake and that my wife is from the Portage la Prairie area. He says Portage la Prairie. She is actually from around MacGregor, Manitoba, but that is close enough.

I want to assure him, as I do the whole House, that I recognize the importance of rural Manitoba, just as I recognize the importance of our larger centres, Winnipeg, Brandon and the other larger cities throughout Manitoba, and that when any part of our province benefits, I like to think that we all benefit.

In the throne speech debate last October, I told the House a little bit about myself and what I hope to accomplish for my constituents and for all of the people of Manitoba. I expressed my belief that the economic issue will be one of the most important facing Manitoba over the next decade.

* (1630)

I said that it is critical that we create a climate that will enable us to provide quality job opportunities for our young people so that more will stay and contribute to the economy of our province. To eliminate the antibusiness perception of Manitoba and attract new business and entrepreneurs to our province. To provide a better taxation environment in order to spread the tax load over a larger base and help make us more competitive. To integrate our educational and training programs with our economic activities, and to take advantage of the major resource and market created by our aging population.

My main point, Madam Deputy Speaker, was that there must be a commitment and participation by all Manitobans to economic development. My feelings have not changed. I am, however, challenged by the direct responsibilities I have been given to pursue these goals.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Filmon government has accomplished a great deal in a short period of time. Despite being in the midst of a national recession, the climate for doing business in this province is much improved and it is getting better. There has been significant improvements under our government in the areas of taxation and labour

legislation. Manitoba has a lot to offer, including a competitive wage structure, quality labour force, low employer turnover rates, reasonable occupancy costs, our central time zone and so on.

These are but some of Manitoba's strengths and why I am optimistic about our future. Manitobans everywhere are moving ahead together, planning for the future and doing the things they need to do to make things happen. The Winnipeg 2000 Leaders Committee is just one example. This will all serve us in good stead as we come out of the recession we are in. I want to talk a little bit about the recession a little later in my comments, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The throne speech is clear evidence that this government is continuing to do its part. Creating new and better jobs remains the foremost goal of its economic agenda. This government is committed to building a strong economy that will provide jobs and economic opportunities for Manitobans in every region of this province.

Significantly, the throne speech recognizes that it is not just new jobs that are needed, but it is better jobs as well. The Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism is to have an important role in continuing efforts to implement the economic plan laid out at the beginning of our last session. I have been consulting at length with my officials on the actions we will be taking.

I am confident that an increased emphasis on major strategic initiatives will lead to important results which would not otherwise be possible. Our focus on an environmental industries development strategy will not only capture economic benefits from emerging needs and markets, but also support the attainment of the government's sustainable development goals.

Accelerating plans for the Manitoba Innovations Council will promote Manitoba's future strength as an innovation- and knowledge-based economy. A new federal-provincial tourism agreement will build on the province's strengths as a destination area for all visitors.

Our efforts on the trade front will serve to protect and broaden foreign markets for provincial goods and services and improve provincial trade balances. The high priority for the successful health industry and aerospace strategic initiatives will be maintained.

Madam Deputy Speaker, national and international circumstances present many challenges for our province and indeed for all of Canada. The external environment contains a wide range of complex and sometimes unfamiliar factors. The change is rapid, accelerating and becoming increasingly unpredictable. In fact, there is growing uncertainty.

Economies everywhere are shifting to ones which are based on human capital. Globalization is bringing the peoples of the world together and building interdependence. Traditional methods for influencing economic growth and behaviour are in fact losing their effectiveness.

Here at home, prospective changes in the economic union of Canada potentially have major implications for the province. These changes, however, present opportunities. The trick is to take advantage of change and to identify and seize on those opportunities.

We want to build an economy which can capitalize on change, withstand it if need be. Our security and our prosperity rest in being strong, in fostering an economy which is inherently capable of meeting in full the employment and income needs of all of our citizens.

In addition to being a lead agency in government for economic development, the department seeks to foster steady, stable growth and an economic structure in keeping with the employment, income and human development aspirations of Manitobans.

The department does this in many ways, Madam Deputy Speaker, by capitalizing, as I have suggested, on new opportunities, opening new markets, attracting new investment, building new economic structures and promoting new technology.

We also build on our strengths, expanding the existing economic base, developing our tourism potential and securing markets. We also promote the development of entrepreneurs and small businesses, which are skills development and improving access to capital.

Fundamentally, we have to work together, whether it be the private sector and the provincial government, federal-provincial co-operation, interprovincial co-operation and in fact co-operation with the states to the south of us.

In conclusion on that aspect, this government knows where it wants to go and we do know how to get there. While I am extremely optimistic about Manitoba's future, I want to now turn to the current situation and the recession we do in fact find ourselves in today. I like to think that nobody in this Legislature likes to see job losses, higher unemployment or increased bankruptcies.

I assure you, Madam Deputy Speaker, that I do not like to witness those kinds of events and that our government continues to work aggressively to minimize the impact here in Manitoba, but there seem to be people in this Legislature who have yet to realize that we are in a national recession. -(interjection)- I do not know what to tell you, Mr. Minister. Some quote a single negative statistic and seem to imply that this recession is in fact only happening here in Manitoba.

Well, I want to provide you with some figures at this time. While none of us want to see job losses or bankruptcies, let us put those statistics in perspective and see what is happening in the rest of Canada. I hope those who are in the House will pay close attention to some of these statistics.

In terms of employment, while we recognize that manufacturing employment is down in Manitoba by a rate of approximately 3.6 percent, that compares to Ontario and Quebec, for example, which are down. Ontario is down 12.6 percent, Quebec is down 11 percent and Canada's decline rate is 10 percent. We are not pleased with a 3.6 percent decline. When you look what is happening across the country, when you look at what is happening in a province like Ontario that is almost four times the decline in manufacturing employment, it gives you a feel and a sense for what is happening in the rest of Canada.

I want to talk about an other economic indicator, shipments. The total value of shipments in Manitoba once again unfortunately decreased by some 1.7 percent, compared with a Canadian drop of 3.0 percent. Despite some weakening, this is the fifth straight year that Manitoba has outperformed the Canadian average.

I want to talk about an other economic indicator, capital investment, expected to reach \$293 million in 1991, up 7.7 percent from last year. This is the fourth best growth rate among the provinces.

I want to talk about bankruptcies, Madam Deputy Speaker, something that none of us like to see occur

in this province. There were 35 business bankruptcies in Manitoba during January, up 16.7 percent from January of 1990. This was the third lowest rate increase among the provinces and well below the current national increase of 43 percent. Most other provinces have much larger increase than Manitoba, notably Ontario—98.2 percent, six times what is happening here in Manitoba.

I also want to give you some history on bankruptcies, Madam Deputy Speaker. Manitoba bankruptcies per 1,000 new business starts are currently running at about 44 per 1,000, up from a rate of 41 per 1,000 in 1989, but once again to put this in perspective, the highest level of business bankruptcies per 1,000 starts in Manitoba over the last 20 years occurred in 1982 and 1983. That is 58 per 1,000 in 1982 and 45 per 1,000 in 1983. I ask you, what party was the government at that time?

I do not want to bore you with statistics, but there are a few more I would like to share, because it clearly helps to put things in perspective. We have heard many things about this. We have heard the number 10 many times today from one particular party. The current Conference Board provincial forecast indicates a decline of .8 percent in real domestic growth for Manitoba this year. That percentage from the Conference Board does in fact place Manitoba 10th, based on the Conference Board's projection. However, the current average of seven private economic forecasters, including the Conference Board—so six others plus the Conference Board—suggest only a margin of decline of .1 percent in Manitoba this year, matching the Canadian average.

I want to indicate to you, Madam Deputy Speaker, who some of those companies are, those organizations are, the private economic forecasters. They are: The Bank of Nova Scotia, they do not show Manitoba 10th, they show Manitoba eighth; Informetrica, they do not show Manitoba 10th; they show us sixth; Conference Board does show us 10th; Toronto Dominion Bank shows Manitoba fifth; The Bank of Commerce shows Manitoba seventh; The Royal Bank shows Manitoba fifth—for an overall average of seven, still something we are not pleased with, but unquestionably significantly different than the 10th that we continually hear from a particular party in this House.

When dealing with numbers, rather than focus on one economic indicator out of hundreds of economic

indicators, I wish certain individuals and parties in this House would bring a balanced perspective to really where Manitoba is positioned relative to what is happening in the rest of Canada.

* (1640)

I want to talk about just a couple of more statistics, Madam Deputy Speaker. I want to talk about our employment. Once again, the total Manitoba employment averaged 484,000 persons for the first two months of '90 year. Again, while this is a decline of 1.6 percent, it compares better than the Canadian average of 2.4 percent. The employment rate, Manitoba's seasonally adjusted employment rate was 8.5 percent in February 1991. The current Canadian rate is 10.2 percent, so Manitoba's rate was the third lowest, as our Premier (Mr. Filmon) has indicated on many occasions, in all of Canada.

The last one I want to talk about is retail sales. It increased by 2.4 percent to the end of 1990 compared with the same period in 1981. Once again, Manitoba's retail sector is faring better than central Canada's. Ontario and Quebec recorded declines. While Manitoba recorded an increase, Ontario recorded a decline of .5 percent, Quebec recorded a decline of .8 percent respectively during that period, and Canada's growth rate was 1 percent.

Once again, Madam Deputy Speaker, when you look at all kinds of major economic indicators, you see that Manitoba is performing at or above the Canadian average in many instances. While some of the news is not good news here at home in Manitoba, if you get your head out of the sand and realize the difficult situation that Canada in total is faced with, you realize that Manitoba relative to the rest of Canada is coming through this session reasonably well, certainly in comparison.

I guess the best news of all is that the Conference Board of Canada indicates that all provinces are expected to be in recovery by the summer of this year and to post relatively good growth rates in 1992.

I think I have quoted enough statistics, Madam Deputy Speaker. I hope my message gets through. I heard one member today reference this 10th position over and over and over again. If you look at the performance indicators from major institutions in our country indicating that Manitoba favours much better in many instances, I only ask that, rather than strike fear and unnecessary concern in the hearts

and minds of many people, there would be a more balanced approach and a more honest and forthright recognition of what the performance indicators really do reflect.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

I cannot reiterate often enough, nobody is happy with what is happening in Manitoba, nobody is happy with job losses, nobody is happy with bankruptcies, nobody is happy with some of the things we see occurring in this province, but let us keep in mind what is happening nationally, and let us give this government some credit for weathering a very difficult economic storm that is taking place across this nation. When it does come to an end, I feel that our province is going to be very well positioned in terms of coming out of it.

That is partly why it is so very important to keep our expenditures under control and not to increase taxes, so that in fact we will be well positioned as we come out of this recession. The most direct impact of any government on its economy is through its taxes. Therefore the approach offered by some of trying to spend our way through this recession through government job creation strategies would only serve to worsen our position in the long term and not lead to the kind of long-term quality jobs that we want for all Manitobans.

Some suggest that the solution is an all-party task force. Well, there have been economic studies done to date. The Winnipeg 2000 here in our city did an economic study, prepared a report with all kinds of initiatives. This government is acting on many of those initiatives. It is a time for action and addressing the concerns of businesses and the opportunities in our province and not the need for an all-party task force that would take potentially months to come down with nothing that we already do not know and things that have not been indicated to us by individuals and businesses throughout this province.

At this time -(interjection)- Winnipeg 2000? The original task force was chaired by the MLA for Kirkfield Park, but the current chairman is one Kerry Hawkins.

At this time, I want to discuss sport in Manitoba. It is another part of the portfolio that I am fortunate to be in charge of. The Sport Directorate has a commitment to the continuum of sport development from the initiation on introduction to sport to the high performance level.

Programs of the Sport Directorate are geared to achieve this through financial contributions to over 80 provincial and six regional sport organizations and agencies with sport programs throughout Manitoba. The financial assistance provided is to encourage the sport community to create an environment for skill development, quality training and competitive experiences.

The Sport Directorate is responsible for provincial participation at the interprovincial games such as the Western Canada Games and the Canada Games.

The Manitoba Sports Federation promotes and develops amateur sport throughout Manitoba. Through an agreement with the Province of Manitoba, the Manitoba Sports Federation serves as the umbrella for lottery funds, which are distributed on a fair and equitable basis to provincial and regional sport organizations for their programs and services.

Mr. Speaker, 57.5 percent of the \$7.8 million in yearly funding flows directly through the grant process to the member sports programs.

In the 1991 fiscal year, the Sport Directorate achieved the following: at the 1991 Canada Winter Games in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Team Manitoba achieved its objective of a best ever performance; Team Manitoba won more medals than ever before and was awarded the Centennial Cup for the most improved province; the 1990 Manitoba Winter Games, hosted in Carman, Manitoba, in March set a financial and human resource legacy for all future provincial games hosts to attempt to emulate.

The Sport Directorate role in the tripartite Winnipeg Sport Facility Program led to the successful completion of facilities totalling \$8 million for the staging of the 1990 Western Canada Summer Games. Manitoba is already reaping the benefits of refurbished facilities in the numerous national and interprovincial events Manitoba will be hosting in the next two years.

The adoption of the Sport Policy recommendations for the province of Manitoba marks the first policy document for sport in the province of Manitoba. Further work to ensure its implementation is under way, Mr. Speaker.

The Manitoba Summer Games will be held August 19 to 23, 1992. The Games were awarded

to the communities of Minnedosa and Neepawa in January of 1991, and the Sport Directorate, through the Manitoba Games Council, is assisting the host communities in their planning.

Also in 1991, Manitoba will be hosting several major sporting events. At the end of this month, Winnipeg will play host to the Men's and Women's World Curling Championship. This will attract fans from around the world and also bring significant economic benefits to our province.

Also in November of this year, Winnipeg will for the first time host the Grey Cup. I am confident Winnipeg will do an outstanding job in hosting this major Canadian event.

Further events that Manitoba has to look forward to: In 1997, we have the Canada Summer Games coming to Manitoba; Brandon is going to be hosting the Tournament of Hearts, the Women's National Curling Championship—I believe it is 1993; and the City of Winnipeg is currently laying the foundation for a bid for the 1990 Pan-American Games.

Certainly in terms of the outlook for sport and sporting opportunities in Manitoba, sporting events, the future is bright.

An Honourable Member: We have a baseball team now.

Mr. Stefanson: Well, there is actually going to be, I believe, it is a World Baseball Championship held in Brandon as well. So Brandon as a community is being very—

An Honourable Member: Juniors.

Mr. Stefanson: Juniors, that is right, the junior baseball. Brandon as a community is certainly being aggressive in terms of hosting events, and I am sure the City of Brandon will do an outstanding job in hosting the baseball championship and the Tournament of Hearts.

Our Sports Directorate also continued development of coaches and officials by the provision of grants for certification clinics. The directorate continued with the promotion of the value of sport through public education, media relations and internal government network. The directorate also worked to raise the awareness of the sport community and the general public regarding the roles and services of the directorate in the province of Manitoba in order to promote the awareness of the goals and value of sport, including the

preventative health care aspect of participating in sport.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to speak briefly about Tourism Manitoba and some specific initiatives, and I am sure the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr) will be paying close attention to some of these. In May, Travel Manitoba will launch a \$500,000 joint promotion with Canada Safeway and Kodak Canada. The overall objective of the program is to generate increased travel through the utilization of the supplier discounts.

At least 350,000 Travel Card booklets will be distributed to the traveling public in Manitoba, northwestern Ontario, Saskatchewan, North Dakota and northern Minnesota. This booklet will contain Manitoba vacation values from 250 participating Manitoba tourism suppliers ranging from restaurants to attractions and to accommodations. Manitoba Travel Card booklets will be available at all Safeway stores throughout Manitoba and northwest Ontario, as well as Travel Manitoba's tourist information centres. The Travel Card program will be supported by television, radio and print advertising in all the listed primary markets.

In fact, Kodak Canada will also sponsor a Manitoba photo contest in conjunction with the Travel Card program. Five hundred thousand entry forms will be distributed encouraging travelers to submit their best vacation shots for prizes including Manitoba vacations and Kodak products. The photo contest will also be supported by comprehensive media coverage. The Travel Card program will run throughout the summer and fall of '91. It meets the department's key marketing objectives of financial leveraging, private sector partnerships and performance measurability, very important factors in terms of our tourism development program.

* (1650)

I am not sure what my time is like, Mr. Speaker. I want to—

An Honourable Member: You can talk about tourism for a while longer.

Mr. Stefanson: Talk about tourism a while longer? I want to turn briefly to a couple of issues, one of them being Winnipeg City Council and the initiative of this government to reduce the size of Winnipeg City Council to no more than 15 city councillors. Having served on Winnipeg City Council for approximately eight years, I see this as an extremely

positive initiative. I think, for those changes, we will end up with a more efficient, effective and accountable city government for the citizens of Winnipeg. It is not the kind of change that will necessarily bring direct financial savings through the reduction in the cost of our City Council or our city government, but the financial benefits it will derive will be the kinds of decisions that body will in fact make in the future.

I am very pleased to see that we will be bringing in forward legislation in this House to address that issue, something that is certainly recognized by most citizens in Winnipeg, wanted by most citizens in Winnipeg, and I think something that will serve the citizens of Winnipeg very well in the years ahead.

I want to turn very, very briefly to education in terms of some of the initiatives mentioned in the throne speech, two of them being the renewal of our education system with a five-year plan and the importance of direct linkages between education and the economic and business opportunities in our city and in our province, Mr. Speaker. Those are very important. Initiatives such as Workforce 2000 are going to be a very important initiative in terms of the long-term economic benefits for the young people here in Manitoba.

One issue that falls under the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism is the issue of the Canada-U.S.-Mexico free trade negotiations which will be taking place at the federal level later this year. I want to indicate to this House, and I think most already know, that we are just beginning a very detailed consultation process with the citizens of Manitoba through contacts with business, labour, individual citizens, interested groups and so on.

Over the next months, that will help to formulate our position in terms of the position of Manitoba government, but as well, to also address some very specific factors that have to be addressed, the point being, Mr. Speaker, that Canada as a government is into these negotiations. That is the reality. They have indicated they are going to the table, and negotiations will begin sometime in June.

Besides staking out our position as a government, it is very important to recognize what particular parts of that potential agreement are of extreme importance to Manitobans. We have to be sure to reflect those, the positive aspects and the negative aspects in terms of our reporting to the federal government. We will be undertaking that process in

the weeks and months ahead, and I look forward to reporting back to this House with the outcome of that consultation process. It is going to be a very healthy process in terms of soliciting the comments, not only having our internal people work on specific aspects of that agreement, but having the consultation process with the citizens of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude by saying that I look forward to my new responsibilities and to working co-operatively with all of the members of the House in building a bigger and better Manitoba.

In Sport, I look forward to stimulating sport growth and development in Manitoba, resulting in a positive effect on the physical, mental and social well-being of all Manitobans.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to indicate how pleased I am to be back in the House, because we have very serious problems facing Manitoba, and they must be addressed here in the House.

Before I begin my comments on the throne speech, I would like to offer my congratulations to the two new members of cabinet. I wish them well in their new jobs, and I would also like to express my regrets that two rural members have been taken out of cabinet, because I think that the situation in rural Manitoba is very serious and we need that strong representation. I am quite disappointed that the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) has chosen to reduce rural representation.

Mr. Speaker, when I first heard the throne speech, my first reaction was that the speech did not address the concerns of the people of my constituency, and as I look at it more closely, I believe that is very true.

I represent the constituency of Swan River, which is largely agriculture, fisheries, forestry and very little industry, except, of course, for Repap, so you see, our constituency does not benefit from any of the tax benefits that go to big business.

As you are well aware, the rural community is in a crisis situation, and I had hoped that this government was serious when it said that it was interested in stimulating the rural economy. However, decentralization is not even mentioned in the throne speech. Decentralization was one of the biggest promises in the election platform. They promised that there were going to be jobs coming out to the rural community, there would be additional

taxes, the whole rural economy was going to be stimulated.

What do we have? The minister responsible is all of a sudden back-peddalling. He is saying hey, sorry, there is no money. We have to go back on decentralization. There is not money.

This government knew what the financial situation in this province was before the election. Why were they not truthful with the people of rural Manitoba? Instead, they used decentralization as an election ploy. In fact, if you look at the matter very truthfully, we in rural Manitoba are losing jobs.

Swan River, two jobs moved out of Swan River into Winnipeg; Flin Flon, four jobs; Lynn Lake, Brandon, jobs leaving the rural area. The member who just left the Chamber said we have 60 people working. Where? There are no 60 jobs from Repap. There are four jobs out of Repap right now. That is the truth of it, so do not try to say that Swan River got 60 jobs out of Repap.

They promised us jobs, and as I say, Swan River was promised five jobs from decentralization because we were going to get the big Repap promise—250 jobs, a permanent chipping plant, a service centre. For all of this, they gave away a strandboard plant which was supposed to be coming. Funding was coming from Western Diversification. They gave away all the cutting rights to the area, the biggest part of the province, and this prevents local operators from expanding their operation.

When the chipping plant fell through and was not going to be built last May, we were offered a compensation package. I was at the meeting when representatives from Repap called all the municipal people together and said sorry, you know, technology has changed so much, we cannot build a permanent chipper, the technology is just not there now, it will not be feasible, but we will give you a million dollars to invest into the forestry industry and diversify the economy of Swan River.

We thought, well, we are not going to get the chipping plant. We are still going to get the service centre. Let us take the million dollars and do some diversification.

So we set up a committee with representatives from all the municipalities and decided, yes. My predecessor was there as well and he said, oh, yes, you take this million dollars because there is no

chipping plant anyway. He said, I will get a negotiator for you. You know who he got for us as a negotiator? Mr. Mike Bessey. Talk about letting the fox into the hen house. Oh, yes, and what did Mr. Mike Bessey tell the committee? He said, oh, yes, but I think you should go higher. You guys can probably get about somewhere between \$1 million and \$3 million to put into a heritage fund that will be used for the Swan River area. Well, you know, \$3 million, we did some calculations, and we thought, you know, that is not bad. If we can have this money invested and use it over the years, we can do something in the Swan River valley to compensate for what we have given away. There were a couple of meetings and all of a sudden things died down during the summer months and, lo and behold, we had an election and Mr. Mike Bessey disappeared out of the picture. We never saw him again.

An Honourable Member: What constituency is he from?

Ms. Wowchuk: I do not know what constituency he is from, but he is from the Minister of Finance's (Mr. Manness) office, is where he is really from. Good man, he sure shafted us. Anyway, after the election was over, the chairman of the committee made several attempts to reach Mr. Bessey, and Mr. Bessey would not return the calls. We could not—Mr. Bessey would not return the calls.

* (1700)

Finally, I was able to persuade the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) to come up to Swan River to talk to the committee to see what was happening. Yes, Mr. Manness came, but he did not return the phone call to me, and he told the committee that it was a closed meeting, that I could not be there—must be some secrets going on. What did the Minister of Finance tell the people of Swan River? He said there never was a deal, there never was \$1 million. Sorry, guys, I am not going to push Repap because if I push Repap, they might not like it.

Who is the boss here? Is it the Minister of Finance or is it Repap? Swan River has been let down the tubes by this government as far as jobs go. I challenge this minister who was prepared to come to Swan River and take part in public meetings and tell all the foresters and all the people of the area how good it was going to be. I challenge him now to come back to Swan River and hold a public meeting with the people and explain why his deal did not

work. Let him come now and tell the people because those people are in desperate need. There are no jobs.

Mr. Speaker, the other area that I would like to mention that I took from the throne speech is the struggle facing the agricultural community right now. We know we are in serious trouble in agriculture, and the members across the way admit we are in serious trouble, and what is their answer? The answer in this budget is, well, we are going to set up a task force on agriculture diversification.

We do not need another task force. We know what the problems are in agriculture. We have a Rural Development Institute that has been in place for two years, and we have no answers out of that institute.

Why are we using the excuse that we are going to put another task force forward to look at what the problems are? Get on with it. Admit that there are problems and do something about them. Look for some diversification. Look to create some jobs in the rural areas so that our young children have something to stay here for rather than going off to Alberta to get jobs because there is nothing here for them.

Another segment of my constituency is involved in fisheries and in fur trade, two areas that were not even mentioned in this throne speech. Can you imagine? They talk about caring, but I guess the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) said that they did not vote the right way, so they are not even going to be given any consideration in this throne speech—nothing for fishermen, nothing for forestry.

During the last election I raised several issues with the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), but fishermen have not received any answers.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to share a little bit about one of my communities in the Swan River constituency, and that is the community of Swan Lake. There are approximately 20-25 fishermen in this community and since Christmas they have not caught any fish. There are no fish left in the lake. They have not enough income to pay into unemployment insurance, so they will not be able to collect. What is their alternative? They are going to end up on welfare. Is that our answer to everything—no jobs, no fish, so go on welfare.

I would also like to tell you what the—we talk about the base poverty line. The average income of these fishermen is about \$6,000 to \$7,000 a year.

We have to really seriously look at what is going on in the fishing industry, whether it can survive or whether we are prepared to offer some sort of diversification in this area. Or are we just going to say, well, no, let us keep paying them welfare, because if we pay them welfare and offer them a little bit of time we can just completely ignore that problem?

What do we want to do? Do we want to help this area and help people be proud of themselves and earn an income or just send a cheque out once a month and ignore them?

Mr. Speaker, the other area that is involved in fishing is Lake Winnipegosis. In the last term as well, I listed for the minister several of the problems in the area. Since I got no reaction to them, I would like to list those concerns again.

There are extremely low fish stocks in Lake Winnipegosis. There is a restocking program. The fishermen are very concerned because, although there is a problem in Lake Winnipegosis and the government is saying they are addressing the problem, in Lake Winnipegosis they stocked only 2 million fry; in Lake Dauphin, 56 million fry; Lake Manitoba, 22 million fish were put into Lake Manitoba. Why is Lake Winnipegosis being neglected so badly?

Other areas, the fishermen have raised time and time again that the Fairford dam is a problem. -(interjection)- Well, to some of you fishing may be a joke, but these people are trying to make a living off fishing. They are concerned because Ducks Unlimited has been given the authority to block off some of the smaller lakes and these are the spawning lakes that are rearing lakes for fish. They are catching many mullet in these lakes, but have no sale for them.

Another serious issue on Lake Winnipegosis is the cormorant. Now, for those of you who are not aware of what a cormorant is, it is a crow duck. It is a duck that is a nuisance bird, but it was put on the protected species list many years ago because their numbers were so low; however, the numbers have grown tremendously. In fact, on Lake Winnipegosis we know now that there are 200,000 birds and these birds eat up to two to three pounds of fish per day. We also know that this bird has a disease that could spread to domestic birds.

These problems have been raised with the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns). The

people on the lake have asked the minister to call for a review of the lake, look at the lake. Is there a possibility that something can happen here? If they cannot fish anymore, do they have to look at tourism? So I urge the minister to look at calling for a study of the lake, involve the fishermen and get to the real problem.

As I say, I am very disappointed that this government has chosen to ignore a group of people who rely on nature to make a living and are having such a difficult time. I am also very concerned because most of these people are aboriginal people, and they have not been addressed anywhere in this Throne Speech.

Mr. Speaker, the largest part of my constituency depends on agriculture. As farmers are hurt from agriculture, so is the business community around it. If you are from a farming community, you know the saying that if farmers suffer, so does the whole community. This is very true. We can see it all around us every day. We see businesses in the small communities—we just had Co-op Implements close down, we have Parkland Feeds going down. All of these who provide service for the farm community are suffering along with the farm community.

We as New Democrats have said that we must bring stability to the farming economy, and in order for farmers to survive, we must have a program that takes into consideration the cost of production. Unfortunately, that has not happened with the GRIP program. We finally have the details of this program, and I would like to raise a few concerns that farmers have raised with me. The minister would like us to believe that all farmers are happy with this program because they had input. Yesterday we saw—and Keystone was involved in drawing up the program, but we hear Keystone speaking out very loudly against the program. They say, and I agree, that the program does not meet the needs of farmers.

* (1710)

I would also like to share a quote from the Brandon Banner on how farmers really feel about the public meetings that were held. It says farmers are not happy. Probably one of the most extreme views was expressed by a local farmer who hollered, why do you not pay us at 1975 levels and give us the same increases you fellows are getting? When he got no answer he said, I hope you guys are lined up from here to the highway for a loaf of

bread and someone runs over you before you get there. To me that is not the sign of a happy farmer. They also went on to say, most farmers left the meeting frustrated and with lots of questions in their mind, as was emphasized at the meeting as each farmer will have to get their information from their crop insurance agent. Farmers are not happy with the program. The people who designed the program did not listen to the farmers.

The minister also says this is a volunteer program. It is not a volunteer program. You have no choice but go into it if you expect—because we are told any other ad hoc programs will be tied into it. It is not voluntary either because when you sign up you have to wait for at least a minimum of four years before you can get out of the program. Let us not be led to believe that this is a volunteer program.

Farmers would also like to see a cap on the program. As much as the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) disagrees with this, this would save money and more farmers would be able to get a fairer payment.

One of the biggest concerns is that there is no information on a deficiency payment. Are farmers going to get a deficiency payment this spring before they put the crop in? Is the payment going to be tied into GRIP, that meaning if you do not join GRIP you will not get any payment? How is the deficiency payment going to be made, if there is one? It is absolutely urgent that this minister push forward to get a deficiency payment for farmers this spring.

An issue I raised this afternoon is still of concern to me and that is, can women who choose to farm as independent operators apply for GRIP, or must they—and the reason this is a concern is because it says you must apply for crop insurance to get GRIP. Are they going to be able to apply for GRIP on their own, or are they going to have to apply for it through their husband's policy? If this is the case, it is unfair because if they have chosen to operate independently, each of them should be able to make their own decision.

I have one other suggestion that was made to me by—one comment that I have been asked to pass on to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), and that suggestion is that the minister average his salary for the past 15 years and then work for 70 percent of that average. He does not want to live at 70 percent of his salary and nor do farmers want to

live at 70 percent of their average earning over the past 15 years.

I urge the minister to look at the suggestions put forward by our Agriculture critic, the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), and work towards improving this program, because there are possibilities that this program could work for farmers, but it needs to be improved. Our Agriculture critic has put forward some very good suggestions.

Mr. Speaker, the next area that I would like to address is education. For this government to say that they care about public education and then have most schools get a zero percent increase is hypocritical. When they expect school boards to carry on the same level of education with this kind of funding is absolutely impossible. Then, on the other hand, to find an 11 percent increase for the private schools is just unfair, because it is the public school that must educate everyone. The public school cannot be selective of who will attend. They must educate everyone, and it only stands to reason that they would need more monies for special needs children.

The members across the way pride themselves in their election promise that they would not raise personal income tax. No, they have not raised personal income tax, but the taxes are going up in every other way. Do you think that if the public schools cannot afford to offer the services that are required, where are they going to get the money? We saw an example of it last night. What is going to happen? It is going to go on your and my property tax. You are going to pay. So why pretend that you are not going to raise personal income tax when what you are really doing is passing off your responsibility onto the local school boards and onto the municipalities.

You criticize the federal government for passing on their responsibility onto the province, and so you should, because the federal government should not be doing things like that, but you do the same thing. You expect the municipal people to make a decision on which courses are going to be cut. It is not fair. It is the responsibility of the provincial government to provide equal access and quality education to all of our children. This government is failing in that area.

The government says they have no money for education and health care. They are concerned about education and health care, but they have no money. Well, if this government had left in place the

payroll tax, a tax that was put in place to pay for education and health care, had they left that tax in place there would have been revenue, but this government made a promise to their corporate friends that, yes, they were going to reduce their taxes.

(Mr. Gerry McAlpine, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

How does the payroll tax affect each and every one of us? None of us are benefitting, at least very few of us. There might be a few that might benefit a little bit from, on that side of the House, who may benefit from their cut in payroll tax.

In reality a larger number of us are suffering because of the cuts to payroll tax, because we are now paying it through our property tax to carry on, to keep up the education funding, and we are seeing a reduced health care system because the money is not there.

* (1720)

Mr. Acting Speaker, I am also concerned about the quality of education in rural schools. As farmers go out of business the population goes down, the tax base goes down, and there are less and less people there to pay the costs of education.

I would like to ask the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach), what is going to happen to schools such as Pine River and Rorketon, schools that are located in an area that has a very low tax base? Are these schools going to be able to stay open? Can the minister guarantee that there will be schools there for these children, or are they going to end up being transported 20, 30 miles further?

When those schools go, what happens to the infrastructure in those towns? You take out a couple of teachers who are probably the best paid people in the community, you take those out, they have to go someplace else. That is funds, revenue out of the town, and slowly you see a further and further demise of the small towns in the communities.

It is absolutely unfair that municipal councils and school boards have to take over this responsibility and burden of making decisions of which programs are going to be offered, which schools are going to stay open. This government has to look at how we are going to keep those schools open at zero percent funding.

Another area that was not addressed in the throne speech was policing costs. We know that the federal

government is trying to offload more costs onto the provincial government on policing costs and that in turn will shift onto municipalities. I urge this government to hold firm on its deal and not take on more responsibility of paying the policing costs of this province. A large portion of that is a federal responsibility, and if they do not hold firm on it, we will see tremendous cost increases in the rural area.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I have to also say that I am very disappointed in this government's decision to cancel local housing authorities. To say that this is going to save money is ludicrous. What this is going to do is take away local control, local involvement.

A government that says they are committed to decentralization, on the other hand going towards centralization on housing authorities, it just does not make any sense. Either on one hand you are doing one and then the other. What happens is, you take away local control, you take away local involvement.

They say that it is going to save money. It will probably save money because it will take twice as long to get any work done, so they will not have to spend the money repairing the homes.

It is going to take much longer, because you cannot even sign a cheque without somebody from—in our area, to come to Swan River somebody is going to have to drive 100 miles. How often are they going to come out and check? How often are they going to be there to see what is going on?

The other concern is, what is this going to do for local jobs? Is all of this going to be contracted out to some outsider who will come in once or twice a year and do the repair work? If this happens, again you have no guarantee of the quality of work. When you have local people involved, you have local jobs, but you have accountability as well because these people live right in the community. What we have seen happen when people come from other areas to do the work, they are not accountable. They do a job and they are off. So this is how we lose. We lose income, we lose in the quality of work, and we lose local jobs.

For the government to say that they are going to save money by removing the boards, they are not being fair also to the members who served on those local housing committees. All of those local housing committee members were volunteers. They were not being paid. So let us not give false impressions that this government was going to save big money

by removing these local boards. What they have taken is a little bit of local identity away.

This government, I feel, has failed the rural community completely. They have let them down on their election promises and on stimulating the economy in the area, and for that reason I cannot support the Throne Speech.

We must work together because we do have serious problems in rural Manitoba. You as government have to listen to suggestions on this side of the House and work together to help the people. We all want the same thing. I believe we all want to see the rural economy stimulated. I do not think there is anyone on that side of the House who would like to see—who is any happier than I am when I see a business close down in a small community.

I urge the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) to listen to some of the suggestions that have been put forward, and I look forward to working in this House to try to help people in all of Manitoba, but in particular in rural Manitoba where people are suffering right now. Thank you.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker, for the opportunity to put forward some of my thoughts onto the record.

Before I begin, may I congratulate the Speaker on his job that he has performed over the past while. I have really enjoyed working with him. I would also like to congratulate the Honourable Eric Stefanson and the Honourable Linda McIntosh as they assume their new responsibilities, and I would also like to congratulate the new Sergeant-at-Arms, Mr. Dennis Gray.

Welcome back to our pages. I am sure this second session will be a great learning experience as the first.

I am proud, Mr. Acting Speaker, to be part of a government which has faith in Manitobans and believes in our potential to build a stronger Manitoba. Even though the financial challenge currently before us seems overwhelming, our government has developed a strategy to combat the forces of this recession through the use of solid management principles. We intend to live within our means. Manitobans cannot bear any more tax increases. The Manitoba economy is already burdened by one of the highest levels of taxation in the country. We cannot raise taxes any further. We

will not support our spending habits as the NDP did by raising taxes.

In his speech, the honourable Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer), talked about accumulative effects. In '82 and '83 every man, woman and child paid \$1,797 toward the provincial general service debt. By 1987-88, after many tough years under the NDP, every man, woman and child paid \$4,784 toward our provincial debt. Those are accumulative effects which we will not be part of, Mr. Acting Speaker. We will not make our children pay for our spending habits of today.

Today's debt servicing takes up an enormous amount of provincial revenues. In the upcoming budget, we will have to spend over \$600 million on the interest payments alone of past debts. It should be painfully obvious to everyone now that our government must try to balance the budget. We can no longer spend beyond our means. Too much of our taxpayers' hard-earned money is going towards servicing the debt, rather than towards critical programs in health, education and social services.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Mr. Speaker, our Conservative government has developed an economic plan in the throne speech which will allow us to emerge from this recession with our finances in order and our most essential services intact. We will not implement the strategy used by the NDP of throwing money at problems. We will use our taxpayers' money in its greatest effect. Vital programs will be protected. Vital services such as the ones provided by the St. Norbert Foundation are recognized and will be protected.

I am proud to report that in my constituency of St. Norbert, the foundation operates a 72-bed residential treatment centre for people with chemical abuse or dependency problems. This includes the 12-bed adolescent males' residential chemical dependency treatment centre called the Lemay House. The foundation runs several programs geared towards drug, alcohol and substance abuse and concentrates on treating the family as a whole, rather than just the individuals.

Our government provided the St. Norbert Foundation with \$255,400 last year through the Alcohol Foundation of Manitoba program delivery. Construction is also under way for an additional 12-bed treatment centre for the chemically dependent adolescent females which will be the first

of its kind in Manitoba. Mortgage financing of close to \$365,000 has been arranged through Manitoba Housing with the foundation providing \$89,000 of equity financing themselves.

Kirkos House, the 12-bed treatment centre for adolescent females, was announced in August as part of a four-point strategy under the war on drugs initiative. Mr. Speaker, this is just one example of how our government deals with a problem. We talk to Manitobans through public consultation. We emphasize education and implement a treatment plan. We do not simply throw money at our problems. We look at ways of dealing with them in an intelligent and manageable fashion.

* (1730)

Mr. Speaker, in our efforts to build a stronger Manitoba, our government has not forgotten the effects that development can have upon the environment. In our last budget, the Environmental Innovations Fund was increased sixfold. A \$1.4 million increase was given to the budgeted amount for the environmental department programming. A contribution of \$800,000 was made toward the establishment of the International Institute for Sustainable Development in Winnipeg in an attempt to join the world-wide effort to integrate ecological and economic thinking. Sustainable development remains as a priority. Our Premier has announced a consultation process designed to develop a long-term strategy to ensure that the future economic growth occurs in harmony with the environment. In launching the consultation process a draft sustainable development strategy prepared in partnership with the Round Table on the Environment and Economy was released. This draft was entitled, Towards a Sustainable Development Strategy for Manitobans.

At the same time, a strategy for showcasing sustainable development at work was unveiled. This strategy consists of two phases, establishment of an awards program and a catalogue of demonstration project; and secondly, development of specific projects which demonstrate sustainable development. As well, an independent evaluation committee has been established with one representative from each of the environmental, academic, business and Native communities.

Our government has displayed its concerns for the environment, not only through its initiatives launched in our province, but by showing concerns

and potential landmark cases throughout our country. For example, the Manitoba government is intervening in the Old Man River case before the Supreme Court of Canada in order to underline the federal government's responsibility to protect provinces from any adverse environmental impacts as a result of developments in other provinces. Although the Old Man River case deals with an Alberta project, the court decision could affect all provinces including Manitoba. This court ruling could spell an important clarification of federal and provincial jurisdictions in the dealing of environmental issues.

Also during this session, our government will be tabling Manitoba's first State of the Environment report with input by some 70 scientists from a variety of disciplines. This report, the first attempt to characterize the conditions of our environment, will reflect on the impact and trends over a century of development and change in Manitoba. The benchmark will help government to assess the progress Manitoba is making toward our goal of sustainable development.

At this point, I would like to address some of the concerns raised by the honourable Leader of the Opposition in bringing forward a nonconfidence motion. The NDP have denounced our government for doing nothing to stimulate the economy or create jobs. Mr. Speaker, the creation of new jobs and better jobs remains the foremost goal of the government. We realize that Manitoba's economy is a part of an intensely competitive global marketplace. An educated, well-trained, flexible work force is essential to succeed in this environment. Our government, however, will not fall prey to the momentary lure of short-term make-work programs. We will continue to work with the private sector to create long-term jobs that will provide a foundation for the future instead of mortgaging it.

In our last budget, our government committed an additional \$37 million toward emerging work force through education and training programs—training programs which the NDP do not seem to agree with. Manitoba Energy and Mines signed an agreement in which they provided 2.2 million to facilitate the location of a new Dow Corning plant in East Selkirk. This \$30 million project will bring many jobs to Manitoba.

Through the Workforce 2000 plan announced in the previous throne speech, we are making efforts

to improve the basic skills and education of Manitobans. This comprehensive plan consists of training, advisory and human resource planning services; private sector training initiatives to encourage private sectors to increase their investment and training; an industry-wide planning and training initiative to assess skills and training needs; and province-wide special curriculum courses

Effective for 1991, Manitoba business employers will qualify for a credit of up to .03 percent of their payroll for costs relating to the employee training. This initiative will complement others in the Workforce 2000 plan. The credit recognizes the contribution of many farsighted Manitoba businesses who invest heavily in the skills of their employees, thereby significantly improving the quality of life in Manitoba.

More recently, the Manitoba government has shown its dedication to maintaining and creating new jobs in Manitoba by providing a \$743,375 loan to a Winnipeg window and door manufacturer. This loan from the Manitoba Industrial Opportunities Program will help to create at least 130 new manufacturing jobs during the next five years as part of a \$4.2 million plant expansion and upgrading of Willmar Window industries. Willmar intends to be in full expanded production by the end of March 1994. Additional funding for the expansion project is forthcoming from the federal Western Economic Diversification department and the Core Area Initiative. This is the kind of assistance which allows solid, long-term jobs to be created without simply throwing money at the problem. This is the kind of government planning which stimulated a total employment increase in Manitoba in 1990 of 7,000 jobs.

Our friends across the way complained that we as a government were not helping farmers. Our government realizes that agriculture lays the foundation for our economy. In realizing that fact, we have given agriculture significant priority with our government's budget. Our last budget allocated an additional \$46 million to assist the farming community, including \$23 million for the new Manitoba Interest Rate Assistance Program and \$16 million increase in the provincial contribution for the federal-provincial crop insurance. Programs such as the Gross Revenue Insurance Plan, GRIP, illustrate that we are concerned with the plight of farmers in our province, and we are trying to give

stability in ways of guaranteed income. Our government will be providing at least \$40 million in premium contributions in '91-92.

As my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), pointed out, if our agriculture economy is to survive through these tough times, it is critical that farmers and the provincial government form a strong partnership to ensure incomes are protected while we work toward a more diversified agricultural base. Our government is committed to reaching this long-term objective.

The honourable opposition Leader also implied that we as a government are failing to protect the environment. As already mentioned, Mr. Speaker, our government has taken a leadership role when it comes to sustainable development and the conservation of our environment. Just to accentuate this point, I would like to draw the attention of the members opposite to the five-year agreement signed by both the Government of Canada and Manitoba, known as the Canada-Manitoba Partnership Agreement on Municipal Water Infrastructure for Rural Economic Diversification.

This \$90 million agreement is designed to help key centres in southern Manitoba strengthen their opportunities for sustainable economic development. This agreement enables eligible communities to access financial assistance in order to improve their water supply or waste water disposal facilities. The federal and provincial governments have each committed \$30 million over the life of the agreement.

Our government realizes the importance of the potential impacts our development today can have on the environment in both the present and the future. Therefore, I refute any implications of the opposition indicating that our government is not protecting the environment.

The opposition also pointed a finger at our government for the erosion of health care, education and family services. Mr. Speaker, the honourable Leader of the Opposition talks about accumulative effects. We would have more tax dollars to devote to these critical areas if it were not for the accumulative effects of rising debt during the famed NDP years. The erosion of our health care, education and family services began when the NDP started to spend without regard for the growing debt. Our government, since 1988, has begun the process of rebuilding our province. This has

involved re-evaluation, rearranging and restructuring the existing budgetary commitments.

In doing so we have found ways to give taxpayers more of their hard-earned tax dollars. We are finding ways of living within our means so that some day a future generation can make decisions without the cumbersome burden of servicing a debt they did not incur.

Mr. Speaker, by living within our means, we have still found ways to protect the vital services in the Health, Education and Family Services departments. The last budget allocated \$148 million of additional funding for the health programs in order to maintain adequate and efficient services. This allocation included \$10 million for the new health service development fund. However, in light of the current financial restraints we cannot continue to increase funding ad nauseam.

As outlined in the throne speech, our government will take strong measures to build on the trend towards good health. We will develop an enhanced public policy aimed at keeping Manitobans healthier. We will build on actions taken to improve mental health services through the provincial mental health strategy, and we will see the implementation of bold and initiative plans to provide services in the community setting to enhance the care and treatment of people suffering from mental illness.

We will continue to focus upon the community base preventions and treatments as a result of the province-wide consultation on the war on drugs. Partnerships will be developed among the ministries and the communities in order to make co-ordinated efforts to attack the root causes of substance abuse in our province.

* (1740)

In the same vein, our government will be focusing on Family Services. In the last budget, \$48 million were committed to support programs within the Family Services that strengthened the institution of the family and relieved the most urgent needs of individuals in our society.

We will maintain a strong commitment to family life and to the family unit as a critical focus for our provincial social services and income assistance program. Strengthening and supporting Manitoba families and helping Manitobans to help themselves are among our government's highest priorities.

Mr. Speaker, the honourable Leader of the Opposition claims that they will be an opposition of hope. Why then does he continually say our province is weak? He says that the reality of our province is weakness. Our government does not subscribe to his view. We believe that Manitoba is a province of great potential. Our province is a storehouse of natural resources. We have plentiful amounts of untapped potential in hydro and mineral resources. We have vast stretches of forest, fertile soils that produce some of the highest quality crops in the world. Most importantly, we have industrious and hard working people.

Unlike the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), I do not believe that this is a have-not province. Unlike the opposition, our government has faith in the people of Manitoba. We are determined to realize the vast untapped potential existing in our province.

I believe that the throne speech outlines a strategy which will allow us to continue to build a stronger Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, I think it is time that the negative attitude from the opposition side of the House comes to an end. I think it is time that we work as a team, rather than the rhetoric that we have heard through a number of the speeches. Throughout my constituency the people are saying they are paying enough taxes—enough is enough is enough. I think we have heard enough of their rhetoric, and it is time that they get down and work toward a real end to the problems that we have today. I really do not believe they can believe in the things that they are saying in some of their speeches against the throne speech. If they do, I really feel sorry for them because that is what has caused the problems of today.

I hear, Mr. Speaker, that we have—they bring up their statistics, but Gary Doer recently made the comment that Manitoba is quickly gaining the reputation as the easiest place in Canada to close a plant. How soon he forgets of some of the plant closures under his administration: Canada Packers, Modern Dairies, Canada Packers' slaughter house, Marshall Wells, Dominion Stores, CSP Foods, Ray-O-Vac Canada, Citadel Life Insurance, Gemini Outerwear, Yamaha Canada Music Limited, Gabrielle Air. I mean, I can continue on and on and on. How many jobs? There are thousands of jobs, and this is from '83 to '87. It is terrible. They say that we are losing jobs. I cannot believe they believe in their rhetoric.

Mr. Speaker, I only hope they really, truly want to work as a team to correct some of the inequities within the system today. I really hope that they see the future for our children is not a debt ridden one. I do not want my children to be mortgaged into the future. I want them to be able to live in the future without having the debt. I should pay today for what I am enjoying today, and I should not leave a debt for my children. It is as simple as that.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I will try and be gentle with the opposition, because I know they are a little bit afraid of some of the things that we have said here over the last few days since we resumed our sitting in this House.

I would like to welcome you back, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to be back in here and under your guidance at the continuing of the thirty-fifth legislative sitting. I would like to welcome back, as well, the table officers and the pages, and I look forward to working with them through this session. I would also like to congratulate the new Sergeant-at-Arms. Mr. Gray, welcome to the Chamber.

To the two new cabinet ministers who have been appointed to their positions, the honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh), I welcome her, and I also welcome the member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Stefanson) the Minister of IT and T. We have, as I have just heard, said that they are good people. I guess only time will tell how good they are in their respective portfolios. We will definitely be putting them to the test for that, Mr. Speaker, and time will tell how good they are at their portfolios.

With the introduction of the throne speech last Thursday, it was talked of many times throughout the document itself, of weathering the recession better. Yet we have seen time after time the performance of this province being put in the position where it is going to be last—as my Leader has so eloquently said earlier—coming out of the recession. When we talk about the Conference Board talking about this province being tenth out of tenth, I am kind of ashamed to be in a position like that knowing that we should be able to do better than that as a province. It is unfortunate that this government, this Tory government, has put us in that position where we are going to be last coming out of the recession.

We see the industries are being driven out of this province, being bankrupt, being forced to relocate to other points in Canada and the U.S. That is unfortunate. -(interjection)- Well, we have not seen any significant changes in that area for businesses coming into this province. We talk about jobs that are coming in here, let us talk about the real jobs that should be created instead of the large numbers that we have seen lost, the 10,000 manufacturing jobs we have seen lost in the last 12 months in this province, Mr. Speaker.

We have not seen any new initiatives by this government to create jobs in this province, and that is unfortunate. I kind of see this government in a position as a ship heading towards a storm, not knowing what they are going to do and no one at the rudder controls of that ship. If you can picture in your mind a tall ship sailing along with no one at the controls, and the ship starting to flounder as you enter into that storm, this is what I see this government as being.

This government should be taking charge of the ship before it flounders and sinks, and I do not see that happening. I do not see anyone in there taking the initiative to turn the economy around in this province and head us in the right direction, into the wind, and to bring about some new changes that will improve the economy of this province. That is an unfortunate position.

What I would like to see in this province is a panel that would be created that would be comprised of business, labour and government to seek out new business opportunities for this province, to create the new wealth for the province that we all desperately want for this province. That is one of the reasons why we are here. I do not see the government taking initiatives like this to gain that type of industry for the province, the wealth that we want.

I think that if the government was to take that they could use the tools, the resources that we have available to us, resources like our hydro-electric power, a God-given resource. That is one of the areas that I think that we should be taking and using as our bargaining chip, if we can call it that, to seek out new business, to encourage them to come to this province and establish here.

We have many things going for us in Manitoba, and as the previous speaker said, we should be talking positive and I am going to talk positive. That

is what I am trying to do here is that by bringing in a panel like this and by explaining to the industry that we want to come and establish in this province, that we have a stable labour market and we have highly skilled, highly trained people in this province able to perform those jobs and duties, and we have an abundance of hydro-electric power.

I think that we can sell this province on those merits but we have to have a panel like that put into place to go out and seek that business. We cannot expect those business ventures and industries to come and establish here unless we go out and seek them to come to this province.

This government talked about working in partnership with the different sectors. I cannot understand how you can work in a partnership with someone when you have a confrontational style of governing. I could never understand that concept, and I think we have seen the examples over the last several months since the last election in September.

I would like to point out specifically the nurses' strike that was in this province. I do not understand how you can have good faith bargaining if you are going to put a spin onto the figures that you release into the media to try and convince the public that what you are saying is accurate, when the nurses themselves know full well that was not the figures that you were giving to them at the bargaining table.

* (1750)

I have talked to many of them on the picket line and there were many members on this side of the House who were at the picket line walking with those nurses and talking with them to find out what their concerns are, and they were many. This government has done nothing to this point in time, as the issue was raised again once in the House this week, to find out what the government was going to do to address the concerns that the nurses had.

You need to strike a panel again that will be comprised of all of the health care professionals to have them have some input into the system, to give them the opportunity to tell government and to tell the administration where the shortfalls in the system are, how we can improve that system and make it more responsive to the people of the province.

I do not see this government—that is true, they have very often said in the past that they wanted to study and study, and then when the time comes for concrete proposals or solutions to these problems,

they refuse to study the solution or to even encourage the people who are involved in these areas to come out and take part in solving the problems that we have.

If this government was serious, they would strike a panel like this of the health care professionals so that we can address the concerns in our health care system in this province, and that we can solve these problems and make this more responsive to the needs of the sick people of this province.

We see in the newspapers this weekend and on the different media outlets where our emergency facilities at the different hospitals once again are being overcrowded and they had to close the doors. They can no longer accept the patients in, and they have had to redirect those patients to other hospitals. I am sure that if we had had solutions to these problems some time ago we would not be faced with this problem over and over and becoming a repetitive situation.

We have in our hospitals a large number, so I am told, of geriatric patients, and we had when we were in government a program in place where we were trying to develop facilities so that we could take these senior patients that needed extensive care out of the hospital system and put them into the seniors homes. This program seems to have fallen by the wayside. Now it has continued to put stress on the health care system again; the seniors are still remaining in the hospitals; and it is taking up space that could be used for chronic patients. The government has to take the initiative to solve these problems to create that type of facility so that we can deal with the more serious issues in the health care system.

This government and its Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) have talked about a 3 percent ceiling on wage adjustments for the public sector in this province. When the cost of living has gone up nearly double that figure, I find it hard to understand how you put a ceiling on that because the costs for these families that are supported by these incomes have gone up the full 6 percent, plus the factor of the GST that is going to have a large bearing on the standard of living of these families.

The only way that these families can control their expenditures and where they can make the cutbacks and the belt tightening like the government likes to talk about all the time is on food because your utilities, your mortgage payment, and your

clothing are areas that are out of your control. The only place that you have any means of cutting back is in your food. If you cut back on the food that your families are consuming, you are going to cut back on the quality of health of your families. If you cut back on the quality of health of your families, you are going to put pressure back on the health care system again. So you have created a vicious circle in here by putting a ceiling on the limits on the salaries that these people are going to get, unless at the same time as you bring in wage controls, you are going to bring in price controls.

We saw the previous Liberal government in this country bring in wage and price controls back into the '70s, early '80s during the Trudeau years. I remember it very clearly because in those days, -(interjection)- yes, that is right, they did. They said they would not do it, and then they went and they implemented wage and price controls. I remember it very clearly because my wage was frozen at that time, and yet my prices as a consumer and as a breadwinner for my family continued to escalate beyond my control.

There seems to be a picture or a pattern that is developing here in what is proposed by this government in relationship to what happened back in those times, and I can see the same scenario developing for the families now as what happened back in those times. -(interjection)- No, no, I understand very clearly the principle. Families are going to suffer and that is the bottom line. -(interjection)-

Mr. Speaker, we do not have the luxury of speech writers on this side of the House. We speak from the heart, and we go out and we talk to the people in our communities. We find out their concerns. Their concerns are the same as ours because they have families too. Their problems are the problems that we bring to this House that need solutions to them, and that is why we bring them to the attention of this government.

In the throne speech in the fall of 1990, this government promised economic prosperity for the province of Manitoba. I have yet to see any economic prosperity for the province of Manitoba developing in this province. Now we see by this throne speech here that this province is headed in the opposite direction.

I talked a few moments ago about this province floundering as a ship heading into a hurricane, and

I think that was a very good example of the way this government is headed—no control at the rudder. We see dozens of plant closures, Mr. Speaker, and dozens of layoffs. While the party opposite likes to talk about the jobs that they create, the lists that they create are not nearly as long as the number of jobs that we have lost in this province. We have read time and time again in this House during Question Period and during other speeches, that the thousands and thousands of jobs that we have lost and the government does not seem to attach any significance to it that there are families who are affected by these job losses. It is not just one individual who is affected here, it is four, five and six people for each one of those jobs that are lost.

Paulin, Interbake 300 people, Bristol Aerospace 195, Repap 225, Northern Telecom 186, CN Transcona 1,545. -(interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Transcona has the floor.

Mr. Reid: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. National Truck Sales 48, Air Canada 64, I. Peters Transport Ltd. 80. The list goes on and on. We see not only the job losses but the industry itself. Many industries themselves are disappearing in this province.

Bankruptcies are increasing. The government likes to talk about this being rhetoric and fear mongering. These are real jobs that are being lost in this province. People are being hurt by this. We have lost 10,000 in the last month as I have indicated earlier, and all of this is happening under a Conservative government who are supposed to be better managers of the economy. I have yet to see the better manager develop.

An Honourable Member: Bitter management.

Mr. Reid: Bitter would be more like it. That is a more appropriate term.

Under Conservative government rule, 10.2 percent unemployment in the country, we are headed in the wrong direction, Mr. Speaker. There is no initiative being taken to ensure that new jobs and new job opportunities are being created.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have 25 minutes remaining.

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

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Wednesday, March 13, 1991

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