



Second Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(Hansard)**

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, April 12, 1996

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS****PRESENTING PETITIONS****Licensed Practical Nurses**

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Judy Parnell, Tracy Thomson, Doug Rowsell and others urging the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to recognize the value of LPNs and to consider reversing the decision to cut LPNs in Manitoba.

Retention of Hogs Single-Desk Selling

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Madam Speaker, I beg to present to petition of Nelson Boychuk, Mark Brandt and W. Myska and others requesting the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) to consider reversing his decision and retain a system for orderly marketing of hogs in Manitoba under Manitoba Pork.

Home Care Services

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Walter Johnston, Janice Lamirande, Bluma Levine and others requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

Manitoba Telephone System

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Herb Christian, Shirl Christian, Olive Sweetser and others requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) not to sell the Manitoba Telephone System.

Home Care Services

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Gayle Eadie, T. Venema, F. West and others requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

Licensed Practical Nurses

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Lisa Scott, Wendy Scott, Greg Anderson and others urging the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to recognize the value of LPNs and to consider reversing the decision to cut LPNs in Manitoba.

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Bev Arron, Joan Thomas, Winnie Wellnitz and others urging the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to recognize the value of LPNs and to consider reversing the decision to cut LPNs in Manitoba.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS**Home Care Services**

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

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election, the Premier promised not to cut health services; and

THAT on December 16, 1995, a plan to privatize home care services was presented to Treasury Board; and

THAT this plan calls for the complete divestiture of all service delivery to nongovernment organizations, mainly private for-profit companies as well as the implementation of a user-pay system of home care; and

THAT previous cuts to the Home Care program have resulted in services being cut and people's health being compromised; and

THAT thousands of caring front-line service providers will lose their jobs as a result of this change; and

THAT profit has no place in the provision of vital health services.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

* (1005)

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

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election, the Premier promised not to cut health services; and

THAT on December 16, 1995, a plan to privatize home care services was presented to Treasury Board; and

THAT this plan calls for the complete divestiture of all service delivery to nongovernment organizations, mainly private for-profit companies as well as the implementation of a user-pay system of home care; and

THAT previous cuts to the Home Care program have resulted in services being cut and people's health being compromised; and

THAT thousands of caring front-line service providers will lose their jobs as a result of this change; and

THAT profit has no place in the provision of vital health services.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

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

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election, the Premier promised not to cut health services; and

THAT on December 16, 1995, a plan to privatize home care services was presented to Treasury Board; and

THAT this plan calls for the complete divestiture of all service delivery to nongovernment organizations, mainly private for-profit companies as well as the implementation of a user-pay system of home care; and

THAT previous cuts to the Home Care program have resulted in services being cut and people's health being compromised; and

THAT thousands of caring front-line service providers will lose their jobs as a result of this change; and

THAT profit has no place in the provision of vital health services.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

Retention of Hogs Single-Desk Selling

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

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

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

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

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

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

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

* (1010)

Home Care Services

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

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election, the Premier promised not to cut health services; and

THAT on December 16, 1995, a plan to privatize home care services was presented to Treasury Board; and

THAT this plan calls for the complete divestiture of all service delivery to nongovernment organizations, mainly private for-profit companies as well as the implementation of a user-pay system of home care; and

THAT previous cuts to the Home Care program have resulted in services being cut and people's health being compromised; and

THAT thousands of caring front-line service providers will lose their jobs as a result of this change; and

THAT profit has no place in the provision of vital health services.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

Retention of Hogs Single-Desk Selling

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

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

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

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

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

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

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

Home Care Services

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett). It

complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election, the Premier promised not to cut health services; and

THAT on December 16, 1995, a plan to privatize home care services was presented to Treasury Board; and

THAT this plan calls for the complete divestiture of all service delivery to nongovernment organizations, mainly private for-profit companies as well as the implementation of a user-pay system of home care; and

THAT previous cuts to the Home Care program have resulted in services being cut and people's health being compromised; and

THAT thousands of caring front-line service providers will lose their jobs as a result of this change; and

THAT profit has no place in the provision of vital health services.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

* (1015)

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election, the Premier promised not to cut health services; and

THAT on December 16, 1995, a plan to privatize home care services was presented to Treasury Board; and

THAT this plan calls for the complete divestiture of all service delivery to nongovernment organizations, mainly private for-profit companies as well as the implementation of a user-pay system of home care; and

THAT previous cuts to the Home Care program have resulted in services being cut and people's health being compromised; and

THAT thousands of caring front-line service providers will lose their jobs as a result of this change; and

THAT profit has no place in the provision of vital health services.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

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

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election, the Premier promised not to cut health services; and

THAT on December 16, 1995, a plan to privatize home care services was presented to Treasury Board; and

THAT this plan calls for the complete divestiture of all service delivery to nongovernment organizations, mainly private for-profit companies as well as the implementation of a user-pay system of home care; and

THAT previous cuts to the Home Care program have resulted in services being cut and people's health being compromised; and

THAT thousands of caring front-line service providers will lose their jobs as a result of this change; and

THAT profit has no place in the provision of vital health services.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

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

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election, the Premier promised not to cut health services; and

THAT on December 16, 1995, a plan to privatize home care services was presented to Treasury Board; and

THAT this plan calls for the complete divestiture of all service delivery to nongovernment organizations, mainly private for-profit companies as well as the implementation of a user-pay system of home care; and

THAT previous cuts to the Home Care program have resulted in services being cut and people's health being compromised; and

THAT thousands of caring front-line service providers will lose their jobs as a result of this change; and

THAT profit has no place in the provision of vital health services.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

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

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election, the Premier promised not to cut health services; and

THAT on December 16, 1995, a plan to privatize home care services was presented to Treasury Board; and

THAT this plan calls for the complete divestiture of all service delivery to nongovernment organizations, mainly private for-profit companies as well as the implementation of a user-pay system of home care; and

THAT previous cuts to the Home Care program have resulted in services being cut and people's health being compromised; and

THAT thousands of caring front-line service providers will lose their jobs as a result of this change; and

THAT profit has no place in the provision of vital health services.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

* (1020)

Retention of Hogs Single-Desk Selling

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

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Yes. The Clerk will read.

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

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

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

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

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

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Potential Flood-Preparations

Hon. Brian Pallister (Minister of Government Services): I have a statement for the House, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Pallister: Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to advise members of the House on activities and preparations taken in response to the potential flood situation in Manitoba this spring. This information is timely as in the past 24 hours we have seen local flooding along the Deadhorse Creek in the Morden-Winkler area and a number of temporary road closures due to drainage overflow.

Although the effects of this localized flooding have been limited, it reminds us all of the values of being prepared. The Inter-Agency Emergency Preparedness Committee chaired by the co-ordinator of Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization has been meeting regularly since early March to review flood forecast

reports, flood preparedness plans and activities of departments and agencies, agricultural concerns regarding the protection of grains, livestock, poultry and other agricultural products, special permits to allow the transportation of flood protection materials and agricultural products over roads on which weight restrictions apply and protection of communities in the Red, Morris, Assiniboine and Souris River flood plains, as well as disaster financial assistance policy.

Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization has taken preliminary action necessary to open the Manitoba Emergency Co-ordination Centre. MEMO has briefed federal authorities on flood potential, contacted all lead agencies to ensure that flood prep is in place, maintained contact with local authorities keeping them apprised of flood potential and assessing flood response capabilities and initiated distribution of flood forecasts and reports to potentially affected communities, as well as developed and distributed information packages for communities.

Town hall meetings were held in Morris and Russell to brief elected officials, emergency co-ordinators and secretary-treasurers on the flood potential in their areas. Various government departments and agencies were present to respond to concerns and the questions of local authorities.

Some of the work of our government departments includes establishing flood inquiry lines at Niverville, Russell, Melita and Grosse Isle, initiating regular flood forecasts, updates and news releases, conducting technical presentations on floodway operation, diking, et cetera. As well, our officials have participated in the City of Winnipeg town hall meeting in St. Norbert.

Family Services, Emergency Social Services has made arrangements to utilize dormitory facilities at the U of M to house evacuees and to host an emergency social services meeting in Morris to begin plans for possible evacuation of communities in the Red River Valley.

Manitoba Housing is undertaking an inventory of available housing units and preparing these units to house possible evacuees.

Manitoba Health is preparing to open their emergency operation centre, and the life flight is alerted and prepared to handle emergency health cases in flooded areas.

Agriculture is providing advice to farmers regarding grain and livestock movement from flood-prone areas, and all departments have alerted staff of the situation and to be prepared for flood response as may be required.

Madam Speaker, I wish to advise members that a listing of key flood telephone numbers will be provided to caucus rooms for the information of members. I am confident that our government's co-ordinated and co-operative approach and partnership with Manitobans at the local level will allow us to successfully rise to the challenges that nature has placed before us this spring.

* (1025)

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): I want to thank the Minister of Government Services for making the effort to keep the House informed of the flood conditions. I want to commend him for taking some steps to have some public input on this. I note the meetings in a variety of communities across the province. I would encourage the government to continue with collecting public input in the areas that are prone to flooding, and I would also suggest that the door remain open to communities which have yet to maybe be hit with some floods. As we know, Mother Nature can throw a curve ball every now and then, and one area that is not prone to flooding right now or is not on the list could very quickly be added to it.

I am pleased to see some type of co-ordination between the departments, interdepartmental co-ordination with Agriculture and such. My basic advice is that we have to get the water flowing early. Last year we got caught flat-footed by not having dams open early enough to draw down some water, and we ended up paying for it through the nose later on. In specific, I want to point out that the Red River Floodway for city residents needs to be utilized early, and it needs to be utilized to its potential to actually do its job and have residents of Winnipeg safe from the flooding that could actually occur.

Along those lines as well, last year we got caught flat-footed at the Shellmouth Dam. I think what we need to do is make sure that dam is opened early enough to draw down the water so it does not cause problems throughout the whole system. We also need a plan for Lake Winnipeg because if we do not get that water down to a decent level, we are going to cause problems in the North with the rivers flowing out of the north of Lake

Winnipeg. We do not want to end up with a whole lot of problems with too much water in Lake Winnipeg and then have to draw it down at a later date. The same applies for Lake Manitoba where, again, we think there could be some very drastic flooding in through the Fairford area because of the high levels on Lake Manitoba, and I think that what we need there is a plan. I want to say that our member for the Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans) is actually going to go and check this out for himself and assess the possibilities of flood there.

So, with those comments, I would encourage the Minister for Government Services (Mr. Pallister) to continue keeping us informed in the House, and I thank him very much for his information.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table two reports of the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation, one for the second quarter for the period April to September 1995, and one for the third quarter for the period April to December 1995.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Home Care Program Privatization

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, my question is to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon).

We have been asking for the last number of days for studies that the government might have about the credibility or continuity of service with home care privatization, the quality of service, the cost, any study that they might have. Yesterday, when we cited Dr. Shapiro, the Premier did not respond to the question but rather attacked the personal credibility of Dr. Shapiro.

I would like the Premier now to apologize to Dr. Shapiro and indeed put some studies, some research and some independent studies before this Legislature that all Manitobans can look at in terms of the policy of this government to privatize a publicly run, publicly operated and nonprofit home care service in Manitoba.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, if anybody should apologize, it should be the honourable Leader of the Opposition for accusing the Premier of attacking the credibility of Dr. Shapiro, when I was the one who discussed those matters yesterday, not the Premier (Mr. Filmon). At no point did I say anything about Dr. Shapiro's credibility. There are credible people on all sides, I suggest, of many issues, and time arrives when there is a disagreement. That does not mean that in any way I would have done a thing like that. Indeed, the services of Dr. Shapiro in Manitoba have been much valued over the years.

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, it is unfortunate the Premier does not have the integrity to apologize to Dr. Shapiro for his comments in the hallway yesterday that were false.

An Honourable Member: . . . the ruling was just about the use of that word.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Doer: On a point of order, are you going to call the Premier to order, Madam Speaker, for heckling during the question?

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, on a ruling which you just tabled the day—

Madam Speaker: On a point of order?

Mr. Filmon: Yes, on a point of order. On a ruling that you just tabled the day before yesterday, you called into question the use of the term "questioning the integrity of the member." The member opposite has just repeated that phrase, and I wonder if you would examine whether or not that is in accordance with the rules of this House.

Madam Speaker: On the point of order, the honourable minister indeed does have a point of order. Those words that were utilized previously were deemed in a ruling to be unparliamentary. I would caution all members to exercise courtesy and careful choice and discretion of all words.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable Leader of the official opposition, to pose his second question.

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am totally disappointed when the Premier makes false allegations against an individual, that he would not have the courage to apologize as any Manitoban should and provide a leadership position.

I would like to ask the best contingency plan on home care—

An Honourable Member: You have been making a career on false allegations.

* (1030)

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Once again, I would ask for the co-operation of all members to treat each other with respect. When a member is on his or her feet to pose a question, they deserve and demand as much respect as those on their feet to respond to a question. It takes co-operation from both sides of the House and I have asked repeatedly—and I have also been made aware on several occasions that the public does not appreciate the interruptions and the inflammatory comments that are passed from one side of the Chamber to the other.

The honourable Leader of the official opposition, to pose his second question.

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The best contingency plan, we believe, for the government is to remove their ideological blinkers and not privatize home care and end this potential strike situation. However, the government has proceeded with a privatization initiative and they are releasing information on a contingency plan.

I would like to ask the Premier, what is the contingency plan in terms of its impact on elective surgery in the province of Manitoba and on the issue of panelling patients for personal care homes?

Mr. McCrae: A couple of points, Madam Speaker. If apologies are in order, honourable members opposite, including the honourable Leader of the Opposition, ought

to very humbly apologize to the people of Manitoba for not standing up for the clients of the Home Care program.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): A point of order, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I have been sitting here listening to the minister's response to the question which bears absolutely no relationship whatsoever to the specific question posed by the Leader of the Opposition concerning the contingency plan and the lack thereof by this government, and I would ask you to refer to Beuchesne where ministers may refuse to answer questions, but if the minister is going to go off on tangents, he ought to be called to order.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order, the honourable member for Kildonan indeed does have a point of order. I will quote Beuchesne Citation 408(2), page 417: Answers to questions should not be lengthy, contain argument or debate and/or provoke debate.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Health, to complete his response.

Mr. McCrae: In his preamble, Madam Speaker, the honourable Leader of the Opposition spoke about apologies. I am responding to that and saying that an apology is indeed due on the part of honourable members opposite to the home care clients of this province for failing to stand up on their behalf against those who might withdraw services from them.

Madam Speaker, the honourable member made a point about an ideological or philosophical sort of position. It is my understanding that at the bargaining table the union representatives themselves have made the point that for them this is a philosophical issue.

Madam Speaker, for me and my colleagues on this side of the House it is an issue of delivering quality services to the clients of the Home Care program.

Mr. Doer: The minister did not answer the question. He has not tabled any studies; he has not got any reports.

I want to table a letter that has been delivered by his department and the government of Manitoba to rural hospitals and personal care homes wherein they talk about restricting elective surgery and suspending the admissions to personal care homes and the panelling of such patients.

I would like to ask the government, are we not going to be spending an inordinate amount of money in this ideological battle by the government to privatize without any study, without any indication at all, Madam Speaker, and would it not be better for the government and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to listen to David Martin, to listen to the seniors, to listen to the clients of the home care providers and put their plans to privatize on hold as the best contingency plan that the province could have in terms of home care services in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, we have repeatedly said that it would be our wish that the contingency plan upon which we have been working would not be something that would need to be resorted to. But failing the support of the honourable members opposite for the clients of home care in this province, failing their participation with their friends in the union movement to tell them to stop all this foolishness, which they did not do—they refused to stand up for the clients of home care—we have to have a contingency plan and we have one which will be made known at the appropriate time.

Life Saving Drug Program Status Report

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, Pharmacare changes that have been brought in by the government with literally no consultation have virtually destroyed the Pharmacare program that was built in this province for the past 20 to 25 years.

Madam Speaker, because there was no consultation, the implementation of this program has been suffering from severe problems.

Can the minister specifically outline today—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, on a point of order, Madam Speaker, I would like to refer you to Beauchesne 409(1) that says the question must not be an expression of an opinion, representation, argumentation nor debate; (2) says the question must be brief, their preamble need not exceed one carefully drawn sentence and, thirdly, a supplementary question needs no preamble.

Perhaps you could, Madam Speaker, look to those rules as well.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): On the same point of order, Madam Speaker, I believe if you will peruse Hansard, you will see that this was a preamble that is in order. The problem is that the minister is sensitive to the nature of the question. That is the only problem here. Our member was entirely within order.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the government House leader's point of order, indeed I will take this under advisement, and I will peruse Hansard to address the two issues he has raised relative to the question being posed.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Kildonan, to pose his question, please.

Mr. Chomiak: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the Minister of Health advise the House whether or not the Life Saving Drug Program, a special program designed to deal with very severe situations concerning drug costs and patients, whether that program is being continued or in fact that program is being melded into the new so-called government Pharmacare program?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, those Manitobans who are enrolled in the Life Saving Drug Program are—I guess the word is—grandparented. The new people coming forward for Life Saving Drug assistance will qualify under the new Pharmacare program which provides maximum assistance to those on low income and provides similar services or, in some cases, enhanced assistance to people in those circumstances.

Mr. Chomiak: Can the Minister of Health outline the reasons why the government has decided to cancel the Life Saving Drug Program, a specific program dealing with AIDS patients, chronic patients, severe patients, who suffer from the most severe and debilitating illnesses, why they have chosen to cancel that particular program?

Mr. McCrae: A number of features in the new Pharmacare program are an improvement over what we had before, Madam Speaker. Those who require assistance the most are getting more assistance in the future. There is no co-payment once you have reached your deductible, and if you are at a low income level your deductible is not beyond 2 percent of your income.

So there are a lot of improvements, but the main feature of the new Pharmacare in Manitoba is that those who need the most assistance get the most assistance. Those people are usually people who are on low incomes or people who require large amounts of prescription drugs.

* (1040)

Deductible

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, can the Minister of Health explain why, we understand, there is a hundred dollar deductible that is being applied on the program and in fact the former Life Saving Drug Program, which was given to the very sickest and the very worst in our society, was completely free and had no deductible?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, it is an extremely egalitarian approach that has been taken with respect to the new Pharmacare in that we are saying that anybody whose income is under \$15,000 should not have to pay more than 2 percent of their income for prescription drugs. If you happen to have an income over \$15,000, then you should not have to pay more than 3 percent, which is an extremely fair and appropriate way. It falls into line with everything the socialists opposite have been asking for all of these years. We have basically said, yes, some of those principles are the proper ones to apply in a publicly funded drug assistance program, and so I do not really understand where the honourable member is coming from. He wants us to treat some people unfairly, I guess, and I do not agree with that.

Home Care Program Labour Dispute

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

Because of the direction this government is taking in the province of Manitoba with respect to home care services and the way in which they are going to be delivered, a great deal of the workforce, home care service workers, have been greatly offended in terms of the treatment that this government has delivered. As a result of that treatment, we are looking at a strike that is going to occur. As a result of that strike, our hospital institutions are going to be expected to pick up the slack, opening in excess of 300 beds. There is going to be a cost to that.

My question to the Minister of Health is, are the hospital institutions in the province of Manitoba going to be financially compensated because of the direct costs that are going to be put onto them as a direct result of this poor decision made by this minister?

Mr. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Well, I guess I should not reserve my criticism simply for New Democrats because, frankly, I have not heard too many expressions of concern from the honourable member for Inkster for the welfare of the clients of the Home Care program in the face of a threatened walkout by home care attendant staff, people who provide services, very, very important services to home care clients, who are considering turning their backs on those people. I have not heard the honourable member for Inkster implore Peter Olfert or anybody in the MGEU not to carry out that course of action.

The honourable member talks—or some people talk about his potential leadership. This is a time for leadership, and where is the honourable member for Inkster when it comes to working with people in unions who are talking about removing services from some of the most vulnerable people in Manitoba?

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I will ask the Minister of Health, will he show some leadership in the Department of Health and make the commitment or guarantee to financially compensate the hospitals for having to take in potential clients—after all, the clients are our first concern—and not have to rely on our hospitals or

our institutions to have to come up with the funds internally under their current operating funds?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, if the honourable member means what he says when he says that the clients are our first concern, where does the honourable member for Inkster stand on the MGEU and their members suggesting removing their services from these vulnerable people? Where does this honourable member stand when it comes to standing up and providing leadership for elderly and frail people in our society?

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, it is a question of leadership. My question then goes to the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of the province.

The Premier, in the report that was just tabled today, indicates that Manitoba lotteries and gambling are up in terms of revenue in the last third quarter. Will the Premier allocate lottery dollars, if necessary, to financially compensate our hospitals because there is going to be a direct increase of costs? It is not fair for Manitobans, for the patients of Manitoba, to have to be penalized because of a bad decision from this government. Will that commitment for additional resources go to our hospitals?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, I have told the honourable member that we will accept our responsibility to have a plan should the union carry out its threat.

But I still ask the honourable member—who has never said where he stands, and surely Manitobans, this man wants to be the Leader of the Liberal Party, are entitled to know where this honourable member stands when it comes to the clients of the home care system—does he support a walkout or does he not?

Point of Order

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, just so that the minister can sleep better tonight, I stand behind the clients.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Inkster does not have point of order.

Collège Jeanne Sauvé Parent Forum

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): My questions are to the Minister of Education.

We understand that tomorrow there is going to be a parent forum in Portage la Prairie at Yellowquill School, and we commend and welcome meaningful consultation with parents in the community. Our concerns are echoed by many parents and people involved in education reform.

I wish to table a letter from the parent council committee from Collège Jeanne Sauvé parent council in which—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Would the honourable member please pose her question.

Ms. Mihychuk: Yes, I am, Madam Speaker, thank you—in which the concern is raised.

My question to the Minister of Education is, what is she going to do considering that the president of the parent council has indicated that for meaningful, for true parental involvement, more lead time is required than 12 days to consult with the public and parent—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): This forum has been in the planning for certainly more than 12 days. I will read the correspondence here to see what the member is referring to, but it has been well known for some time that a parent forum was in the offing, and certainly 12 days ago is not when we started planning this conference.

I will read the concerns here and try to determine what this particular situation is and why this anomaly appears to be here. I will get back to the member after I have done that examination.

Ms. Mihychuk: I would like to hear, and so would the parents of Collège Jeanne Sauvé, the minister's response. I quote from the letter that—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would remind the honourable member for St. James that on supplementary questions there is to be no postamble. Would the honourable member for St. James please pose her question now.

Ms. Mihychuk: My question is, how does the minister respond to the statement that the registration form for the

parent forum is offensive and that the questions asking respondents to identify if they have family members involved in the education system appear to be a way to screen participants? As parents, are our views not valued? In a truly democratic state, is not the possibility of open discussion an important goal?

* (1050)

Mrs. McIntosh: I hope that I will be given an opportunity to answer each of the points raised in that fairly lengthy series of questions just put forward.

I should indicate, first of all, that reading this letter, I have seen this letter before, and the member put very misleading information on the record just a few moments ago when she said that this council had received only 12 days notice. They got their invitation on March 1. So to say that, as she did state categorically on the record that this parent group had received only 12 days notice when in their own letter to me they indicate that their invitation arrived on March 1 for a forum taking place April 13, was a very, very misleading, one would say almost fraudulent statement that she just put on the record.

Madam Speaker, that correction having been made, I will also then indicate—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): I would like the Speaker to remind the honourable minister that Beauchesne 417 says that "answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate" and, as well, that the word "fraudulent" has been ruled unparliamentary, and she is calling this parents group fraudulent, which is clearly unparliamentary. I ask her to withdraw.

Madam Speaker: On the point of order, I would remind the honourable member for—oh, on the same point of order, the honourable government House leader.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): On the same point of order, Madam Speaker.

Firstly, with respect to the acting opposition House leader's statement, Madam Speaker, I think, if you check the time, you will find that the minister's response was shorter than the member's question.

Madam Speaker, secondly, with respect to the use of the word "fraudulent," the opposition House leader clearly used that word just the other day and you ruled it parliamentary. What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order by the honourable member for Burrows, the honourable member for Burrows indeed does not have a point of order. The stopwatch was running. The minister had not consumed the time allocations that were agreed to by House leaders in numerous meetings, and the word "fraudulent" indeed was used by the opposition House leader and it was ruled not to be unparliamentary unless it referred specifically to an honourable member.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Education, to quickly complete her response.

Mrs. McIntosh: Thank you, Madam Speaker. With regard to the main concern of the question—there were several questions, I will only get to answer two of the many she asked. With regard to the second one, we did not screen out any participants. Every person who applied to come has been accepted. So there has been no screening out of participants, as the member alleges.

Madam Speaker, the only reason we are trying to categorize what background people may have in terms of education is to make sure that when we put our groups together for group discussions, we have a good balance of people and backgrounds for more meaningful discussion. There is no evil intent as she tries to imply.

Ms. Mihychuk: Just for the record, it says they received—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I again draw your attention to Beausnes Citation 409(2): A supplementary question needs no preamble.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order, indeed the government House leader has a point of order.

I cautioned the honourable member for St. James previously on her second supplementary question, and I am now pleading for a third and final time for cooperation in complying with our rules.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for St. James, to pose her question now.

Ms. Mihychuk: Madam Speaker, to the Minister of Education: Will the minister promise this House to release the summary from these forums and make it an open public discussion, or will we have to go and use Freedom of Information to get the forum results?

Madam Speaker: Order, please. One question.

Mrs. McIntosh: I should indicate, Madam Speaker, I will try to give two answers, one to one of the many questions she asked in her first, and one to the one she has just asked now.

The member may not realize that while the invitation went out March 1 for an April 13 public forum and we had asked people to get back to us if they could by the nineteenth, we did extend the deadline and all of those applications were still being received, Madam Speaker, up until last week. We did extend the deadline just in response to the very kinds of concerns that these parents raised. So they called, they wrote, they indicated they had a concern. We extended the deadline to accommodate them. The member should do her research a little more carefully before she embarrasses herself by asking the question.

Madam Speaker, there is no need for them to go repeatedly to Freedom of Information on a number of these issues. Of course, this is a public forum; there will be a public summation ready at the end of it.

Post-Secondary Education Tuition Fees

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Madam Speaker, I also have questions for the Minister of Education. In Estimates last year the minister indicated that a tuition fee policy would be announced in September 1995 and would take effect this September in '96. Last week the

minister said she would be announcing a tuition fee policy within a few days. Can the minister tell us, in light of tuition fee increases announced at the University of Manitoba of, in some cases, as high as 15 percent, when Manitoba university students can expect the government's tuition fee policy?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, we have been dialoguing with the presidents of the universities—the student council presidents, that is—and in all likelihood next week sometime the member should be hearing some indication of that review, and the students will certainly be participating and we will have the details of that. We are just waiting for certain people to all be together at the same time.

I should indicate as well, of course, that the student fee increases will be offset by a 10 percent refund, a 10 percent tax credit, that students will be able to access. Any student who pays a tuition will be able to get a refund of 10 percent on that tuition at income tax time, and it is tied to what they pay, not to what their income might be.

Ms. Cerilli: Does the minister see a correlation between increased tuition fees, decreased student financial assistance and declining enrollment, which has meant a loss of revenue to the University of Manitoba alone of \$1 million this year, and will this be reflected in the tuition fee policy?

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, in the last round of questions, I tried to answer the several questions that were asked when one was supposed to be. Here I will try to answer just the one in recognition of your frustration with the rules wanting to be held to.

I indicate that students—now I have forgotten the question. [interjection] Oh, do I see the correlation? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, we indicated, as the member knows, that in the last couple of years we have had a tuition fee cap of 5 percent which has held tuitions to that. With the new decisions made by the University of Manitoba and our 10 percent learning credit, the net effect is still for those high-cost faculties such as Medicine, et cetera, that it will still be as if a 5 percent cap was imposed. Indeed,

for students in Arts and Science, they will actually be ahead of the game because a 10 percent refund on a 5 percent increase actually leads to a reduction for them. The correlation we see—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): On a point of order, Madam Speaker, you have admonished this side on numerous occasions about the length of questions. The length of question from the member was very precise and very accurate, and the minister as is her wont is going on and on, and I ask you to call the minister to order.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Kildonan, I have been advised by my table officers that indeed the honourable Minister of Education had exceeded the time for her response to the question. So the honourable member for Kildonan indeed does have a point of order.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Radisson, to pose a final supplementary question.

St. Boniface College Funding

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Merci, Madame la présidente.

La troisième question est pour le futur du Collège Saint-Boniface. Je voudrais que la ministre explique pourquoi ce gouvernement coupe du Collège Saint-Boniface 50 pour cent sans consultation avec les gens du Collège, alors que ce gouvernement avait l'information sur les réductions du gouvernement fédéral avant son budget.

[Translation]

Thank you, Madam Speaker. The third question concerns the future of St. Boniface College. I would like the minister to explain why this government has cut 50

percent from St. Boniface College without consulting the college, when the government had the information about the federal government's reductions prior to its budget.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I appreciate for you Fridays must be—that word that we have all learned we are allowed to say in the House recently.

Madam Speaker, the member asks a question on a very serious topic and one about which we are extremely concerned. We have not cut our provincial funding to St. Boniface College. We have not taken one red cent of provincial money out of St. Boniface College. We are funding St. Boniface College to the same extent that we always did.

Unfortunately, the federal government has drastically reduced its OLE transfers to St. Boniface College specifically. When the members opposite said the other day that we are always whining about the transfer cuts, this is one of the very real impacts of OLE cutting. We just simply cannot keep backfilling federal cuts of this magnitude. I, hopefully, will have communication from Sheila Copps this afternoon in response to my plea to her in March, and we will be in consultation with them to try to get the federal money back for St. Boniface College.

Charities Endorsement Act Regulations

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Consumer Affairs. As the minister knows, The Charities Endorsement Act has no regulations and there are very few guidelines governing the operation of charities in Manitoba.

I would like to know if this minister plans to introduce any regulations governing the act and whether he will develop some specific guidelines.

* (1100)

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, the answer is no.

Mr. Maloway: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the same minister, has the department investigated events such as the charity-sponsored luxury boat cruises in

which the charity receives very little and the so-called celebrities receive more than four times as many benefits as the charity does?

Mr. Ernst: Madam Speaker, to the best of my knowledge, we have received no complaints in the department with respect to the issue that the member raises, but I will investigate and advise.

Mr. Maloway: I would like to ask the same minister when he is investigating such practices, would he establish guidelines to make sure that the product being endorsed is of good value, not sold at an inflated price and that the return of the charity be substantial and not a nominal amount?

Mr. Ernst: Madam Speaker, I will take under advisement the comments of the member.

Mining Industry Inspection Program

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Tragically, yesterday, James Girard died in a fall at the Rea gold mine in Bissett. Since 1993, this brings to six in total the number of miners that have died in mine accidents.

My question is for the Minister of Labour. Can the Minister of Labour tell the House what actions his government is taking to increase mine inspections and enforcement since the current system is clearly not working?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Labour): Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable member for that question. As the House knows, it is the important function of the Department of Labour to consistently monitor safety and health in this province, and we are in fact monitoring and investigating all accidents, including this one. I do not want to speak specifically about this particular accident, but it is being investigated and appropriate action will be taken.

Mr. Reid: Given that the current charges in the trial that is now taking place only occurred after we released copies of the Department of Labour information summary sheet—and I will table, again, copies of this information. It was raised by my Leader, the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), and that was the only time that the Minister

of Labour and the department acted. Can the minister give a single example of increased inspections and enforcement that has occurred since 1994?

Mr. Toews: Madam Speaker, the statistics are very clear, that in respect of time-loss accidents and deaths the rate continues to drop in Manitoba. But that is no excuse; there is never an excuse for any accident that can be prevented.

In the 1970s mining was one of the most dangerous occupations in Manitoba, and it has a lower loss-time accident rate now than many sectors which have not gone up in the meantime. So the mining sector in fact is becoming one of the more safer industries in this province. It is due to the policies implemented by this government, my predecessors, and it is a tradition that I am proud to continue in.

Fine Increase

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Since the number of fatalities in the mining industry continue to increase, can the Minister of Labour indicate to the House what action he is prepared to take to increase the amount of fines that his department would levy against any accidents where parties would be found guilty of breach of the act, since the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) herself now is increasing fines for such matters as speeding tickets? Will the—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The question has been put.

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Labour): What I would like to indicate to the House is that in some sectors, in some industries, prosecutions are very, very important and are necessary. We find, however, that in many provinces where they have adopted a very aggressive prosecutions policy, the issue of safety becomes bogged down in the courts.

The important thing is to move in a multifaceted way to ensure that safety is assured in the mines. We do not want to see any more accidents. We are continuing on a trend of less accidents in the mining industry. I do not know where the honourable member is getting his figures, but we have been improving our mining inspections and that has resulted, along with the internal

responsibility system that we have in the mines, in a lower rate than in prior years when the honourable members were in power.

Women's Resource Services Funding

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) was unequivocal in assuring the House that she had and would protect the lives and interests of abused women. Yet, even as she was voicing her commitment, agencies funded by Family Dispute were receiving word that their operating budgets were being cut by 2 percent.

Will the Minister of Family Services confirm that indeed women's resource centres, second-stage housing, shelters, community-based organizations which offer services to abused women and their families have suffered cuts to their operating budgets?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): I indicated very clearly yesterday that the support through our social allowances program will not be changed for women that are in abuse shelters. They will indeed be receiving the same amount of resources.

I think, if you will look through the budget and had listened very carefully to the Minister of Finance's (Mr. Stefanson) Budget Address, that there were reductions in operating grants throughout government around the 2 percent range, and the detail around any changes in funding in the Department of Family Services can be discussed in full detail through the Estimates process.

Ms. McGifford: Will the minister explain to the House how she expects these agencies to continue their work when many of them now have waiting lists of over one year, staff who are worked to the bone and indeed who may now have to consider cutting service because of the loss in their operating budget?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I do want to indicate that we as a government have taken very seriously the issues around zero tolerance and support for women, children and families that have experienced abuse situations. We have increased considerably over the time we have been in government the funding for shelters and for support for

women and children in these circumstances, and we will continue to make it a high priority.

Health Care System Funding—Rural Manitoba

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): In the 1995 provincial election, the Conservative party promised not to cut funding to health care. Now that you have been re-elected, you have cut \$53 million out of hospitals alone. You broke your word.

How much of this \$53-million cut will come from rural hospitals?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, the honourable member may not remember this, but just recently the budget came down, and that part of the budget that will be appropriated for health services is 33.8 percent of the—

Mr. Struthers: Answer my question, Jim. I asked—

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member does not want to hear this because that is a much greater commitment to health care than has ever been demonstrated by the New Democrats in this province, 33.8 percent of spending. They were in the neighbourhood of 31.5 percent of spending on health care. Am I not going to conclude that the New Democrats had no commitment to health care? No, I am not going to say that, but it certainly was not as great as ours.

Mr. Struthers: The Minister of Health did not answer my question. He does not have the courage to tell—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Dauphin, to pose a supplementary question.

Mr. Struthers: Since the minister has no plan for these cuts, how can he assure rural Manitobans that our hospitals can afford the kind of hit he has in mind for our hospitals?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. We have very few minutes left.

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member's constituency is not very far from New Democratic Saskatchewan. He may want to slip over to Regina for a little while and chat with his New Democratic colleagues over there who have closed 52 rural hospitals, Madam Speaker, and find out how New Democrats in Saskatchewan feel about that. Then he can come back to Manitoba and attempt to defend that approach. That is not the approach we take in Manitoba. Our approach is to ensure that the health services that people need are available.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Swan River, to quickly pose a question.

Regional Health Boards Appointments

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, people across rural Manitoba and, in particular, the Parkland are very concerned with the way this government has appointed their regional health boards.

I want to ask the Minister of Health whether he recognizes the concerns in the Parkland, both in Winnipegosis and in Grandview, that they have not had appointments in those areas where there are hospitals. Will he use his power—those two seats that he has—to cover those areas off to ensure that those people are represented on the regional health board, which will be making the decisions for all parts of the Parkland?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Yes, Madam Speaker, we do recognize the concern; and, yes, we are working to attempt to alleviate that concern.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Speaker, I would like to present a petition with close to 1,100 people from the Winnipegosis region requesting that those positions be filled. I would ask the minister if he will also encourage the board to recognize the need for aboriginal representation on the boards, which has not been recognized in the Parkland and in other parts of the province.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Time for Oral Questions has expired.

The honourable Minister of Health, to quickly complete his response.

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, with the leave of the House, I could—even though the clock has run out, the question did get asked, and I am quite prepared to answer it.

The honourable member will recall that she wanted the time for nominations extended because nobody knew about it. It was advertised throughout the province, and in no region were there more nominations than in the Parkland Region. So we can only wonder why the honourable member made that demand.

Nonetheless, we were disappointed in the response from aboriginal organizations in terms of getting nominations out there. They did not make very many nominations, and that is a problem for us. I met recently with some chiefs with respect to this matter, and we have addressed it—or we talked about it. There are concerns because a number of aboriginal people agree that their relationship ought to be with the federal government and that the responsibility for services is that of the federal government. So, for a variety of reasons, there were very few nominations, but I, again, share the honourable member's concern, Madam Speaker.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Urban Green Team Initiative

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Madam Speaker, as many of the members of this House are aware, our government has renewed our commitment to the youth of this province by continuing the successful Urban Green Team initiative. More than 650 Winnipeg youth will have job opportunities this summer through the \$1.58-million program. In the last two years, over a thousand young Winnipeg residents have found summer work with the Urban Green Team, and these young people, in partnership with the community groups, have provided lasting benefits to the city of Winnipeg.

Although the Urban Green Team is an excellent way for the youth of Winnipeg to earn a summer wage, it also means much more than this. I in Sturgeon Creek have had the privilege of the many accolades that have been given to these members on the projects that have been carried out over the last number of years by the Green

Team participants. Working with the Urban Green Team projects allows youth to obtain valuable experience and skills, and it is an excellent opportunity for them to learn first-hand, sometimes for the first time, abilities which a youth will retain for a lifetime. The Urban Green Team program also encourages nonprofit community groups to initiate projects focused on improving the environment. The projects in the past, for example, have promoted environmental awareness, improvement for conservation, park and riverbank cleanup, improvement of the public facilities, trail enhancement, recycling and conservation education.

We are anticipating that the work experience opportunities available this summer will be as interesting and diverse as in the previous years. Madam Speaker, the youth employed on an Urban Green Team project are university, community college and high school students, and I look forward to that again this year.

Parkland Regional Health Board

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): Madam Speaker, those of us on this side of the House have been trying to get from the government some information on how the health cuts will affect hospitals and health care in rural Manitoba. This is something I think all members are very concerned with, and I want to rise today in the House to try to make some suggestions that the government might be willing to take us up on, that would alleviate a lot of the mistrust that is developing in rural Manitoba in terms of health care.

I want to speak specifically in terms of the Parkland and the regional board in the make-up in the Parkland and specifically the lack of representation from the Grandview area and from the Winnipegosis area.

Madam Speaker, the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) has appointed 12 people in our Parkland region. He has the option to appoint two more, and the board has the option of appointing one more, for a total of 15. Now the minister has the power to appoint two people. Grandview and Winnipegosis in the Parkland are the only two communities with health care facilities that have been ignored so far in these appointments. These two communities do not have representation on the Parkland Regional Health Board.

My suggestion to the Health minister is that, with his power, he appoint somebody from Grandview to sit on this Parkland Health Board and he use his other appointment and appoint somebody from the town of Winnipegosis to sit on this Parkland Regional Health Board. It is in his power to do this. He can do this, and I believe he should do this.

One of the things the government has complained of is the rumours that get started in rural Manitoba and all the fear that is brought up. This government can take this positive step to relieve the fear and relieve the mistrust that is developing out there, and I would encourage the minister to appoint somebody from Grandview and somebody from Winnipegosis for the Parkland Regional Health Board.

* (1110)

Home Care Services

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to appeal to the government with respect to the home care service deliveries and the way in which the government is moving in the province of Manitoba, with the focus being on privatization.

Madam Speaker, what we wanted to point out from a Liberal Party's perspective is that the government, as it has not as of today, from what I understand, set out the tendering for the privatization—what they should be doing if they feel that is absolutely essential to move ahead in this area is allow for some form of preferential treatment for nonprofit organizations. I am thinking in particular of the Victorian Order of Nurses. I think, as history has very clearly demonstrated, that nonprofit organizations have a completely different focus and prioritization, if you like, their primary concern, of course, being that of the community and the clients, whereas in the private industry the primary focus will be one of profit.

So, if in fact they deem that they cannot change their current course, we would appeal to the government in terms of giving special consideration to nonprofit organizations, and that should be stated in the criteria that is put out when they issue the tendering for privatization.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Manitoba Telephone System

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Madam Speaker, the Manitoba Telephone System is a billion-dollar asset owned by the people of Manitoba. The company employs over 3,000 Manitobans in rural and urban communities, and that is a thousand individuals less than what it was when this government took office. The \$100 million in profits that MTS has made over the past five years are reinvested into our province. They do not leave. They do not go to Toronto or New York. The money stays here. Of course, it is unfortunate, but the government opposes this, and they want rates to go higher in order to increase profits for private firms.

Madam Speaker, the Minister responsible for Telephones claims that universal phone service and jobs are not in jeopardy from privatization, but, when you look at the evidence from other provinces, you find that he is wrong. In Alberta, under a private system, local phone rates have increased by \$6 a month so far this year. In British Columbia, the privately owned telephone system is considering charging people for local calls. In eastern provinces, Bell Canada, for example, which is the largest—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I wonder if I might ask all honourable members who are carrying on little private meetings if they would do so either in the loge or outside the Chamber. This is Members' Statements, and all members should indeed have the respect they deserve in responding to the Members' Statement portion of Routine Proceedings.

The honourable member for Selkirk, to complete his statement.

Mr. Dewar: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Bell Canada, the biggest private telephone company in Canada, is recording record profits, up 40 percent from 1995, and will be reducing its workforce by over 10,000. The worst admission on the part of the government is its failure to consult with the owners of MTS, which is the public of this province. It was only because we were able to leak information about the fact that this government hired a brokerage firm that the public was even notified that the government is considering the sell-off of this much-

needed corporation. The decision to privatize MTS is bad economics, and what I am really concerned about is the government opposite who cares so little about jobs that will be lost in rural and northern and urban communities of this province as a result of the privatization of MTS. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUDGET DEBATE (Seventh Day of Debate)

Madam Speaker: To resume debate, on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), and on the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer) in amendment thereto, and on the proposed motion of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) in further amendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River, who has 15 minutes remaining.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, this budget which this government would like to portray as a confidence-building budget, a good news budget for Manitobans, contains many contradictions and, in fact, does very little to restore confidence in the people of Manitoba. On one hand, they say that the economy is doing very well, and, on the other hand, they say that the revenues in this province are not going to grow very much at all. In fact, they are using this as an excuse to put away funds for a rainy day fund that they can build up and have in the year when they have to call an election. But, when we look at the statistics from this province, we can see that although the government is saying the economy is doing very well, we see that private investment in this province has declined by some 7.2 percent, and, in fact, Manitoba investment is down by \$150 million, less than it was in 1990. Public investment is also down in this province.

The government says that they are protecting social services such as health care and education and supports for families when, in actual fact, hospital budgets are cut down by \$53 million, and I have a real concern about what impact that is going to have in rural Manitoba. We know that a large portion of that money is going to have to come from rural Manitoba, and we are going to see a deterioration in services—the cuts to Pharmacare of some

\$20 million, cuts to public education, cuts to daycare and cuts to university fundings. This is not a budget that protects social services.

The government would like to portray that they are not increasing taxes when in fact property taxes all over Manitoba are going up because this government is cutting their supports for schools and municipalities. They would like us to believe, and they would like the public to believe, that they—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Once again I would ask that all honourable members that are standing at the rear of the Chamber who are having private meetings that they would do so in the loge or outside the Chamber.

Ms. Wowchuk: —are helping people become more independent through employment, but in actual fact welfare work programs are cut by 26 percent. Welfare for children is cut. Our most vulnerable in our society are paying the price for the cuts of this government. [interjection] Social assistance cuts for children, cuts to tax credits on social assistance—all of these have an impact on our children, the people who are the future of this country.

I hear members across the way saying somebody has to pay. It is unfortunate that this government is trying to make their cuts on the most vulnerable in our society and on our children who are our future in this society.

There are surpluses. There was a surplus of \$120 million, a projected surplus this year again. The government could use that money to prevent the cuts to health care and to the most vulnerable in our society.

I would like to address two issues with respect to health care that affect rural Manitobans. One of them we talked about today is the regional health boards. We looked at this plan of the government's to move towards regionalization. It is a known fact that this will not save money. We wonder what the government is trying to do. In actual fact the government is putting in place these boards so that they can take the blame for the cuts that are coming to health care in rural Manitoba.

Just recently in Winnipegosis there was a meeting by some 400 people that came out. I am very pleased that my colleague from Dauphin was able to attend that

meeting on my behalf and listen to the concerns. The result of that meeting has been many, many letters sent to the minister and the petition that I tabled in the House today with over 1,100 signatures of people of the area expressing concern that they have no representation on the regional health board, just as the people in Grandview are expressing the same concern.

There are two regional hospitals in the area that have hospitals but no representation on the board. I hope that the minister will keep his word, as he indicated today that he is going to address it. Winnipegosis serves a very large area, and we must have an active treatment hospital there. It cannot be changed to a geriatric centre or palliative care centre, whatever the government is proposing, nor can Grandview. Those two hospitals serve a very important role, a very large area, and I would hope very much that the minister would keep this commitment. We will look forward to it.

I understand that the complete regional health boards are going to be announced very soon and that they will be having a meeting in the near future. I also hope that he will address the concern that there is not enough aboriginal representation.

The minister chastised me today for asking for an extension on the time period for nomination. It just shows very clearly that there was not enough time or that not enough work was done by this government because they got very few people from the aboriginal community to submit their name into the board. There is work that the government has to do on that.

* (1120)

Also, we did not look at the many names that were submitted. Yes, there were names submitted, but the minister or whoever did the selecting chose to be very selective. The rumour is, the feeling is, that these are all Tory appointments. When we checked the list, particularly in the Parklands, all of them have very, very close connections to the Conservative Party. So I hope that, when the minister is making the rest of his appointments, he will do just service to the people and look at people who have a genuine interest in health care, not have a Conservative membership card, when he is making these appointments to these boards. Health care

in rural Manitoba is far too important to play politics and use these boards as a payoff for people who worked in campaigns or ran as candidates for the Conservatives.

I have not looked at the boards across the province, but I am sure we would see a lot of that right across the province. It is not the right way. This is far too important. If the government is going for regionalization, they have to be fair. They also have to ensure that we have community-based care in place, and they also have to address the issues of aboriginal people who, in many cases, have different needs, and many of whom need health care services brought closer to their community.

They also need home care, Madam Speaker, and that is another issue I want to address. I am very disappointed in how the government has addressed this issue of privatization and the result of their move towards privatization, which is resulting in a strike of workers. There is a solution. There is a solution to this, and all the government has to do is recognize that what they are doing is wrong. The clients are not happy with it. The workers are not happy with it. What the government has to do is put their privatization plan on hold and go back and talk to the people. Discuss this with the clients. Discuss this with the workers. That is the role of government to come to consensus.

This government is just pushing forward in many areas on the path of privatization, showing no respect for the clients or the workers. Now we see that, as a result of this bungling by the government, we are going to see surgery in rural hospitals put on hold. We are going to see the panelling of people for personal care go on hold. This is disgraceful, Madam Speaker. Right now we have long waiting lists for people to get into personal care homes, and the government is saying to these families, no, you can still keep on waiting because we have made a mess of how we are handling home care, and we are going to put our home care patients into personal care homes and into hospitals instead of going through the panelling process.

I am very concerned as well, Madam Speaker, that this will result in people leaving the rural community. If you have surgery that cannot be done, of course, people are going to go elsewhere. What does this do for the role of our hospitals? Eventually the result is going to be more and more drain, and then you will say, well, we do not

need to do these surgeries here, and it is the demise of our rural hospitals.

Where is this government's commitment to rural people? With the representation that they have I would hope that their rural members would say that this is terrible, this cannot happen. We cannot have the surgery go on hold to allow for the mistakes that this government has made. I urge the government, I urge the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), to recognize that there is a mistake. They have done this wrong.

The people of Manitoba do not want to see home care privatized, and there is a way to correct this. Put it on hold. Go back to the people. Go back to the clients and let us forget about doing favours for We Care and the friends of the minister who stand to profit from this. What we have to think about is these workers, and I have talked to workers in my constituency. You have to recognize, Madam Speaker, that in rural Manitoba it is a little different than in urban centres because there is a lot of distance between client and worker. Now, if they are going to take a reduction of 40 percent in their pay and then get 5 percent for travelling, you know that these people are not going to be able to continue to work. Many of these are women who are trying to supplement their farm income, which is not all that great right now, and many of them are single mothers who have this as their only income. I know that none of us could survive a 40 percent cut in our pay, particularly when these are part-time employees, many who have maybe 20 hours a week. Now to ask them to take a 40 percent cut in wage is unconscionable, and I cannot believe that this is the direction that the government is going in, to help a few of their friends become millionaires on the backs of women. It is, in many cases, women are the home care workers in this society.

The other part is, what is going to happen to the clients who have built strong bonds between their workers? I know that there is a turnover, but in rural Manitoba, very often, those workers stay with one patient from the time they require home care until such time as they move into a personal care home or pass away. There is a strong bond that is built. Moving to a private system, where you will not have the continuity, is not a good move.

Madam Speaker, there are a couple of other issues that I would like to cover just briefly that I think this

government—mistakes that this government is making, and one of them is the dealings of Manitoba changing the privatization or moving to dual marketing of the pork system. I know that the members across the way consider that I am a dinosaur—I said, dragon the other day, but a dinosaur—for continuing to raise this issue. Well, I guess if I am a dinosaur, then all the producers who support the single-desk selling are dinosaurs as well because that is what they want, and it is a disgrace that someone from the government side would make that statement saying that we are dinosaurs for wanting to retain a system that has worked so well for producers.

In my constituency also, people are very concerned about the plan by this government to privatize Manitoba Telephone and are very concerned with what is going to happen to telephone rates. We will be raising that again, Madam Speaker.

As Agriculture critic, I want to say that I am disappointed to see such a large cut in the Agriculture budget. The members across the way themselves say that we are facing great changes in agriculture. We should not be cutting that Agriculture budget even though they can save a lot of money on GRIP. They should be looking at ways that we can support the farm community, add diversification, ensure that there are opportunities for people to stay in rural Manitoba rather than have an increasing decline in population.

So, Madam Speaker, with those comments, I look forward to the Estimates process, not only in Agriculture, but also in many of the other areas that we have seen changes in that are going to affect the people in rural Manitoba, and I will take that opportunity to discuss those issues with many ministers when we begin the Estimates.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Madam Speaker, it is indeed a great honour for me to rise in the Legislature this morning to represent the constituents of Pembina on the 1996-97 provincial budget.

Madam Speaker, as I have listened to the various members of this House discuss our government's budget, it has truly struck me how far our province has come since 1988, when the Filmon government took power. From 1981 to 1988, the years in which opposition members were busy redefining the word "budget" by

continually delivering enormous deficit after enormous deficit, much of the debate in this very House centred around how we could eliminate the annual budgetary shortfall. Today, the debate we hear from members opposite largely revolves around what should be done with our second consecutive surplus. A remarkable change in only eight years.

Imagine the surprise that would greet a visitor who, after not being in our province for eight years, returned. What a different Manitoba they would find today, a better Manitoba than they left eight years ago. Yet, Madam Speaker, sadly, they would find one thing still had not changed; they would discover that the members opposite still have learned little about fiscal management and Manitobans' desire for a responsible government. The Manitoba that our visitor left in 1988 was one which was filled with pessimism and one in which citizens had lost faith in their government to control spending. For residents of Manitoba, there was little to be optimistic about at the beginning of 1988. After bringing in eight consecutive deficits and tripling Manitoba's debt, Manitobans resolved themselves that government could not become fiscally responsible or simply did not care to do so. In fact, the NDP critic, the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), is on record saying, and I quote from Hansard of August 9, 1988, that the eight consecutive NDP deficits were done deliberately to offset the recession of the early 1980s.

* (1130)

Madam Speaker, the NDP Finance critic confesses to what amounts to be premeditated fiscal homicide. One wonders what economic circumstances it would have required, if any, for the members of the opposition to balance the budget.

Madam Speaker, in May of 1987, the Winnipeg Free Press wrote and I quote: The NDP have brought us so deep into fiscal glue, there is absolutely no way any government can pull us out of this without putting us through a massive recession.

Madam Speaker, I can only imagine how grim the synopsis would have been had it been known then that the federal Liberal government would slash transfer funds to such priority areas as health and education. Yet that same newspaper these past few days has been trumpeting

headlines, such as PC's fiscal policy paying off—obviously, a good budget—Manitoba's job growth tops nation's, and Taxes remain on ice.

Madam Speaker, it would be easy to forget how far we have come since 1988 and how far it has been to get here, but Manitobans have not forgotten, and they affirmed that last April by again putting their faith in this government and this Premier (Mr. Filmon). To reach the fiscal stability and confidence our government has achieved was a difficult task. It requires patience, planning, commitment and dedication. These are traits that are not only found in our government's financial planning but are also found in the constituents I represent, and I believe that explains why they understand and support this government's budget.

Madam Speaker, I am going to be introducing a number of topics that I would like to be dealing with. They are: first of all, waiting for the end of winter; then external damage; then developing a vision and planting the seed and growth; laying the groundwork and tools; insurance; and then last, the harvest—six different topics that I am going to be speaking on. I just wish to address them as I see them from our area and within this province.

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

First of all, the first topic, waiting for the end of winter. Many of the residents of Pembina make their living by growing and harvesting crops. They, perhaps better than most, can understand the process we as a government have undergone to correct the damage caused by seven years of NDP fiscal fumbling. Every year in our area, farmers wait patiently for the winter to end to see what damage the long months of cold have left. This winter has especially tried their patience along with that of most Manitobans.

Politically, Manitobans suffered through several years of NDP winter in the 1980s, a winter that was as cold and damaging as anything Mother Nature could serve up. In 1988, our government took office and the ensuing thaw revealed damage that left Manitobans wondering if their province could ever truly be successful and productive again. What was left from that NDP administration was a legacy that Manitobans hope will

never be equalled. In the seven years members opposite spent in power, they managed to triple a debt that took 112 years to accumulate. They introduced a tax of 2 percent on net income. They increased sales tax. They increased payroll taxes by 50 percent—tax increase after tax increase after tax increase.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when this government took office, Manitobans made it very clear that we need to look at every area and aspect of how we spend their money and we need to create efficiencies in government. They made it equally clear that they were paying enough in taxes and that government would have to do with what they had. One wonders if the members opposite have learned from their mistakes, if they have been taking notes as this government laid out a blueprint for financial responsibility. The member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) stated in this House, five years after Manitobans ended this province's NDP fiscal nightmare—this was found in Hansard of April 7, 1993—that deficits were not created by high spending but rather because of problems on the revenue side. Now clearly the NDP Finance critic has yet to listen to the advice of Manitobans. This government listened to Manitobans. We took what they told us, and we acted upon it.

The next area: external damage. The farmers in my constituency and throughout Manitoba are also affected by those things that happen in the greater environment. International markets largely determine the price they will receive for their product and consequently their budget for the year. Drastic reductions in the market price for their crop greatly reduce their income. Similarly, this government has been affected by the massive reductions in federal transfer payments from the Liberal government in Ottawa. As these payments to such areas as health and education get reduced, our provincial budget is negatively impacted. Members opposite will suggest that this is merely an attempt to blame a separate level of government for the difficult decisions that we are being forced to make. This would be like telling our farmers that a 50 percent reduction in the world price of their product is simply an attempt to blame others and that it should not affect how they budget their money.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitobans recognize the difference between fiscal reality and NDP rhetoric. In fact, the projected \$220 million decline in federal transfer

payments is a fiscal reality of government that is real and that must be dealt with. For members opposite who have been removed from the fiscal reality of government for eight years now and who chose to ignore it during the seven years they held office, this is a difficult thing to appreciate.

Next topic: developing a vision and planting the seed. Mr. Deputy Speaker, as members of our agricultural community will tell you, every growing season begins with a goal. It begins with a vision of what season's production will be and of what priorities must be adhered to. In 1988, this government began with the goal of protecting a health care system, an education system and a social system that were in grave danger due to years of overspending. Manitobans knew that their children would have a need for quality services, and they wondered where the money to provide these would come from when more and more money was being drained into financing the provincial debt.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are many different means by which government can go about delivering a balanced budget. Members opposite seem to favour the idea of higher taxes to feed their insatiable appetite to spend more and increase the size and scope of government. Electoral results prove, however, that Manitobans' ability to pay could not keep pace with the former NDP government's ability to spend. The seed that this government planted to produce economic stability and confidence was not one based on higher taxes, as was done in Saskatchewan and as opposition members would seem to favour, but was based on government efficiency. Today, eight years after the initiative began, we now have achieved the lowest cost government in Canada. By looking at every aspect of how we spend Manitobans' money, the money that they earn, we have been able to hold the line on major taxes for nine consecutive years and deliver responsible expenditures.

Most importantly, however, Manitobans can be assured that the quality, education and health care services they value are no longer in economic peril. Next year, as we begin paying down our accumulated debt, we also begin a process that will eventually see revenue that was previously used to pay the interest on our debt freed up and available for, among other things, health and education programs.

Our priorities have been and continue to be quality health and quality education. We have demonstrated this to the people of Manitoba by continually allocating a greater percentage of our budget to health than any other province in Canada.

* (1140)

The second largest portion of our budget is funnelled into investing in our children's education. In fact, this government has continually spent a greater percentage of its budget on health care than did the former NDP government. Members opposite, who stand in this House on a daily basis to issue hollow rhetoric on their fight to protect health care, failed to mention that while this government currently spends 34 percent of its budget on health care, the former NDP administration budgeted only 31.5 percent of their 1987-88 budget on health.

It appears that the NDP's priority is not protecting health services but rather is that of striking fear into Manitobans and misrepresenting reality. Had the previous government been allowed to continue to run annual deficits of a half a billion dollars per year into this decade, our health care system would have been reduced to a mere shell of what we have today.

By restoring sanity to Manitoba's finances, we have replaced uncertainty with confidence and given hope where before there was fear.

The next area I would like to look at is growth or laying the groundwork and tools. Once the seed of fiscal stability was planted in 1988, this government went about the business of ensuring that it would grow. After the election of 1988, the task that faced this government was enormous. Years of free spending had left inflated departments, nonaccountable services and poor management. Members of this government went about the task of cutting out the fat built up by the previous administration, establishing objectives and standards, and ensuring that government was run efficiently.

It is to those members in 1988 who began laying the groundwork that I give my thanks and extended gratitude of the constituents of Pembina. Often, when you face a mess of enormous proportions, you do not even know where to start. I suspect many of the members of the day experienced a similar feeling. I know what a difficult

task it must have been for those members, many of whom still serve in government to begin a process of living within our means.

It is always easy to take a vacation on one's credit card, but what a difficult task it is to repay once the vacation is over. The members opposite had a seven-year vacation on the credit of Manitobans, and we inherited the task of trying to pay that debt off.

One of the initiatives this government has undertaken to return efficiencies to government is the introduction of special operating agencies, SOAs. These agencies have become models for other governments as to how to deliver and finance programs. Many of the residents of my constituency own and operate their own business. While they understand that government by its very nature cannot act entirely like a business, many of my constituents have long wondered why certain dimensions of government could not function more like the private sector.

As a government, we have taken up this challenge, and the results have been rewarding. We have seen that certain aspects of government can operate in a businesslike mandate, and we have found that there is an interesting spin-off. The quality and level of service they provide actually increases.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, through these types of initiatives and experiments, we have been able to reshape the government of Manitoba in eight years. Of course, most of the credit for this turnaround belongs to Manitobans themselves. They knew that in 1988 our government would need to make a difficult decision on the expenditure side to put Manitoba's economic ship on course, yet Manitobans, and I was one of them, told this government to implement the measures necessary because they knew what was at stake.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitobans see the greater picture. They see the end result of these difficult decisions. Residents of this province and of my constituency especially have always been forward thinking and have been asking the government to do the same for many years. I want to make it clear to this House what I mean when I talk about difficult decisions. In the 1988 NDP budget, the budget they introduced before Manitobans had their say at the polls, then

Finance Minister Eugene Kostyra stated, and I quote: We have proved our willingness to make difficult choices in order to meet our commitments, end of quote.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is the same budget in which the NDP government budgeted for a \$334 million shortfall. In a budget that borrowed more than a quarter of a billion dollars on the credit of Manitobans, the members opposite had the nerve to stand in this House and tell Manitobans that they had made difficult decisions. There is nothing difficult about spending money you do not have. I would also point out that in that same budget the former Finance minister goes on to state, and I quote: Manitoba's deficit is fifth lowest among the provinces on a per capita basis, end of quote. This would appear to be the NDP's version of a good-news budget, that the amount they were overspending was not as bad as those around them.

I mention these points because I think it is important that we remember how far it is that we have come since 1988 when we planted the seeds of fiscal responsibility. To get to this point, a point where we are bringing in a second consecutive surplus for only the first time since 1971, we have needed certain tools. Where a Manitoba farmer would use their mechanical instruments to ensure the success of their crop, we brought in legislation to ensure our seeds of fiscal stability would continue to grow. The Balanced Budget, Debt Repayment and Taxpayer Protection Act is the tool that this government created to ensure that government remains fiscally responsible and accountable to Manitobans. This act, which Manitoba taxpayers endorsed during the last election, ensures that Manitoba will not fall back into the days of economic mismanagement it suffered through during the NDP administration.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is unfortunate in some respects that an act such as this is even necessary. If all members of this House exercised the same common sense demonstrated by Manitobans, an act like this would be redundant, since no government would bring in repeated deficits, but sadly this is not the case.

The member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) is on record, and I refer to Hansard of April 25, 1991, as saying that the NDP would not balance the budget in one year but that they would, and I quote: balance the budget over the business cycle, end of quote.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in seven years of NDP government, we never approached the end or likely the middle of their business cycle. I have had the opportunity to own several businesses during my lifetime, and running a deficit for seven years in any of those companies would not have been part of a business cycle. They would have been part of a business bankruptcy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Howard Pawley, the former NDP Premier, has stated, and this was in the Winnipeg Free Press, September 3, 1993, and I quote: that the NDP sometimes suffers from not enough people that bring with them a business sense, end of quote.

I would suggest that this is a prime example.

* (1150)

The other area I would like to address is that of insurance. One of the things that Manitoba farmers do annually is acquire insurance to protect themselves from unexpected events that can destroy their crops. In a similar vein, this government has committed to placing its surplus in a Fiscal Stabilization Fund until it reaches 5 percent of the province's operating fund expenditure. This fund will act as a type of insurance against floods, fires and natural disasters. By having this money available, the government can meet the demands of these unplanned occurrences while not increasing taxes or radically reducing program expenditures.

It seems however that this type of planning, something that is practised by the majority of Manitobans, is lost on members of the opposition. One is left to wonder if they, as individuals, practised the type of financial management they preach for Manitobans. In fact, we find that their actions have not always followed their rhetoric.

In 1982, when many of the province's credit unions were having financial difficulty, the NDP government of the day established a stabilization fund which the credit unions could draw upon. This was a \$25-million fund that was made available to help the struggling credit unions get their finances into shape. There were some requirements, however. First, all credit unions across the province were required to work toward the establishment of a 5 percent reserve. Also, the money that was loaned to the institutions needed to be paid back. Both of these requirements were to be fulfilled within 10 years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, listening to the members opposite implore this government day after day to abandon this 5 percent stabilization fund or reserve fund, you are left to wonder about the contradiction. The same members opposite, who suggest that a surplus fund is irresponsible, are the ones who felt it was a responsible course of action when it came to the security of Manitobans' savings.

Is it possible that the members opposite actually agree with this government strategy and that their rhetoric is merely for their own political purposes of the day? The reserve fund that we are establishing is in fact an integral part of the overall fiscal plan this government has developed since 1988 and seems to meet with the historical approval of the members opposite.

Another area: the harvest. There are few times as exciting and as rewarding as harvest time on the farm. Each year Manitoba's farmers see the rewards of their labour, of their patience and planning as they bring in their year-end crop. Manitobans are also beginning to harvest the rewards of this government's fiscal responsibility and planning. The signs of this harvest are all around us. Population growth in Manitoba is at a nine-year high. Our youth unemployment is the lowest in Canada, and we have achieved a new record level of manufacturing capital investment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, renewed confidence in Manitoba and in Manitobans is also an important part of our economic harvest. Confidence is created by a massive decline in unemployment, confidence created by large gains in retail and export sales. The best news for Manitobans is on the economic front. There are no signs that the harvest is coming to an end.

As has already been quoted in this House, Manitoba's economy is steamrolling ahead. What is important to remember about these positive economic indications is that they were not created in isolation and that they were not achieved overnight. To listen to the members opposite, one would think that the positive signs of confidence and renewal they see around them occurred as a matter of fortune or timing. What the members of the opposition fail to see, or at the very least refuse to recognize, is that the seeds for the harvest we are beginning to see in Manitoba were planted eight years ago and that it has taken a great deal of work and a great deal of effort to reach this point.

Manitobans elected this government last April because they saw and recognized the vision this government has. Manitobans understood the process we would need to go through because it is one they have gone through on different levels in their own lives. Throughout my speech today, I have used as reference Manitoba's farmers to relate the process this government has gone through to breath life into Manitoba's economy.

There are many other examples that I could have used from my different occupations and from many different Manitobans. The important point, however, is that the plan this government has used to restore fiscal stability to Manitoba is not one which was created in an ivory tower. Its impetus can be found in ordinary Manitobans. We, as a government, cannot take credit for leading Manitobans as much as we can thank them for leading us.

Manitobans knew in 1988 what needed to be done, and they recognized that the members opposite did not have the capability to do it. It has taken eight years to arrive from planting the seed of fiscal responsibility to beginning to the reaping of the harvest. Along the way, difficult decisions have had to be made, but they are the decisions that Manitobans asked us to make.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to congratulate and thank my colleague, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), for providing the stewardship needed to achieve what we have. I would also like to thank the Premier for recognizing the vision of Manitobans and for taking their vision and making it ours as well. It is always easy to stand back after the work has been done and comment on how simple and obvious the solution was, but what a task it must have been in 1988, after surveying the mess, roll up the sleeves and begin the clean up.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would most of all like to thank Manitobans. It was their desire to see a change. It was their willingness to make that change, and it was their foresight to stand by that change that has made this entire process possible. Thank you very much.

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): I rise in support of the proposed amendment by my Leader and the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) to the budget motion.

It is a short time ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I became aware of that book by Stephen Covey, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, and I had some interest in reading that book. In fact, I was at the stationer's one day and I had it in my basket, but after looking at the price, I thought I had better put it back on the shelf. Then I see that the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) of this province thought so highly of that book and thought so highly of the habits that apparently were urged, that he bought it for all the members of the government, urging them to read and adopt what was in that book.

So I thought I do not really have to spend the money on the book, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I should be able to determine what those seven habits are by looking at the actions of this government, by considering the budget, taking from that what the seven habits of highly effective people must be if, in fact, this government has read and adopted what Mr. Covey preached.

Now, my first habit that I have elicited from this government, and I think it is the worst habit that I have elicited, is damn the unfortunate. The right wing has a philosophy that we all recognize and is based on what we call the trickle-down theory. If you provide the capital class, the well-off, with more funds, they will invest it in plants, and somehow jobs may someday be created. We have seen how that philosophy has skewed human behaviour. It has not functioned effectively, and we have seen recent attempts in the modern world, in the industrial nations, particularly in the United States, in Great Britain and in Canada, to practise that trickle-down theory, with disastrous consequences, particularly for wage earners and for the unemployed.

That is a belief, but we are afraid that in the Conservative Party and their cousins in the Reform Party, what they are doing is now moving beyond that theory. They are moving to meanness, and I do not think it is just because they are out of touch with real people, with people who are working hard, who are just trying to get by. I think there is an actual blaming of the poor. There is a contempt for those who tend to be vulnerable, for those who earn wages and for those who are unable to earn wages. I believe this philosophy and this government fail to understand society, society in the '90s. They are not equipped to govern. My colleague for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) said, I just think they are mean,

the blue meanies, the land of the blue meanies, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I want to refer to example. First of all, how does this government deal with the sick and the disabled? You can look to Pharmacare first off, and the meanness here is their failure to understand and to acknowledge the circumstances of those who are ill and disabled. Those individuals do not choose their plight, and we have said that the financial burden of the misfortune of poor health and disability should be shared across the community and supported by a system of fair taxation, but to do otherwise and, indeed, to take away an existing program smacks of an evil, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

* (1200)

I had a constituent who came in to see me last week, and with a family income of approximately \$45,000, he suffers a condition of severe dermatitis in his hands, and I looked at them and they were cracked, and the cracks went deep. He was a manual labourer who depended on his hands to provide for his family. He said, the medication for my hands cost \$75 a month, \$900 a year. The new Pharmacare plan that at one time gave substantial benefits to this individual, again for a condition that he did not choose, over which he has no control, but now with the changes, that \$900 a year will have to be paid for by this individual, and, of course, tell that individual that taxes are frozen. He has to pay \$900 cash, and he said to me, I am going to start to reduce the intake of these pills. I cannot afford this. We are just barely getting by. We are barely getting our house payments. We have no frills.

What will happen, Mr. Deputy Speaker? What will be the cost to people not just like this constituent, but to those with heart conditions and those with any condition that have prescribed medications. Will this individual have to suffer gangrene someday? Will there be losses to the workplace, income losses? Will there be demands on mental health services? Will this individual show up at the social allowance office, unemployment insurance office? Will he show up at the emergency room? The changes to Pharmacare are very shortsighted.

The second example of the meanness toward the sick and disabled is in home care. Being on home care, living with a disability, an illness, is usually very, very stressful

on the person suffering. I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I know first-hand, and yet with home care there is a dignity available to these individuals, a dignity because they are able to stay in their home, which is not only healthier, but they are happier there, and there is not the bureaucracy that is in an institution. So often we hear the stories about the gall bladder in D5, the depersonalizing of individuals, the dehumanizing experience of being in a health care institution. With home care, you are in your own place, in your own castle.

But, with the privatization of home care which this government is proceeding with, that castle will not be respected because that friend—and I have heard this from constituents, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Home care recipients have enjoyed sometimes the same health care provider for 11-some years, and that is how it should be. There is often a very, very strong bond between the home care recipient and the health care provider. After all, the provider is entering into someone else's castle; they are in their home.

We know from experience that we have had in this province that the private firms delivering home care services suffer from a tremendous turnover. I do not mean staff turnover coming and going from the payroll, but they are reassigning the home care workers so often, there is a real reputation attached to the private services in Manitoba. As well, the level of training, I am afraid, will be negatively affected, and we will see people who are untrained going in to provide services where trained people were once provided in the public system.

I had a good discussion with a constituent, actually a constituent of the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews). She is a home care worker. She was so pleased to talk to me. She said, I was writing a letter to the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) because I phoned and phoned and phoned. They would not put me through to him—I hear this from everyone, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You cannot talk to the Minister of Health, and I just wonder, too, if the Minister of Health is even getting little notes passed on from the front lines of that office about the concern about privatizing home care. This particular worker said, I see what happens. I see, when I am not scheduled and the private home care firm goes in, the level of service. They do not know the recipient's needs. They change personnel every second week or so. She pleaded with me to raise this issue with the Minister of Health.

The third example of the meanness toward the sick and disabled is the elimination of eye exams. It was a few years ago when I noticed that my eyesight was deteriorating, and I learned first-hand, indeed, that eyesight difficulties are a disability; again, not one that I chose, not one that anyone chooses, but this government has a philosophy of blaming, damning the unfortunate.

In addition to the meanness against the sick and the disabled is the meanness toward the poor. We were advised by representatives of the coalition called Choices yesterday that, currently, people living on social allowance are 50 to 60 percent below the poverty rate now, but what this government plans is heinous, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I particularly note the 30 percent reduction, the roughly 30 percent reduction, in rates for infants.

I had a call from a constituent who is single, no children. He was getting \$102.50 every two weeks after rent. Now he will be receiving \$79 every two weeks, and, of course, the rent continues. As the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) made the point, the reductions are not shared by those who receive social allowance, because the landlords are continuing to get their amounts, but he has to make do with that much less. He says, it is too close to the bone; it is affecting the food I am eating.

The third focus of this government's meanness is the unemployed. It was fascinating to hear the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) and the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) recently talk about their changes to welfare rates and training programs. There are 26,000 people estimated to be on welfare, and 7,000 of those are single parents who are deemed to be employable, yet the minister confessed her new programs would provide work for only 700 people, and, worse yet, no new daycare spaces, no rollback of rates for subsidized spaces—in fact, there is a \$4-million cut to daycare at a time when daycares in the inner city of Winnipeg are on the verge of closing.

* (1210)

What has the government done? Well, it increased the rates of subsidized spaces. The use of those spaces went down, very unfortunate, but what does the government do? Well, we are just going to get rid of those forever now. They do not go back and make daycare more

accessible. At the same time they are cutting welfare rates and saying to single parents, you go to work.

I also want to talk about how the meanness has been targeted against women. We have talked in Question Period about how the home care workers of this province are disproportionately women, and the users of home care are disproportionately women. The privatization plans, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have a terrible impact on the women of this province.

This is the government that is bringing on this strike by this ridiculous threat to the best home care system in North America. It failed to have an essential service agreement in place. It did not consult the recipients. It did not consult the seniors. It did not listen to consumers, consumers in particular who have had very bad experiences with private home care service.

What about the war that this government is waging on nurses? I know that first-hand, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Our family has suffered the consequences of layoff due to this government's policies affecting nurses; and the new war against teachers, the policies on child care, the hits on single moms receiving social allowance.

Look at the thread that runs throughout these attacks, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The thread is an attack on women. We have identified in our caucus how shallow the zero tolerance policy on violence against women is, yet there has been no new priority given to that challenge in our society. We have read about the inquest report on the tragic death of Sarah Kelly, and we have seen from that report—and we knew this before and the government knew it, but they did not do anything; they had to wait for an inquest report—that Mr. Arthurson did not fall through a crack, he fell through a crevice, and that this government has so far to go for an effective program, an effective response to sex offenders, while these individuals, these known threats to our community, are allowed to prey on our women and children.

I have just been reading the book by Hillary Clinton called, *It Takes a Village*, which I would recommend, I think, more highly than Mr. Covey's book to the members of this government. She talks about the nostalgia that the right wing is trying to appeal to. We have to get back to what some people call the good old days, and we see that happening in Manitoba where this

government wants to go back to some system of medicare, some system of education, some system of child care that was in existence long even before the 1970s, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hillary Clinton says, I understand that nostalgia. I feel it myself when the world seems too much to take. There were many good things about our way of life back then, but in reality our past was not so picture perfect. Ask African-American children who grew up in a segregated society. I would say in Canada, ask aboriginal peoples. She says, ask immigrants who struggled to survive in sweatshops and tenements, and I would say in Manitoba and in Winnipeg, ask the East European descendants who came to Manitoba and to Winnipeg and built this city. Ask them about the prejudice and the discrimination that they suffered at the hands of the majority of the dominant society. She says, ask women whose life choices were circumscribed and whose work was underpaid. She says, ask those who grew up in the picture-perfect houses about the secrets and desperation they sometimes concealed.

So, in conclusion to this No. 1 habit of damn the unfortunate, returning to the past, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as this government wants to do, is to damn not only the unfortunate but to damn the future.

Now, what is another habit of this government? Well, I think it is the other tray on the weigh scale, benefit the privileged. I think as an example of that there is nothing more despicable than cabinet ministers' salaries increasing 11 percent, and, in fact, a 21 percent increase in remuneration for the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of this province. I mean, that is the ultimate take-for-yourself. It is not the money so much as the symbol.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

Another example is private school funding in this province and how this government always goes back to this argument—well, we are required by law to provide this funding. What law is that? There is no legislation. There is no court case. The government talks about some legal opinion, and I want to see that legal opinion, and I understand there are legal opinions that say otherwise. This government is committed to increasing private school funding the way it is not because of any legal

opinion; it is because of its ideology. It is because it has a commitment to elite schools.

It is the elite schools we are concerned about. We do not care that there are private schools. We say, fine, let us have that offering to parents and families, but if you are going to an elite private school, you pay. You make that choice, you pay, because our commitment is to a public system which should be the envy of everyone, and it should be the private school enrollees who say, I want to go to the public school because it is the best. That has to be the objective.

Finally, under this second habit of benefiting the privileged, I just want to talk about the bigger picture. Last year, there was a record \$95 billion—I cannot even imagine what that is—\$95-billion record profits last year. That was 19 percent higher than 1994—19 percent. We do not see percentages like that except with the Premier's (Mr. Filmon) salary when it comes to incomes, when it comes to the intake of money into families.

There is the business writer for Maclean's magazine who recently said, wages for unionized workers rose 0.9 percent in 1995, which is a polite way of saying that the average stiff had less money in his pocket after inflation. No wonder consumer spending is in the doldrums, and no wonder so many people feel burned. He said, and I agree with this, while Bay Street parties, the mood on main street is getting ugly, and it is getting particularly ugly on our Main Street.

Now, let us go on and talk about some other habits that are elicited here. I wonder if this is one of Mr. Covey's habits of highly effective people. Promise conveniently. You know, we believe that the economics of this government are wrong, but I think what really offends sensibilities, not just of members on this side but of Manitobans, are questions of trust. I think it is habits three, four and five that I will be getting to that speak to this question of trust.

Questions of trust defeat governments, I believe, more than any other trait, and, believe me, Manitobans have an uncanny sense of right and wrong, and they are watching this government very closely now. What are some of the biggies? Well, some of the promises that deserve some mention here—let us start with the health care capital program. This is an article from the Winnipeg Sun of

March 17, 1995. There is an election promise by this government to spend, oh, what is it, about \$600 million or so on construction projects in the health care field, and that included capital funding for the Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation.

This is prophetic, and you will be hearing a lot more of this from everyone from now on. New Democrat MLA Dave Chomiak complained in response to the promise: This is a shell game. They are trying to convince the public they intend to do something, but if they are elected, they will not proceed.

* (1220)

What happened? What happened after E day, Madam Speaker?

We can talk about Manitoba Pork. There was another convenient promise. We understand the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) made a promise, no changes to Manitoba Pork unless the producers by majority decision decide that there should be a change. That promise went by. It went by just like E day on the calendar.

Here is another doozie. Headlines Winnipeg Free Press, again March of 1995—that is when all these promises came out. Headline, Tories vow to maintain current spending level. It said: After two years of slashing government spending, the Filmon government is adopting a gentler approach in its quest to balance the books, and this easing in spending cuts is not a one-time thing, according to Finance Minister Eric Stefanson. He told the Legislature yesterday the government plans to maintain program spending at \$4.465 billion for each of the next four years—a very specific promise.

Oh, here is another one. Here is another doozie, the Pharmacare deductible. The folks opposite will remember sending this around in black and orange: There is a better way, Gary Filmon's way. It says, check mark, Pharmacare deductible, just \$230 per family. Where did that go after E day? So that is promise conveniently, habit No. 3.

Habit No. 4 is lie, lie, lie, and I do not know if that is parliamentary, Madam Speaker. I am not referring to an individual; I am referring to a habit of individuals. I suppose if that is unparliamentary, I withdraw, and I

would say that habit No. 4 should be, serve baloney, breakfast, lunch and supper.

I had a hard time with this one because I wanted to come up with the top five. Let us talk about the big baloneys. No. 1: We have had no tax increases for how many years, and I do not have to look further than this budget. I do not have to look further than a letter from my constituent that I got last week, and I want to put it on the record: My husband and I are campers at one of Manitoba's provincial parks. The annual draw is approaching, and we have been informed that the seasonal camping fee has been augmented from \$224 to \$390. We were not surprised that the rate had been raised. However, we were quite shocked at the enormous amount of the augmentation. This is a 75 percent increase, I say to the minister, at a time when many people are facing layoffs, wage rollbacks, zero salary increases or even modest 2 percent salary increases.

They said this increase seems outrageous, and here is the important point. Up until now low- to middle-income families who could not afford cottages or private camping facilities could still spend nice summers away from the city. This increase is effectively denying a wonderful camping experience to many of these families.

There are a few other ones. Of course, we talked about the Pharmacare change. We talked about eye examinations. This is only this budget. Two budgets ago there were some real losers in there. I mean, there is this shift to the user pay often to those who are least able to afford it.

No. 2, under the baloney list, the surplus last year, that was a good one. We had a surplus, they said. Not according to independent observers who said there was a \$97-million deficit, actually.

Let us go to No. 3, and this follows on the earlier speaker. I have heard this time and time again. I have seen it in the literature, and almost every time they get up and they have an audience they will tell you that we spend more as a percentage on health care than any other province in Canada.

I do not know where they get those figures, but I will tell you what. I will go to Statistics Canada for my figures. Statistics Canada tells me that Manitoba does

not spend the most as a percentage of its total budget on health care; it does not spend the second most; it does not spend the third most; but Manitoba is No. 4. It is in the middle of the pack in this country. It is No. 4. By the way, in the last fiscal year it was behind both Ontario and British Columbia, and Nova Scotia was the other one.

Here is another piece of baloney, No. 4, we cannot afford our social programs. This is the great one of the right. We cannot afford our social programs, and then I go to The Globe and Mail in January 20, 1996, and there is our own Finance minister writing to The Globe and Mail. What does he say? He says, we have no need to slash government spending. That is a quotable quote. So you are defeating some of your own arguments.

The last of the top five—and I wish I had more time to get into the top 10 just like on the radio—is that Manitoba's economy is steamrolling ahead. When I was a little boy, I used to stand for a long time on the edge of the road watching them pave. I do not know if the members opposite have seen a steamroller for a long time, but after looking at a steamroller I can see there is an argument that Manitoba is steamrolling ahead. Those things plod. They plod. They plod. They clunk. Manitoba is having a lot of very serious difficulties in the economy, and I refer the members opposite, not to the Finance minister's letter to The Globe and Mail, but to the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), who said that, according to the Conference Board, Manitoba's level of total output, that is, real GDP in '95, was about the same as 1988. The Manitoba economy has been close to stagnation during the whole period of the Filmon government.

Very quickly, what could have been Mr. Covey's other habits? No. 5, blame freely, blame the federal government. Madam Speaker, \$147 million was going to be our loss. What is the net? Around \$41 million. Teachers, blame the teachers. Union bosses, that is one we hear every day.

No. 6, worship the market, whatever. No. 7, only listen to friends. Those must be the habits. I am afraid those are bad habits, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Yes, Madam Speaker, is it the desire to call it 12:30?

Madam Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it 12:30?

Madam Speaker: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, April 12, 1996

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