



Fifth Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(Hansard)

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, April 13, 1994

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Curran Contract Cancellation and Pharmacare and Home Care Reinstatement

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Mildred Glover, Alison Wood, Eva Cobb and others requesting the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to personally step in and order the cancellation of the Connie Curran contract and consider cancelling the recent cuts to the Pharmacare and Home Care programs.

Mr. Harry Schellenberg (Rossmere): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Jackie Greenaway, Carol Smith, Bill Wilson and others requesting the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Premier to personally step in and order the cancellation of the Connie Curran contract and consider cancelling the recent cuts to the Pharmacare and Home Care programs.

APM Incorporated Remuneration and Pharmacare and Home Care Reinstatement

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of M. Zaluski, B. Chemiak, A. Welicko and others requesting the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Premier to personally step in and order the repayment of the \$4 million paid to Connie Curran and her firm APM Incorporated and consider cancelling the recent cuts to the Pharmacare and Home Care programs.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

APM Incorporated Remuneration and Pharmacare and Home Care Reinstatement

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

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the Province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS the Manitoba government has repeatedly broken promises to support the Pharmacare program and has in fact cut benefits and increased deductibles far above the inflation rate; and

WHEREAS the Pharmacare program was brought in by the NDP as a preventative program which keeps people out of costly hospital beds and institutions; and

WHEREAS rather than cutting benefits and increasing deductibles the provincial government should be demanding the federal government cancel recent cuts to generic drugs that occurred under the Drug Patent Act; and

WHEREAS at the same time Manitoba government has also cut home care and implemented user fees; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba government paid an American health care consultant over \$4 million to implement further cuts in health care.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly urge the Premier to personally step in and order the repayment of the \$4 million paid to Connie Curran and her firm APM Incorporated and consider cancelling the

recent cuts to the Pharmacare and Home Care Program.

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Santos). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? The Clerk will read.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): The petition of the undersigned citizens of the Province of Manitoba, humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS the Manitoba government has repeatedly broken promises to support the Pharmacare program and has in fact cut benefits and increased deductibles far above the inflation rate; and

WHEREAS the Pharmacare program was brought in by the NDP as a preventative program which keeps people out of costly hospital beds and institutions; and

WHEREAS rather than cutting benefits and increasing deductibles the provincial government should be demanding the federal government cancel recent cuts to generic drugs that occurred under the Drug Patent Act; and

WHEREAS at the same time Manitoba government has also cut home care and implemented user fees; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba government paid an American health care consultant over \$4 million to implement further cuts in health care.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly urge the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to personally step in and order the repayment of the \$4 million paid to Connie Curran and her firm APM Incorporated and consider cancelling the recent cuts to the Pharmacare and Home Care programs.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister charged with the administration of The Liquor Control Act): I would like to table the 70th Annual Report of the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission for the fiscal year April 1, 1992, to March 31, 1993, as

well as the Quarterly Report for the first three quarters.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table three reports: the Annual Report 1993 of the University of Manitoba; the Annual Financial Report for the year ended March 31, 1993, of Brandon University; the University of Winnipeg Financial Statements for the year ended March 31, 1993.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the Residential Tenancies Branch Annual Report 1992.

* (1335)

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery where we have with us this afternoon from the Crestview School, twenty-seven Grade 5 students under the direction of Mrs. Lorraine Prokopchuk. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Urban Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh).

Also this afternoon, from the Churchill High School we have twenty-five Grade 9 students under the direction of Ms. Terri Gartner. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Osborne (Ms. McCormick).

From the River West Park School, we have twenty-eight Grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Colin Wilson. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ernst).

On behalf of all honourable members, I would like to welcome you here this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Brandon General Hospital Funding Reduction

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): I have a question for the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), Mr. Speaker.

As the minister knows, I have expressed serious concerns in the past about cutbacks to the funding of the Brandon General Hospital. Now we have learned that the Brandon General Hospital is being forced to look at additional cuts to surgical beds and nursing staff because the minister is requiring the Brandon General Hospital to eliminate approximately \$4 million in its budget in the next three years.

This is a cut of about 10 percent on top of millions of dollars of cuts required previously. We always thought there was a pause in health cutbacks, but now it seems we are full speed ahead.

Will the minister confirm that the Brandon General Hospital is being cut back in funding and is being forced to look at eliminating a third of its surgical beds?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, the medical profession have voluntarily joined in observing the commitments required in Bill 22. The Manitoba Nurses' Union has voluntarily accepted compliance with Bill 22, as has everyone in the public service affected by Bill 22. So it is not surprising that Brandon General Hospital would be included. The Health Sciences Centre has already done that. Certainly, we are working with the hospitals to ensure that patient care, our bottom line, is observed.

The honourable member for Brandon East, who is my neighbour, will recognize and remember that the first permanent bed cuts were brought about by his government back in 1987.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, we also provided for day surgery and outpatient surgery.

Mr. Speaker, this is beyond the amount being required to fulfill Bill 22. This is much more than that. It is a very small amount; it is only one-quarter of a million this year. But they are being asked to cut \$780,000 this year, \$1.6 million next year, and another \$1.6 million in the subsequent year. So that is a very serious cut for that particular hospital.

My supplementary question to the minister then is: How can the Brandon General Hospital

continue in its role as a major regional referral centre if it is being continually cut back? The question is when is this going to stop, because the downsizing is discouraging people from Westman and elsewhere from using the hospital.

Mr. McCrae: I recently announced our government's support for Phase I of an over-\$70 million redevelopment for Brandon General Hospital, Mr. Speaker.

I think the honourable member does not remember things like that when he rises in the House to ask questions. Do you think that we do not see a major role for Brandon General Hospital in western Manitoba in the future if we are committing that kind of commitment to the redevelopment of the Brandon General Hospital?

That hospital will serve as a major urban community, regional, whatever you want to call it, facility for many, many years, and it will play an extremely important role in the health care needs of many, many people in western Manitoba.

Does the honourable member know that 50 percent of the patients in that hospital are from outside the city of Brandon? That tells me that it is being regarded very much as a regional centre by the government of Manitoba. We work with that hospital and the other hospitals in Manitoba to ensure patient care is taken care of in the best way possible.

* (1340)

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, it is regrettable that this modernization has been delayed since 1988 because, as the minister knows, we had a \$45 million to \$50 million plan at that time and it was in the capital budget tabled in this hospital. It has been delayed and delayed and people have been discouraged from using Brandon General Hospital, and this is from doctors who have told me this.

Mr. Speaker: Question, please.

Mr. Leonard Evans: My question to the minister is: What does the minister intend to do to ensure that people can easily access Brandon General Hospital in the future and receive adequate care, taking into consideration the bed closures and the

nursing layoffs that are going to take place because of this funding cutback by this minister?

Mr. McCrae: In 1994, this year, the honourable member for Brandon East made it clear that his commitment to the redevelopment of Brandon General Hospital goes back to 1983.

My question is, where was the honourable member between the years 1983 and 1988 when the people of Manitoba put him and his government out of office? For him to be raising that kind of argument today rings very strangely indeed to me.

Brandon General Hospital, as I said, will have a very, very important role in the future. The honourable member knows that there will be psychiatric beds located at Brandon General Hospital to provide for the acute psychiatric needs of people who unfortunately need those services. The staff at the Brandon General Hospital do a terrific job. My neighbours, members of my family who have been at Brandon General Hospital have spoken and continue to speak very highly of the services offered there.

Social Assistance Reduction Strategy

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, last month the number of cases of City of Winnipeg social assistance achieved a record all-time high of 18,717. At the same time there were 26,835 provincial social assistance cases.

Can the Minister of Family Services tell us what her government plans to do to move the record numbers of people on social assistance off social assistance and into paid employment?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): I thank my honourable friend for that question because we did indeed commit, in the throne speech of just last week—and I hope the member will take the opportunity to congratulate us on working very actively along with the federal government, in co-operation with the federal government, on many pilot projects that will get people off of welfare and into the workforce.

Yes, the city of Winnipeg numbers are high as they are right across the country. Mr. Speaker, in

provinces that are governed by NDP administrations, they are experiencing extremely difficult times.

We will do everything within our power, and I have alluded to my request to the federal minister to initiate and implement pilot projects that will deal with getting single moms off of the welfare rolls and into the workforce, and we will be working and have been in discussions with the City of Winnipeg around how we can put initiatives in place to accomplish that for the single employable rolls also.

Single Parent Families

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Can the minister tell us how many single parents are going to be moved off social assistance and into paid employment as the result of this so-called initiative, given that this government has had since November 1990 the Single-Parent Families Report with eight pages of recommendations which this government has acted on almost none of and has cut in almost every area including the Student Social Assistance Program, child care, and closed two Human Resources Opportunity Centres?

* (1345)

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, our record on child care is second to none across this country. We have, in fact, since we took over as government increased the number of subsidized spaces throughout the province dramatically. We have doubled the amount of money that was spent on child care that was spent under the former administration in this province. We have increased the number of licensed spaces. We have made child care much more flexible by allowing parents to take the subsidy with them to the daycare centre of their choice. So we have nothing to be ashamed of on our record with child care.

Mr. Speaker, I have indicated that it will take a partnership right across our Manitoba community in order to implement any of the pilot projects that will be undertaken in co-operation with the federal government. We have the private sector that we need to dialogue with. We have the front-line

workers which we are in the process of beginning a dialogue with, and we have the volunteer community that are all going to have to partner with government in order to put in place programs that will be meaningful for single mothers right across this province.

Mr. Martindale: Can the Minister of Family Services tell the House why they are planning, after closing the Dauphin Human Resources Opportunity Centre, to cut the Dauphin Single Parent Job Access worker? Why are they planning to lay off this person when the minister professes to have a concern for single parents? Why are they eliminating this position, this person who works with single parents?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, I think I should repeat the answer that I just gave to my honourable friend because obviously he was not listening. He must have been thinking about his follow-up question.

Mr. Speaker, I have indicated that we announced in the throne speech that we will be holding a Partnership to Independence Forum which will involve the private sector which will be the vehicle for job creation for single mothers throughout this province, along with the front-line workers to determine what the incentives and what the disincentives are to moving people off of welfare and into the workforce. We will also be asking the community volunteers throughout our province to indicate where they can be a part of the process in the partnership.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a comprehensive plan in place, and we believe that we will be moving single mothers off of welfare and into the workforce this year.

Parents Forum on Education Representation

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

On April 8, the minister announced with some fanfare that there is going to be a Parents Forum on Education. His press release stated that we need to consult directly with parents of children in the

public school system, the people most affected and concerned with our children's education. The letter attached to the press release states that the minister wishes to ensure fair regional distribution from all Manitoba as well as proportional representation, Mr. Speaker.

My question for the minister is whether copies of the application form and letters of invitation were ever sent out to parent councils?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, there was some dialogue with the home and school and parent-teachers' association giving early notice that we were contemplating a forum, but other than that nobody had prior notice.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I was the one who faxed over to home and school or couriered over to home and school the application, so I think I probably have been maybe a bit more aggressive in trying to get the parents involved than the Minister of Education.

The letter of invitation goes on: Further participation will be based on a fair distribution of parents representing independent school students, exceptional needs students, parents who are teachers, trustees, principals, superintendents of our education employees. It goes on to say that: Given the criteria listed above, spaces will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.

My question to the minister is: Who will be determining which parents meet the minister's criteria? Will it be the minister himself or someone from his staff who will choose parents on the basis of what they believe or what his personal agenda is?

* (1350)

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I find the question perplexing in many respects.

I know if we had not tried to fairly distribute the number of opportunities as between school divisions, as between rural and urban Manitoba, as between the various interest groups, as between the demographics to some degree, if we had not done that the member would be standing in his place criticizing.

So he asked the question, who is going to ultimately do the evaluating and the waiting and who is going to be making the hard choices as to including a select number from those areas which may be overrepresented in the number of applications that come forward.

My staff will be doing that, Mr. Speaker, but obviously I will be held accountable and responsible for that action.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, an article in yesterday's *Flin Flon Reminder* stated that the Flin Flon School Division will offer support to local parents taking part in the Parents Forum. The school division will pay mileage plus a hundred dollars a night for up to four parents to attend the forum.

This morning I received a call from someone in Flin Flon who went to her local school this morning to pick up an application for the Parents Forum. She was told that the application forms were available at the Flin Flon School Division office, something about which the minister himself implied that they would be going to the schools.

My question for the minister is: Since it appears that the school divisions may be choosing who attends the forum, how can the minister ensure that representation at the forum is really and truly reflective of the parents?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, the member, I guess, could assume the whole forum away, and I guess he could assume this is November and not April. I do not know where he is coming from.

All I know is that I am disappointed to hear that the applications in that school division are not with the schools. I will look into that, because certainly we directed them out to roughly 800 schools throughout our province.

With respect to who is going to be selecting, I mean, I trust every school division office within this province if indeed they have the applications. I assume that they will direct those applications to any individual who asks for them and if there are beyond 30 within any setting that they will be xeroxed or reproduced and more will be provided.

Workforce 2000 Abuses

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, last year I raised many concerns about Workforce 2000, a program of this government which transfers \$7 million a year into private education at a time when every sector of public education is being cut.

I was pleased to see this third Minister of Education shared some of my concerns when he was quoted in the *Free Press* as saying that he is aware that abuse has occurred in Workforce 2000, that somebody has gone beyond the limits of fair play and fair training and that in some rare cases it is questionable whether the training took place at all.

Mr. Speaker, these are very serious allegations.

Will the minister table the list now of companies and trainers who are implicated in these abuses?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I do not have such a list because none exists.

An Honourable Member: Make one.

An Honourable Member: The NDP policy: just make one up.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) encourages me to make one up.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

* (1355)

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, the member from Elmwood said: Make one; make a list of those who are abusing the program, not make one up.

The minister should be careful in putting statements on the record, Mr. Speaker. He should perhaps listen a little more closely to the member for Elmwood.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Manness: I know I should not reflect upon your ruling, and I will not, but certainly a member opposite said, make one.

Mr. Speaker, I guess I started my answer by saying I do not have one, and I do not. If I had one I would share it, but I do not have it because it does not exist.

We are aware of a couple of situations under the good faith model that was put into place and which, for the most part, has delivered far beyond the early expectations. Within that good faith model, there were some situations that were in my view a little offside. We have tried to take internal actions with the criteria to make sure that indeed the number that happen in the future that are offside are certainly even reduced from the level they might be at now.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, I am using the minister's words: There were abuses and training did not take place.

This is a \$7-million program. Will he table the list of people where these abuses occurred? Will he tell us how he is going about recovering that public money?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, it seems to me the question is identical to the very first one that was posed. Again, the response that I provide will be very similar to my first response.

The members opposite, in discussions last year, brought forward some examples of where they thought that there may be abuse. We looked into them. As a matter of fact, I am sure the Provincial Auditor who was looking at our criteria that were in place may have looked at them also. In most of the cases the member has cited there was no abuse, but in one there may have been on the margins of abuse. We have looked into it and we have tried to deal with it with a change in criteria that apply to that sector and to that type of application, should it continue to come forward.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, will the minister explain then, why in the Free Press there are abuses? Why, in answer to my first question, there are two abuses, and why, when we are now down

to the third question, we are down to one borderline case?

What is the issue? Will he now answer and table the list of people who have abused that Workforce 2000 money, so that money can be recovered?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, the member stands and asks rhetorically, what is the issue. It is up to her to ascertain the validity of her facts.

I have shared with her—and I sent to the NDP caucus room and I believe recently to the Liberal caucus room—the whole list of those successful applications who have had training support under the Workforce 2000 program.

I am aware through some representation made not only by the NDP party but some others that there were some cases of those receiving support that were on the line. I would count those on one hand.

So I am saying to the member: We have taken actions internally to try and correct that criteria, to continue to have in place the good faith model without hiring a battery of inspectors and auditors, and yet still deliver training as indeed most of society wants today.

Workforce 2000 Centra Gas

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Finance.

Clearly, from the previous answer of the minister, the minister has no intention whatsoever of doing anything to get this money back. He plans to let these people off with the money they have gotten away with.

Clearly, this government makes a mockery out of deficit reduction. Over the last five years, this government has added \$5 billion onto the accumulated provincial debt of this province.

What it has recently done is to give \$177,000 under the Workforce 2000 grants to Centra Gas. This is a company that was recently ordered to stop overbilling consumers. It guarantees its investors a 12 percent return on investments.

I would like to know from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) if he is serious about deficit reduction as to why a money-making company like Centra Gas needs corporate welfare.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, an observation drawn over many years of having sat in this House is when the NDP has nowhere else to go, is try and set up the economic warfare class struggle, and try to lay, of course, all the blame of a society at the feet of a large employer who is making obviously a large contribution to the employment numbers in our province. Nothing has changed, so I am not surprised by the essence of the question put forward by the member for Elmwood.

I say to him that it is a sector, indeed the energy sector is one that obviously has to have some high sophistication of training, and to the extent that all of our wealth-generating companies within our province have some access to better train their workers, this program, Workforce 2000, has a role to play.

Abuses

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary then to the minister in charge of the Workforce 2000 program is that, given that Terry Cristall, the president of the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, sheepishly admitted that it probably was not a very smart move on his part to accept a Workforce 2000 grant, and Bob Kozminski, the Tory bagman and president of a car company, accepted money from Workforce 2000—

Mr. Speaker: And your question, sir, is.

Mr. Maloway: I would like to know when will this abuse of tax dollars stop, and when will this government put some controls on this program?

* (1400)

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I wish that the members opposite had maybe posed this question in the first instance, because that is a fair question. I say to them that I am trying to review the criteria because I too want to know whether or not it should apply to all sectors within the makeup of our economy.

The question is fairly posed and in Estimates I would hope to have a fuller response to that question. I think the criteria should be reviewed, but this is a program that is delivered exceedingly well over the course of three years, but there is no reason why some of the criteria that are in place should not be reviewed. I am planning to do that.

Centra Gas Overbilling

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary is to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

I would like to ask the minister to table any correspondence he has with Centra Gas involving the recent overbilling of consumers in this province, and I would like to know why he has not met with Centra to resolve this case.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as the member for Elmwood full knows, the Centra Gas company is regulated by the Public Utilities Board. I have had no contact with anyone at Centra Gas, nor have I issued any orders, nor have I talked to them about this question. It is under the jurisdiction of the Public Utilities Board, a quasi-judicial body. It may be the plan of the NDP to interfere and to politically direct the operations of the Public Utilities Board. That is not the case for this government.

Youth Crime Prevention Programs

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): My question is to the Minister of Justice.

Last year in the city of Winnipeg alone there has been an increase of 137 percent in charges of theft over \$1,000 regarding youth. There are, on average, 17 vehicles a day being stolen in the city of Winnipeg.

I think that those figures speak more forcefully than I ever could of the results of six years of cutbacks to programs for youth and families in this province, of policies that have led to the highest child poverty rate in Canada and of

mismanagement that has led to the breakdown in the court system in Manitoba.

My question to the minister is: Will she confirm to Manitobans that she has not even taken any rear-guard action to deal with this crisis, not even following the summit on youth violence in December?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, let me start by reminding the member of information delivered in this House by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) the other day, which included the increasing amount of money spent by this government in all areas of service to people that relate particularly to children and to youth.

In terms of what we are doing, yes, we did take the advice of Manitobans. We held a summit on youth crime and violence. I came out on behalf of our government with a nine-point plan to deal with youth crime and violence. It deals with youth crime and violence at the prevention end. It deals with toughening up the Young Offenders Act, and it deals with youth crime and violence in the Corrections end.

Community-Based Policing Government Support

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, the minister answered her question that all she has is a plan. I do not know what she is hearing, but we are fed up with rising youth crime. We need action, and we need action now.

My question for the minister is: In the least, will she ensure a provincial role so that there can be community-based policing across this province so that officers are continuously and visibly deployed in neighbourhoods?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased with the plan that we put forward. That plan involves the people of Manitoba. It involves communities in Manitoba taking direct action.

I ask that member why he cannot get the NDP party to support the toughening up of the Young Offenders Act. It is this government who has determined and spoken out across Canada and

taken the toughest stand across Canada against young offenders, and that party does not support it. They, as usual, are on the side of the offenders.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, if our caucus is going to get tough on youth crime, it is going to get tough on this government first.

Youth Crime

Auto Theft—Prevention Programs

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): My question for the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) then: Will she immediately convene a meeting with the minister responsible for Autopac and officials of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation to put in place programs to reduce the opportunities for car theft, and put in place and support our caucus in having a surcharge on premiums to deal with people who have been involved in vandalism and car theft? Will she do that immediately?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): I notice the member is shaking his watch. Mr. Speaker, the corporation is pursuing, to a far greater degree than perhaps the member appreciates, the young offenders who have been identified as having been vandalizing automobiles or where they have stolen an automobile and caused damage to it.

If it can be shown that they owe to the corporation as a result of that insurance claim, the corporation is working with the department of Driver and Vehicle Licencing to make sure that claim is paid back or arrangements are made prior to them being able to receive a driver's licence.

Personal Care Homes Standards and Regulations

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, since 1989, my colleagues and I have raised the issue of standards in personal care homes. The government's own report of December 1993 from the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation indicates that we need to shore up standards in personal care homes. As well, a recent television documentary outlines the difficulties with staffing in homes, abuse and security.

My question for the Minister of Health is: Can he tell this House how has he followed up with the allegations from the documentary and the recommendations from his own report in December?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): The honourable member raises a very important issue, Mr. Speaker. At a time when acuity of condition of people in our personal care homes is increasing and higher levels of care are required, it is extremely appropriate that government be mindful of the need to ensure that our standards and regulations are in keeping with those higher levels of acuity. That being the case, my department and the Department of Family Services led by the Minister responsible for Seniors (Mr. Ducharme) will be examining carefully those regulations and standards in the light of changing circumstances in personal care homes.

Ms. Gray: It has already been four months. We will hope to see some action very shortly.

Inspection Notice

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Can the Minister of Health tell us—that since to date inspections of personal care homes, homes are still given prior notice before the inspections occur—notwithstanding his committee that is working on a report, will he move today to remove that ridiculous procedure which staff at the care homes find laughable?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): That matter has been raised with me as well. In some of my travels I visited a number of personal care homes. I have been to 42 Manitoba communities visiting with the people who staff hospitals and personal care homes in our communities. That issue has arisen, and I do propose to address that issue as well.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Speaker, while the minister and his committee are addressing that issue, could he also address the issue in personal care homes which again is common knowledge, that when inspection reports are carried out in fact patients who are difficult to manage and control are oftentimes sedated and oversedated so that when inspectors

arrive things appear to be very much the normal? Could he investigate that immediately?

Mr. McCrae: That is a fairly serious allegation and also one that I have heard previously, and that will also be part of our review.

Infrastructure Works Agreement Northern Manitoba

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) attempted to continue to blame northern elected representatives for the lack of provincial government and federal government commitment to Northern Affairs communities.

Everyone in this House knows that the Minister of Northern Affairs supplies all of the capital for projects in the 52 communities involved in the Northern Affairs department.

Given the fact that not one single project was given to the 52 communities, many of whom lack sewer and water, adequate roads, access even to provincial trunk highways, not one project was approved, can the First Minister explain to this House how the Minister of Northern Affairs failed so miserably in his responsibility to protect the interests of those 52 communities?

* (1410)

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Northern Affairs): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would remind the member for Flin Flon that Herb Lake Landing, I believe is in his constituency, which just received electricity, was the last community in Manitoba to receive electricity this year under this government. So the member for Flin Flon, in all honesty, has no cause to rise in this House to talk about lack of service or concern for northern people or his own constituents.

I would remind the member for Flin Flon as well that we saw the first round of this project completed. There is another round, and I think if the member would show a little bit of the patience that the people of his constituency in Herb Lake Landing had to show, with him as their MLA, getting electricity, he will have some good news shortly.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, this minister is also having difficulty keeping the facts straight when it comes to this House.

I have a letter from the Minister of Northern Affairs acknowledging my letter of January 24 regarding the need for infrastructure improvement in our community. He wrote a letter to my Leader on March 18 also suggesting that the Department of Northern Affairs was submitting proposals based on projects that are part of the budgeting process for Northern Affairs communities. There are dozens of them.

My question is: Which is the truth? Were there no projects submitted or only a few, or did this minister not do his job?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, first of all, yes, there are always a list of capital projects that—

An Honourable Member: Did you submit them as you said you did?

Mr. Praznik: If the honourable member would just have a little bit of the patience that the people of Herb Lake have had, we will answer the question.

Mr. Speaker, there are always a list of capital projects, as the member knows, from NACC committees. Some of them go back many, many years. This department has always had a capital budget, a limited capital budget. The resources of the province are not overwhelming, as the member knows. We sort through with NACC, with our regional staff and we prioritize projects.

Out of that prioritization, the member is correct, yes, there is a list of projects. Out of that list, with the communities involved, the Department of Northern Affairs prioritized and submitted and there are two applications in with the infrastructure currently.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, we have just had a new revelation from the minister. The First Minister (Mr. Filmon) was blaming elected representatives, when he has now taken responsibility for the failure.

Will the Minister of Northern Affairs now resign and the Premier assign this duty to someone who

actually cares about the quality of services in northern Manitoba?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, the member for Flin Flon, one would think after being an MLA in the North and representing Northern Affairs communities for a number of years, would appreciate that first of all not all of those communities have elected councils. The Department of Northern Affairs—in many cases there are not any councils—is the authority. We work with people in the community. We work with the elected communities, and we develop a priority list with them. So the list that was developed has been dealt with, with the staff, to prioritize the list. [interjection]

The member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) mentions two. He also should remember that the one-third municipal share that has to be borne is not borne by those communities but by the department and has to fit within the budget that the department has. The process is there, and I think that at the end of the day work will get done.

Transcona-Springfield School Division Funding Formula

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, on Monday the Minister of Education stated that funding was not an issue. Yesterday the trustees of the Transcona-Springfield School Division stated that funding was indeed an issue, as the division funding decreased by 3.6 percent, forcing trustees to cut 30 jobs, including 10 teachers, two child guidance clinicians and paraprofessionals and others.

Yesterday I asked the minister what assistance he offered to this division who had requested his help in a letter of March '94.

My question is for the Minister of Education. I again ask the Minister of Education to tell the House what verbal options he offered in a phone call to the trustees of the Transcona-Springfield School Division.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, if the member knows there was a phone call and there was a verbal offer,

he obviously knows what the offer is. I wonder why he is asking the question.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Education tell the House, because he was the former Finance minister, why he told the trustees that the level of funding will continue to decrease next year and then offer the trustees a \$450,000 loan against next year's grants? How is this supposed to solve the funding issue for this school division?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I cannot predict what the budget will look like next year. I was asked how I saw the state of financial affairs throughout the country. My response would be as it has been for several years when I was the Minister of Finance. I cannot see where revenues to government are going to flow in the realm of 17 or 18 percent like they did in 1984-85, like they did to the NDP government. I think that is making a very honest answer to the situation. That was trying to put into place the fiscal landscape of the province.

Furthermore, with respect to an offer, we were trying to find ways of helping, and I would think the member should not be so critical of that.

Mr. Reid: My final supplementary to the same minister, Mr. Speaker: When is this Minister of Education going to realize and make changes to the unfair funding formula so that the Transcona-Springfield School Division does not have to add a sixth successive year of cutbacks to the programs in our community, a sixth successive year?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I do not know of a school division throughout the province who has not had to go through its budget on a yearly basis and remove some elements to contribute to the overall desire to try and make the budget work. That has been part of the times that we have been involved in. If the Springfield-Transcona division were in Saskatchewan, of course, they would be dealing with an increase this year that would be much larger than the one we are talking about.

Mr. Speaker, in direct response to the question, we review every year through the advisory committee to the minister, and I will be asking them again late summer to prepare a commentary

as to how the funding formula might be revised for the forthcoming year. I have also had direct representation from the school division. They have been in my office and have provided a model of what they think a revised funding formula should look like.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

NONPOLITICAL STATEMENTS

Sikh Celebration, Festival of Vaisakh

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for Seine River have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Seine River): Mr. Speaker, I ask the members of the House to join with me in extending our warmest wishes to all Sikhs in Manitoba and across Canada as they celebrate the Festival of Vaisakh. On April 13, 1969, 10th master guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa, the order of pure beings. Today, the descendants of the guru's followers are proudly known as Sikhs.

For nearly 300 years, the baptized Sikh men and women have lived by the guiding principles of sacrifice, responsibility, accountability, truth, beauty, goodness and acting for the good of others. For Sikhs here and around the world, the Vaisakh festival is a time to gather and rejoice in their spiritual and cultural heritage. In our multicultural society, we welcome these celebrations which renew and revitalize our links to the past, as well as reaffirming our sense of self in today's global community.

The Sikh faith and culture has handed down its belief and customs from generation to generation for almost three centuries. For nearly a third of that time, Sikhs have been an active part of the Canadian mosaic. They have contributed much and have enriched our nation. I wish to extend sincere best wishes to the Sikh community in observing this special day and the great legacy of guru Gobind Singh. Thank you.

* (1420)

**Manitoba Speech and Debating Association
1993 Junior High Provincial Championship**

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for St. Vital have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mrs. Shirley Render (St. Vital): Mr. Speaker, last night, April 12, the 1993 Junior High Provincial Championship finals for the Manitoba Speech and Debating Association was held.

Twenty-eight teams from across the city participated. I am very proud to say that a school in St. Vital swept away almost all of the honours. The top school was Windsor School. The top team was from Windsor School. The top two individuals were from Windsor School, and the novice team who came second was also from Windsor School.

My congratulations to Erica Best and Rob Chymy who were on the top team and who were the top two individuals. My thanks and my congratulations also to Al Friesen, the gifted catalyst teacher from Windsor, for his hard work in organizing this event and for working with the students.

I had the honour of being one of the judges in the final debate, and I want to say how impressed I was with the calibre of the debate. Again, my congratulations to Windsor School. Thank you.

CBC Program, The Trouble with Evan

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for River Heights have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (River Heights): This will be very brief. I just wanted to remind members if they did not have the opportunity last night of seeing the Fifth Estate program on The Trouble with Evan that they should in fact spend two hours doing that sometime this weekend when it will be rebroadcast on Newsworld.

There is no question that this program very graphically portrayed a child in great stress in our nation, and it is those children that all of us, no matter what our political affiliation, should be representing.

I have to tell you that I wanted to give that child one enormous hug, but I did a great deal of crying throughout much of what went on in the interaction in that family. I urge every one of you to watch it at the very first opportunity that you have to do so.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

(Fourth Day of Debate)

Mr. Speaker: On the adjourned debate, the fourth day of debate, on the proposed motion of the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), for an address to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, in answer to his speech at the opening of session, and the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer) in amendment thereto, and the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the Second Opposition (Mr. Edwards) in a further amendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Urban Affairs, who has eight minutes remaining.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Urban Affairs): I am very pleased to be able to get up and continue my remarks today on the throne speech. Yesterday when I began my remarks I was so overwhelmed with delight at being able to welcome you back to the Chair, Sir, that I neglected to welcome to the Chamber five other people that I did not intend to overlook, those being the five new MLAs who sit in our Assembly this session. So I welcome you five new people. I hope that you enjoy your time and that you find it satisfying serving the people of your constituencies.

I had left off yesterday by indicating that some good partnerships have been formed with other levels of government. While we do have opportunities and incentives to be critical of each other at various levels just through the everyday workings that come about, nonetheless there are some positive things happening in terms of intergovernmental co-operation between all levels of government and indeed between provinces.

I do believe that we have had very good co-operation with our Premier (Mr. Filnon) and other Premiers, with our Finance minister and other Finance ministers across the nation. This speaks well I believe for the benefit of all the people we serve collectively.

Having said that, of course I acknowledge there are differences and that we feel the position that we have taken is one that is in the best interests of the people of Manitoba that we were elected to govern and to make decisions on their behalf.

Much has been said recently about youth violence, about violence in the schools and indeed that concern has been explored by our government through a variety of means, one of those of course being the seminar that was held recently on youth violence. Dialogue continues between members and situations occur in society that draw our attention to this issue in rather dramatic ways.

We saw recently that the Winnipeg School Division has taken a fairly strong stand against the carrying of weapons or the discharging of weapons, be they pellet guns, knives, whatever could be brought onto the school grounds or to the school buildings that have the potential to harm other people.

I commend them for taking that stand. It is not an easy stand to take. As a person who once represented a school division which, prior to my coming on the board, had just had a very violent death occur in a local school where a student had entered the school with a gun and had literally blown the head off another student in the middle of a classroom during class, I think the Winnipeg School Division is working very hard to ensure that the threat of that or the possibility of that happening again will become more and more remote.

Those kinds of occurrences bring home the message to us that we do need to take strong action so we do not end up with increasing violence but rather with decreasing violence. We know our courts, for example, refuse to allow weapons, and there have been strong measures taken to ensure that the schools and other public places are also

freed from people who could harm others with weapons.

Mr. Speaker, there is much in the throne speech that I believe gives hope and optimism to the people of Manitoba. I believe the initiatives that are outlined in the throne speech are for continued growth, continued economic activity, continued expansion of investment and continued initiatives in the realm of social and community activities that will ultimately be to the benefit of the people of this province. I look forward to being part of the implementation of the initiatives that we see outlined and to the continuation of the good work that has been done over the years that still has an ongoing need for continuation.

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

I also would like to indicate my appreciation to various members of my caucus who have been given the responsibility to follow through on some of these initiatives.

I applaud the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) for the very genuine care and concern that he evidences in his consultations with many sectors involved in health care delivery and indeed with the consumers of health care, the patients themselves. Those of us who work daily with our Minister of Health have seen the very great amount of time that he is devoting to communicating with all of the people who access the medical system and who work in the medical system. The suggestions those people have offered for enhancements, improvements, for cost-effectiveness, for reduction of waste and mismanagement have been valuable indeed.

On that note I also extend thanks to several of the groups in Assiniboia who have been kind enough to share with me their own thoughts and views and ideas. I have been proud and pleased to pass those on to the minister. I know he has taken them very much to heart and has taken the time to go out and actually speak to groups in my constituency and answer questions and clarify for them any misrepresentation they might have been given or any false rumours they might have been

privity to, to correct the misinformation that has been put before them.

I also would like to thank very much the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness). Education is an issue very near and dear to my heart. It is one of my main interests. I am very pleased about the upcoming forum. I look forward to seeing that forum take place and to hearing what people have to say.

One thing I think that has become clear as we progress through our mandate is that we do have a lot of faith in the people. People have good common sense. We have made a practice of consulting with them since we first took government. Our cabinet meetings are frequently held outside of the city of Winnipeg, away from the Legislative Building, in towns and communities across Manitoba. People have come to those meetings and shared views and opinions with us, and invariably we will hear a good idea that we can take back and incorporate into our planning. They believe this kind of consultation, this willingness to reach out, indeed, this eagerness to reach out and hear what the people have to say has led to the development of the throne speech that you heard in the Chamber a few days ago.

The nine-point plan the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) has for youth violence has come from the people of Manitoba. We are listening to them, and I hope that members opposite be willing also to respect the opinions of the people of Manitoba upon whose recommendations we are taking action. I know that members opposite do want to be seen to be responsive to what people are saying, and so I am sure that ultimately they will say, we do agree with the people and are willing to support the government in advancing the ideas of the people and implementing their thoughts and desires. We do have faith in the common sense of the good people of Manitoba.

*(1430)

Madam Deputy Speaker, that concludes my remarks on the throne speech. As I say, I look forward to the implementation of the initiatives and the ongoingness of the initiatives. I hope, as

well, that we can have the co-operation of our colleagues on benches opposite. I know that in their hearts they do support many of these measures, and I would like to see them have the courage with their voices to support these measures as well. Thank you.

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Madam Deputy Speaker, I welcome the chance to join the debate on this government's throne speech. I look forward to this session. I think that there are a number of serious issues that are facing this province that this government has refused to deal with and has been incapable of dealing with. I want to address some of those.

I want to begin today by starting with some thank you's. I want to thank a number of people and groups that I have had the good fortune of being able to work with over the last couple of years since being elected as the MLA for Radisson. I really do feel it has been an honour to represent the communities of East Kildonan-Transcona. I want to thank a number of the groups that I have had the good fortune to work with: parent councils, community clubs, daycare co-ordinators and boards, service clubs, a number of people in the community who are running businesses.

I really feel as I get to know more and more people in the community that it is a very strong community. The number of parents who are involved in the schools and community clubs across the constituency pay tribute to their commitments to the community, and I really think that that speaks volumes to what needs to be recognized I think by government and how much people can do in the community to make this a better place to live and a strong community.

I also want to take the opportunity to thank the many people in the party that I represent who worked so hard on behalf of the party and have worked with me. I am proud to represent a party that has a strong history of standing up for people who often are disenfranchised. We have a strong history, in the party that I represent, for standing up for working people and their families, and I really think that it is important to recognize that many people who are members of our party do not have

the advantage of privilege. They do not have the advantage often even of a job and they give of their time and they give of their money in organizing and working to face the kind of corporate sponsorship that other parties in this House have the advantage of.

We do a lot of hard work to raise money and get our message out and work with people in the community, and I really think that, unlike what the members across often say, we are not subsidized by labour, we are subsidized by working people and community people, seniors, youth, members of families across this province who believe in a different vision of how government should work, and they believe in a different vision of how there should be a relationship between government and the private sector and industry that is going to be more co-operative and is going to work to make this a better place to live.

I also want to give some recognition to the number of groups that I work with in my critic areas on a daily basis, the number of hours that these people contribute on a volunteer basis to making this province a better place to be and that are working to protect our environment, that are working to make sure our workplaces are safer, and young people who are working on student councils, young people who are working in youth groups and young people who are trying to get a leg up and trying to find a place in this society that is becoming more and more competitive and more and more difficult for them to find a place to participate. I want to recognize how difficult it is for those young people.

I am going to talk a lot about young people in my speech. I think as the Youth critic it is a role that I can play, especially since I have worked quite a bit in my former life with young people, young people who were young offenders, young people who were victims of child abuse, young people who were from very impoverished backgrounds and young people who were gifted. I had the good fortune to work with a lot of young people also who were doing all right and probably are doing quite fine now, but feel that they have to realize as they are growing up that they do have advantages

that often other members of our community do not have.

Before I start on that note, I want to talk a little bit about the throne speech and a number of things this government is trying to do in its message. It was interesting. Last night I was at a forum at Kildonan East high school. The Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) was there, and they continue to put out the same kind of message there as starts off the throne speech. That is, there is this sort of sweeping change going on across the world, and we are a planet in transition. There is this restructuring going on, and the sense that it seems they are trying to create is that there is nothing we can do about this, that all of these things that are changing in our world and in our communities are simply happening and we just have to sort of cope with it, we have to restructure, we have to reorganize.

That may be true. There may be some things that are happening that we do not have a lot of control over. I want to say, categorically, the economy is not an act of God. The economy is man-made. [interjection] No, the economy, I would say, is man-made. The economy is made and designed to support a certain segment of our society. That is a segment that is privileged. As we move more and more to a globalized economy, where we have multinational corporations having more and more reign over the decisions that are being made in our communities across the province, we have a government, I think, that is supporting this. We have a government in Manitoba that did not oppose the free trade agreements. They did not really do anything to oppose the Free Trade Agreement and the North American Free Trade Agreement, which are tying us into this kind of corporate multinational agenda, which is wreaking havoc across the country and across the world.

I am going, I think, to refer later, there was some language I was reading in the throne speech that talks about the level playing field. I would say that is the attitude a lot of the wealthy and powerful in the world have about the planet, that it is their playing field. They think they have the right to treat workers and communities as if they are some

kind of movable commodity that can be set up and taken down and workers can be exploited and moved around as they see fit.

I think what we need to have are governments that are going to stand up to this. We need to stand up to this sort of free marketeering that is going on with some balance provided by regulation from government.

We have to get away from the pressure that is being created to lower wages and the pressure that is being created by governments such as the one led by Premier Filmon moving away from taxation based on the ability to pay. That is the fundamental, I think, characteristic of the Canadian democratic society, that we have had a taxation system based on the ability to pay, and that is being dismantled and changed by this government, and the cost of government is being transferred from industry and corporations to individuals, ratepayers and their families.

We have seen this change dramatically since about the 1950s, when we have seen corporate taxes reduced from about 50 percent of government revenue to something around 12 percent of government revenue. I would tell this government categorically that that is what is causing the deficit. That kind of tax giveaway to industry does not attract business like they are trying to tell us it does. We have seen investment in this province reduced; even though we have the lowest minimum wage, we have had no increase in minimum wage, we have seen investment in this province reduced.

We have had it used as an excuse for years of why we cannot afford good public education, good public health care, good community services, recreation programs and the like. I think that people are starting to realize the deceit behind this argument that we have to deal with the deficit because of overspending.

* (1440)

The deficit is caused because governments, Conservative governments and Liberal governments, yes, Liberal governments, have refused to make industry pay their fair share. They

have refused to do that and now they have brought in trade agreements that are going to make it nearly impossible for us to have any kind of local control over our economy and local ability to have business pay, to have industry and the polluter pay.

So I think that people across the province are getting really tired of the deceit. They want to have local control of their economy in Manitoba. We want to have some kind of ability to have some security.

It is interesting hearing the minister across the way talk about balancing the budget. I would ask him to look to Saskatchewan, where the NDP in Saskatchewan had years of no deficit, and then they had Grant Devine rack up more deficit with more handouts to industry and his friends, and now it is the NDP that is in there again to try and clean up the mess. I am concerned that that is what is going to happen here in Manitoba.

One of the concerns that has been raised now, and it is starting to get some attention, is Manitoba's abysmal poverty rate, Manitoba having the highest rate of child poverty and the highest incidence of poverty among families in Canada.

It says in an article from the Brandon Sun this past December that the state of the economy is a key factor, but it does not explain the significant widening of the gap between Manitoba and the rest of the country in terms of poverty. On the contrary, from 1989 to 1991 the increase in the unemployment rate in Manitoba was below the rest of the country, but the poverty rate rose. By how much? I was on a roll there. How much did it go up?

An Honourable Member: 17.1 percent.

Ms. Cerilli: 17.1 percent. Thank you very much. It goes on that one of the key factors in contributing to this was the failure of the Manitoba government to raise the minimum wage, which deals with what I raised earlier, where they have had the lowest increase in minimum wage across the country.

Other provinces have had their minimum wages increase over 25 percent, over 38 percent in Ontario, and in Manitoba, it is 6.4 percent. The

outcome is the result of a deliberate policy on the part of the Manitoba government to reduce the minimum wage in real terms relative to other wages and relative to the minimum wages in other provinces.

What is behind this policy? It is part and parcel of a concerted effort by the present government to create in Manitoba what some people call the mean streets economy. The purpose of such a policy is to reduce the wage levels, undermine the power of trade unions and promote intensified competition in labour markets.

Reductions in minimum wage directly affect working poor and their families. As well, by holding down the minimum wage, the government encounters less resistance to other regressive policies that affect the poor—reductions in welfare payments, the elimination of agencies and programs that serve the poor and a dilution and/or nonenforcement of employment standards legislation.

The government would have us believe, of course, that such policies are necessary to make Manitoba competitive with other jurisdictions for new investment in jobs. In fact, the sorts of investments in jobs which such policies attract will be compatible with the mean streets economy, investment in jobs that are likely to accentuate the economic decline in the province and expand the ranks of the poor and the destitute, attracting Mcjobs just like they have done with the telemarketing system, giving away the MTS services and a number of other industries that they are privatizing, which is, of course, the other part and parcel of the agenda of Conservative governments.

So this is the context that we are working in and the kind of situation that is going to have to be remedied after an election in this province.

This is what young people are facing. I have a cartoon that is from the newsletter for The Marquis Project in Brandon, and it says: I worry about the youth of today. They are sensitive, compassionate, service minded, ecology minded and accepting of people from all cultures and backgrounds. In short,

they are totally unprepared for the world we are about to dump on them.

That is a quote that I think speaks volumes to what we are setting up young people for, because they are the ones that are going to inherit the mess that has been made. They are the ones that are going to inherit the toxic waste, the pension funds, the boot camps, the justice system full of people who have been incarcerated, often in an unjust way, because they suffer poverty and alienation.

One of the big issues that is being debated right now concerns me greatly, the way that it is being handled—and it has been talked about in this House—is the whole issue of youth crime. Youth crime apparently consists of about 25 percent of crimes. So what all this media hype, all of these headlines that I think stereotype young people, all of these headlines that just encourage a generation gap, all of these headlines and news reports I think that further alienate young people from our community and the services and those people that are supposed to work with them. All of this is happening, but why is there not just as much focus on adult crime?

Why is there not this kind of attention on tax evasion, child abuse, fraud? Why is it that this government has chosen from all of the hundreds of recommendations made at the youth summit, which I attended, why are they focusing on this one? Why are they focusing on this simplistic punish-oriented authoritarian approach to dealing with young people?

There were two fellows in the workshop that I participated in that were at the youth summit, and they talked about how we have to control young people with fear. They talked about how we have to show them that they cannot get away with things and we have to control them with fear. They said the reason why they are going to stop committing crimes is if they fear they are going to be punished.

Now I do not know about other people in this Chamber, but I know that I am not a law-abiding citizen because of fear. I am a law-abiding citizen because I think that over the course of my life, and I think over the course of most people's lives, they

have developed values that they believe in intrinsically where they respect other people. They feel some kind of consideration for other people. They do things because they believe it is right, not just because they fear that they are going to be punished.

* (1450)

I think if we want young people to be contributing members of our community in a democratic society, that they have to be educated to have those kinds of values. That is one of the reasons that I have a real hard time with this approach, because I really think that if you use things like corporal punishment, and if you use these kinds of authoritarian approaches that what you do is you create another generation of corporal punishers. It is interesting, you know, because it is natural I think for young people to go through adolescence. What happens is they start challenging authority and they want to have some more freedom and they want to be able to do things by themselves. Part of becoming a responsible citizen is learning how to do things for yourself.

I think we cannot isolate crimes that young people are committing simply as a policing and punishment problem. We have to look at it in context. We have to see it as a societal and community problem. It is a problem of the alienation a lot of young people feel. They feel alienation often because of racism. I think that young people feel an awful lot of alienation because often they have been the victims of child abuse, and we can show from studies that a lot of young people who are criminals, who are violent have a history of child abuse.

So we have to look at this in context of high unemployment; we have to look at how drugs and alcohol are involved in youth crime. We have to also look at the cutbacks in youth services, in recreation opportunities so young people can have an alternative to get their need for peer support, to get their need for risk taking met in a positive way rather than a negative way.

I think that we also have to address what has happened in our community, where violence and

crime is more and more entertainment, and how we have young people who grow up playing Nintendo and watching violent television shows, and stealing cars becomes almost like real-life Nintendo. They are having a real way to get that same type of excitement.

We have to be able to show that they can meet their needs and deal with all of these pressures on them in a positive way. I think young people see the unsustainability of the economy that we are in and I think that is also contributing to the alienation a lot of them feel. We have to realize that violence is learnt and criminal behaviour is learnt.

I remember working with one young fellow when I was working in the school division. His mother had just been incarcerated for drug dealing and for possession of drugs. This fellow was now the ward of the state, Child and Family Services, and he was going to be living on his own in an apartment by himself. I was really concerned about him and wanted to make sure that he was going to have enough life skills and independent living support so that he was not going to follow in the footsteps of his parents.

So we have to look at all of these issues, I think, and not just take a simplistic approach. We cannot just deal with young people as if they are criminals and forget that they are part of our community. I think that it is a challenge to our humanity and our compassion when we see some of the horrible things that happen, of how we are going to deal with it, and realize that the punishment has to fit the crime. Facing up to it and facing the victim and having alternative sentencing can in fact create more change than incarceration.

I am not saying that there should not be incarceration. I think there are a number of violent offenders that we have to remove from society for the safety of the community. Certain provisions in the Young Offenders Act, like protecting the identity of young offenders, provisions like having youth court, were put in place because we wanted to see if young people could be rehabilitated. We wanted to see if we could not give up on young people if they were criminals.

I guess the members opposite are saying we have to give up on them because we found that did not work. I wonder if that is perhaps because we did not do a good enough job in really understanding the problems and putting things in place that were actually going to rehabilitate them. [interjection]

The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), I believe, is taking a position that we cannot paint everyone with the same brush. I think we cannot look at all the young people who are getting in trouble with the law and think there is going to be one solution to deal with them all. I think we have to be creative.

I asked the minister the other day why, in his consultations on education, he was ignoring young people and not including them. I think that certainly teenagers and recent graduates have a lot to contribute, and they have a lot to say about how their education has shortchanged them, if in fact it has. I bet young people who have just graduated from high school have a lot of good recommendations that they could make about how the education system can be improved, because they are the ones who are being directly affected.

If you treat young people with respect, if you treat them like they have rights, they act more responsibly. They really do. That has been my experience from working with young people over the years. I think that is true for anybody. You have to treat young people like they have a brain, and then they use it.

I want to spend a little time from there talking about education and how that is affecting young people in this province. I went last night, as well, to the board meeting of the Transcona-Springfield School Division and heard about the kind of cutbacks that are going to be facing that community.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): It is long overdue.

Ms. Cerilli: Ten teaching positions are being reduced, and the Minister of Agriculture says it is long overdue. I would like to hear some explanation when he has his chance to debate the

Speech from the Throne. [interjection] Yes, I wonder if his colleague from Springfield feels the same way.

With the way this government has boxed in school divisions, I think, for their own political purposes—they have said they are not going to raise taxes, and it is very clear now the kind of offloading that has gone on and how we can attribute a number of tax increases at school board and municipal levels to cutbacks from provincial governments. I think they started wanting to avoid that, and that is why they capped the local levy.

They capped the local levy and boxed school divisions in, took away the school boards' democratically elected right to manage the affairs of school divisions. Now we are seeing the further erosion of our public school system, and this government has the gall to try to say that it is not affecting kids in the classroom, it is not affecting students. Everything is wonderful in the Conservatives' world.

One of the ideas that was presented in the paper for how to deal with this "crisis in education" that has been created by the Conservative agenda is, for example, to have volunteers do custodial staff work in schools. Now let us think about this, because for every cutback that we have there are all sorts of ramifications in communities. In schools where custodians work with chemicals, work with equipment, there are huge implications for the safety of children in schools, for the safety of teachers in those workplaces, and we have to look very, very seriously at lawsuits that could come about from this kind of initiative to save, you know, \$1,000 here, \$1,000 there.

I would hope that this government looks seriously at the kinds of recommendations it could get from any kind of meeting in their focus groups, whatever they are going to do to come up with more ways to cut back, and they would make sure that we are not going to jeopardize the safety of our students and teachers in this province.

The busing reduction in the River East School Division that is occurring, I have gotten involved in this issue at the request of my constituents that

live in that school division. It is a question of equality. We have a provincial government that just went and cut funding for school busing, phasing it out so it ends at Grade 6, and not really looking at how that is going to impact on certain communities like in Radisson where we have a new subdivision that has very limited Transit service, that is miles away from schools because the kids do not have a school in their community because it is not finished yet.

So there are urban sprawl issues related to this. There is the financing of education and taxation issues related to this. So it is not an easy situation. We cannot just bring Transit buses in there if there is not the ridership. That is understandable, but is it really fair to the people in this community to have to have their kids now pay \$300 a year to take a Transit bus that is going leave them more than a kilometre from their school, so that when it is 30 below they still have to walk a kilometre after paying a user fee now for what used to be provided through their tax money by school bus for Transit? I do not think that is fair.

* (1500)

We are going to have a community meeting and see if anyone has some good ideas of how to deal with it, because that is the kind of effect that this Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) is having on communities. Families are being affected. It is being disruptive. There are all sorts of repercussions for this for families now having to figure out how they are going to get their kids to child care and to school and get to work themselves. This government just does not seem to care. The bottom line is all that they care about. That seems to be the case.

What all of this is doing is forcing us to the level playing field, the lowest common denominator. That is what this is all about.

What is a real concern to me as well is that in this climate all these other inequities irritate people. We see a resurgence of racism. We see a resurgence in sexism, the kind of violence against women that is going on in this community. But the kinds of cutbacks this government makes to

women's shelters, to child and family services, they do not understand that basic connection between the economy and society and social services, that you cannot dismantle social services at a time of high economic crisis, at a time of high unemployment. When wages are lowered and buying less, there is high inflation.

They have to understand that people, I think, expect a government that is going to make those connections. We cannot allow the polarization of people and the alienation of people from each other that occurs in this kind of climate because we are all in this together. We really are.

Those elderly people in my constituency who are afraid of young people in their community when they go to the store to get their groceries deserve to feel safe, and they deserve to feel that they are going to have protection in their homes. They deserve to have governments that are going to provide that kind of service.

That, as I said earlier, is going to come by making sure that those services for young people are there as well so that there is an interest in elderly people having an interest in seeing that young people are taken care of in our community because they are all living in the same community.

One of the things that was focused on in the throne speech was single parent families. Now, talking to, particularly young moms who are single parents, you realize the trap that they often are in because they want to stay at home and raise their child but at the same time they also want to be self-sufficient.

I really hope, with the initiatives that this government is proposing of transferring monies to education so that single moms can get the training and work experience and job placement that they need to end the welfare cycle, that they are going to make sure that they are going to have daycare and that they are not going to take that child care space from another working mom and set up this kind of competition that this government seems to favour which again just works to bringing us to the level playing field at the lowest common denominator.

One other issue that is a big concern, and I have had phone calls regarding this, is the way that this government has handled gambling. I thought it was an excellent point that was made in the paper, in the Free Press the other day, when they talked about how it is pretty easy money. I think it is the government of Manitoba that has become addicted to gambling.

We have to look at how this is affecting our communities. We have to look at who is doing this gambling and where is all this money coming from and is it in fact coming from families and people who really cannot afford it, and has in fact the VLT system in this province become a tax on the poor, which is taking money from people who for recreation are going and playing bingo and gambling and then that money is being transferred often for recreation and culture for other people who are often in more positive kinds of recreational pursuits.

I have a real problem in arguing that this is creating jobs. I think this is a false economy and, yes, there may be some jobs there, but what is the cost in terms of health care, in terms of social allowance, in terms of people losing their savings and having to give up their homes and all of the other things that we are seeing happening with the gambling increase in our province.

May I ask the Deputy Speaker how much time I have left? Four minutes. Thank you.

I guess I will conclude by spending some time talking about this government's sustainable development initiatives and how it has tried to paint itself as a government that believes in sustainable development. I think what is really going to be telling is this government's record on its inability to follow its own environmental law and how on issue after issue they have either changed laws when it has fit for them like when the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) wanted to build his office complex in Oak Hammock Marsh and changed legislation, or when they brought in Bill 49 which allows them to ease in development, or they have simply ignored legislation mandating environmental impact assessment process. Time and time again they have initiated construction on

buildings and facilities without having an environmental impact assessment. That is going to be one of the telling records of this government come the election.

I really think that if this government meant what they said when they put out documents that say that they want to integrate environment and economy, they would stop ignoring environmental impact assessment legislation like they are doing in a number of places across the province, because that is the process that is going to allow us to get away from the jobs environment dichotomy and start looking at environment development issues together in the environmental impact assessment which this government refuses to have in project after project. We want to be able to look at a development before it starts and see if it is in fact sustainable, if it is in fact going to be able to ensure that the environment is going to be protected. We want to be able to make sure that there is provision for the public to participate. That is the only way that it is going to happen.

One of the other things that was interesting was the whole debate around the NAFTA centre. If this government was really concerned about environment, they would not have been out there with their federal counterparts supporting NAFTA, because that agreement was one of the worst things that is going to affect our international continental environment. So this Minister of Environment and the First Minister of the province are trying to buy themselves a reputation on environment development by having these international centres here rather than earning it by the way that they practise environmental legislation and programs in this province. There is no doubt about it, this government is not able to practise what it preaches on sustainable development.

* (1510)

I think, Madam Deputy Speaker, that this government, if it really wanted to talk about sustainable development, would look at trying to create local control in an economy, a diversified local economy. They would deal with this whole issue of how foreign investment is draining

resources out of our province, and they would make sure that they follow environmental provisions rather than ignoring them. The way that this government has treated the number of scientists that have donated their lives to working on environment issues by calling them fearmongers whenever they raise an issue that is of concern is ridiculous. We have people who are raising legitimate concerns about community health, about water quality, about forestry, about hazardous waste, and over and over and over again this government ignores them.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's time has expired.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Labour): Madam Deputy Speaker, what an opportunity today to be the member from our side who gets to speak after the member for Radisson. What an opportunity. An opportunity because the member for Radisson clearly divides the thinking of this House and represents the division in the House. She clearly put on the record today, I think, many of the reasons why the people of this province find such hypocrisy from members of the New Democratic Party and in fact, Madam Deputy Speaker, why, if that member were ever to be in charge of the affairs of this province, I am sure we would be on a downward slide like we have never seen in our history.

Before I get into my remarks and comments on the member's speech, I would like to extend my congratulations and a welcome to the five new members of this House. Indeed we have our partisan moments. I, obviously as a member of the Conservative Party, wish we were welcoming five Conservatives to this Legislature, but the fact of the matter is that the people in those constituencies elected those members. It is a tremendous honour for any Manitoban to have the confidence of their constituents to represent and serve them in this Chamber. It is truly a noble and great institution of which we are all members.

Some of them I have had the opportunity of working with in other capacities. The member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) was a member of the—pardon me. I referred to the member for Osborne

(Ms. McCormick) as the member for Wolseley. I remember another day in which she sought office in that constituency.

The member for Osborne had the opportunity to serve on the Workplace Safety and Health Advisory Committee when I was first minister. I know the member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg) has had opportunity to speak with me on some issues relating to workers compensation. We had a very interesting conversation and an enjoyable one, Madam Deputy Speaker. To those members I offer my congratulations on their elections and their welcome to this Assembly.

Certainly there is a rancour to our debate. At many times across the aisle we get into some very heated discussion. I think for the majority of members in this House there is truly a camaraderie that develops from time to time, and I am certain those members will enjoy the personal relationships that they develop among members.

I would also like to mention a very regrettable incident that occurred in my constituency in the last couple of weeks, truly a tragedy and one I mention for a number of reasons. A pioneer of the Bird River district in my constituency, Mrs. Greta Tagesen, was a fatality in a fire two weeks ago in her log house in the Bird River. Mrs. Tagesen was an individual who was well-known over the years to all of the residents of the eastern part of my constituency. Her and her husband I believe were pioneers in the settlement of that Bird River area. Indeed, the home in which she died was a log house that her husband and she had built when they had settled in that area. I had been a visitor to that home on many occasions. It was also the polling station in the Bird River Valley, a very small poll, only 36 voters. I always enjoyed visiting with Greta there because it represented to me how our democracy worked, how the democratic principle, the principle of election could be extended to this far-flung little log cabin on the Bird River, far away from the hustle and bustle of the populated areas of our province. In each election, the 36 people eligible to vote in a poll that was truly a quarter of the geography of my

constituency would come to that little log cabin on that river to exercise their franchise.

It was with great sense of loss that Mrs. Tagesen, who was the deputy returning officer in that poll for many, many elections, was killed two weeks ago in a very tragic fire. To her family, I offer the deepest sympathies. I know that members of this House would share certainly a loss to our community.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli), there is a comment that she made that just begs to be corrected. If members want to talk about Sagkeeng, I will be delighted to discuss that in my speech, given the concerns raised by the member's party on one day about the Pine Falls buy out, yet when their Leader goes out, he is all supportive, but on other occasions, they are all opposed. We will be discussing that a little later in my remarks.

Madam Deputy Speaker, a comment that just begs for correction is when the member for Radisson got up and said to this House that she was proud to be a party that was not subsidized by anyone and not subsidized by unions but paid for by people who came forward with almost their nickels and dimes to support the cause.

I just wanted to point out how hypocritical that is, because my wife, who is an employee of the Province of Manitoba and is in no way, I can assure members of this House, in support of the New Democratic Party, each paycheque out of our family income, we make a contribution to the New Democratic Party and not because my wife chooses to make the contribution but because it is stolen, expropriated out of the mouths of my children, in essence, from my family, to support her cause.

I want to clear up on the record today that there is no voluntary contribution made from my household to the New Democratic Party, but my spouse has to go to work, works part time, and part of her hard-earned money has to go to support the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) and her colleagues because she is forced to do it.

If the member, who spoke so eloquently about how her party is financed, I would welcome if she really wants to stand by that, if she would like us to provide legislation in the province that would prohibit the forced deduction or the forced payment of contributions to political parties without the consent of the individual. I would welcome that legislation and be prepared to present it to this House as Minister of Labour. I challenge her to come forward and make that suggestion and be true to the conviction which she wanted this House to believe somehow was so noble.

* (1520)

Madam Deputy Speaker, the other comments that the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) made at the end of her speech that I find absolutely hypocritical are her comments about this government ignoring the environmental impact statement in process.

Now I know that my colleague the member for Pembina, Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Orchard), happened to pick up a book that may be quoted by members opposite. What is it called—Mao Tse-tung's red book. I know the member for Radisson on occasion has quoted Karl Marx in this House, and I know there will be some exchanges back and forth among members but for the member for Radisson to say that after booking the conference centre in this building for a band of environmentalists—Madam Deputy Speaker, I say so-called environmentalists—who oppose a major project in this province without even having seen an application yet, without even having any facts, and that member has the gall to come to this House and stand here today and talk about this government ignoring environmental process.

An Honourable Member: Shame.

Mr. Praznik: Shame is right, Madam Deputy Speaker, because all of us, if we truly believe in sustainable development, if we truly believe in protecting our environment and also having an economy that produces wealth, which we all in this House want to spend on a variety of services, then we must respect the process.

The process is that an applicant has to bring forward their proposal and it is examined. To prejudge that proposal before an application is even made says to the people of Manitoba that that party's true agenda is not environmental processes, is not protecting the environment. It is destroying job opportunities for the same young people that the member pretends to be concerned about.

I am not in the habit of offering personal advice to members of the New Democratic Party, but to the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) I do have some advice. The member for Swan River was done a great disservice by her Leader in this House by being seated right in front of the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli). I would suggest to the member for Swan River that she turn her chair and face the member behind her, the member for Radisson, because I will tell you, the knife is coming in her back, the knife, the cold steel of hypocrisy is coming right into her back. I will tell her, I will tell the member for Swan River that she has far more to worry about from the member who sits behind her than she does from any of the members who sit in front.

In fact, if my understanding is correct, I believe that member and the Leader of her party are out today in Swan River or will be out there tomorrow trying to put out all the fires that her colleague has caused her because she had no faith—no, not faith, that is not the correct word, Madam Deputy Speaker—because she did not let the process work, but did not want the project no matter what the project, not even seeing the application.

Point of Order

Ms. Cerilli: Madam Deputy Speaker, I just wanted to come in. I was told there was some inaccurate information put on the record. I just wanted to clarify that it is 10 percent funding by labour unions to our party, and I think that is quite a lower percentage than the corporations that fund either of the other two parties in the House.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Radisson does not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

Mr. Praznik: It does not matter if it is 100 percent, 10 percent, 1 percent. Not one penny—not one penny from my wife-spouse's salary should go to the New Democratic Party if she does not want it to, Madam Deputy Speaker. The amount is not important, it is the principle. Again we see the principle of democracy abandoned.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, getting back to the matter at hand. The member for Radisson spoke about young people and, yes, I think every member of this House is concerned about the future of our province, but if we are going to come to grips with the future of this province and the future of the young people of our province who are going to have to earn their living in that future, we cannot ignore the last 20 to 30 years and decisions that were made right across our country in every province, to one degree or another by every political party, in fact indeed throughout much of the western world, that has put us today in the position that we have to make very difficult decisions in order to secure a future for our young people.

The member tends to totally ignore, just like the members of her party, the financial reality in which we live. After the delivery of the throne speech, I noted the president of the Manitoba Nurses' Union made the statement that the problem in health care is not expenditure, it is that the economy, I believe the president of that union said, is not producing enough money. We hear that from the president of the Manitoba Teachers' Society. The problem is not our levels of expenditure, the problem is that our economy is not producing enough money.

You know, Madam Deputy Speaker, our economy then has not produced enough money for 20 to 30 years, because for clearly the last 20 years, governments all across this country of all political stripes have had to borrow each year.

Well, now there were deficits to various degrees, but the member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg) says Blakeney did in Saskatchewan and certainly the Devine government overspent and not even by

a wee bit, by a very excessive amount, and so have the New Democrats.

But how is the government of Premier Roy Romanow dealing with this? He is not ignoring it. He is not going out there and promoting the policies that the New Democrats in Manitoba are proposing, that we spend more, spend more, spend more. He is going out there by getting his expenditure levels, as we are trying to do, into what the province can afford today. And he is doing that. The fact is they are trying to do that. How are they doing it? They are closing 56 hospitals in Saskatchewan. Yet the member for Rossmere and his colleagues get up day after day and say, for goodness' sake, do not make any reductions in health care.

Well, there is a hypocrisy there. Even the new member for Rossmere has to admit that. There is a hypocrisy when the New Democrats close hospitals in Ontario, Saskatchewan and British Columbia for the purpose of getting their expenditures under control to what they can afford, and when this government tries to do the same thing in Manitoba we are chastised and criticized for it by those New Democrats.

You cannot have it both ways, and you know if the electors of this province—and from current polls it does not appear they are going to—saw those members on this side of the House, they would have to do exactly the same thing, because the option to doing nothing is that this province will undergo the same situation as in Newfoundland or in New Zealand. We will be bankrupt. We will not be able to borrow money, and then we will have to make those decisions, but we will have less choice, less maneuverability and far greater pain. So the irony in all of this, the irony for the president of the Manitoba Nurses' Union, the irony of our New Democratic Party, the irony of all those who stand and say, spend more, more, more, more, more, is that they are pushing us to that precipice.

* (1530)

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Spend smartly.

Mr. Praznik: The member for Transcona says, spend smartly. You are right, spend smartly. When I was elected to return to this Legislature in 1988, the budget for the Ministry of Health was \$1.3 billion. It is \$1.9 billion, almost \$2 billion today, and yet the members opposite say spend more, more, more. When this government brings in plans or supports the administrators and plans to reduce their cost to better deliver services, the members opposite get up and say no, it might mean jobs.

Madam Deputy Speaker, 75 percent, 85 percent of the cost of delivering those services are the human costs. They are costs and benefit packages to our employees. You can only save so many items or not wash the floor so many times before you get to that result. The members opposite I think owe it to the people of Manitoba to at least have some consistency with New Democratic Parties and governments across the country and to lay out how they would do it in more than, there just has to be a better way. I think the truth of the matter is in every province governed by New Democrats, they are doing what every other government is doing, a little bit different here or there, but by and large the same, because there are not any realistic options. It is about time that members opposite started to at least recognize that.

What I am really saying is they have to get out of Jurassic Park. Let us go back to the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) for a moment. The member for Radisson made a comment. She said that this administration, if I remember her words correctly, is moving away from the principle of taxation being based on the ability to pay. [interjection] The member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) says right.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this is coming from a party that brought in probably the most regressive, the most unethical tax you could ever impose on a people, the payroll tax. Not a tax on profits, not a tax on money earned, but a tax on payroll, on jobs. In other words, make a job, create a job, create an economic opportunity for someone and we are going to tax it. It does not have to make any profit, we will tax it. [interjection] The member for Thompson—an interesting exchange going on below me. The member for Thompson says what is

the level? What is the level in Sweden—70 percent, 80 percent? After how many decades of socialism, they had to then go and take 70 percent to 80 percent of the income earned by their people and they were still going back.

An Honourable Member: Darren, they have a right-wing government.

Mr. Praznik: Yes, a right-wing government. Is it not a surprise now why Sweden has a government of the right and is trying to clean up its mess. What disturbs me more by the comment from the member for Thompson is he seems to think that where our tax rates are today, that is okay, we can move them up to 70 percent before we really get into trouble. The attitude is that make do with what the people of Manitoba can afford to pay. His argument is to squeeze more out of them. The member speaks from his seat and this member can hear.

Madam Deputy Speaker, but back to the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli), because her thinking—I have to give her credit because she is one of the few members of that party opposite who actually comes out and says what they believe without being all over the map because—

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Scary as it is.

Mr. Praznik: The Deputy Premier says scary. You are right, it is very, very scary. Because she and that viewpoint is exactly what is pushing this country to the precipice and over, because she somehow believes that there is a great pool of money out there, this great corporate or industrial wealth, that if only we go and tax, all our problems will be solved. In fact, she said we need good quality public education, health care and social services, yes, but the fact that we were not out there taking more out in taxes was the reason why we do not have these things.

Well, I have to ask that member and I have to ask every member of this House who is the trustee of the public money, it is not our money, it is not their money. We are the trustees of the public money. Why? In 1988, members like the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), who entered this

House with me, we voted on budgets in this House that spent \$1.3 billion on health care. Last year, it had risen by 50 percent to \$1.9 billion. That is faster than any rate of inflation. One would think the members opposite, as trustees of the public money, would be saying to us on this side, how can you sustain that level of growth, what are you doing? But they are not. They are saying to us, spend more, spend more. Somebody gets up and says I want something, give it to them, but by the way your deficit is too high.

There are some very fundamental issues here. We have to come to grips with them as a province. The last time I looked, there were 57 members in this House who are charged with the responsibility of coming to grips with it. The greater good of this province is not served if a very significant portion of them are not truly prepared to face the reality. We should be having good debates in this House about how we are going to manage with less money for these services. Should we prioritize this or that? We should not be spending this time, quite frankly, in my opinion, hearing one day the deficit is too high but spend more, go and borrow more. It just does a disservice to all of the people that we represent.

If I may make a comment on our media particularly, who, I suppose, are listening to this from their office in the building—

An Honourable Member: All very intently, I am sure, Darren.

Mr. Praznik: I am sure not, because their deadlines are probably—[interjection] They do the people of Manitoba a disservice in not narrowing the issues to the true, meaningful issues that we face, as opposed to the quick headline, the quick bite which we all as politicians play into. But they do a great disservice to the people of Manitoba in not defining those particular issues.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) also made a comment that is worthy of note, because she said what we want for our young people is to have local control of our economy and security. I think all of us would love to have that. It would make life much easier if we

could control all of the economic forces around us and know we would have security in our income for all of our days.

Mr. Enns: I mean, Russia tried it for 70 years.

Mr. Praznik: My colleague from Lakeside constituency, the Minister of Agriculture, refers to the collapse of Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. There they tried it, and what did they do? They ate up their capital until the system collapsed on its own with its own people out in the streets because the system could not even produce essentials like soap and food, things that we in this province take for granted. It collapsed because it could not work.

The reality we face, although we would all like to have control of our economy, and although we would all like security, the reality of it is, we do not have that. We probably never have had that, and we probably never will. Trying to pretend that somehow you can achieve that, ask the North Koreans, maybe they have achieved it as they quickly move on the slope to their own collapse and demise. You do not achieve it, you cannot, and to hold out some kind of false hope that you can do it is blatantly wrong.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we on this side of the House want a future for our young people. We on this side of the House want to make sure that we do our absolute best to give the young people of this province opportunities that they can take advantage of as they move through life.

* (1540)

Madam Deputy Speaker, we heard our colleague the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) speak about opportunities in agriculture the other day, about the opportunities to expand in pork and a host of other areas. They mean jobs, they mean wealth, real wealth, wealth that this Legislature will tax a portion of to provide public service.

We have also heard about other opportunities. We have seen the whole industry grow in Manitoba around PMU based out of Brandon, but the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) goes out and attacks that industry and the jobs that it brings to our province and somehow then says she is

worried about jobs for the young people of our province. We see her attack Louisiana Pacific—

Point of Order

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to remind or share with the member for Lac du Bonnet that the member for Wellington has never in this House so much as said a word, as far as I know, about PMU.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Labour, on the same point of order.

Mr. Praznik: I am not on a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Wellington does not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts. The honourable Minister of Labour, to continue his debate.

* * *

Mr. Praznik: Madam Deputy Speaker, I would not deny that for a moment, because the member for Wellington has not had the courage—or the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) has not had the courage to come to this House and tell us what she has really been doing outside the House. Her name is associated and she is involved with, I am sure, a whole campaign to destroy that industry in the province of Manitoba. Now maybe she has not been honest enough to share that with her colleagues, but that is what she is out there doing. If she truly believes in that, she should come to this House and say that.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we talked about Louisiana Pacific. Without even an application made yet, without even knowing the details of the program, the member and her friends and some so-called environmental groups are out against it without even having it gone through the proper process. They are agin it even before it is there to be judged, and yet the member says, we want jobs.

Madam Deputy Speaker, when I listened to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) talk about jobs and young people in his remarks, I am reminded of the two largest employers in my

constituency, Atomic Energy of Canada and the new Pine Falls paper company as of the beginning of July. Both of those employers, employing almost 2,000 people in eastern Manitoba, have been attacked by the friends and by the member for Radisson, and I believe if that member had her way both would be shut down. I have never seen the New Democratic Party come out other than—I have to qualify this—when they are talking to people from those communities they are very supportive of those industries, but once they leave the boundary of the Lac du Bonnet constituency, once they get in the room that is with a radical fringe in our province, they are against those industries.

You know, we do not have to go very far. Members of the New Democratic Party got up and spoke about gambling, how they are opposed to gambling. At least I give the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Edwards) credit, even though his House leader supports more casinos and he is opposed to them, but the Leader of the Opposition rolls into The Pas, right? The community asks for a casino, and he says, yep, you elect us and you will get your casino. Roll in with a group of people who are opposed to gambling, oh, we are against gambling. Right? What do you want? We will promise.

Now, the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) looks a little miffed, but I have a press release issued by the Opasquia First Nation saying, we are going to vote NDP. They said that if they get elected they are giving us a casino. Now, they also said they are going to start building it now. So, I mean, if that is not true, if the Leader of the Opposition's comments are not true, then I believe he owes it to those people to tell them that before they go out and spend money. But has he done that yet? Oh, no. He has not done that yet. I think there was a local newspaper that called him the king of the one-liners, and the people of Manitoba are not going to be fooled by that at all.

Madam Deputy Speaker, if I may for a moment, the future of Manitobans—[interjection]

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I am having great difficulty hearing the honourable Minister of Labour.

Mr. Praznik: Madam Deputy Speaker, we as trustees of the public's money and as its elected Legislature have a responsibility to ensure that we do a number of things, that we expend well the dollars that they have available for us to expend, that we do not so overtax them and overburden them that they do not have a hope of doing anything but paying taxes. We have to ensure that opportunities that are there for Manitobans to take advantage of are pursued, and that we as government are doing what we can to allow them to take advantage of those opportunities.

It is interesting to note that many of us, the member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans) included, were at the meeting of the Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities just yesterday, I believe, and in their Urban Scene magazine—and I would refer members opposite to this magazine—on page 6 they talk about communities selling themselves and a number of job-creating businesses—real businesses—that have grown throughout our province in a number of communities. Some are employing a few people; others, many hundreds; and all because the climate is right for these things to happen, and that does not happen by accident. If that is not looked after each and every day by the trustees of the public who are elected to this Legislature, then those opportunities will not take place.

I cannot resist, Madam Deputy Speaker, raising another issue on the job front which I know members of this House will enjoy. I have a letter from Carnation Foods, and they wrote to me about a little incident where the brothers and sisters of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) went out and picketed at Carnation Foods in Carberry. Now, there is tremendous insight in this incident. What were they picketing? They were picketing the fact that a company based in the United States that sold a piece of industrial equipment to Carnation Foods required that the installation be done by their own people to get the warranty. Now, there is nothing unusual about that. That happens all the time. Ask United Steelworkers, and they will tell you about it. It happens all the time, but the brothers and sisters of members opposite loaded a bus and they

went down to Carberry. They picketed, and do you know what they said on their picket signs? They said: Yankee go home.

I tell the honourable members, what was that equipment going to be used to produce? French fries. Do you know where those french fries were being consumed? In the United States, by Americans, by those same Yankees that the brothers and sisters of the members opposite said should go home. Do you know how many new jobs? One hundred new jobs in the province of Manitoba, 100 new jobs for working people in our province, created by that facility—and members opposite: Yankees go home. Is that the future of Manitoba? No. Manitobans can compete, can take advantage of opportunities—

Some Honourable Members: Shame.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

* (1550)

Mr. Praznik: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. That speaks volumes, volumes to the mentality and thinking of members of that party. I am sure, in the course of the next number of days of the session, we will have plenty of opportunities to engage in a host of issues. My time is running short. I say to the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes), I would love to entertain a question from the member in the House, any opportunity on that subject.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate one of the many opportunities we have as members of the Legislature, one of the most significant opportunities to participate in debate, and I want to first of all congratulate you on your continued stewardship of this House. I say to you that you have been a very fair Speaker. I realize you are placed in a rather difficult situation in this session. I am reminded, when I see you, of a time when, in a previous Legislature with a previous Speaker, I was giving a question during Question Period, and I was ruled out of order. I suppose I must have been somewhat perturbed—

[interjection] No, this was Myrna Phillips, previous Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I do remember that the former Minister of Energy and Mines, who was then in opposition, sent me a statement from my throne speech debate in which I had said what a tremendous job the Speaker was doing and how fair she was. I am saying this now so that if at any time in this session, if I ever look like I perhaps disagree, although I will never say so publicly, or am somewhat frustrated by anything you might do, I am hoping that the member will save this throne speech and have it ready to send over to me, because I was reminded then and as I am reminded now of the fact that during sessions we sometimes end up in heated debates and there often are situations that are very difficult for yourself in terms of dealing with it. I certainly respect your fair judgment. I will say that on the record and it can be quoted back to me at anytime.

I also want to take the opportunity to welcome the five new members of the Legislature. It has really been rather unusual really to have this many new members through by-elections. It has been some years since we have had the same number of by-elections. I think you have to go back to the 1970s to find a similar parallel. I really want to say that I have been very impressed by all the new members. Of course, I have had the opportunity to see more closely the three New Democratic Party members: the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson), my neighbouring constituency; the member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg) and the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh). I want to commend them on their early contributions in Question Period. In terms of representing their constituents I think they are going to do a very excellent job.

I also want to pay tribute to the new member for Osborne (Ms. McCormick) and the new member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski). While I have not had the opportunity to perhaps get to know them in the same way as I have members of the New Democratic Party, I can indicate that certainly they are following in a tradition that I am sure they will admit themselves is a very significant tradition to

follow. The two previous members certainly distinguished themselves in debate in this House in terms of participation and public affairs in Manitoba, and I certainly wish them well.

I want to say also that I appreciate being back in this Legislature seeing those who are continuing, many excellent public servants serve this Chamber, the new Pages. It is certainly a tremendous session that we are looking ahead to. I know that we may have some heated debates but I think it is important to remind ourselves of why we are all here. I want to begin by saying, as I believe I have traditionally done in the throne speech, that I appreciate the continued support and encouragement from my constituents.

Thanks to the delay in being in session I have had perhaps more time to spend in my constituency than I have had in many years, in the sense of the long period out of session. Just coincidentally it happened to be the worst winter we have had in Thompson in about 25 years, but as we were suffering, as many Manitobans were in terms of the minus 40 degree weather, I really appreciated the opportunity to travel in my constituency. I visited every single one of the eight communities. I really appreciate the feedback from members of my constituency. I want to say that in terms of my priorities in this session, members will have to forgive me if my first priority is not to represent the people of Thompson, the people of the eight communities in the Thompson constituency and their concerns.

I want to indicate too that I appreciate the fact that a number of members of the Legislature, particularly in our caucus, have taken the opportunity to travel into northern Manitoba, in fact had been into my constituency. I note the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) is here, he spent a number of days travelling in my constituency. It was particularly appropriate given the fact he is the critic for Highways and Transportation. He drove himself, with me, on the winter roads, some of which I must say are not in the best of condition. He drove on Highway 391, which is once again not in the best of condition, but I give him tribute for taking the opportunity to have gone to northern

Manitoba and do that. In fact, I noticed the former minister of Highways and Transportation is here. I note that he did go into, I believe, Cross Lake and meet with people in the community of Cross Lake, Norway House, went on that road, which is in deplorable shape. I do note there was some concern that finally we got a Conservative Minister of Highways to go across the Cross Lake-Norway House road, and he was replaced within a few months. Perhaps the minister committed the heresy of suggesting that we might want to fix up the road, and I want to say I hope that was not the reason that the cabinet shuffle took place.

But I would invite the current Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Findlay) to do what the former minister did and what our Highways critic did and travel northern Manitoba. In fact, I can take him on some roads that I am sure he will be appalled at in terms of their condition. The reason I am making this is to point out how important it is for people to travel throughout this province, and particularly I can say as a northerner that we appreciate the fact when people do come up to northern Manitoba. I note that I was also accompanied by the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson), Mr. Speaker. Of course, he is no stranger to northern Manitoba, representing a northern constituency. I was also accompanied by the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) and at a later date the member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg), and the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos) also attended along with the member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans), and we held meetings, whether they be formal meetings or informal meetings, throughout northern Manitoba.

I am going to refer to some of the major concerns that were expressed by my constituents to the MLAs during my speech today, Mr. Speaker, because I believe it is important. But you know, I must say that one thing about Throne Speech Debates, they are interesting in the sense of the approaches taken by members of the Legislature. I thought it was rather interesting comparing and contrasting some of the styles of the members that have spoken, particularly from the government

side. Because, yesterday we had the speech of the member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh)—and there have been some very interesting speeches—who indicated some concern about negativity on behalf of opposition members, that they were too negative in their approach in this House.

Now, some of us could contrast those statements with the speech that was just given by the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Praznik), Mr. Speaker. I do not think I heard too much positive in his speech. I heard mostly attacks on individual members of this House. The minister rather effectively tried to develop straw persons, to develop them that way. Whether the statements he was using were accurate or not was not really a major concern, but there was not much in the way of positive in his statement. But you know, and I say this to the member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh) and I know that she will, if she has the opportunity to peruse my comments, that part of our process in this House is to have full and open debate. I just was struck by some of the contrasts in terms of what that member was saying, and having been in this House and heard a number of speeches.

In fact, I have a speech here and I just want to quote because I think it is sort of interesting given the scenario we are in and the fact we have not been in this House for a considerable period of time. We have not sat during the fall, this past fall. We did not sit until April, Mr. Speaker, which is quite unusual, other than in years in which elections have delayed sessions. But I want to indicate that all of us, and this is a statement again: "I believe that this record length of time is one more indication of this Premier's and this government's callous disregard for the necessity and the importance of this House being in session, listening to the views of the people of Manitoba and debating the issues that are of concern to them."

Mr. Speaker, who said that? Was it the Leader of the Opposition? Was it the Leader of the Second Opposition?

An Honourable Member: George Washington.

Mr. Ashton: Someone says, George Washington.

An Honourable Member: Or Harry Enns.

Mr. Ashton: The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) says, Harry Enns. He probably has said that at some point in time. When you are in this Chamber for as long as the member has in his long distinguished career, you do run the risk of repeating yourself on occasion, Mr. Speaker, but no, that quote came from the 12th of May, 1986. It was the then Leader of the Opposition, the current Premier (Mr. Filmon).

And I say, Mr. Speaker, I could read the speech of the Premier because, in the spirit of the member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh), I went through and I was trying to find something, anything that was positive in the speech that was given by the then Leader of the Opposition, and you know what? I did not find anything positive, other than congratulating the Pages and welcoming the members back to the House.

* (1600)

Mr. Speaker, I calculated that the speech probably went for an hour and a half. I know I was there because I spoke immediately after the Premier, the then Leader of the Opposition's comments. I must admit I had to read it in Hansard because it was not a particularly memorable speech. But I say this to the member for Assiniboia that one of the reasons we are in this House is to debate the priorities and policies of this government, and if she is suggesting that there be more positive suggestions, I will say in my speech today I will be making some positive suggestions, not the kind that I also found in reading the same debate.

The current Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Orchard), most of his comments were usually in the category of "Resign, resign and call an election." I note that he is not quite as vocal currently. In fact, we are going to miss the Minister of Energy and Mines in this session in comparison to previous sessions. But certainly I say this to the member for Assiniboia, that we are here to debate and there will be times when there will be disagreements, and you know, Mr. Speaker, that is

what my constituents expect from the Legislature. They expect that type of debate. When my constituents have a concern and I raise it in this House, they expect those concerns will be debated, and indeed today I will be raising many of those types of concerns.

Mr. Speaker, you know what I find interesting is in many ways I see history repeating itself in this Manitoba Legislature. And it usually does this, as the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) with his long, distinguished career talks about. By the way I want to give him credit. He gave a very interesting speech on agriculture, and it is quite refreshing when you have a member like the member for Lakeside talking about pork and it is actually about pigs, not about patronage. I must say it was rather interesting reading his speech because he did stick to the agricultural issues.

I could talk for 30 minutes about the other type of pork, which this government is expert at, Mr. Speaker, and certainly we have seen evidence of that and we are seeing increasing evidence, as this government is under political pressure, of people being put into the Civil Service and political appointments. I really got a kick out of the statements by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ernst) talking about the Public Utilities Board. The last two appointments to the Public Utilities Board were what—average Manitobans? Well, you could maybe argue that. People who had specific experience? Well, I suppose you could argue that. But, coincidentally, both of them were defeated Tory candidates, and this is the government that talks about the nonpolitical nature of the Public Utilities Board.

Well, let us deal with the reality of what is happening. History is repeating itself. You know, governments when they are in trouble—and I will say it is true of governments of all stripes—tend to have a number of reactions in common, but one of the most common reactions of a government that is in trouble is when they start blaming virtually anybody and everybody for what is happening other than themselves. They start saying, well, the problem is we are not getting our message out.

I find it rather entertaining that some Manitobans have been getting a document called—and this I think is clear evidence of just how desperate the government is getting—Manitoba's Good News Paper.

An Honourable Member: Is that mine?

Mr. Ashton: No, it is not yours. If you have an extra copy I would certainly be interested in reading it.

Mr. Speaker, this is very much the mentality of this government. In actual fact, reading the paper, I would say it probably has more in common with the National Enquirer in terms of its approach to news than with the facts of what is happening in this province. That is what someone has decided, and someone must have said, you know, there is a problem. People are not getting our message. We have to get something out that is good news, so they came out with the paper. It says Manitoba's Good News Paper.

The fact is—and I will say this to the government in the way of some unsolicited advice, which I am sure will probably be ignored—but there is a reason why there were five by-elections in which the Conservatives ran five candidates and the Conservatives lost every single seat. The people in those constituencies voted overwhelmingly for opposition members, most significant of course in the seat that was held by the Conservatives. Rossmere elected a New Democrat. But it is not because of a lack of "good news." It is because of the reality of what they saw from this government, particularly on health care, increasingly on education, and in terms of jobs and other issues as well.

So anyway, the first part of the strategy is we have to talk about good news. Well, there is evidence in the throne speech what the second part of the strategy is. Once again, governments when they are in trouble tend to do this. What I found interesting is for two years we had a Minister of Health that talked about health care reform. Now there were those who supported the minister. The Liberal critic at the time was very supportive, certainly in the initial stages, of the minister's

approach to health care reform. We were skeptical. We were critical of many of the things that were done, particularly the Connie Curran contract and some of the contradictory things that were developing—not totally critical. As a former health critic I would note the area of mental health care reform as an area that I believe has been very positive.

In fact, ironically, the current Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) has been in the position of announcing some of the positive features of mental health care reform, and that actually goes back to the previous minister. I say that in recognizing where positive items were done.

You know, someone sat down after the by-elections and said, well, there is a problem here. Solution A, strategy A—let us get more “good news out there.” Solution B, health care—it was a major issue, and anybody who does not believe it was a major issue I do not think followed the events that took place. Just talk to any one of the five new members about the importance of health care and the concerns about what was happening with the government and the Connie Curran contract and the cuts that were taking place in terms of hospitals, the confusing messages that were developing.

So now we have in the throne speech the new Conservative approach. This is part of it, plan B here. You know what they have done? They have dropped the word “reform” from health care. Brilliant political strategy here. They change the minister and they drop the word “reform,” but has that changed what is happening in terms of health care? There have been pauses put in place to terms of some of the drastic cuts that were going to take place in terms of health care, in rural hospitals in particular.

In my own hospital, under the guidelines that were announced last August there were going to be cuts of 22 positions and 19 beds, including the Intensive Care Unit, including the emergency ward, including cuts that were going to deal with significant parts of the hospital, that would have taken away much of the developing role of the Thompson General Hospital as a regional facility.

It was the same in The Pas, it was the same in Flin Flon, it was the same in many rural and northern facilities. The reaction was very strong in northern Manitoba, strong throughout this province, so they put it on hold. But today we have evidence brought to this House by the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) that now the Brandon General Hospital is looking at significant cuts in surgery. A third of the surgical beds—does that not tell you something? The Minister of Health’s own backyard—if it is happening in Brandon in the Minister of Health’s own backyard, what is going to happen in other parts of this province?

So what has happened is, they changed the face of the minister, they changed the PR strategy with Health. In fact, I find it interesting that in this paper, this one is obviously from the River East area, it talks about, the Filmon government shows commitment to health care in River East area. I think that is interesting news to people in the northeast end of the city in terms of what has been happening. They picked one good announcement and ignore all the rest of the concerns about what is happening in terms of Concordia Hospital and many of the other concerns about the province, but if it is happening in Brandon, is there any doubt that that is going to happen elsewhere in this province?

I say to the government, who do they think they are fooling? Taking the word “reform” out of this document in terms of health care is not going to change the concerns of the people of Manitoba in terms of health care. There has to be a fundamental shift. I think the most indicative example of how little change there has been is that the new minister, as he was appointed in the by-election, did not tear up the Connie Curran contract, followed through in the Connie Curran contract. I can tell you and, quite frankly, I am amazed that the government has not got this message earlier. People think it is absolutely stupid to hire an American consultant for \$4 million-plus to tell us how to run our health care system. At a time when the Americans are learning from our example in terms of medicare, many, many Manitobans say, why would you hire Connie Curran for \$4

million-plus, plus an escalation clause for the decline in the Canadian dollar? Why?

Mr. Enns: Why did your national Leader Audrey McLaughlin hire an American to do her video for her?

* (1610)

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) is talking about contracts. I would appreciate, and I would give him that opportunity. If he is opposed to the Connie Curran contract, which I am sure in his heart of hearts he is, I would have suggested that was the approach for the government to follow. Well, the fact is that plan A and plan B are not working. Well, there is also a plan C as well in here, and this is sort of typical of this government. We have seen it on the infrastructure program. We saw it in an article entitled "Tories roll out pork-barrel." That is not the Minister of Agriculture's (Mr. Enns) pork; this is patronage pork.

I want to quote here the Premier (Mr. Filmon), because this is, I think, an example of just how desperate this government is, and I want to put it in context. There were three approvals out of 131 from northern Manitoba in the first approvals, Mr. Speaker, three out of 131. What was the total of the amount that was approved for northern Manitoba—.4 percent. Now, do you not think that northern Manitobans might be just a little bit concerned about that.

How about people in the community of Flin Flon that has a significant application in? How about the people in Thompson? The mayor of Thompson, I know, I have worked very closely with the mayor for Thompson, his \$3.8 million application to upgrade sewer and water in terms of the Burntwood trailer court. How about the people in Northern Affairs communities that year after year have to sit, go through a process of capital application and have to wait because of the fact, the amount that is there for capital is far less than the amount of applications there.

You know what, Mr. Speaker, what did the Premier (Mr. Filmon) say to northerners who quite justifiably said this is not a fair allocation, and we

want to make sure it is fair in the remaining funds? He said the complaints are a typical attempt by some to get people mad at each other. We are not mad at each other in northern Manitoba. We are mad at a process that has yet shown itself to be fair to northern Manitoba, and we want to make sure, with whatever money is left, that we are not left out of that. But you know, the Premier went further, and this is sort of plan C on the Conservative government's side—[interjection]

I appreciate the fact that the member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh) is here, and after her lecture yesterday of being positive and not heckling, I appreciate the fact that she is probably trying to make a very positive statement, but I cannot quite hear it above the statements of other members.

What did the Premier say, Mr. Speaker? Questioned about the North's cold shoulder, he said, he shifted the blame to Harper, the M.P. for Churchill, and the three provincial New Democrats. Well, he said, the North's federal and provincial representatives did not do their job. The process this province chose was the input from municipalities. It was up to them to pull their projects together, and if they had done the preliminary work, they would go ahead.

The city of Thompson has been trying to get funding for the Burntwood trailer court for three years. It was one of the first communities to put its proposals forward to this particular program. They had met with virtually every minister that has ever come close to Thompson, although maybe the former Minister of Northern Affairs missed them, but they met with the Minister responsible for Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) two weeks ago. The proposal to upgrade the Burntwood trailer court is a proposal that should be accepted and should be approved on the infrastructure program. It is at least as positive a contribution, the infrastructure of this province, as the indoor swimming pool that was approved. It is at least as deserving as the \$39 million for the upgrading of Route 90, the Kenaston underpass. It is at least in that category, but you know, it did not make the first cut. Now it has to go into the final cut.

I say to the Premier (Mr. Filmon), for him to suggest in any way, shape or form there was any lack of work on the behalf of the municipalities is absolutely despicable, but I will go further. Mr. Speaker, I quoted yesterday. Why did not the Minister of Northern Affairs, because he was criticizing myself—I tabled in this House yesterday letters to the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Praznik), the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), to Lloyd Axworthy and to Elijah Harper supporting not only the Burntwood trailer court but the inclusion of Northern Affairs communities under this particular program, specific inclusion.

Every northern MLA has written to this provincial government and the federal government in this regard; so has our Leader. Do you know why? Because we have met with people in the communities, and they are saying we need sewer, we need water, we need roads, we need bridges, we need basic infrastructure. So what happens? Yesterday the Premier was shown to have been incorrect in suggesting the provincial MLAs have not done their job. Today was the ultimate. It just shows how desperate this government is.

The Minister of Northern Affairs admitted in this House, finally, that the reason there are only two applications before this infrastructure program is because the Minister of Northern Affairs and his department have taken all the communities and all their applications and whittled them down to two. It is the Minister of Northern Affairs and this government that has stopped those proposals going before it to the infrastructure program. One of the reasons northerners have been shafted on this particular program is because this government was not willing to put those projects ahead and provide the funding that would be required.

Mr. Speaker, strategy to blame anybody but yourself just does not work. The fact is, this Premier (Mr. Filmon) is responsible for being fair to all parts of this province. It is time we finished with this 1950s style of politics, this pork-barrel style of politics that does pit one region of this province against another. It is time the Premier accepted responsibility for that. I say it is

absolutely despicable when we have a Premier of this province who will not accept responsibility for the actions of his own minister and instead tries to blame northern communities.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say to this government, there are a lot of things that need to be done in this province, and there are a lot of things that need to be done in northern Manitoba: Improve the roads; improve the sewer and water; deal with a desperate situation in terms of unemployment in northern communities. Let us start with infrastructure. Let us establish a Northern Development Agreement. The member opposite talked about—the member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh) talked about positive ideas. One item I was pleased to see in the Speech from the Throne, one item, was the fact that there might be a Northern Development Agreement. That should fund infrastructure and economic development.

Still with some other suggestions—you know this government's approach in terms of economic development has been a complete failure in terms of many communities. In northern Manitoba, despite the fact they are sucking out millions in the form of VLT revenue, very little has gone back in terms of community economic development. I use the example the REDI Program that I do not believe has had a single application approved for northern Manitoba because many northern communities do not fit the criteria.

Mr. Speaker, I have some suggestions for the minister to put in place a true strategy of community economic development, as has the province of Saskatchewan and the province of Ontario. Then we will start seeing funding for small ventures. We will start seeing community economic development put in place.

I say to the member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh) that that is the kind of approach that could do a lot for northern communities or a lot of small ventures.

I can talk about some other suggestions. You know, we have heard this government talk about boot camps. I suppose it is very much a part of their agenda of trying to develop once again some

straw issues that they can attack. I wonder if they are so much interested in the boot camps or trying to develop a situation where they can say, well, we are in favour of boot camps, and the other parties are against boot camps.

But, you know, the experience of the boot camps that I assume the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) is talking about in the United States, if it is the model that has been developed there, it does not work. Now, if the minister is talking about wilderness camps, and some of the suggestions have been coming forth from aboriginal people, I certainly as an MLA would be willing to be involved in discussions.

But, you know, forgive many aboriginal people if they are concerned about the kind of approach that is being talked about because many aboriginal youth find themselves in the justice system.

There are so many things that can be done, but what you need to do with young people is to teach them respect and teach them values. That is what many aboriginal people have suggested in terms of their approach. But, Mr. Speaker, aboriginal people have been burnt many times. There was an interesting suggestion made that in many ways the boot camps of 20 years were the residential schools.

* (1620)

I could respond flippantly to the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) when she talks about boot camps. Perhaps we should set them up in some of the private schools since they have got such an excellent record with young people.

We might want to send some of the young offenders to St. John's-Ravenscourt to learn some values and some discipline, but I do not think they are going to send the young offenders to St. John's-Ravenscourt or Balmoral High. They are not going to do that.

Mr. Speaker, the minister opposite says, it is a good idea. That is going to create some interesting debate. I can just see the Conservatives might have strategy B now for dealing with their situation. Instead of putting funding for private schools under Education, they will put it under Justice, the

St. John's-Ravenscourt boot camp. They are going to throw those youth offenders in there, and they will teach them some discipline. What an interesting combination would that ever be.

But I will make a prediction. I do not think the boot camp is going to be located in St. John's-Ravenscourt or Balmoral High or even Fort Garry. I do not think it will be located anywhere close to the city of Winnipeg. I do not know which community they want to put it in, in terms of this boot camp idea, but if the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) is truly interested in dealing with the situation in terms of young offenders, there is a positive proposal from aboriginal people. I would encourage the minister to look at that and not to develop the kind of rhetoric that we have seen in this particular issue thus far.

Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of other suggestions and ideas that we have put forward. I find it sort of interesting that a lot of cases, even when we do put forward ideas in this House and I believe the Liberal Leader as well, to be fair, put forward some proposals. I think it was in an effort made there. I am not saying it is strictly the New Democratic Party, I think opposition members generally.

I must say that I did not quite agree with some of the statements that were made in terms of the International Year of the Family. I do not criticize some of the efforts, and I know that there has been an effort and the Deputy Speaker of this House has been very active on the International Year of the Family, and I think it is unfair in that sense to criticize those activities. I wish, quite frankly, there had been a similar approach for the International Year of the Indigenous People, but I do not criticize the efforts in terms of the International Year of the Family. I think perhaps the Liberal Leader went a little bit overboard in criticisms in that case. [interjection] Well, he was criticizing the government. That is fair comment from the Liberal House leader, but there are things that can be done.

I think the members of the government will have to understand that we would like to see the fine activities that are being done for the International Year of the Family extended in terms of practice as

well as in terms of this government. There are a lot of areas that could be dealt with.

You know, Mr. Speaker, does the government want more suggestions and ideas? One way to deal with one of the major problems would be to immediately increase the minimum wage in the province of Manitoba. [interjection] Yes, increase the minimum wage. I am glad the minister's listening. I want to put this in context. In 1988, we had the incidence of low income amongst families. The rate of poverty was 13.1 percent in Manitoba. It was 12.2 percent for Canada as a whole. It has increased in Canada to 13.1 percent, but in Manitoba it has gone to 17.1 percent; 17.1 percent, well above the national average, well above Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. I would point to some work done by an economist out of Brandon who pointed the exact reason why.

In 1988, Manitoba had the highest minimum wage in the country, \$4.70, the highest, Mr. Speaker. In 1993, it is increased—and this is in six years—is increased only 30 cents. We are now sixth highest. The percent change has been 6.4 percent. In other provinces, and Ontario with an NDP government, it has gone up by 38 percent; Saskatchewan 18.9 percent; British Columbia it has increased by 47 percent. Mr. Speaker, the minimum wage has not kept pace with the rate of inflation, but the rate of poverty has increased dramatically. Those are connected. It has gotten to the point, where on minimum wage many people are worse off than they would be on welfare and that has been admitted I think by many, and that is a tragedy. That is a tragedy, Mr. Speaker.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that this is part of the Tory approach, and the argument probably, when they were elected in '88, went as follows: If we keep the minimum wage down, we decrease the cost of labour. That is going to create additional jobs. I think it is a fair statement, but has it worked? Has it worked? We were traditionally first or second in terms of unemployment. For the first three months of this year, we have been fifth. We have slipped. Are there more Manitobans working today than there were in 1988 when this government came into office and applied this type

of economic philosophy, ideology that they have? No, there are fewer Manitobans working today. I mean, has it increased private sector investment? No, that is decreasing. Has it had any impact on the economic situation in terms of creating additional jobs? No. They talk about creating 5,000 jobs for youth. In 1987-88, when we had the highest minimum wage in the country, we created double that number.

The fact is it is high time we raised the minimum wage in this province. I make that as a suggestion, and I will tell you what it will do. I believe it will decrease the number of people in poverty. That is the first thing it will do. I believe it will give some real purchasing power to many Manitobans. I believe it will stimulate the economy, and I believe that that kind of approach would do more for job creation than the approach they have followed for six years. The results speak for themselves. It just has not worked. You do not create jobs by forcing people into the trap of poverty, which we are currently doing in terms of the minimum wage.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest not only that, but the minimum wage, once it has been increased to reflect the true increase in the cost of living in the last six years, when it has only increased once, I would suggest it be indexed to the rate of inflation. You know, I do not think that is unreasonable, and it does not mean the real cost will increase or decrease. It means the real cost, once it is fixed, will stay the same. What it means is you will not have this situation developing currently where those who are at or close to minimum wage are slipping into poverty increasingly.

In terms of other suggestions, Mr. Speaker, I want to raise a concern about social assistance in this province. I will give an example of how governments can do things because of their ideology that have cuts on intended consequences.

The government has reduced social assistance rates. They use the argument about Winnipeg boarding houses and cost of rents in Winnipeg. What has it done though? It has decreased that now for the province as a whole. Not only that, but people living on reserves who are under the federal government's jurisdiction have now learned that

the federal government, since it follows the provincial guidelines, is now implementing the same cuts. So you end up with the bizarre situation in communities with 80 or 90 percent unemployment where people now are going to have their social assistance cut even further than it is.

Mr. Speaker, believe you me, travel in any northern community, my constituency, or travel into Shamattawa, as I did recently, where a pair of rubber boots cost \$42, where you could look at the price of groceries, you are looking at two and three times the cost in southern Manitoba. There is a higher cost of living. You know, if you want to improve living conditions, you have got to recognize that. I say this not as a criticism only to the provincial government, because as I said, the federal government followed the rates that were set. I say it to both levels of government, to not pass the buck back and forth about who is responsible, but to reflect the fact that people in northern communities, in particular, and I would say in many communities, including in the city of Winnipeg, cannot afford those type of cuts.

If we are going to deal with improving not only the immediate standard of living, but improving the future that the people have, particularly the future of our young people, we have got to start with that. We have got to start with having proper and adequate standards of living in this province, and those kind of actions do not achieve that. They put people back.

I could continue with many other suggestions, Mr. Speaker, for this government, but you know, the bottom line here is regardless of how we can categorize the approach of this government, I think it was best indicated earlier by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer), and ironically it comes from statements made by the former Minister of Highways and Transportation, who a number of years ago in opposition said that you can tell when governments lose their moral authority to govern. I believe it develops. We develop those kinds of strategies, as I said, first of all suggesting the only problem is getting the message out. Second of all is in the throne speech trying to change the message,

take the word "reform" out. Strategy C, which is to blame anybody but yourself.

Mr. Speaker, this government has to accept responsibility for the six years it has been in office, stand by that, accept responsibility for increasing poverty, failure on unemployment, health care chaos, decline in our educational system.

I want to say that one of the reasons we will not only criticize but put forward our views is because we as a party, the New Democratic Party, whether in government or first opposition or second opposition, do have a different vision, the same vision that perhaps goes back to the days of the Winnipeg General Strike—it is the 75th anniversary this year—the same vision that inspired the Schreyer government which was elected 25 years ago. We believe that you can improve economic well-being, that you can fight poverty, that you can create better opportunities in terms of employment and education, that you can have universal accessible health care in this province.

* (1630)

As I said, perhaps ironically in the year that is the 75th anniversary of the Winnipeg General Strike, I would like to finish with a quote from J. S. Woodsworth: What we desire for ourselves, we wish for all.

That is the New Democratic vision, Mr. Speaker, and it will guide our debate throughout this session. Thank you.

Mrs. Shirley Render (St. Vital): Mr. Speaker, I will just begin by saying I am glad to see you back as our Speaker. I think your level-headed actions and your thoughtful pronouncements of the past may be needed this session, and I cannot think of a better person than you to be sitting in the Speaker's Chair.

I would like to take this time right now to welcome our new members, the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski), the member for Osborne (McCormick), the member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg), the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) and the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson). A very warm welcome to you all and I

know just a little bit from your background I think you will be providing some very interesting and hopefully very reasonable, logical kinds of comments to this Chamber.

Also, a very warm welcome to our Pages. I think all of us look forward to seeing young people in this Chamber. I hope that the discussions and the debate that the Pages will hear either in this Chamber or in the committee rooms will maybe prompt some of them to serve in public life either as politicians or in the public sector.

I think all of us consider that it is a privilege to speak on the throne speech. Throne speeches are typically the time when the government of the day lays out its blueprint for action for the upcoming session. I am pleased with what this government has said it is going to be doing. Some of the priorities that it has highlighted are youth violence and crime. This is something that is very important to the constituents of St. Vital. Many of my constituents over the past year have expressed great concern with the increase in youth violence and crime. I carried their concerns to our caucus and I am pleased that we have already initiated a summit on youth violence. Many of my constituents participated in that day-long meeting and told me that they felt that it was an excellent first step. They also felt it was very valuable to be able to hear what others in the community were saying. They also felt it was very necessary to make the community aware that no one segment could be held responsible to try to deal with this issue. It was absolutely vital to make sure that it was not just the parents that the finger was pointed at, not just the teachers, not just the police department, not just the politicians, but all of us working together in a concerted co-operative effort.

I think Canadians, Manitobans in particular, have always prided themselves in living in a relatively crime-free province. However, this feeling has been shattered in recent years as we read about the rise in murders and violent crime. I think what has shocked so many of us has been the rise in youth crime and violence.

I just look at today's paper and I see "Stopping car theft 'priority'." That is one of the headlines. Car thefts in this province, in particular car thefts by young people, have certainly risen dramatically. I know of one school that had three cars taken in one afternoon, and in each incident young people were involved. I am not too sure how many of you are aware but in North America a car is stolen every 20 seconds. According to the Free Press today, 17 cars are stolen every day.

(Mr. Bob Rose, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Some of you may know that I no longer drive a Toyota 4 Runner. That is because someone stole it. Obviously, they knew it was in A-1 shape because just a little old lady drove it from home to the Legislature. Be that as it may, the police told me that in all likelihood it was stolen by somebody who was under the age of twenty-one. It was stolen a couple of months ago right in front of our place in broad daylight. So like so many of my constituents, I have a very personal interest in dealing with the subject of youth crime.

As a former social worker with the Children's Aid Society and also as someone who was very concerned throughout the 1970s in making child abuse presentations throughout the community, throughout the city of Winnipeg—because again I think even back in the '70s we Winnipeggers, we Manitobans thought child abuse does not happen here in this province. We like to smugly look at ourselves and say we are better than everyone else. As I say, as a former social worker in these areas, I know that there is really no simple answer to youth crime, to youth violence, particularly if the youth involved in the crime is a youth who himself or herself has been a victim of child abuse.

Back then there were conflicting views as to what kind of a stance to take with dealing with young offenders. Today there are conflicting views in how to deal with young offenders. However, I think most of us can agree that it is absolutely necessary that we make changes in how we deal with young offenders, particularly the repeat ones.

When I receive calls from seniors or young moms who want to walk their children in the

evening or parents who are afraid to let their children walk home alone from cub meetings, from hockey practices, I know that it is time that we take a hard, serious look at this issue, and that is what this government has done. That is why I very strongly support it, this government's action, in holding a summit on youth violence. I was particularly pleased to see that spaces were held not just for the so-called experts, not for the people that we always call upon to give us advice, but also for teachers, for parents and for the young people themselves, young people who maybe have been involved in crime and young people who know of people who do these sorts of things, because we need their kinds of responses.

Now really in today's life and in every facet of today's life, whether we are talking about budgets, school budgets, provincial budgets, whether we are talking about environmental issues, you name it, we are past the time of thinking that we alone can solve the problem. We need to go out to the community.

I mentioned earlier that as far as youth crime goes there are many, many conflicting opinions, and what I found interesting in speaking to constituents after the youth summit was that every single one of the constituents who had made reference to me that something had to be done about youth crime, all were in agreement that tougher measures were needed against young offenders, and this belief also came out at the summit conference.

Our aim at the conference was not to come up with a definitive plan; it was simply to bring the community together to hear what people from various parts of the community were saying, to hear where their concerns were, to listen to their ideas as to how to deal with this, but it takes a while for the community to mobilize itself into action. What we wanted to have happen was each of the people to take back some of the things that they learned at that summit, and as I said, it takes a while for a community to get its act together and to determine exactly what it does want to do, and that is why I was pleased that this government moved very quickly to come up with a nine-point plan.

Some of those initiatives—I will just very briefly mention them—are boot camps or wilderness camps, a school antiviolence program, increased police surveillance of gang members, a youth violence line, trying to improve the Young Offenders Act. We all know that our Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) was in Ottawa not too long ago trying to make changes, have changes made to the Young Offenders Act, but again we saw what happened. We have these conflicting opinions. Let us not make it too tough on the youth, some say. At any rate, she is out there. Our Minister of Justice worked very hard on the part of Manitobans. She listened to the people at the youth conference, and we heard what they were saying, but as I say, there are conflicting opinions as to how to deal with this problem. One of the other points in the nine-point plan was to have a forum to allow young people to tell government their thoughts on government policies and programs that affect youth, and also to set up a provincial council on youth crime.

I hear comments across the way just about youth crime and being too tough or perhaps not tough enough, but again, I think it is very interesting that just in today's clippings I see a headline that says, "Law is tough, but repeaters don't think so." I think it is interesting to note that Manitoba's tough drinking and driving laws have worked. They have reduced the incidence of impaired and disqualified drivers, and it has been reduced by 10 percent. So I think people should not be too quick about saying, oh, no, we cannot take a tough stand. I just put that out, because sometimes taking a tough stand is what is necessary.

* (1640)

Looking at another headline here, again today's paper. I did not know these headlines were coming out, but they are certainly helping me make my point. "Let's try harder slap on wrist" says this headline. "Pain, not probation, will deter youth from crime." So these are what some of the people out here in Manitoba are saying.

Now another initiative that was outlined in the throne speech were the welfare-to-work pilot projects. I think this is excellent. I think we are all aware that in many instances it is much easier just

to be on welfare. It is certainly easier. It is sometimes even financially more beneficial to be on welfare than it is to work, particularly if you were to find a job, you may find yourself at the bottom of the pay scale. Now the idea behind the welfare-to-work project is to have strong employment initiatives so that the welfare recipient is not penalized for working but can ease himself or herself off welfare without an abrupt cutting off or abrupt loss of all benefits.

One of the things that really concerned me—because I was very interested to see now who are the people on social allowances. I was very disturbed to learn that in December 1993, there were 12,436 sole-support parent cases, and of those 12,000-plus, 11,807 were headed by mothers; only 629 headed by fathers. These cases had a total of over 22,000 children. The sole-support parent cases represented 47 percent of the total social allowances caseload.

Another interesting statistic was the fact that the average monthly mother's allowance caseload increased by 61 percent over the last decade, from 1983-84 to '93-94. That is to December of 1993, but during this very same period, the total caseload for social allowances as a whole increased by only 29 percent. So we see where the focus is. It is on the single moms, the young moms.

That is why I was very pleased to note in the throne speech that one of the first pilot projects will be focusing on single mothers. Under the programs that very shortly will be introduced is something called Partnership to Independence. This is absolutely vital, because I think sometimes people think too often that everybody on social allowances may be in their 30s, their 40s, their 50s or 60s, but we can see that there is a definite need to be focusing on young single mothers.

I talked earlier about consulting others, and I think all of us here in this Chamber recognize that Manitobans, indeed Canadians, are demanding much more input into what government does. I am not just talking at the provincial level, I am talking about all levels of government—federal, provincial, city and school board level.

I think we are all very aware of the cynicism towards politicians. I think that most of us are honest enough to realize that we do not have all of the answers, that we need to reach out and ask others, what do you want done, what are your priorities, how do you want this handled?

Well, that is exactly what this government has done. We have gone out to the community. The first instance that I was involved in was the all-party task force, and this government has created two all-party task forces to deal with the Constitution.

Just a couple of months ago, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) went out to six different locations here in Manitoba to hear people and ask for their suggestions, their comments as to how to deal with the budget and the problems that we were facing.

I have already mentioned that the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) held a forum on youth violence.

These are only a few examples of how this government reaches out into the community to get input from the grassroots level.

Now another area that we have sought public input is in education. We have had the boundaries commission, the University Review Commission chaired by Duff Roblin. Now we are going to be having the Parents Forum, and that is going to be held in a few weeks by the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness).

Again, this is an initiative that I am really pleased about. I have had so many parents approach me and say, how can we have input into how our children are educated? How can we have some say into how we want to see the curriculum structured? Well, this is going to be their chance. That is why I am very pleased that the throne speech highlighted this particular initiative, because parents are now going to have a very unique opportunity to have direct influence on the future direction of education in this province.

Now, over the past six months, I know that the minister has been meeting with a huge variety of groups. They are student groups, parents' groups,

teachers' groups. I know his door has been open when people want to meet with him. Now we are going to be consulting with the people who are probably the most interested in what happens to children, and that is the parents of the children themselves who are in the educational system.

Now I just really want to switch gears here for a moment, and I will just speak very, very briefly on economics and growth and jobs. Of course, these continue to be a priority of this government.

For those of you who really listened to the throne speech, you will know that this government has pledged new initiatives to encourage small business and to continue aggressively pursuing trade opportunities and also to develop more of Manitoba's resources and to really target some of the emerging sectors, strategic sectors here in this province.

I think it is very significant that when you look at the throne speech, the jobs and economics section are at the very beginning of the throne speech, because we do consider this a top priority. We can talk about our social net. We can talk about the things we are going to do in a variety of areas, but if we do not have the basis, if we do not have the money coming in to support these things, that is all it is going to be. It is just going to be talk.

Now I am keeping an eye here on the clock. I do not want my time to run out before I speak a little bit about what has been happening in my constituency of St. Vital.

I think one of the most exciting happenings that has happened was an announcement that was made just last week, and it concerned Glenlawn Collegiate, a high school in the riding of St. Vital, and a concern, the Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Works Agreement. Now, for those of you who do not know, the Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Works Agreement was signed in January of this year, and its purpose was to encourage infrastructure development and job creation for Manitoba.

Glenlawn Collegiate was chosen as one of the projects to receive the go-ahead. Needless to say, I was very, very pleased. Many of you may recall

the fire that devastated Glenlawn last fall, and because of this agreement money has now been earmarked for 30,000 square feet of new building and 7,500 square feet in renovations. This new space will house academic, computer communications areas, industrial technology, community athletic and performing arts facilities. The Glenlawn project—and I think this is another very important part of this whole thing—will support over 50 workweeks of construction jobs as well as full-time positions for teachers, custodial and clerical staff.

I am just going to read from the application form here. One of the criteria that was marked down for Glenlawn: What is it going to do for our community? It is going to enhance this province's economic competitiveness, because Glenlawn Collegiate will be bringing in the electronic highway. It will also be providing Distance Education facilities. Now, currently in southern Winnipeg, more specifically in St. Vital, there is no acceptable facility available to accommodate the creative arts, athletic recreation and technology interest groups, and these facilities, these new facilities, and the renovated areas are going to do this. They are also going to be available not just for the students but for the community at large.

* (1650)

As I have said many, many times in this Chamber, Glenlawn Collegiate is an excellent facility, and it excels not just on the academic side but also in music, fine arts and sports. The new building and the renovations will benefit not just the students but, as I said, the whole community of St. Vital, and because I know first-hand what an outstanding high school Glenlawn is, I backed this project 100 percent. This project is a concrete example of what can happen when governments co-operate.

Speaking on a little more general level, this Manitoba-Canada Infrastructure Works Program will be investing \$205 million into Manitoba over the next two years to improve public facilities, to encourage economic development and to create jobs, and that is absolutely vital. Because, as I said earlier, for the other things, for health, education,

for child and family services we need that economic background to be able to provide the services in those areas.

Before I leave Glenlawn Collegiate, I just want to say thank you to all the residents and the students and the former students and the businesses, businesses such as McDonald's on St. Anne's who helped Glenlawn in a variety of ways to recover from the fire last fall. I was really impressed by how so many people, so many students and businesses, rallied to help Glenlawn Collegiate. The community spirit was really there. I was equally impressed with how hard the staff and the teachers at Glenlawn worked to ensure that their students did not suffer.

True to form, the students of Glenlawn, as usual, rose to the top and they did exceedingly well in music and in sports, bringing home medals and championships in the last couple of months. They also even put on a musical a few weeks ago. Keep in mind that these students and teachers were practising in less than adequate facilities. But, as I say, the spirit of Glenlawn is strong and the students rose to the top.

Another program that I just want to briefly mention that concerns St. Vital is the Glenwood revitalization project. This is a shared project with the city, and the purpose is to rejuvenate designated areas of the city before they get past the point of no return. Again, I am very pleased that Glenwood was chosen as one of the areas, and I simply wish to say at this point that the residents committees have been elected and they are now meeting on a regular basis.

I will just conclude my talk here by zeroing in on four very special people in St. Vital. In late November of 1993, on behalf of the Governor-General of Canada, I presented four Canada 125 medals to people who lived or worked in St. Vital. These four individuals contributed immensely to the betterment of the community, indeed to all of Manitoba and, in some instances, to all of Canada. I would just like to put their names on the record. They are Ralph Bagley, Mary Dixon, Helen Granger Young, and Brian Thorarinson who is the

principal of Glenlawn Collegiate and who accepted the medal on behalf of the collegiate.

So once again my congratulations to these four people who have given of their time, their talent and their energies in making our community a better place. I would just like to thank constituents who have supported me and to say I hope that you will continue to keep in touch with me as I have tried very hard to keep in touch with you.

Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Acting Speaker, it is always a pleasure to be able to stand inside the Chamber and to add words representing the constituency of Inkster in terms of what I believe people that I am representing are thinking and to express some of my personal opinions and also to express some positions that we have in the Liberal caucus to the government.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

May I first congratulate, Mr. Speaker, the new Pages and yourself for the work that you will be doing, and particularly the new Pages, over the upcoming session. I am sure you will find it most interesting, and no doubt you will be putting on a couple of miles going up and down some stairs and to the caucus rooms, as I am sure you can attest to already.

As I indicated, Mr. Speaker, it has always been a pleasure to work under your directorship of this Chamber, and we look forward to having many more discussions just as a half hour or 40 minutes ago we entered into one of those discussions, and I am sure we will be having a few more of those sorts of discussions as time approaches.

Mr. Speaker, it has been a long time since we have been back in session, a long, long time, and one has to wonder, you know, in terms of why it is that it took so long for this government to come back into session. I know the federal election happened in late October, as we all know, and three months later a new government in Ottawa was put into place. They have introduced a throne, they have introduced a budget, and now we finally see a government that has been in office for six years finally returning to the Chamber.

I was a bit disappointed in terms of the timing of this particular session, because I can recall the negotiations that took place in order to try to get the government back on track right back from 1988, and we all recall when the government came back in '88 it was because of a defeated budget. They had to prepare a new budget. Some suggested it was more of a photocopy of the then-NDP administration, and we had the long, long sessions. I believe one was 151 days. The next one was 140-some days or whatever the actual length is, I cannot recall right off hand, but I do know that the one session was fairly lengthy.

Then after the 1990 election there was a good sense of co-operation, let us get back on track, and I had bought into the argument that the then House leader was putting forward, that they want to get into a situation where we are introducing the throne speech in the fall and then we are having the Budget Debate in February, March at the very latest. I remember those discussions, as I am sure the NDP House leader does. I find it is unfortunate that the government did not live up to what I believe was a sincere attempt to try to get more order and to try to get better debates going on inside this Chamber by establishing some more protocols in terms of when to introduce a throne, to bring in the budget and things of that nature, Mr. Speaker.

Anyway, as I have indicated, a lot has happened. We have got five new MLAs inside the Chamber, and I extend my congratulations to all five MLAs into the Chamber. I did want to make a special reference to the two new additions in the Liberal caucus, because it really has been a delight to have both the member for Osborne (Ms. McCormick) and the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) join us in the Liberal caucus. I did not get to campaign as much as I would have liked to for the member for Osborne because I was quite busy in the riding of The Maples.

There were a number of things that came out of that particular by-election in which I myself learned, for example, the member for The Maples has a youth justice committee in which he played an instrumental role establishing in The Maples. I

had taken that idea and put it into my own riding where I started to solicit individuals to participate in a very active way dealing with young offenders.

Even though, as I say, I did not get to do too much campaigning with the member for Osborne, I have on a number of occasions had very interesting and pleasant discussions with the member for Osborne, as I find out that we have a lot of things in common, in particular on the social side of government expenditures, Mr. Speaker. I do very much enjoy the discussions and the dialogue that we have had thus far, and I look forward to the many years ahead of us to continue that.

It was sad for me to see a very close and personal friend in the former member for The Maples, Dr. Gulzar Cheema, leave, because he was a very good friend. One of the benefits of being elected in 1988 and being a politician is you do get to meet a lot of fine people, and there is no one finer than my friend and former colleague, Dr. Cheema. His presence will in fact be missed, even though we have had opportunity to talk via long distance and once in person when he came down to help out in the by-election.

* (1700)

I am sure that The Maples will be represented equally as well with the addition of the new member for The Maples. Again, he and I have had ample opportunity, especially during the campaign, on a daily basis to have dialogue on a number of different issues, particularly the whole issue of youth justice, something that I have really enjoyed. As a result of those discussions, the area that I represent will be having a youth justice committee, and that would not have happened had it not been for the member for The Maples.

Also during the break, we had a number of opportunities to be able to put into place different organizations, and I wanted to make brief mention of each of the residents associations that were formed. They all had their founding meetings actually back in January and February, and that is the Meadows West residents association. The Meadows West residents association elected a

chair, being Wayne Rumley, and I extend the congratulations in a very formal way to him through here, and through the Tyndall Garden residents association to Angelina Olivia Job [phonetic] as the elected chairperson, and the Burrows-Shaughnessy residents association, where Ron Chambers [phonetic] was elected as the chair. I should also make mention that the youth justice committee has selected a chair in the name of John Emery [phonetic]. All of these individuals, Mr. Speaker, live in the community, and have been putting in a phenomenal amount of hours to get these resident associations and the youth justice committee off the ground, and the constituents that I represent will be better off for the efforts that they are putting into it. It is very, very much appreciated.

I guess I should start off by talking directly with respect to the throne speech. It was interesting yesterday that the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) made reference that the Conservatives must have a computer program that punches out throne speeches. In going through it, I am inclined to believe what it is that he is in fact suggesting. The only real difference that I have noticed is the fact that on the front page of this throne speech we now see the new, augmented coat of arms. There was a lot of debate on that particular debate.

But I do want to go through a number of different points in the throne speech. To start off with what our Leader has said is the No. 1 issue for us, and that is, in fact, the jobs in providing hope for Manitobans that there is a future in the province. It was interesting that we have the government saying the very same thing. They are saying that "our top priority," and I quote from the throne speech, Mr. Speaker, "must continue to be jobs and economic growth: secure jobs and a sound economy to support those jobs and the public services Manitobans require." That is what they indicate is their top priority.

I believe that actions speak much louder than words. We have seen a government that has been in office for six years, and we have not seen bold, new initiatives coming from this government with respect to job creation or to assisting the economy

out of a recession. In fact, there is virtually every other day where we are asking questions not only in the beginning of this session but in the past session about the jobs and the stats. We hear the opposition coming with statistics to substantiate what our claims are, and then the government refutes that by saying, these are the statistics that say that we are doing a good job.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that we need to look at the bottom line, and the bottom line for this government has not been very positive. The bottom line is that there are fewer jobs today under this administration than there were in 1988. The government makes reference, Mr. Speaker, to the manufacturing industry as an example. It is right in the throne speech where it says that the manufacturing investment has grown by 35 percent, the best rate in Canada. Well, year over year, yes, the stat of that nature might make it look as if it is being a positive, but when this government took office back in 1988 we had a manufacturing industry that employed over 60,000 people. Today that number of jobs has dramatically decreased, and that is the bottom line.

The government can throw all the statistics it wants at the opposition parties, but unless, Mr. Speaker, you are able to improve that bottom line or to provide the hope for Manitobans going into the future, unless you are able to do that, your arguments in terms of us being the government that is best able to provide jobs as the No. 1 priority are not valid. If there was some sort of indication from this government that they want to see some sort of involvement—they firmly believe in the trickle-down theory, that the business and corporations will create all the jobs for the economy, that the government does not have a role. You know, I look at the front bench of the Conservative caucus, and you see individuals very right of centre that believe in that in a very firm way.

I have always believed in the Keynesian theory in the sense that during good times there is a need for government to look around at its expenditures and to see where they can in fact hold back, maybe pull back out of the economy somewhat, but when

an economy is going down, Mr. Speaker, that is the time in which the government has to recognize that you do have a role to play in the economy. This government has not acknowledged that role in the economy.

We have on numerous occasions given ideas to this particular government in what we believe would work, what would at least give individuals, Manitobans, some hope that the government is concerned about the economy and is trying to do what they can to get us out of the recession. The Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Edwards) made mention of them in his throne speech. He has had press conferences on them. We have indicated it in the past, yet we never receive a response from it.

* (1710)

One of those suggestions was, in fact, the 3 percent tax reduction for three months on the provincial sales tax. Mr. Speaker, how has the government responded to that? I am disappointed in the sense that they disregard it completely. They look at it as a Liberal Party idea that is completely unacceptable to them. I do not know if maybe they are scared that the Liberal Party could receive some credit, not in the sense that we have come up with the idea—after all, it is Sterling Lyon's idea—but that we in fact could get some credit because the government adopted that particular position. The Leader of the Liberal Party has talked extensively about prairie integration, establishing a prairie stock exchange, a public bonding process. The ideas have been flowing from the Liberal caucus in terms of what it is that we believe you should be doing to try to get the economy moving in a much more positive way.

Mr. Speaker, this government's failure to recognize the role that you have to play on the economy has resulted in thousands of Manitobans leaving the province. That is true. Thousands of Manitobans are leaving the province every year because they do not believe that they necessarily have any hope of being able to better their life in the province of Manitoba, for whatever different reasons, and the reasons vary.

If we look at the throne speech, one of the most encouraging aspects of this throne speech is that they talk about the infrastructure program. What does the infrastructure program mean? It means that jobs are going to be created and the government is finally onside with some form of job creation, but this is not something that this government has initiated. This is something that the federal government has come up with. Now we see a government at least at one level that recognizes that there is an importance for governments to play some role, and there are many benefits of concentrating some public dollars on an infrastructure that are very long term, that it does not have to cost money especially in the long term, because there are deflated prices. There are more people who are going to be paying into taxes.

There are a number of different arguments that could be made, but this government did not lead for this particular program. This is a program that was brought down through the federal government and it is the highlight of sorts of this particular throne speech. This is the first time where we actually see the provincial government take any sort of a proactive approach in terms of dealing with the economy.

Education is an area which I do want to spend a bit of time on. I am going to save it for after I comment on just a few other issues dealing with the throne speech.

I want to go on to health care, Mr. Speaker. Health care has been an issue in which the Liberal caucus in the past has given this government the benefit of the doubt. The member for The Maples in the Liberal caucus when the government came forward with the health care reform package—the Liberal Party supported the concept in terms of what it was the government was saying. What the government said did not turn out to be what the government was planning on doing, and that is somewhat unfortunate. Had the government implemented what it is that they were talking about doing back when the report initially came out, health care reform could have been a very positive thing. In fact, we could not even see health care reform being used in the current throne speech.

We were not the only ones that were disappointed, Mr. Speaker. I know that there were ample other organizations, health care professionals in unions and other support organizations, that when they first heard what the government's intentions were on health care reform, they were all supportive. The only ones that were not supportive were the New Democratic caucus at that point in time. But we did give you the benefit of the doubt, and because we give you that benefit of the doubt and you do not live up to the expectations that you have set to not only the Liberal caucus as an opposition party but also the different interest groups out there, you open yourself up for a considerable amount of criticism, and legitimate criticism. I, as a result, as an education critic, have to be very concerned in terms of what this government's real agenda is on education. How do I know it is not going to be the same sort of an approach as to health care.

Taxes. This government talks about how wonderful we are because we have not increased personal income tax, Mr. Speaker. Well, you know, if it was just as simple as that, it would be wonderful to be able to support a government that has not increased personal income taxes, but their actions have caused other taxes to be increased in many other jurisdictions—school divisions, municipal governments and other provincial taxes. One of the most progressive taxes we have as a society is in fact the income tax. You pay in terms of how much you take home or on how much you make, your gross amount.

Other areas of taxation like the property tax, where a lot of the offloading has occurred, is a regressive tax, and we would have liked to have seen the government take a much more aggressive role in trying to fight for fairer taxation. They have not been doing that because they believe that they do not have to have fair taxation as long as they can go to the public in the next provincial election and say, look, we have not increased personal income tax. I do not believe that is the best way to operate on a taxation policy.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to comment on free trade. There has been a great deal of debate in the

Chamber over the last number of months on free trade, and we did see a new federal government come in which has taken some actions to alleviate some of the concerns that Canadians have with respect to free trade. What makes me most encouraged—

Mr. Downey: What happened to the Liberals on free trade federally?

Mr. Lamoureux: Well, the Deputy Premier asked what happened to the Liberals. Let us look at what the Liberals are in fact doing with respect to freer trade. One of the first things we hear from Mr. Chretien and his government is that what we need to do is to have freer trade amongst the provinces. When was Brian Mulroney or the former Prime Minister talking about freer trade within Canada, Mr. Speaker?

Now we have a federal government that is saying we want to take down some of these trade barriers, and I give credit to the provincial government here in the sense they now are saying that they too would like to co-operate and try to get some sense of freer trade amongst all the provinces across Canada. I believe they are operating under some sort of a June deadline, or at least having something ready for June.

I think that is a very positive thing. Freer trade with the United States and Mexico can be a very positive thing if it is implemented in a fair way, that we not only have to look at Mexico and the United States, but there are other countries in Asia and the western world and, most importantly, free trade from within Canada itself. That is where I am quite glad to see that the current national government has put a very high priority on this particular issue.

* (1720)

The environment has been another issue that has come up within the throne speech, and I am somewhat concerned with what it is that the government is saying on the environment, and maybe how I can sum this up is to talk a bit about the federal government. There used to be a time in which it was quite commonly known as fodbashing. Mr. Speaker, we all know at times that

the federal government, whatever political stripe it is, is going to do some things that are not necessarily supported from provincial jurisdictions. There have been a couple of things that I wanted to make reference to because the throne speech makes reference to them, and that is first with respect to the environmental office that was located in Montreal, I know the government is trying to draw the comparison with the CF-18. I would like to believe that in fact there was a better process that was put in place that there is no comparison between the CF-18 and the NAFTA environmental office located in Montreal.

I looked at it, and it is not to defend, but if I had my choice out of the 25 cities, I too would love to have seen it put in Winnipeg, hands down. I do not think there is anyone inside the Chamber that loves Winnipeg any more than I, but there was a process that was in fact established and, unfortunately, Winnipeg was not the benefactor of having this particular site. Yes, it is unfortunate and, hopefully, we will get other offices and other programs, as I am sure we will, into the future.

(The Acting Speaker, Mr. Jack Penner, in the Chair)

I do know, Mr. Acting Speaker, that there were a number of cities, some 25 cities that did make application, and there were some criteria that were established. I know, for example, it was pointed out that Montreal has the United States and Mexico diplomatic mission offices located as one of them. I do not know what all the criteria were. I like to believe that some criteria were used, that it was not as blatant as the CF-18 was, where there was a strong recommendation that it come to the city of Winnipeg. There was no recommendation that came out of that particular report.

Another issue which the government took issue with was the one of cigarette taxes. Again, this is a position which I do not support. I did not believe that the government made necessarily a wise decision. [interjection] Well, the Minister of Health has selective hearing.

It is interesting, governments will make decisions, and sometimes you agree with them and

sometimes you do not. This government has made a lot of decisions in which I do not personally disagree with, and the federal government made one decision on February 8 that I do not necessarily agree with. They made a decision based on information that was provided to them, and they made that decision on February 8. They made it looking at the problems that were there. Illegal tobacco was accounting for up to 40 percent of the \$12.4 billion Canadian tobacco market. That is significant, Mr. Acting Speaker, and at the very least the government felt that this is something that had to be addressed. They estimated that the organized crime controlled up to 95 percent of contraband tobacco entering the country. These were decisions that the government had at least the courage to address and to make a decision, something which we do not necessarily see from this particular government. [interjection]

Well, it was interesting, you know, on February 11. Because people will say, well, this is a political party thing, that the Liberals do not care for health care, where within two weeks we had the New Democrats in Ontario that adopted the same policy where they dropped it.

Ms. Barrett: Not out of choice, Kevin.

Mr. Lamoureux: Well, the member for Wellington says not out of choice. The national government had to make a decision because of smuggling. Ontario had to make a decision because of smuggling. There is no difference, Mr. Acting Speaker, so it is not fair nor appropriate to make this a Quebec-bashing issue when, in fact, Mr. Acting Speaker, we have seen a number of governments of both Liberal and New Democratic stripe—and there are no Conservative governments out east—I am sure that we probably would have seen the very same quite realistically. It would be interesting to see in terms of what this government—our position has been very clear in terms of that we do not support.

Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, I wanted now to move on to education.

An Honourable Member: I figured you would do that pretty quick.

Mr. Lamoureux: Pretty quick. Well, I do not want to be accused of skating different issues, not like many different ministers that prefer not to touch on different issues. I want to talk now about education.

Education is something that in the last six months I have had the privilege of representing the Liberal caucus on, and I am taking advantage of that opportunity by trying to meet with as many different interest groups, individuals, as possible to try to get a better understanding of what is going on in education.

Mr. Acting Speaker, there is a number of things that come to mind when education is being talked about, at least in my presence. I recall when the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) was in Brandon, and I think if you take a look at what the Minister of Education said in Brandon, you compare that to what the Liberal caucus is doing, you will see clearly two different ways of approaching education reform.

The Minister of Education was like a bull in a china shop the way he went into a conference— [interjection] The Minister of Education, yes, he came into a conference where there was a lot of positive dialogue on what can be done to change education in a positive way, solutions, looking for solutions, not just identifying problems. Then we have the Minister of Education come, and Mr. Acting Speaker, I do not know what the Minister of Education was trying to accomplish but he sure did get a lot of attention, and the attention that he received over the next few days was not very positive. We heard a government that had, or a minister in particular, the Minister of Education—and we take it that the Premier has full confidence in him—a minister that has his own ideas on education, and those were the ideas that were going to be changed.

Let us talk about these ideas. Let us look in terms of education. Let us look at these educational ideas and why it is that they came up. Many would argue that unfortunately the ideas that he was talking about, Mr. Acting Speaker, were not ideas for tomorrow. He was talking about ideas that he believes are popular. Whether they are going to

work or whether they are not is irrelevant. He is talking in terms of what he believes no doubt people want to hear and possibly some of his own personal opinions.

Mr. Acting Speaker, so let us look in terms of what it is—[interjection] Well, I disagree with the manner in which this government is talking education reform. You know, I have been here for six years, and in six years we have had—this is the third Minister of Education. For the first time we hear a government that is at least saying one thing right, and that is that education is a top priority for this government. This is the first time where I am really hearing that education is a top priority. Now they are really talking about some sort of comprehensive educational reform package after five and a half or six years of being in government.

The problems that even the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) was talking about in his address at the Brandon conference, those problems were there for years, but now we see a minister who is prepared to take some action. Mr. Acting Speaker, I am glad to see at least the government is prepared to take some action on it.

If we take a look now at what it is the government is actually saying about education or educational reform, I would like to start off with the Boundaries Review commission. The government establishes the long-awaited Boundaries Review commission, something that was put on the back burner, and gives it a mandate to go out there and to come back, to give presentation to the government, whichever government might be there whenever the presentation is complete. We look forward to receiving that presentation. In fact, I had the opportunity as the critic for Education to make presentation to the committee in which I did make presentation.

* (1730)

Mr. Acting Speaker, we have a number of concerns that were expressed on that particular day. The primary one is one of consistency, that we believe that whatever government is in office, if you say we have to have community-based school

divisions, then it should be community-based school divisions throughout. A good example of that would be to again look at the city of Winnipeg, and you compare the Winnipeg School Division No. 1 with Norwood, where you can see that a relatively small community in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 is in fact larger than a school division in the city of Winnipeg. So the actual numbers are something we did not take a position on, but we did make a suggestion that in fact what we want to see is that there be consistency in terms of community-based school divisions, whatever that number might be.

The other point that was made is the whole issue of financing of our education. Mr. Acting Speaker, we need to see a government that is going to move in the right direction in dealing with the education funding. This government has been moving in the wrong direction. This government, over the last six years, has continued to put a heavier onus on the individual school divisions to be able to come up with additional dollars to finance education. If anything, this government should be moving in the other direction. There needs to be more money coming from general revenues to finance education. Mr. Acting Speaker, that is a very reasonable request. [interjection] The minister says, more taxes. It does not mean more taxes. [interjection] The minister asks, where does the money come from? If you shift education taxes onto personal income taxes, that means there is going to be less reliance on property taxes. Both are taxes. Both of them are taxes. One is much more progressive than the other tax, and this government is taking the regressive tax.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Mr. Speaker, I can illustrate that by concern that has been expressed by my constituents to the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of the province. Maybe the Minister of Mines (Mr. Orchard) will listen to this. The card—and there are just under 750 of these cards that were sent to me. The card reads: Dear Mr. Filmon, I believe you and your government should reform the way in which the school portion of the property tax is being collected. Even though there may be different services in Winnipeg

School Division No. 1, it does not justify the difference in property tax I have to pay over everyone else in the city. It is a regressive tax; it is an unfair tax. This government is not making it any better—[interjection] Just under 750.

Because I did make the commitment that I would give them to the Premier, I would ask one of the Pages to come and pick up the 750 cards and put them on the Premier's table. Hopefully, they all have their name and address on the back of the card itself.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Energy and Mines): Do you want increased taxation or just applied differently? Which is it?

Mr. Lamoureux: You start off by applying it and making it more fair. Does the Minister of Mines oppose fair taxation?

Mr. Orchard: So you acknowledge, then, that there is enough money in the system. You are not wanting more money.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I am not going to take an irresponsible approach to financing of education like the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) has. The Minister of Education puts a 2.7 percent decrease on Education and does not even know in terms of where his priorities are on education. What this government has to do is it has got to establish its priorities in dealing with education, and one of those priorities has got to be to increase the level of financing of education through general revenues.

Point of Order

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I know my honourable friend would accept the question on whether he expects increased taxes to fund the education that he believes is improperly underfunded by the present government. I want to know which increased taxes my honourable friend supports.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) has five seconds remaining at which point in time if the honourable member would like to answer that question we will ask for leave of the House. Right

now, we will let the honourable member for Inkster conclude his remarks.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would be more than happy to answer that particular question. Education—how much time?

Mr. Speaker: Five seconds.

* * *

Mr. Lamoureux: Well, Mr. Speaker, I do want to conclude that we will be expecting to see Estimates coming up very shortly. We want to see this government see education at the top of the list because education is in fact a priority for this government.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to allow the honourable member for Inkster if he so likes—I guess he has indicated that he would—to answer a question? Is there leave? [agreed]

Mr. Lamoureux: I am always pleased to answer a question from the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Orchard). What I was suggesting is actually fairly clear. Number one, you have to be able to see a shift from the reliance on property tax onto general revenues. The Minister of Energy and Mines agrees with that, at least he agrees with that from his seat. He is not disputing that. The government, before it goes and makes a 2.7 percent cut, the Minister of Education has a responsibility to ensure what those ramifications are going to be. As a result of making that 2.7 percent cut, you are doing the very opposite on what the Minister of Energy and Mines just agreed with me. So that is a fact, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the throne speech which I am extremely pleased and proud to support. Representing the constituency of Arthur-Virden and the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, I am more than pleased to address this document and to put some ideas and comments on the record.

I as well, Mr. Speaker, would like to at the outset acknowledge your presence and the work which you do on behalf of this Chamber in keeping the balance and the fairness applied which is important in the democratic system. I would as well like to acknowledge the young people who are carrying

out the responsibility as Pages. I am sure it will be an experience that they will remember for a long time, hopefully not all negative experiences, but I want to acknowledge their work and efforts on behalf of what we have to do in this Assembly.

I want to as well, Mr. Speaker, acknowledge the presence of all members, all those who have returned and those new ones particularly, who have taken on the responsibility of bringing the message from their constituents and their concerns forward. One thing is to get elected the first time, the other is to carry forward and reflect properly so that they can work for re-election. Of course, that is the bigger challenge, and I understand with the constitution of the province the way it is, unless there are advocates of change and it happens in the next while, we may have to put that test to those individuals as we would all have to have the test put to us over the next several months as to who returns to represent and govern the province of Manitoba.

That is why I am pleased to speak to the throne speech, but I am also equally anxious and encouraged to hear what the other members have had to say. I think the public will be able to judge and will judge, and I hope that the media reflect accurately, as they generally do, as to what they have in fact seen and heard in the opening stages of this Legislature.

You know, I have to say honestly at the outset that for a group of people who were so anxious to get back into the House, to get back into debate and to ask questions about the economy and all of those kinds of things, Mr. Speaker, I have been sitting waiting, as the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism, as has the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) been sitting anxiously waiting, for a question dealing with jobs and the economy in the province of Manitoba. For days now we have been standing and sitting here waiting for questions. But what do we hear come from the opposition parties? Again, that political rhetoric of trying to in some way encourage the people of Manitoba to listen to what their case is. I am extremely disappointed, and I would hope that the media and the journalists

that report on what is happening here would in fact reflect what is taking place.

An Honourable Member: They will.

* (1740)

Mr. Downey: I am sure they will, but I have to say at the outset I am extremely disappointed. Again I say I wish all the members well, both in health and in their work of legislators and carrying out their responsibilities. I think it is an extremely important job. I want to as well acknowledge my colleagues, and I have had the privilege of returning to Treasury Board and sitting over the last few months working with my colleague the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) and my other colleagues, an extremely important challenge to bring before the people of Manitoba not only the economic package that we have had to deal with in the past but to bring forward a balance in spending plans, to bring forward the kinds of plans that our Minister of Finance has to bring forward.

I am looking forward, and I say this genuinely, Mr. Speaker, to April 20, when the Minister of Finance brings down the budget and again sends out another message, an extremely important message, as to what we believe as a party, what we believe as a government are the priority areas, and what we believe should be done in Manitoba to deal with economic issues and to deal with the day-to-day concerns of the people of Manitoba. So I am anxiously awaiting that particular time.

I want to as well acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of the Province of Manitoba and the individual who is not only recognized for his leadership capabilities and the way in which he has directed the economy and the affairs of the Province of Manitoba, but I want to acknowledge as well that the individual who is the Premier of the Province in Manitoba is recognized nationally as a Leader whom many people from other provinces and other jurisdictions speak very highly of and look toward for forms of national leadership which are extremely important in this country. I want to acknowledge that and thank him for the confidence that he has shown in me as Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism, to give me the

portfolio which I currently have and to allow me to have experienced the many portfolios that I have had, because I have had many portfolios.

Some may say that I just cannot hold a job, but the important thing is that I have had the opportunity to work with and experience many areas within government, to work with many people, dedicated people within the Civil Service. I say, I take my hat off to them because there are many, many dedicated people to make sure that Manitoba is a province that we are all extremely proud of, some place we want our families to thrive in, places where we want our families to be educated, and, of course, obtain all the essential services and the necessities of life and particularly enjoy a quality of life that many people in Canada are not able to enjoy, so I think we have to set some targets and some objectives.

Mr. Speaker, I want to point out as well to you that I guess one of the biggest disappointments—and I am generally a positive person, but I will get to the positive part of my speech before very long—but I am a little troubled by the lack of leadership that is shown by the other two parties. I say this genuinely because the leadership responsibilities that I think should be coming from the other two parties have not really given the people of Manitoba a real clear option as to where they would take the province of Manitoba.

I think that is extremely important. It is extremely important that they lay out before the people of Manitoba what they would do in circumstances if given the opportunity to govern this province. It is unfortunate from the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer); it is not only void, but I think it errs on the side of not taking a hold of issues and the concerns of which many people are having to deal with and not laying before us the kinds of alternatives.

The Liberal Leader, although new, I think, and I can make a case after hearing his speech yesterday—I think, quite frankly, although he is new in the job, maybe he is not quite as firm in his position in the support of people of Manitoba as he should be. Yes, he has some ideas, but I think with the test of time may well see that he would be well advised to

support the Premier which we currently have and this government. I hope he would. I would encourage him to do so, because I think there are a lot of things that could be supported by that Liberal Leader.

I do, though, want to take this occasion just to take a few minutes of my speech and speak to the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) because over the past few days I have been extremely troubled in the tactics and the efforts of the individual. I am not speaking personally, but I am speaking to the manner in which he has conducted himself, a senior individual in this Assembly, and the way in which he has conducted his carrying out of his affairs and the area which he represents.

I say this genuinely to him because I am really troubled that an individual who has spent the time that he has in this Legislature would do what he has done for political and totally crass political purposes at the expense of many, many people who depend daily on a business and an industry which is important to him, important to them and important to all of us.

I want to speak about McKenzie Seeds for a minute, Mr. Speaker, because what happened last week is inexcusable in the manner in which this man has conducted himself. I have to compliment the Brandon Sun of April 12, and I compliment them on the editorial which they have written. That, I believe, pretty accurately covers the situation, which a lot of people feel, that he has crossed the line in the way in which he has portrayed what is actually happening at McKenzie Seeds.

First of all, I think it is fair when one speaks to a subject that they should have all the facts and all the information before them, and they should reflect it accurately when they are doing that reflection. That is not the case as it reflects as it has happened in the last few days with McKenzie Seeds. As I read it, Mr. Speaker, and I just go over it as I understand it. McKenzie Seeds which, by the way, under the leadership and the administration of the former administration of the New Democratic Party, lost the province of Manitoba

substantial amounts of money. In fact, they got into such difficult situations in certain considerations when he was the minister that the former Premier Howard Pawley actually removed him from the responsibility of McKenzie Seeds because of some of the involvement that he had, and that is on his record.

I want to as well point out, Mr. Speaker, that there is no question that the member for Brandon East (Leonard Evans) has discussed in his past, in his time, the sale of McKenzie Seeds. That is not the case that we are talking about at this particular time.

We had the chairman of the board and the general manager, Mr. Ray West, who I think very highly of, as I am sure many people do, who took on the responsibility after 30-some years, 37 years, as the president—worked with that company—and he has taken on the presidency with nothing more in mind but to make McKenzie Seeds, putting it in a position of profitability and assured jobs for those people. It is a family and it is a situation to him. Plus his father worked for McKenzie for some 44 years, so we are talking people with a long-time commitment and depth, 80-some years of commitment to McKenzie Seeds. To have the member for Brandon East get into a personal disagreement is fine, but to try to discredit Ray West in the manner in which the member for Brandon East did is totally unacceptable.

* (1750)

I would ask the member for Brandon East (Leonard Evans) to seriously consider an apology to Mr. Ray West and the people of Brandon East. I think it would be appropriate if he were to really consider what he has done and apologize to Ray West.

I will give you the grounds to which I think he should do this. First of all, McKenzie is looking to expand and to strengthen themselves in Brandon—in Brandon, Mr. Speaker—and have spoken out very clearly that there are six conditions in which they would talk to someone if they are interested, and there are people interested, companies that would come and do some form of a joint venture,

strategic alliance but work with McKenzie Seeds to ensure that they would be part of the marketplace in the years 2,000 and beyond. That is what we are talking about here and assure those jobs. Six conditions of which I think the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) should have seriously considered.

But, Mr. Speaker, what the member for Brandon East did, what he did was, he said, oh, yes, he talked to an American company in 1969 in which they offered \$200,000. Well, they did not accept it. I guess they did not accept it because it was not a good offer, and he said they were only going to keep McKenzie in Brandon for two years. That is totally different than what is being talked about today, but what I find really difficult is that the member for Brandon East said that Ray West was a part of a group in the management who came to his office and wanted to sell McKenzie Seeds.

An Honourable Member: Begged them.

Mr. Downey: Begged them, yes, begged them. And that is a quote from the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) in the Brandon paper, and to the best of my knowledge, Mr. Speaker, Ray West was not at a meeting with the member for Brandon East in his office.

If the member for Brandon East cannot bring forward proof that Mr. West was at that meeting, I would expect that the member for Brandon East would do the honourable thing and apologize. I am serious. I think this would be only appropriate for the member for Brandon East to apologize to Ray West for accusing him of being in his office when he was not, 25 years ago, and I would ask him to apologize to Ray West in Brandon East.

Point of Order

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): To the point of order. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that when one talks to the media, and I am talking generally, trying to leave the make-impressions, make-comments, sometimes things get a bit twisted. I have since written a letter to the editor of the Brandon Sun which I hope will be published soon whereby I clarify that in no way did Ray West play any role of any consequence 25 years ago or since

—well, maybe today perhaps, because he is present—in the attempted sale of the company. But I will say this, Mr. West did meet with me 25 years ago, a lengthy meeting, but he played no role of any consequence whatsoever.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Brandon East did not have a point of order. Clearly it was a dispute over the facts.

The honourable minister, to continue with his remarks.

* * *

Mr. Downey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, but I do want to continue just a little bit further, because the member for Brandon East has another responsibility that I think he has got to pay attention to. He has got a member sitting in this Legislature, the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli), that is scaring the living daylight out of people who have invested in the Ayerst business, in the PMU business, young people who have got debt, staked their lives on this business, that he has many people working in Brandon East that are relying on these good jobs in Brandon East in the plant, that he is letting that individual irresponsibly going out destroying an industry that has been there for 25 to 30 years. I would hope that the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) would do that at some point in the next few days in this session, that he would stand and say that he is going to be opposed to any member or any colleague of his who would do anything that would destroy that industry and put in jeopardy the people that work in them.

That is the challenge I give the member for Brandon East. You see, because what this all boils down to is, they who are sitting on the other side come at us wanting jobs, employment creation, and we want it. We want that money to create the jobs in employment, to pay for the health care, to pay for the education and the family services. That is what those jobs do, and he knows it. But for crass political politics, almost political terrorism that we are seeing come out of the NDP Party, we are seeing them scare off some of the people that

want to generate the wealth to pay for the health care so he better stand up.

Not only him, Mr. Speaker, but I challenge the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer), it is he who has to bring this thing to a head. He has to say his caucus is either for development and economics, responsible environmental guidelines. I have one more problem with them, and I am going to put this on the record too. We have worked hard to make Manitoba a call centre for the telephone industry providing services, an electronic highway. We have worked hard to bring a new company to Brandon, and you know what? I have quotes here in the press again that the member for Brandon East is again negative, negative about Brandon.

In fact, since GWE have made their announcement, they will be expanding their business and more employees than what they initially announced, more than 110, and we are glad to have them, but the point is, and here is what the member for Brandon East said, and this has got to be put on the record. I will read this in for the record: that any private company buying into McKenzie Seeds would eventually move the company out of Brandon and closer to its market which is very much centered in Ontario and Quebec.

The truth is 50 percent of the market is in the West and 50 percent is in the East, and they are right in the middle of the market. In fact, they bought an Ontario company because it was losing money and moved it to Brandon. A private company is profit orientated and must seek out its most viable location. That is absolutely true and that is why Manitoba and Brandon is the most obvious location. It is the place to be and here is what he said to conclude: Brandon is not the most viable location.

Mr. Speaker, again, we have a member who should know better, 25 years of service. I would suggest that maybe he has run his term. Maybe it is time the people for Brandon East said, maybe this person is not really doing the things that should be for the community of Brandon. He is so negative and every time he turns around, if he and his

colleagues are driving people away and that judgment has to be made. That is why we have to bring this debate forward, that is why I want the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer) to stand up and say, is he for the member for Brandon East in keeping jobs in Ayerst or is he for his member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) who is trying to drive business out of this province for partisan politics.

The same with Louisiana Pacific. You cannot have it both ways, and he will not be able to have it both ways so he better bring that party into line or find out where they really do stand.

I have got that off my mind, but I do think the member for Brandon East better weigh very carefully what he is actually doing.

Mr. Speaker, I realize that my speech will be interrupted in two parts, so I will conclude today's comments just by saying that I am pretty positive about Manitoba and what has taken place over the past six years. We have a lot of evidence that positive things are happening, positive things that are happening on the jobs front, to create the kind of wealth that we need, to pay for the education, to pay for the health care and to pay for the essential services that this province needs.

I think that the Liberal Party, I give them credit, understand to some degree that that has to take place. I say this, I have heard them make some positive comments as it relates to the economy and some of the things that are happening. They do have to make up their minds though. They have a responsibility to put some positive initiatives forward as well, but I say this as it relates to the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism.

I take very seriously the responsibility that I have and will, in the next few minutes that I have left, put forward some of the initiatives that we have started within the department.

I think it is important as well to point out that you do not always have things turn out exactly the way you want them to, but you have to strike a general direction, you have to identify some priorities and we have. My colleague the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) very capably pointed

out, as far as the agricultural sector is concerned, some of the priorities and the things that we have to do to create jobs, create wealth with the resources we produce.

I want to spend a few minutes and will on what is happening in the mining industry. We have many, many members in the opposition parties across the way who are very interested in mining activity and what is going on.

I am surprised that I have not heard more positive comments from the Liberal Party as it relates to what is happening in the mining sector.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable minister will have 17 minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, April 13, 1994

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