



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

40 Elizabeth II

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, March 18, 1991

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to table in the House the Annual Report for 1989-90 of the Manitoba Labour Board.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the 1990 Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 2—The Amusements Amendment Act

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), that Bill 2, The Amusements Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les divertissements, be introduced, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 8—The Vital Statistics Amendment Act

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach), that Bill 8, The Vital Statistics Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les statistiques de l'état civil, be introduced, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 12—The Court of Queen's Bench Small Claims Practices Amendment Act

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), that Bill 12, The Court of Queen's Bench

Small Claims Practices Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le recouvrement des petites créances à la Cour du Banc de la Reine, be introduced, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

* (1335)

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery, where we have with us this afternoon from the Lavallée School twenty-five Grade 9 students. They are under the direction of Laura-Lee Bosma. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

ESL Programs Continuation

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, Manitobans have been proud of our heritage in terms of immigrants coming to Manitoba from all over the world, and of course Manitobans and Winnipeggers welcome them with open arms in terms of their new life and their new opportunities in this province.

Many of us attended the information meeting this Saturday at Tech-Voc, in light of the direct fears of losing English as a Second Language in the Winnipeg School Division, a program that was called by teachers and pupils and immigrant people who have been directly affected a model program in North America.

I listened for three hours at that meeting, and I could not determine whether in fact the program was being saved or it was not being saved. I could not determine whether the layoff notices that have now been issued, the 45 layoff notices, would be rescinded tomorrow night at the last school board

meeting before they go into effect or whether they would not.

My question is very direct to the Premier. In light of the fact that he is head of the Manitoba Treasury Board, in light of the fact that he is the Minister of Federal/Provincial Relations, will there be written commitments to the Winnipeg School Division, the Winnipeg School Board tomorrow for their evening meeting, so the layoffs can be rescinded and the programs could be reinstated for English as a Second Language in the province of Manitoba?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, I too was at that meeting on Saturday afternoon, and I think that our commitment was firm. We will be continuing with the ESL programming through Winnipeg School Division No. 1.

Mr. Speaker, I do know that the decision to rescind the layoff notices has to be a decision that is made by Winnipeg School Division No. 1. They went ahead and made those decisions to lay teachers off, or to give them notices of layoff, without consulting with funding agencies to determine whether the program would in fact continue.

We have given them that assurance, and it is up to them to rescind those layoff notices.

ESL Programs Federal Funding

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, this thing keeps going round and round and round. They were told that they would have no money from the province at the time they issued the layoff notices. Then there was information that they would have some money.

My question is to the Premier, who is responsible for Federal/Provincial Relations. Right now people -(interjection)- well, what we want is the program, not the rhetoric.

Mr. Speaker, Quebec now is getting, according to the people at that meeting, 33 percent of the money from the federal government for 25 percent of the population. Manitoba was characterized in that meeting by the students and teachers as bungling the negotiations of the federal government, because they only get 1.5 percent of the money for 4 percent of the population.

My question is to the Minister of Federal/Provincial Relations. Has he been in touch with the Prime Minister? Has he contacted the Prime

Minister to get the federal share? Will we be getting the federal share to match the provincial share so that the program that was in place when he formed government will stay in place after tomorrow night when the layoff notices are being dealt with?

* (1340)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Minister of Federal/Provincial Relations): Mr. Speaker, it is regrettable that the Leader of the Opposition wants to play politics with this issue. I know that he and his colleagues have been meeting with his colleagues on the board of the Winnipeg School Division encouraging them to play this kind of politics with the notices of layoff for people.

People's lives are being affected, people's livelihoods are being affected by this, and I do not think that playing politics for his own personal gain speaks very well of him on this matter.

The fact of the matter was that the Winnipeg School Board was not at any time told that they would not get any money from the provincial government. They were told by the New Democratic Party caucus in the Manitoba Legislature that they ought to make some good politics of this. That is nonsense.

We have been dealing with the federal government now for well over a year, Mr. Speaker. We had from the federal government at the time that this issue first came up over a year ago—and I might say, a year ago, when the federal government started to withdraw from the funding for this particular program, we filled in the breach and put additional funding in, because we were told by the federal government that this was only temporary until the new UIC act was passed through Senate and that there would be funds made available through that new vehicle to fill in the breach.

We said, okay, we will do it on a temporary basis. Now we have made very clear commitments. One is that we are going to continue the support for the programming till the end of June. Second is that our traditional share of the funding will be maintained in those programs. Those commitments have been made publicly by the minister responsible, by myself and by any representative of government who has spoken with those groups.

I too met with a group of a half dozen or more—I think it was nine—teachers of ESL on Saturday morning and gave them that same consistent message, Mr. Speaker. So let not -(interjection)-

well, the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) says they will not believe it, because he and his colleagues are attempting to move in and play politics with it and encourage them not to believe it and politicize an issue that is not—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Doer: Well, getting back to the substance of the issue, Mr. Speaker, there are 2,000 people right now in the English as a Second Language program in the Winnipeg School Division. There is a waiting list that is 200 new people per month.

The Premier, in the election, said quite correctly that immigration is one of the keys to the economic future of this province. We agree with him on that point. We all agree this is a model program. There are no politics involved.

The question is: You are responsible for federal/provincial negotiations as the minister responsible. Has this Premier contacted the Prime Minister so that we can ensure that the federal/provincial financing is in place so that 2,000 people who are in that program will have that program in the future and the 200 people who will be on the waiting list per month will be provided that program in the future as they have had it in the past?

* (1345)

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, there have been literally dozens of letters go back and forth between our government and the Government of Canada indicating the seriousness with which we view this particular cutback by the federal government. We have told them in meetings face to face with Manitoba representatives, with cabinet ministers, with officials, the seriousness with which we view this situation, the fact that it does indeed play an important role in our future citizenship policy in this province, that we want to have more influence so that we can increase the number. I might say, the proportion of immigrants to Canada who came to the province of Manitoba reduced in half during the decade of the '80s. From 1980 to 1990, it reduced in half.

That is a serious issue. We are losing the opportunity for human resource capital to fill skill shortages in our province. We have a very serious commitment to try and reverse that. All of it involves a great many discussions and work toward what we believe should be a new federal/provincial agreement on immigration with more provincial influence.

Under all of those circumstances, we are not doing it to play politics. We resent, quite frankly, the politicization of the issue by the New Democratic Party, trying to make some cheap politics, trying to encourage people not to accept the word of the minister, not to accept the word of the Premier or the head of Treasury Board or the government but trying to say to them, carry this on because it is good politics for the New Democratic Party. Mr. Speaker, it is not good for the immigrants who need this service. They need consistent support. They need sincere support. They do not need cheap politics from the NDP.

Universities Funding

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the First Minister.

Cutbacks in federal funding to universities started long before the present incumbent was Premier. Yet in 1988 this Premier promised, and I quote: that funding would stay at least equal the rate of inflation, Mr. Premier—Mr. Speaker. April 2, 1988, this Premier—is there any wonder that some immigrants and other groups doubt the word of this government?

Why, Sir, have you broken your promise?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I am sure that when the member is here long enough he will learn that the question is to be directed to the Chair, not of course to me.

Mr. Speaker, in 1988, when we were running for election, we promised that. For the two years that we have struck budgets with funding to the universities of this province, we have indeed provided them with funding level increases equal to or better than inflation.

Universities Funding

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

The results of provincial offloading will see the university budget increase by at least 6 percent this year when inflation is at 6 percent. This potential 12 percent cutback will affect the university.

What will this government do to prevent the erosion of education and the offloading of costs onto the university?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, as the member for Kildonan knows, there has been no announcement made with regard to funding of universities for this fiscal year. Indeed, what the universities are doing at the present time is going through their budgets to ensure that in light of the economic circumstances of the province they do the responsible thing and they ensure that they run an effective and efficient operation.

When the announcement on funding is made I am sure that the member will have an opportunity during the Estimates process to question us on why we made the kind of decision that we did, but indeed that decision has not been made yet.

Tuition Fee Increases

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): My question is to the same minister.

Will the GFT now being faced by public school divisions be placed on the backs of students in the form of higher tuition fees this year?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education of Training): Mr. Speaker, I have to indicate that the universities are the ones who are responsible for setting tuition fees. That has always been the case.

Traditionally, Manitoba has been about third lowest in terms of the tuition fees paid by students in support of education. That responsibility will remain with the universities, and it will be the universities who will set the tuition fees for students for the current year.

ESL Programs Funding Guarantee

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in mid March, Winnipeg School Division No. 1 was told that they might very well have to close adult English Second Language classes for nine days in order to meet their budgetary requirements.

The Winnipeg School Division No. 1 decided that they would absorb the \$70,000 cost, which they believed to have been promised to them by the Province of Manitoba but was not met. It is for this reason that they want a guarantee in writing from the minister with respect to the funding to June of 1991.

Can the minister tell the House today if they will in fact get that guarantee in writing prior to the meeting tomorrow evening so that they can rescind

the layoff notices which are required by the law of this province?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, I think that the Leader of the Opposition on Saturday afternoon was so busy shaking her finger that she was not listening to the answers that were given.

The fact of the matter is that I indicated quite clearly that we were working very closely to get an answer to Winnipeg School Division No. 1 by tomorrow, the day that they are having their board meeting. We are still continuing along that path, and those answers will be provided.

* (1350)

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, when the government speaks of traditional share of funding, does that mean that they will fund English as a Second Language for the full requirement to June of '91 or only their 50 percent share?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, we have been very clear. We have indicated that the program will continue in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 until the end of June, and we will be providing funding for the rest of the fiscal year, for the rest of the school year. Those answers will be given to Winnipeg School Division No. 1 so that they can make the decisions on what numbers of staff they need to deliver the program.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, the program cannot continue for 2,000 students taught by 45 teachers if the funding is not adequate until June of 1991.

Is the minister prepared to tell the House today if they are going to continue the pattern which they exercised in the last few months of the past fiscal year, the one that will end March 31, and fund all the requirements needed by Winnipeg School Division No. 1 until June 30, 1991?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, I have made myself very clear. Obviously the Leader of the Liberal Opposition does not choose to listen to the answer, that we will provide adequate funding to Winnipeg School Division School No. 1 to continue the program.

Churchill Northern Studies Centre Funding

Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupert's Land): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education.

Last week I asked a question regarding Churchill's Northern Studies Centre. I asked the minister whether he was going to re-fund the Churchill Studies Centre and he told me to get my facts straight. His answer was somewhat confusing. I was just wondering whether he issued the statement or has made the commitment already, because I was in Churchill this weekend and they have not received any information regarding the funding of the Churchill Studies Centre.

I wonder if the minister would clarify his statement.

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, if the member recalls, he asked whether or not we would be forwarding the \$200,000 to the Churchill Studies Centre that we traditionally do. We never funded them at \$200,000 per year.

I have to indicate to you that usually that funding announcement comes with the release of the budget and indeed that decision will then be made public. That is the way it has traditionally been done. The budget is not yet before the House, and indeed when that announcement is ready we will be making it at that time.

Mr. Harper: To the same minister, will he be willing to commit the ongoing funding for the Churchill Studies Centre? Also I would ask him whether the \$65,000 that was withheld from the Churchill Northern Studies Centre will be provided to the centre this year?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, I know the member was in the House last year and could have asked that question during Estimates, but indeed the funding to the Churchill Studies Centre was \$100,000 last year, so I do not know what \$65,000 he is speaking about.

With regard to the funding for this year, I indicated in my first response that would be made known when the budget is brought down in the House.

* (1355)

Decentralization Churchill, Manitoba

Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupert's Land): My final question would be to the Minister of Rural Development.

Will this government, under the decentralization program, provide more jobs to the town of Churchill?

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, unlike the previous

administration, this government has continuously worked aggressively to support the town of Churchill, the shipping of grain through that port and all the vital things that are needed to make any community viable, and we will continue to do that.

Health Care Facilities Funding

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): The Conservative funding policy in the area of health care is having major consequences throughout our health care system. Wards are in the process of closing. Nurses are being told that they are not exempt from layoffs. Other emergency wards are in the works in terms of potential closure. The list goes on and on.

I would like to know from the Minister of Health exactly what is the breakdown for the \$19 million that urban hospitals have been asked to shave from their budgets. Could he give us a hospital-by-hospital breakdown, and would he table the letter that went from MHSC to—

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

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend, the official opposition Health critic, really does not help any of those Manitobans who wish to access our health care system with the kind of fearmongering in her questioning that she has been wont to do over the last three days.

The \$19 million that is less than requested by the major Winnipeg hospitals and Brandon General Hospital is the normal budget process by which requests are made to the commission for funding levels. A funding level is achieved which is always less than requested by those respective institutions, including when my honourable friend sat in cabinet making those kinds of decisions.

Although the memory fails one when one moves from government and forgets conveniently what the process was and moves to the alarmism of opposition, I look forward to my honourable friend bringing meaningful questions to the Estimates debate on the expenditure of funds for health care in the province of Manitoba. I look forward to her suggestions on how her party would approach these very issues.

Ward Closures

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, if this was a rational planned budgetary process we would not see the kind of panic that is taking place in our hospital system, with wards being closed, with nurses told that they may have to be laid off, with emergency wards slated for closure.

I would like to ask the minister if he could give us a precise breakdown on a hospital-by-hospital basis of wards that are being closed right now or slated to be closed, beds that are being closed as a result of this government's funding guidelines.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that we have gotten quite a bargain in my honourable friend's MLA salary, because she now apparently is in a position to make management decisions for all eight hospitals in Manitoba, because she is aware of nurses who may be laid off, of wards that may be closed. Those are issues that the managers of the hospitals have never brought to my attention.

She is quite a bargain at \$43,000, doing all of this management for eight hospitals in the province of Manitoba.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: We do not have any bargain, Mr. Speaker, and our Minister of Health cannot give us the slightest indication of what is happening.

Point of Order

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I ask you to bring to the attention again of the member that a postamble is not allowed under our rules and that she has to draw her final supplementary in one clearly put question.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, you might also bring to the attention of the Minister of Health that answers to questions should not lead to debate. I believe that is why our Health critic was responding to some of the rather debatable comments made by the Minister of Health.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have in the past indicated to honourable members that these postambles have absolutely no place in this Chamber whatsoever, but I would also on the same point of order admonish the fact that I would like to remind the honourable members that answers to questions should be as brief as possible, should

deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate.

Nursing Layoff Protection

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): My final question is: When the Minister of Health sent out this directive to urban hospitals asking them to shave \$19 million off their budget, did he also send some guidelines and directions in terms of what areas might be cut and what areas should not be touched, and did he tell the hospitals that layoffs, when it comes to nurses, are not acceptable, and did he ensure that he is living up to the spirit of the contract recently arrived at with the nurses—

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

*(1400)

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, again my honourable friend likes to put scenarios on the record which she does not have knowledge of, which fits fearmongering rather than a reasonable approach to the planning of health care delivery amongst the major Winnipeg hospitals and Brandon General Hospital.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell my honourable friend that Manitobans are requesting from their elected officials at least some consistency. That consistency does not come from the New Democratic Party today, wherein they advocate higher salaries for nurses, while they give them a zero percent raise in previous negotiations, while they advocate that we ought to consult with hospitals when their record was a unilateral closing of 120-plus beds without consultation.

Anesthetist Shortage Government Initiatives

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, my question is again for the Minister of Health.

Since June 8, 1989, we have been warning this Minister of Health of the critical shortage of anesthetists in the province of Manitoba. The Health Sciences Centre must cancel this month alone 150 surgeries and next month 210 surgeries. The problem is going to get worse.

Can the minister tell this House why he waited for one and a half years to address this problem when he was well aware and said on June 8, 1989, that he knows the problem and he will tackle it?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate my honourable friend's interest in this issue. That is why we have been working with the anesthesiologist group from the Health Sciences Centre, which provides services to Seven Oaks Hospital. That is why the commission has been working with the Misericordia Hospital anesthesiology group that provides services to Concordia Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, let my honourable friend not believe that government and government alone is the sole solver of this problem. The Manitoba Medical Association has received funding from governments over the past 20 years which they have divested themselves amongst various professional groups. In that process, anesthesiology has been forsaken by the Manitoba Medical Association over a number of contract settlements.

Last year when we provided focused fee schedule increases in the 3 percent settlement, we urged the MMA to consider an increase to the anesthesiologists to help solve this problem. That advice was not taken because they wanted to use the issue to lever more money out of government, not refocus the \$300 million that they currently spend.

Government Study

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, the ultimate responsibility for health care is with the Minister of Health. The Minister of Health has the Health Advisory Network, which is costing \$500,000 per year.

Can the minister tell this House why he has to hire another consultant to study this problem which has been outlined by his department, by himself a number of times and also the MMA, the college and all the hospitals?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, surely my honourable friend does not want to say that the organization responsible for the distribution of increased taxpayer money to pay for physician services does not have a role in resolving the fee schedule disparity amongst the anesthesiologists of the province of Manitoba. Surely my honourable friend must recognize that there is a role to be taken by the MMA as the bargaining agent on behalf of those physicians.

As part of the agreement that we had last year with the MMA is two separate studies, jointly funded

by the MMA and the Manitoba Health Services Commission.

The first of those studies is to investigate the fee schedule as paid by the Province of Manitoba and, I would suggest, that fee schedule study might lead to a greater solution of the problem we currently face with anesthesiology than any other single initiative of government. We want to get on with that study, and we are waiting patiently to do so.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, while the minister is waiting very patiently, people are waiting for surgeries. Every month the waiting period is increasing.

Can the minister tell this House how much this consultant is going to cost the taxpayers of Manitoba?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I do not have that figure at the tip of my tongue, but surely my honourable friend would want that study to be undertaken. We have wanted to undertake this study for almost a year and a half now and, because of difficulties with the process that my honourable friend is fully and completely aware of, we want to get this fee schedule study under way, because it has significant impact on the way that Manitoba taxpayers are served by \$300 million of funding, not an insignificant amount of money amongst the 2,000 physicians whom we have in the province of Manitoba.

Manitoba Telephone System Fibre Optics Contracts

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Telephone System.

This week, some 11 contracts for the installation of fibre optics totalling in excess of 4,000 kilometres will be decided. As the minister is aware, these contracts will pump several million dollars into the economy of rural Manitoba.

Is the minister aware that last year a Saskatchewan firm was awarded a contract which virtually imported all of its staff from Saskatchewan and paid wages substantially below the Manitoba heavy construction minimum wage?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister responsible for the administration of The Manitoba Telephone Act): Mr. Speaker, when the Manitoba Telephone System lets contracts, it receives all bidders and analyzes

the contracts with the idea of trying to save the taxpayers of Manitoba, the users of telephone service, money in the awarding of those contracts.

Mr. Dewar: Will this minister guarantee today, particularly to rural Manitobans, that he will ensure that the winning bid of each of these contracts upholds all heavy construction minimum wages as a condition of the contracts?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, the government is in charge of policy; the Manitoba Telephone System is in charge of carrying out the policy of delivering telephone service to the province of Manitoba. I will guarantee to the member that I will discuss this issue with them and be sure they are following the laws of the Province of Manitoba.

Community Calling Program Review Status

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Can the minister reveal today the status of the review of the Community Calling Program?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister responsible for the administration of The Manitoba Telephone Act): Last November the Manitoba Telephone System undertook a review and is presently completing that review. An announcement will be forthcoming.

Housing Programs Funding

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, as the recession deepens and more and more people are thrown out of work, the need for decent affordable housing increases. As the Core Area Initiative winds down, it is more important than ever that Manitoba Housing take the initiative in meeting the need for decent, affordable housing.

Therefore, what new initiatives, if any, is the Minister of Housing planning to replace Core Area Initiative housing programs when they are phased out?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Housing): Mr. Speaker, we are considering at the present time in the course of budget deliberations the ability of the province to carry out programs of all different types.

As the member for Burrows well knows and has been explained time and time again by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and others, the province has limited abilities to fund new programs, extremely

limited abilities. The revenue growth in the Province of Manitoba is zero.

If we are going to be fiscally responsible in terms of the operation of the government, then we have to consider all programs in the context of that revenue nongrowth.

Co-op Housing Program Unit Allocation

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Housing tell the House whether or not he has made strong representation to the federal Minister of Housing on the need to increase the unit allocation for the Co-op Housing Program, since allocating only 1,700 units nationally is totally inadequate and does not meet the needs of Manitobans?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Housing): Mr. Speaker, I have had one preliminary conversation with the federal Minister of Housing since having assumed the responsibilities of the Housing portfolio for the Province of Manitoba.

Once the new minister is appointed, I will have another discussion with him.

* (1410)

Co-op HomeStart Program Funding

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Housing assure working Manitobans in need of affordable housing that the Co-op HomeStart program, an excellent renovation co-op program, which has had no new units built in the last 12 months, will get a new unit allocation in '91-92 and, if so, how many units, so that people in need of affordable housing can be assured that Co-op HomeStart will not be a victim of the budget?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Housing): As I indicated, Mr. Speaker, in my first answer, all of the programs that are presently in place and those under consideration are being dealt with in the budget process. Once those decisions are taken, they will be announced publicly.

Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting Co. Ltd. Modernization

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Acting Minister of Energy, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism.

On February 18, the people of Flin Flon learned from a Department of Health document that in fact the sulfur dioxide levels in Flin Flon, even though they may meet the requirements of the Department of Environment maximum hourly limits, are in fact a danger to health for time periods in excess of five minutes when exposure is associated with a respiratory problem or with the elderly.

Mr. Speaker, my question is either to the Minister of Energy (Mr. Neufeld) or the Acting Minister of Energy, and it is to the question of the negotiations between the province, the federal government and Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting, which would alleviate some of this problem.

Can the minister indicate whether the province has signed an agreement with HBM&S and the federal government so that the modernization in Flin Flon will take place?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Acting Minister of Energy and Mines): Mr. Speaker, to ensure that appropriate and factual information is provided to the member, I will take it as notice on behalf of the Minister of Energy.

Sulfur Dioxide Guidelines

Mr. Jerry Storle (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Environment, the Minister of Environment's department is preparing new guidelines for Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting to ensure that the people of Flin Flon are made aware of excess levels of sulfur dioxide in a more timely fashion.

Can the Minister of Environment tell us today whether the department has contacted yet the steelworkers, who have a vital interest in this question?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of contacts made throughout the community, including public meetings, and I would assume that contact has been made directly as well, but I will certainly ascertain that.

Mr. Storle: Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that contact has not been made and that the draft guidelines are in preparation.

My question is to the Minister of Environment. Will the Minister of Environment ensure that all interested groups in Flin Flon who have a health interest in this question are contacted and their views solicited so that the new guidelines will in

effect protect people from sulfur dioxide and other fugitive gases coming from the plant in Flin Flon?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, I have absolutely no problem with that, and we intend to do everything we can to make sure that we keep that mill operating in as safe a manner as possible for all of the residents of the community.

Manitoba Telephone System Fuel Oil Spill

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Environment as well.

In August of 1982, over eight years ago, the Department of Environment learned of a 4,000 gallon diesel fuel oil spill at Chesnaye, an MTS site in northern Manitoba near Churchill. Despite improvement orders for this site and 10 others given to MTS over seven years ago, nothing was done. The cleanup was not completed until September of last year. The NDP cabinet was aware of this throughout. This is just one more example, unfortunately, of the incredible hypocrisy of the NDP government on environmental issues.

My question for the Minister is: Can this minister indicate why his department, when it learned in August of 1988 of MTS' total disregard for these improvement orders for some seven years, took a further 14 months to finally get the job done?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, the member has pointed out what has obviously been happening is that we have had governments that have been saying one thing and doing something else, but the fact is that we have moved to have that matter cleaned up. Certainly the type of delay that was involved was not acceptable.

Fuel Oil Spill - Prosecution

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, for the same minister, can this minister indicate why MTS was not prosecuted for this flaunting of the law?

I want to table in that regard a memo dated November 29, 1988, from Mr. Conklin, a Crown attorney, asking for further details in furtherance of a prosecution.

Can the minister indicate what in fact the response was to that memo, why no prosecution was given and how this government expects the private industry to toe the line when MTS—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

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

Hon. Glen Cummlings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, very often in the cleanup of these types of spills, one of the most important things that we can accomplish is in fact getting the cleanup done. I am aware of the issue, but I am not aware of the memo that the member references. I will answer the question when I have investigated it.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, finally, for the same minister, I appreciate that he will investigate why no prosecution was laid.

I want to assist him further by tabling an activity report done by Mr. Mazerolle, Environment Officer, dated September 26, 1988, and ask him again if he will seriously consider prosecuting, given that a senior MTS official said in August of 1988, when asked why they were not complied with, I guess we lied. If that is not a breach of our environmental laws, what is?

Mr. Cummlings: Mr. Speaker, I now have the dust off my briefing notes. One of the reasons that there was some problem with responding to the request for prosecution was the wording within the regulation, which we have now rectified so that we will not be faced with that complication again. It is also my understanding that the MTS employee who made that rather flippant remark has been subject to disciplinary action.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Committee Changes

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I move, seconded by the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: Osborne (Mr. Alcock) for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr), St. James (Mr. Edwards) for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry).

I also move, seconded by the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development be amended as follows: The Maples (Mr. Cheema) for Osborne (Mr. Alcock).

Mr. Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Can I have leave to make committee changes?

Mr. Speaker: Committee changes?

Mr. Hickes: I move, seconded by the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) for Concordia (Mr. Doer), Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans) for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes).

Mr. Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

Mr. Hickes: I also move, seconded by the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development be amended as follows: Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), and Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin).

Mr. Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), for an address to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor in answer to his speech at the opening of the session, and the proposed amendment of the honourable Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer), standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), who has 34 minutes remaining.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I simply want to assure you that I enjoyed the six brief minutes I had in starting the contribution to this Throne Speech Debate from the ministry of Health, particularly around the issue of the role that my honourable friend, the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), as Leader of the New Democratic Party can and ought to play in this House in showing a leadership role for his -(interjection)- well, I have called it his caucus collection, but he takes offence at that and I shall not use that terminology.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is appropriate now to all very seriously reflect on the mood of Canadians, on the mood of Manitobans, and what they are demanding. I think this is a demand that has been coming to the forefront over the last eight to 10 months, but particularly in the new year, the role they are demanding of elected officials at municipal, provincial, in this Chamber and the federal level of elected service to the people of Manitoba.

* (1420)

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you that Canadians and Manitobans are not distinguishing between members of government and members of opposition parties in this because Canadians, Manitobans, quite frankly are fed up with the rhetoric, the quick-fix solutions that come from time to time, the bantering back and forth that happens in this Chamber and in the federal Parliament, and indeed in the Council Chamber of the City of Winnipeg and throughout Council Chambers in the Province of Manitoba.

What they are asking for is not simply an identification of what is wrong with the system or what a government of the day may or may not be doing right or wrong. They are asking and they are crying out for solutions to problems, problems that in many ways are not unique, for instance, to this province or to any other province across Canada, and indeed are not particularly unique to the western world.

We have ourselves in this nation a series of challenges that face all of us in terms of identifying what our nation is and what it will mean to its individual citizens. That is going to involve all of us as elected people in creating the solutions to meet the challenges not only from a constitutional standpoint and its process of inclusion of aboriginal peoples and newcomers to this nation and to this province, but also, Mr. Speaker, clearly and unequivocally an obligation on all of us as elected members to come to grips with the economic circumstances that this country currently faces.

Let me deal just briefly in this limited time I have for the throne speech to point out to Manitobans and to all my honourable friends in this Chamber that this nation of Canada will break the \$400 billion deficit number in this current calendar year. For a nation, that in 1967 in celebrating our 100th anniversary, to come to a juncture in just 23 or 24 short years to that kind of indebtedness to the world without building the nation and without building the underpinning strengths in education and infrastructure in pursuit of industrial development in the knowledge-based industries that Japan and other countries have taken on, is disgraceful.

In the province of Manitoba, for the 20-year period since the start of the '70s and into the '80s, we amassed the majority of our approximately \$11 billion deficit. You know, with the exception of Long Spruce and Limestone, we do not have the assets in place to show the purpose of that expenditure.

Contrast that just for a small moment with the pre-1970s achievement at our 100th anniversary in this province, of what a government did in the early teens of this century to build this legislative building at a cost of, I guess, approaching \$10 million, with the vision that this beautiful edifice has as a hallmark for investment in the future by Manitobans of the past, feature the visionary approach of the forefathers of this city when they built an aqueduct from Shoal Lake to the city of Winnipeg complete with a railroad to serve the water needs of this city today. It was built at a time when the population was less than 200,000 people. Now those are investments in the future that were essentially given to us in 1970 debt-free for our continued and further use.

In 1970 our highway infrastructure was very vibrant. We had the flood protection of the Winnipeg floodway. We had the flood protection of the Shellmouth Dam and the diversion into Lake Manitoba from the Assiniboine River at Portage. All of those were there at—if any debt load on future generations, very, very modest.

Since that time, we have provided virtually no flood protection with the exception of flood protection for the town of Carman in the last three years. We have provided no major new sourcing of water for any community. We have provided for only catch-up maintenance in our infrastructure as it applies to roads and sewer and water. Yet we have amassed an enormous amount of debt that we are saddling the people of Manitoba with, and the interest costs approaching \$600 billion a year.

Now that was easy decision making in the early '70s and particularly—and I make no bones about it, I fault the Pawley administration for very, very, very unwise decision making in their term of government, because they drove the interest costs through increased deficit from an \$80 million figure to approaching \$600 million this year.

Now those are challenges that all taxpayers are starting to realize, and they are realizing it because, you know, we fight with the federal government, all political parties across Canada fight with the federal government, and say the federal government must give us more money, because we cannot stand the offloading of responsibilities to the provincial government. That is right; that is a legitimate argument that all 10 provinces and two territorial governments can rightfully make.

Our municipalities within the province of Manitoba can rightfully make the same argument against us, but do you know what really started Manitobans thinking about the impact of deficit financing and out-of-control spending by government—and with government I use government generically, be it municipal, provincial or federal? What really brought it home was last fall when the taxpayers of this city were hit with massive increases in their tax bill, and all of a sudden, this government that was off over there doing programs and services and things for people over there, and not directly attached to me, come home to rest, as having meaning, that all of a sudden free health care, free highway construction, free environmental protection services were costing money because all of a sudden the tax bill came in on property paid by the individual.

I am going to say something right now that goes against our arguments, and I say it only for food for thought, because all of us can make the legitimate argument that we ought not to offload on lower levels of government. Let me tell you, there is one hidden advantage to that process, and that is that it is the individual taxpayer, the property owner, who sees it being hit once in a year with one major impact, rather than the trickle takeaway from most paychecks from federal and provincial tax deductions which simply says you take home less pay every two weeks. It has brought the issue home when once a year, once in the calendar year, your tax bill for your home, or your farm, or your business comes in you recognize what governments cost you.

Mr. Speaker, that process of recognition was reasonable. What I am saying to you, and to my honourable friends in this House, is that now the taxpayers are aware of what we do for them, and some are beginning to say, in growing numbers of voices, what governments do to them, not for them. They are saying enough is enough of the rhetorical criticism of government action.

If you do not like what government is doing, then suggest an alternative, and therein lies the whole essence of this session of the Legislature. I genuinely look forward to the debate in the Department of Health, because we do not have any easy quick-fix solutions in the ministry of Health. We have tried to spend our way to better health over the last 20 years in this province and in this nation, and our health status has improved in certain degrees, but not to the degree it ought to have improved with the kind of level of spending that we have focused

on health care. We have to approach it from a system reform approach, not from the individual day-to-day issues that my honourable friend, particularly the official opposition critic, will bring forward.

* (1430)

My honourable friend from the second opposition, the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema), is a little more consistent and a little more focused in his suggestions and his observations of the health care system, and I appreciate that.

The caution I want to provide to all members of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition is that as we approach this session there is no question that there are going to be groups that have already visited the Legislature that are going to say, government's action is wrong and inappropriate.

It is going to be so very, very easy for members of the opposition to say, we agree with you that this government is doing the wrong thing, but you have to then say to them, what would you do to resolve the problem if you were government? If the roles were reversed tomorrow, would you provide us in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 with more money, and if you would provide us with more money, how much more money? Where would you get the increased funds from? Would you take it from other departments within government? Would you raise taxes, and if you would raise taxes, which taxes?

If you would drive the deficit up higher, then please tell us that as well, because Manitobans will not accept the simple siding with every group that comes here with a focus on an issue of the day saying: Government is wrong; we need more. Manitobans will not accept the simple answer from opposition parties, yes, you can have more, without saying, from whence that more comes.

The other caution—and this does not apply to my honourable friends in the Liberal Party. This applies to my honourable friends in the New Democratic Party. The other thing that Manitobans will demand from members of government, members from opposition, their elected members in this Chamber, is consistency. If you are going to say, as my honourable friend, the Leader of the Opposition Party (Mr. Doer), the member for Concordia said to Manitoba nurses, that yes, we believe you should have more money—that was a very popular thing to say when they were demanding a 30 percent increase at the start of negotiations in one year, a

very popular thing to say—you have to then say, from whence would you get that money?

Would you borrow it? Would you tax it? Would you reallocate it from other departments or from within the ministry of Health. Identify the source. Do not simply say that yes, we agree you should get more money.

The second point of consistency that I focus at my honourable friend, the Leader of the Opposition party, the member for Concordia, is that you have to do today what you did in the past. You have to be consistent, because if you look at the salary increases that were given to the nurses of Manitoba under two successive three-year contracts by the member for Concordia and his cohorts in the Pawley government, you will find a zero percent increase for a three-month period of time, absolutely no salary increase, then a 12-month period of time with a 2 percent increase.

Here my honourable friend, the member for Concordia, stands up and says, yes, they should get more. Yet, when he had the obligation, the ability, the government mandate and financial capacity as a Treasury Board member to give them more, they gave them less and significantly less. The nurses across Manitoba recognize that, and they recognize that the member for Concordia is simply a political opportunist when he agrees with them today when he is in opposition, that they need more money, and he did not deliver that more money when he had the chance.

In fact, all during the days of the session in December, the most commonly tossed at me taunt from the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), heard by my honourable friends in the Liberal opposition who were close by, was the member for Concordia saying we settled for 3 percent with the nurses, what are you going to do? Three percent was good when he was in opposition or when he was a government Treasury bench member. He bragged to me about the 3 percent settlement, and then when we have 20 percent on the table over three years, he says, well, gee, that is not quite enough. That is the kind of political opportunism and inconsistency that will leave him as Leader of the Opposition if he survives in that role as a New Democratic Party Leader.

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

I want to say to my honourable friends that in the Liberal Party, they do not have recent government

record at which we can make those kinds of comparisons to, and in that you are fortunate. But where you are unfortunate in that we have very, very significant numbers of quotations from your Leader which are inconsistent depending on whether the statement on decentralization was made in The Pas, Manitoba, where she said, where she premiated there would be civil servants out there tomorrow; where she said in Brandon, it is not that we do not like what is happening, it is just the method by which it is happening, and we need to have more consultation; to the statement to those same civil servants in front of this Legislature when there was a demonstration saying, no, I would not make anybody move. Three communities—The Pas, Brandon and Winnipeg—three different positions, incredible inconsistency from the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs).

That will not wash, and I suggest to you that was the kind of verbal gymnastics—thank you—that caused my honourable friend to go from 21 seats and the much-daunted first-time-woman Premier in the Province of Manitoba to the Leader of a scant seven in opposition.

When my honourable friends talk about health care, talk about other government programs, Manitobans are watching to see whether there is consistency with what you have said in the past. They are also going to demand the answers from you that if you believe more is the solution, rather than better, or spend smarter like my honourable friend, the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema), indicated to us in his address on Friday of last week, when you fall outside of that, taxpayers are going to say, are you going to hit my taxes? Are you going to borrow the future away from my children or grandchildren, or are you going to take it from some other department in government, and if so, which one?

There are no simple more-money solutions in this province. If my honourable friends think that this is a unique situation to Manitoba, contemplate for a minute the Newfoundland budget that was just brought down. The Newfoundland budget is not a budget wherein a group of elected MLAs, opposition and government, or government alone around the cabinet table have control of the spending destiny of the Province of Newfoundland. No, it is not. It is forced upon them because they can only borrow \$50 million or thereabouts to undertake meeting their budgetary and their funding and their program

requirements for this fiscal year. That is not the cabinet deciding on behalf of the people of Newfoundland what the programs ought to be; that is someone from outside, outside of the country making those kinds of decisions.

In Port aux Basques, I listened to CBC Radio this morning. They did a short interview on Port aux Basques, where Port aux Basques is being devastated. They have lost ferry service, fisheries, they have lost a whole series of jobs in Port aux Basques, and this budget that has recently been brought down, because of the financial constraints imposed upon the health care system, they are losing some 30 jobs in the Port aux Basques hospital, and according to the CBC report, it will be reduced to a long-term chronic care facility, not a hospital. That is not the kind of decision that any elected person in Newfoundland wanted to make, be they opposition Conservatives or the governing Liberals in Newfoundland. They do not want to make them.

Just as we have tried to caution, that is the whole purpose why we have to get control of our finances in the Province of Manitoba, or someone else imposes those kinds of decisions on you from outside the province of Manitoba. You know, when you hear about the Port aux Basques fishermen and the early closure of the inshore fishery and its impact on them, their lifestyle and the employment in their fish processing plants, how devastating it is. I simply want to tell my honourable friends in the opposition parties, many of whom are from within the city of Winnipeg, simply drive beyond the Perimeter Highway and talk to rural Manitoba and the agricultural community, and you will see the same kind of despair in the agricultural community because of our inability to sell at a profit our agricultural products in the main. There are some profitable areas in agriculture, yes, but not nearly enough. Our grains market is devastated right now.

* (1440)

I want to tell my honourable friends that represents a significant and tremendous challenge. You see, when we have approached the funding of different public sector employees, and we have indicated that, you know, we have so many dollars, a 3 percent global increase in salaries to those Civil Service unions that are coming to the bargaining table in this next fiscal year, and we say we have so many dollars and we said nurses will be a priority and others therefore must take less.

I want to tell you that the zero percent, for instance, and I will give you an anecdotal incident. The nurses were on the picket line for an increase of approximately 20 percent over three years, and at the same time the International Union of Operating Engineers was walking the same picket lines at some of the same hospitals with an offer of 2 percent over two years, a significant difference, Madam Deputy Speaker. It was a difference that a caller to one of the talkback shows, who happened to be an operating engineer, asked me how can I justify offering zero percent to him in this year when all he was asking for was just the cost of living, a 4.5 percent increase would be fine for them.

I asked him—we were off the air—and I asked the individual, what is it that you currently are making? It is not on the air, it will not be broadcast. He indicated to me it was just under \$40,000. I was taken aback a little bit and I had to remind him that all around him in the private sector, the private sector from whence the taxes come to pay that \$40,000 salary, there are layoffs because they can no longer afford to pay all of the taxes they are called upon to pay because their margins are reduced because of the recession and the slump in the national economy. Here we have private sector workers being laid off while public sector workers are on strike, not just to keep their jobs but to keep their jobs plus 4.5 percent increase.

I reminded the gentleman who called that maybe he should not be quite so narrowed in his focus and to look around him and talk to some of his neighbours who work for the private sector and ask whether in the last number of years they had received an increase in their salaries every year, whether their jobs were guaranteed and had a permanency there, because the real world across Canada has massive layoffs occurring in the private sector.

It is the private sector that is providing the tax revenues to fund the public sector, and the taxpayers are consistently now starting to say, look, governments of all levels—municipal, provincial, and federal—get your act together. We cannot afford to pay more while we are on the unemployment lines while public servants are asking for job security and increases in salary. It will not wash with the taxpayers anymore.

Last week, I had the opportunity to talk to an individual from Ontario. He was in a business that supplied contracted services to both major

government institutions and manufacturing firms in southern Ontario. I do not know whether I misheard him or whether this is actually happening, but he is indicating that he is losing a contract a day. Surely, it must be a contract a week, but even if it is a contract a week, because of plant closures in the private sector in southern Ontario, because of the layoffs there, he is losing his food service contracts with them. Now, he is suffering, but think of the amount of employment that is being lost in southern Ontario right now.

Meanwhile, we have the public service across Canada saying, well, we will not participate in this. We still want to have our jobs, and we want a raise, when their fellow workers in the private sector who pay those kinds of salaries in the public sector are being laid off and are having to substantially curtail their standard of living. The same has been happening for a number of years in the agricultural community.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to close by saying to my honourable friends that agriculture is an incredible challenge for all of us in this House. It is a challenge that I hope we meet over this next several years, because it seems to me a strange phenomenon that, as an agricultural producer, one can go out with, as was explained to Keith Spicer on the weekend when he visited my community of Miami. A woman indicated that on their farm they plant 60 pounds of beans in the spring, and in the fall with any kind of luck from God and the weather they will harvest 1,200 pounds. That is creation of new wealth to feed a hungry world. Yet they often do not have the kind of returns that will allow them to continue creating that new wealth of food for the people of this world.

Now, it seems to me in Manitoba that we have certainly one of the most progressive agricultural industries in the world. Our researchers in Manitoba have allowed us in Manitoba to produce some 60-plus different crop varieties in the province of Manitoba. Contrast that with Saskatchewan, contrast that with Alberta, and no one comes close.

The second thing that I want to remind my honourable friends is that amongst those 60 crop varieties, many of them are, without question, the best in the world, the best quality in the world given to us by research and genetic improvement efforts in Manitoba agriculture over literally decades. Our meat industries, the pork, the beef industries provide to the world the best pork and beef that the world

can buy. Now, I want to make people think about bringing this full circle. We have the best in the world. There are none who have crops or varieties or meat products that are better anywhere in the world, and we have the added advantage of producing them in a pollution-free environment.

Now surely that must put us into an opportunity-to-develop niche in specialty markets to feed the European Economic Community, the growing food needs of the Pacific Rim for high-quality, best-in-the-world food commodities produced in a pollution-free environment, but we have tended, over the past number of years, to focus our agricultural extension efforts in how to produce more, and we have succeeded enormously. Now, I believe, is the time to change the thrust in agriculture, tie it to our industrial development strategy and to now market what is the best in the world, grown in a pollution-free environment, to a market that is waiting for us.

I close with two observations. If any of you watch from time to time American cable television that comes in, you will notice that down there they are very much into the health food issue, and you will hear, on American television, advertisements about this cooking oil being the healthiest or that cooking oil being the healthiest. Everybody has the healthiest cooking oil, as they market it, with the exception of one. It is Proctor & Gamble's cooking oil marketed under the Puritan food label, and it received the health food oil award of the United States three years ago. It is Manitoba-grown canola, and it is the best in the world.

We developed that in Manitoba through the research efforts of Dr. Baldur Stefansson at the University of Manitoba in co-operation with Dr. Downey in Saskatoon. We have taken canola as the Cinderella crop of western Canada, made it the best in the world and grown in a pollution-free environment. That is where our future in Manitoba agriculture lies.

I want to give you a second example. Last summer, the World Conference of Mennonites was held in Winnipeg, and we were proud host to that conference. There was a family of Japanese Mennonites who were here in Winnipeg as part of that conference, and I think it is fair to say that the family of Japanese Mennonites had the income that they did not have to be terribly choosy in their supermarket choices. I believe they could have

bought the \$30-a-pound beef that is part and parcel of the Japanese consumers' range of choices.

The Mayor of Winkler took the Japanese Mennonite family to his home for the weekend, and do you know what food product they could not get enough of over that summer weekend? They could not get enough of Winkler farmer sausage, a scant \$2 a pound in the supermarket today. I say to you, do we do enough to promote the strengths that we have in agriculture and the innovators in the production of specialty food products to access the growing and burgeoning world market for food?

I offer this challenge to all of us in this House to get our creative hats around the issue of where we go in agriculture, where we go in food processing and what markets we access. In Europe, we have the European Economic Community post 1992, which is going to be a potential market of some 400 million people. I dream when I sit on my tractor occasionally, losing money in my current farming operation, but I sit there, and I say to myself, if only -(interjection)-both red and green was the question. I asked myself, what is stopping Manitoba producers from establishing the niche market based on the best food products in the world, grown in a pollution-free environment, of developing a specialty product line in foodstuffs whereby we sell one meal per month to the top 20 percent income earners in the European Economic Community?

* (1450)

Do you realize that we are talking about a potential market of 80 million people who are the top 20 percent income earners of the European Economic Community? They are not going to go to the supermarket and price shop. They do not have to. They will buy quality, and they will buy the quality of a pollution-free environment under which we have to grow our best crops in the world.

Then you extend that philosophy to the Pacific Rim, with the burgeoning economies there of Japan, of Korea, of Hong Kong, Taiwan, mainland China. The opportunities for us to provide them with foodstuffs is incredible. I simply say to you that, should we come around this issue and develop the policies, the programs and the opportunities for excellence that exist in Manitoba in our food industry, we can then take and resolve some of the employment issues in Manitoba, some of the future issues in rural Manitoba wherein, instead of having communities facing continued depopulation, we

offer communities an opportunity for hope that they can take their role that they want to take in building a stronger Manitoba, a more industrial and diverse Manitoba, and a Manitoba that holds the promise of the future that they would like to latch on to and grow with, Madam Deputy Speaker. Thank you.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Merci Madame la vice-présidente. Je voudrais vous féliciter encore une fois, Madame, et j'aimerais aussi commencer par exprimer ma reconnaissance du travail qu'a fait le président de l'Assemblée lors de la session précédente. Mais aussi, je voudrais le remercier pour sa prévoyance et pour sa direction. J'aimerais aussi offrir mes meilleurs vœux pour cette nouvelle session qui se présente à la fois longue et, je crois, amère.

A maintes reprises, j'ai pu observer le président qui a fait preuve de tact et qui a une habileté certaine d'imposer l'ordre, sinon l'harmonie, dans cette Chambre. Je me demande si son conseiller politique avait imaginé un tel rôle lorsqu'il lui a dit, embarque Rocan, il y a déjà quelques années.

(Translation)

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I would like to congratulate you once more, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I would also like to begin by expressing my appreciation regarding the work of the Speaker in the previous session. I would also like to thank him for his thoughtfulness and guidance and offer my best wishes for this new session, which will be a long, and I think, bitter one.

On a number of occasions, I have observed the Speaker demonstrate a great deal of tact and an ability to maintain order, if not harmony, in the House. I wonder if his political mentor had envisaged such a role when he said, "embarque Rocan," so many years ago.

(English)

I would like also to welcome the new Sergeant-at-Arms and to wish him well throughout the long hours he will serve in the interests of the institutions of this House. To the pages, the translators, the recorders, the Clerk and his staff, I would like to say thank you for the consistently high standards of your work and for the long hours that you too endure to serve this Legislature.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Monsieur le président, j'aimerais commencer mon discours par une présentation du contexte

international et national de cette crise qu'affronte le Manitoba en cette dernière décennie du 20e siècle. La plupart de ces problèmes seront familiers aux députés de cette Chambre. Toutefois, il est toujours utile de rappeler, dans une province comptant un million d'habitants, au beau milieu du continent nord-américain, l'étendue de nos choix et de nos limitations qui nous sont imposés par les actions et les décisions des autres.

(Translation)

Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin my speech by a presentation of the international and national context of the crisis that confronts Manitoba in this last decade of the 20th Century. Most of these problems will be familiar to the members of this Chamber. However, it is always useful to remember, in this province of one million people in the middle of the North American continent, the range of our choices and limitations that are placed on us by the actions and decisions of others.

(English)

Since the 1960s, the movement to greater international economic interdependence has gained momentum. With the rise of an industrial Japan, the creation of a unified European economy that the previous speaker spoke of, we begin to see a shift away from North America.

We saw in the 1980s a tremendous expansion in the Pacific Rim countries, Korea, Thailand, but also the coming giant of Indonesia. We saw too a consequent decline in the relative power of North American economies and a restructuring of the world into large, unified trading blocks. This was accompanied by a move away from manufacturing industries and to an increase in the service industries on a world-wide basis, including an enormous expansion of the so-called knowledge-based industries.

Given these changes, which some economists had predicted as early as the 1950s, what was the role Canada could have imagined for herself and what could have been the place of Manitoba in this?

The wise course for all governments in this context is to position themselves in the global economy by national economic planning to strengthen the natural and specialized advantages of the country. Successive governments in Ottawa did have some versions of economic planning over the next few decades, whether it was the Roads to Resources of John Diefenbaker, the National

Energy Policy of the Trudeau years or the Autopact of the Pearson decades. Manitoba remained relatively stable for much of these years because marketing boards and national planning made agriculture, resource extraction a priority. Similarly, food processing and garment manufacturing with their locational advantages were able to maintain themselves in the international economy and to make some gains internally as well.

Until the Free Trade Agreement then, there was the possibility that Manitoba could have found its international economic niche with agriculture, agriculturally based industries and manufacturing, energy, some transport functions and some elements of the national service industries, yet this throne speech seems to me, Mr. Speaker, to base its economic assessment on a welcoming of the Free Trade Agreement and on a belief that the job loss we see now will be more than compensated for over the next few years. Already we have lost thousands of jobs in Manitoba and received fewer than 300 full-time new ones.

* (1500)

It is not a pattern which bodes well for the future, and it requires greater faith than I possess to believe that there is any reason to suppose that Manitoba will eventually prosper under this agreement. The government is going to find it increasingly difficult and illogical to defend this agreement, yet at the same time, lament the loss of jobs from the province. As we were reminded in a recent article in *The Globe and Mail* by one of the more conservative economic commentators, it is likely that the jobs we are losing now throughout Canada will be permanent jobs. They will not return when or if this depression is over.

The response of the present Conservative government in Ottawa to the challenge of the global economy of the past decade has been driven not by common sense but by a right-wing ideology of an intensity which we have not seen in Canada before. Unlike the Scandinavian countries or Germany, it was ideologically opposed to any kind of rational direction of the economy. The carefully built harmony between labour, management and government, which we see in all the successful European economies, and in a different way in the Japanese economy, seems to count for nothing with the Mulroney Tories. Free trade was their only policy, and they accomplished it over the wishes of the majority of the population. We are and shall

continue to endure its consequences for at least a generation. -(interjection)- I am getting to Meech Lake.

Ideology prevented the federal Tories from the pragmatic solutions of specialization, economic partnership and planning, yet it should not have prevented them from using another tool that governments elsewhere in Europe, Japan and even to some extent the United States, have used. Each of these governments has recognized that the creation of an educated, innovative and flexible work force was crucial to finding a place in the new global economy. Rather than invest in the extensive literacy programs required and the intensive language training for non-English or non-French speaking immigrants in research and development in the industrial sphere and most importantly in higher education generally, we have seen the federal government walk away from education.

It has given us public relations exercises instead of long-term commitments to literacy. It offers advertising campaigns instead of vocational education to try and get children to stay in school, and it is in the process of abandoning any commitment to national standards in higher education by its continual offloading of costs onto the provinces.

The Conservatives' ideological commitment to the unrestrained marketplace inevitably leads them to believe that research and development should be done where it is most immediately and commercially viable, in the labs of the multinationals with their headquarters in the United States.

I was interested to note the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) talked about the discovery and use of canola in university laboratories in Canada. I think with the kind of support that we are seeing for universities at the present time, we will not see any more canolas in western Canada.

The Tories are prepared to suffer the consequences of loss of trained people, the loss of opportunity to build scientific research in Canada. All have an economic cost to this country. Their ideological commitment to the marketplace leads them to support commercially based educational developments rather than give the long-term commitment to the public sector that is required.

Their faith in the marketplace leads them to rely on advertising campaigns for staying in school rather than examining the economic crises which

are facing thousands of high school students who enter the part-time labour market while still in high school out of sheer economic need and who are increasingly unlikely ever to escape its clutches.

Conservative ideology and their willingness to let the weakest go to the wall has forced increasing numbers of Canadians into poverty, particularly in the Maritimes and in parts of the Prairies. The downward spiral to hopelessness and defeat is a real and present threat for many of our fellow citizens. This federal government has been a brutal government which may have lost forever the economic opportunities which were there for the northern nation of North America.

The second crisis which Canada and Manitoba face is the national restructuring which has taken place without our consent over the last decade. There has been, as we all know, an increase in the numbers and economic strength of southern Ontario, Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver. Those areas which have lost ground are in the rural parts of the Prairies and the Maritimes.

We know all too well in Manitoba the cost of those losses in our small towns. Part is due indeed to the international grain price crisis, but part is also due to the incremental effects of the decline of educational opportunities in Manitoba and the lack of economic opportunities in our towns and cities. To most Manitobans, there seems to be little government commitment to counteract this process. It is, after all, one of the consequences of the free market economy and, in the collective Tory mind, that is the will that should prevail.

At the same time as have seen this economic restructuring of our country, we have seen also the character of our major cities altered. Over the last decade, urban centres in Canada, at least those west of Quebec City, have become much more racially diverse. In prairie cities, this is due not just to immigration but to a very large-scale internal migration of aboriginal people.

This new and visible mix has challenged the old orthodoxies of Canadian public life on the part of recent immigrants by the questioning of multicultural policies that Canadians had subscribed to since the 1960s and on the part of aboriginal people by the rejection of Meech Lake. Added to these uncertainties has been the growing divide between the Francophones of Quebec and the rest of the country. Although this is not a new crisis for

Canada—indeed it may well be one which every generation of Canadians has encountered—this time it has been different. It has been tragically fueled by the actions of the Tory government. The Conservative idea that Canada is no more than an economic union whose future could be negotiated in a back room in a week in June has done irreparable damage to this country. It intensified the anger of both English and French Canadians, and it brought discredit to the institutions of government itself. It was unnecessary. It was arrogant, and its effects will remain with us for the next generation.

The divisions between the aspirations of aboriginal people and the goals of the federal government was seen very clearly at Oka, and the effects of armed conflict between former allies are felt in aboriginal communities right across this province and this country. The origins of Oka may lie in the specific history of aboriginal-white relations in Quebec, but the consequences of the use of military force to ensure the expansion of a golf course will be ingrained forever in the history of Canadian aboriginal-white relations.

As a country then, Mr. Speaker, we are facing very serious issues. We have seen over the past decade a restructuring of our economy, a major change in the face of our cities, a loss of faith in the older definitions and public myths of Canada. On the part of the federal government, we have seen policies which have added to, fueled these difficulties, which have added to and extended these divisions. Even now as, I believe, the federal government has begun to realize the nature if not the extent of the difficulties, they are unable to define the shape of the new Canada in an open and direct way. We hear rumours of the work of deputy ministers in back rooms. We see the well-meaning but unfulfilled promise of the Spicer commission, and we see the speeding up of the Tory agenda of decentralization, the abandonment of national standards through their continual offloading of social programs onto the provinces.

One of the most remarkable aspects of this throne speech was its attack on the federal government. This provincial government has finally recognized the implications of the federal Tories' actions over the past decade. Had the provincial revenue been expanding would we have seen the same protest from Manitoba, or is this attack simply the last resort of the desperate? Have they not in other days supported the decentralization policies of the

federal government? Do they not subscribe to the ideals of limited government involvement in social policies which the federal programs imply or necessitate? Do they not, when they go home at night, send in their subscriptions to the federal Tory party, attend the \$500-a-plate dinners for their local candidates and put their X against the federal Tory candidate in federal elections?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

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

Ms. Friesen: Merci, Monsieur le Président. To ask this House or Manitobans to believe anything different would be ludicrous, yet we are regaled with press releases which announce that the Province of Manitoba's top priority will be to restore fully funded equalization payments and stop the threat to national standards. I applaud this stand, no doubt about it, as do all Manitobans, but surely we are allowed a little cynicism here, a little reminder perhaps that in the heart of every traditional Tory voter there beats the refrain of Preston Manning. Will this throne speech stem that beating heart? Will the press releases convince the voters of Manitoba that Gary Filmon and Brian Mulroney do not share a fundamental view of this country? Did King Canute turn back the waters? -(interjection)- King Canute and the canoe.

* (1510)

Mr. Speaker, federal offloading is portrayed as a way of handling a debt crisis which has largely been created by Tory monetary policies. It is a solution which is entirely in keeping with the Alberta and Quebec Tories' version of a decentralized country. It will force the privatization of health and education throughout the country and create a two-tier nation. This too is entirely acceptable to the new Tories for whom the market, international or national in product or service, is the most important regulator of individual lives.

I emphasize, Mr. Speaker, that the policies on which federal offloading are based are entirely consistent with the ideology of this government of Manitoba. Of course, all Manitobans are by now painfully aware that this government is practising exactly the same policies of offloading onto school boards and municipalities. It is the same ideology at work—a debt crisis which is largely the result of Tory economic policies combined with the decline in

revenues and loss of jobs that the Tory free trade agenda has brought us.

It is a crisis that they believe will be solved by starving local services and education throughout the province. If the result is less public service and a privatized education system, this would be entirely in keeping with the ideology of this Tory government in Manitoba. This government has chosen, it says, to protect health, education and family services. I am sure that their polls are telling them so, and I believe that those indeed are the prime concerns of Manitobans.

We cannot tell yet what the meaning of this protection is until the budget is released, but in education we can already see that it means dramatic cuts for the universities and community colleges, the very sectors which should be expanded to meet the challenges of both international and national restructuring.

In other areas of education, we can see it means a refusal to pick up the federal contributions to ESL programs and thus a reduction in the programs available to new immigrants. It means no increase to Manitoba's largest school division which is bearing the brunt of urban social problems as well as maintaining its special needs programs and its high level of academic programming and language instruction.

The universities will respond by increasing their fees. Access to higher education will be further reduced. Fewer Manitobans will be empowered to take part in the new global economy. The connections are very clear. Community colleges will reduce their programs. The waiting lines will grow. More will become discouraged and as we are seeing in Saskatchewan, a generation will leave the province. Again, the consequences will be felt directly and immediately.

In primary and secondary education, what will be the results of the decline of provincial funding? Some of it will be paid for by the property owner, but the property tax falls indiscriminately on those with or without jobs.

Although I heard the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) uphold the great value of the property tax as a way of teaching Manitobans the significance of their tax base, it is of course an unfair tax in many ways. It does not discriminate between those with jobs, those without jobs and those who are on fixed

incomes. It is not a fair way to fully fund education, and it is not an unlimited source of revenue.

The obvious answer is that the quality and range of education will deteriorate, particularly in the inner city schools. The response of the Tories and the Liberals, of course, is to increase funding to private schools. Here we see a direct attempt to shape the market conditions in favour of private schools.

One of the reasons Canada, unlike the United States, Australia or Great Britain, has a less divisive class system has been the commitment of a public education system. In Winnipeg, if you wanted a quality education you would choose the public systems. The language teaching in immersion, in heritage languages is simply not available at the same level and with the same support in the private schools.

If you wanted the academic challenge of the International Baccalaureate programs, of the challenge programs that are run by many schools you would choose the public system. The public schools are the best academic choice for every Manitoban, in my view.

For how long will this be the case if this Tory government continues to underfund the public schools and increase the funding to private schools? With their wealthy donors and their ability to charge fees, the private schools will have a decided advantage. The government will in fact have created a market in private education, and it will have tipped the balance in favour of private education. It will have taken us another step down the road to a two-tier Canada.

As the government begins its review of education in the province, I hope it will remember that a commitment to good public education is a commitment to social cohesion and that a commitment to accessible higher education is a commitment to the maintenance of an open society in Manitoba. If Manitobans are to cope with the restructuring of Canada that they face, education at all levels will be the key whether it is in literacy or in college programs.

The government in fact should be looking at education in the context of its economic position and not simply I think in terms of the boundary reviews and the educational financing which the throne speech suggests.

How else should Manitoba be dealing with its new economic position? As many of my colleagues have

pointed out, we should be widening the tax base to include corporations and ensuring that those who are wealthy—and there are some in Manitoba—pay their fair share of the community charge.

We should be creating jobs, not welfare. The logic of this will become ever more apparent even to this government as the welfare rolls continue to expand at municipal and provincial offices.

We should be conserving our energy resources as part of our economic strategy, and we should be following the European path of a co-operative approach to the economy of labour, management and government.

This government, on the other hand, will not expand its taxation base by taxing its corporate friends. It is ideologically opposed to job creation and is prepared to tolerate instead the widespread social dislocation that policies of high unemployment bring.

It has shown little willingness to follow the European program of co-operation for industrial renewal. Rather, it has signalled its willingness to do battle with labour through its ending of FOS, its promise to review labour legislation to create a more favourable climate for businesses in Manitoba and its confrontational approach to the issues facing health care professionals and public servants in Manitoba.

The throne speech did, however, indicate that tourism would be the key to Manitoba's economic development and anticipated the possibility of federal money for such an initiative. I wish the new Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson) well in his endeavour. I think he has a large task ahead of him, particularly if the government is hanging its entire economic strategy on the expansion of tourism in Manitoba.

I listened quite carefully to the speech of the new minister, and though it was perhaps prematurely fulsome in its praise of Winnipeg 2000, I was also dismayed that his proposals for tourist development amounted to a photo competition which one might have hoped was part of the continuing program of the department, not something that should be trumpeted as a major initiative of the government. As I listened to this new minister, I was also struck by the absence of any reference to labour, a most curious omission I thought, even for a Tory Minister of Industry.

The rest of the throne speech speaks of matters of faith, promises, generalities, of task forces and reviews. I wish the government well in its endeavours. I hope that it will study effectively and wisely and that I may be proved wrong in my cynicism that this is all a smoke screen to disguise the ideological basis of a government which firmly believes in the idea that the best government is no government.

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

* (1520)

I believe, Mr. Acting Speaker, that Tory policies and Tory governments across this country have driven Canada into a crisis, but I also believe that nations do not create or define crises which they cannot solve. There are solutions and some of them I have suggested. Others have been spoken of in more detail by my colleagues here and in Ottawa. Outside of this Chamber there are also alternatives being proposed.

Since Christmas I have had the opportunity to visit in a number of places, to talk to people in Virten, to speak to students of the Peguis Reserve in Transcona and in local high schools in my own riding. I have been to my own constituency meetings and to community meetings in Wolseley as well. I find that there is a growing sense of despair across the province, but there are also elements of hope.

I think one of the things I would like to share with members of this Chamber is my feelings on the demonstration that took place here at the Legislature over the cuts to education. No one who took part in that demonstration here could have failed to have been moved by the numbers of people from all walks of life and by the speeches of students, trustees and teachers who supported public education.

On Saturday, no one who sat through the more than three hours of speeches at the ESL meeting could equally have come away without a renewed sense of the energy and determination of new immigrants and of the strength of our city as a consequence, nor could they have come away without a renewed anger at a federal government which is prepared to abandon many immigrants and their families to a life without language and without hope.

I was particularly struck by one of the speeches made by a student of the ESL program who pointed

out clearly that the policies of these Tory governments, federal and provincial, are turning us all into beggars, and beggars not just in the sense of impoverishment, although that is felt by many in the inner city, but beggars in the sense of petitioners, of people who must always beg and petition for the things which they had been taught to consider their rights. It struck a cord because, not only was it so manifestly true here where over 1,000 people unused to demonstrations, yet who had overcome their reticence to beg for the maintenance of a program for themselves and for those who came after them, but it struck a cord because it is the position aboriginal people were put in for over a century in Canada, a life on the reserve with little economic opportunity, and forced to petition and beg for even the rights they thought they had been promised in treaties.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I looked in vain for any indication of assistance for urban aboriginal people in this throne speech. I watched as the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst) last week avoided questions on the urban aboriginal strategy this government has been promising for over a year. I heard the Minister of Native Affairs (Mr. Downey) give some very odd interpretation of the history of aboriginal rights to self-government. They amounted, in his view or in his mind, to a desire on the part of aboriginal people everywhere to be free of the heavy yoke of socialism, a most unusual interpretation of history.

In fact, I am tempted to comment generally on the historic interpretations of Manitoba offered in this throne speech, whether it is in the quilting bee and the barn raising, which seems to be of someone's southern Ontario fantasy, or the idea that agriculture was the foundation of the first settlers of this land. All of them need a current update, and I would be happy to provide a few fresh references for whoever is writing the next throne speech.

On Saturday evening, I took part in the third Festival of Native Languages, a festival of music, drama, story telling. The participants were elders, children, university students, both Native and non-Native, community workers, teachers and lawyers. Their goal was to bring together all those with a concern for the maintenance of aboriginal languages in Manitoba to celebrate their survival and, in so doing, to create that sense of community and shared experience so imperative to urban life.

I searched in vain again, Mr. Acting Speaker, to find in the throne speech initiatives in education, in the social services, in land claims entitlement which would address the needs and expectations of this community, a community whose strength will be a crucial part of the fortunes of the city of Winnipeg in the next decade.

Finally, I did attend the opening of the Westminster Housing Co-op yesterday, begun under the NDP administration, initiated by the Outreach Program of Westminster United Church and supported by federal and provincial governments. -(interjection)- Yes.

An Honourable Member: Did somebody thank Mr. Mulroney?

Ms. Frlesen: Ms. Dobbie was there to accept his thanks and to suggest that we all move to the suburbs. It was a very hopeful occasion, Mr. Acting Speaker, because it is a building which represents and, I think in all ways, respects its neighbourhood. Its design fits well with the historic nature of Wolseley. Its co-operative base would have fulfilled the dreams of J. S. Woodsworth who lived a block away.

It points to an alternative kind of vision for Canada. Its commitment to the maintaining of family life in inner-city neighbourhoods also gives us hope that if we survive the destruction of these Tory governments, we have the tools in our principles of co-operative financing, co-operative living and commitment to inner-city schools and communities, to build the kind of Canada and Manitoba that we will need for all our citizens.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McAlpine): The honourable Minister of Education.

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): What?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Thank you very much, Mr. Acting Speaker—what is that? Paul, you want to go?

Mr. Edwards: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker—

Point of Order

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Acting Speaker, in allowing the member to go forth, I hope I did not relinquish my spot to speak?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McAlpine): No.

Mr. Derkach: Thank you very much.

Mr. Edwards: No. I assure the Minister of Education he will certainly have his opportunity to speak and we look forward to that speech.

Mr. Acting Speaker, let me say at the start that it is a great pleasure to be back in the Legislature and to have this opportunity to address my fellow members in this upcoming session.

I want to start by congratulating the Speaker for his appointment, yet again, to the position that he holds and the esteemed position that it is, and a very qualified man of integrity holds that position. I want to wish him the best in this upcoming session. I have not known any other Speaker in my tenure in this Legislature and I can only say that I cannot imagine a better one. I have not had the experience of seeing any other and I wish him well in this coming session.

I also want to pass on my best regards to the Deputy Speaker. I hope that she also has a successful session, and I look forward to her role in this House and her new position.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I want to say, as I have said on many occasions as well, congratulations to the other members of this House. I have said that in the last session, after the last election, but it is indeed a pleasure to be back in this House with all of them.

I feel I know many of them better, in particular in the New Democratic Party who are new to this House. I look forward to the upcoming session in working with them to do what I think we all hope to do and that is the best thing for the province.

We have different views of what that is, but I do not think that any of us come to this House with anything but best wishes for the people of our constituency and the people of this province. So I start by saying that I certainly respect the views that are put forward by the other members in the other parties.

I, of course, do not disagree and it would not be the place it is, the esteemed and the hopeful House that it is, if indeed we did agree. I would be worried about that.

Mr. Acting Speaker, with respect to the upcoming session I had the distinct pleasure part way through the break, in January of this year, of returning to the House, not the Chamber itself but to the committee room to deal with Bill 24. That was indeed a lesson that I had not had before, perhaps because we had not been in a majority situation.

When I got back to this House—there had been, in the recent past, discussions in December between myself, the New Democrat critic, members of the environmental community and the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings). We had discussed long and hard many of the issues which were coming before us in Bill 24.

* (1530)

We returned here in January to see that the table had, in effect, been completely cleaned. The arrangements that we had made, the discussions that we had meant in essence nothing when we got back to the committee table.

Mr. Acting Speaker, that was truly a hard lesson to learn in what I can only call a real politic, that is the hard ball game of politics, which frankly I went through with some distaste. We were not, I did not believe, doing what was best for the people of this province. The government was not willing to listen, I do not think, to the concerns put forward, the legitimate concerns which they had agreed to just a month earlier.

It was a very depressing spectre to see every environmental group that came forward, and interested person, criticize Bill 24 and many in good faith suggest amendments—amendments which had been discussed back in December—and to see those single-handedly and repeatedly shot down. The government came in with some amendments which they wanted to see done. They would not change a word, and that is what they came out with.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I do not think the best thing was done for this province, not close to it. What was done was to gut the provisions which we already had in place to ensure the highest environmental standards. It was done under the guise of providing highest standards, but that was never defined and that was never set out in the legislation. That was always rhetoric, and that is all it was.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I believe that we will see the ramifications of that legislation in the coming years in this province, and I worry about that. I worry in the context of the major projects which we have coming in the near future in this province—a \$5.5 billion investment in northern Manitoba, which can and may have untold environmental implications for the north.

In the wake of that we have a government that has given unto itself the absolute executive authority to do the kind of dirty deal that was done in

Rafferty-Alameda. I do not say that they necessarily will do that. I say that I am very suspicious of a government that sees fit to give itself that power in this day and age.

I believe that it was—and all throughout this debate they were saying, we are leading the country in this. Yes, they were leading the country. There is no other jurisdiction that has the level of executive control that this government now has over interjurisdictional environmental matters. There is no other province that has given itself that kind of *carte blanche*.

It is a troublesome spectre, one that everyone in the environmental community was onto and vociferously opposed. This government saw fit to ram it down our throats, Mr. Acting Speaker, and I believe that gives us all great concern and should do so.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we are, in this province at this time, facing very tough economic times. I accept that, as it is put forward by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness); that these are tough economic times. I do not think any of us deny that. They are tough economic times for many in this country, if not most.

We have in the agricultural community formidable odds in the European Economic Community and the United States as they increasingly subsidize, and continue on the warfare to subsidize, their agricultural communities. We are forced to compete in that if we want to preserve at all our agricultural heritage in community, so I—that is one front.

I guess the other one that strikes me—and in my constituency many are involved in the manufacturing industries, both around the industrial park around the airport and others. I am very worried about the industrial and the manufacturing sector in this city and in this province, because we are now into an era in which we are forced to compete, unlike ever before, with Americans and now ostensibly at the behest of our Conservative government in Ottawa, the Mexicans, and who next, Mr. Acting Speaker? We are forced now, without any advantages, without using any of the natural advantages, which we were given as a country, to deal with those people on the level playing field.

Let us define the level playing field for the average Manitoba worker. The level playing field that we are going to be going to is going to be the lowest common denominator. It is going to be the wage

standards, the health and safety standards, the worker protection standards of the Mexicans. That is what it is going to be, Mr. Acting Speaker. That is the level that we are sinking to in this country. To have sold our birthright, as we did in the Free Trade Agreement and now to go further, to take a step further and to join with Mexico in that track, is an absolute denial of what we, as Canadians, should have been standing for.

We do not need to point any further than the first Prime Minister of this country, who was a Conservative by the way, who understood the fact that Canada needed the protections to build itself as a nation and to ensure its independence as a nation. We needed to construct those barriers in order to do just that and maintain the independence as a nation, which geography and the natural demographic trends of this continent would work against. They have worked against it, and we have survived against the odds.

I see that agreement, I see that movement and the path that this Conservative government, assisted by the local Conservative government in this province, has put us on as exactly what Mr. Turner said in the campaign in 1988, a selling of our birthright, and that is what it was. With one stroke of the pen, we sold that birthright. Canadians increasingly have come to see that and will come to see that in the future.

Mr. Acting Speaker, on a more provincial note, turning to Manitoba's situation, first starting with some of the social concerns that I have in this province, I want to talk about one that strikes me as particularly damning—a damning indictment of this province and how we are faring. Any of us who know the core at all in any way know of the desperate needs of the families and the individuals in that area. We know of the desperate circumstances that people try and survive in and try and maintain some decency and integrity in their lives. Is there any more poignant or striking example of how we are failing than the teen-age prostitution problem in our core area?

Mr. Acting Speaker, to have any knowledge of that situation, I think, is to be struck if one has any sensitivity to young people and to the degradation which we, as a society, tolerate of them, both through drug and alcohol addiction but also through sexual and physical exploitation and abuse. We had a group in that area that was functioning. It is a very tough job to serve those people, because they are

not people who come naturally to sources of help. They come reluctantly, they come cautiously and they come suspiciously to those agencies of assistance.

* (1540)

We had a group in there, the POWER group, working down in that area. It is just a small example, I believe, of how we are failing those people. That POWER group was held up for accolades and was held up as an example of the way we, as a nation, should be moving, by a national committee whose majority of members were Conservative members at the federal level.

That committee singled out some six or eight months ago that POWER operation in downtown Winnipeg as a group that was having success in turning around lives in the inner core—desperate, hopeless lives, which had only a bleak future and a short future, I might add, to look forward to. Yet, at the very same time, we saw fit as a province—and the city is not blameless in this—to withdraw funding from that group, Mr. Acting Speaker.

I believe that was just one example, but a tragic example, and one that we should and can learn from. Most of us will not have occasion to visit the core in this city on any kind of a regular basis. That will be a tragedy. The many tragedies which are worked out on those streets, those will go unseen by most of us in this city and in this province.

Mr. Acting Speaker, they are happening. To know about it as we do and to turn a blind eye, in my view, is unforgivable. We, as legislators, I believe, have a sacred duty to protect the weak. That is our mission. We have other duties, equally important duties of maintaining the finances of the province and not taxing beyond what can reasonably be tolerated by our people.

Our foremost duty, in my view, is to protect the weak. We must work against the natural tendency in a corporate world and in a world in which we allow free enterprise, with good reason, to function. We must work against the tendency to make the strong stronger and to disempower the weak.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Mr. Speaker, I also note with some dismay that the Main Street Project in that downtown area is going to close its doors at the end of this month. That as well, in my view, will be a tragic loss in that area.

We know that the Main Street Project has served this city well for many, many years. Mr. John Rogers has come to the end of his rope, however, in dealing with those people who come through his doors on a nonvoluntary basis, drunk, dishevelled, not easy people to deal with. That is not an easy job, but it is a job that serves us, that has to be done.

Lives are lives in our system. We believe in equality, and if we believe in that, we have an obligation to reach out to those who are less fortunate than us, addicted to drugs, despondent, depressed, on a downhill slide towards inevitable death, Mr. Speaker. Those are the people who frequent the Main Street Project. We are allowing those doors to be closed, the most vulnerable, the most depressed area in this province, and we are allowing our doors of assistance—whatever small assistance we can give—to be shut through neglect. Mr. Speaker, that, again in my view, is an unforgivable thing. We cannot let that happen.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the economic future of this province in the Canadian federation, as I have indicated earlier, I am saddened and dismayed by the effect of the Free Trade Agreement, what I perceive to be an inherently flawed agreement which started from the wrong premise which was that we should join a level playing field in this continent.

Moving beyond that to the Manitoba situation, a situation in which we find ourselves in a free trade era—and we do not have the power to exempt ourselves from that agreement—in my view, we have to turn the tables and see the new realities as the new challenges of the future.

Manitoba is a place that can grow and prosper, I believe. Still, it is going to take adjustment and it is going to take more than the pat answers that business will solve the problems and will save us in the long run. If we just wade through this period of time, Mr. Speaker, and accept the tragic losses of unemployment as Mr. Wilson would have us do, we will somehow be saved by the guiding hand of Adam Smith and the corporate world—eloquently put forward by Mr. Freedman—as the people who will save us all and give us jobs in the long run.

Mr. Speaker, that is not the route we can follow. We cannot afford to follow that route. We will not continue to exist as a province in my view if we allow that to happen. Maybe that is the agenda of the federal Conservative government, but we must

resist that. Provincially, we must be willing as a government to take a proactive stance as the economy of this continent evolves.

One of the ways and one of the most pressing ways that we have to act—that we have not acted—is in the area of labour adjustment. I remind my friends in the government again of the study done by Mr. de Grandpre at the time that the Free Trade Agreement was entered into. The title of that report was “Adjusting to Win.”

Mr. Speaker, that is a very instructive title. You cannot win unless you adjust. That was the lesson of Mr. de Grandpre. We are now in an era where the average Manitoba worker will have four or five different jobs in a lifetime—four or five significant career changes out of necessity, not out of choice, out of necessity in a lifetime. We are not in a world any longer where someone can join a company and spend 40 years. That is not a reality today. The reality is four or five career changes. If we are going to keep these people in Manitoba with their families, our most significant challenge in the area of industrial relations and labour adjustment is going to be to bridge the gaps between those jobs so that we can allow those people to retrain for other jobs, to go into other industries and to move with the economy because the economy is going to shift rapidly. It already is.

Anyone who functions in the private sector—and I consider myself somewhat fortunate to be able to maintain a role in the private sector as well as my role in this Legislature—anyone who knows anything about the private sector in today's world knows that we are in a state of great flux, and it only stands to become a higher degree of flux as time goes on. That is the reality.

The other reality of Manitoba business is—and I know many of my friends in the Conservative caucus and indeed members of the NDP caucus will agree with this, we are a province that is driven by small business. We are not a province that is driven by large corporate entities. That is not to say that we should spurn them or not do our best to attempt to attract them, but the engine of the Manitoba economy is small business, Mr. Speaker. That is the hallmark of the Manitoba economy.

Those small businesses have both an advantage and a disadvantage, and it is two sides of the same coin. The great disadvantage is that they are oftentimes very vulnerable to economic shifts

because they do not have diversity of large corporations to shift from one division to the next. They are often quite vulnerable to shifts in the economy.

The other side of that is, however, Mr. Speaker, if they have the will to adjust and they have the assistance, and they have the encouragement of the government to adjust to economic change, a small business can change rapidly. If they want to change and if they see the opportunity to change, I know, and I think any member of this House who has been involved in small business will know, you can change quickly.

Unlike GM and Chrysler and all of these other corporations, many of whom function in Manitoba, who have a hard time adjusting because they have to go through so many levels, the small business can turn on a dime if they have the desire to do so.

We as a government, I think, have to go to our business community and to our labour community, and we have to acknowledge that we are living in an economic environment in which change is going to happen rapidly and often. We have to work with them to assist that kind of change if we have any hope of keeping those workers in Manitoba, their families and those businesses, let alone attracting new ones.

Mr. Speaker, along with tough economic times comes, I believe, an obligation on government to account for priorities of spending like never before. In good times it is bad enough when people squander money as the NDP did for many, many years. Wherever you looked they squandered money. There were some good years that they were in power and they squandered like no government in this province has ever before and perhaps no government in this country has ever before. Now we are in very, very dire economic times.

The government must account for their economic priorities. I do not have the advantage or the benefit of knowing all of their spending priorities. I do not have the advantage of knowing the inner workings of the cabinet and how they are seeing the future of this province. I can only take small examples that I happen, in my role as a critic, to catch onto to expose the government, to get a look at their spending priorities.

Let me cite two that I have come to know quite intimately in the last month, Mr. Speaker. First of all, we have seen in the last number of weeks a \$20,000

contract given out of the Environmental Innovations Fund to Mr. Moore. Now Mr. Moore, I know, is well-known to many in this Chamber in the Conservative Party. He is a long-time member of that party and an active participant in that party, so much so that he chaired the member for Charleswood's (Mr. Ernst) campaign in the last election. I do not blame him for that, for being a partisan politician.

He was given a task which was, in my view, an abuse of the Environmental Innovations Fund. It was an untendered contract that he was given for some \$20,000 to come up with a paper on recycling in an area in which we had direct experience, experience of the Resource Recovery Institute which has been consistently starved out by this government. This will be the third time that this government has starved out the Resource Recovery Institute at the end of this month. I think it is going to be the last time that they starve them out. I think they have gotten their way.

I talked to Mr. Barker who has been the head of that, and you know what, he is tired of giving out layoff notices to his employees every couple of months. He is tired of fighting this inane political battle for survival in doing the only significant resource recovery work of its kind in this province. He is the biggest operation, Mr. Speaker. He is on the streets doing the job, picking up the garbage and recycling it. He is actually doing it. Anyone who has toured that operation will know the volume that he is dealing with. We are starving these people out left, right and centre. Meanwhile, we are handing out \$20,000 contracts to friends of the government to do papers that simply are not necessary.

Let me cite one other example—and let me say, there is absolutely no doubt in my mind that when the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) stood up and said, it is Mr. Moore, he knew exactly who Jim Moore was and he knew exactly what he was going to be doing. There is no question in my mind that he knew that, Mr. Speaker.

* (1550)

Let me cite one other example of, in my view, a spending priority which needs to be brought to the people of this province's attention as one which simply cannot be tolerated in these tough economic times. This government has constituted yet another committee of again loyal Tories to go over the urban

situation in this province and look at the issue of boundaries and the issue of the size of council.

Mr. Speaker, that committee I had the pleasure of appearing before a couple of weeks ago, and I drew to their attention my reading of the legislation which does not empower them to do the drawing of boundaries that they are seeking to do. That is \$20,000 that we are spending on that committee. In my view, it just cannot be tolerated.

In a time of excess, it would be regrettable. Now, it is truly tragic that we are letting the POWER operation die in downtown Winnipeg. We are letting the Main Street Project die in downtown Winnipeg. We are letting the Resource Recovery Institute die in Winnipeg, and we are giving \$20,000 out left, right and centre to Tory pals. It just will not do, Mr. Speaker, for unnecessary work.

I believe this government will have to account for its priorities, and I believe that it is truly tragic, and I truly say that in good faith. We cannot tolerate that. We are here to do the best for this province, all of us. We cannot tolerate that kind of expenditure in this day and age, in this economic time, when we are seeing social services gutted both at the federal, provincial and civic level.

Mr. Speaker, moving on to my critic areas, which I have the pleasure of carrying forth for my party in this coming session. First of all, one that I have carried since becoming a member of this House for my party—the area of justice. It is an area which I have a great interest in and an area which I enjoy learning more about all the time, and representing our party as the critic for.

I have become increasingly frustrated with this Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) who started his—and I was at his first speech. I was at the first speech he gave as the Minister of Justice. It was up at the Elkhorn ranch, and he gave it to the members of the Manitoba Bar Association. I was there. He stood up, and I will never forget what he said. He said, my tenure as the Minister of Justice will be marked by increased access to justice. He said, what I can bring as a non-lawyer to the job is access to justice. The layman's view of the justice system, Mr. Speaker.

Let us look at what he has and what he has not done. We now live in a system where the fact is that if you want to get to court and get your day in court for anything under \$20,000 in terms of the size of the claim, the size of your legal costs will be the

determining factor, absolutely will be the determining factor.

Now, the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) says lawyers are the cause of that. That is truly a statement—and I will not belabour it, because I know he does not have experience in this area. Well, I think he does have experience in litigation, but he does not have experience in this area.

The fact is, we have a whole set of hundreds of Queen's Bench rules. You have got to follow them. You cannot get away not following the rules, and anything over \$5,000 in this province, you have got to obey those rules. They are good rules. They are great rules if your claim is for \$100,000. They are great rules. They will see you through. You will learn everything. It is a great case. Justice is done.

There is not a person, I believe, practising civil litigation in this province who would defend the system for claims under \$20,000 or \$30,000. It just does not work. You get to these discoveries, you get to pretrial conferences, all of these wonderful things. By the time you get through them, you have to settle. You cannot get through the system. You will be running up tabs of necessity. You can bankrupt your opponent. That is wrong. You should have your day in court. People in this province have a right to speedy, competent and effective justice, and part of that is having their day in court.

There has been an economic litigation project in B.C. piloted now for a year and a half. I have drawn it to the attention of this minister on numerous occasions. Year after year after year, I say, Mr. McCrae, do this. Do something right for this province and put in an economic litigation program. He has every time refused to answer me in any substantive way. He simply stands up and says that is not something which has come up through my department, therefore, it must be wrong. That is the kind of blind answer that I get consistently from this minister every time.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Edwards: I hear the groans. I hear the groans, and I ask all of those groaning here, Mr. Speaker, to draw that to the attention of their Minister of Justice. -(interjection)- Well, the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) says he is not his Minister of Justice. Okay, I will let him off the hook. Would all of the others please draw it to his attention and remind him of the access to justice which he spoke about?

Now, another—and it is not, perhaps, the largest justice issue on the horizon, let me say that—but I find this particularly instructive about this minister. He was a court reporter. We now have a revolt on our hands of the court reporters in this province. They are leaving the province in droves. We cannot attract any, and the ones who are here -(interjection)- and the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) says, give some more money. That is the laughable thing about this. There is no more money required, Mr. Speaker. That is the kind of spending dumb that this government does. They do not understand court reporters were being paid out of the private sector. That is where they were making their money. They were making money of litigants in actions who would pay for speedy, competent court reporting, and the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) knows that full well. He did that for many, many years.

Mr. Speaker, what this minister has done by making these people civil servants as, in effect, he has done, is absolutely infuriate them. You simply cannot get transcripts in the same timely fashion you could before, and when they are done, they are not done as well. That is the situation that this minister has put us in. He has put us in an absolute revolt mentality amongst court reporters.

I find that shocking on the part of this minister being a court reporter himself. He has totally forgotten obviously, intentionally or otherwise, the reality of the world that he used to live in. I do not know what has gotten into the minister, but I do know that he has forgotten that, as well as his roots themselves. I mean, the Brandon courthouse, I had the interesting opportunity to leaf through the Brandon Sun during his campaign. Imagine my shock to see a big ad from Jim McCrae saying, elect me and I will renovate the Brandon courthouse—right there, April 21, five days before the election, Mr. Speaker.

You know, it has been going on three years, Mr. Speaker, not a thing has been done, not a thing. -(interjection)- I see the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme) who was saying the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) was sincere and just did not get his way. Well, you know, I mean, I will remember that the next time I am out in Brandon, but I can tell you that, at some point, people have to own up to their promises. You know, he got elected again, and I do not think he raised the issue. I do not think he raised it last time, but he did in 1988.

* (1600)

Mr. Speaker, there are other justice issues which are known to the minister, and I want to only highlight a couple of the major ones. One for me is crime prevention, and that is an area that I have harped on. I acknowledge to members that I have harped on it. They may be getting sick of hearing it, but they are not going to stop hearing it, Mr. Speaker, because crime prevention is the initiative of this decade around the world. It is an initiative which we have wilfully neglected in this province. Let us be clear that we have every reason—we have the most reason—in this province to take advantage of it. We continue to have the highest violent crime rate as a province in this country.

Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely unbelievable that we tolerate that in this province. We have, I will acknowledge, been replaced as the murder capital—Winnipeg has, I think it is Edmonton now—but we are numbered two or three in the country, yet we as a province are doing absolutely nothing in the area of crime prevention. This minister has totally abandoned that field. He shows up every year at the crime prevention breakfast. I go, and I keep going, because a lot of the people there I know, but I am getting awfully sick of his speeches. He always says the same thing. It is platitude after platitude after platitude: We do not like crime; let us get crime off the streets; crime is terrible; a victim saved is a wonderful thing; we must use and enhance our crime prevention efforts.

Nothing has been done. One year, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) actually spoke and said the same things. Absolutely nothing has been done. We have a problem which is serious, which is growing, which every Manitoban knows about, and we are doing absolutely nothing to take advantage of the very, very significant and exciting work that is being done around the world, and of course in this country, in particular in Quebec, and internationally in France in the area of crime prevention. The other interesting thing about the crime prevention initiatives worldwide and in this country is that they are free, Mr. Speaker. They do not cost us anything. They come from the grassroots. It takes initiative and leadership at the provincial level, and that is it.

The best crime prevention is done by the people in the communities they live in. That has been the story throughout the jurisdictions that this has been tried in any serious way. Again, I am cognizant of our tough times. That is why I tailor my comments,

whenever I can, in a fashion that does not cost this government money and indeed saves this province money.

Mr. Speaker, in the area of labour, I have already touched on the wilfully inadequate labour adjustment interest and efforts that have come forth on this government. We have a new Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik), and I do not think any of us wanted to not give him some time to work into his position in the coming months. -(interjection)- Yes, the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) is reminding me about his tenure, and I remember that now. Yes, he was—and I do not want to relive this because I know that we have recently become friends, the member for Portage la Prairie and I—but, Mr. Speaker, I am sure he is.

I wish the new Minister of Labour well, but he is at some point going to have to start answering for the labour problems in this province. I think his honeymoon is over, and he has to acknowledge and recognize the disastrous labour policy of this government and of the federal government, the total failure to respond to the new economic order and the new era in which we live with the Free Trade Agreement.

He has to start taking the Free Trade Agreement seriously. You cannot keep saying, free trade is wonderful; free trade is great; free trade is going to save this province. That is all we ever hear, Mr. Speaker. When are they going to acknowledge reality and actually get down to work?

I was in the Department of Labour Estimates and asked the Research and Planning branch—a whole branch of the department. I asked them—I said, look, I asked this assuming that they were doing something to study the effects of the Free Trade Agreement in this province, and I asked them that. No, not a thing, they are not interested in that; that is not a labour issue for the Research and Planning department. I think some—I believe, six or eight employees are involved in research and planning. Not one of them is spending time studying the Free Trade Agreement. Can you imagine a more important event for the labour community in Manitoba than the Free Trade Agreement? Yet this Department of Labour has absolutely abandoned that field, Mr. Speaker.

We must do more for our workers, and I ask this minister and I ask this government to leave the partisan politics of free trade and the rhetoric of their

federal counterparts and to think seriously about what they have to do to preserve the economic viability of this province in the future and in their term. They have broken with the federal government in other areas. Break on this one, because there is no other one that is more deserving of breaking with their federal counterparts.

Mr. Speaker, on the issue of the environment, I have already spoken somewhat. I simply want to say, I was absolutely shocked that the member for Concordia, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer), stood up in his place and after a speech I believe it was an hour and a half, 90 minutes long, in the last two minutes said, well, I could say something about the environment; I could say something about Natives but there is no time. I have talked about other things. No time. He had unlimited time, no time for the environment, no time for Native affairs. That is really great, Mr. Speaker. That is leadership on the environment all right. Now we know why they were tenth out of 10, now we know why today, yet again, we expose the hypocrisy of the New Democratic Party on environmental issues, Mr. Speaker. They lived it. Believe me, they lived it, and we are all paying the price today.

Mr. Speaker, I want to close again by reiterating my congratulations to you on remaining Speaker and my best wishes in your tenure as Speaker in this Chamber in the coming session. Thank you very much.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment):

Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be able to rise and say a few words in recognition of the Speech from the Throne and to make a few comments -(interjection)-

I see the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) is in fine voice today. I will have to listen a little more carefully.

Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to extend my congratulations to you and to all the members of the Legislature for being here to represent our constituencies.

There is one line that I like to include at the front end of my comments every year when I rise to speak on the Speech from the Throne. It is to remind all of us that it is a privilege and a responsibility to serve in this Legislature, and certainly we have to decide to do the best that we can on behalf of those who elected us, no matter which riding we represent.

The fact is that each and every one of us I am sure was elected with the clear intent that we wanted to make a difference on behalf of our constituents and on behalf of this province.

Despite the public view that is very often portrayed of politicians, I am sure there is not one member who was elected to this Legislature who made the effort to run; who made the commitment to run; who put forward himself, his reputation, his family and probably his financial well-being on the line in order to be able to speak out in this Legislature and do something useful on behalf of the constituents, on behalf of the future generations within the constituency and certainly on behalf of the future of this province. So while from time to time we are going to have some lively debates in this Legislature those debates I hope will always be predicated on whether or not we feel that in the long run the outcome of those debates will benefit the people who we represent in this province.

I take a fair bit of umbrage at those who like to refer to this province as a have-not province. We are truly a province that is very diverse and does have an enormous number of resources, including our people, that we can draw on, on times when we are somewhat constrained, you might say, as we are today in the economic times that we are entering into.

Certainly, we are well situated strategically. The geographic location of this province bodes well for our future development and our being able to be a major player in the economics of the North American trade.

We also have to be cognizant of the products that we produce. We do have to be players on the world market. We do have to depend, in many instances, on the world market for the products and for the services that we produce in this province.

* (1610)

We have good access to the California markets. The American markets are markets that we need to be very cognizant of because of the high degree of dependency this province has on agricultural products and the two-way flow and the competitiveness of that environment in which we are involved.

Certainly, the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) in his business has shown that we can compete in the North American market and that it is very important to us, whether it is in that specific

niche or in an enlarged variety of other markets that are available.

I can look at my own district and look at the industry that is based there. They are competing on a world market. The hog production in this province is one that reaches far beyond the borders of this province, far beyond the borders of this country, and yet we have to be economical in our ability to produce, our ability to process and our ability to market. When we look at the competition that we have to enter into, I think that we need to make sure we poise this province so that it is in a competitive position to meet those challenges.

We only need to look at the cost of operating in this province, the cost of taxes, the cost of the social services that we provide, the benefits that we provide to our people, and we know that this is one of the best places to live. We have to make sure that it is also one of the more competitive producers and marketers in this continent and in certain markets on a worldwide basis.

The fact that we see some things happening in the garment industry today demonstrates when very imaginative and strong-willed people will approach a market with a mind to making it work rather than looking at the downsides, to look at the positive sides and move from there, but we have to be very cognizant of the type of competition that we enter into.

If I could borrow a line from my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), there is absolutely no doubt that economic warfare has been perpetrated on this country and several other grain exporting countries by the European Economic Market and the approach that they have taken to marketing on a worldwide basis.

The amount of grain that is available to the world market today is less than what normally influences the fluctuation of the market, but the buyers have become drugged by the fact that the margin of grain in storage no longer matters. The fact is that they look only at price, and because we have large subsidizers in the market, which now, of course, includes the United States through their retaliation, through their export subsidies. We are literally paying the world to take some of the best products off the hands of the producers on this continent.

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

Canada, Manitoba, western Canada is caught in a squeeze, a squeeze that could not come at a more

inadvertent time, if you will, for the agricultural economy and for the economies of our provinces. I do not think there is any question that anyone in this room would argue that we have seen a considerable amount of responsibility that should rest with the federal government being drawn from the coffers of the provincial counterparts for agricultural support, but we are not going to see our agricultural economy taken apart. We have to see it through a difficult time, not to rise again as it is today or was yesterday, but more competitive, more economical and more prepared to meet the challenge of what is needed out there in the world market.

That is what we have to design this province to be able to compete with. Those are the considerations that we have to enter into when we are designing the upcoming budget. Those are the considerations that have to be taken into very careful consideration when we look at the priorities of this government and where we expect to be in the next three or four years as we move into the 1990s.

All of this, of course, has been compounded by weather factors that have influenced this province, going back to the forest fires we saw that devastated northern Manitoba a couple of years ago, to the type of droughts we have seen in large portions of this province to varying degrees virtually over the last decade because, as climatologists will say, the essence of a drought is when the rainfall becomes more spotty, less universal and more selective where it falls. We have certainly seen a great degree of that in this province.

The member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) knows full well that is the type of impact that falls on his own constituency, where the rainfall has been quite adequate in some areas. Those who seem to be doing remarkably well are only a few miles down the road from those who may not be doing so well in the face of the challenges, the economic challenges, they are facing. -(interjection)-

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ben Sveinson): Order, please; order, please.

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Acting Speaker, we only need to look at the fact that the wage payers, the taxpayers of this province, the wage earners of this province are paying a million and a half dollars a day in interest to know what kind of impact poor planning for the future of this province can have on the ability of future governments to be able to deal with the challenges that are placed before them.

Unfortunately, we do not see the long-time plans of this province being put in the larger context by many of the opposition parties. That is why I feel that we are positioned properly today, as a government with a broadly-based support, to be able to make the decisions that need to be brought to bear for the future of this province.

We know what happens when we see communities shrinking. I do not need to talk about the fact that we have to reprioritize in those communities where they see their schools and their hospitals not being used to the extent for which they were originally built, but we do know full well that if we do not maintain the infrastructure and the important underpinnings that we need in this province, that they will not be able to recover when the economic opportunity is there.

That is why, when the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) announced that we were participating in the GRIP program, gross revenue insurance, it became evident to a lot of people that it is not necessarily the answer to all the concerns in rural Manitoba, but it is an opportunity to help that industry and those people who are part of it to restructure their operations so that they can be competitive down the road.

The same thing happens in any of our other industries, and because I am most familiar with agriculture-related industry, let me talk about the world competitive market that they have to deal with. The packing house industry in this province deals with competitors in other parts of this continent who probably pay two-thirds of the wage level that we do in this province. We do not need to make ourselves competitive on the backs of the labourers. We need to make the environment in which the industry operates in this province competitive so that they can pay those labourers, so they can buy the product, so they can export it, so they can compete on the world market in a manner that we know they can do, because our product is one of the better products and faces any of that competition without any problem.

We know the transportation costs, marketing strategies, taxes, cost of living, world competition all affect how this province is going to grow. That comes down even to the assessment, the personal taxes that we have to pay on our real property taxes. Combine that with our very large income tax burden that people of this country and this province are required to pay—and if I could borrow a line from the

opposition Health critic, again, as I heard my colleague, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), do—we do need to spend smart.

Manitoba does not have the luxury anymore of simply going to the bank. When we look down the road to Conawapa and Repap, being two major undertakings that are in their starting stages in this province.

* (1620)

We should not look to them, as the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) does, as bringing upon the north destruction. What we want to do is be able to use the resource to the betterment of the people of the north, to the betterment of the people of this province. We have to keep ourselves competitive. What province in this country is better positioned than to have economically priced, competitive hydro-electric power? Manitoba has a tremendous resource there that we need to develop for today, for future generations, and it has to be developed in such a way that it is environmentally sound.

In Repap, we knew that Manfor was not a good corporate citizen. Not only were they a financial drain on this province, not only were they a drag on the economies of the community and the bills that were presented to this Provincial Treasurer, but they were not necessarily operating in an environmentally sound manner. We know all of those arguments. We need to look forward as to where we are going with the present owner. They are a company with a good reputation, a company with a solid footing in the paper market and with solid operational standards.

I had the opportunity to talk to other people in the forestry industry at the national level, and they indicated that Repap is considered in the industry to be one of the better operating companies that we could have attracted to this province. We do have a good proponent in this project.

Both of these projects require major environmental assessment reviews. They require the input of the public. They require the input of the proponents to make sure that the projects are brought forward in the most environmentally sound manner, and where there seem to be impacts on the environment, that they can demonstrate how those will be mitigated, replaced or eliminated.

Mr. Acting Speaker, these will not be fast processes. We know that by entering into a joint process with the federal process, using the federal

interim guidelines because they are still law, we know that we are going to be entering into a significantly lengthy, detailed and very, very all-encompassing assessment of these projects.

Do we enter into this process on the basis that we want to destroy the proponent on one hand, or do we enter into the process as those who would be critics who say that we are entering into a process where we are going to end up whitewashing what is being proposed? Either extreme is wrong. We need to make sure that the projects are environmentally sound, particularly Conawapa. We know the dam site itself is a very environmentally sound dam, as dam sites go. It is a run-of-the-river dam site. The transmission line will have far greater significance in how the environmental assessment goes than the dam site itself.

When we introduced Bill 24 in the last session of this Legislature, Mr. Acting Speaker, we introduced it with the intention of bringing the federal government into the tent, not to force the proponent to have to go through the process twice. We knew that the standards that would be imposed would be the highest that were available in this land, because the federal government certainly cannot put itself in a position of compromising its standards to make an agreement with Manitoba, nor can Manitoba compromise our standards that we set under our Environment Act. The bottom line is that both standards will be recognized which gives us the highest standard.

Even in the appointment of the panels, Mr. Acting Speaker, the federal guidelines for appointment of those panels will be followed. We are involved in that process today. It is a difficult process, but one that has to be followed to the T. I take great personal offence at those who say that we are somehow shortchanging the environmental process in this province.

The member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), I think, made the comment that we had the greatest amount of executive authority in Bill 24, now attached to our Environment Act. Manitoba's Environment Act is considered quite a significant act across the various provinces of this country, and the one thing you have to do in making sure that this legislation is such is that there are correct decision points in it.

That is why in many cases it finally says, to the satisfaction of the minister, so that a decision point is made. It lays out the criteria that shall constitute

the satisfaction that is required under that system. Then a decision can be made and then the process can go forward. We do not need to spend our days in court fighting whether or not the process is correct. We need to spend our days at hearings and we need to spend our days assessing environmental work that has been done to make sure the process is sound, to make sure the problems that are identified are being dealt with, to make sure that if there are any problems they are identified with up front, not later.

I would have to say that if you look across this country and look where the challenges have come to environmental process, they have not come in Manitoba. Why have they not come to this province in the last two or three years? Certainly there were times when that could have happened, not to say that there may not be times maybe in the very near future when that will happen, but the fact is, we have gone out of our way as a government to work with the various federal authorities to make sure that they are involved with the process from Day One. We are involved with Fisheries and Oceans to make sure that their concerns are addressed up front so they can be heard, so they can be dealt with in the process itself, so that when they sign off on a project, they can sign off with some comfort, and those who say they need the federal process for protection will know that in fact the federal concerns have been addressed.

A very time consuming process, Mr. Acting Speaker. It has taken as long as a year to get the federal authorities to say that they are satisfied with the work that is being done, and it may very well not go far beyond putting in two or three culverts in a stream that very often may be a stream, however, that had some fish potential or some sport-fishing potential, things that need to be done carefully and well, but we need to make sure that process is linked better than it has been up to now. That is the challenge that is before us, all of us as legislators, to make sure that the process is done right but that it is done for the future of this province in mind. That is what will make it sound. That is what will make it so that it goes through without a lot of unnecessary detours along the way.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the Department of Environment and this government have undertaken a number of different initiatives in environmental areas that are far less lofty than the big important issues that I just spoke about: the day-to-day

licensing of waste disposal grounds that we are working towards very actively in this province, the licensing of lagoon discharges that raises difficulties not only for the communities, limits their possible development, but raises concerns for those who are potentially downstream of any discharges.

We are now making sure in a far greater degree than we did two or three years ago that these types of projects are operated properly within guidelines, and their discharges are controlled and allowed only within the guidelines for the receiving waters and for the product that is coming out of the various lagoons.

What does that mean? That means we have to address those costs that go with that type of development; it means we have to be that much more conscious of the innovation and the technology that goes into these types of developments where there is potential impact. We have to make sure we are leading; we virtually have to lead and be innovative in order to be able to afford those types of infrastructure developments in this province, because we have to husband those dollars very carefully.

* (1630)

We have known for years, for example, that the City of Brandon's waste-water discharge is going to have to be improved, that is now in train. We have known for years there need to be water quality standards for the City of Winnipeg's Assiniboine and Red Rivers. That is now going to be brought forward under a joint process, which I am still hopeful we will get a better degree and further co-operation from the federal government.

All of these things do not come quickly, but the fact is that they are now literally open for us to deal with. It will be a challenge to us to be able to deal with them quickly, efficiently and in an affordable manner.

But, you know, I look at a release by the Liberal Environment critic indicating what he was going to do to me, among other things, in this session. He talks about wanting to have assessments of generating stations over 100 megawatts, less than one-twelfth the size of Limestone. Well, I am not sure why he would put that in that context other than the fact he probably simply does not understand that is required under today's act.

I am afraid he is starting to believe his own rhetoric because he thinks that there are things out there we are not doing. He is now saying well, that must be a

fault with the act. The fact is, he does not understand the process that is in place today. -(interjection)-

Well, that is probably what is happening, he is starting to run by news release and he is reading his own. But, you know, the same thing is true of the official opposition. I have to point out, Mr. Acting Speaker, that we have now put ourselves into a situation where we have the former NDP candidates, who put themselves forward as environmentalists who were leading in the environmental scene, joining up with the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) and the federal member for Winnipeg-Transcona I believe it is—yes—leading the southern contingent into the battle against those terrible developers from the north, the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper).

Apparently in their mind he is promoting the rape and pillage of the northern parts of this province because he said, and I would quote, we have been told to wait too long. He says we can wait until hell freezes over, the time for action is now. Is that what the member for Rupertsland said? I think it was. The paper is never wrong, so they must have quoted him correctly I would assume. He said these decisions should not be made by people down south. Well, that is what the environment assessment process is all about. You allow the people who are going to be affected—not the producers, the consumers—those who are going to be affected by the process itself, to have an opportunity into the process so that they can decide if the assessment is being done in a proper way in order to accommodate their concerns and make sure that they are dealt with.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I guess I digress a little bit; one should not waste his time on those types of issues. I really do want to touch on a couple of other things that go beyond environmental issues for a moment.

I just had the pleasure today, Mr. Acting Speaker, of tabling the MPIC Annual Report for 1990, and I think that is one of the areas that we need to be very cognizant of, because from time to time members opposite would like to indicate that we make certain decisions because of ideology, but this is certainly not an ideological decision. This was a decision that was driven by the reality of what we were faced with in MPIC, particularly in the General Insurance Division.

We are now over halfway through the divestiture of MPIC General Insurance to the General

Assurance Company. What we have seen is that we are now having a more profitable appearance to the balance sheet of that arm of the corporation, but we are starting to see, on the other hand, the pickup of some private jobs by General Assurance. We are seeing a very high rate of recontracting between General Assurance and the former customers of MPIC.

The agreement that was made which was led by the chairman of MPIC, Mr. Harold Thompson, produced a guarantee from General Assurance that they would provide a competitive offer to the customers of MPIC. That competitive offer has now come to pass, and we now have the type of renewal percentages that we were predicting. One-half way through a project, however, we should not jump to the conclusion you will always meet your goals, but I want to report today to those skeptics across the way that the fact is that this is definitely on track, that the target of 70 to 80 percent renewals appears to be reasonable and practical.

We set up a three-person appeal board to look at any potential concerns or conflicts that might arise, and any customer of MPIC who was dissatisfied with the offer he was given by General Assurance could appeal to that board, which contained a representative from MPIC General, contained one from General Assurance and a neutral person appointed by myself. There has not been one reference to that panel since we started the divestiture of MPIC General. So that tells me that the people out there, the ones who are the most affected by this, are satisfied with the offers that they are being given.

I have to tell you, Mr. Acting Speaker, that General Assurance has of course played somewhat of a minor role in Autopac as a whole. It was always the Autopac insurance that attracted the public attention.

The fact is there was an ideologically driven move by the former government when they went into general insurance, hoping that they were going to produce revenues which we have since had to write off. Instead of producing that "golden egg" that was deemed to be the saviour of MPIC rising costs, it produced another \$50 million worth of debt that they did not know what to do with. -(interjection)- I think it worked rather well, to tell you the truth. The fact is, it drew to the attention of the public how much they were being misled by the information that was being put out by the government of the day.

Mr. Acting Speaker, there is another little issue that was brought up a couple of minutes ago by the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) when he wanted to reference the fact that the blue-bag project was unfortunately not likely to survive past the end of the month. I say "unfortunately." I bear no ill will to the RRI or to Mr. Barker. He has done a lot of work. He has, in his mind, brought forward a project that he thought was the answer to curbside recycling in this city.

Manitoba is a unique province where we have one large city and a very large area outside of the city with a number of small communities. The bottom line is, Mr. Acting Speaker, that in putting forward a recycling project in this province we need to have the ability to be able to pay for the type of recycling that we are bringing forward. In order to do that, there is going to have to be some value and there is going to have to be a collection system that works.

We have recently appointed four committees to work on recycling in this province. One of those is to deal with used oil. We have committees that are composed of some of the top executives of the oil companies and the retailers in this province and in western Canada. We have a committee on used tires.

All of these, by the way, will be reporting by early April, so they have a fairly short time frame to bring in their report and recommendations on the ways that we can move to get these materials out of the waste stream.

Another committee will be bringing in a report, a joint committee of the carbonated beverage industry and the beer distributors in this province, will be bringing in a report on beverage containers and how we will get them out of the waste stream.

We have a committee of four working on old newsprint. The publishers of the Winnipeg Free Press, the Winnipeg Sun, the Brandon Sun and the head of the rural newspaper association of this province, a very highly qualified group of people, will be making recommendations on what is the best way to get the newspapers out of the waste stream and how they will accommodate the costs that are associated with that. At the same time, we have hired research to be done on developing a province-wide collection system, so that all of the used newsprint and the corrugated paper in this province can be brought into a market that will use it and use it the most efficient way.

* (1640)

In other words, I do not think the consumers of this province or anywhere else should be saddled with the problem of an additional expense that they cannot readily pick up within the framework of the value that is in the product. There needs to be a market for the product. We cannot simply say because we want to get this product out of the waste stream that we are now prepared to pay any price to do it.

An example of an industry that has functioned quite well in the market force of course is the metal recycling industry. We have one of the biggest recyclers of used cars in the country located right in this city.

Let us take only a moment to look at what happened in Ontario. The new Minister of Environment in Ontario has taken considerable notice of the costs that are associated with the blue-box program in that province. The bottom line is that those costs, while they were very easy to justify at the front end, are now being passed off to the municipalities. The municipalities are picking up costs for programs that they did not help design.

If there is one thing that we do in this province, I hope we do this one right, we get the City of Winnipeg and the other municipalities involved and working with us in devising a recycling system that will work and will be efficient, because that efficiency is going to be important to what we consider the real cost of living in this province.

Too often, a number of people, Mr. Acting Speaker, would like to refer to the fact that environmental regulation is slowing down development or that it can harm development. In fact, we may very well be seeing the benefits of providing better environmental regulations, better environmental efforts on behalf of the government, because through simple little things like working on the type of preferred product that government itself uses as a consumer all the way to the fact that the smelter at Flin Flon needs to be refurbished, rebuilt and brought up to today's standards leads to economic activity. The companies today have changed their view of the regulations upon which they are required to operate.

Having met with the new head of Hudson Bay operations at Flin Flon and having had his response to how he sees his company progressing, I can tell you that moving their headquarters into Flin Flon is

done for the very real reason that they want to be there. They want to be close to the operation, and they are prepared to live as a head office anywhere where their corporation is operating. They are prepared to make that kind of commitment, which gives me some satisfaction to know that we now should see some real action on the part of that company.

While they have been criticized many times in the past, I think we have to give them full marks for moving in that direction and making sure they can adequately respond to the demands we have put on them because, in fact, there is a very real market out there that they want to be part of and, to have that smelting capacity in the north, is very, very important to the economy of this province.

An Honourable Member: Ducks Unlimited feels the same way.

Mr. Cummings: My colleague, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), says that is very much what is happening at Oak Hammock. I suspect that, when the dust settles or when the duck feathers settle around the Oak Hammock project, we will be able to demonstrate that the licence within which they are required to operate and the confines that Ducks Unlimited are being put within, plus their intent to be as environmentally sound and as conscientious as any organization in this province can be, will lead to a development and a conclusion that will be very beneficial for this province, very beneficial for the future.

If there is one thing that I have learned since I have come into the Department of Environment, the key to the future success of this province and this department and the regulations that we are required to impose on developers and on ourselves as a society, education is absolutely key to it, communication, the involvement of the public. Whether we chafe at the process that we put people through in this province or not, it does involve everyone in the community in order to assist the decision, but ultimately a decision has to be made, based on the best information that is brought forward.

I think those who sit in opposition benches should remember that ultimately they will be held responsible by the other people of this province for the comments that they make about the process and the developers who come to this province because they come here to live under the guidelines and the

regulations and the environment that we lay down for them.

They are providing jobs and providing infrastructure, and they are providing very, very important economic growth under circumstances that a few years ago people would not have thought that they would be required to live up to. The reality of doing business in this country means that Manitoba needs to have that clear process by which the proponents know when they come to this province what they are facing.

I guess I have taken a half an hour, Mr. Acting Speaker, to say why I think it is very critical that as part of the economic future and development of this province, we make sure the requirements and the path for development in this province is clear and unequivocal so that those who want to develop, those who wish to be part of the future economy of this province can know what the guidelines are and that they can invest here and feel comfortable as part of the development and the future of this province. Thank you.

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): I often hear some difficult Tory terms directed at politics and politicking and cheap shots and political shots. Mr. Acting Speaker, I disagreed vehemently. If politics is dirty, what are we people doing here? Why do we follow the profession of politics? I would say that politics is neither good nor bad. It is like sex. You can make it the way you like it. You can make it sublime and pleasurable or you can make it indecent and despicable.

I would like to be magnanimous and congratulate the First Minister and Premier (Mr. Filmon) of this province for winning an election, a majority, and facing the challenge of leadership in a situation of recession, business bankruptcies, high unemployment, job layoffs and general, personal and family anxiety and insecurity. It is true indeed that Tory times are tough times.

I would also like to congratulate the Speaker for his graceful acceptance to preside again in this second session of the Thirty-fifth Legislature.

I congratulate as well, my own Leader of the official Opposition (Mr. Doer) for increasing the seats from 12 to 20, and also the Leader of the Second Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs), despite a political setback, she is willing to continue as the Leader of her party.

Finally, I would like to congratulate all newly elected and re-elected MLAs on both sides of the House.

I want to express my gratitude to the electorate of the newly created riding of Broadway. They have consistently shown enough common sense to support the party that fights for the little people. The electorate of Broadway upholds the democratic principle that a public office is a position of public trust, that the citizens have a right to participate and provide input for those policies in order to arrive at decisions that particularly affect them.

* (1650)

There are some big people and there are some little people. I would like to say a little bit about the true nature of politics and then proceed on to discuss a more fundamental issue of why do governments exist, what are the things that governments are supposed to do, and how best the government can do what they are supposed to be doing.

As I have said, politics is neither good nor bad. It can be made good; indeed, it is initially conceived to be good. It is one of the noblest of all professions if it is intertwined and linked with the imperatives of ethical morality, but the art of politics can also be corrupt and degrading if it is based on personal expediency and self-interest to the neglect of the promotion of the national interest.

Why do people run—

An Honourable Member: The trouble, Conrad, is the national interest is cloudy these days.

Mr. Santos: It is always cloudy, that is why it is exciting to be in politics to clarify the clouds, and beyond the clouds can see the true nature of political responsibility.

We often say and more often hear—for example, we often hear this particular remark that according to Greek philosopher Plato it is okay for the ruler to tell a lie if it is for the good of the people. Is that correct? Can you tell a lie in order to promote a public good? I call this Plato's privilege, which is not necessarily correct, because one time when the Progressive Conservatives had just been elected to public office, a number of their ministers tried this. We have had the Sinclair affair, the resignation of the Minister of Defence and all those resignations, seven of them in a row. They tried to do this.

It is not possible to use devious means to promote a public good. That is not possible, because you cannot extract good things from a bad tree. How can you pick up good fruits from a bad tree? It is not good to tell a lie even if the intention is good, because the means will taint the end and it will not be done to the benefit of everyone.

I ask the question, why do people decide political power? Well, there are a number of explanations -(interjection)- yes, it depends, from case to case, but these are the explanations.

One explanation is psychological. They say that people who seek political power, whether it is in the private enterprise, you know, trying to be a manager or in public life trying to run for public office, they say that they have been psychologically deprived in their youth, and to make up for this psychological deprivation, they continually seek some kind of influence and power over other people. That is one explanation.

Another explanation is this: Some people would run for public office in order to promote their own personal interests. That is a common case. People say, is this good or bad? I do not know the answer. Everybody seeks their own interest, is it not?

If you can seek your own interest in the realm of political life, why not? The question is: Are you fulfilling the primary and noblest function of political life?

I think the noblest motive of any individual who runs for public position is to seek to serve the people, forget his own interest and devote himself to the general interest of all. That is the noblest of all motives in running for political office. If you have to suffer some personal disadvantage to do that, then I salute the individual. If he has to give up certain benefits and privileges in order to accept the public position and run for public office, I salute the individual, because he is living up to the very purpose and existence of politics, which is the promotion of the benefit of everyone.

They often say, and we often hear it, the end justifies the means. Is this correct? They say that if our objective is good then we can use any means, fair or foul, to promote our objective. After all it is good. Is that correct? Let me cite you who said that and why it came to be popular. It was stated by a fellow named Niccolo Machiavelli. What did he say? Men, in general, judge more by the eyes than by the hands, for everyone can see but very few can feel.

Everybody sees what you appear to be; few feel what you are. Those few will not dare to oppose themselves to the many who have the majority at state to defend it.

In the actions of man, and especially of princes, the end justifies the means. I say there is no difference between means and end. In the ultimate analysis, whatever is the quality of your means will tar the quality of your ends. Whatever you use defines the ultimate outcome. Anyway, that is just an opinion to negate the famous principle of expediency, that you can do anything in order to promote a good objective or purpose. It is not so.

I want to speak in defence of all of you as politicians. We sometimes say, and this is true, you go out there in the public and ask them what is their opinion of politicians, political leaders and people in the public life. Oh, they rank as almost like a secondhand car salesman. They are very skeptical about politics. We hear that they say all politicians are alike you know. They all seek their own selfish interests, but I say, not all politicians are alike. Indeed, not all people in public life are politicians, some of them are statesmen. It is only the statesman who will suffer self-sacrifice in order to promote the public interest. The politicians are those who promise anything in order to please their constituents and not be able to help promote the benefit of all.

*(1700)

If anyone tries to enter the realm of political life, especially the younger generation, I say that they should be prepared to make sacrifices, because in order to be able to fulfill political life you have to give up certain values, the comfort and benefit of your family, the companionship of your children, the joy of home, the benefit of rest—these all have to be given up and foregone if you are to do a credible job of promoting the public interest.

I used to be very skeptical, myself, of politicians, but when I tried to play that role in political life, I could see how sensitive and how difficult it is for any of them to survive, because they have to attend to many conflicting pressures in their life. They have to satisfy, sometimes, unreasonable demands. They cannot say no when they have to say no—a very difficult time of existence. Yet, as I said, commensurate with the risk of it is the self-satisfaction that you are serving, not yourself, but the people for whom you generally exist. I say

government exists for the people, and without the people, there is no justification for government at all.

I now come to the second point. If government exists for the people, if government and people who are in government are there to serve the interests of their constituents, regardless of their private motive, if they are to comply with this great political obligation to serve the people, the question is, what are governments supposed to do to meet the needs and wants of the people? That is the question, especially in a time of political stringency, especially in times of economic difficulties. What are the governments to do? It is to be true, to the true and noble nature of a political profession.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

The first function of government since we cannot exist without the basic needs in life is to promote and manage the economy well. That is the first function of government, to manage the economy through monetary and fiscal policy, but what if in the economy right now there are so many problems. We have problems of recession, problems of inflation, problems of unemployment.

Recession is generally defined as a general decline from the peak of a business cycle to its trough, signifying a downturn in the total goods and services produced in the economy, whether you call it gross domestic product or gross national product. It is generally evidenced by general decline in output, in income, decline in employment, in trade, and underutilization of the productive capacities in order to produce goods and services.

Generally, we should be glad and thankful enough that we can control recession in its mild form. Generally, in North America, recession is not as harsh as in other areas of the world, because our growth industries in the service industries, generally service industry is less susceptible to cyclical changes in economic activities.

Our system of taxes and expenditures are all geared to change automatically with changes in income and in productivity. There are certain built-in stabilizers that tend to reduce the severity of economic downturns in our economy. We even have a federal deposit insurance system which makes the banking system less susceptible to panicking in case of real economic difficulties.

The problem of inflation is another problem that is difficult to handle, because there are two different kinds of inflation, what they call the demand pull

inflation, which is caused by excessive demands, rising prices, and what they call the cost push inflation that are due to a monopoly market power of the firm or the union, rising prices and less than full capacity production, resulting in unemployed resources in our economy.

In order to counteract the demand-pull type of inflation, generally government will adapt tight monetary policy, tight fiscal policy or a combination of both tight monetary and fiscal policy in order to reduce spending, in order to eliminate inflationary pressure, in order to help the gradual return to full employment.

With respect to the cost-push inflation, the use of tight monetary and fiscal policy to reduce inflationary pressure will result in another evil that we do not like, it will result in more unemployment. Any attempt to correct unemployment, on the other hand, by expansionary policy will increase the rate of inflation. So sometimes we have to resort to the supply-side measures like income policy of wage control or price control in order to control the cost-push type of inflation.

Generally, in our economy there are three main sources of increased productivity that we can avail of. First, the economies of scale, which means increasing the output per unit of input for every change in the size of the market. This is done through greater specialization, longer production run. We can also improve our resource allocation by shifting our resources from less-efficient types of industries into more a efficient, high-paying type of employment.

Of course, if we indulge, spend money in research and development, we can have advances in knowledge and technology that are relevant in order to promote increase in production so that more output can be obtained from a given quantity of input. So much for the economy.

The second function of government is to provide basic and essential services. This will include services providing health for its people, promoting education to the young people, providing all basic social services to the needy and the afflicted so that no one will suffer indignity and lose his dignity as a human being.

In this connection, it might well be to remember our senior citizens. Most of our senior citizens need adequate pensions. Some of our senior citizens never have any private pension plan. Housewives,

for example, who have never worked in their life, devoted themselves completely to family responsibilities and duties, have reached old age and yet they have no private pension plan. Is it the duty and responsibility of government to help out its citizens?

An Honourable Member: Indeed, it is.

Mr. Santos: Indeed, it is. We need to give them increased pensions adequate to give them a decent means of livelihood.

Indeed I believe that there should be some form of compensation for even women who devoted their whole life tending to the household. We cannot say that they are not economically productive because without their help the husband cannot attend to the business. Without their help the husband cannot attend to other economic productive activities. Housewives should be given salaries because they spend their time working for everyone in society.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

* (1710)

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

Mr. Santos: What did I say about women? I said they should be given salaries.

Senior citizens need adequate housing. They have to be independently responsible and autonomous in their lives. As much as possible, we should encourage them to keep their own homes as long as they can by extending home care to all our senior citizens.

They are particularly concerned about their health as well. They lack recreational activities and they are subject to elderly abuse sometimes even by their own family members—shameful thing to do to our own senior citizens. They should be given some privileges, even a Pharmacare card, for example, would be good if they should be allowed to pick up their prescription drugs without paying the whole shot because they have limited means of income and resources.

An Honourable Member: Why did you not do something when you were in government, Conrad?

Mr. Santos: I was a backbencher.

If it is for this function of government that governments do exist, then government will be shrinking in its responsibility if they do not satisfy these basic needs of its own citizens. The real question is how can we, in this Legislative Assembly, change that apparent cynicism and

skepticism about governments and politicians? How can we retain and reinforce public confidence in government? How can we help to make the provincial government of Manitoba become a truly representative, responsive and responsible service-fulfilling model of government?

Let us start by making the composition of government itself truly reflective of the population that they serve. I say that no government which is not representative of its own people can ever be responsive to the people of which they do not represent.

After all, this is consistent with our doctrine of democracy. The primary purpose of the existence of government is to serve the people and to serve the people is to represent them accurately in government and to respond to their needs and to their requirements.

If the population mix of any society, any city, any province had changed as it has obviously changed, then the composition of the elected and appointed personnel of government should also change similarly, because representativeness means that the government bureaucracy should be the mirror image of its very own people. How can a government which is not a mirror image of its own people be responsive to the needs of those people?

A lack of representativeness in our public service can lead to real nonresponsiveness in serving the needs of the people. If the government is not responsive to the needs of the people, then the government will be losing credibility, and the people will be losing confidence in government. The more the people lose their confidence in government and the more the government loses its credibility, the easier and the shorter will be the term by which they will be elected to public office.

An Honourable Member: And it goes full cycle, does it not?

Mr. Santos: Yes.

In order that the government can gain the real confidence and trust of its people, the government must guard the basic values of our democratic way of life. One of the basic values, fundamental in the eyes of the people, is the equality of opportunity for everyone. Equality of opportunity—I am not talking of equality of resources—I am talking of equality of opportunity. Equality of opportunity is a social condition by which every individual human being has the right and the privilege to develop all his

capacities and skills to the highest possible level of development without any artificial barrier imposed by society or its institutions.

Now, if we as legislators, particularly those who are in cabinet positions of power and responsibility, see to it that our service fulfilling agencies of government are run by competent, responsible, accountable, and morally upright people, there can be no doubt that we will regain the confidence and trust of the people. As the spring, the source of the water, the spring cannot rise higher than its source. No government, of whatever stripe, can be any better than the quality of people who run this government. We need not only competent people, we need dedicated people; not only competent and dedicated people, we need morally upright people who are responsible for their public decisions.

What is moral integrity? What has that got to do with politics?

Integrity is the seed of ethical morality that is implanted early in our development as human beings when we were yet young. -(interjection)- It is learned, as the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) has stated. It is developed gradually. It takes listening to our parents, to the values that they inculcate in us while we grow up. It takes listening to our teachers who teach us good manners and right conduct. It is that seed of morality that is in us which urges us to be truthful when it would be to our advantage to tell a lie.

Moral integrity is the one that gives us courage to be fair to everyone including our adversary. It is the force that makes us honest in our dealings with people in public life, in business life—more importantly in public life. It is moral integrity that gives us the courage to do our public duty with a high sense of responsibility.

I asked it before and I ask it again, what has ethical morality got to do with successfully managing and running the program of activities of a provincial government? What has ethical morality got to do with politics? What has ethical morality got to do with this continuing struggle for political power and influence in our society?

* (1720)

In this inscrutable contest of personalities, talents and skills by individuals and groups in determining peacefully through the electoral process what allocations shall be made, who shall get what, when, where and how, the answer is that there can be no

public confidence in government. There will be no public responsibility in powerful politicians and powerful bureaucrats if there were no strong personal commitment on their part to the highest ethical standard of public morality.

In the long run, there is nothing more pernicious and more dangerous to both the individual in particular and to our established institution in general than for human beings to possess power without correlative duty, to possess influence without ethical morality, because as Lord Acton stated, power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

Corruption is an even more dangerous enemy to our free political institutions than open defiance of the law. Corruption works in hidden and pernicious, mysterious and insidious ways whereby people who are ethically moral initially, with good and honest intention, are actually destroyed insidiously from within, eating away their moral fibre and, indeed, our doctrine of secrecy and confidentiality facilitates the development of corruption within. If everything is open, it will be very difficult for anyone to conduct activities that are not defensible in the eyes of the public, but because we have the doctrine of secrecy and doctrine of confidentiality, you can hide away all of these insidious activities and not expose them to the public eye.

To those of us who are committed to a philosophy of public morality in government, we must reaffirm our ethical duty to promote the doctrine of honesty in government, the avoidance of discriminatory treatment of certain segments of our citizens and the avoidance of selected oppressive conduct against—and directed even to—our adversaries. It is public morality that makes powerful people responsible. It is public morality that makes government competent, responsive and responsible. It is public morality that makes government enduring in their charge of public responsibility.

A responsible public servant, whether appointed or elected is not self seeking. He perceives the world realistically; he has a genuine identification with the rest of humanity; he has a crystallized sense of right and wrong, and he is truly democratic in his belief that all human beings are equal in dignity and rights. He squarely faces the problem, wrestles with the difficulties and then, in the process of decision making, actualizes himself by the exercise of the right choice according to the dictates of clear

conscience and then willingly accepts praise or blame for the results.

It is stated that some of the blame in our society is laid against those who lead us politically, because it is part of our parliamentary tradition that political leadership should accept responsibility for what happens. Leadership is something that is difficult to understand. Leadership is a personal and social relationship between an individual who happens to possess some natural ascendancy over others, who in turn, acting on the perception and beliefs of such others that he can satisfy their needs, that other accepts his guidance or her guidance in their attitude and in their behaviour.

Leadership, properly understood, is a personal and dynamic social relationship that does not necessarily go along with the public position that one holds. It is a role that sometimes shifts itself back and forth, depending on the situation. Good leadership requires, as I said, good moral character. It is only good people who can make good government. It is only people who possess the power of love more than the love of power. Only when the power of love replaces the love of power in the hearts of people that our world can achieve the blessings of plenty or prosperity and peace.

There was a story about—I should not tell this story because I am running out of time—but I would like to end, Mr. Speaker, by saying that it is good people, regardless of the deficiencies and defects in our government, that make this society good and well.

Who is the person who is responsible, accountable? He is the person who has a basic fear of God. He deals generously with the affairs of others. He conducts his affairs with justice, with fairness. He walks in integrity and he understands the meaning of righteousness, justice and equity. Thank you.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to add my comments to the discussion on the throne speech. Indeed, I have listened carefully to the comments that have been made by members of this House as they relate to the throne speech, and I think some of them require some explanation and perhaps some rebuttal.

In the next few minutes, I will try to put some comments on the record to indicate where we as a government are going, and indeed, I will focus on

the Department of Education and Training for which I have some responsibility for.

We live in a beautiful province, and before I talk about the beauty of this province and the resources that we have, may I say that all of us in this Chamber represent various parts of this province. Indeed, we bring with us our many talents from many jurisdictions of this province, and collectively we try to make decisions that will benefit the population of this province. Indeed, I know that over the next few weeks, we will engage in some very lively debate about the direction of this province in the future.

* (1730)

Mr. Speaker, may I also pause for a moment to congratulate you in returning to the Chair and wish you well during what I am sure is going to be a very lively legislative session during the next few months?

I would also like to welcome our two new cabinet ministers, the member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Stefanson) and the member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh). Indeed, I look forward to them sharing their talents with us in cabinet and in government.

As I said, we live in a beautiful province, a province that is rich in many resources, whether it is mining or forestry or whether it is hydro power or in our rich agricultural land or in the knowledge base and the people who inhabit this province. Most jurisdictions would look at this province with envy.

Mr. Speaker, once anyone has travelled into other countries, into other jurisdictions, one cannot help but return to this province and this country and know for certain that we live in one of the finest parts of the world. That does not say that there are not people in our population who do have some suffering that they are going through, and indeed it is our responsibility as legislators to ensure that we ease the burden for these people as much as possible.

Mr. Speaker, there are not too many jurisdictions in this world where you can enjoy the kind of health care system that we have in this country and in this province. There are not too many jurisdictions in this world where you can enjoy the quality of education that we enjoy in this province. Indeed, when you look and compare us to other jurisdictions, one cannot help but say that we have a very fine social service program within our province. That does not say that we cannot improve any longer. Indeed, we must work very diligently from day to day to ensure that

we do everything we can for the people that we represent.

In the last few years, times have been becoming very difficult or somewhat difficult in our province, and I represent an area, Mr. Speaker, which is basically rural and agricultural. I have watched family farms go out of existence over the last few years. I have watched farm families lose their livelihood, and I have watched incomes on family farms drop by as much as 25 percent in a given year.

For those families, Mr. Speaker, times are difficult and we have to do everything we can to try and support those kinds of families because indeed they are suffering from an economic time, not from their inability to work or to create wealth but indeed from a marketplace that the bottom has dropped out of. Over the next while we as legislators, we as government in this province, have responsibility to try and make their lives a little easier.

Mr. Speaker, although this province is richly blessed with many rich natural resources, with the kinds of programs that I have just alluded to, we still find ourselves in a position where we have some of the highest tax rates in this country, in this land. At the same time we find an interest payment that is crippling our ability to deliver the services that we should be delivering. This year in particular we find that our revenues are at zero and yet we are expected to provide the kinds of services that there are many demands for.

In the past, as has been said time and time again, government has always had the ability to borrow in difficult times and then to pay back that debt in better times. Well, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately government forgot to stop borrowing during the '80s. It continued to borrow instead of paying back their debt, and so today we find ourselves with an interest bill on our debt that is crippling our ability to deliver the services that we should be providing. What does this mean, Mr. Speaker, to the people of this province and what does it mean to us? Well, just putting it very plainly, it means that for every dollar of income tax that this province receives, 50 cents of it goes to pay the interest on our borrowings.

Mr. Speaker, this is money that could have been used to invest in our health care systems, to invest in education and to invest in family services. Can you imagine what we could do in the Department of Education and Training if we had just a small portion of that \$600 million that goes to pay the interest

costs on our borrowings? Can you imagine what we could do in our health care system or in the family services area if we indeed had a small portion of that money to invest into our province instead of having that money flow directly out of our province into the banks to pay the interest costs?

When the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) shared this information with the legislators, Mr. Speaker, I would have thought that there would have been some very clear understanding of what the minister was putting forth, and indeed I have to say that from the Liberal opposition, there appeared to be some understanding at least from the Finance critic who indeed acknowledged that we were at a point in time where we could not continue spending at levels that we had become accustomed to.

Mr. Speaker, I have not heard a single word from the New Democrats since the Minister of Finance shared that information that would indicate that they have any grasp of the reality of this situation, or that they have any understanding of where we should go as a province. All we hear from them consistently is that we need to spend more and more and more. That is not surprising because if you look at their record, that is exactly what they have been accustomed to all of their governing years. That debt that this province has is largely thanks to the New Democrats of this province.

Mr. Speaker, this year we find ourselves in some very tight economic straits. Indeed, the funding announcement to schools this year was an indication of how difficult times are. Yes, the funding announcement of 2 percent made it difficult for school boards to deal with the situation as well. They had to go back to their communities and set their priorities, and they had to go back into their budgets and reprioritize their budgets and yes, it meant that they had to do without some of those lesser-priority items if you like that they had within their budgets.

I have to say that school trustees have been very responsible, Mr. Speaker. They have been sensitive to the needs of students that they are delivering services for, and at the same time they have tried to set their budgets without trying to impose hardship on the people who work for them. In other words, it is hoped that by the budgets they have set this year, some of the lay-offs that we hear will come through attrition rather than through direct lay-offs where people find themselves without jobs.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time in history that a province finds itself in this kind of a situation. It is not the first time in recent history that a province has given only 2 percent to the public school system of this province. We can go back as recently as 1985 when the Minister of Education at that time gave school divisions in this province 2 percent. That was a time when revenue growth in this province was at around 7 percent. Then we found that some two years later, the then Minister of Education, the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) announced that he was looking at a salary freeze for teachers. We have not done that.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to read from a press release where he indicated that the alternatives were increased property taxes, cutting programs, closing schools or laying off teachers, all undesirable. So at that time he was asking teachers to take zero percent, a salary freeze if you like.

I look at the revenues during that period of time, and the revenues in this province were 19.3 percent, an increase by 19.3 percent, and there was a time when the Minister of Education then was calling for a salary freeze. Now compare that to the situation that we are facing today, a situation where the revenue growth in this province is zero, and we are still able to afford to give education, public schools, a 2 percent increase.

* (1740)

So, Mr. Speaker, when the New Democrats criticize this government for cutting back on programs, I ask them to look in the mirror and perhaps to look back at the records of their administration and to look at the programs that they were indeed having an impact on when they asked teachers to freeze their salaries, when they asked school divisions to take only 2 percent when their revenues were far, far greater. The rationale that they gave for those low increases and for asking teachers to have their salaries frozen was the fact that revenues in the province were diminishing. Mr. Speaker, 19 percent is far, far greater than zero percent.

So we ask the New Democrats to be somewhat responsible when they get up in the House, and when they make statements outside of the House, in terms of what we as a province can really afford. I think that is all we can expect, is to ask the opposition to be reasonable in their criticism. Yes, in times when they disagree philosophically, they

can criticize, but indeed they better understand what the reality of the situation is.

Mr. Speaker, the education environment is changing. We have said from the beginning, from the time that we came into government, that education was a partnership business, that it was not a situation where you simply delivered the service as a school board, or as the province, but indeed we called on a partnership between parents and schools, between students and schools, between the various organizations and, yes, indeed, players such as the business community.

As I go around the province, Mr. Speaker, I find that there is not a very good understanding between what goes on in the school system and perhaps the business community, and vice versa. Indeed, for too long the education community has been isolated from what goes on in the rest of the community, so we need to invite and broaden the family, if you like, to invite those who are in the communities, whether they are labour or business, to come into the school situation and understand what goes on in a classroom because over the last number of years the pressures on school teachers have become greater and greater.

We expect our teachers not only to deliver the basic educational programs, but also we have imposed upon them new additional programs such as family life and, yes, the new AIDS program. Yet the school day does not get any longer. We continue to demand that they deliver these services in that restricted time frame.

Mainstreaming has had an impact on the pressure that teachers are facing as well. Today, the ordinary classroom teacher has to put up with not only the regular students who are in the classroom but many special needs students who might be in the classroom.

The time has come for us to take a look and to determine what education can realistically do and what we want it to do. What are the expectations of society of the education system? We need to better define what constitutes the basic or essential learning programs. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, we talk about basic programs, but the basics have changed over the years. Today we are demanding that teachers provide computer training in the regular part of the school day. The basics have changed dramatically over the last few years. When we talk about funding to schools, we have to take into

account what it is that we expect schools to deliver as the essential learning parts of education.

We also have to prioritize what our education system is doing for our young people. There are programs that we as a department have to lay out that need to be delivered. On the other hand, there are many options that are being delivered by school divisions now. Those have to be defined by the school divisions themselves in conjunction with the communities that they serve. Those needs might be different from one community to another. Indeed, if we take a look at the inner city, the needs there are vastly different from what they might be in rural Manitoba or in some of the other urban areas of this province.

Above all, Mr. Speaker, we have to ensure that all students in this province have an opportunity to receive an education of the highest quality and that the labour market has the skills that it needs to function effectively. That does not mean that we just educate students for the labour market, but indeed we are sending students out there today with a grade 12 diploma which is vague. Employers who hire these students look at the diploma and they really are not given any kind of a message as to what the capability of this student is, even though that student has a Grade 12 diploma.

Indeed our universities have complained about the fact that they are receiving students into the university setting where students do not have the skills, because they perhaps were not given those skills because of the disparity of education across this province. We have to ensure that as close as possible, students who are taking their diplomas, their grade 12 education, their high school education in some of the rural and northern parts of the province have equal access to the kinds of opportunities that are offered in some of our suburban and some of our urban areas.

In all of this, Mr. Speaker, we have to ensure that we control our costs of education. Education costs cannot continue escalating. It is not just the fact that we want to control costs for the sake of controlling them, but indeed we have to ask ourselves a question: Is the money we are putting into education really resulting in the kind of quality of education and the kind of graduate that we really expect? Does it mean that by throwing more money into the system, we are going to come out with a better student. There are some who would argue that yes, that is the only way that you get a better quality of

education. I think there are many in our society who would recognize that is not necessarily true, that perhaps we need to take a look at the system, how we can do things differently and how we can be more effective. It does not mean we have to dump in large sums of money. It means we have to reprioritize. It means that we have to set our goals very clearly, and then we have to address the situation from there.

Mr. Speaker, over the last number of weeks I have travelled across this province and I have met with school boards. Of course, the big issue in the last month has been the funding issue. The school boards have indeed wrestled with the funding issue very well. What I find when I talk to school board trustees is that they tell me, we can deal with the situation this year. It is going to be a little tough, but what this is doing, it is really causing us to take a look at what we are doing in education. It is causing us, as school trustees, to prioritize our educational goals and our needs.

Mr. Speaker, maybe that is something that should have happened some time ago, is that we should have taken a better look at what the priorities of education are. It is not too late. I maintain that we have a good education system in this province. It needs some fine tuning—yes, indeed it does. I do not think anyone would argue that.

We have to address some of the issues such as the high dropout rates that have been alleged, Mr. Speaker. We have to address the illiteracy rate in this province. Instead of continually complaining about, you know, how high our illiteracy rate is, how high our dropout rate is, we have to do something positive about it. Indeed, we have to address it in a positive way. To that end I was happy to see we have embarked on some initiatives that will assist us to keep students in school longer, perhaps provide them with better resources, perhaps provide them with a reason to stay in school longer.

About a month ago, Mr. Speaker, we, for the first time, opened a library in Norway House, something that was not available in that community. How can we expect students to stay in school if we do not provide them with the kinds of learning tools that they really require? I am told from the community that this library that was established is being used continually, not only by the students but indeed by all the citizens of that community.

* (1750))

As we go around the province, Mr. Speaker, we have to ensure that students and parents have the kind of tools that will enable them not only to become interested in the whole concept of education, but will give them a reason for staying in school and a reason for learning.

Mr. Speaker, we talk about students at risk. I would like to spend a little time just talking about that particular clientele. We see that students are dropping out of school for a variety of reasons. First, boredom—it could be their socioeconomic situation, or it could be a combination of things, or simply that the education system is not addressing their educational needs.

That is something we have to address because we are losing some of our brightest minds from our education system. In addition, the students who are dropping out now are trying to find their way back into the school system in three or four or five years, and then it is more costly. Indeed, some of the students who we lose never come back to the school system and, unfortunately, find their way either on to the welfare rolls or, indeed, many of them find their way into the prisons of this province.

So we have to ensure that these students who are at risk are given every possible opportunity to stay in school and to get an education. For that reason I welcome the initiative of the federal government, the stay-in-school initiative, because I think it will keep some students in school. It will allow school divisions to work creatively at creating programs that will help students stay in school longer.

The High School Review was launched last summer and, indeed, some of the initiatives are already being worked on. As I travelled throughout the province and talked to school personnel, they were in agreement that the strategies that are outlined are indeed needed to revamp our high school system. They agree that we need to change the approach that we have been using over the last number of years in educating our youth at the high school level.

We have to define our priorities. We have to articulate better with our post-secondary institutions so that students who are taking programs in the high school can move on to the post-secondary institution and can continue their education. Up until this time we have not done a very good job in that regard. I give you an example of what happens, just one simple example.

A student in the vocational education program who is taking the first year child care program now is not given recognition for that first-year program when that student moves on to community college. I ask the question why, because indeed the first year program at the college is very similar, almost identical to the one taken in Grade 12. So we need to do a better job at articulating between our high schools and our post-secondary institutions.

The other thing we need to do more of in programs that have worked well are the co-operative education programs. In this area we need to ensure that there is a link between the business community and the school, and there are many programs in the high school area that lend themselves directly to a co-operative education program and allow students to experience in a practical sense what goes on in the real world, if you like.

It also allows for the business community who receive these students to take a look at what happens in the school system and to understand the school system better. In this way, co-operatively working, I think we can do a better job in ensuring the students graduate with better programs.

Within the high school system we need to do many of the strategies that we have outlined to ensure that by 1995, when we have implemented all the strategies of the High School Review, we will have a system that is responsive to the needs of students and will be more responsive to the needs of the community that receives these students, be it a post-secondary institutions or the business world or the job market, and we will have a better skilled work force for our province.

Mr. Speaker, there were several initiatives announced in the throne speech in education, and I was very pleased that education did play a prominent part in the throne speech this year. Some of these initiatives will take longer than just this session to complete, but I think that everyone would agree that many of these are needed and have been needed for some time.

The first initiative I would like to spend a moment on, Mr. Speaker, is the strategic plan that was announced in the throne speech, the first steps toward a five-year plan for Education. Never before that I know of in any department has there been a project where we can announce that there is a plan in which direction we are going to be going over an extended period of time.

Mr. Speaker, although the final details of that plan have not been announced at this time, I look forward to being able to share that with members of the Legislature, and indeed the critics of Education and the education community at large, in the next short while.

Mr. Speaker, we also announced the new Education finance model. The finance model has been overdue for some time and I admit that. We have been working at this model now for two years. We indicated very clearly that we would not be introducing it at the time when assessment reform came in, because it would create some chaos in terms of people understanding what the assessment reform was, at the same time trying to deal with the new Education finance formula.

At this present time, we have the Advisory Committee on Education Finance reviewing the model and doing some alterations to the approach and dealing with a consultation paper on the whole matter of the ed finance review. By the end of April the advisory committee will be in a position where they will be able to share with me, as minister, their results and we will be in a position then to go to the inner organizations groups to look at what the model really does, and then also to receive feedback from the various divisions across this province.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very important initiative because it will decide the type of funding approach we will be using in Education for some time. Indeed, the last time Education funding was revamped was in 1984 and at that time, although we had what was called the GSE formula, many school divisions did not find themselves on the formula, they were grandfathered—if I could use the term—and have never found themselves onto the formula. The formula has become outdated and indeed it is time to look at a new approach. This approach, we are confident, will be in place and ready to use for the 1992 school year.

Mr. Speaker, I was also very pleased that we are moving ahead with college governance in this session. Over the last year and a half we have been not only studying the task of how we are going to embark on college governance, but indeed we have now a transition committee set up that is looking at devolving the responsibility of governing our colleges to boards of governors. Everywhere else in

this country we find that community colleges work under a governance model, a model that is arm's length from government. In this way it becomes more flexible; yes, more responsive to the needs of industry and the training needs of the province, and it allows the communities to take on that community spirit that they were designed to have.

We have three community colleges in this province, one in the north, one in Brandon and one in Winnipeg here, all community colleges serving different needs with different mandates, indeed, doing a very fine job. I think our community colleges look forward to the day when they have some autonomy and are able to operate under boards of governors and sort of break away from the direct control of government.

Last year, Mr. Speaker, we announced the first year university Distance Education Program. This program was operating in five different communities across this province. I would like to report that the program has been very successful and is operating, to date, at a capacity of about 170 some students. Indeed, the students are completing their first year of university by distance education. In talking to some of the students who are enrolled in the program, they have found the year very rewarding. Yes, we lost a few students who thought that university education was going to be a snap through distance education. When they did find that they had to work very hard at it, they came to realize that it is just as difficult as a university program on campus.

I think this is an area we can expand in the future to ensure that students in regional parts of this province can avail themselves of opportunities to take a university education. Next year the program will continue at the first year level, but hopefully in the future we will be able to expand that program into a second year level as well.

Mr. Speaker, we had announced in the throne speech also the review of university education to allow university education to become—

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

The hour being 6 p.m., I am recessing the House and will return at 8 p.m.

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Monday, March 18, 1991

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