



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

41 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
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	Liberal
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
CHEEMA, Gulzar	The Maples	Liberal
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	NDP
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	Liberal
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	NDP
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	NDP
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Liberal
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
GRAY, Avis	Crescentwood	Liberal
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	NDP
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	Rossmere	PC
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	PC
PALLISTER, Brian	Portage la Prairie	PC
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
REID, Daryl	Transcona	NDP
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	PC
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	PC
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, Hon.	Fort Garry	PC
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP
<i>Vacant</i>	Rupertsland	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**Monday, March 1, 1993****The House met at 8 p.m.****MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC
IMPORTANCE (Cont'd)**

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

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Acting Speaker, I am pleased to rise and add my comments to the debate that has been going on in the House today.

I would like to just begin by trying to put into context the rationale for some of the moves that are being made. It is like we have been on a wonderful party that has been going on for many years, over a decade, a decade and a half, and the party is over and it is the morning after the night before, and somebody has to come in and deal with the mess that has been left and pay the bills that have been accumulated because of the arrangements made for the party.

I liken as well the situation in which we find ourselves to that of a household. For those on the opposite side who may have trouble trying to figure out the kind of circumstances in which we find ourselves, perhaps they could try to identify with a household in which for the better part of 20 years the family has been living off the credit cards and using Mastercard to pay Visa and running all the credit cards up to their very limit and finding that during a period of growth in the economy that their income into the household was steadily climbing and therefore held no hesitation in continuing to build up those debts and those credit cards, but finding to their great alarm a period in history coming when their income was no longer climbing at a steady rate year after year, but of course their payments and their interest on their payments was not finding itself dropping the way that the income is dropping. When such a scenario happens and the money coming into the household every month is needed to go to meet the minimum payment on all the credit cards, sometimes there is not enough money left over for the groceries and the family then finds itself in a very difficult situation.

That is not unlike what has happened here in Manitoba, Mr. Acting Speaker. We have had close to 20 years of high spending at both the federal and provincial levels in Canada and in Manitoba, and that high spending has now caught up with us. It has caught up with governments all across this nation and indeed in many parts of the world. In fact, we hear our neighbours to the south also talking about the situations they face because the spending went out of control. I used to find it amusing but I now find it sad that the opposition parties have the gall to stand up in the House and criticize the government for trying to get a hold on spending and to control expenditures when we are trying to deal with a situation created, in large part, by the habits that they and those like them accumulated and lived with during their tenure in government.

We see our neighbours to the east in Ontario suddenly realizing that the high-spending habits they took into government are not going to work for the long-term good of Ontario. I notice with great interest that when the opposition, particularly the NDP, stands up to criticize other jurisdictions for their high-spending habits and for their increased taxation and for their irresponsible fiscal management, they seldom if ever mention Ontario. I am not surprised at that, because the government of Ontario is—well, what shall we say, a socialist is a socialist. When the high spending is there to be done, the socialists will do it at great cost not just in dollars but in terms of what government can provide to the people in that province.

I also find it no longer amusing but rather sad to see certain members opposite stand and make statements in this House, not realizing that some of us on this side actually have memories. I can remember the former Minister of Education in the NDP government, the Minister of Education from Flin Flon—I can remember being president of the Manitoba Association of School Trustees and chairman of my local board and dealing with that minister who was, at one point in his career, pushing for a freeze on teachers' salaries. I remember that because I sat down and had discussions with him on that issue as he was saying, the only thing is we

have to get a freeze on teachers' salaries. That was clear and loud and known by all trustees.

When I hear members opposite stand and say some of the things they are saying, particularly in light of education, I think, they are new, the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar). They are new. They were not there when their Ministers of Education said to me as school board chairman some of the things that they said during their term in office; or, if they had been there or if they did know the history, they would be cringing with embarrassment, faces flushed with embarrassment to hear their members actually stand with the greatest hypocrisy I have ever witnessed and say back to me the things that they deny they would ever stand for. [interjection]

The member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) chirps in his chair—chirp, chirp, chirp. He was part of the government. He remembers what their Ministers of Education said. He remembers they lived in double-digit inflation. While they were in double-digit inflation, I can tell the member for Thompson that the division of which I was chair took a 1 percent increase in funding in a year when you had double-digit inflation—totally disgraceful, absolutely taking into consideration none of our needs. The hypocrisy of that side astounds me, absolutely astounds me.

You take a look at some of the articles that were in the papers when they were in government. You take a look at the headlines: School funding falls far short of NDP promises—this is NDP; Wrong way property tax—this is NDP; Kostyra admits school funding unable to meet board needs—this is NDP; Board blames province for tax hike—this is NDP; Minister flays NDP position on school aid—this is NDP; Education funding fudged—this is NDP; The decay of a province—this is NDP; Pawley ducks funding pledge for education—this is NDP; and you go on and on and on for year after endless year. I was in the system. I was a teacher. I was a school trustee. I was a parent. I know what you people did to education, and you have the gall to sit there. You have the gall and the sheer hypocrisy like I have never seen in my life to sit on that side of the House and try and pretend that you did something good for education and you did not. You did not.

* (2005)

You also have the gall to sit there and try to pretend that you left us with a surplus when your method of describing how you spend your money and account for your money is so creative that you should be putting on plays in the theatre. You spend money like you throw confetti at a wedding, but you are not there the next day to pick up the empty champagne glasses and sweep the floors to get the confetti off the wet sidewalks. We are there to do that, and we will clean up the mess you left and we will do it responsibly.

We know the taxpayer cannot pay any more. You maybe do not know that. We know that. We hear it all the time. I hear you getting up and quoting all these people that you say talked to you. They do not talk to us. The Liberals who brought this motion in because it was an emergency debate that was so hard to debate—I guess I cannot make comment about who is here in the House and who is absent in the House so I will not. I will say it is good to see the member from The Maples (Mr. Cheema) here, making no comment on any other Liberals who brought the motion in and felt it was really important. I can see by the throngs of people on the NDP side how important this is to them as well.

We cannot ignore the fact that there is no more money. There is no more money. Now you can wish for the money till the cows come home, but it is not there. You can talk to Bill Clinton, you can talk to Premier Bob, you can talk to Mike Harcourt, you can talk to—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Order, please. The honourable member's time has expired.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Acting Speaker, I listened with interest to the member for Assiniboia and her comparison of this to a wedding, and I can well assure her that there will be lots of cleaning up to do after this government and there will be long memories about what we have to clean up from what they have done and the deficit that they have left this province.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I am pleased to be able to rise today to participate in this emergency debate on education for indeed we are in an emergency and we do have a crisis in education. We have this crisis because of the policies and the work that this government has been doing, or I should say, the lack of what they have been doing. Because of the lack of what they have been doing we have less tax

revenue in this province. Every effort that they have made to create jobs has failed. They have done nothing to stimulate our economy, and we have had no growth in this province. For that reason, that is why we have no money in this province and that is why we have the deficit that we do.

There are ways that you could raise money in this province and this government should look seriously at them. There should be job creation. There should be things done that will get people working. People want to work. There are also ways of restructuring. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) on the news this evening said that there was nowhere else to get money. Perhaps it is time to reconsider restructuring the tax system. It is not only the poor who should be paying the costs of this government's mistakes, but perhaps there are also those who are in upper incomes and who can afford to pay a larger share of the taxes to carry the burden of this province to offer our children the opportunity for an education.

* (2010)

Mr. Acting Speaker, for weeks people were speculating and parents and teachers were very worried about what this government was going to do as far as the money that the school boards were going to get for education, but they were shocked when they heard the announcement that there was going to be a reduction.

I recently attended one of the hearings at the Northern Economic Development workshops. At that group meeting, some of the people talked about the value. They talked about economic development, and what is economic development. In fact, they said if you reduce the number of people that drop out of school, if you get more graduates, then you have economic development. If you can get people to stay in and finish their high school, if the people in this particular community have not finished their high school up to this point, that is economic development.

If you deal with children who have drug problems and need supports in those families who are in family crisis and get them through the educational system, that is economic development. Children, young people need an education in order to cope with the jobs that we hopefully will have out there, the new kind of jobs that are coming, but that is not what we are going to get from this government. Instead, we are going to have cutbacks. We are

going to have larger classroom sizes and probably less people graduating, Mr. Acting Speaker.

At a time when we are faced with high stress—particularly I look at rural communities, the high stress that families are under, and I guess those same stresses are here in the city as well for when people are not working—it is the teachers many times who identify the first crisis that children are in. It is the teachers that deal with those crises and help students through them, but they are not going to be able to do that, particularly as we get into larger classroom sizes, more responsibilities. These are the children that are going to fall through the cracks. We are going to see many more serious problems.

I am very disappointed that this government, instead of choosing to prepare our children for the future, they have chosen rather to just slash dollars and reduce the opportunity for children to get an education.

I believe it was the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) who said that there are—in fact, he referred to my constituency across the floor indicating that the Swan Valley School Division was going to come out of this OK. Well, in fact, Mr. Acting Speaker, the Swan Valley School Division is going to suffer a reduction of about 2.65 percent, and even with the restricting formula that has been put in place on how school boards can raise money, there is going to be a shortfall of \$350,000. Yes, there are going to be staff reductions, but that is not the only thing that is going to be reduced. There is going to be quality of education reduced.

There are going to be, if not in the Swan Valley School Division, programs such as the hot lunch program and the breakfast program that are reduced. Who are the ones that are going to suffer because of that? It is not going to be the children from the wealthy families who can afford to bring their lunch to school, it is going to be those who have the least. And if we really want to think about it, have you ever tried to work on an empty stomach or tried to study on an empty stomach? There is not much production there, and we are not going to see our young people going forward.

This government has to look really seriously at what their priorities are in this. It is not just a matter of cutting and slashing. We have to be able to look forward, as I say, and prepare our young people for the future.

One of the things that I find very difficult to understand is how the government can be so restrictive on school boards and cutting into their responsibility. After all, school boards are elected by the people of the district to make decisions—on the budgeting and spending decisions. What they have done is dealt with school boards in a very dictatorial manner and restricted their ability to provide education in their various communities.

It seems hypocritical for a government, who on one hand will offload costs onto municipalities and tell them they have to pick them up, and then tell school boards, well, we are going to offload onto you, but you do not have the ability to collect this money. It is being very restrictive on what school boards can do.

* (2015)

I guess I am also very concerned about what has happened with university funding and to see that the government is clawing back money that has actually been spent and expecting the universities to also provide education at a reasonable rate. In the high school-university funding, I am quite concerned. I am wondering what their impacts are going to be on first-year Distance Education.

The Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), this afternoon, talked about how fortunate they were in their area to have the opportunities for first-year Distance Education, but there are other areas that have applied for it as well. We want to see equal opportunity in those areas, but with these cuts and these decisions that this government is making it will be highly unlikely, although I hope that I am wrong, that we will see such things.

I think in all of this that what we really, really have to look at is, as I said earlier, who is going to suffer the most in this? It is going to be children who live in divisions who do not have a large tax base. Again, in my constituency, we have the Duck Mountain School Division. At this time, there are schools in that division who have three grades in one classroom. If they have not got the ability to raise funds, what is the quality of education for those people going to be?

I think that rather than just thinking about cutting funds, we also have to look at how we can use modern technology to improve the education in those communities. There are groups throughout the Swan Valley Division and the Duck Mountain Division who are trying to work to get different types

of education using the television fiber optics that are there. Hopefully, we will see progress made in that, but I cannot see progress. I am very disappointed that this government would consider making cuts like this when on one hand they talk about the value of education and on the other hand do not give our young people the opportunity to face the challenges of the future.

Mr. Jack Reimer (Niakwa): Mr. Acting Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to stand here this evening and talk and put some views on record regarding the emergency debate or the matter of urgent public importance regarding the education, because education is, and there is no doubt about it, one of the most important and one of the most valuable assets we have as a society and as we have here in Manitoba. It is an issue that I do not think has any partisanship in it in the sense that any party in this Chamber has a lock or a certain amount of more care or more concern than the other parties, because education, as pointed out, is the key to our future. It does give us the opportunity to grow, and it does give us the windows and the avenues of opportunity to develop and to pursue not only economic benefit but also social, moral and personal gratification and contribution within society and within the whole framework of the world that we are becoming so closely associated with.

As we look at the world today, and as we look at our country, and as we look at our city, and we look at our own municipality and our own community, the one thing that is very, very prevalent and the one thing that becomes very paramount is the fact that we are subjected to change. It becomes such a cliché in a sense, that we hear this word change, that we are becoming so quickly exposed that what was in vogue yesterday is no longer applicable for today, and tomorrow it is obsolete. So one of the things that we have to look at is having an education that does give us the opportunity to recognize this.

* (2020)

Here in Manitoba we are blessed with some very strong administrators, some strong educators and some strong teaching professions. We do have a very strong, a very dedicated and a very loyal teaching staff and surroundings, and I think that every teacher that is in that profession is a credit to his or her own vocation because of their dedication to want to help and to contribute through their insights, and through their knowledge to pass this on to the future generations. The teaching

profession in itself is a very noble and a very gratifying profession, and I do not think that it is an attack on the teaching profession when we talk about the funding and the lack of funding or the increase in funding. I think it is a realization of the facts. It is a realization of the economic times, and it is a realization that here in Manitoba, here in Winnipeg or here in our own constituencies, our school boards are going through some very trying, and prying to an extent, circumstances in trying to get the monies that they feel that they need.

As we look at education, I guess we could say that if we measure education by the amount of money we spend, we spend an awful lot of money on education. In fact, I believe this year with the proposed announcement that the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) came out—when we talk about \$770 million of funding for the province of Manitoba, for a province of one million people, we are spending an awful lot of money. In fact, if we look at our budget figures for between 1988 and 1992-93 we are looking at an increase in funding of over 23 percent—23 percent more money spent from 1988 to 1992-93.

So money is being spent on education, but money is not the answer, because if it was we would continue to just throw money at it, and we would think that we are having the best educated and the best qualified students and the best qualified capabilities of universities and of all our student faculties in all of Canada or indeed the world. That is not the problem, because if we were having that we still would not be getting the comments, the expressions being said that our students are graduating without the ability to fill out job applications. We are being inundated sometimes with suggestions that some of our students are illiterate in the sense that they cannot read when they graduate.

So there seems to be a quandary or a direction that a lot of us have to look at as to where and what is happening in education. This government has always been committed and will continue to be committed to providing a quality education to Manitoba students of all ages. We have to look at some of the initiatives that have come about in the last while and within the last budget regarding education, and we have to look at some of the initiatives that were brought forth or are in the process of being brought forth, and the fact there are revisions to the curricula in the introduction of new

programs and courses to strengthen skill development.

There are enhanced academic standards that are being looked at. There are the improving programs and opportunities for special needs students. There are expanded opportunities for students at risk. There is the implementing of a school financing formula which is targeting the classroom as a basic unit in education.

I would like to just talk about the funding formula that has been alluded to by some of the members of the opposition in regards to the inequities and the differences that they have pointed out. I would like to point out too that the funding formula when it was implemented was not a funding formula that was just implemented because of the fact that it had to be implemented. There was extensive consultation and an advocacy committee that looked at various alternatives in the methods of funding to the schools. This was done in co-operation with the Manitoba Association of School Trustees; it was done in collaboration with the Manitoba Teachers' Society; also, I believe, superintendents were represented on the board.

* (2025)

There was a lot of talk, there was a lot of input, and there were a lot of people of very high quality and high consciousness coming together to come up with a formula that they feel was equitable and was indeed manageable within all the school divisions. So the formula that was implemented was something that was done with an awful lot of input by an awful lot of qualified people, so the inequities and the disparities that the opposition are referring to are incidents, as has been pointed out, that are not brought down because of the government's firm direction but through a genuine concern for all school divisions so there is a recognition that this is about.

In talking to school divisions—as I believe one of the members on the opposition mentioned, to talk to your individual school divisions and to get a sense of feeling on it is naturally I think one of the things that all members did. I have to admit that I too have been out talking to my school trustees, I have talked to my superintendent, trying to get an indication as to their feelings and their concerns. They are naturally concerned because my school division is one of the ones that is going to have a shortfall in its funding.

They recognize that there is a shortfall, but they have also said that they want to work within that shortfall. They want to try to resolve the difficulties within it, and one of the things that they are looking at is some of the surplus that they have to use. They are looking at innovative other ways to try to come to this agreement, and they also feel that if they can work together and try to resolve some of this, they can work through these difficult times.

The recognition of difficult times has to be addressed because there is just no doubt about it that the funding is just not there. We have to look at our funding and look at critical ways, as in all other areas of Canada and other municipalities, and at the same time try to come up with a better way of coming back to providing an education that is not only equitable but is fair for all students here in Manitoba whether in the urban area or the city area or the rural areas.

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like to thank you for taking the time to come forth with some of my views on this important topic. Thank you very much.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Acting Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to speak on this resolution. I must comment that I hope that this will be a trend in the future in this House. I think it is important that this, the first day after the resumption of the sitting in this House, we are here today talking about a real issue, the situation in terms of education; a real issue, the absence of adequate funding for education; a real issue, the future of education in this province. My concern and the concern of many in my constituency that that future of education is going to be threatened by the actions of this government.

It is better than some of the debates we have had in this House. Some may recall the coat of arms debate. Unfortunately sometimes when governments are slow getting their legislation in, we often end up debating bills that might not otherwise get the same amount of attention, and I would say that this House should be doing more of this, debating the real issues whether it be health, whether it be education, or whether it be in terms of economic development.

I want to say that this issue does concern me greatly, Mr. Acting Speaker, and I focus it to begin with in terms of my own constituency, my own community of Thompson, the impact the situation of

funding has already had in schools in my community. I say that as someone who went through the Thompson school system. I graduated from R.D. Parker Collegiate, have been in Thompson since junior high actually, and I have two children in the Thompson school system. I can tell the government opposite and particularly the members such as the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) I thought gave one of the most incredible—and that is not a compliment—one of the most incredible speeches I have heard her give, and she has given some other incredible speeches, and that is not a compliment either.

I mean, when the minister starts talking about weddings and cleaning up champagne bottles, Mr. Acting Speaker, I must admit, weddings that I have been to, most people are not exactly celebrating with champagne nowadays in the current economic circumstances, but then again that is maybe the tale of two parties. But the members can talk about the NDP this, the NDP that, the NDP the other. This government has been in power for five years, and this government has brought in a budget that in my constituency in Thompson did what? Did they limit the increase this year? No. Did they freeze the increase? Did they have a frozen budget? No. This government for the first time in Manitoba history cut the funding, cut the funding by 2.7 percent.

* (2030)

Mr. Acting Speaker, I have had a lot of chance to talk to people in my constituency the last little while, and people remember quite a bit in the North. They remember Sterling Lyon.

An Honourable Member: The good old days.

Mr. Ashton: The member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) says the good old days. If you talk to anybody in the North, Mr. Acting Speaker, it is more like the dark ages when it comes to the Sterling Lyon period, but the member for Lakeside will appreciate this. I have had people say that even Sterling Lyon was not as bad as this government when it came to such things as education funding, and the member knows when he sat in the cabinet of Sterling Lyon that Sterling Lyon's government did not cut back funding by 2.7 percent, so this is unprecedented.

I want to say to members, such as the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh), it is unprecedented and it is going to have an unprecedented impact. We are not talking about

incremental shifts in programs and policies. We are looking at school divisions that are going to be making major decisions affecting whole series of programs that are offered in the school system, Mr. Acting Speaker. That is because it is a twofold policy decision by the government. It restricts the amount of local revenue that can be raised in terms of property tax at 2 percent. So it is a mandated—and to the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) who obviously does not understand, it is a mandated decision by the government that determines that the school boards have to cut. They have to cut, and it is going to be a very difficult exercise.

In my constituency, as I said, the school board has already had to make cuts. They eliminated 10 positions at the high school, and it is already affecting the quality of education at R.D. Parker Collegiate. They have already had to cut out teaching assistants dealing with special needs students, Mr. Acting Speaker. They have cut out a number of other valuable programs, but that was before this year. What are they going to do with 2.7 percent less than last year? What are they going to do? What is this government suggesting that they cut in order to make up a shortfall that in real terms when one looks at 2 percent inflation is close to 5 percent in one year? What are they suggesting be cut? Are they suggesting that we cut whole programs, that is the French Immersion program? Is that what they want?

Mr. Acting Speaker, do they want the school district to cut back further in terms of numbers of teachers in R.D. Parker Collegiate and other schools in Thompson? Do they want programs for special needs kids cut? Do they want those type of programs cut? Do they want the enrichment program—do they want that cut—the one program that has been brought in in a public school that attempts to deal with the kind of criticism that the private schools have preyed on in the need for quality education?

I ask the government, and the minister says they have given suggestions. I mean, suggestions—if you look at what is being proposed, as draconian as it is, one is clearly left with the conclusion that what is going to happen in school districts such as the school district in Mystery Lake and others throughout the province is they are going to have to cut programs, and it has cut significantly in terms of programs. The school district in my community

cannot survive on a 2.7 percent cut without cutting back in terms of those programs.

What do they want, Mr. Acting Speaker? You know, they are going to shut down the government on Fridays during the summer. What are they suggesting we do in the schools? Shut down the schools for extra numbers of days per year? In Canada we already have one of the smallest numbers of days in terms of days in school. So are they suggesting that? Well, no, obviously. It cannot be done. They cannot shut it down. Even the way that I feel they are doing incorrectly in government offices, it cannot be done in terms of education. What is going to result is going to be cuts in programs in communities such as Thompson, clear and simple.

What bothers me, Mr. Acting Speaker, about the way this government is dealing with the situation that they are in is that they are already looking for scapegoats, and they are already turning their backs on people that they should be working in partnership with. You know, sure, there are difficult times in this province. We have been through a recession. It is not the first time we have been through a recession and it will not be the last. There are a lot of people that understand that situation.

I think a lot of people question the role of this government and its failed economic policies, but even beyond that, people are willing to put aside differences, Mr. Acting Speaker, and sit down and resolve problems. What did this government do? What did it do with its civil servants? It had its Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) phone the head of the MGEU on a Thursday night at midnight to say—[interjection] If the Minister of Labour had checked, the MGEU president was in The Pas. Maybe the minister was not aware that sometimes people travel up to the northern part of the province. But he was told that there was going to be an announcement about something the next day that he might be interested to watch. That is how they dealt with the MGEU.

Let us see what kind of partnership this government has developed with MAST, with MTS and with parents and students in this province. What do they do, even in terms of this fiscal year, with the clawbacks we have seen in terms of university funding? What are they doing now with MAST, with MTS? Are they sitting down, saying we have a problem, let us resolve it? No.

The Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) brings in the most vicious cuts in history in Manitoba in terms of education and then says to the school boards: Here, it is your problem. Deal with it. You cannot do this on property taxes. Here are a few ideas. Go and deal with it. Take out 5 percent out of the real services that could be provided in terms of your budget and then come back and talk to us next year, Mr. Acting Speaker. That is problem solving? That is recognizing the tough situation we are in?

This kind of politics will not work, because what they do, instead of partnership, they substitute the process of finding scapegoats, and yes, they are looking for scapegoats now. They are looking for school board administration; they are looking for teachers; they are looking for anybody else to blame other than themselves.

Mr. Acting Speaker, they have gotten themselves into this mess, and no matter how much they protest, they will not be able to hide from that fact. If they want to get out of it, the route is not through these kind of cutbacks and it is not through this kind of confrontation with people in the education system. It is through finding solutions to the common problems we share, something this government has absolutely no idea of how to deal with.

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Acting Speaker, a rather interesting debate we have heard today. An interesting number of members across the way are paying attention to this very serious matter. Certainly, as the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) made comment, it is a real issue; it is a very real issue from many different directions.

I want to talk a little bit about how do we afford to pay the bills that we run up. We have had some comments from this side on that all day. I have listened to many people from that side and I never heard anybody be worried about how do you pay the bills. How do you pay the bills? If you are going to spend money on a social program, albeit a very important—[interjection] The member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), maybe he is a shining light over on the other side.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we have developed a society in Canada and in Manitoba that is the second best in the world. We have built it up on our ability to produce things, produce real wealth like agriculture, forestry, mining, manufacturing. We sell these

commodities all over the world; we bring money back; we tax the people; we tax the businesses. Then we get some taxes and we can have health care, we can have education, we can have our social services and all of the other amenities we think are important to establish our standard of living.

We cannot go on forever spending, spending, spending, and thinking that this magic is going to continue. If you look back in the '70s, we had high inflation, we could spend, spend, spend, and we could not do anything wrong because there was always more money coming in. Our wealth was growing; our disposable income was growing by about 13 percent per year per capita. That is phenomenal growth. The old-timers said it would not last forever. They said to the young people, do not borrow money, but they went out and borrowed and spent more and raised the prices of everything and then we got into the '80s and it got down to 8 percent per year, and now we are in the '90s—and we were still spending in the '80s beyond our capacity to pay, and here we are in the '90s and that growth is 3 percent per capita per year.

Now, from 3 percent to 13 percent is a tremendous change in ability in disposable income per capita in this country. Have we stopped our spending habits, controlled our spending habits as this has happened? I do not think so. If the members opposite will not talk to people, the real people, the people who are paying those taxes, the income tax and the sales tax, they also have to earn salaries to do that, and this is everybody. If you ask them what is happening in their households, they will tell you: it is getting tougher, tighter, we have less disposable income—consistent with the figures I just gave you—and we cannot pay any more taxes. You have taxed us to the limit. Live within those means.

It is critical we do that. The City of Winnipeg just had an election; that was the whole election, do not increase taxes. We had an election in 1990, 1988. As much as anything, that is why we were elected. Control the taxation, and we have increased expenditures—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

* (2040)

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Acting Speaker, you see, rather than solve the problem, if I do not live in Winnipeg, it is OK to raise taxes there, you see. Raise money

so I can spend it for you. It is just unconscionable we would carry on this attitude.

If anybody was watching television last night on W5 and I would like to know if any members over there saw W5 at ten o'clock last night.

An Honourable Member: No, we did not.

Mr. Findlay: No, they did not, OK. The story last night was very similar to what I think would play out in Canada in due course. New Zealand, 1985, socialist government, can you believe it? Socialist government—

An Honourable Member: They went bankrupt, I saw it.

Mr. Findlay: Yes, they put the country into bankruptcy, they put the country into bankruptcy. In 1985 the Labour government was in government in New Zealand, and they had to make some very serious decisions, because they had the best social system in the world, they had medicare 30 years before us, they had social this, social that. Great. Everybody was enjoying life, and they went to raise the money, and just like we have to, every few months, go and raise the money, go borrow it. And they were told, you do not get any more. You have to be kidding me, we do not get any more money? How do we run this system? We have the best in the world. They went from third highest standard of living in the world, right behind Canada, to 22nd in the world. Now, why? Because, as simple as this: they lived beyond their means.

Last fall, at the economic forum here at the Fort Garry Hotel put on by this government, a member or two from that side was there, and Roger Bacon who was the Minister of Finance in that government told us how it happened. [interjection] I am sorry, Roger Douglas.

An Honourable Member: Roger Bacon was the former Minister of Agriculture in Nova Scotia.

Mr. Findlay: That is why I said that. But Mr. Douglas, really—[interjection] You can blame anybody you want. You can blame anybody you want, but the fact of the matter is that we are still spending more than what we are bringing in, as governments, as Manitoba, as Saskatchewan, as Ontario, as Canada. We have, as was identified last night, New Zealand at that time, 44 percent of the gross domestic product was debt. We are at 44 percent. Now, we will probably last a little longer because we are a bigger country, we are more

diversified in the commodities we produce, but sooner or later we are going to hit the end of that rope and once she jerks.

We worry about being minus 2.7 percent in education in Mystery Lake. You worry about that. What happens if it is minus 80 percent? What happens? [interjection] Yes, I think we should think about that, because that is the restructuring we are going through as a province and as a country. I will tell the members opposite, we can differ in all kinds of ideology but when you run out of money it is all over.

The people who are working out there are producing real wealth, that is our farmers, our miners, our manufacturers, our foresters. They are in trouble trying to sell in the world because our commodities are priced too high. It is the buyers who say they are too high. Some commodities are up and some are down, but basically we are not selling enough—to the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton)—to bring in enough revenue to pay our bills. We are running a deficit every year, and last year this country alone of 27 million people added an additional amount to that debt, a bill of \$60 billion. One year—\$60 billion. Now, if I was the lender I would bring you in and say, this has got to stop. This has got to get under control. Minus 2 percent is such a small adjustment in this whole overall picture—

An Honourable Member: And it will not be Legislatures like this that will decide what the cuts will be.

Mr. Findlay: Exactly. It will be somebody outside the country who will pull that rope on us and health care will go down the tube. Education will go down the tube. Our standard of living will go down the tube. We have a chance to do something in this province, in this Legislature, in this country starting right now. I can say to the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) if he went to talk to his colleagues in Saskatchewan and Ontario in particular, and I think also B.C., they will tell him exactly the same story. It is the same everywhere when you are sitting across the bench from the people that are cutting you the money. You sit across the table from the people that are paying the taxes and they tell you the same thing. Why can we not show leadership and start to solve our problems?

All I have heard today is arguments about how everything is going to go to pot because of minus 2

percent. It is just ridiculous. If you want to look back, to the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), I go back to 1983 and the government you were in at the time increased the funding by 2.7 percent in education. Meanwhile the consumer price index was going up 6.7 percent. So they were minus 4. This year with CPI at 1.5 percent it is minus 2. The difference is 3.5.

An Honourable Member: What was it the year before?

Mr. Findlay: See, we do not want to talk about the issue that is in front of us. We always want to skirt around and try to hide. I tell you, when the banker pulls the rope you cannot hide, and I do not know how we are going to get this through to you people that the days of free and easy spending and throw money at it is over. It is over, and Canada has to start adjusting, and most people are prepared to, but they are getting tired of this political wrangling. Us saying there is no money and you saying throw money at it. You go to the next province and the political sides are reversed. The NDP is saying they do not have any money and the Conservative saying he is spending more over in Saskatchewan. In Ontario the same thing.

Our credit rating I would think is in some kind of jeopardy. We cannot go on doing this. We all know what it is like to deal with the banker as a household or as a business. Business people know that things do not always go up. Things can go down sometimes. Some businesses have had to freeze salaries for years. Some of them have had salaries go down. You see 100 jobs laid off here and 10,000 jobs laid off over there. It is not because they wanted to. They were forced to simply because they could not pay the bills.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I guess my time is up.

It is as simple as that. We have got to be able to pay our bills, and I wish that the members opposite would start to speak in that direction because those are the facts of life.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Acting Speaker, I am delighted to speak on this issue on the emergency debate on education that has been occupying us in the House this afternoon and this evening.

I would like, however, to begin by giving the members opposite a small history lesson in the political realities throughout North America since, well, let us say 1979. [interjection] Yes, I am

responding particularly to the member for Lakeside's (Mr. Enns) comments that were just put on the record talking about the problems with New Zealand.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the government has talked all today and they have talked in the past five years about the need to put the house in order, you cannot spend more than you take in, it is time to be fiscally responsible, and how New Democrats are spend, spend, spend. I would like to put on the record, again, to remind the members opposite exactly which political parties of which political and ideological bent have been in power throughout North America and much of Europe since 1979 when Margaret Thatcher became prime minister of Great Britain. It has not been the social democrats, I am sorry to say, or we would be in a lot better shape than we are today. It has not been the Democrats in the United States. It has not been in the federal government in Canada or in virtually any province in this country with the exception of Manitoba from 1981 to '88.

No, Mr. Acting Speaker, the party, no matter what its specific name, that has been in power throughout the decade of the '80s where we have seen enormous—the "Me" decade as the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) has so aptly reminded me that it should be called—where the debts have gone sky high, where the credit cards on the personal and the governmental and the provincial and federal and corporate spending has been absolutely unbelievable, those devastating economic and social and political events took place under conservative governments.

So let this government, this Conservative government who has the same ideological, right-wing agenda as Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government in Great Britain, as Ronald Reagan's and George Bush's Republican government in the United States and as Brian Mulroney's federal Conservative government since 1984 in this country have, the government of Manitoba today has exactly the same spending priorities, exactly the same total lack of any economic policies, any job creation strategies, any concept of a social justice system. This is the problem that we are facing today.

It is not New Democrat policies that have put us in this dreadful situation that we are in today, and I want to go on and make sure the government of the day realizes that we on this side of the House, and

the people in the province of Manitoba know exactly who is responsible for the dreadful situation we find ourselves in today from the province of Manitoba, from the city of Winnipeg, from the rural and the northern areas in this province, through the country, through North America, through the entire western world. It is not social democratic principles, it is conservative ideology that has brought us to where we are today.

(2050)

Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like to speak about the crisis in education that is facing us today. I find it very interesting that the government again has used the word choices and difficult choices in its comments on the education system. It is even more interesting that the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) has talked about difficult choices that are facing school boards and school divisions in this province when she herself has taken one of the main elements of choice away from those very school divisions. The whole concept that our public school system is based on is local autonomy. One of the main bulwarks and fundamentals of our public school system is that locally elected, locally accountable, locally responsible school board members make the decisions as to how to spend the money that is allocated not only from the provincial government but also, Mr. Acting Speaker, through their own taxing ability. A very clear decision has been made on the part of provincial governments for a very long period of time that local autonomy must have attached to it the local ability to raise funds.

Now, this Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) has unilaterally—and I may be open to correction, but I believe for the first time, certainly in the history of this province and maybe in the history of public education systems across the country—taken away the ability of local school divisions to make those decisions. She has taken away the ability of local residents through their discussions with their locally elected school boards to make the decisions as to what kind of funding level they are prepared to pay to support their public school system.

This is unconscionable, Mr. Acting Speaker, that a Minister of Education who talks about choices, who talks about local autonomy, whose government talks about how local agencies and local organizations are the ones who know best how to deliver services to their residents, has taken one of the major elements away from those very school

divisions that are designed specifically to be able to provide those local services. Those school divisions are accountable to the taxpaying members of their communities. Those school board members know that if they do not follow the wishes of their constituents they will not be returned to office. They are on the local level; they have a much better handle on what is going on in their local school divisions. For this provincial minister to unilaterally make that cut and unilaterally take that major component of local control and local autonomy away from school divisions is something that must not be allowed to take place in this province in our education system.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the ministers and the members of the government across the way today have talked about working with us, a co-operative way of thinking, the fact that we are going to consult and work together. Well, it is clear from what the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) has done and it has been clear from actions on the part of other ministers in this government, most particularly the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) that this government does not consult or if they do consult, their definition of consulting is to use a focus group to implement government policy not based on what is best for all of the people of the province but on the basis of what is going to be politically efficacious for their own constituents. It is reprehensible. The people of Manitoba will not allow this to go unanswered for very much longer.

This government has had five years. They will have had six budgets. The people of Manitoba know who is responsible for the problems they are facing and it is the government of the day with its ideological ties to the federal Conservatives, its ideological ties to Reagan and Bush and Margaret Thatcher that will be called accountable within the next two years. We on this side of the House are looking forward to that day, as are the people of Manitoba, with a great deal of anticipation. Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Acting Speaker, I have been in the House and I have attempted to listen fairly carefully to a lot of the debate here this afternoon, and I have to indicate to you, Sir, that I have been intrigued by the lack of understanding of the situation, the lack of positive suggestion around solution that I have heard this afternoon coming from members, particularly the official opposition.

I am intrigued that there is one small exception to that and that is the last speaker for the New Democrats, where my honourable friend the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) has indicated that the deficit of this country, and indeed, she even went to the free world, said it was a dreadful situation. I have to tell you that is the first time I have heard a New Democrat acknowledge that deficits and the debt problem is a serious problem.

I have to say that I am confounded as to how she can sit in that caucus where every single speaker, speaker after speaker, has said the solution is to spend more money, yet she recognizes the problem of a dreadful deficit situation. That is the kind of schizophrenia that allows New Democrats to talk about Reaganomics, Thatcher economics, Mulroney economics, et cetera, and try to hold up some vision of social democracy which can solve all the world's problems, and yet fail to acknowledge that 75 years of experiment in the peoples' government of the Soviet Union is the most colossal failure that the history of mankind in the world has ever known.

(Mr. Jack Reimer, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Nothing has failed more dismally than that system of economic structure in governance and government than the Soviet Union, and my honourable friends the New Democrats would want us to believe that only government has the answer to all the problems.

Now, I am intrigued because I have been asking a lot of people, as I visit different parts of the province, as to whether there is an understanding of how serious the situation, the challenge facing Canada, is and the challenge facing Manitoba. There is a lot of understanding amongst people on the street. I want to share with you an analogy that a young woman who—she and her husband are running a very, very enterprising business in rural Manitoba. Last week, when I walked into their place of business, she observed to me she is getting sick and tired of all of the media coverage and all of the whining about the government not spending money. She said, you know, these people that are complaining remind me of people who run their credit card up to the limit and then whine and complain when the bill comes in.

I thought what a perfect and simplistic analogy of really what the problem is. We have run our credit cards in this country up and now the bills are coming

in and the folks are rather disappointed. Now, it is interesting. I thought that today my honourable friends the New Democrats would at least make reference to the front page article in the Winnipeg Free Press wherein it talks about tax breaks to fatten wallets. Manitoba is singled out as being the province in which your pay packet will come out fatter and larger without having to go to your employer and ask for a raise. Why?

Ms. Barrett: If you have a job.

Mr. Orchard: Well, my honourable friend, the mouth from Wellington, says if you had a job. Well, my honourable friend from Wellington should appreciate that Manitoba has the lowest unemployment rate in Canada and my honourable friend from Wellington should recognize, instead of being always looking down the wrong end of a sewer pipe, that there is 90 percent employed in the province of Manitoba, and they are creatively working.

* (2100)

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Acting Speaker, I do believe that the comments made by the member, particularly the comment that the member just made about the mouth, this member in particular should not throw criticism of that type. Also, the reference to the wrong end of a sewer pipe, I do not know, perhaps the minister is an expert on sewer pipes, but it is certainly not an appropriate thing to bring into debate in this House. I would ask you to ask him to be more careful in choosing his remarks.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reimer): I thank the honourable member. The honourable member does not have a point of order, but I should point out to all members that all members are honourable in this Chamber. I would ask for caution in speaking. Thank you very much.

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Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Speaker, I will naturally apologize to the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) and anyone else who was offended by those comments, but I am getting a little distraught with all of the flip-flops that I see from the NDP day in and day out.

On one hand, they want to blame everything on the Mulroney government, on Reagan, on Thatcher,

whomever, but yet, do you know where my honourable friends are missing the point? I sit on a council of ministers of health as my colleague sits with ministers of education, and you know what, it does not matter what your political affiliation is, whether you are Liberal, New Democrat or Conservative. In Canada today, you are making difficult choices because the limit has been run up on the credit card and the bill is coming in.

It does not matter whether you are Bob Rae's government in Ontario, whether you are the government of Ralph Klein in Alberta, you have significant problems today in making the budget meet. The difficulty we have as a nation is our tendency, when we run into these circumstances, to seek out someone to blame. In the education system right now, my honourable friends in the New Democrats are rallying around those, be they the Teachers' Society, be they trustees, be they whomever, and are saying the government is to blame because the government is not giving us enough money, which is to say that the solution to education is to put in more money.

Well, we have put in more money for 20 years in this country. Ask yourself the simple question, are we getting a better quality student out of the education system? I do not think anyone would say we are. So you have to ask yourself, if more money is the solution, why has it not worked?

The same question is posed in health; the same question has to be posed in social services; the same question has to be posed in every aspect of the North American and Canadian and Manitoban economy. This is not the time to reflect on the past. What worked in the past will not work in the future. Until you understand that, you cannot possibly develop a vision for what will work.

This government came to office in 1988 with a vision that we were going to make judicial attempts not to raise taxes, not to increase the deficit, to take the inappropriate spending out of government, and what are the results? Today, Manitobans will take more money home because of four budgets—it is wrong from that standpoint, it is five budgets—without an increase of personal income taxes, and that is what is driving a greater share of wealth and take-home pay in Manitoba. Was that vision for the future an appropriate one, and is it working? I submit to you, yes.

I look forward to the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), because from his seat when the question was posed about university funding, which would you rather have, the professors and the employees at our universities take less as every other employee in Manitoba has done without exception, or should you raise taxes?

My honourable friend the member for Broadway spouts from his seat, raise taxes. That is always the solution of the New Democrat. Mind you, he did not get the opportunity to put that on the record because his confreres stifled him. So much for academic freedom at the university. So much for academic freedom and freedom to speak. He could not stand up and say that he believed increased taxations were the option that a New Democratic Party would exercise.

Point of Order

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): I did not say that. All I said was yes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reimer): The member did not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Speaker, I want to thank my honourable friend. He stood up and said: All I said was, yes, taxes are the answer. Increase taxes, that is what he said.

Point of Order

Mr. Ashton: You know, we have one very basic rule in Beauséjour, and that is when a member makes a statement about himself that that is to be accepted by the House.

If the minister had listened to what the member just said from his feet was that he never said any of the remarks attributed to him by the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). So he should accept that and instead of creating these phantom boogey people for him to debate, perhaps try and debate the issue for a change and not waste the time of this Chamber.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reimer): The honourable Minister of Labour, on the same point of order.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Deputy Government House Leader): As acting government House leader on the point of order, I would just point out that the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) is asking the Speaker to make a ruling based on a practice that he regularly indulges on in this House

as attributing comments to various members and of creating so-called boogeymen in which to fight his debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reimer): I would thank the members. There was no point of order. The honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) to continue.

* * *

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Speaker, I agree with one thing that my honourable friend the House leader for the New Democrats has said, let us debate the issue. The issue is debating funding in education. Our proposal for funding in education reduces the level of support to the public school systems and disallows a pass through to the property tax base, so that school divisions have to come to grips with some management decisions. That is a very simple analogy that everybody in the funded agencies, in the rest of government, in the private sector, in the free world is coming to grips with.

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

We are asking the education system to respond to the criticisms that are there, not from myself or anybody else in government but from analysis after analysis that says, we have to do a fundamental rethink of education in Canada and indeed in North America.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Order, please. The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): It is a pleasure to speak on this emergency debate on education. I think there is one thing that all members can agree on and that is the importance of education. I have found some very interesting quotations on education that I would like to share with the House.

Education makes a people easy to lead but difficult to drive; easy to govern but impossible to enslave. This is attributed to Henry Peter, who was Lord Brougham.

Cicero said, what greater or better gift can we offer the republic than to teach and instruct our youth, which is an interesting concept to suggest that education is a gift to children and youth. It implies that therefore it is a precious gift and one that we should value. As I said, I think we can agree on that. We all do value it.

Aristotle said, all who have meditated on the art of governing humankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth. If we could paraphrase that and apply it to the modern context of Manitoba, we could say that the future of Manitoba depends on the quality of our educational system today.

We also have a rather conservative educational philosophy summed up by former President Ronald Reagan who said, why should we subsidize intellectual curiosity? I think that kind of sums up the attitude of this provincial government who want to cut community college courses and who want to, at the same time, increase funding for private schools and decrease funding for the public education system.

The other thing that there has been considerable discussion about this afternoon and this evening in debate is, how are we going to pay for the increasingly high cost of education? Well, I think that what we are into is a philosophical discussion about who is responsible as well as who pays.

* (2110)

I think that what the government opposite is doing by capping educational tax levies is basically undemocratic. The reason is that we have trustees who are elected and who are accountable and who are responsible to their electors for setting an educational tax levy. When the government caps the educational tax levy, then they are taking accountability and responsibility away from trustees. I think this is undemocratic. In fact, there are people who are on boards who are not accountable at all, people that are on boards of separate and private schools. There is no accountability to the public by those individuals. They just get the money, but they do not have to stand for public elections.

When you compare school divisions, you see that some have higher property tax levies than others, and sometimes that is for a good reason. I was told, for example, that in Seven Oaks they have a higher educational levy than other school divisions. I was told—it was one person's opinion—but I was told the reason is that the electors in Seven Oaks School Division voluntarily want to spend more money on education and agree to pay higher education levies to do that.

I believe that is their prerogative and that is their right and that is why we have elected trustees. I

think that if they go out and raise the taxes unfairly or too high, they are politically accountable and they will be defeated at the next election if the electorate feels that they raised taxes too high. But they are not being given that opportunity. There is an undemocratic and unfairness to this legislation that is going to be introduced shortly to cap the ability of trustees to raise property taxes.

Secondly, the provincial government provides financial assistance for education. That is the other major source of funding for school boards. Now the dollars come from a different place. They come primarily from income tax revenue. I believe that income tax is a more equitable and more fair system of taxation because it is based on the ability to pay. It is much more fair than the source of revenue which school boards have for their tax base, which is primarily based on property.

This has a great effect on my constituents in Burrows, because in Burrows we have a large number of people who are poor. The majority though would consider themselves middle class, people who are working. These people are worse off now than they were four years ago. Their federal taxes are up since 1984. If you were to read Frances Russell in the Free Press, you would know that their federal income taxes are up. My guess is that because provincial taxes are tied to federal taxes, probably their provincial taxes are up as well, and so they are worse off now in terms of taxation. Their incomes are flat or have declined. For many families their income has declined substantially as people have become unemployed. I know this from going door to door in the constituency of Burrows and frequently finding people at home during the daytime who have been in the workforce and who want to be in the workforce and now find themselves unemployed.

We also have many constituents in Burrows who are senior citizens. They have paid property taxes all their lives. They continue to do so, but since they retired their income went down substantially, but their school board levy is based on their property tax assessment. Many of them are on Canada pension, old age security, but many of them do not have company pensions or Canada pension, and they are on old age security and their guaranteed income supplement—[interjection] Yes, they get a property tax rebate but it has not gone up for many years.

So these people cannot afford to pay increasing property taxes of any kind. I think the school divisions, therefore, rightfully rely on provincial tax revenue, because it is a fairer system of taxation. It is based more on the ability to pay. Property tax levies are not based on the ability to pay; they are based on the assessed value of your house.

Today's editorial in the Free Press I believe was rather critical of the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) for capping education increases, and points out that there will be legislation that we will shortly be debating. I think that what this government has done is said you cannot increase the levy. So what would school trustees normally do? Normally they would say, well, we got less money from the province so we are going to increase your tax levies and they would be able to blame it on the province. But what this government is doing is they want their cake and they want to eat it too, so they have said, you cannot raise taxes and you cannot blame it on us because we capped the education increases.

So we will be debating the legislation when it comes in and I will have longer than my current 15 minutes.

An Honourable Member: Ten minutes.

Mr. Martindale: Ten minutes, pardon me.

There was also a letter to the editor today in the Free Press by Maryann Mihychuk, the chairperson of Winnipeg School Division No. 1, and I am not going to read the entire letter, but I would like to quote from it. She says: "The division will be receiving less money, but is still required to provide more services in such areas as counselling, health, social services and nutrition in order to assist children to be able to learn."

In Winnipeg No. 1, approximately 43 percent of the students who have special needs in the province of Manitoba are located in my school division, School Division No. 1—43 percent of all the students in Manitoba who are deemed to be special needs students are in one school division, the inner city Winnipeg School Division No. 1.

I spoke to a teacher at a social event on Saturday night. She said at her school and School Division No. 1 at least half of the students in her class have either parents who are on social assistance or the children are clients at the Child Guidance Clinic or they are clients of Winnipeg Child and Family Services. These are just examples of some of the special needs of students, many, many students in

Winnipeg School Division No. 1. Winnipeg No. 1 has greater needs because of this, and therefore I believe they need greater resources. I think that the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) and her government should consider this an investment in the future of this generation.

I do not have the federal Senate report on children in poverty, but I remember reading there that this committee calculated the cost of children living in poverty now in terms of future dollars that are going to be spent—millions of dollars that are going to be spent in literacy programs, in prison costs, in social assistance costs, in unemployment costs. This all-party report of the Senate committee, which included the three major parties represented here, all agreed that the government should invest more money in children and getting children out of poverty because the money you spend today you will save in future costs.

To conclude, since my time is probably running out, I would like to talk about two issues of concern to me. The first one is destreaming. Parents in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 and many other school divisions are very concerned about the plans of this government to destream education in Grade 10, and the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) is a proponent of this proposal. We would like to see the evidence so that we could make up our minds. Apparently there are studies for and studies against. I would like to ask the Minister of Education to show us those studies—

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

Mr. Ben Sveinson (La Verendrye): Mr. Acting Speaker, I have sat here this afternoon and this evening and I have listened to many members speak on this topic that is so vitally important to our public at large and our children. I would just like to say that during that time when the majority of the government benches were full, I saw the opposition numbers drop to three. This was an emergency debate. Now, what I am saying here—

Point of Order

Mr. Martindale: Referring to only three opposition members in the House, that has never been true this afternoon, never true this evening and I would like him to correct the record.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Order, please. The honourable member does not have a

point of order, but I would caution the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson) that we do not refer to the numbers or on the absence of any members in the House.

* * *

* (2120)

Mr. Sveinson: Mr. Acting Speaker, let us just say that the numbers were not so strong in the Assembly, in the opposition benches.

I have heard many things said about this government and indeed the Education minister (Mrs. Vodrey) this afternoon and the policy put forward. They have said things like, for example, this government is not supportive of education, they are not preparing our children for the future.

Let us take a look at that. When they say not supportive of education and not preparing our children, the changes that have gone on in the last couple of years, for example, our community colleges and the direction in which they are moving, now in fact dealing with jobs, or education to help our young people in jobs which are actually out there—not jobs that are somewhat of a myth and we just continue to educate.

We can look at our university courses which are also moving in the direction where our young people can in fact get jobs. These are very positive things for young people in our future. Also the fact that education funding has increased approximately 23 per cent since 1988 to '93, again very supportive of our education system and of our young people and their education.

I have heard charges from across the way that this government or our Premier is not showing leadership. What is leadership? Let us take a look at the NDP when they were in power. Let us take a look back and just see what they gave us in leadership. Their policy obviously is to spend as long as we can borrow. That is what it seems to be. I am not being somewhat smart here, I am just saying it the way it is. Facts are there.

It is shown in the time the NDP were in from approximately '80 to '88—in that neighbourhood—they ran up approximately a \$4 billion deficit. Then because of—I do not know what you would call it, an overpayment and a bit of a jump in I believe it was nickel or something. There was a surplus, a blip on the screen for a short period of time and it seems to have disappeared now. Just in the last little while,

all of a sudden that little surplus thing was gone. The surplus was never there. A \$4 billion deficit and a little blip that they were talking about as far as a surplus. Let us not kid about it. A \$4 billion deficit is not a surplus.

Then let us think about today. That \$4 billion deficit that they helped us along with and, like Ontario, they are going to spend themselves out of trouble, which is somewhat silly. But now we are paying an interest that is choking us. It is choking our health care system; it is choking our social services; it is choking our education; and from across the way you hear that cry: spend, spend. It is somewhat sad.

The opposition say, actually, spend until you cannot borrow any more and then slash programs, because this is what would happen under the pretence that we have done all we can.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Is that not somewhat sad? Manitobans, I say to you, beware of the NDP bearing gifts, because that is just what they have done. It does not have to be that way. Let us stop for just a minute and think. It does not have to be that way. A little bit of hurt now, a little bit of squeezing, a little bit of innovation, a little bit of understanding, a little bit of talking to one another—[interjection] Oh, my. Now the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) wants to take my speech. He is agreeing with me. My goodness. We have taken one giant step forward. But I give him credit. If he is with me now, I say that we have got it made.

We have to think now because each year—and we do not have to take the whole deficit and talk about it. OK, the NDP put it there, I am finished with it. Let us take the yearly deficit and throw out a figure of \$300 million. The next year, what are you looking at? Approximately anywhere from \$20 million to \$30 million in interest out of your operating capital for that year. Now how do you cover that? Where do you get it from? Every time you go to look for it in any one of the different departments, you hear a scream. You are bad. For goodness sake, somehow we have to bring it to a stop.

I served a number of years on school board, in fact as chairman of finance. I know that during that time—and I will not go back to who was in government at that time—but each year that we were given an increase or just the yearly amount per student in the division, we heard a cry from the teachers' society and from all the other different

unions within the division. If it was 2 percent, we want 2 percent. If it was 3 percent, we want 3 percent. It was gone, but do you know that I as a school board trustee was considered a nice guy, because I did not have to raise taxes—I did not have to raise taxes. But the government of the day was considered somewhat—well, they were not doing such a great job on the deficit side, if you will.

I am considered a nice guy, but the government is not. Now, that does not really make sense. Are we saying that school boards, municipalities and hospitals are not part of government? Is that what we are saying? That is somewhat ridiculous, is it not? If we are funding them, they are not part of government?

I think it is time that right from the federal government, right through the whole system, we have to say, look, we are all government, it all comes down to one spot. That is the taxpayer.

It is just about time we realized that. It is just about time everybody, every level realized that. Indeed, if we stopped and realized that, we can in fact say, OK, all right, we have gone the limit, we cannot spend any more, the deficit is there, it is choking us. It is like putting a noose around your neck and every day pulling it a little bit more and being stupid enough not to let go. Please, please.

I cannot believe sitting here and listening to comments from honourable members saying the opposite. I would ask all of you to consider and to in fact stand behind the Minister of Education, help out the Minister of Education and the school boards and the municipal government and hospitals in their attempt and our attempt, all of our attempts, to come to a halt with the deficit spending.

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

Mr. Santos: Mr. Speaker, because of the economic imperative of making a living, we often see things from a materialistic looking glass and we fail to recognize that the things in life that count the most are the intangible things that cannot be counted and cannot be measured, including honour, virtue, education.

* (2130)

I would like to talk, Mr. Speaker, about the purpose of education, why it is the duty of the government to provide for this function in our society. How do we get the education that we

need? Why should we educate ourselves and our youth and our people?

It seems to me that education's purpose is to train people, to train us to think clearly, to decide correctly, to solve problems and in general to live life the way it should be lived, not merely to earn a living, but to develop a style of life that is worthy of a human being.

We do not acquire education without any effort or investment in time as well as in money. On an individual level, an individual person who wants to improve himself in life has to invest his time, his youth, the best years of his life studying, working, all individual effort.

On the societal level, it is the duty and function of government to help the individual to achieve the highest potentialities he is capable of, that is to say, to develop all his faculties, his skills, his energies to such a level that he will be an asset to the community to which he belongs, rather than a liability. So we will say education is expensive. Of course it is because it is a form of investment, and any form of investment will require an initial outlay of expenditure.

On the part of the individual, he has to invest the best years of his life. It entails also opportunity cost in the sense that he cannot devote the same time to making money. He has to devote that time seeking knowledge, truth and honour, and in that sense, it is expensive on the part of both the individual and society. But if it is expensive, we cannot simply say it is expensive, therefore we should cut the educational function. What will be the consequence if we do so? If education is expensive, ignorance is more expensive.

Have you ever encountered an individual who does not know what to do in life, who does not know how to deal with a problem, who does not know how to solve? It will be more expensive on the part of that individual to live his life, and if you cut the opportunity of the individual to develop his fine faculties as a human being, the money that you will save in cutting education is the same amount of money that you will later need to spend for jails, for prosecution, for all kinds of law enforcement order needed by society in order to maintain its integrity as a society. So whatever we save in the education of our youth, we will have to spend in the form of a more expensive reformatory system, prison system,

health system because they do not know how to take care of their health. That is the point.

Where should the money come from? The money comes from the creation of wealth by society through the economic machinery. To create that wealth, what do we need? Good managers. Who are the good managers reputed to be? The Progressive Conservatives? But how shall we judge management? We have to judge management by its result. If we look objectively at the result, have we achieved the expectation of a good manager? No, we have lots of unemployment in this province. We have lots of bankruptcies around us, and therefore I say that the theory that was the economic theory of Reagan, Thatcher, Mulroney and of this Conservative Party is no longer relevant in our modern economy and in our society.

Let me point out what Robert Reich, in a book called *The Work of Nations*, has stated: There is a change in economic globalization. Money—listen, Mr. Premier—money, technology, ideas flow easily now from one country to another country. The only claim of any country, of any territory is its own people as its own resource and that people, to be a good asset for economic productivity, must be an educated, trained, well-qualified people.

If we cut on education, what kind of work force shall we have, what kind of managers shall we have, what kind of directors of industry shall we have? People who do not know what they are doing or what they are going to do—that is exactly what will be the consequences if we cut the educational function in our society.

I honestly believe that the quality of our economic performance depends very much on the quality of our human resources, on the quality of our people. The quality of our people in turn is determined by the kind of education that we institute and implement in our society. We can no longer afford to have a two-tier kind of education, one for the rich and one for the poor, because this is divisive in our society.

If you want a good, fresh idea, why do you not integrate the private and public educational system and make it a good system that is accessible and open to all. Then you develop a working force that has all the skills, that knows all the technology, that knows all the essential requirements in order to run the economy and therefore achieve economic prosperity.

We cannot say that we are good managers and yet fail in our economic program. We cannot say and claim that we are good in running the government because we did not raise taxes. Look at the present mayor of Winnipeg. Because of a promise that was based on the wrong premise, she is just sticking to that promise in order to preserve her credibility, but in so doing she has to cut services, essential services, and if essential services are cut, what is the government function left? Is that the kind of justification there is? Failure—the same thing, we have to be judged by the results that we get. If we get unemployment, then our claim to be good managers is no longer true, no longer relevant, because we are applying the wrong economic theory, only we do not have the necessary skill and necessary knowledge in order to achieve our economic prosperity.

An Honourable Member: Conrad, what about the Crow benefit to farmers?

Mr. Santos: The farmers, too, have to be educated. They have to know that stubble burning is not good for the health of the people. The farmers want to provide the food, and when the food is taken in by the population and they have their health deteriorated because of this insensitive attitude towards the environment, we need sustainable economic development consistent with the preservation of our resources, consistent with the elevation of our people as the most important resource that we ever had or will have in our society.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (2140)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I find it very interesting, the comments that have been made by members opposite. I wish the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) would stay and I could entertain her a little for a little while. I was listening to the member for Wellington when she spoke, and I have some comments to respond to her on.

I do say that this is really an unusual circumstance when we have an emergency debate put forward by the Liberal Party, in fact by their Education critic I do believe, and this was set up to be the most important thing, and presumably she was prepared for an emergency debate. This is so urgent that she does not have the time to be able to fully participate in this debate, I say, Mr. Speaker. She must have had other plans that have prevented her from her full participation.

This is so important that she cannot even be a total participant in this debate, and in fact the Liberal Party, were it not for the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema), would be in total embarrassment that they have put forward this motion and are not even able to give it their full attention and participation.

Mr. Speaker, they ought to be ashamed of themselves, and I think they ought not to bring forward another motion for emergency debate for the remainder of this session, because we will remind them about how they treat so casually and with such lack of respect the things that they say are the most urgent matters in Manitoba today.

I want to just talk about what I have listened to from members opposite, and I have been paying attention by virtue of the monitor to the speeches that have been going on throughout the course of the day. Not once have I had any alternative offered by the members opposite, not once, other than just simply spend more money. We know that is the consistent position of the New Democratic Party: spend more money and raise it by way of taxes.

It does not matter whether or not those taxes will impact upon the most vulnerable in society, the working poor, as did the 2 percent tax on net income that the Pawley administration brought in and it started to apply to those with incomes of \$12,000 and up. That was their concern for the working poor. Everybody got caught in the net of increased taxes.

During the period in which those New Democrats were in office, that six-and-one-half-year period, they say that we ought to put more money on the corporations. They increased in that six-and-one-half years the income taxes on corporations by 48 percent and on individual Manitobans by 139 percent.

They raised taxes 16 times during the course of that six-and-one-half years, and they created five new taxes including the payroll tax, the high income surtax, the 2 percent tax on net income, the land transfer tax and the corporation capital tax surcharge—all of those new taxes.

An Honourable Member: How many of those did you get rid of?

Mr. Filmon: Well, we have reduced personal taxes. Personal income tax has been reduced by 2 percent, and we have taken 70 percent of those businesses that were paying the payroll tax off

paying the payroll tax. That is what we have done, Mr. Speaker, so we have indeed worked on it.

But more so than that, the front page of today's newspaper, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) referred to it, tells the whole story: Tax breaks to fatten wallets. It tells about how Manitoba is the best in Canada in terms of having a reduction in personal taxes on individual Manitobans, and they tell how the average worker's take home pay will increase \$215.44 this year.

Now do you know what that is equivalent to? That is equivalent to a \$107 million injection in the economy of Manitoba. That is 500,000 working Manitobans getting an average of \$215.44 more of disposable income. That is bigger than any megaproject. That is bigger than any spending that they might advocate on the Jobs Fund, Mr. Speaker. That is a shot in the arm. Next year it is supposed to go to \$363.68 which is the equivalent of a \$183.8 million injection into the economy. That is what our policies of keeping taxes down have done for this province, only in Manitoba, no other province in the country.

Mr. Speaker, when I heard earlier today the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) talking about the fact that Conservative policies were not working, is she trying to tell us that the policies of the Howard Pawley administration that drove the taxes in this province up to the highest level right across the country, that ripped out of the pockets of individual Manitobans, including the working poor, thousands of dollars in increased taxes, that this is the way to run government, that this is the way to help the poor and the lame and the people in this province who have difficulty? No, it is not.

I will just say, because I only have a few minutes, that with respect to education, I keep hearing over and over and over again from members like the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) equate the quality of education to the amount spent on education, nothing else.

They do not suggest that if every teacher in this province were to take perhaps a 2 percent reduction in their pay packet and help everybody in this province to go along that all of the teachers could still be employed and all of the classroom ratios would be maintained and all of the services would be maintained. No, they will not countenance that, Mr. Speaker. Why? Why is that? When

everybody in the rest of society has had to have freezes and reductions, why would they not suggest that the teachers of this province should participate in this whole process and do the same? Why not give up the in-service days? Why not? Why could that not be done? They could still come and do their professional development so that they could also make a commitment to the students, to the quality of education.

We as a nation spend more per capita on education than any other nation in the world. We as a nation spend more as a percentage of our GDP on education than any other nation in the world. I would hope that members opposite would not argue that we are getting the best education of any country in the world, because everywhere we look at international tests, at international evaluations, we are not getting it, and that has all gone up in the last two decades.

Those numbers have gone up. We were not always the highest spending nation in the world on education. We are today, and we still do not have the best quality education in the world today. On no international test is that ever demonstrated, Mr. Speaker. So let us stop talking about quality of education as being dependent upon the amount of money that is being spent.

Let us talk about a commitment by everybody in education, by the teachers, by the staff, by everybody, the administration, everybody, to saying, let us try and do a better job and live within our means at the same time like everyone else in society is doing. That is the only solution that we should be realistically looking at. We have had a recession and everybody has had to share a bit of pain. The last thing we need to do is raise taxes.

I will say just one final thing, Mr. Speaker. I have heard them complaining over there that we are restricting the flexibility of school boards. The member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) said it, and she is nodding her head. The fact is that last year, when we did not do that, they were the first ones up on their feet saying, you are offloading onto the school divisions, and they said, that is a GFT. It is not this year, because we are ensuring that they cannot raise the taxes.

So how are they going to vote? Which way do the New Democrats want it? Do they want them to be able to raise the taxes? Is that their desire or do

they not? Let us say it, you cannot have it both ways.

Unfortunately, members opposite are only speaking from a personal standpoint. The member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), when he got up, said, the economic imperatives of making a living prevent us from taking a rational view of this.

Well, the fact of the matter is, that is the economic imperative, that we want everybody to be able to make a living and to be able to share in the difficult times and the good times in this province, to be able to create an economic base in which we are competitive and in which people throughout this province are able to have some after-tax income just as they now have, according to the Conference Board, more after-tax income available to them for disposal than any other province in the country, thanks to this particular government.

I want New Democrats to stand up and say that they want taxes raised, that they want to take more out of the pockets of the working poor in Manitoba like they did throughout the '80s. That is not the answer, Mr. Speaker.

* (2150)

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): It is a pleasure to join in on this debate this evening, and to follow the Premier (Mr. Filmon) is a special honour. I just want to begin my remarks with a story.

Just about a week ago, I had the opportunity to attend a banquet in the town of Selkirk, the junior parliament banquet. It was in the honour of the governor-general, and the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) was the governor-general at this particular banquet.

All of us were given the opportunity to address the crowd of young men and women, to basically talk about the junior parliament program and about some of the gains that these young individuals have made by their participation in the program.

The Minister of Labour got up and gave a very good speech, as he often does, about the benefits of junior parliament because, in fact, the Minister of Labour was the first prime minister in the youth parliament in Selkirk. He gave a very good discussion about all the valuable skills that he has learned, the ability to stand up and public speak, how it has given him self-esteem and self-confidence, did a very good job as usual.

The final speaker at the banquet was a teacher, and he was the co-ordinator of the event. He spoke again about how meaningful this was to all the participants and to himself. In his very last remark, he stated that he felt that this program, Youth Parliament, may be in jeopardy because of the government's current policy towards education in this province. Here we have the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) going on and on and on expressing his concerns about what a great program this is, yet the ones who are delivering this program fear that it is going to stop. He did not mention that in his speech, but the teachers mentioned that to me later after the banquet was over, which is of course the essence of the problem, that good programs throughout the province now will be cut.

A 2 percent cut to the public schools will be devastating for school divisions in this province. The Filmon government has claimed in the past that education is a priority. This is an incredible way, Mr. Speaker, to demonstrate that commitment to Manitobans.

Last year alone there were 200 teachers laid off. It is unpredictable what is going to happen this year. Obviously, it is going to deepen current inequities that are in the system now, especially for small school divisions and rural Manitoba. The member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) mentioned earlier that there are going to be school divisions within her own constituency that are going to suffer special problems because of this government cutback.

In the last three years they have offloaded tax increases to local property taxpayers. They have always operated under the illusion that they do not raise any taxes, but no one out there except for the government can honestly admit that or actually believe it.

There was an historic announcement, there was an historic event. This is the first time in history that school divisions and students will receive less money in this province. This is coming before the next historical announcement, which will be the largest deficit in the history of this province, again brought in by the members opposite.

We attend a lot of different functions around this province. Whenever there is a photo op, government ministers will be there with a plaque awarding it. I was wondering who is going to be giving this Minister of Finance (Mr. Maness) a plaque for coming in with the highest deficit in the

history of this province, Mr. Speaker. It is a shameful event.

Again, the effects on local school divisions by the 2 percent cut is still unknown, but there are predictions currently of larger classrooms, less teachers and a real threat to the quality of education in this province. The predicted cuts will force an exodus of teachers from this province at a time when the province is already losing Manitobans, when this government's policies are already driving Manitobans out.

In fact, in Liberal Quebec, where the funding was reduced over the past decade to \$6 billion from \$7 billion, the schools are cleaned every second day, the school division has cut the maintenance budget

and laid off staff, and of course they were forced to cut programs.

Mr. Speaker, with those few comments, I would like to conclude my remarks this evening. I hope Manitobans will never forgive this government and they will never forgive this Premier (Mr. Filmon). Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Will the House call it ten o'clock?
[agreed]

The hour being 10 p.m., this House now adjourns and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. (Tuesday).

Also, the hour being 10 p.m., this does conclude this matter of urgent public importance.

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Monday, March 1, 1993

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