



Sixth Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature

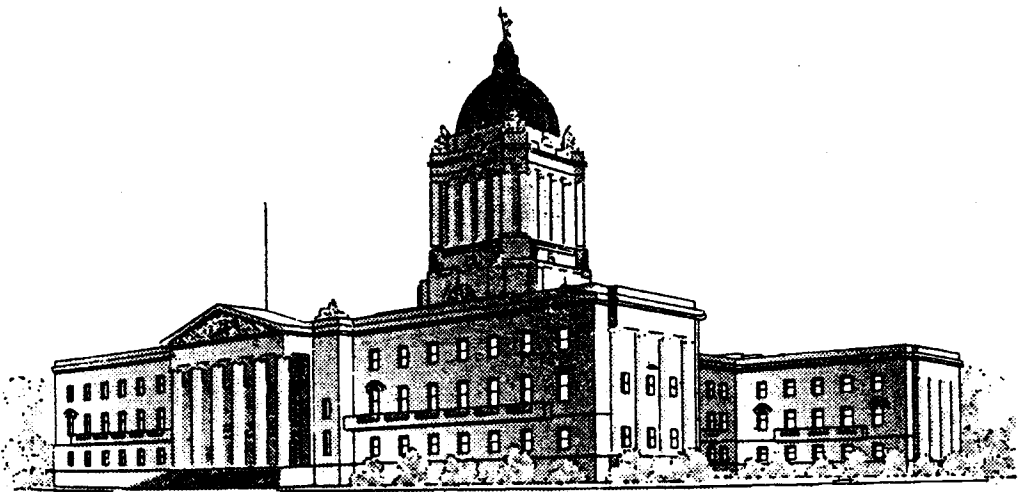
of the

**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**

**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

**(Hansard)**

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Fifth Legislature**

**Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation**

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

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, March 17, 1995

The House met at 10 a.m.

**PRAYERS**

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

**Physical Education in Schools**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Kathleen Lukas, Nancy Clyde, Iris Van Caeyzeele and others urging the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) to consider reinstating physical education as a compulsory core subject area.

**Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Carlos Benevides, Jay Taylor, Rushawn McMaraman and others who request the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) to consider maintaining physical education as part of the core curriculum from kindergarten to senior high.

**READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS**

**Communities' Public Education**

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

**An Honourable Member:** Yes.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Clerk will read.

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

WHEREAS funding for public schools by the provincial government has been cut twice in the past three years; and

WHEREAS provincial funding for the school district of Mystery Lake has dropped by nearly

\$2 million over the same period, more than 10 percent; and

WHEREAS funding for private schools has increased by over 110 percent under the same provincial government; and

WHEREAS Thompson was faced with a 48 percent increase in the education support levy tax as a result of reassessment in 1993, resulting in \$500,000 leaving our community; and

WHEREAS the Thompson school district is now faced with a massive \$1.8-million deficit equivalent to a 48 percent increase in local school taxes; and

WHEREAS unless the minister reviews this funding the Thompson school district will be forced to consider both a \$500,000 tax increase and severe program cuts totalling over \$1.3 million.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly request the Minister of Education and Training (Mr. Manness) to reconsider the funding model to ensure that Thompson and other communities in this province are able to maintain quality public education.

\* (1005)

**Physical Education in Schools**

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

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

WHEREAS the proposed changes to the Manitoba curriculum would have no physical

education required for students after Grade 8; and

WHEREAS the social, intellectual, emotional and physical benefits of physical education have been proven through extensive research; and

WHEREAS requiring physical education for high school sends a message that physical activity is important for life and encourages high school students to make life choices to stay active and it fits into a preventative health strategy; and

WHEREAS many parents, students, medical professionals and educators, health and recreation specialists are urging that physical education be increased in schools;

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Education to consider maintaining physical education as part of the core curriculum from kindergarten to senior high.

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the Quarterly Report to January 31, 1995, for Manitoba Public Insurance.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### Bill 17—The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act

**Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Urban Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move the introduction of Bill 17, The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg, and that the same be now received and read a first time, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey).

**Mr. Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Urban Affairs, seconded by the honourable Minister of Justice, that leave be given to introduce Bill 17, The City of

Winnipeg Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

**Mrs. McIntosh:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce second reading of Bill 17 to amend The City of Winnipeg Act, and the main components of the bill include new legislation which will permit the City of Winnipeg Council to have a program for issuing tax credits and rebates to people who make contributions to candidates running for council. This is a privilege which is accorded other levels of government and now will be extended to councillors as well.

As well, we are introducing legislation to strengthen the existing penalty provisions for violations of the elections expenses and contributions legislation, for greater consistency and equity between elected and defeated candidates, particularly as it comes to the filing of audited statements and campaign expenses. The penalties we are now attempting to make more equal between those who are elected and those who are defeated.

As well, we are introducing new legislation which will enable council to regulate the use of pellet guns and pellet weapons. This is a request the city has made. It is one that we have been looking at, and with Justice's input, the City Council will now be able to establish a by-law to regulate the use of weapons other than those in the Criminal Code, such as pellet guns, BB guns, et cetera. This legislation will be a by-law of the City of Winnipeg. It will enable them to set a by-law, and the city will also be subject to provincial regulation setting the terms and conditions under which the by-law can operate.

\* (1010)

As well, the legislation permits council to establish a program of tax credits and grants for the renovations of heritage buildings. This should assist in preserving the buildings that to date are very costly to landlords, and yet landlords are bound by the heritage building interests.

As well, we have some amendments to the planning and development legislation of The City of Winnipeg Act. These are simply trying to make the processes more streamlined, more common sense, and details of these amendments are available to the members. I believe a clarifying note has been passed around.

We will be enabling, Mr. Speaker, a simple variance procedure to be allowed in a area when it is not desirable to rezone an entire piece of land, but a section of that land is desired to be rezoned, so spot rezoning, I guess, would be a good term for it.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to speaking in more detail to this bill at a future occasion. Thank you.

**Motion agreed to.**

#### **Introduction of Guests**

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery, where we have with us this morning from the Linden Christian School seventeen Grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Darryl Rempel. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable First Minister (Mr. Filmon).

From the Samuel Burland School, we have fifty-two Grade 9 students under the direction of Wendy Zamonsky and Dave Long. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay).

Also with us this morning, we have in the gallery to my right Chief Norman Kirkness and the Council of the Fox Lake First Nations. These are guests of the honourable member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson).

Also, we have officials from the Western Reman. We have the president, Mike Jarvis, Garry Tesluck, Darwin Sparrow, Ivey Maksymich, Frank Cooney and Bob Delzel. These are guests of the honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey).

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

### **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

#### **Health Care System Audiology Services—Children**

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, we have been calling on this government to reverse a number of their spending decisions and start investing in preventative health and start investing in children in our health care system.

We understand today, in another pre-election cynical move, the government on its last days is going to make an announcement on children's health. This is after having a period of government where they have gone in the opposite direction.

They have cut children's health programs. They have flip-flopped all over the map on physical education, and they have cut back on audiologists and speech and language therapists in the province of Manitoba.

I would like to ask the Premier what has been the impact of their spending reduction to children in the audiology programs and audiologist assessment programs in terms of the impact on children's health in Manitoba and the number of assessments performed in Manitoba after their government cut the money for those children in the province of Manitoba.

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, a little later today, I will be pleased to be releasing the report of the Child Health Committee, which is the first population health-based report of its kind to be released in Canada, and we are very happy about that.

It is interesting that late last year, when the New Democrats announced their child health platform, it appears they had taken their policies straight from a draft of the report that I will be introducing a little later today. I guess it is a bit

of a compliment, Mr. Speaker, when New Democrats borrow our policies from us.

Mr. Speaker, quite seriously though, I think the honourable member will share my concern when I got a letter the day after the federal budget from the Honourable Diane Marleau, national Minister of Health, setting out—and this will be of interest to Senator Carstairs and of interest to honourable members of the Liberal Party, I am sure—how the federal budget cuts allocations for nutrition programs and for prenatal programs and for the Headstart programs for disadvantaged children.

Mr. Speaker, I hope the honourable member will join with me in expressing outrage and concern about that when the Prime Minister boldly states in his red book that he is going to save the health care system and does it by cutting as much as \$220 million out of the Manitoba health and social services budget.

\* (1015)

**Mr. Doer:** We have been calling on this provincial government from 1990 on to move forward on preventative health care programs for children.

Mr. Speaker, report after report after report, whether it was the MacDiarmid report in 1989, other reports that the government has had for months and years, have also called on the same government and this same Premier (Mr. Filmon) to do something for children. He went in the opposite direction.

The minister did not answer the question. In 1990 and '91, this Premier cut out money for audiology programs for children in the province of Manitoba. I asked the Minister of Health in December, what has been the impact of that cut on children's preventative health and assessments. I would ask the Premier now, today, since I have asked this question, to stand up and tell the people of Manitoba what has been the impact on speech and language therapy and assessment programs and audiology with his cut

on our children in our province of Manitoba in 1991, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. McCrae:** I think, while I agree that the federal programs that are being cut by the recent budget, while they are being cut, they are programs that were targeted programs, which I support, and I hope the honourable member opposite supports.

I mean, rhetoric is one thing. Actually having a real concern for the children of our province is quite another thing, Mr. Speaker, and I think it is important for honourable members opposite to note that there are certain neighbourhoods and certain populations in Manitoba that are extremely disadvantaged, and we need to target our programming in those areas.

Without telling the honourable member everything I am going to announce a little later, that will be very much a focus of the child health strategy in Manitoba.

**Mr. Doer:** This Filmon team, this Premier (Mr. Filmon), cut back money for children's audiology services. The member for Tuxedo, in his cavalier attitude, Mr. Speaker, has reduced the number of assessments.

If he cannot answer the question, I will give him the answer. The number of assessments has gone down 50 percent in this last majority government, and this Premier should be ashamed to even make announcements on this last day. It is cynical. It is dishonest to children, and it is totally inconsistent with the decisions they have made in the past four years to reduce the services to children.

A further question to the Premier: There are criticisms of the government's VLT policy on children's health services, Mr. Speaker, making a number of recommendations to the government to proceed with VLT programs for children to deal with the overutilization in some communities by families, affecting children, and, further, they also recommend preventative programs for children's dental health.

Remember that? That was another program cut by the Conservative government in rural and northern Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, is the Premier (Mr. Filmon) today saying that they are going to reverse their negative decisions on all of the audiology programs and lack of dealing with the problems with VLTs for children in rural Manitoba and deal with the reductions in children's dental health programs and the lack of prevention for those services for rural and northern children in our province?

**Mr. McCrae:** Mr. Speaker, with respect to issues related to VLTs, children may indeed be affected by the problems experienced by their parents with respect to VLTs, and that is why the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba has virtually doubled its budget for treatment programs for people adversely affected through addiction to gambling.

Mr. Speaker, if you take a look at all of the health strategies that have been undertaken in the last few years in Manitoba, combine that with the very, very significant application of funding resources for health in Manitoba, the highest level of spending on health anywhere in this country, take it all together and we have a recipe for a sustainable health care system, even in the light of massive, massive cuts at the federal level with respect to health care.

Our medicare system, Mr. Speaker, was set up years ago with a 50-50 arrangement between the provinces and the federal government, and over those years, that federal involvement has been drastically reduced. It does not really suit the Prime Minister or the Minister of Health of this country to tell us that they are going to be the ones who protect health care, when they are the ones who are bowing out of the partnership, and I must say bowing out rather quickly in the next few years, which creates serious challenges for all of the provinces, but Manitoba is better placed to deal with the challenges before us because of the astute budgeting of the honourable member for Morris (Mr. Manness)

and the honourable member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Stefanson).

### Health Care System Waiting Lists

**Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan):** Mr. Speaker, in the last 10 days, we have had more so-called positive announcements from this government than in the last seven years, which has constituted nothing but cut and cut and cut.

There has been a blizzard of announcements. One of those announcements called for putting in \$500,000 to reduce waiting lists, Mr. Speaker, for three months, April, May and June, in the hospitals. Is that not coincidental, after taking \$80 million out of the hospital budgets for the past three years and up to \$20 million this year?

Can the minister outline what definitive programs they will put in place to reduce waiting lists, particularly for heart and orthopedic surgery?—since experts and specialists tell me, Mr. Speaker, that the government could do a very easy job of reducing the waiting lists by expanding the hours of operations in the various surgical rooms.

\* (1020)

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** It may be of interest to the honourable member to know that the numbers of surgeries in Manitoba is going up, up, up, every year. That reflects the kinds of commitments that are made to health care in Manitoba by the government and by the hospitals and by the medical profession, as well. I refer to hip and knee and cardiac surgeries, overall, are up, up, up, every year.

It is true that anyone who has to wait for an operation, especially someone in a situation of discomfort or pain or a situation of acute heart disease, it becomes a genuine concern. That is why on March 7, we announced a \$500,000 infusion and a partnership with the hospitals and the Manitoba Cancer Treatment & Research Foundation to make improvements in the areas

of heart, hip, knee and cancer procedures, Mr. Speaker.

### **Medical Laboratories Conflict of Interest**

**Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan):** Can the minister advise this House whether or not the government will be accepting the soft recommendation in the lab committee report regarding conflict of interest or whether the government will take a stand, finally, and recognize that what is necessary regarding the relationship between owners and operators of public labs and private labs is one that necessitates strong conflict-of-interest legislation and regulations to ensure that the integrity of the system is kept in place?

Will they accept and put in place strong recommendations in this regard, Mr. Speaker?

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** Unlike the honourable member, the only relationship which he wants to enjoy is a good one between him and his union boss friends. The relationship I want to cultivate, develop, maintain and strengthen is the relationship between the government, between the professions, between service providers and the patient.

Unfortunately for the honourable member, he loses his case every time because every time he asks a question, he forgets whom he is supposed to be speaking for. He is supposed to be speaking for the patient, for the people who need services in our province, and if we design all of our health care programs as a patient-focused or consumer-focused program, we are going to have much better success.

Now, the lab services provided in this province are provided in a variety of ways, and in his idealistic and in his philosophical mindset, which he borrows from his union boss friends, anything done by the private sector is inherently bad.

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that. I believe that the people of this province can be well

served by a variety of sources of service delivery. I recognize that the lab committee has representatives on it who have conflicts of various kinds, and that includes the conflicts that are very, very obvious brought to these committee meetings by the union bosses who are on those committee meetings.

### **Pediatric Cardiac Care Program Inquest**

**Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan):** My final supplementary to the minister: The minister outlined for the House today specifically when the inquest will commence into the pediatric deaths at the Health Sciences Centre since—for example in the J.J. Harper situation, from the time the inquest was announced until completion was only two and a half months.

We need answers. We prefer a public inquiry, but can the minister today tell the House when the inquest will commence specifically, Mr. Speaker?

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** I know the honourable member wants to learn all of the details and all of the matters that are relevant to the pediatric cardiac program at the Health Sciences Centre. So do the parents of any children affected and so do future users of our health system in Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, that, too, is my wish, to get to the bottom and have a full and wide-ranging inquiry into all matters related to the pediatric cardiac program at Health Sciences Centre.

Once the Chief Medical Examiner recommends that an inquest be held, the conduct of the matter then falls to the Provincial Court, the chief provincial judge and whichever judge it is who is assigned to that, and dates are set in the ordinary course, and I do not have that date.

\* (1025)

### **Education System Recess**

**Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, in an ironical twist



on the healthy child announcement today, the Minister of Education has forwarded correspondence to school boards, superintendents of education, principals and presidents of parent councils in which he says that in order to meet the blueprint requirements, school divisions will now be enabled and essentially will have to, in order to meet what is required, eliminate recess for 10- and 11-year-olds, and it is open to them to reduce the number of minutes for lunch hours across the school system to 45 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the Minister of Education of his blueprint at page 11, which states that there will be an emphasis on physical well-being and that there will be exercise, and fitness will be the focus of an integrated physical education curriculum. Physical education will be designed to lead students to lifelong fitness, emotional and mental well-being through a healthy life style.

On what principle of a healthy life style and allowing children to learn and be physically active during the day which will enhance their learning ability, 10- and 11-year-olds we are talking about, Mr. Speaker, on what basis is he now suggesting in essence that recess should be eliminated for 10- and 11-year-olds in our school system?

**Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training):** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Liberal Party does a terrible injustice to not only the reform document but indeed to the letter that he has in his hands.

Mr. Speaker, we are well aware that through the emphasis, through the attempt to try and put greater emphasis on literacy, which, by the way, the Liberal Party has not supported in one of their utterances with respect to the reform plan, and taking into account that there are going to have to be some difficult decisions made by principals with regard to those elective, supplementary courses that are now in place, we are giving greater freedom to school divisions and licence to make decisions in accordance with what their school community would want to do.

Mr. Speaker, we are not mandating anything. We are giving greater opportunities as to how, indeed, more time can be found for the classroom and for recess, as determined by the school community.

**Mr. Edwards:** Mr. Speaker, the minister talks about allowances and discretion as opposed to mandating. What he has said by his actions is that recess is not essential for 10- and 11-year-olds.

Now, Mr. Speaker, where is that in the blue guide or the blueprint or the action plan, where is there any suggestion that recess is not essential to the learning process for a 10- or 11- year-old? In fact, on what basis, on what credible authority in the education or the health sector, is he presuming to say that recess is not an essential part of the ability to learn for a 10-year-old?

**Mr. Manness:** Well, Mr. Speaker, we can look at it two ways. I gather by the question that the Liberal Party would dictate that the whole day should be recess, and there should be no focus whatsoever on learning. That is the approach that the members are bringing forward by way of the question.

Again we say, we are allowing greater licence to the schools to decide if they want to maintain the level of elective subjects, if they want to maintain the courses and second languages and music, that within the existing day, they may want to reflect on the amount of time that is put into recess, into also the noon-hour period, because that happens in many schools today outside of the province and within the province. There is not homogeneity around these times.

\* (1030)

**Mr. Edwards:** This minister has absolutely no clue. The truth is that every educator will tell you recess is essential to the enhanced learning of everything else, and every single expert in the health and education field will say that about a 10-year-old child.

My question for the minister: On what basis, with what credibility, does he produce any support for taking recess away, when the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation says Canadian children are up to 40 percent less active than they were 30 years ago?

They say that only 6 percent of children ages 10 to 19 are active on a regular basis. They say everyone who knows about healthy children and the ability to teach children and have them learn will say that recess and physical activity on a regular basis during a day is essential.

Why does the minister say the opposite, and on what basis does he make that suggestion to school boards around this province?

**Mr. Manness:** The very essence of the member's question is saying that literacy is not important, because there are only five and a half hours in the school day.

We are doubling the amount of time that is going into literacy. The members are against that. We are still trying to maintain slots for music, for second languages. The reality is something has got to give.

What the Leader of the Liberal Party is saying can give is language arts and literacy. What we are trying to do is offer still greater flexibility, a decision to be made within the public school, but members opposite are saying the status quo is okay, and we want it. Mr. Speaker, we are saying the status quo has to change.

#### **Social Assistance One-Tier System**

**Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows):** Mr. Speaker, for several years, various governments in Manitoba have debated the merits of a one-tier social assistance system. I believe Manitoba is one of only three provinces in Canada that has a two-tier system. There are advantages and disadvantages to each way of handling social assistance in Manitoba. A smaller system, for

example the City of Winnipeg Social Services Department, may have a more personal system and may have smaller caseloads for their workers.

I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services, what are the implications for the city staff who have a five-year contract and for the rates which in some categories are considerably higher on the city social assistance schedule of rates?

**Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services):** I thank my honourable friend for that question. I also want to thank him for his comments when contacted by the news media indicating that he was in support of a one-tier welfare system.

I think it is incumbent that we ensure in today's economic times, when we know that there is not going to be more money from the federal government, but there is going to be less, that, in fact, we look at the overlap and duplication and the inefficiencies that are in place when two levels of government are delivering the same service.

We look to co-ordinate that in some manner, so that the taxpayers of the City of Winnipeg and the taxpayers of the province of Manitoba will benefit.

**Mr. Martindale:** Mr. Speaker, I regret that the media did not report that I am not in favour of it if it means lower rates. We know that in the case of infants, the rates are much lower for the City of Winnipeg.

I would like to ask this minister if it is the policy of her government, not her personally but her government, if they care at all about the nutrition of children which is very important for learning and for normal development, or is their policy that of Marie Antoinette, let them eat cake, let them eat donuts, let them eat bread from food banks.

Is that their alternative by taking over the city welfare system and lowering the rates?

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** I do want to indicate to all members of this Legislature and indeed all Manitobans that we are genuinely concerned about the health and well-being of all children in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, higher welfare rates do not necessarily mean better nutrition for all children. I think we can all agree on that fact, but I want to indicate that as we open the dialogue and discussions with the City of Winnipeg, we will be addressing all of the issues that he has raised in his questions in trying to determine what is fair and reasonable and sensible for the children in the City of Winnipeg and indeed right throughout the province.

**Mr. Martindale:** Mr. Speaker, this minister should tell poor families in Winnipeg that more money for food does not—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. This is not a time for debate.

#### **South Indian Lake Federal Responsibility**

**Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Family Services and the minister of northern development have written to the federal Minister of Indian Affairs on February 21, objecting to the federal offloading of responsibility for people at South Indian Lake.

Since these people are treaty and a federal responsibility, I would like to ask the minister if she has received a response from the federal government about this offloading to this community, who are First Nations people and expecting their community to be designated as a reserve.

What is the response of the federal minister to this new policy and the objections by Manitoba?

**Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services):** Mr. Speaker, again, I thank my honourable friend for that question. There has not been a response from the federal minister. As usual, the federal government unilaterally has

made decisions that impact the taxpayers of Manitoba in the offloading of their responsibility for Status Indians off reserve.

Mr. Speaker, I indicated when we introduced Manitoba's perspective on social security reform that the cost to the taxpayers of Manitoba had been \$60 million since the offloading of the federal government, and that bill is now up to \$70 million. All indications are, if they offload again at South Indian Lake, we are going to experience another \$1.6-million offload to the province of Manitoba.

I want to say that when this originally happened under the former Conservative government at the federal level, my colleague, who was then the Minister of Family Services, stood up and made a statement in this House condemning the federal government and asking all members of this Legislature to support our position to fight the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to quote for you because I believe it is very important that the Liberal Party, with one Reg Alcock who was the critic at that time, stood up in this House, and this is what he said: "I think it is disgraceful action on the part of the federal government. I can tell the minister that I personally—I know my caucus will support him absolutely in his attempts to force our federal government to live up to their responsibilities."

Mr. Speaker, he went on to say: "I think Mr. Mulroney and that gang of crooks that he heads should be brought to heel."

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Liberal Party in Manitoba today was a member of that caucus, and I want to know what their position is and where they stand and what they are going to ask their federal counterparts to do to resolve this issue.

#### **Crow Benefit Elimination Impact on Crop Insurance**

**Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River):** Mr. Speaker, the change in the Crow benefit will

have a dramatic impact on incomes of farm families this crop year as they begin to pay the higher freight rates as of August 1.

Family farms are very concerned about the extra costs that they are going to have to pay, and I want to ask the Minister of Agriculture if he can tell this House if his department has looked at what the impacts will be as a result of the reduction in the Crow benefit and reduced transfer payments. What will be the impact on crop insurance coverage and in gross revenue insurance?

**Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, I cannot give her the specific details. I can acknowledge that there will be an impact. We are sorting out the final impact of it, and, of course, it will come in two steps.

The bigger hurt, quite frankly, to Manitoba farms comes, as the honourable member would know, next year when the pooling question is dealt with. That, by far, is the most serious impact to the farmers of Manitoba and has the greater potential for driving down prices.

All I can tell her at this point is that her premise is essentially correct, that there will be an impact, and this is yet another demonstration of how serious the overall issue is for our grain farmers.

\* (1040)

### **Crop Insurance Notification of Changes**

**Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River):** Can the minister guarantee this House that farmers will know in advance of the deadline, any changes that this government will be making to crop insurance coverages, so that farmers will know what plans they have to make and that they will not face the same problems that they did when the government made changes to lentil coverages and has still not dealt with?

**Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, there are two issues that she raises.

In the first instance, the lentil farmers have certainly been dealt with. Cheques have flowed out to all of those contract holders, some 900 of them.

On the question of the levels of support, farmers have signed and will be in the process by this deadline—I believe it is end of March—of signing their normal contractual agreements with Manitoba Crop Insurance. They will purchase the different levels of coverages that the corporation offers, and they will be totally apprised of their coverage level at that time.

### **Crow Benefit Elimination Transition Period**

**Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River):** Mr. Speaker, considering that the cuts in the Crow package to all farm supports is going to have such a dramatic impact on farmers, will the Minister of Agriculture contact the federal government, federal Minister of Agriculture, and tell him that the package that they have put forward is unacceptable? There must be a transition period.

The whole package that they have put forward is not acceptable. Will he lobby the federal government for a transition period, so that farmers can adjust to these dramatic changes?

**Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, I genuinely hold out to the honourable member for Swan River and seek her and her party's support for the position that the farm leaders of Manitoba, which, I remind her, included all of the farm leaders of the different commodity groups, including Manitoba Pool and other farm organization leaders who have put a strongly worded request to the federal government to do precisely that, that the bulk of the \$300-million adjustment fund that was mentioned in the budget be principally applied to the problems that Manitoba grain farmers will face.

Other than that, I cannot upset or ask the federal government to rewrite its budget. I

welcome her to try, but we have certainly made known our concerns right through the budget time. She is well aware that we talked about a five- or seven-year phase-out period. We talked about a \$7-billion one-time payment settlement if that was to be the case, but the federal Minister of Finance chose to ignore that advice.

### **Provincial Parks Consultations**

**Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupert's Land):** Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Natural Resources.

Last month, the minister announced four new provincial parks to partially fulfill promises from the last election on the Endangered Spaces Program.

I would like to ask the minister, with those announcements of the provincial parks, on what basis did the minister claim that these were endangered spaces, since the minister previously confirmed with mining, logging and hydro officials that they had no economic plans for those areas?

**Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question because there seems to be some confusion as to what kind of process of consultation had taken place prior to that, and I will be tabling some information at the end of my comments.

Mr. Speaker, there were 331 articles sent out prior to the process that was evolved, and 61 of those invitations were sent to First Nations aboriginal associations, et cetera, in terms of asking for their input.

There were basically two organizations that submitted some interest in the area, but all the other ones did not, and, Mr. Speaker, I want to table the list of all the people that were contacted for the member, so that he can look at that.

**Mr. Robinson:** My question further to the minister: Why did this government not have the

First Nations of these areas, particularly the treaty land entitlement bands and the First Nations organizations, involved in the process, in the selection and the approval of the new parks?

**Mr. Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know how the member views consultation because, by and large, it is my understanding that when we are looking at some involvement from the public, we correspond with them and ask for input into the matter. This was done. If nobody responds, we can only assume they have no interest in the matter.

Mr. Speaker, I think we have tried to deal with this as fairly as possible, and we had the president of the World Wildlife Fund who said that the process and consultation—and they are the ones who are most critical of what we are doing with this thing. They claim that the process was a proper process.

### **Provincial Parks Act Proclamation**

**Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupert's Land):** Mr. Speaker, I believe there is a difference between consultation and agreement with First Nations.

My final question to the same minister: Why was the new parks act that was passed in this Legislature not proclaimed before these parks were announced, and why was the process of selecting the parks considered illegal by some people under this new act that was proclaimed in 1993?

**Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, the member is right. The new parks act that was passed has not been proclaimed. We are going through a process in terms of where we will be consulting again with all the people, and the parks that we have designated, the four new ones—which is part of the process of trying to reach the 12 percent commitment that we have by the year 2000—are going to be subjected to the same process that the existing parks do.

So his people will have an opportunity to get involved with the hearings and to put forward submissions as to what should happen with them, as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, I say I think the process is a good process. I think it gives everybody a chance to get involved, and the fact that they possibly missed the window of opportunity to participate because they did not have any interest at that time, maybe now, when the process takes place, they will show that interest and participate this time.

### **Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Emergency Worker Guidelines**

**Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples):** Mr. Speaker, emergency service workers, such as firefighters, ambulance attendants and police officers have a greater chance of being involved in a motor vehicle accident than the average motorist simply because they are duty bound to respond immediately to emergencies.

Whenever there is an accident, MPIC reviews the incident to determine if the emergency worker could have avoided it. They try to discover whether the emergency situation caused the accident, or driver negligence caused it. However, at present, no guidelines or rules are in place to ensure that consistent standards are applied in determining fault, with the resultant increase in the worker's driver's licence fees and insurance premiums for his or her own personal vehicles.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for MPIC.

What is the minister doing to ensure that such guidelines are produced, so that emergency workers can concentrate on saving lives, rather than on demerits and increased licence and insurance fees?

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act):** Mr. Speaker, the member raises a very good question, and one

that has been troubling for more than a short period of time is how to best make sure that those who are responding to emergencies can do so adequately and yet still have some effort on their part to make sure that they are approaching the job in as careful a manner as possible in the exercise of their duties.

We have attempted through internal reviews and in the long run a second level of review in terms of attributing fault to make sure that the emergency response people are taken care of as much as possible within the system. Frankly, other than a blanket exemption—and I do not think that is what the member is asking for—this has been a very difficult situation, and we are working to make sure that the policies are applied as fairly as possible.

**Mr. Kowalski:** MPIC representatives may not be aware of the particular unique pressures involved in responding to an emergency situation. In many cases, internal reviews with their employers decide that the emergency workers are not responsible.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for MPIC.

Does he support government policy that directs MPIC to treat emergency service workers in a manner more consistent with the nature of their work?

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Speaker, in fact, I believe that that is the manner in which we have been and the corporation has been addressing this issue. If he has information to the contrary, I would be more than glad to discuss it.

\* (1050)

**Mr. Kowalski:** My final question to the Minister responsible for MPIC is that since many emergency workers face a very real prospect of job loss if the status of their driver's licence changes, would it not be prudent to ensure that they are protected from wrongful penalties, the result because of MPIC's lack of clear

understanding of emergency work and emergency procedure?

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Speaker, as I have said, we are more than anxious to make sure that we deal fairly with this segment of employees in our society.

I would have to indicate, however, in the last number of years, I cannot recall this matter being brought to the attention of my office more than twice. As I recall, both of those instances have been appropriately dealt with in my view.

I would be more than interested to hear any discussion that representatives of drivers of emergency response vehicles would be prepared to make.

#### **Workers Compensation Merit Surcharge Program**

**Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for giving Workers Compensation funds back to companies.

I have a number of concerns with regard to the government's Workers Compensation merit surcharge problem, which is giving compensation money back to companies with no decrease in Workers Compensation claims or an increase in safety, necessarily, or meaningful participation or training of workers.

I want to ask the Minister of Labour, can he confirm that more than \$300,000 has gone back to companies from Workers Compensation funds and that there had been no training of workers with respect to this program and that there are a number of concerns with regard to workers, so they know what they are signing when they sign on to the claim forms, the checklist criteria forms, for this program?

**Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister charged with the administration of The Workers Compensation Act):** No, I will not give that confirmation to the member.

The member has regularly brought information to this House on a host of issues, whether it be PMU in western Manitoba, whether it be on Workplace Safety and Health, that has usually been very much lacking in facts upon investigation.

If the member would like to provide me with the details of her request, I would endeavour to check it out for the member.

**Mr. Speaker:** Time for Oral Questions has expired.

#### **Speaker's Ruling**

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I have a ruling for the House.

On Tuesday, March 14, 1995—order, please. The honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), I think you want to listen to this one, sir.

On Tuesday, March 14, 1995, during the Budget Debate and while the honourable member for Portage (Mr. Pallister) had the floor and the Acting Speaker, the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) was in the Chair, a point of order was raised by the honourable member for Inkster, alleging that it was improper for a member to refer to another member walking out of the Chamber.

The Acting Speaker ruled there was no point of order. The honourable member for Inkster subsequently rose on another point of order, asking if it was a policy of the particular Acting Speaker who was in the Chair to allow comments that indicated that people are absent from this Chamber. The official opposition House leader (Mr. Ashton) then rose and stated that the proper course for the honourable member for Inkster would have been to challenge the ruling of the Chair when it was given, not to later question what that chairperson's policy was.

I am ruling that the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) was correct. It is not proper to

comment on or question rulings of the Chair. If there is disagreement with a ruling, then the proper course of action is to challenge the ruling. Having said that, I would have to repeat what I ruled on December 12 of this session. It is not proper to refer directly or indirectly to the presence or absence of members from this House.

## NONPOLITICAL STATEMENTS

### National Farm Safety Week

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

**Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River):** Mr. Speaker, this week is National Farm Safety Week and I would like to take a few minutes to recognize the farming industry.

For many people in urban centres, people have the vision that the farm is a very safe place where grandma and grandpa farm as they used to. They raise a few chickens and a few pigs and you grow a little grain, and it is a safe place to send children for a summer holiday.

That was the way farming was, but farming has changed tremendously. Farming, which is a very important industry to the economy of Manitoba, is a very high-tech industry but also an industry in which farmers work under tremendous stress.

As the industry has evolved, equipment has changed and if not handled properly, it can be a very dangerous environment. Working with livestock, if not handled properly, can also be a very dangerous environment to work with. When we look at the statistics of the numbers of farmers in accidents, it is startling to realize what is happening. It is not unusual for these accidents to occur in peak seasons such as seeding and harvest, and I think, Mr. Speaker, that we are going to see an increase in stress on the farms and I hope that the stress that farmers are going to be under does not correspond with increased accidents.

We want to see people be able to work in a safe environment.

The other area of concern is the number of children who are hurt in farm accidents. I have a real concern with the fact that children many times have to spend their times with farmers, because with the mother or father on the farm with the limited dollars that are available and the decreasing rural population, there are many times not facilities available for parents to leave their children. The whole idea where grandparents were supportive of children and looked after them, in many cases that is not available. So I worry about our children and the number of accidents, and I think we should recognize in this week of National Farm Safety that we have to do much more to protect our children.

Farming is an industry, and if you compare farming to any other industry such as mining, a miner would not be able to take their child down in the mine with them to work. A nurse could not take her child with her to a hospital. Farmers should not have to take their children out on farm equipment when they are working, and it should be discouraged.

I am appalled when I see tractors being designed with a little seat on the side for a child to be riding on the field. That should not happen. We have to do much more. We have to look at the recommendations from the Women's Institute of Rural Daycare to provide a safe environment on the farms.

I commend the government on their introducing farm safety into the schools with the Safari game that is there, but we have to do much more. We have to incorporate agriculture into the school curriculum so that people are aware of what is going on, how the industry works, and we have to work for much more safety.

I also believe that as a province we have the ability and we should be strengthening regulations on how farm equipment is moved. If



you think back to a tragic accident that happened in southern Manitoba last year, and that is not the only one, where a carload of young children was hit when they ran into a combine.

So with those comments, Mr. Speaker, I think that we have much more to do. I commend the farmers for the job they are doing in supporting the economy of this country but as a province we have much more to do.

I encourage this government to look at the recommendations on child safety and look at ways where we can provide a safer environment and look at ways where we can strengthen regulations. All of us, if we work together to enable farmers to make a better living, we will take a lot of stress off of them and hopefully take away the difficult times when farmers are under stress, resulting in accidents.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the honourable Minister of Labour have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

**Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Labour):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to join in the comments of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) recognizing this is National Farm Safety Week. As a minister who has had responsibility for The Workers Compensation Act and for The Workplace Safety and Health Act, I have had a fair bit to do with safety in industry including agriculture over the last number of years.

Many of the points that the member for Swan River has raised with respect to the danger and the situation on the farm are absolutely true. One of the greatest things that we fight in dealing with accidents on the farm is the fact that the farm, unlike most other workplaces in the province of Manitoba, is almost impossible to regulate because farmers are working on their own property. They are working in their own operations; they are their own supervisors.

As a consequence, the practices that they take on in doing their daily work are ones that they

ultimately choose, and whether they be safe or not is the question.

Mr. Speaker, if one looks at the statistics in a province like Manitoba, and I understand that they are repeated throughout most of the country that has an agricultural sector, the largest numbers of deaths each year in the workplace, if one considers the farm a workplace and certainly it is, take place on our farms—by far greater numbers than anywhere else.

I know members of this House, on this side of the House in particular, some of my colleagues including myself, in the last few years have experienced friends and people who are close to us who have been killed in farm accidents. In my own constituency, we have had in the last four years two deaths, both individuals who were very close friends of mine, and in both cases, accidents that could have been easily prevented—in one case, just the decision to do things the way they had been done over the course of a lifetime of work of some 50 years, even unsafe, but time caught up. In another case, the modification of a piece of farm equipment, such that it created an unsafe situation in which the individual found himself, crushed himself to death without the ability to turn off the power take-off.

Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House share the concern I believe all members have. I would like to thank the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) for her compliments of our Nero and Ashcan farm safety program which we did in co-operation with Imperial Oil dealers across Manitoba.

The purpose and thrust of that particular program was to reach children, because one thing I think we have all learned, those of us who work in this particular area, is that if we can reach the children, if we can teach them and ingrain in them safe practices and alert them to dangers, they become the greatest supervisors of their parents' activity. Nothing can be more persuasive, whether it be on farm safety or fire safety, if one's youngster says, Mom or Dad, that

is wrong, that is going to cause a fire or you could get killed or hurt. So those thrusts certainly will continue, and I am very pleased to participate in this with this comment and I thank the Speaker for the indulgence for both myself and the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk).

\* (1100)

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

**Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples):** I would like to join with the other members to recognize Farm Safety Week. As a person who comes from a family of farmers, I have spent many a summer in Hadashville, Manitoba and in the rural areas of Charleswood, believe it or not, harvesting on combines, and I know after long hours harvesting or planting that one of the first things that goes when you are fatigued is your attention to safety.

As a police officer, I think it is a popular misconception that police work is such a dangerous job. Farm work is far more dangerous. More farmers are hurt and killed in a year in Canada in farm accidents than police officers. I think, as someone in what is presumed as a dangerous occupation, I want to acknowledge that farming can be a dangerous occupation and Farm Safety Week brings attention to that fact.

So I want to join with the other members to commemorate Farm Safety Week. Thank you.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### BUDGET DEBATE (Seventh Day of Debate)

**Mr. Speaker:** On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) that this House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government and the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the official opposition in amendment thereto, and the

proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the second opposition in further amendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer) who has 30 minutes remaining.

**Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, when I was interrupted at six o'clock here, I was talking about some of the endorsements that we have received in Manitoba on this budget. I just want to mention the endorsement that we received from a Nesbitt Burns, who said that Manitoba has made remarkable progress in getting its fiscal house in order.

Also in yesterday's newspaper the Taxpayers Association of Manitoba had a great article about how we are balancing the budget and the job we are doing and the job that our Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) is doing. Also another one in the Financial Times says: Manitoba shows the fiscal way.

It is just another endorsement and shows that we are on the right track.

Yesterday I talked a little about taxes and one thing and another and said that we have not increased any major taxes in the last seven years since 1988. I also want to mention that frankly, Mr. Speaker, I do not see any end in sight to frozen taxes if this government and the people of Manitoba have any say about it.

I also want to mention that we have reduced some taxes in the seven years that we have been in government. One of the main ones is the payroll tax that has been taken off the backs of many, about 90 percent actually, of the small businesses in Manitoba. This will help the small businesses to be able to grow and continue to expand in Manitoba and will also be able to bring in new business into Manitoba. This is just another good news item in a good news budget for Manitoba.

So despite the massive withdrawal of federal support for health care, education and family

services in the 1995 federal budget, the Filmon government is determined to protect the vital services of Manitobans. These are areas that are of the highest priorities of Manitobans and of this government. So funding for Education, Family Services, and Health has increased by more than \$1 billion or 41.8 percent since 1988.

The three main items such as health care, education and family services is taking more and more, a larger percent of our total dollars that we have to work with. That means we have less to spend on the other items, such as natural resources, highways and other things, but we realize the importance of the three major items.

The Manitoba government has dedicated a greater percentage of its budget to health care than any other province in Canada last year. This is a leadership position that will be maintained this year and also providing students with the skills needed to succeed, encouraging individual independence for social assistance recipients, ensuring streets and neighbourhoods are safe and continuing to bring health services closer to home through community-based health care are all areas of importance to the people of Manitoba. This government has heard the voice of the people and has also enshrined these priorities in this budget.

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

This budget also enhances the level of support in areas of importance to all Manitobans in education, a 6.4 percent increase to community colleges and to enhance training opportunities, and the new \$1-million Universities Incentive Fund to foster change and renewal at Manitoba's universities with the aim of paying greater attention to marketable skills in their activities, and also that tuition cap which will cap the increase on the universities and colleges to a maximum of 5 percent this year, and the establishment of 25 new technology and science centres to support the newly revised Senior 4 or the Grade 12 curriculum for industrial arts was also announced for education.

Also for Manitobans in need, \$9.9 million has been dedicated through the Departments of Education and Training and Family Services to the new program of Making Welfare Work. Also, Manitobans had a hand up when they needed it, not just a hand out, was the motivation behind the \$2-million increase for the community residences and supports for adults with mental disabilities, and the pending new maintenance enforcement legislation which was highlighted in the budget to ensure that single parents receive the financial support to which they are entitled.

As well, Mr. Acting Speaker, the budget highlighted the government's strong commitment to safe streets and neighbourhoods through increased funding to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the overhaul of the youth corrections system through boot camps, the rigorous confinement for adult offenders and pioneering legislation to allow the naming of dangerous sex offenders.

This is not my budget, nor the budget of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) or the Premier (Mr. Filmon) actually of Manitoba. This is a document echoing the voice of Manitobans. This budget is the collective hope of Manitobans for today and a vision of a prosperous and quality life for the children of Manitoba for the future.

Mr. Acting Speaker, agriculture has always been and will continue to remain a significant sector in the provincial economy. Truly 4 percent of the provincial gross domestic product in 1993 was attributed directly through agriculture and another 6 percent indirectly through food processing. So agriculture really makes up 10 percent of our real gross domestic product in Manitoba and also makes up about 7 percent of our total workforce. Agriculture employs about 7 percent of the total workforce so it is very important in Manitoba.

We also have a well-balanced agricultural industry here in Manitoba between the livestock and the production of crops, within the crop

sector a growing emphasis being placed on oilseeds and specialty crops. This province has the most diversified crop production of all prairie provinces with wheat, barley, canola, potatoes and sugar beets and other vegetables which are the key products. Wheat sales typically constitute about one-fifth of Manitoba's total cash receipts, compared with roughly about 35 percent in Saskatchewan. Also sugar beets, as I mentioned, are a very important crop here in Manitoba. So are potatoes, some of the special crops, vegetables, and there is some expansion going on in these industries. Potatoes in the Carberry area, the potato processing plant there will be expanding. This is good news for Manitoba. It will increase the number of acres of potatoes grown in Manitoba.

Also, I mentioned sugar beets, and this is an industry that is important to Manitoba not only for the growers, the producers of the beets themselves but also for the processing plant here in Winnipeg located in Fort Garry, which is a good industry for Manitoba and employs a lot of people.

\* (1110)

Just this morning, Mr. Acting Speaker, they talked about the embargo that the U.S. has put on sugar exports to the U.S. I understand that there has been some negotiations going on just recently whereby Canada could be putting some restriction on the amount of sugar being brought into Canada from the United States.

I believe they have some reason to believe that the U.S. has been dumping some U.S. sugar onto the Canadian market, and this has in effect reduced the price of sugar and also it will reduce the return for our sugar beet farmers in Manitoba and also could threaten the industry itself. We certainly would not want to see that.

So I hope that our Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) can work with the federal Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Trade to try to resolve the sugar question. This would be a benefit to all of us here in Manitoba.

The agricultural industry in Manitoba has also been quite appropriately growing both with the quality and the quantity of the crop improved in 1994 from 1993. Crop production actually rose by 22 percent to some 9 million metric tonnes last year.

I also want to mention that the farmers are becoming much more sophisticated in their operation of the farms. Because of the competitiveness of the industry, farmers are becoming more computerized. They are hooked up to items such as the Global Link, Internet, Freenet and they are using the information highway already in the marketing of their crops and forecasts of particular markets for certain commodities. Also, in the weather they are getting much better information on weather forecasting now than we have ever seen.

All these things make our farmers much more competitive in the international scene. Our farmers in Manitoba are actually quick to adapt to this type of thing. I want to congratulate them for the job they have done really on this.

Although wheat still remains the province's most important grain, accounting for about 40 percent of our crop harvest, oilseeds and specialty grain harvest rose some 67 percent actually to a record 3 million tonnes while wheat production rose a moderate 2 percent actually to about 4 million tonnes.

So cash crop receipts rose to a record of 1.2 billion in 1994. This was due to increased crop yields and quality of the crop and also the rising grain prices and strong demand for specialty crops, such as canola.

Prices for Canadian wheat and oilseeds have also benefitted from tight supplies in 1994, as a major heat wave negatively impacted some European crops and also droughts in Australia and other exporting countries which have further reduced supplies. The Canadian Wheat Board estimates that the final price for top-quality wheat rose actually in 1994 to about \$194, which is up from about \$167 per metric tonne in the prior year.

Manitoba canola prices also have been very good, somewhere around the \$380- to \$400-per-tonne price compared to about \$325 last year and about under \$300 per tonne in 1993.

So cash receipts for these special crops, such as canola, rose some 50 percent to \$374 million last year and now account for about 16 percent of total cash receipts, up from a 5 percent share only four years ago. Despite wheat prices last year, cash receipts for wheat declined some 3.2 percent to about \$481 million, reflecting sales of some of the lower-quality wheat which was held over from the 1993 harvest.

In Manitoba we have two major farm income support programs, which are the Gross Revenue Insurance Plan, GRIP; and also the Net Income Stabilization Account, NISA. GRIP offers protection to producers against steep declines in both crop prices and yields and the program is partially funded by this government, the federal government and the producers. While payments are delivered through the provincial crop insurance agencies, NISA, on the other hand, is a tax-sheltered savings program for farmers, under which they may contribute up to 2 percent of their gross annual sales to a NISA account and then this account is then matched by both the federal and the provincial programs. So both these are good programs.

The budget will continue to work to meet the needs of the Manitoba producers by reinforcing efforts to help Manitoba's agri-food sector capitalize on diversification and export opportunities and broadening the Net Income Stabilization Account to some \$16 million, an increase of about \$3 million, actually.

The budget also announced an innovative agri-business or agri-ventures initiative to assist producers and processors and the rural entrepreneurs considering the establishment of a new, unique or value-added production venture. The creation of some 15,000 jobs in Manitoba last year, which was a nine-year high for retail sales growth and a nation-leading 29 percent increase actually in foreign exports, as evidenced

that the provincial economy is clearly moving ahead, citing over the 15,000 jobs created in the last year and the above-average performances in the economic growth in retail sales and also in foreign exports and in housing starts in 1994.

The budget forecasts strong performance in capital and manufacturing investment in 1995, and I am sure we are going to see this. Capital investment itself is expected to increase some 11.8 percent, which is four times the national increase and the best record among the provinces; and manufacturing investment will increase some 48 percent, a record high, in 1995. Also, I want to mention that in 1994 the Department of Rural Development had some really good news, and in just the latest issue that they have published it announces some of the good things that the Department of Rural Development is doing, Mr. Acting Speaker.

With the Grow Bonds and REDI and some of the programs that they have in the Department of Rural Development, they certainly have been making rural Manitoba grow and expand. There are many announcements in rural Manitoba.

One of the things that the Department of Rural Development did which I was very impressed with was their rural development forum that they held in Brandon just in March of this year. One of the highlights of that forum and one of things that we do in Manitoba is the Junior Achievement program, and they were at this forum of the students from the different schools who have this Junior Achievement program in Manitoba. It was a great opportunity for them to see the number of businesses and how the entrepreneurs operate.

When we consider someone said that by the year 2000, 50 percent of our workforce will be self-employed people, this is what this is all about. It is to try to promote some of the programs of Rural Development, such as the Grow Bonds, the Business Start Program, the Rural Economic Initiative Development. These will create jobs and create economic activity in rural Manitoba.

\* (1120)

Just recently I was able to make an announcement on a REDI program for Stonewall, for a campground expansion in the Quarry Park area, because this is a great tourist area for people to go out to. It is a heritage site, and people can go out there. They have a good campground; they have good ball diamonds; they have barbecue facilities. We just helped them with a \$45,000 grant to help them add some new campsites and also new bathroom facilities for their Quarry Park in Stonewall. This is really a good news item in the Department of Rural Development.

Also, in this recent budget, \$342 million will be dedicated to capital investments designed to improve infrastructure and provide jobs for Manitobans, with some almost \$97 million allocated for provincial capital investment in highway construction and upgrading. This was an increase of some \$3 million. I am really pleased that the Minister of Highways (Mr. Findlay) announced the upgrading of Highway 9 in the town of Gimli just recently at a total cost of \$2.3 million. This will improve that community. It is long overdue. We have been trying to get this done for a number of years. This will certainly help the town of Gimli and the area there because of the high tourist-

**Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources):** Very positive . . .

**Mr. Helwer:** Very positive, yes. We have a high tourist-

**Mr. Driedger:** Component in the summertime.

**Mr. Helwer:** Yes, that is right, the component in the summertime. A lot of traffic, so it is great that we are going to be able to improve Highway 9.

We also have a project which a tender was just called for on Highway 8 which will upgrade the last portion of Highway 8 till they widen it with shoulders. This will certainly be an

improvement to Highway 8. There again, these Highways 8 and 9 are important because they go up through Winnipeg Beach and Gimli and even up to Hecla Island and Riverton because of the tourist potential. So there is a lot of traffic, yes. I am glad to see these roads being expanded.

Also, Highway 415, a tender has been allowed for that one also for base and AST. That will improve those areas. Those people have been putting up with a lot of dust and rough roads for the last 25 or 30 years. I am really pleased to see that highway program finally go ahead.

Also, Highway 220 which goes into Oak Hammock. That one is under review by the Department of Environment. Hopefully that one will be approved shortly, and we will be able to get that one completed this summer also. That is also again very important because of the number of tourists that go into the Oak Hammock Marsh area because of the number of schools that visit there, the number of buses visit the Interpretive Centre there. It is just a great place to visit. If you ever have an opportunity, please go to Oak Hammock and have a tour there. You will be very impressed with that. That has just been a great place.

The capital program also for public schools will also show an increase this year of some \$5.4 million to \$23.7 million and a \$679-million capital program is outlined for Manitoba hospitals and personal care homes. In my constituency alone we also, for the last number of years, had capital improvements in schools. We have built classrooms onto the Bobby Bend School in Stonewall, and there has been an addition to the Balmoral School as well, as also the Teulon Elementary School.

I think this is good. We have seen an increase in the number of students in the last number of years especially in the Interlake School Division which is close to Winnipeg, and there has been a lot of expansion in the Stonewall area. Actually the Interlake School Division gained some 100 students last year, and

they are budgeting for another increase of about 50 students this year. So you can see that as these school divisions grow there, they are going to need more improvements. Hopefully they are able to expand the school system and the infrastructure there at Stonewall.

Also, in the health care program, I am really pleased that Stonewall Hospital is going to be complete very shortly. This is a total of about a \$9-million project. I understand that they will be moving into that new facility some time around the end of March. That is really great for the community of Stonewall. They need the new facility, and it will help them there quite a lot. With that, there will also be a 20-bed Crystal Care Home being built there on the site of the old hospital once the old hospital is torn down. This will also help that community meet the needs of our seniors there. Also, I am really pleased that we are going to finally get an addition to the Goodwin Lodge at Teulon, which is a personal care home. We are going to increase that facility by about some 27 beds, and this will help serve the needs of the seniors in that area. So this is just great. I am really pleased to see these improvements in the health care system with the facilities in the capital program.

The budget also notes the strong growth in the information and telecommunications industry, which has created some 1,200 new jobs in 1994, and is expected to increase with an additional 1,600 jobs in coming years. In addition, the budget stated that \$23 million will be spent over the next several years to assist facility development and operating costs for the 1999 Pan-Am Games, while another \$3 million has been committed to Brandon to host the 1997 Canada Summer Games. This will be creating over \$260 million in economic spin-offs and over 2,000 person years of employment. So these Pan-Am Games and these things such as the Canada Summer Games, World Curling that is being held in Brandon coming up in April—these are great things for Manitoba communities to host. There is indeed a big spin-off that helps the whole economy, and we are

really pleased. These committees should be commended for their hard work in getting these things for Manitoba.

We are entering an exciting time in Manitoba's history, Mr. Acting Speaker, and this budget—

**An Honourable Member:** It is our birthday.

**Mr. Helwer:** Yes, that is right. It is Manitoba's 125th birthday, this year 1995, too. May 12 will be a special day in 1995 because of Manitoba's 125th birthday. I am glad our member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer) here is on this committee and is doing a great job and getting our stuff ready for the 125th birthday. That is great.

This budget also confirms our commitment to keeping Manitoba strong today and ensures a solid foundation for our children's future, and this budget is based on the principles of accountability and integrity and on fiscal management and protection of our important social programs. I will really be pleased to be able to vote on this budget on Monday because it is a budget that reflects what the people of Manitoba and the constituents of Gimli actually want for today and for their children tomorrow.

So, thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker, for the opportunity to speak on this great budget this morning.

**Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk):** It is indeed a pleasure to rise today to put a few words on the record in terms of this particular budget, the last budget of a government before it goes before the people of Manitoba and the last Conservative budget for many years to come.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we know that this budget is based on a number of falsehoods. It is based on some very flimsy arguments, arguments which my colleagues have been able to poke holes in over the last number of days, a budget that is based this year on the incredible amount of revenues from gambling in the province.

We know that the 5,300 VLTs throughout Manitoba are just going full out raising revenues for the members opposite, where they will be bringing in this year alone \$385 million to support the activities of the government and to allow them to bring forward a forecasted balanced budget.

This government in the past has made similar forecasts in terms of revenues, and we have noticed for the most part they have been off. There was one year where they forecast a deficit in the range of \$330 million, but when the final figure was tallied it was closer to \$760 million, which in fact was a record deficit from this government.

Before I begin that I just wanted to pay tribute to the members who are retiring, who will be leaving. The member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose), I do want to just add my comments to the member, to his level of speeches, which he has given here in the past. I have always enjoyed them and disagreed with them but certainly did enjoy his presentation. The quiet dignity, of course, of the member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) will be missed by all, his quiet way. We will all miss him.

\* (1130)

The member for Morris (Mr. Manness), an individual of high principle; the member for Riel (Mr. Ducharme); of course, our own member here, the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), who has decided not to continue on with his political career. He will be seeking his way in another profession.

There will also be many members who will not be returning to this Chamber in a number of weeks. There will be a few members from the second opposition party, who I know are destined not to return and quite possibly, we are more than certain, there will be a few members of the government House which will be forced to take-well, they will be forced into retirement, I guess they would suggest somewhat prematurely.

All of us are anxious to get out there and to raise the issues that we have been able to, raise the issues of our party in a political forum. As we have mentioned, the government has been able to bring in this so-called balanced budget based exclusively on a massive increase in gambling over the past years. They have been able to balance this budget, at least in terms of those of us in Selkirk by a number of cuts which have affected our community in a very, very negative way.

All of us will remember in 1991, when the former Minister of Health closed the School of Psychiatric Nursing. This school of nursing was a very important institution in our community for over 70-odd years. It was the only post-secondary educational facility in our town and our surrounding community. In fact, now, if any of our young people wish to pursue a career in psychiatric nursing, they have to leave our community; they cannot stay within our community to receive the higher education.

It affects not only individuals who live within Selkirk, but also individuals who live in other communities, other constituencies surrounding Selkirk. For example, the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer) in his remarks earlier failed to mention that several of his constituents have attended the Selkirk School of Nursing in the past, so have members from the east side of the Red River. The member for Springfield (Mr. Findlay) and the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) have not raised the concern about the effects that this closing has had upon our community. It really affects the soul of our town.

The following year, of course, the government once again decided that they would close our training plant, the Human Resources Opportunity Centre in Selkirk. This plant offered individuals the opportunity to get off social assistance by providing them with meaningful training, allowed individuals to return to the workforce. For some unknown reason, the government decided, well, this was not in the best interests of individuals who were



on social assistance. Well, let us simply close the training plant down, robbing literally hundreds of individuals an opportunity to escape the cycle of welfare.

This is how they have balanced their budget. They balanced their budget by attacking communities such as mine. They closed or withdrew funding to the friendship centres throughout the province, and this was a move which we completely disagreed with on this side. It showed that the government had no understanding of the valuable work provided by the friendship centre movement, and those individuals who were involved in that movement throughout the province.

Being a former employee of the friendship centre, and I also enjoyed the number of years being on the board of the friendship centre in Selkirk, I understand the important work the friendship centre was able to provide to individuals. We are very disappointed that the government withdrew funding. It is a commitment that we have made, that we would restore funding because we do recognize the fine work that is done by this centre, both for native and non-native individuals in our community.

It was a move that was condemned, I might add, by the Town of Selkirk, both by letter and by resolution. In fact, all of these closures were condemned by the council and mayor of the Town of Selkirk, either by resolution or by direct letter. Those letters were presented to the minister or the Premier, either by myself tabling them in the House or by the mayor sending the letters directly, or their feelings on these issues directly to the ministers involved.

There is widespread support for our actions as we stand up in the House to raise these issues, to question the government why they would take such moves to hurt our community. The government knows their candidate out in that area will be challenged on these issues in the next number of weeks, why he would support a government who would take such drastic action in hurting our community.

Mr. Acting Speaker, as I mentioned, the budget is a document that is based upon gambling revenues. We know that they have taken \$140-odd million out of a slush fund that was created from excess revenues over the years, and they have used that here. Now they will not have that next year. What are they going to do next year if they are, heaven forbid, returned into office? What is any government going to do next year or this budgetary year when those revenues, when that one-time slush fund is now used up? What is any government going to do—\$145 million in terms of excess revenue?

That actually represents over 7 percent of their budget this particular year. They have also indicated, members opposite, that they would do away with the health and education levy. They have mentioned that in their speeches in the past, but, again, how are they going to recover the \$200-odd million that is used now to fund our health care and our education system throughout the province?

Mr. Acting Speaker, like all members, I assume all members, we had the honour this morning of attending a breakfast with school trustees in Manitoba. As I was there with mine, they had a number of concerns regarding education and the government's lack of commitment to the public education system in this province, and they were wondering where were some of the members opposite.

They were asking me where the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer) was because the member for Gimli, of course, a huge part of the Lord Selkirk School Division falls within his provincial constituency, yet he was not there to defend the government's actions, and they were questioning his whereabouts.

They also wanted to speak with the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) because the Lord Selkirk School Division falls within his constituency as well. They were questioning his whereabouts because they wanted to ask him some questions regarding his commitment to public education in this province.

The Lord Selkirk School Division, just upcoming, this fiscal year, they were forced to increase the mill rate by 1.7 mills, which appears to be over the 10 percent mark in order to maintain staffing levels at the '94-95 fiscal year. Last year there were over 25 full-time teaching positions and 25 full-time support staff cut because of the government's lack of commitment to public education here in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I wanted to raise some issues regarding a number of other issues that are important in Selkirk. One, of course, is the public housing issue. As I raised in previous speeches, I want to once again emphasize the importance of housing stocks, the importance of public housing to the constituents of Selkirk. Over the last number of years, several of the housing stocks in Selkirk are in serious decay. They are deteriorating rapidly because of a lack of concern by members opposite. I am pleased to say that there was some action taken to upgrade some of the housing stocks. I feel that is important.

We know now that the federal Liberal government is no longer committed to public housing in this province or across this country where they, as a matter of fact, have cut \$270 million over the next three years. This is the second year in a row that the Liberal government has cut public housing here in the province.

Last year the government opposite forced an increase of 17 percent upon those individuals who live in public housing, and they have also increased their total rents from 25 percent to 27 percent of the income. This has forced many individuals to take their meagre wages and direct it to paying the costs of their housing because of the lack of commitment on behalf of both governments to public housing here in the province of Manitoba.

To clear that now, we know that the Conservatives were—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner):** Order, please. I wonder if the people that are conversing in the room could do so a bit more quietly; then we could hear the speaker. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Dewar:** Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker. So we always question the commitment of the government opposite to public housing. Now we know that the Liberal federal government has, fortunately, because of their cut to public housing, demonstrated that they are not committed to public housing in this province either.

Mr. Acting Speaker, just weeks before the House was called back, the government opposite announced that they were going to do a review of gambling here in the province. All of a sudden, they discovered, after four and a half years, that there is a problem with gambling here in this province. They discovered that after four and a half years of putting more and more VLTs and casinos into the province. Now they have more VLTs per capita than any other province in this country, and they say, well, let us see here.

There could be a problem with 5,300 VLTs in this province and many, many casinos and so on, other gaming initiatives. Gee, you know, we had better have a little slow down here and take a look at what is going on.

Just two weeks prior to the anticipated election call, the government has announced its policy, a review working group to look at all aspects of gambling. We suggest that it falls short of our own calls for public hearings, something that we were able to bring forward in our legislation, which is Bill 203.

Our bill, of course, has received wide support throughout the province, but what they have done is, they have taken some of our elements of our bill, sort of like the me-too party over there, some of the actual clauses out of our bill, and they have put it in their press release that was announced just on March 7. Their review will not be required to report back until October 1,

which will be long, long after the government opposite has gone out of power.

It is kind of ironic, of course, because that is the government that has increased gaming in this province from—oh, I believe their revenues were \$50 million, and now they are forecasted to be over \$220 million in this particular fiscal year.

I want to talk a bit about the widespread support that we have received throughout the province for Bill 203. We have letters of support and resolutions from Brandon. We have a letter from the mayor of Brandon, where he states that the Brandon City Council has been frustrated over the possessive and reluctant attitude of the provincial government in releasing any information on the amount of revenue being earned from video lottery terminals throughout the province.

They also have received a letter from the mayor of the Town of Selkirk, again conveying the support of the mayor and council supporting our legislation. We have a resolution from the cities of Flin Flon, Portage la Prairie, Gimli. We have another letter from Treherne, Garson, the Municipality of Rosburn, the Community Council of Waterhen, Whitemouth, Mountain, Lynn Lake, Gillam. We have widespread support throughout the province. We have letters of support from areas in the west and the south and the north supporting our legislation, urging the government opposite to pass our legislation in Bill 203, The Lotteries Accountability Act, which will force the government opposite to tell communities, such as Gimli or Selkirk, how much money is leaving that community in terms of VLT revenues each fiscal year.

They do not know. They clearly are concerned about the high level of money that is leaving. They know that it is a substantial drain on those communities in terms of revenues. They see very little money coming back.

They support legislation which would force the government to bring that information back so

at least they can assess the magnitude of the problem in terms of gambling and in terms of the number of literally millions of dollars that is leaving rural Manitoba.

I was quite interested, and I just wanted to make a few comments regarding some of the words on the record that was put here by the Liberal Leader. The Liberal Leader in his comments on Monday, March 13, where he is talking about the Lotteries Corporation reporting to a committee of the House and talking about the accountability of the Lotteries Corporation, something which we are also concerned about, something that our Bill 203 will address. He goes on to say that he was there at this committee: I was there asking questions.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I quote: I was there asking questions. He goes on: I do not even think that we finished that report. I think we got a couple of hours into it. We asked some questions, and I know that the member for Selkirk, I think, asked some questions. I was there asking questions.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Well, Mr. Speaker, I was at that committee, and I remembered the individuals who were there, but I do not remember seeing the Leader of the Liberal Party at that particular committee meeting.

**Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Energy and Mines):** He was having a recess.

**Mr. Dewar:** Well, as the member for Pembina says, he was having a recess. He could have been, but I did get a copy of that standing committee, Hansard, of June 17. I look at the members who were on that committee: the Honourable Messrs. Enns, Findlay, the Honourable Mrs. McIntosh, the Honourable Mr. Praznik, and then other members—Messrs. Ashton, Dewar, Helwer, Lamoureux, McAlpine, Reid, and Rose. So that is fair enough. I mean, the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), you do not have to be on the committee to ask a

question at the committee—that is true. He could have been there, and he could have asked a question but not been part of that committee.

I urge all members to get a copy of that committee and look through it. You will find something quite interesting. You will find that the member for St. James, the Leader of the Liberal Party, did not raise one single question. [interjection] Well, yes, the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) did raise questions. The Leader of the Liberal Party said, I was there. He quotes in Hansard: I was there asking questions. Maybe he forgot to turn his mike on, because he did not ask one single question.

This raises questions of the integrity of the Liberal Leader; when he keeps saying these things, I guess eventually he begins to believe them. But I tell members to take a look at that.

It really does reflect badly on the Leader of the Liberal Party. Maybe he was at a recess at that moment; maybe he was out chasing Winnie the Pooh around; or maybe he was out attacking an individual who wishes to bring jobs to the community of Selkirk.

He is good at doing those things. He is good at grandstanding, at standing here in the Legislative Building and grandstanding, trying to get his face on the six o'clock news. But he has limited credibility or no credibility outside of this Chamber. I would suggest that if he has any within—and I would suggest now that this disputes that he would have any within the Chamber when he can make such claims as that: I was there asking questions. Yet, for some reason, he failed to get his name in Hansard. As a matter of fact, maybe he was there. Maybe he did not turn his mike on, but it does raise the credibility of that particular member, Mr. Speaker.

As I mentioned earlier, the budget is based upon, basically, an incredible increase in gambling. The public out there, outside this Chamber, know that. They know that it is simply, again, based upon this one-time infusion of money from gamblers, and those of us who

live in rural Manitoba know that we have been hit quite hard by that. VLTs were introduced into rural Manitoba in the fall of 1991. They were there for two years, and then now they have VLTs throughout the province. There are 5,300 for a population of just over one million.

\* (1150)

The Province of Saskatchewan recently has reduced the VLTs by 10 percent, down to 3,600. Within Saskatchewan, they have a treatment program which is double the amount in terms of revenues that we do have here in the Province of Manitoba. So they have fewer machines; they have more money. I urge the members opposite to look at that and to act if they can before their review comes in to deal with some of the issues that we have raised on this side regarding the negative social and economic effects of gambling throughout the province, Mr. Speaker. I urge them to do that.

I urge the government, if they want to try to redeem themselves in terms of some of the actions they have taken in our community, to move ahead with the forensic unit, something that we on this side of the House have been pushing for. We urge them to deal with the issue of public housing, perhaps put some more money into public housing to upgrade some of the housing stocks. I know it is going to be difficult now that the Liberal government has shown that they are no longer interested in the concept of public housing.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to now yield the floor to another one of my colleagues. Like all members in this House, I am anxious to get out there on the streets, to debate the real issues. So I just want to close with those thoughts.

**Mr. Driedger:** I almost missed it. I did not realize—the ongoing droning that took place here—when the member quit really, but I caught it in time.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate once again in another budget debate. Before I get into

that, I would like to also extend my condolences to the member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) on the passing of her mother. The funeral is this afternoon, and I think there are going to be quite a few members that will appear there. Unfortunately, I cannot, but I want to extend my condolences.

Mr. Speaker, just before I get into the budget end of it, I also want to take this opportunity because I do not know how many more I will have in terms of making reference to some of the members that are going to be leaving. I would be remiss in not doing that because, first of all, the member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard), sitting very close to me here, and I both started on the political road approximately at the same time, in 1977.

In fact, I have to say that my nomination for the upcoming election is taking place on the 21st of March. Eighteen years ago, on March 25, is when I had my first nomination, so it was approximately the same time as the member for Pembina won his nomination. Those were exciting times.

We have spent a lot of time together, the member for Pembina and myself. I have to say that all members of this Legislature, during the time that the member for Pembina has been here, will remember the member for Pembina, some with very fond memories, others probably having felt his pointed jabs from time to time.

I know that the present Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) though, in spite of his saying he will be missing the member, I think, is probably going to have a little bit of relief. He will be a bit more relaxed.

Then we have the member for Morris (Mr. Manness), who has been here almost as long as well. These are certainly two of the members that have not been backwards in their comments. They are very opinionated. They have a strong opinion and do not mind relating them.

We have the member for Riel (Mr. Ducharme) and the member for Turtle Mountain.

The member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose) has been here one term. It is surprising, of all the people who come through this House here, you know, everybody makes their own impact. There is an old saying that says, they also serve who only stand and watch, but that has not been the case with the four that are not running again on our side of the House; certainly, they have been very qualified members.

The member for Turtle Mountain, I have always enjoyed sort of the dry, sage humour that he presents and the very strong views he has. The member for Riel and I have had our fun and differences and have our own way of dialoguing with each other. So these are people that I will certainly miss the next time around, because we expect the election is going to be coming very shortly, some time this spring.

There are also three members from the NDP who are not running again. Or is it four? There is the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), who wisely has chosen not to get exposed at this time, and the member for Flin Flon, of course. Then we had the member for River Heights. So, just voluntarily, seven members have changed that are going to be changed.

But experience has shown that over the elections usually you have anywhere from 17 to 25 members who change every time we have an election. I would expect, Mr. Speaker, that when you consider—and this is for the benefit of people like the member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg). I mentioned him the other day, and we talked about it briefly, that the average term of a politician in the Legislature is between six and six and a half years. So you know that always quite a radical change takes place. [interjection] Sometimes you wonder why some of them do keep coming back.

**An Honourable Member:** I think Kevie is about three months away from becoming the Leader.

**Mr. Driedger:** I sort of like that comment from the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns). Now,

when you consider that the average time served in this building as an elected official is between six, six and one-half years, and then you have the member for Lakeside, who is now running again and will win again, will be here well over 30 years. You have to ask yourself, why would one individual be able to last that long and others keep moving that fast? Because of credibility and honesty.

I want to talk about that a little bit when we talk about the budget. But I bring this forward, and, Mr. Speaker, I have had the occasion from '77 to '81 to be a backbencher and speak in support of the budgets of those times then. Six and a half years in opposition speaking against the budgets that were presented by the then-NDP. Then, of course, this is the seventh year basically that I can speak as part of the government in support of the budget that I have had some input into developing.

You have the throne speech, which is basically sort of a philosophical type of document, but really the mettle of the government comes in the budget. When the budgets get presented over the times—and I can recall sitting in opposition in that chair in the second row, that of the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway)—I cannot remember all these seats; they keep changing on me. Anyway, at that time, the then-Minister of Finance, a certain Vic Schroeder, was bringing down the budget. We sensed his government at that time, the government of the day, was having financial difficulty. They would probably have to look at raising the sales tax. It was then that infamous payroll tax was implemented, and the government of the day—we were sitting there watching this come down and they implemented it. That tax is still a sore spot to everybody, and we are still trying to cope with it and trying to get rid of it.

\*(1200)

No, we are trying to work on it; once you have a tax and that kind of a revenue, how do you just replace that all the time? But we have

been working at it stage-wise. I want to talk about other budgets as well. Do you actually know what happens to people when a budget is brought down? The government of the day who brings it down can invariably tell whether they have a good budget or not. And I will tell you something, when in 1988—it was in March of 1988—the then-NDP government brought down a budget and it was that budget that brought down that government of the day at that time. One vote made the difference.

I can recall when that vote took place, sitting over there, and when the one member from the government side got up and voted against the budget, the consternation, you could have heard a pin drop, and, of course, with jubilation on our side because the government was defeated that day. For Manitobans that was a great day because that was when we started the era of the Conservative government in '88, after the election with a minority government, and developed, from that time on, a seven-year plan with the culmination of the budget that was presented just a week ago last Thursday. [interjection]

Well, we will get around to that; we used to refer to him as "Landslide," the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). He has been around a while, too. I never want to take away, discredit any individual that has been—he has fought hard. I do not agree with very many things that he does, but I respect the fact that he has been here and has been doing his job. Anyway, I want to come back to making the reference to the budget that brought down the government of the day.

From that time on, in a minority government, the member for Morris (Mr. Manness), the Minister of Finance, started developing this scenario that ultimately the member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Stefanson), the now-Minister of Finance, developed a scenario that culminated with the budget that we brought down, which is a balanced budget.

Now, sitting here and looking when that budget was brought down and announcing to

Manitobans that it was a balanced budget, I could see the consternation on the opposition members' faces, because they knew we are going into an election shortly this spring, and this budget is hurting them. It is hurting them because, really, the public has been demanding a balanced budget.

What did they say to the federal government? What did they say to Paul Martin prior to the federal budget coming down? Do not increase taxes, and get your spending under control. There were lobby groups all over the place to bring down a strong message. Do not raise taxes. Get spending under control.

When we brought our budget down, there was not a big hue and cry about it, but people really accepted it, and those of you who think that this does not have an impact, get out, get real, get out and talk to your people. Ask them honestly, what do you think of a balanced budget. Do not try and bias your question by saying, do you think it is right what they have done in terms of using lottery money?

Mr. Speaker, I go to my constituency, I go to active communities and ask, what do you think, guys, what do you think about the balanced budget? They say, congratulations, much needed, this is the start of a new era, and they like it. Members opposite have been going and looking how they can discredit the balanced budget, and they go on the angle of the Lotteries thing, the lottery money.

Well, let me tell you, my constituency could possibly be referred to as one of the Bible belts, you know, in the Steinbach area. We have in the town of Steinbach no VLTs. We have in the R.M. of Hanover no VLTs. We have no VLTs in Niverville, but we have VLTs in the R.M. of La Broquerie. But I will tell you something. The people out there, they do not really care. Do you think that people in my constituency do not go out and play the machines? Yes, they do. [interjection] No, but if you say that my people are going to be concerned because VLTs—if you think that my constituents are upset because

VLT money is going to balance the budget, think again.

**An Honourable Member:** What do think they about gun control?

**Mr. Driedger:** I will tell you something, the same as I. They do not believe in this gun legislation—[interjection] Yes, and they do not believe in gun legislation either, and I am very strongly opposed to it, I can tell you that.

You know, I find it interesting that members of the opposition are trying to say this is a terrible thing, taking this lottery money and balancing the budget with it. I will tell you something, the other provinces are chasing after Manitoba, to see whether they can get that same kind of money generated somewhere along the line.

To the NDP, the Saskatchewan government is rushing as fast as they can to get VLT money and gambling money. What does Ontario do, another NDP government? They all go after this. They are going after the bingo palaces; they are going after gambling. The only thing that chagrins them really is that we are the leaders in this thing. Everybody comes storming behind, trying to get the same kind of revenues.

Now, I find it with interest that—especially the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) who says this business of getting this kind of money, we should not allow gambling to take place—[interjection]

**Mr. Driedger:** You have made that comment from time to time. Everybody has on that side. Everybody attacks this kind of revenue. Well, I will tell you something. If you want to really look at it in terms of the revenue that it generates, let us talk about—my colleague the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey) the other day was accusing the previous administration of having changed the drinking age from 21 to 18. Remember that.

I have to say that in 1978 or 1979 I brought in a private member's bill to raise the drinking age

back to not 21 but to 19. Because of the count the way it worked out that day, because it was a free vote, I lost by two votes. This is because two of my colleagues were out in Churchill at that time fighting to save the Port of Churchill, otherwise the drinking age would have been 19.

But I picked that up because the member for Arthur-Virden was saying you dropped the drinking age; you allowed our young people between 18 and 21 to start legally drinking. I use that as comparison in terms of where is the moral fibre or criticism coming on the gambling end of it? We have it on smoking. People smoke, and we tax them. We allow them to drink, and we tax them. Heavy, heavy revenues. And we have gambling.

**An Honourable Member:** And we tax them.

**Mr. Driedger:** No. But all three vices are optional, are they not? People do not have to smoke.

**An Honourable Member:** What vices do you have left then, Albert?

**Mr. Driedger:** Well, there could be some yet. I will not mention it, but you have drinking; you have smoking, and you have gambling.

**An Honourable Member:** And you do not do any of them.

**Mr. Driedger:** I did not say that. But these are all optional ones that we tax. So the revenue that we basically use from lotteries, from gambling and use that to balance a budget, the general public accepts that and likes that because we are not forcing anybody to go out there and play the machines.

**An Honourable Member:** It is a volunteer tax.

**Mr. Driedger:** Yes. If we would tax that amount of money off the people by any tax, if we would take and apply that kind of a tax to anybody, the revenue that we are getting out of VLTs and other gambling, we would have a

revolt. But now the people come and give of their own free will. They go and play the machines. Those who do not want to do not have to. The same thing with drinking and smoking. I mean, they are optional things. We tax them. That is why we call them sin taxes, so to speak.

We have used that money to basically balance a budget which is what people respect and want. We have done that without raising any taxes, the major taxes. We have not. We have not raised sales tax. Look what Saskatchewan had to do. We have not raised the corporate tax. We have reduced the personal income tax. I am coming back to the credibility and being honest. That is why people like the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), like the member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard), have been here a long time because they are forthright and honest. They will take their lickings when they make a mistake as well, and so will I, but that has to do some with credibility.

\* (1210)

I have done this before, talked about credibility in here, because as we go into the campaign very shortly—the Premier has told me we will have an election this spring. We know that, but, as we get into that, it again comes down to the credibility of all of us that ultimately get elected, all 57 members in here, and our reputations are not that good as politicians. Basically, exactly as regards the debate that takes place in here, we are not quite honest with how we present our views. We do not, because everyone of you would have to admit that a balanced budget is the most desired thing that could happen to a government. All provinces are striving to do that, but this is what people basically wanted. But you have to go now because you are opposition members and you want to get re-elected, you are looking for targets, how you can punch holes into this thing.

How else can you get elected? But then, when you do that, that is where we blow the credibility of all of us here.



I am proud to be a politician. I really am. I like my position as an MLA for the years that I have been there. I enjoy the work that I am doing, not all of it, and many things I cannot change that I would like to change, but that is where we collectively here as governments work together.

I just want to say a little bit, be a little honest.

Mr. Speaker, I made reference already to the fact that, before the federal budget came forward, you know how people were expressing their views. Do not increase taxes, be accountable, and we have applied that principle. But what has the federal government done, because people will accept decisions of government if they are fair and there has got to be credibility? I have to tell you that the federal budget is not fair. The member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) can yell all he wants; ultimately, everything comes around that goes around. And the federal budget is not fair to Manitobans, and I am surprised because, out of the 14 M.P.s, we have one Reformer, we have one NDP and we have 12 Liberals. How did Liberal M.P.s allow themselves to get dumped on by Paul Martin? Because that is what has happened to us. They have disappeared off the face of the map. I mean, the strong members in the western part of the city get pillaged there with the removal of the—what is it?—the headquarters. Air Command.

Our farmers have really got it kicking in terms of WGTA, the removal of it. But those are the bigger picture. I have to tell you, ladies and gentlemen, that within my Department of Natural Resources, I have a letter here that I actually should table, and I will table it.

Addressed to myself after the federal budget, in there, I get informed that there is no further cost-sharing. The federal government is not going to give one dollar to Natural Resources. Not to Forestry. We are trying to establish the impact of the dollars that it would have.

There was a joint agreement on some of these things and not only that, they have shut down the

federal forestry office, they have shut down the survey office, the federal one. They are looking at transferring all the docks and harbours in the province back to the province, so I will table this just so that everybody can avail themselves of it. [interjection]

The member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) is still chirping away and saying, well, you know, why are they so popular? It takes a little while.

You, provincially, will reap the results of it as well. [interjection] It has not been received that well. Whom have you been talking to? I personally, based on the federal budget and the changes to the method of payment and the removal of the Crow, will probably be in the end result a benefactor, because I think there are going to be major changes taking place in terms of how we perform in agriculture in this province. Because with the removal of the subsidy because we are centrally located in Canada, we would pay the biggest percentage of the freight. We will be raising more livestock here. That has actually been happening in my area for quite some time, in terms of hog production, dairy production, the feather industry, so that I expect will escalate.

I am saying I personally in my area will probably be, over the long term, the benefactor. I will tell you something, Manitobans are not going to be the benefactors. A major pain and adjustment is going to have to take place.

I want to come back to our provincial budget a little bit. I do not know whether everyone of you, I think that we had circulated this to all people in Manitoba, the budget in brief. We would be fools if we did not because it is a good-news story.

I want to come back to credibility again because—

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** Albert, have you heard of spot Waldo and his books? There is a new one going out.

**Mr. Driedger:** The member for Thompson is giving me an idea again. Because when we see what happens in our document that we have put out, where the amount of money that we are spending for health, education and social services, which is over 60 percent of the provincial budget, if you want to look at the figures of expenditures in the three main categories, we have escalated that to the point and all the time—especially the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak).

The member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard), remember the member for Kildonan always yelling, cutbacks, cutbacks. When you consider the amount of money that we have spent in health services, it is to the point where you cried wolf once too often. You all know the story where this little kid is yelling wolf, wolf, everybody runs and says, where, where. No wolf. He does it the second time. The third time he is crying wolf again, saying we have cut back, but nobody is really prepared to listen again.

It happened, it worked in the by-elections, but the issue is gone. Now what are you going to cry now? That is why these documents are out there.

**An Honourable Member:** Cry wolf again.

**Mr. Driedger:** Yes, I know. The member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg) is very nervous, because that is what won him the last election.

I will tell you something, there is a different attitude out there. Talk to your people. There is a different attitude. We are running on the performance of seven years with the culmination of this budget, and I will tell you something: Come on and take me on in my constituency, take on the business community, because we have the credibility out there.

\* (1220)

Yes, Mr. Speaker, there is bragging that takes place when you do something good, and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) did that in this brochure. I like this. I believe this balanced

budget is the best 125th birthday present we can offer our children. Is that not nice, eh? And why would we not brag about something like this? We have credibility, and we have established that credibility over a period of time.

Now let us get on to the hustings whenever the Premier (Mr. Filmon) decides to call it. We will challenge you to these things here, and you will have to try and defend why you would not support a balanced budget. You can say lotteries all you want, but your case is weak. It is going to be very interesting; I am looking forward to it.

I want to just touch on the credibility end of it a little bit again, because I looked at the amendments by the Liberals, for example: (b) "this government has failed to give hope to Manitoba young people who want to improve or acquire new skills by cutting ACCESS and youth programs." Out of the four, they have (a), (b), (c) and (d), you know.

I find this sort of ironic. I was out yesterday in my riding announcing the Green Team program—very, very positive. We are looking at 700 jobs to be created for our youth between 16 and 24, a \$2.4-million program, and here they say we are not creating opportunities for our youth.

Then they talk about item (c): "this government's poor economic performance will continue as a result of their steadily increasing reliance on revenues from video lottery terminals . . . ."

I do not know, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) was busy announcing—what?—400 jobs yesterday afternoon. There are more jobs coming on an ongoing basis. The community out there, if you talk to the business people, talk to them. They like what is happening. The way that this government has treated them, we have developed a fair economic climate out there, and they are very satisfied with it.

Then I read item (d): "this government has failed to recognize the priorities of Manitobans

by cutting spending to health, education and social services . . . ."

That is why I say you cry wolf once too often, and ultimately it will catch up with you. It is the Liberals—[interjection] The member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) has been screaming this so long that nobody listens anymore. But now the Liberals have picked it up, the comelately Liberals. It is going to be interesting to see how they will react.

I am looking forward to some of the public debates that are going to take place between the Leaders in terms of what credibility everybody has. At the door, of course, you can say anything you want, but the general perception is ultimately going to take and judgment will be passed.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on, I suppose, but I have had my shot at it, and I am hoping that by the time we get out there on the hustings and by the time the election is over—it is time. There is so much rhetoric out here after four and a half years that it is time to get out there and re-evaluate as to what the people of Manitoba want. I always say that in spite of—I sometimes do not agree with what they do, but the public is always right. I would hope that they would be right again this time, and it would be the way that I would prefer to see it. Thank you for your comments.

**Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan):** Mr. Speaker, at the onset of my speech, I would like to wish well all of those members of the Chamber who are voluntarily leaving us after this session. It is probably the last chance I will have to do so before the call of the election.

I sincerely wish them all well in their continuing lives and certainly recognize their contribution on behalf of all Manitobans. Public life is not easy. I recognize it is a commitment on everyone's part, regardless of their political ideology and philosophy. I think it is a mark of credit to any individual to come forward and offer themselves for public office and commit

themselves to working in this environment, to ultimately better their fellow human beings.

I congratulate all of the members of this Chamber who have done their duty and who are leaving us after this session. I sincerely wish them all well in their future endeavours and thank them on my behalf, and certainly for their contributions and efforts in the past. That goes to all the members leaving us: the member for Morris (Mr. Manness), the member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard), the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose), of course, the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), who are all voluntarily leaving us, and as well, Mr. Ducharme, the member for Riel, for all of their work and efforts.

I can honestly say that I consider all of them not only colleagues but friends. Despite banter in the Legislature, I cannot think of an unkind word I would have to say about these individuals. In fact, I cannot think of an unkind word I would say on a personal level about any member of this Chamber. That bespeaks, I think, the credit of the individuals who have been elected to this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, we are entering the twilight of the government's seven years, and certainly the twilight of its most recent mandate. We are seeing the twilight being enhanced by a blizzard of announcements that have come upon us in the last week or 10 days.

I think there has been more activity generating press releases in the last 10 days than perhaps almost the first four and a half years of this government combined, in terms of activities. That being the case, one would think that perhaps there ought to be elections more often. We will see some activity on the part of members opposite, although I do not recommend it as an overall policy, because as the member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) indicated, there is a level of cynicism out there.

It is only enhanced by a government's—in the dying days of its mandate, issuing press release after press release of documents and issues that

have been current and important to the public of Manitoba for many years. Some have been studied to death for many years and some of them have been studied to death by this government for many years, but the government just sat on many of those reports.

It does add to the cynicism level, although we welcome any positive announcements, particularly in the health care field, by members of this government whose record in the health care field leaves somewhat to be desired.

We are also moving into a new environment with the complete capitulation and the turnaround of a federal Liberal government that is nothing short of—what can I say?—I am utterly and terribly disappointed with the federal Liberal government, its complete retreat from the principles that it was elected on. I think it is one of the issues that fuels cynicism in the public when you have a government that is elected on.

Mr. Speaker, we are going into an election campaign. We are going to put our names and our party labels on standby, and we are going to outline what we stand for. We are going to ask the public to vote for us based on those principles, and presumably when we are elected we will follow principles. I am disgusted that we have a federal Liberal government that was elected on a platform and principles. They elected a member of Parliament in my own community on a platform of principles, but they completely turned their backs on. It goes so far to discredit all of us who were elected office, when you have a party saying one

thing to be elected and then as soon as they are elected to office, turning it around dramatically.

I think it is deplorable. I would hope that whatever party comes out on top in the provincial election campaign will not follow the pattern of the federal Liberal government who have reneged on program after program, and who have changed in the space of a year and a half. They have changed completely their entire orientation and direction.

It was totally contrary to that upon which they were elected. It is amazing to watch the contortions of the federal and provincial Liberal politicians as they try to contort themselves into the various ideological changes and policy changes that the Liberal government has made. It certainly does not do anything to enhance the credibility of politicians when you have members of that Chamber, members of that provincial and federal party changing their position overnight and daily. It certainly does not create a good deal of credibility amongst the public.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Kildonan will have 35 minutes remaining.

The hour being 12:30 p.m., this House now adjourns and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. (Monday).

Everybody, have a good weekend.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, March 17, 1995

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