



Second Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(Hansard)**

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, December 15, 1995

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

**Emergency Health Care Services—
Community Hospitals**

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of A.J. Milne, Kim Milne and Alex Milne praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record requesting the Premier to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care at community hospitals, as was promised in the 1995 general election.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Maxine Lawrence, Darlene Dryborough, Gail Peters and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record requesting the Premier to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care at community hospitals, as was promised in the 1995 general election.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

**Emergency Health Care Services—
Community Hospitals**

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

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT emergency health care services are the core of Manitoba's health care system.

THAT Manitobans deserve the greatest possible access to this care.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly urge the Minister responsible for

Health consider making a commitment to the people of Manitoba that emergency health care services in Winnipeg's five community hospitals will remain open seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

**Liquor Store Closure—
Winnipegosis**

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

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

WHEREAS the MLCC store has been a part of our community for many years, and

WHEREAS this store provides a good-paying job for the community, and

WHEREAS the MLCC rents a building to provide this service, and

WHEREAS the MLCC store has a much more varied selection of products than any private vendor, and

WHEREAS this store is convenient for all our residents, including our summer tourist trade, and

WHEREAS the MLCC employee is very careful to prevent sales to minors,

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the Manitoba government instruct the MLCC to reverse the decision to close the Winnipegosis liquor store.

**Emergency Health Care Services—
Community Hospitals**

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). It

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

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Yes. The Clerk will read.

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

THAT emergency health care services are the core of Manitoba's health care system.

THAT Manitobans deserve the greatest possible access to this care.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly urge the Minister responsible for Health consider making a commitment to the people of Manitoba that emergency health care services in Winnipeg's five community hospitals will remain open seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

Emergency Health Care Services— Concordia Hospital

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

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

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

THAT following the election the Minister of Health promised that emergency services would not be reduced at community hospitals in Winnipeg; and

THAT the Minister of Health on October 6 announced that emergency services at these hospitals would be cut back immediately; and

THAT residents of the Concordia Hospital vicinity depend upon emergency service at this hospital.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record requesting the Premier to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care at Concordia community Hospital, as was promised in the 1995 general election.

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

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

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

THAT following the election the Minister of Health promised that emergency services would not be reduced at community hospitals in Winnipeg; and

THAT the Minister of Health on October 6 announced that emergency services at these hospitals would be cut back immediately; and

THAT residents of the Concordia Hospital vicinity depend upon emergency service at this hospital.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record requesting the Premier to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care at Concordia community Hospital as was promised in the 1995 general election.

* (1005)

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

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

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

THAT following the election the Minister of Health promised that emergency services would not be reduced at community hospitals in Winnipeg; and

THAT the Minister of Health on October 6 announced that emergency services at these hospitals would be cut back immediately; and

THAT residents of the Concordia Hospital vicinity depend upon emergency service at this hospital.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record requesting the Premier to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care at Concordia community Hospital as was promised in the 1995 general election.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the Annual Report of the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council 1994-95.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us today Mr. Ron Osika, Leader of the Opposition of Saskatchewan.

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

Also seated in the public gallery we have 14 students from The Maples Collegiate under the direction of Mr. Murray Goldenberg. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski).

We also have 45 visitors from Poland and all of Canada from the Canada World Youth Exchange Program under the direction of Ms. Manon Roy.

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Lottery Revenue Decline Impact on Education/Health

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

Today his Minister of Finance is quoted as saying that the provincial-owned source revenues are, quote, on stream.

Part of those revenues include a lottery revenue that went from \$227 million in '94-95 to some \$396 million in '95-96. It included \$251 million for the regular income of lotteries and the \$145 million that was removed as a one-time-only payment from the financial accounts, for a total of \$396 million.

As the Dominion Bond Rating agency has said, that is a one-time-only payment for this next fiscal year.

I would like to ask the Premier, what is the impact of a decline of some \$145 million in the one-time-only lottery revenue item on the health and education cuts that are being proposed by this provincial government?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I think that was very clearly outlined in the budget document, as the Leader of the Opposition suggests.

We show the annual lottery revenue. We show it as being transferred, the \$145 million one-time transfer. We have also projected in our 1995 budget document our next three years revenue projections on an overall basis, and if the Leader of the Opposition looks at the budget document that we tabled back in March of this year, we showed that we were able to factor in the information that was announced last year by the federal government in terms of reductions in federal transfers, but because we had received the more recent federal reductions in the 1995 federal budget, we did show that there was an \$87-million issue that has to be dealt with in 1996.

We suggested our first course of action was to point out to the federal government that we disagreed with their establishment of priorities, that the greatest priorities should be for health and post-secondary education and to support the families.

We made a request of them to provide that funding from the reserve that they had established, some \$2 billion. They at this point in time have chosen not to do that.

We disagree with that, but as a result of that decision we today are faced with an \$87-million shortfall in funding from the federal government that has to be addressed in our 1996 budget.

*(1010)

Federal Equalization Payments Status Report

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, that confirms that we also have a \$145-million shortfall from Lotteries that you also have to deal with from the one-time-only payment, something that is never referenced by this government in their communication strategy.

I would like to ask the Premier, has his government received revised numbers for the equalization transfers for the '95-96 fiscal year and the '96-97 fiscal year, Madam Speaker, and are those numbers up \$34 million in this fiscal year and are they up a total of \$73 million for the '96-97 fiscal year over what the budget of '95-96 is in this year?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): First of all, the Leader of the Opposition is wrong.

I do not want him to leave the impression that we have the \$87-million issue to deal with in terms of the shortfall from funding from Ottawa plus another \$145 million over and above that. That is not the case.

If he looks at our 1995 budget, he will see that the shortfall that has to be addressed as a result of reduced federal funding is \$87 million. I hope he is clear with that.

The issue of equalization, Madam Speaker, equalization, as the Leader knows, is open for 30

months after each year-end. So we are not only being dealt with on the basis of current estimates, we also get what are called prior period adjustments for prior year's adjustments. We are in the position that Manitoba, because we have had population growth that was reflected in our last equalization numbers, will be reflected in revised numbers.

We are expecting to release our next quarterly report sometime hopefully before the end of this month, which is tradition. Normally we get it out in the month of December, and at this point in time our equalization adjustment for the current year will be up somewhat.

In terms of the projection for next year, we will be receiving revised projections in February of 1996, but at this point in time they are basically in line with what we were projecting in our 1995 budget.

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, this government has called press conferences at a similar time in past years when they felt that equalization grants were going to go down as a justification to cut programs.

I would like to table the latest projections from the federal government on equalization, indicating an increase this year, in this fiscal year, and an increase in next year's fiscal year for a sum total of \$73 million.

Now we understand the negative cut that the federal government has implemented, and we also oppose the cuts that have been made on health and post-secondary education.

Why are the minister and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) hiding from the people of Manitoba some of the more positive transfers on equalization, some \$73 million, so the public can have the facts on the negative cuts and the positive equalization numbers so that all Manitobans can participate with all the information?

Why is this government keeping this information secret in these decisions to cut health and post-secondary education?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, there is nothing of substance that can be hidden, because the people of Manitoba now know by virtue of an act that

was passed in this Legislature on November 3 that we must achieve a balanced budget each and every year.

So when all of the numbers are clearly defined and known, the people of Manitoba will know exactly where we stand. As he should be aware, there are continuous revisions being made going back as much as three years, as the minister has just said, based on new information that is provided to him.

The clear numbers with respect to this in-year, that is, 1995-96 fiscal year, ending March 31, 1996, will be known and will be put out as part of the Second Quarter Financial Statement.

With respect to next year, all we are dealing with is projections, and he knows full well that although projections sometimes go up, we were caught in a situation a couple of years ago in which the projection was altered midyear by \$150 million in the negative sense.

So to start spending money as he did that year—as soon as that was made available, he stood up and said, we will spend it here, we will spend it there, we will spend it the other way. It was all money that we never ended up getting. He spent money that we never had, and he continued the New Democratic tradition of spending money that the people of Manitoba do not have. That is what has put us in the position that we have, over \$7 billion of debt, most of which was created by New Democratic administrations.

Madam Speaker, that is why we are in the situation that we are in today, and that is why our balanced budget ensures that we will not get in that situation again in the future.

Children's Hospital Relocation

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, when the government closed children's services at Victoria Hospital, Misericordia Hospital, St. Boniface Hospital, consolidated all of the children's services at the Health Sciences Centre, both ministers said they were going to improve the quality of service delivered to children. In fact, Children's Hospital saw the same budget cutbacks as a result of this government.

Now the minister's hand-picked executive committee is recommending that Children's Hospital be considered to be moved to the suburbs, to one suburb facility, which is contrary to what most people and experts and parents recommend.

Can I ask the Minister of Health what is this government's position with respect to the relocation of Children's Hospital out to the suburbs at one hospital?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, the honourable member is taking a leaf from the page of the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) today in that he is spreading information that has no substance. There is no such recommendation made to me. This is exactly the same idea that was raised by the member for Brandon East when he talked about the closure of numerous rural hospitals. There was absolutely no foundation for that, and the honourable member for Kildonan, I think, believes or would know that there is no foundation for what he is raising today. There might very well be discussions along these lines but there is certainly no recommendation on my desk.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, the minister did not answer the question.

My supplementary to the minister: As we speak, the minister's hand-appointed executive committee is making a number of recommendations, and I will table this hand-picked executive committee, with no representation from the public, no family doctors on it. They are having discussions at the Holiday Inn South. The minister is trying to hide away from those recommendations.

I would like to simply ask him, is it the government's position that they will reject any recommendation—after having changed the entire scope of children's services in this province, will they reject the recommendation that is on the table to move Children's Hospital from the centre of Winnipeg out to one of the suburbs?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, I would caution the honourable member that it would not be a good idea for him or for me to substitute our clinical and medical judgment for the judgment of those who may indeed be making recommendations at some point in the future.

The honourable member chooses to approach health care from a political standpoint; we on this side choose to approach health care from a health care outcomes standpoint.

* (1015)

Health Care System Public Consultations

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, can the minister, who said the emergency wards would not be closed and then closed them, who said they would be reopened and then subsequently is not reopening some, can that minister promise this House that prior to closing possibly a thousand beds in Winnipeg, prior to closing possibly a thousand beds outside of Winnipeg, prior to raising Pharmacare rates on January 1, prior to the cutting and the converting of Seven Oaks Hospital and Misericordia Hospital, that he will come to the public of Manitoba and allow public input, not after the decision is made, not after he has had a chance to review recommendations, but prior to making these decisions?

Will he come to the public and allow them to have input?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): I think it was yesterday, Madam Speaker, I responded to the honourable member by saying, I do not think ever before in the history of health care has there been so much public consultation and public input.

Even with respect to emergency services, over the last two or three months tens of thousands of Manitobans have made their views known.

This government is responsive, this government understands, this government is listening, and that has been the case since 1992, when reforms to our health system began to take shape.

They began to take shape because of consultation with literally thousands of Manitobans.

Other provinces, Madam Speaker, have not engaged in anywhere near the kind of consultation that has taken place here in the province of Manitoba.

What consultation did the New Democratic government of Saskatchewan engage in when 52 rural hospitals were closed? What kind of consultation was engaged in by Bob Rae when he unilaterally hacked away and removed 10,000 acute care beds from the hospital system in Ontario, something that the honourable Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) here in Manitoba said he is proud to defend?

Education System Health Curriculum

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Madam Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Education.

The Filmon blueprint for education is failing. It is taking schools backwards. It is eliminating health education and physical education when kids in Manitoba are less healthy and need more activity, and is eliminating skills for job finding and career planning when students are faced with a poor economy and more challenges in their lives.

It is throwing so many changes at once into the schools, there is chaos, Madam Speaker.

* (1020)

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

Ms. Cerilli: I want to ask the Minister of Education, given that this government reversed the decision in the blueprint, or the recommendation, to eliminate phys ed in high schools only after public outcry and that their own study shows that children are less healthy, why are they eliminating health education at K to 9 in our schools in Manitoba?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, just as the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) was wrong yesterday in saying there was no professional development or supporting documents for the division that chose not to participate in the pilot, just as she was wrong in her preamble yesterday, the member for Radisson is also wrong in her preamble today.

We have put—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Ms. Cerilli: I want to have the minister read the document that does eliminate health education as a core course, K to 9, in her own document. It is in the blueprint.

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

* * *

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

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, I would be most pleased if the member would like to come to my office for a full briefing so she can better understand the issue, and my door is open to her for that.

Madam Speaker, we will be putting increased emphasis on health and fitness and physical education, but not as separate components from each other.

That is part of the problem we have had. People do not see fitness and physical activity and healthy lifestyles as being linked together.

Our new curriculum will be stronger in terms of emphasizing the emphasis on healthy lifestyle. It is mandatory till the end of Senior 2 or Grade 10, thanks to the work of people in the health field who have been putting together content that will be applicable to a society in which we have raised a whole series of inactive people for watching television instead of being active when they could be. We intend to change those attitudes. That is in the curriculum, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Cerilli: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the invitation by the minister, and I would be happy to compare notes on health and fitness any time.

Career Development

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): I want to ask the minister, given that at the youth forum yesterday that

was at St. Luke's parish, where we heard youth saying that they need more help in making career plans because guidance staff are run off their feet dealing with crises and an increased teaching load, what recommendations can she give for how schools can deal with the problem of ensuring that each student that leaves high school in the province of Manitoba is going to have a plan for their career and their life after high school? How is this government going to—

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

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I am quite happy to answer the question, but I believe, according to our rules, that questions as supplementary are to be supplementary questions based upon information provided in the first question. So I believe the member, in addition to having—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, there are many references in Beuchesne with regard to Question Period and with regard to answers relating to questions and matters raised, but I do not believe there is any reference anywhere in Beuchesne or our rules or the traditions of this House for a minister playing Speaker when she is supposed to be answering questions. Will you please ask her to come to order, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker: On the point of order by the honourable member for Thompson, I would remind the honourable minister that a response should deal directly with the question being posed and should be as direct and as brief as possible.

* (1025)

Point of Order

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, I rose on a point of order when I said, well, I would be happy to answer the question. The member was out of order, and I believe

the member for Thompson was responding to that. Or did you—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

The honourable Minister of Education has indicated she is asking for a point of clarification. I directed that indeed the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) did have a point of order and requested the co-operation of the minister to provide a direct answer.

* * *

Madam Speaker: I am now prepared to recognize the honourable member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) with a final supplementary question.

Ms. Cerilli: To the same minister, I would like for the minister to show me in the blueprint any action plans or recommendations so that the government is going to give direction to school divisions who are faced with many curriculum changes, less teachers, while students come to school with greater needs for preventative health and for career planning when there is less time in the day for scheduling.

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, even though the member has changed topics, I will refer back to her first original topic, which I believe was the main question from which all supplementaries should flow, and I will indicate to her that with regard to physical education—and I will also answer the new question that she asked—the physical education component will be one that will be a rigorous curriculum which will contain the aspects of health and healthy lifestyles that students need to rouse them out of the lifestyles they have become accustomed to over this current generation, which spent a lot of time in front of a television rather than being physically active.

That is in the curricula, and we thank all of those who gave us input, both experts and members of the public, to develop what the experts say we need and the public says they want.

In terms of preparing students for careers, perhaps the member did not happen to catch the announcement I made last Friday.

The member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) does not want me to speak anymore.

I am constantly amused and puzzled by the way they want questions answered and then when you try to give an answer they want you to sit down.

Point of Order

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): On a point of order, Madam Speaker, on three occasions now you have stood up and when you stand, the minister is supposed to sit down and the Speaker—[interjection] She has recognized me on a point of order.

I would really ask you to call the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) to order when you stand up to cut off her answer. It is very important to the workings of this House. A minister of the Crown should know that, and she should not continue to abuse our rules.

Madam Speaker: On the official Leader of the Opposition's point of order, indeed he does have a point of order.

I would remind all honourable members that it is their obligation, and I would ask their co-operation, to indeed be seated when the Speaker of this House stands to either curtail debate or recognize another individual on a point of order.

Now, I recognize today is Friday. There is still time on the clock and I would appreciate it if everyone could co-operate so we could finalize Question Period in a more orderly fashion.

Education System

English Language Exam—Teacher Markers

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education.

Will the minister confirm that she switched from the stick to the carrot, that this week she has offered the Grade 12 English language exam markers \$100 a day in addition to their regular pay as teachers for five of the nine marking days?

Could she tell us whose budget has been cut to provide these additional incentives for the exams?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, again, I am incredibly amused. Here we have the opposition members who have been saying, why do you not pay the markers more and have them mark on the weekends, and we are now planning to do that and they now are upset that we are doing it.

I find the inconsistencies coming from the other side to be a little wearing and a little overdone. Their flagrant disregard for the rules of the House—the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh), who knows very well what a point of order is because he was a deputy clerk, constantly breaking that rule. I am telling you, Madam Speaker—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

* (1030)

Ms. Friesen: Madam Speaker, will the minister confirm that she is asking markers to consider marking papers from 8:30 in the morning to 9:30 in the evening? And will she tell us what assurance of quality control she can offer at the end of that 13-hour day?

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, I do not know the hours that have been negotiated between markers and the department. I do know that the department is following through on suggestions that we received from the field, that we do hire teachers to mark on the evenings and weekends rather than during the school day, and we have followed that suggestion.

It seems a reasonable and good suggestion, this first time through the marking of such an extensive, comprehensive exam, and indeed it is showing that the markers are starting to respond with great enthusiasm with the ability to work on the weekends and be paid a higher sum. We are now getting the markers that were requested.

Desjardins Report Tabling Request

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for Lotteries.

The biggest tax grab, of course, of the past seven years has been that in gambling revenues as this government has smiled from one ear to the other ear, taking in tax revenue. Madam Speaker, that has been at a great cost, a social cost where we have seen families break up and numerous other social problems as a direct result.

Yesterday this minister was provided a draft copy of the Desjardins committee report, an independent committee report.

My question to the minister is, is this minister prepared to table that draft document so that all members will be able to have input to the committee regarding this very important, crucial document?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act): Madam Speaker, the member is partly correct in his preamble. Yes, I did receive a copy of an unfinished report from the Lottery Review Commission provided to me yesterday by the chairman, Mr. Larry Desjardins, and the committee felt very strongly that they had made a commitment to get a copy of the report to government by December 15, so they undertook to do that.

They still have some elements to finalize in terms of the report. It is mostly done, but their thinking was to get it to our government to give us an opportunity to review it, obviously formulate positions on the recommendations. We are now going to be faced with a situation where it will have to be printed for a period of time.

I expect it will be ready very early in 1996 and our full intention is to make the report available as soon as possible for members of this Legislature, for members of the public to have discussion and debate on the recommendations, so I thank the committee for making the effort to get us a copy as quickly as they could, and

we will be reviewing it over the course of the next couple of weeks.

Gambling Social Costs

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, will the minister responsible acknowledge the problems that VLTs are causing in our rural and urban communities by being in every bar and lounge throughout the province of Manitoba—as the gambling committee recommended in Alberta, where they in fact recommend that there should be primary locations for gambling in Alberta, not bars and lounges?

When is this government going to take action to deal with this problem?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act): Madam Speaker, this is very interesting. First the member asked for a copy of the report to see what the recommendations are. Now he is making his own recommendations or anticipation, I guess, what might be in the report, coming from a member who wanted—how many casinos did you want to locate throughout Manitoba, three more, five more, six more?

I do not think the question carries a great deal of credibility, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, will then the minister deny that there is any reallocation that is being suggested in the Desjardins report, or does the Desjardins report recognize this as a problem and want to see this government take some action to resolve the problem?

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, I am not sure if the member has seen a copy of the report or not. I would suggest that he be patient. We have just received a copy. I have indicated what the process will be. The report has to be printed, ultimately released by the commission.

It certainly is our intention to release that report as soon as we can to have debate on this very important

topic, and I would encourage the member for Inkster to be patient. I do not anticipate it taking very much longer.

Faneuil ISG Inc. Operating History

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Premier.

Could the Deputy Premier indicate approximately how long the Faneuil group of companies of Boston has been operating in the United States? Is it an old company, Madam Speaker, or a fairly new company? How long has it been operating?

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): I will take the specifics of that question as notice, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, I am surprised the minister does not know the answer.

Corporate Evaluation

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Was a corporate valuation, Madam Speaker, to establish the worth of the assets of the Faneuil group which are being purchased, done on that group of companies prior to undertaking the various deals between Faneuil, MTS, et cetera, and was that corporate valuation provided to the Provincial Auditor?

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): I will take that question as notice, Madam Speaker.

Operating History

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Will the Deputy Premier finally come clean and confirm that prior to 1994, the Faneuil group of companies did not—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, the member for Crescentwood just by

another phrase suggested that the Minister of Industry and Trade lied to this House. I think he should, first of all, apologize. Secondly, he should withdraw.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On the same point of order, Madam Speaker, I am sure if the member for Crescentwood wanted to accuse the minister of lying he would have used that word.

Madam Speaker, a number of terms have been used in the House in regard to—for example, "not telling the truth" has been listed as being parliamentary, and it is very clear that asking a minister to come clean, I mean, you know, I think that is a bare minimum we expect from this government, and we are not accusing him of lying when we ask him to come clean. So it is most definitely—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the government House leader's point of order, I have some difficulty with his explanation of the point of order.

However, in the Speaker's opinion, I am trying to instill that this be a kinder, gentler House, and I would ask all honourable members to exercise caution with the choice of their words.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Crescentwood, to quickly pose his question.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, will the Deputy Premier confirm that prior to 1994 the Faneuil group of Boston did not even exist in spite of its press releases claiming to be in business since 1989?

It came into existence late in 1994 after Faneuil ISG was created.

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): Madam Speaker, I attempt to come clean every day. The shower that I have usually is supposed to work.

I would, Madam Speaker, as I had indicated—I will not accept any of his preamble, and I would take that as notice as well as part of the other questions which he has presented.

* (1040)

Taking Charge! Program

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Speaker, it was said that Nero fiddled while Rome burned. In Manitoba, while the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) serves lunch, many Manitobans go hungry.

The Children's Advocate recommendations of last year have not been implemented, child care spaces are empty, the funding for children's special needs has been expended for the current financial year.

After two and a half years The Vulnerable Persons Act has not been proclaimed. Taking Charge! clients are required to work shift work, but there is no child care. The food allowance for children on city welfare will be reduced. There has been no increase in social assistance rates in two and a half years.

Finally, people who have expertise in welfare reform have not been consulted in spite of the fact the reforms are going to be announced soon.

I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services why she is offering Taking Charge! clients, according to a story in the media, single parents, a top-up of \$200 a month to work in the garment industry, why she would offer this kind of—

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

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Madam Speaker, I am not sure where to start in answering this question except to say that we feel it is very important to focus our energies and our efforts into the future on trying to find work opportunity for as many Manitobans as possible. That includes single parents. We believe as a government, in fact, that a job and a job opportunity for single parents is much better than a career on welfare.

I make no apologies for the work that has gone in to date to the Taking Charge! initiative, the opportunity for single parents to train, to get on-the-job experience and a supplement so in fact they can become independent, self-sufficient, feel better about themselves and contribute in a positive way to our community and society.

Teenage Pregnancy Pilot Project

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services why, since she knows according to Taking Charge! literature that Manitoba has the highest rate of teen pregnancy in Canada, has she asked the Children and Youth Secretariat to pilot a project in River East. Is it because they have the highest rate of teen pregnancy in Manitoba, or is it just coincidence that this is the minister's constituency?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Madam Speaker, I make no apologies at all for broad consultation throughout the community, as I have in the north end of the city of Winnipeg with the Andrews Street Centre and many in the community that are doing extremely good work, and the new initiatives that we have supported at the Andrews Street Centre in the north end of Winnipeg, the Moms Helping Moms program where single parents are mentoring other single parents, where we have a drop-in centre with a community kitchen, where single parents are learning, indeed, to prepare nutritious meals to take home to their families.

I make no apologies for any consultation in any part of the province or the city of Winnipeg that deals with the issue of teen pregnancy and parenting and trying to ensure that young girls have the opportunity to learn that first and foremost their first responsibility is to parent their children, to nurture and to love their children.

No matter where that is in the city of Winnipeg, I am supportive of new initiatives to try to turn things around.

Manitoba Hydro Brandon Control Centre Closure

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, the minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro.

As the minister knows, Manitoba Hydro is seriously considering closing the Brandon control centre, which regulates and directs all the high voltage switching on

power lines serving 95,000 customers in western Manitoba. Such a closure will mean the transfer of eight highly paid technical jobs to Winnipeg and, of course, have a negative impact on the Brandon economy.

I would ask the minister, in view of the government's stated policy of decentralization of government services, will the minister undertake to look into this and ensure that the Brandon control centre remains open?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): Madam Speaker, I will undertake to have a look at the matter that the member brings to Question Period today, but I must remind him that when you are operating an electrical utility with sales in the order of about a billion dollars a year in a world where technology is increasing in ever greater amounts in making available much better ways of running that particular system, I am sure that the member would not be suggesting that Hydro not proceed with updating and modernizing its equipment just in order to maintain old, outdated equipment that does not deliver the services necessary, but I will undertake to look into the matter for the member.

Mr. Leonard Evans: I appreciate the minister's effort because he should look into it. I do not believe there are any technical problems that would prevent the continuation of the control centre.

So the question really is, will the minister confirm that with modern communication technology, there should be no insurmountable technical problems preventing continued operation of this control centre in Brandon?

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, I certainly appreciate the concern of the member for Brandon East, which I know would be shared by the member for Brandon West (Mr. McCrae), to ensure that the city of Brandon maintains as many positions as possible. I certainly appreciate that, particularly being a rural member.

But I must just tell the member, I will undertake to look at this particular issue, but the corporation does

have a responsibility to ensure that it is using the most modern and efficient equipment with which to run a very large system. As we have seen over the years, new technology has meant often the consolidation of control systems for its operation.

I will give that undertaking, but we must remember that one of the driving forces behind a lot of change within the utility is modernization and efficiency and being up to date in technology.

Faneuil ISG Inc. Financing

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): With this government on the verge of privatizing MTS, we are seeing some very interesting dealings, book deals, tuition fees and fancy financial footwork, and many unanswered questions.

I would like to ask a question today related to some of the financing of the Faneuil deal, in particular if the Deputy Premier can explain the Order-in-Council 649 which was issued in 1994, which authorized \$28.5 million worth of transfer of MTS debentures to the Manitoba Trading Corporation as part of the Faneuil deal.

Can the Deputy Premier explain the full \$28.5 million, since we have only had an explanation of \$19 million of that thus far?

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): Madam Speaker, the member opposite is always ready to try and bring negative news to this House.

I think, given the opportunity to fully look at the complexity of the deal and, on the other side, look at the benefits that the people of Manitoba will receive from the agreements that have been entered into with Faneuil, with a thousand-plus jobs, with the revenues generated to the Manitoba Telephone System, and all the positives that the Faneuil deal brings to Manitoba—[interjection] Yes, \$18 million in tax returned to the people.

When you assess all the benefits, Madam Speaker, I think the people of Manitoba, maybe not the opposition members who like to bring a lot of negatives to this

House, will in fact see how many benefits the people of Manitoba have, and it is in the interests of Manitoba in job creation.

* (1050)

Manitoba Telephone System Right Associates Role

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): If the minister cannot answer that question, can the minister explain why MTS has hired a company known as Right Associates, appropriately named, a Philadelphia-based company which is based in the same office building as Faneuil, to provide counselling on relocation?

Can the minister explain why they were hired and how much money is being paid to this Philadelphia-based company to deal with the trauma being faced by the 46 MTS employees they have just laid off?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister responsible for the administration of The Manitoba Telephone Act): As the Minister of I, T and T has mentioned, we get a thousand jobs here created for Manitobans.

The process of many months of due diligence was done on the agreement to be sure that all the angles were covered. EDB, I, T and T, MTS, Bell Canada have done all the scrutiny into the due diligence process. Six different firms were hired to be sure that the process of the agreement of some 140 agreements that were signed had the proper protections for Manitobans and creating the jobs.

Madam Speaker, it is an ongoing process to be sure that we do the best we can to bring jobs in that sector here in a highly competitive area.

Labatt Brewery Employee Purchase Plan

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Speaker, after 42 years Labatt is abandoning its modern, profitable Winnipeg brewing operations, throwing 121 employees out of work.

My question is for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism. Can the minister indicate what plans

his department has to facilitate an employee purchase of the Labatt plant and equipment, and what action his department is prepared to take to prevent Labatt from having a scorched-earth policy with respect to this Winnipeg operation?

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): One has to be concerned about those who have been employed in the Labatt operation, and it is unfortunate that that kind of decision was in fact made.

Madam Speaker, we do not have the ability nor can we force anyone to sell to their employees or anyone else. It is my understanding that Labatt have made a decision, that it will be capacity that will be taken out of the system, and we can do nothing to force that. What we can do, and have done, is to make sure through the Department of Labour that there is an adjustment package which is in fact put in place to make sure those employees are dealt with fairly, and that is what our responsibility is. But as far as forcing an employee buy out, it is not able to be done.

An Honourable Member: Facilitating.

Mr. Downey: Well, Madam Speaker, if I am allowed to continue, they say facilitate. We would do what we can to facilitate it if that was a possibility, but I understand that is not a possibility.

Madam Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to recognizing the members, I would like to draw the members' attention to the public gallery where we have with us an additional forty-five Grade 11 students from Teulon Collegiate under the direction of Mr. Reinsch and Mr. Loochuk. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer).

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

NONPOLITICAL STATEMENTS

Hanukkah

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, might I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable member for Kildonan have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, on Monday begins the week-long celebration of Hanukkah. The lighting of the Menorah in observance of Hanukkah is a reaffirmation of the times of renewal, faith, friendships and family. It is a symbol of the faith and heritage of the Jewish people. The brightness of each flame reminds us of the triumph of good over evil, a theme shared and celebrated by many cultures.

So, on behalf of all members of the Chamber, I would like to wish a happy Hanukkah to all members of the Jewish community and to all members in Manitoba, and we will see you all at the Legislature, Madam Speaker, for the community-wide Hanukkah celebration which will be here on Saturday, December 23.

Willow Park East Housing Co-op

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): May I seek leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable member for Burrows have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Martindale: Madam Speaker, I rise to congratulate Willow Park East Housing Co-op who celebrated their 25th anniversary with a dinner and dance on November 25, 1995. They do a wonderful job of providing decent, affordable housing and a sense of community. It is a great place to live and to raise children. Having lived there myself, I can vouch for that. It continues to be a good place to live and to raise children.

There are eight families who have been living there for the entire 25 years and continue to live there, and at

the anniversary we had people attending from Calgary and Riverton, Manitoba.

I would also like to congratulate the manager, Pat Deans, for being an excellent manager and having been in that position for 16 years, and I would like to wish best wishes to Willow Park East Co-op for another 25 years.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

House Business

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, on a matter of House business, the members of the opposition and members of the government have been meeting for some time to discuss the question of changes to the rules under which we operate here.

We have reached an agreement, Madam Speaker, although not quite finalized in terms of the wording; nonetheless, we have reached an agreement in principle. So it is my intention, once a Memorandum of Understanding has been finalized, hopefully within the next few days, that I will call the committee on Rules to meet perhaps by mid-February. It will take that much time, I am told by the officers of the House, to create the necessary amendments to give effect to the principles that have been discussed and agreed to amongst all of the members of the House.

This agreement, Madam Speaker, would be on the basis of a trial period, a one-session trial period. The formal change to the rules would end at the end of next year but at the same time could be renewed or altered, as the case may be, following the effect of the changes, shall we say, and how they benefit each member of the House.

So I am pleased to announce that today. I think it has been a long time in coming, several years, I suppose, in its original genesis. The fact of the matter is, we have reached an agreement. We will finalize that within the next few days in terms of Memorandum of Understanding to be signed by the opposition and by members of the Liberal caucus here in the House so that I think all of us look forward to this change.

Hopefully, it will work out well, and all members will see a benefit. For that matter, Madam Speaker, not just the members, but I think the public will benefit as well from the fact that they will see a better structured system, one that will be more predictable and be able to be better understood perhaps by the public in general.

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE (Eighth Day of Debate)

Madam Speaker: To resume debate on the proposed motion of the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) for an address to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor in answer to his speech at the opening of the session, standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson, who has 33 minutes remaining.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, yesterday in the short time that I had available I referenced the fact that I believe politics in many ways is like the tides of a sea: there are the ebbs, there are the flows. I think one of the opportunities, one of the great privileges we have as members of the Legislature is not only to observe that process but to be part of it as well.

I referenced how after perhaps more than a decade in which the tide was very much a right-wing tide, in which the agenda was very much driven by the sort of new-right policies which involved jettisoning many of the original tenets of parties such as the Conservative Party, after that process, even a few months ago, as we saw right-wing governments elected in such countries as France, where we saw the rise to power in the United States of the Newt Gingriches of the world, that it appeared that the right wing was continuing in the ascendance.

Even here in Manitoba, with the election of this government which, despite its best efforts to hide its true political nature, is a right-wing government, Madam Speaker, the tide appeared to be very much flowing in that direction.

But you know, what is interesting is how there was a watershed very shortly after this election here in Manitoba when we saw just how cynical this

Conservative government was in its election strategy. This was the government that was going to, and they used this on the doors, save the Winnipeg Jets. They were the only party that was going to save the Winnipeg Jets.

Now, in the rural areas, it was, they were going to put in no more than \$10 million, but in true Conservative form, and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) was very much—well, pardon me, he said he was out of the loop on this, hear no evil, see no evil.

The bottom line was, the people of Manitoba were sold a bill of goods. You know what we saw? I have to be careful in the words that I use, but let us put it this way. The Conservative Party did not tell the truth on the Winnipeg Jets, but, Madam Speaker, in the election the Conservative Party went further.

I referenced yesterday how this party, this so-called political party across the way, the so-called Conservative Party, is jettisoning more than 80 years of tradition of support for a balanced approach to the economy. They are looking at privatizing MTS. Now, did anyone hear about MTS in the election? Did the Premier go out into the rural areas and northern areas saying we are going to privatize MTS? No. When they reorganized MTS in July of this year, and we said that we saw this as a preview to privatization, what did the government say? No, we are not going to privatize; we have no intention of doing it.

* (1100)

The bottom line, Madam Speaker, is this government did not tell the truth in July. In September, in the committee of this House, I asked the Minister responsible for MTS (Mr. Findlay) repeatedly, are you going to privatize MTS? You know what the minister said? The only one talking about it is the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) and the New Democratic Party. Well, in questioning in this December session, we found out, it was later confirmed by a press release that was rushed out, that this government is looking at privatizing MTS.

Well, I do not know what has happened to this party, this Newt Gingrich party, this party of tuition fees and

book advances. Boy, they have got it right down to that level. I remind them in terms of ethics, and the Premier should, I think, reflect on this with his comments earlier this week in which he accuses us of McCarthyite tactics on Monday in raising questions about the ethics and some of the dealings of one Mr. Bessey and the Faneuil deal. This is the government, by the way, which wants to now sell off part or all of MTS. He accused us of McCarthyite tactics. I would suggest he read a book, *On the Take*, and it might explain to him why some of that same type of ethical approach led to his party at the national level going from government to two seats.

I believe there is a smell coming from the MTS-Faneuil deal, and I believe it is a smell that reflects on the ethics of the dealings of this government and the inability of this Premier and this government to recognize the reality of what is going on: these deals with friends, these book advances, these fancy transfers of debentures to companies that did not exist, phantom companies, you know, these deals with Tory friends, whether it be with the Winnipeg Jets, whether it be some of the deals like the 280 Broadway deal, whether it be things—small things to some people, but big issues to communities such as Cross Lake—in which Mr. Barrett, a Mr. Cubby Barrett, also known as the sponsor of the aboriginal party, also one of the key drivers on the hog marketing board or the destruction of that, the same Mr. Barrett who is on the Conservative financial committee who contributed in a major way to their campaign.

Three times the previous owners of Charlie's Inn in Cross Lake attempted to get a liquor licence. They were opposed by the people of the community. Madam Speaker, the people of the community did not want an expanded liquor facility on the outskirts of their community. But one Mr. Cubby Barrett buys the hotel, one Mr. Cubby Barrett lobbies this government, and their liquor licence is approved.

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

You know, when I heard the reference a few days ago to this pork company, Elite Swine, I mean, what a name for a Tory outfit, Elite Swine, because this government has got to the point of arrogance to which

we see this government sees nothing wrong with that kind of manipulation of the political process. Set up a phony political party to try and split the vote. I tell you it backfired, Mr. Acting Speaker. You want a liquor licence, you lobby the board. If you are a Tory contributor, you get what you want. If you are in dealings with companies like Faneuil and you want to make a deal and then you want to go and set yourself up afterwards, no problem, there is no problem with ethics in that.

An Honourable Member: What about Workforce 2000 and Kozminski?

Mr. Ashton: The Workforce 2000, we can run through the many inside deals that this government has received.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

Whatever happened to Conservatives such as Rodmond Roblin, who in 1905 talked about the need for MTS, who said why they purchased it: I believe that it is a good commercial proposition, and whatever profit there is in the operation of the telephone system from this time on will belong to the people of Manitoba, rather than a private company. I am also proud of the fact that we have been able to secure for the people of Manitoba the first complete system of government-owned telephones in the continent of North America, and I am sure from the information that has been secured that the result, as years go by, will prove more and more beneficial to the people.

That was a Conservative vision, and for how many years have we had that vision in this province? You know what? I think the problem with this Conservative government, they remind me of some of the stereotypical sort of unwanted relatives visiting the home. They stick around. First, they drink all the booze; then they eat all the food; finally, they get kicked out. But, when they are gone, what do they take with them? It is the same thing with this government. They have no mandate to give away MTS. They have no mandate to privatize MTS. This has been a Manitoba tradition. It has given us good service, and it has given us the lowest rates in North America. They have no mandate to do that. They never once

mentioned it in the election, and we, Madam Speaker, will not ever let this government sell off our assets, because Manitoba Telephone System, as Rodmond Roblin said in 1905, is owned by the people. We are the shareholders. You know what I think is happening? We are a microcosm.

An Honourable Member: Five minutes.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, I will be going a few more minutes, and I certainly have no difficulty giving some leave to the Premier (Mr. Filmon) if we need to sit beyond twelve o'clock. Unfortunately, given some of the lengthy points of order today and other matters—well, if that is agreeable. I am not attempting to prevent the PC speaker from speaking, but you know this may be my last opportunity in this House to speak about MTS because this government is fast-tracking it. By January, February, we may have a partial or a full sell-off of MTS. This may be my only opportunity, our only opportunity, to address this in debate, and that is why I ask for the government House leader and others to at least give me a few more minutes to put on the record how important this is.

You know, Madam Speaker, what is happening in Manitoba is evidence of the intellectual bankruptcy of the right-wing agenda which they are following. We are in a country now where we have record bank profits. We have got record corporate profits. We have members opposite defend those bank profits in this House. We have the average employee—the average industrial wage has dropped the last 10, 20 years, but the salaries of corporate executives have continued to increase. We are in a world now where bond traders can sink currencies, can sink governments. We are in a world in which one trader can sink a bank. We are in the second richest country in the world according to the UN, and yet we have this kind of inequality developing in our society.

Madam Speaker, the interesting thing is it would be a lot worse if it was not for the many of the programs that the New Democratic Party fought for over the years. You know, people talk about the welfare state. They talk about social services. Stats Canada recently indicated that the only reason that the inequality in this country has not gotten worse has been because of our

social programs. But what are these right-wing governments—and, by the way, I include the Liberal Party nationally. They have sold out any vestige of Liberal principles. What are they doing? They are cutting unemployment insurance. They are cutting welfare. They are eroding our health care system. They are eroding the welfare state that has protected us from the kind of inequalities in the United States.

There is something wrong with this picture when the First Nations have to camp out at The Forks, have to camp out at Indian Affairs to get the most basic human right, which is decent housing, when we live in a society where we have so much. I mean, we have, according to the UN and the World Bank, we have \$800,000 worth of assets per person.

Why, then, are we so incapable of dealing with child poverty, the many frustrating situations in our First Nations communities? We cannot even settle treaty land entitlement obligations that were negotiated by governments in good faith and which First Nations are looking to. There is something wrong with this picture. It is a system that is immoral. It is immoral, and I say increasingly across this province and this country people are starting to recognize the connection between the Tory friends and the kind of ethical practices we see with their cousins in other places, the book deals, the liquor licences approved on demand, the changes to our marketing system, and now one of our most sacred assets, MTS, all up for grabs under this government and all particularly up for grabs for Tory friends.

At some point in time, Madam Speaker, people have to say, enough is enough. I believe people in other jurisdictions are doing that. I look at France; I look even to our province next door in Ontario; I look at many things that are happening internationally. People are saying, enough is enough. You know, we keep cutting back on jobs and downsizing. Who is going to be left with the jobs to provide the goods? The bottom line is we cannot continue with this corporate and government anorexia. We keep starving ourselves; we starve the people; we starve our future generations.

Madam Speaker, it is indeed a race for the bottom, but, at some point in time, enough is enough, and I say to the Premier because I sense, and I have seen this

with governments before. It can affect all political stripes, but it is particularly endemic to right-wing governments because their sense of ethics does not separate their "friends"—I put that in quotation marks—from the kind of ethical decisions that we expect in terms of public policy. I think the Premier should reflect on some of the decisions that have been made, because I believe they are not ethical decisions and his government has been a part of them.

* (1110)

But whether it is the kind of political arrogance that can come from a majority government, this is a third-term government, or whether indeed it is a part of the broader picture, I say to the Premier that many of the things that are happening are just not acceptable to the public of Manitoba, many of the people who elected this government. They do not want their health care system eroded; they do not want the social services cut; they do not want their telephone system sold off to the likes of the Faneuil group, those kinds of dealings; and they do not buy this kind of rhetoric which the Premier trots out on the Jets and on the Faneuil deal that tries this creative arithmetic to hide the fact that we have questionable deals.

The bottom line is here. Politics is always a process of tides; there are the ebbs and there are the flows. While this government in April of this year may have felt that it was on the high tide, that it was surfing away, I say to them that, if they continue on the path they are continuing now, they will follow the same footsteps as their cousins in other jurisdictions, the federal Conservative Party. Just as quickly as the people supported them to be a majority government in April, if they sell out their birthright, whether it be their health care system or their telephone system, the people will send them a message, and they will pay the political price.

With those remarks, and I apologize for having run somewhat longer than was anticipated because of the delay earlier, I also want to take the opportunity to wish everybody a Merry Christmas, and I look forward to being back in the new year with our new set of rules that was adopted. You know, there are times when we can work together, Madam Speaker, in this House. The

rules are a good example of that, and perhaps if we can do it on things like the Manitoba Telephone System and some of the other issues I mentioned, we might learn a lot. Thank you.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, it really is my pleasure to address this Assembly after such a lengthy period of time. Contrary to most of our traditions, the Leaders of the two main parties in this Legislature did not speak at the conclusion of the last session on the 3rd of November. I missed that opportunity, quite frankly, the opportunity to wrap up and give a perspective on the things that have happened in the province, particularly since the election campaign of this spring, and members opposite have raised the matter in their speeches recently. I think there is a great sense of bitterness and envy behind many of their comments, and it creeps into their demeanour each and every day.

An Honourable Member: You have to climb up to get into the gutter.

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, after the diatribe that we have listened to from the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) and her colleagues, I think that some gentle nudging of this nature hardly seems like the subject that ought to get under her skin, but, as I say, these days there is a sense of bitterness in the members opposite that blinds them from any rational review or objective analysis of anything that goes on.

I want to begin by just saying to all of the members of the Chamber that we certainly are delighted that they are all here in this Assembly, that the democratic process depends upon having a strong opposition as well as a strong government. I know that the members opposite continue to do their share in attempting to further the democratic process in Manitoba, and I congratulate each and every one of them on their re-election. I congratulate each and every one of them on the work that they do in this Legislature on behalf of their constituents.

I want to thank all of our staff in the Chamber, in the Assembly. I want to particularly thank the Pages who each and every day serve us and work with us to try and make this Assembly work better and work well.

I want, for certain, to wish each of them and their families a very merry Christmas, happy Hanukkah, best of the holidays that are being celebrated by people of all religions at this time of year and, of course, a happy healthy and prosperous 1996.

In addressing the throne speech, I want to make emphasis, Madam Speaker, on the difference, I think, between the attitude of those on the government side and those opposite that is contained within the throne speech. The throne speech is basically a forward-looking document. It is a document that outlines the challenges that we as a government and as a society and as an economy are going to face in the future in this province, in this country and in this world. It is optimistic, though, because in recognizing that there are serious challenges, it also recognizes that there are many opportunities, opportunities for advancement, opportunities for, I would say, reorienting this province on a path of economic growth, the like of which we have not seen for a long, long time.

It is ironic, but just one small example, I think, notes that point, and that is, everybody opposite and indeed many thousands of people throughout western Canada assumed that the demise of the Crow rate subsidy would probably be a death knell for countless farmers in western Canada and indeed an economic blow from which they may not recover.

That was the assumption, and it is still being, of course, perpetrated by members like the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) in an attempt to try and appear as though they have some sense of what is good for agriculture in Manitoba.

The fact of the matter is that the removal of the Crow rate, as difficult as that will be and is for farmers in this province, has unleashed a sense of entrepreneurship that we have not seen here in the farm community for decades.

What it has done is cause people to take a new look at the economic circumstances of the world in which they operate. What they are saying is, and it should not be a surprise to anybody, well, if we are going to have to pay so much more per tonne to ship the grain to an export port at the east coast or the west coast, are we

not better off to find new and creative ways of investing in our economy to consume this grain here?

All that people talked about throughout the decades about having flour and pasta and all of those value-added, processed foods being done here rather than in eastern Canada, whether it is processing, meat-processing operations, barley malting, all those kinds of things that, because of the Crow rate were centralized in the East, all of a sudden we have this great entrepreneurial response unleashed, just almost by magic.

Yet it is the natural economic response that throughout the ages we have seen will happen. People faced with new circumstances will find ways to take advantage of those circumstances, and, in effect, turn a lemon into lemonade. We have over a half-billion dollars in value-added investment announced since this summer.

Now, the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) says, Ralph Goodale. Well, heaven knows, Ralph Goodale was not the person who came up with that idea. I mean, I remember Charlie Mayer starting the process of discussion about it and being absolutely devastated by the opposition, the Liberal opposition in Parliament, and going throughout the length and breadth of western Canada getting every farmer to sign a petition and damning the federal government for even considering working it through in a much more, I might say, palatable way.

He was going to phase it out over a longer period of time. He was going to provide far greater compensation for the farmers, adjustment, all those kinds of things that should have been done. He was absolutely condemned by the Liberals and New Democrats of this world as they did their favourite trip to the opposition mentality.

* (1120)

The fact of the matter is, he was faced with a circumstance that he had absolutely no choice about, which was that the federal government had to get its deficit down in a very, very rapid period of time, cold turkey, literally, removed the Crow rate, and then, of

course, got the greatest benefit of all—that is, the agricultural commodity prices came up to all-time record levels for wheat and barley and all those commodities—and did it without a vote, did it without consultation, did it without any of the normal democratic processes, and fell into a bucket of fertilizer and came up smelling like a rose because of the circumstances of the day. Unbelievable.

But I digress, Madam Speaker; that is not what I wanted to talk about. It was just an example that I could not help but give you.

The central message of the throne speech is that first and foremost our government will continue to fulfill the commitments that we made to the people of Manitoba in the spring when they gave us the third mandate.

We want all Manitobans to know that our priorities are clear: strong economic growth, job creation, excellence in education, protection of vital social services, and the promotion of safe and healthy communities.

Madam Speaker, what is implicit though in this optimistic outlook for the future is that we are prepared as a government, and as a society we must be prepared, to deal with change because the fact of the matter is that change is inevitable, growth is optional. What we see here in the throne speech is that our government is prepared to accept change and turn it into growth and opportunity whereas the members opposite want to fight change day after day after day. Any type of change is seen as bad. Any type of change is seen as negative. You know, I do not know whether it is a flatter society outlook, whether it is the ostrich mentality of having your head in the sand and ignoring the reality of everything that is going on around here in the world, and members opposite can talk about these things, and they can talk about the impacts.

I just heard the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) talking about how one trader could bring down an entire bank, that a collection of traders could destroy a currency. These are circumstances that are unprecedented, that no government in the history of the world had to deal with, the power that has happened as a result of what? The globalization of the economy, the

introduction of electronic technology that would allow people to react and respond in an instant worldwide to a change in currency and to a shift in trading patterns and all of those things. That is reality, and he talked about it as though he acknowledges it. Except his answer was we have got to fight all of this. We have got to resist it. We have got to not be a part of the world. We are going to opt out. That is what he suggested. Well, how preposterous could you possibly be in your perspective of the circumstances that we all live in in this economy in this world. It is changing dramatically. It is changing unalterably, and no government, certainly not a government of a provincial nature, could resist those changes.

What we have to do is take the lemons and turn them into lemonade—no one understands the forces that are out there—and take advantage of them for Manitoba's benefit. Which is why, interestingly enough, we are benefiting out of the loss of the Crow rate, because we are the first ones to jump in and take advantage with the unleashing of the entrepreneurial energy that is out there. Which is why we are going to be taking advantage, and are taking advantage, of the changing trading patterns and creating jobs in transportation. The transportation hub that people dreamed about, that this would be the Chicago of the North, this would be the trading centre, the distribution centre—all of those kinds of things are indeed what is happening because there are people out there who are willing to make those investments, take those risks. We as a government are supporting them in those efforts.

It is the technology that is creating this, as I have said in some speeches, the Omaha of the North where we have become a centre for telecommunications, a centre for back office functions, computerizations and all of those kinds of things that we have many advantages of—Central time zone, the synergies of many people who are involved in this whole finance, telecommunications and computerized area. All of these things can and will happen here with the right attitude and the right approach.

Now, interestingly enough, if you could look for a company that would fit with that mode, that would create the synergies, the investment, the jobs and the opportunity for value-added growth in that sector, one

that you would immediately point to would be Faneuil. Indeed, I have talked about that in detail because the members opposite all of a sudden jump on that and find every possible way to discredit them and to throw them out of the province when that is exactly what you want to attract, that kind of company, into this environment.

The negativity that we are seeing from members opposite, you know, it knows no bounds. They are negative towards the province. They are negative towards the people. They are negative towards investors, towards people doing business; anything that smacks of opportunity and achievement, growth, investment, they are negative towards.

You know, the old saying, and I cannot remember from which of our predecessors in this Chamber, but it has been used on occasion, about looking up the wrong end of a sewer pipe, and that specifically describes the members opposite in terms of their perspective in this House and in public.

The other aspect of their perspective that I find so unbelievable is their sense that they want to portray to people that they can criticize everything and not take responsibility for anything.

Well, the fact is that to govern is to assume responsibility. We do not back away from it. We cannot back away from it. If ever, and Heaven forbid that it happened, they were in government, they would have to take responsibility finally for making things happen, for making choices and decisions.

I want to just tell you the difference, because New Democrats who are in government are entirely different from this breed of never democrats who are opposite us in the Chamber. These negative democrats that we see over there do not compare to their colleagues who are in government, because like them or not, and the public for some reason does not seem to like them, the fact is that when they are in government, they have to take responsibility and they have to make choices and then their choices are open to scrutiny.

In Ontario, the New Democratic administration there, which thought initially when it was elected it could buy its way and spend its way out of a recession, has put

them in the circumstances that they are in the worst economic conditions that they have seen in their history.

I said this last week—[interjection] Madam Speaker, I am going to speak about Saskatchewan, and I invite the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) to listen, but I said last week in my speech to the Chamber of Commerce that the Province of Manitoba now enjoys the third best borrowing rate in Canada. We are next only to British Columbia and Alberta.

Who would ever have believed in 1988 when we took office that we would be able to borrow at a better rate than Ontario, 100 basis points better rate than Ontario?

Now, all of that happened—[interjection] Sure, the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) says, it is because of Bob Rae. Well, the fact of the matter is, it is true. His administration has changed all of that with this incredible debt load that they have applied on the province that even the biggest, wealthiest province in this country cannot handle the bad policies that a New Democratic administration will bring to bear on any economic situation.

* (1130)

They are in that circumstance, and they are under a cloud and an immense load that was as a result of those kinds of economic policies.

You know, they go about things in such—they talk about ethics. This is really strange. Here is ethics. The member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) raises here in the House an issue that he says that he has a report that says that we are planning to close—well, how many hospitals in rural Manitoba? Eight. And he names the communities. How irresponsible can you be? He names communities, eight of them, and says, they are planning to close them.

When pressed, where does he get this information, he says, well, it came from the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation and research. Of course, people

go to the centre, they phone them and say, tell us about this report. They say, we have not done anything like that. We have absolutely no information.

Absolutely false information. He just makes up a rumour, puts it on the floor, and it is being done day after day after day. Now, you want to talk about playing with people's lives. You want to talk about irresponsibility.

On the one hand, they say to us, you have not consulted enough. So the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) has consultative groups out there who are working in the community. The management, the senior staff, the stakeholders who work in the hospital system are all out there churning out ideas, ideas to do what? To try and make better use of the dollars that we spend in health care. Why? Because the fact of the matter is that in health care today we cannot possibly justify doing what we are doing with the money that we have available.

So you have the circumstances in which you have not enough long-term care beds available in the system, let us say, in greater Winnipeg, so you have people who are sitting for weeks on end, nine, 12, 15, 30 weeks in beds on long-term care which are acute-care beds, our most expensive beds, and inappropriate treatment for long-term geriatric patients. They are sitting in there. What do you have to do? You have to create in some way long-term beds and better, more appropriate geriatric care for people in order to ensure that you have that.

So is that bad health care? No, it is not. It is better health care. Will it save us money? Yes, it will, absolutely. New Democrats are opposed to it. Can you believe that? Opposed to it. No change under any circumstances is all they say, and that is a tragedy.

We have to be in a continuum of moving from the very highly expensive and sometimes inappropriate care provided in acute-care institutions to less intrusive, more appropriate and less expensive care closer to the community. That is what we are doing, and New Democrats are opposed to it. Why? Because, very simply, they want to be in lockstep with their fellow union boss members, and they want to be in a

straitjacket in which the only issue is not whether or not it is good health care for Manitoba and Manitobans, but the only issue is, what do their union boss friends want them to do? That is the only issue that they put forward, and, Madam Speaker, it is a tragedy.

Our health care system does not exist for the benefit of health care unions. It is there for the people of Manitoba. That is why it is there.

Madam Speaker, our education system does not exist for the benefit of the teachers' union or any other employment group in that education system. It is there for the benefit of the people of Manitoba and their children who will be educated in that education system.

Our Manitoba Telephone System does not exist for the benefit of its workforce; it exists for the benefit of the people of Manitoba and the services that they must have.

That is the difference, Madam Speaker, between the point of view of the members opposite and the point of view of our government. The people of Manitoba elected us to a higher calling, and that is to be in charge of all of the things that they depend upon, the services that government provides, the assets that government has care over, the taxes that we collect and spend on their behalf. That is the higher calling to which we have been elected to this Legislature. We do not exist here to serve the special interest needs of people like union bosses and others who rattle the cage of the members opposite.

Madam Speaker, it reminds me of a discussion I had with a New Democratic premier a while back who shall remain nameless, who said, it is impossible for me to serve the interests of the people of my province while I am being dictated to by the union bosses of this province. And he said, I cannot be put in a position of conflict of interest where my government has been elected by the people at large, but it is only expected to listen to the union bosses who dictate to my party. He said, the problem with the way a New Democratic Party is structured is that there are certain people there who have immense power over it because they could not exist without the unions. They could not exist without the unions for their money, for their organizing

skills, and, indeed, for the resources that they put at the disposal of the New Democratic Party. That is the kind of difference that there is between having real accountability to the people of this province versus accountability only to certain people who rattle their cage and who dictate to them, Madam Speaker.

You know, it is interesting to show how out of touch they are. In the most recent speech that was given here by the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) in his rationale for protecting the Manitoba Telephone System, he quotes comments of a very, very honourable and distinguished premier of this province, Sir Rodmond Roblin giving the rationale why, in 1905, the Manitoba Telephone System was important to be owned by the public. Because that is where they are, in a time warp, 90 years ago. The only understanding that they have of a problem is what the circumstances were in 1905 when it was decided to go ahead with having the telephone system in public ownership.

I have had those discussions. I have had those discussions with people who have read the history books and obviously knew the circumstances of the decision that was made at the time, and it was considered at that time to be a natural monopoly and the only way in which they could extend those services to all the rural and remote areas of the province and assure that there would be some equality of access to a telephone company at that time because the private sector did not have the resources, the wherewithal or the desire or the ability to provide telephone service to every small remote area of the province. It was a natural monopoly.

But guess what? We are in a circumstance today in which we are approaching 70 percent of the revenues of the telephone system that are no longer in a monopoly circumstance. They are in a field of open, active competition with primarily private-sector companies, and instead of having a monopoly, instead of having a natural monopoly circumstance, they are competing in the private sector with the private sector but have not the handicap now of being a public-sector entity which cannot react as quickly, cannot adapt technology as quickly, and cannot do, unfortunately, many of the things that are going to be needed to take

part in a world in which they are in the most technologically advanced and advancing area of the economy.

* (1140)

The natural monopoly is now a handicap to them in order to be able to respond and take on the new opportunities. As a result, they are putting at risk, unfortunately, \$800 million of taxpayers' money. That is what we have tied up in that corporation.

So we must evaluate the circumstances today and say, if Sir Rodmond's rationale was valid in 1905, is it valid in 1995? It is a simple question. Has there been enough change? Well, of course, 1905 was a monopoly circumstance that gave them advantages in being a monopoly corporation. Today we are no longer in a monopoly; 70 percent of the revenues are in a free, open, competitive market. We had better find out whether or not we can compete under those circumstances or whether we are putting \$800 million of taxpayers' money at risk.

Madam Speaker, the members opposite know full well what happens when you get out of the comfort zone of the natural monopoly and into a competitive area. They went into MTX in Saudi Arabia, and they got their clocks cleaned, quite honestly, \$27 million of taxpayers' money not only put at risk but poured down the toilet, lost in the sands of Saudi Arabia, because they did not understand the difference between operating in a monopoly circumstance in Manitoba and operating in a competitive market and environment in Saudi Arabia. They lost \$27 million of our taxpayers' money because of their irresponsibility and because they did not understand the circumstances that they were going into.

Madam Speaker, just because the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) is being a little quiet there, I just want to give him some food for thought. We in this province, like all the provinces of Canada, are now having to react and respond to some massive pressures created by decisions from Ottawa. Members opposite know full well that we have always argued that governments ought to live within their means and that we have done our level best to try and bring ourselves

to the first balanced budget in 23 years in this province. It has taken, obviously, serious decisions and some very careful choices, none of which were easy.

But the federal government is doing things that I think are inexcusable, quite honestly. I mean, this is supposed to be co-operative federalism, and we are faced with a challenge to our unity here because one province in particular is speaking out about their concerns about how this federation does not work very well. What they show is here we have a distribution of responsibilities under the Constitution that was created almost 130 years ago when this federation was born, and the way in which those responsibilities were distributed probably does not make sense today.

What it has turned up is that we have at least 12 areas of absolute overlap of jurisdiction which both federal government and provinces are essentially treading in each other's territory, and what does it do? It results in people who look at us, say, out in the Prairies here and who see a project going on, let us say, it is a water management project. They see, maybe, people from the Department of Natural Resources of the provincial government involved in the development of that water management project, and then they see another set of trucks and bureaucrats that say PFRA on them, and they say, what are they doing there? Well, same thing. Dak samo, as they would say in Ukrainian.

They look at this and they say, what are they doing there? They are all both doing the same thing. You take a look throughout the piece. In Manitoba we have Energy and Mines personnel, and they do the inspection of mines, they do the licensing of mines, workplace safety, all those issues to do with mines, the development process. Everything is provincial, but we have more employees of the federal department of mines in Manitoba than we have provincial employees.

People say, what do they do? Same thing. [interjection] Well, you see, well, then, Ottawa will be offloading responsibility. I say not. I say, if we are intelligent human beings, what we should do is say, okay, you normally spend X-hundred million dollars in this area. We will take it over if you share the benefits

and transfer a portion of that over to us and use the rest as savings to reduce your deficit and debt.

Is that unreasonable? I do not think it is. I think reasonable people, given that problem, can find a reasonable solution. I believe that to be the case. It is common sense. But we could go through the piece. Well, now you want to have co-operative federalism, and here is what you are faced with. Yesterday, or was it the day before—it might have been the day before—you have an announcement from Ottawa, on high, of a \$720-million fund that has been made available for child care in Canada.

Here is the interesting thing. All that morning, Mr. Axworthy sat in with the Finance ministers from all the provinces of Canada and with Mr. Martin, did not say a word that he had this in mind or up his sleeve, sat through the entire morning's meeting and went out and had a news conference a half-hour after he left the meeting and announced this \$720-million program, all on his own. There was no consideration of even telling them to give them a heads up, this is what I am going to do; no consultation with the provinces on the issue; no consultation with the Minister responsible for Family Services; no consultation with anybody. But he is being defended now by the member for Inkster.

I will tell you what the real indefensible part of it is. Here is the real indefensible part of it right now. The federal government is in the midst of reducing transfers to provinces; right out of their figures, right out of their books, \$4.1 billion in '96-97 and \$6.6 billion in '97-98.

So they take all of that money away from the provinces to provide for health, education, family services, child care, take it all away, take \$4.1 billion, then \$6.6 billion, and now they say, after we have done that to you, we are going to give \$720 million back, but there is a string. You have to create new spaces.

Now, does that make sense? Does that make sense across the country when this province on a per capita basis has more child care spaces than any other province? This province added several thousand spaces in the last seven years. This province doubled the number of subsidized child care spaces since we have been in office, and we do not have a problem of

enough spaces. If we have a problem, it is not enough funding.

So they take away all this funding from us in the Manitoba context this coming year—\$147 million is three times the entire child care budget that they are taking away from us—and they are going to put some back if we create more spaces that we do not need.

Now, that really makes sense. I tell you, Madam Speaker, this is not co-operative federalism, this is not consultation. If the New Democrats are in a time warp, so are the Liberals in Ottawa in a time warp, because he is trying to solve a problem that does not exist, that may have existed seven years ago when he last looked at it, but does not exist today in Manitoba. So he has the wrong solution for the wrong problem, and he is in a time warp as much as the New Democrats are.

It is the Big Brother approach that really, I think, ought to be condemned by the people of this province and every other province. To consider that you would do this in a way that does not serve the needs of the people of this province, that does not serve the needs, probably, of people in many provinces because one-size-fits-all does not work. What does work is if you would consult, if you would ask what the issues are in child care in Manitoba. Indeed, one of them is the wages that are paid to the people who work in child care, affordability. All of those things ought to be addressed; none of them are addressed by the solution that Mr. Axworthy brings in. That is an issue that has to be dealt with. That is an issue that I believe there ought to be tremendous criticism for.

* (1150)

Madam Speaker, as I said earlier, my concern is that the members opposite, particularly in the New Democratic Party, are so negative towards everything that is happening in our society, so negative towards all of the opportunities. This Manitoba of ours is an exceedingly better place to invest in today than it was a decade ago. You take a look at all of the numbers; we are going to have all-time, record-high levels of capital investment this year, \$4.2 billion. That follows upon an all-time, record-high level of capital investment last year in our province. Last year our

growth rate was 3.8 percent. This year it is expected to be 2.5 percent, which is going to be above the national average, and we are going to continue to have reasonable growth next year and probably beyond.

We are having investments, as I said earlier, by people like Canadian Agra, people like Schneider, people like McCain, people like Simplot and Nestle-Carnation and all of those people who are investing in the value-added agriculture. Repap, \$250 million expansion and reconfiguration of their integrated forestry complex at The Pas. That is as a result of seeing a very good investment climate here. This ought to be of interest to the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), because we have opened a number of new mines already this year in Manitoba and have another one to be opened that they will be starting in April in Bissett.

Why is it there? It is there because we have created an environment that is the most attractive environment in Canada for investing in mining exploration. We hit an all-time record level of mineral exploration in 1993. We exceeded that level in 1994, and we are having another good year in 1995. That is why mining is doing so well.

I read the column of the member for Flin Flon, a member whom we treat with respect and who has been with us at openings of these mines and activities in the North in his constituency, and he says, it is because mining is doing well everywhere in Canada. No, it is not doing very well. As a matter of fact, all you have to do is talk to the mining companies. Talk to the mining companies. They recognize the difference. There is no secret why our mines and minerals conference had the biggest turnout in history this year, had more participants than ever before in all of the activities of the minerals conference. It is because of the climate and the specific policies of this administration.

He does not even have the courtesy to be able to acknowledge that. He tells his constituents that it is doing well everywhere. You know, he is the beneficiary of hundreds of jobs because of the policies

of this administration. He has hundreds of people working in his area that did not work before.

The retail sales increase in 1994 was the largest in nine years in Manitoba, and guess what? This year it is up 6.2 percent, which is the second best increase in the country. The economy in every area is doing well and doing better than most areas of Canada.

What we are doing, of course, is plugging in on the different—[interjection] Sorry, the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) says, the trade deficit is worse. You have new plants coming in here and they are bringing in hundreds of millions of dollars of new production machinery. The Louisiana-Pacific plant alone, the production machinery that has to be brought in from outside because we do not manufacture it here in this province is tens of millions of dollars.

The McCain's plant expansion, tens of millions of dollars of new production machinery. The whole expansion for the plant at Brandon comes from Sicily, all of that production equipment. So hundreds of jobs are being created by bringing in this production machinery.

The member for Crescentwood is against it. I cannot believe him, Madam Speaker. He is the most negative, most absolutely shameless critic with mindless criticism day after day with no sense of what is good for the people, what is good for the economy. All he thinks about is what is good for his own ego to be able to come up with a criticism that gets him onto Question Period. It is ignorant, it is mindless, and it is a terrible, terrible sense of obligation to the people who elected him.

Madam Speaker, the criticism that goes on day after day after day of any business that is doing well, any new business that comes into this province, criticism of the Faneuil group coming here, and I remind members opposite that the Faneuil corporation has met all of its targets and exceeded them. By August of 1995 they were supposed to have 100 full-time jobs. They have 340 jobs, 240 full-time equivalent positions. They were supposed to have a payroll of about two and a half million. Their payroll exceeded six million this year.

The work they are doing for the Manitoba Telephone System for \$5 million that the Manitoba Telephone System has spent with the company, they have added \$15 million of revenue, three to one return for the investment that they are making. They have added millions of minutes of use to the telephone system, long distance tolls that are being paid through the telephone system just for the use of it. They have brought business that existed in the United States and moved some of their accounts here. They were supposed to have achieved, I believe it is something like, on projection, about \$50 million of revenue and this year they exceeded \$72 million of revenue. The business is booming.

In the course of the seven years of the agreement they will have paid \$18 million in taxes, plus they will have repaid the entire \$16 million of loan capital, plus they will have employed a thousand people, and the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) and the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) say it is a bad deal. That speaks volumes about the real interest of the people of the New Democratic Party. They want to kill jobs, kill investment and destroy opportunity in this province, all for their own cheap political gain and that is why they are sitting on the opposite side of this Legislature. That is why they are sitting on the opposite side of this Legislature.

Madam Speaker, that is a tragedy, that is an absolute tragedy that members opposite could be so self-centred and so narrow-minded that their own cheap political gain is all that ever motivates them.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, actually "cheap political" is out of order, and I also would ask, I believe there might be leave to not see the clock at twelve o'clock to allow the Premier to complete his speech.

Madam Speaker: On the point of order, indeed "cheap political shots" has been ruled unparliamentary in the past, and I would ask the honourable First Minister to exercise caution in the choice of his words.

* * *

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to permit the honourable First Minister to go beyond twelve o'clock?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Speaker: Leave has been granted.

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, I withdraw the words "cheap political shots" or whatever it was I said. [interjection]

I will just say to the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) that if the decision as to whether or not he spoke in this Assembly was based on whether or not he was good, we would never hear him.

Madam Speaker, I want to talk about responsibility and talk about the members opposite to tell people, like the Burger King slogan, you can have it your way, every time they meet with somebody. As I said earlier they can be all of the things that they want to be in their own minds, but their colleagues who are in government are making decisions every day. New Democrats across this country are making decisions every day. And here is, for instance, a clipping from the Victoria Times columnist in British Columbia in which the social services minister, Joy McPhail, said B.C. is actively considering measures to reduce the number of people on welfare similar to those Ontario's Tory government announced in Wednesday's throne speech.

* (1200)

When they say that this government is acting too much like Mike Harris' Tories, well, so is their B.C. NDP government. But in justifying the changes that are going to be directed towards forcing people on welfare to work or take training, she says, now this is what Joy McPhail says, and I admire Joy McPhail. I want to tell you that I think that she is a person with a great deal of commitment and courage. She is unlike anybody opposite. The members opposite have no courage and no commitment. They try to be all things to all people and that is why they remain opposite, Madam Speaker.

But Joy McPhail says, and I quote. Listen to this: The difference between us and the new Tory

government in Ontario is that we have concentrated on removing fraud and abuse from the system and putting the dollars to those who are truly in need.

That is exactly what our Minister of Family Services did and the members opposite criticized, saying it was terrible to have a welfare abuse line. Terrible to have welfare fraud be investigated and reported. Terrible to share figures between provinces so that we eliminated people who were collecting in two different provinces. It is okay for a New Democrat to do it in British Columbia, but it is not okay for a Conservative to do it in Manitoba. That is the kind of hypocrisy, inconsistency and ignorance that does not serve members opposite well at all.

I want to just quote something else for you here. Here is a story that says: The government plans significant spending cutbacks in the next provincial budget. Grants to health districts and school boards represent such a huge portion of the Health and Education budgets that, quote, you cannot exempt them.

Now, did this come from a Manitoba newspaper? Did this come from an Alberta Newspaper? Did this come from an Ontario newspaper? This came from the Star-Phoenix in Saskatoon. And the person being quoted is Janice MacKinnon, the Minister of Finance.

This is a responsible New Democrat. This is somebody with integrity. This is somebody with honesty, all qualities that are never found in the members opposite in this Chamber.

These people know that to govern is to be responsible. These people know that to govern is to make choices and to be honest with the public, and that is not something that we see in members opposite.

The worst criticism is that of the ideologically blind members opposite. I am sorry, Madam Speaker. I do not want to in any way breach the rules, but since the member opposite did not have the benefit, I will tell the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) that I said all of those things earlier and he might want to read Hansard. He might want to read Hansard to see the vision and to

see the direction that this government sees for the future.

Members opposite absolutely blindly in their ideology criticized, condemned the balanced budget legislation. I want to tell you that people everywhere in this province are saying that is the greatest assurance that they have of having their health care provided, having their education preserved and improved, and having family services funded properly to meet the needs of people.

The balanced budget is what they want, the balanced budget is what they got.

We have people everywhere, objective people right across this country writing in the Financial Post. I will not quote them all because they are writing in The Globe and Mail.

Here is a column from the Edmonton Journal. I do not know the writer. It is entitled, Manitoba Tories pull off Major Economic Revolution. He goes on to say that the legislation that we have is legislation that will indeed be of tremendous benefit to the people of this province for all time in future. He goes on to compare our legislation to that of Ralph Klein and that of Frank McKenna. He says, in conclusion, that McKenna always leaves out the fact that his government fudges the numbers and leaves out all sorts of things in it such as capital expenditures and everything else.

The member opposite has asked what the Dominion Bond Rating agency said. So I think I have a quote here somewhere. Here it is. I will quote from the Dominion Bond Rating agency. It says in their report of April 1995, quote: Manitoba's fiscal performance since 1990-91 has consistently been among the most favourable in Canada.

Under the Financial Post, it says: Premier Gary Filmon and his Tory government deserve full marks for proposing a balanced budget law with teeth.

Quote: Manitoba has been the only Canadian province to successfully reduce its deficit without raising any major taxes in recent years—Standard and Poor's, September of 1995

Quote: We view the Province of Manitoba as a high A credit with an improving outlook. The province is rated A-1 by Moody's, and A-plus with a stable outlook by Standard and Poor's. We believe an upgrade by the rating agencies as possible in the next two years. Manitoba's strengths include sound fiscal policy—Lehman Bros. brokerage firm of New York, September of 1995.

Madam Speaker, I could go on and on, but the fact of the matter is that objective observers everywhere in North America are saying that this government is doing a good job of managing the economy; that this government has created an environment in which we welcome investment and, in fact, we are attracting investment, the like of which we have never seen in our history; that this government has created an environment that has led to more jobs and more economic opportunities, more investment and help everywhere, everywhere in our economy.

I want to just say, in conclusion, that I was very, very disappointed to listen to the negativity, to see the incredibly distorted and wrong perspective that has been taken day after day by members opposite. They are in a time warp, like the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). They quote authorities of 90 years ago as the basis for their policies today; a 90-year-old quote is the basis on which they make their current judgments. Unbelievable, Madam Speaker, unbelievable. That is not the kind of future that Manitobans are looking forward to.

* (1210)

Thankfully, the members opposite will remain opposite for the next four and a half years and Manitobans will get good government because for the third time they elected us to office to look after their affairs and to create the kind of energy, enthusiasm and opportunity that they are looking for.

Madam Speaker, in conclusion, I just want to take this opportunity to wish all members opposite, all of our staff and support in the Chamber, the very best of the holiday season, a very happy, healthy and prosperous 1996. Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. Do members wish to have the motion read?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense. All those in favour of the motion, is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Madam Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Formal Vote

Mr. Ashton: Yeas and Nays, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: A recorded vote has been requested. Call in the members.

Division

A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas

Cummings, Derkach, Downey, Driedger, Dyck, Enns, Ernst, Filmon, Findlay, Gilleshammer, Helwer, Laurendeau, McAlpine, McCrae, McIntosh, Mitchelson, Newman, Pallister, Penner, Pitura, Praznik, Radcliffe, Reimer, Render, Rocan, Stefanson, Sveinson, Toews, Tweed, Vodrey.

Nays

Ashton, Barrett, Cerilli, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Evans (Brandon East), Evans (Interlake), Friesen, Gaudry, Hickes, Jennissen, Kowalski, Lamoureux, Mackintosh, Maloway, Martindale, McGifford, Mihychuk, Reid, Robinson, Sale, Santos, Struthers, Wowchuk.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Yeas 30, Nays 25.

Madam Speaker: The motion is accordingly carried.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of

Education (Mrs. McIntosh), (by leave) that when the House adjourns today, it shall stand adjourned until a time fixed by Madam Speaker upon the request of the government.

Motion agreed to.

Madam Speaker: I would like to take this opportunity to wish all honourable members and their families a very peaceful Christmas and a New Year filled with peace, happiness, good health and prosperity.

This House is adjourned.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, December 15, 1995

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