

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA
8:00 o'clock, Monday, March 23, 1970

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Radisson.

MR. HARRY SHAFRANSKY (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, as I have stated before, we have seen the disastrous effects of putting profit before people in the rape of Manitoba as it has been described in the case of the Churchill Forest complex, and as our First Minister stated at that time, we will not be putting our people into this jeopardy again, and when we will be spending the people's money, Mr. Speaker, we will be investing it for the benefit of Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to quote now from the Speech from The Throne itself. It reads: "We are entering an era where, for the first time, solutions become possible to many classic socio-economic problems. New techniques of production, distribution, management and administration have brought the potential of a material abundance that has no parallel in all of recorded history. My Ministers believe that the extent to which these techniques are used to reduce disparities and equalize opportunity will determine the success of government in solving the problems."

I read you this quote, Mr. Speaker, because I would like to give notice today that these are the very goals and these are the very intentions that I shall be working for. Those who have spoken against this motion have said that it contain platitudes, but what is a platitude, Mr. Speaker? A platitude is nothing more than a statement of something that is true and desirable but one suspects will never come to fruition. I have observed and heard many statements from the opposition benches, Mr. Speaker. Some of these statements have been true and some of these statements have been desirable. Few of them, Mr. Speaker, have ever borne fruit. I know that the statements that have been made on the benches of the present government are somewhat different. These statements are true, they are desirable, but I know in this case they will bear fruit because of the commitments that we carry for a better Manitoba, and that commitment, Mr. Speaker, is expressed in the Speech from The Throne. Mr. Speaker, if these are platitudes then I welcome them.

At this point, Mr. Speaker, it gives me particular pleasure to mention the Festival du Voyageur that was conducted in St. Boniface. I can say in full honesty that this Festival placed Manitoba on the map. It was certainly one of the most successful of the Centennial festivities. Certainly the organizers deserve praise because of the manner in which the whole community was involved. The Festival involved participation by various churches and various organizations. It brought about unity within St. Boniface as it was supported by all the people. It was a superb example of how the cultural mosaic in this province can be made to work for the benefit of Manitobans, and although the Festival was focused in and on St. Boniface, Mr. Speaker, I would like to propose that in the future we call this the Manitoba Festival du Voyageur. I wish to congratulate His Honour Mayor Turner and the Council of the City of St. Boniface, and particularly the first chairman, Magistrate Trudel. Speaking personally, I took great delight in representing the province of Manitoba at the dinner given by the City. The only pall of the proceedings was the Honourable Leader of the Opposition's attempt at being - and I shall use his word - "petty". He succeed in casting a shadow on the Festival that we would all do better to quickly forget. However, I remind him that we have to differentiate between the letter of the law and literally the spirit of the law, and I can say without fear of contradiction that every loyal Manitoban will only be too happy to conform to the spirit of the law, come the Festival du Voyageur.

I now come to the topic of poverty in Manitoba. There is no doubt in my mind that it is a blot and a shame on our record and on our history and on our present situation that we have in contemporary Manitoba a very large and a very substantial number of people who are not in the position of being able to meet their own basic needs. I am particularly disturbed by the fact that these people are frequently denied their share in Manitoba's wealth, a wealth, indeed, that many of them have helped to produce. Worst of all, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that there are many people in Manitoba who are trying to help themselves and in the past they have been penalized by our welfare program, programs that have actually assisted people to remain poor. Mr. Speaker, we are often accused of being in a welfare state and being in a state that has failed. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that it is not the welfare state that has failed but rather the failure lies in the state of welfare. As Andrew Bruin, the New Democratic Member of Parliament for Greenwood, who was the guest speaker at the Inter-Faith Breakfast last Thursday morning, March 19th, stated, it is the imperfections of the welfare state to which we must

(MR. SHAFRANSKY cont'd.)... address ourselves in order to more equitably distribute wealth and in order to permit the doors of opportunity to open equally to all citizens.

I was particularly pleased to see in the Throne Speech reference to the Social Service Audit. The Social Service Audit is a product of a long and comprehensive piece of research which has helped to direct us toward new directions in the delivery of social services. I trust, Mr. Speaker, that the implementation of some of the recommendations of the audit that will take place in this session will help us to alleviate the worst aspects of poverty and lead us closer to that greater goal of the final elimination of poverty in Manitoba. The record shows very clearly that over the last years we have spent millions of dollars on welfare here, nationally and internationally, and yet the curious fact is, Mr. Speaker, that we have not solved or defeated poverty. Poverty is still with us.

Every once in a while someone declares a war on poverty that much more resembles the odd ambush here and there. It has been the pattern in these wars on poverty and in welfare programs to provide less money to a family than they would be earning if they were being defined as poor. This to me, Mr. Speaker, says that in the past we have been interested not in alleviating or eliminating poverty, but rather in maintaining poverty with some facade of humanitarianism. It is simply a law of human nature and of social science that man is not free until he has an economic surplus. Indeed, as Ernest Bevin, that great British parliamentarian said: "Personal freedom is one by-product of economic surplus." The answer to me, Mr. Speaker, therefore seems rather obvious. We have to provide for an income floor for our people which will be of such a nature that the monies coming into a home will more than meet the basic necessities, because it is not until there is a surplus in a home that a person can truly be said to be free.

We do not wish to perpetuate poverty generation after generation. We want to break the cycle of poverty and I believe that we can do that and that we are moving in precisely that direction. The road to the defeat of poverty lies not in minor programs here and there; it lies not in tinkering with little bits of system here and there. It lies, Mr. Speaker, in programs that have universal benefits for all people so that all of our people can equally enjoy a quality of life which we would like to see them enjoy. We have already made one step in that direction in our amendment to the Medicare Act. Another direction in which we can move is the area of housing. We know that there is a shortage of housing. As much as raising an income floor we can assist by providing housing to those who most need it; and I was particularly pleased to see reference in the Throne Speech to changes in the borrowing power of the Manitoba Housing and Urban Renewal Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, on the point of auto insurance, I have some statistics that I have received from my constituency which are somewhat different from what was given by the survey in the Winnipeg Tribune. I took the same area that was surveyed in the Windsor Park area and I find in the question: "Would you like to see a government auto insurance premium if this is the best way to reduce premiums?" 76 percent of the people said "yes", 24 percent said "no".

We come to the question of urbanization of Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, it is a fact that over 60 percent of Manitoba's population lives in the Greater Winnipeg area and that the rate of rural to urban drift shows every indication of increasing and not decreasing. At the present time there is no preparation for people to move into a city. There are very few services that are city-oriented. There are very few programs that are designed for urban living. And Mr. Speaker, I would like to believe that we can correct this by developing the same kind of government services for urban living as we have for agriculture, for industry and commerce, and for mines and natural resources. -- (Interjection) -- Right. If the minerals of Manitoba deserve a Department of Mines, then, Mr. Speaker, I believe the people of Manitoba deserve a Department of Urban Affairs.

The topic of pollution is one that has very quickly become one of the top priority items for governments around the globe. I understand that according to some analysts things are so bad that if we do not control pollution today, future generations may not be around to celebrate any bi-centennial. Let me tell you this, Mr. Speaker, that we in this government of Manitoba intend to celebrate many more birthdays and we will take any action that is necessary to defend the people of this province from contaminated air, soil and water, Manitoba's heritage, which is proud and independent people, people who enjoy their heritage of rich soil, clean air, pure water. We do not expect to destroy such a valuable inheritance, for the object of economic growth is the moulding of a social and economic environment that encourages and makes

(MR. SHAFRANSKY cont'd.)... available opportunities for a particular quality of life in this province. The underlying theme which motivates my thinking are best expressed in Articles 22 and 25 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In the arena of public service, we have to remember one basic fact about public programs and that is that a first-rate program encourages first-rate citizenship. In the past, too often we have seen second-rate programs have encouraged second-rate citizenship. This will now change. We must remain discontent as long as there is one Manitoban who feels second-rate. To quote the late Senator Robert Kennedy: "Government is an institution too often set in ways accepted in the past, but the old answers have failed and we need new institutions to shape new solutions. Most importantly, reliance on government is dependence and what the people need is not greater dependence but full independence; not the charity and favour of their fellow citizens, but equal claims of rights and equal power to enforce those claims." Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Roblin.

MR. McKENZIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not in the enviable position of the honourable member who just spoke and can speak from a prepared speech. I haven't got a ghost writer to write for me -- (Interjections) -- and I am basically one of those rural politicians who does his own on government stationery with pen and ink. -- (Interjection) -- No, I haven't got a paid executive assistant.

However, Mr. Speaker, I congratulate you on the fact that you have recognized....

MR. SHAFRANSKY: Possibly if you used a prepared speech you'd be more coherent. I can't quite follow you.

MR. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, I heard voices. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I extend to you, along with all those who have preceded me, the traditional expressions of respect and bring you greetings from those constituents who I am honoured to represent. And as you guide us through this second session of the 29th Legislature, Mr. Speaker, I sincerely hope that you will protect our rights, and my rights as a member of this Legislature, and try and remember at all times that the only power that I have is the right to speak, and any time that the government or you in your Chair try to rob me of that power, I humbly submit, Mr. Speaker, that you are treading on dangerous ground. And I well recognize the sleepless nights that the Speaker maybe has had after he read that article in the Tribune of my friend Steve Melnyk. One Speaker was tarred and feathered one time in this province because he was the first one, if my memory serves me accurately, but I well recognize the problems that you have and you have been fair and you have been square and I wish you the best as you guide us through this session of the Legislature.

I am not concerned, Mr. Speaker, however, that the Premier and his government haven't apparently -- they have for some reason shelved this suggestion of a permanent Speaker in this province. This has been debated at great length and I think there's almost unanimous consent. The subject I think is history and I'm surprised that it hasn't come up in this great message that we are debating here tonight. I know of no reason why you could not be the permanent Speaker of this Assembly, but I possibly would think that maybe the government and the Premier in his wisdom will have this at a later date, and I think it's something that we as MLAs, members of the Legislature -- it could be easily done. I think....

MR. SCHREYER: the honourable member; I didn't realize he was interested. Is he preaching for a call or....

MR. McKENZIE: I thank the First Minister for his remark suggesting that I might be capable, but I think there are many others that are much more capable than I am, but I am most concerned at this session that when the Premier had the message and he spoke about it and made the suggestion, he even intimated my colleague here on my left might be the Speaker and the Member for Rhineland was... However, no doubt that will come and I'm not going to debate it at any further length tonight.

I would like to secondly Mr. Speaker, congratulate the mover and the seconder of the Address in Reply. Their efforts in proposing and seconding the motion were very well prepared and are now documented in the records of this province and I congratulate them for their initiative and I congratulate them for the message which they brought forth.

I would also like to extend to the Premier and his government my best wishes. His wife is -- (Interjection) -- No, the Premier has some fairly deep roots in my constituency and I wish him well on behalf of my constituents and I wish his government well. As an MLA in an opposite political party, we may not agree all the time but I certainly will do everything I can

(MR. McKENZIE cont'd.)... to help him with his government and help him with his legislation, and on behalf of Roblin I wish you well. -- (Interjections) -- This of course is a non-political speech.

Now Mr. Speaker, it's especially fitting that we in Manitoba this year, our Centennial year, can honour so many things that have taken place. I think whereas I stand here right now, and I'm keenly interested in the Dauphin Kings who won the provincial championship, and the Minister of Tourism and Recreation - that's his constituency. I have some boys from my constituency play on the team, but that is one of the events of our Centennial Year that I think was fantastic. I recognize Don Duguid and the fantastic job that they have done for this province and for Canada in the old roaring game of the brushes and the hurrahs of curling. And as a hockey fan, I very much regret the horrible experience of the events that preceded the disbanding of our Manitoba-based national team. I join the feelings and I join the sentiments of thousands, Mr. Speaker, thousands of hockey fans, who felt certain that we would this year have won it all with this Centennial team that had been built and based in Winnipeg. And I take my hat off to those that had anything to do in any shape or form with that team. Father Bauer, I know; Jackie McLeod, and the many others that went through all the exercise of preparing a national team, and I felt as I saw our Centennial year coming upon us, that they had based their hopes on the fact that they would bring the championship to Canada in this year, and bring it to Manitoba, as we were the base of the team. Unfortunately, it did not happen. . . .

A MEMBER: Bunny Ahearne.

MR. McKENZIE: Well, let's not get into that debate. That's one I would like to debate in a political arena; however, that will never happen.

I look forward, Mr. Speaker, with great interest to the remaining ten months of 1970 and the many, many, many Centennial events that will unfold before us and bring back to us some of the memories that are so treasured by especially our senior citizens of this province. We had events this afternoon of the Member for Virden constituency. Imagine the stories that those people could tell about the history -- they have been here a hundred years. I listened this morning at great length, as I drove in in my automobile, to a gentleman by the name of Henderson from Minitonas, who has been apparently a guest in Dauphin for the last two or three days, of these various Centennial groups in Dauphin, and they debated with him on radio this morning, and he told of all the history of his community. This, I think, is one of the most unbelievable things to me to unfold because basically I'm not native to Manitoba. I am a Saskatchewanite, half by birth, and I have a few remarks, Mr. Speaker, if you permit me, regarding the fact that there are many people in this province who are not born here and don't know the history of this province. And I think back about when the glacial waters receded and this province -- (Interjection) -- some ten thousand years ago. . . .

A MEMBER: What a memory!

MR. McKENZIE: But nevertheless the aboriginal hunters came along, and then came the Indian, came the Chippewas, came the Crees, came the Saulteaux, and came the Assiniboias, and those tribes arrived. -- (Interjection) -- let's not get into the exercise of the various mosaic. . . . Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, I find it very interesting that those tribes, the Chippewan, the Cree, the Saulteaux and the Assiniboian, for some unforeseen or unknown reason, they thought that the waters of this province were filled with spirits, and in their language the word is Manitou. And from the word Manitou came Manitoba, and that's how, according to the history that I read, this is how this province received its name - from that historical event. And history also informs me - and I'm only as I say a Saskatchewanite who came to this province - that by the year 1612 this Captain Thomas Button - and I wonder if he has any descendants in this province? He was the first man. . . .

MR. MILLER: For the benefit of the gentleman, the Fire Chief of West Kildonan is his descendent.

MR. McKENZIE: There is a man - I would direct my remarks to the Minister in charge - the Buttons were the first white men to set foot in Manitoba, and he apparently arrived in Northern Manitoba. And then of course came others - the story that was brought out so ably this afternoon by the Honourable Member for La Verendrye, those that set foot in Churchill and so on, looking for the Northwest Passage, and history goes on and on. And it's also recorded, of course, that the Monks, James Monk and his crew, spent a winter in Churchill. Isn't that interesting - I think the year was 1619 - because that is where the King and the Queen are going to arrive during our Centennial Year. And I may be telling a story tonight, Mr.

(MR. McKENZIE cont'd.)... Speaker, that's old to many people of this province but to a lot like myself, that only came here in the last 25 or 30 years, it's new and it's something I hope, in the wisdom of our Centennial year, that we'll prepare in a pamphlet some historical document of this province that we can hand to the new people that weren't here too long; something of our history, this is what happened, how Manitoba came to be. It'd just a humble suggestion, Mr. Premier, but I hope that we can go on through the York Factory experience, we can go on through the Hudson Bay experience and so on and so forth. And of course Riel provisional government and Sir John A. Macdonald and the whole exercise, and out of it all came Manitoba. In fact, I was talking to somebody the other day about Manitoba's first session of the Legislature which was held down at the corner of what is now Portage and Main, back in the year 1871. But I do hope that some place along the line we can record the historical events that made this province what it is today, one of those places where a lot of people like to live.

Mr. Speaker, now having taken the time of the House to deal with these pleasantries and these courtesies, may I now come to grips with the Speech from the Throne that is before us tonight. Those important points in the Speech from the Throne that interested me the most was our agricultural program, economic development, and the automobile insurance scheme. And they have been dealt with by others on the Official Opposition benches so I shall not deal at any great length with any of them but I would like to cover those points if I would be permitted.

The matter of a government-sponsored insurance scheme, Mr. Speaker, is one that I am most keenly interested in, and in the capacity as a member of the automobile insurance committees during the days of the Conservative Government and as an agent in a very small village, I have been able to accumulate a wealth of information and material over those years, and I have not been at all impressed, Mr. Speaker, with the tactics and the methodology that's been practised by the government of the day as they search through the exercises and the records and statistics of this industry. We have a committee, government-appointed, political, on automobile insurance, who have held hearings and have listened to briefs these past several months. And these straw man tactics that have been utilized in this exercise, Mr. Speaker, I don't think are needed in this day and age of our society where basically this government has never laid a plan on the table. They're talking about every other insurance plan and jurisdiction in North America and in the world, but they have never yet laid their own plan on the table. And I say, Mr. Speaker, very humbly, it's a fruitless exercise. How can any human being like me debate with you when -- I place my faith in a plan that I have in my hand. You have never yet placed your plan on the table. Why?

MR. MILLER: You'll get it. Give us time.

MR. McKENZIE: Oh yes, I know. But let us not go through this fruitless exercise of wasting people's time and money with these straw man tactics which doesn't actually solve anything. Mr. Speaker, how can I as an MLA or as an agent, debate when only one side or one point of view is on the table? If this government, Mr. Speaker, wants to implement an automobile insurance scheme in Manitoba, I ask you here and now to put her on the table. Put her on the table. Well what have you been doing for the last six or eight months? -- (Interjection)-- Let's compare it with the Saskatchewan plan; on the rating schedules that's offered by some 150 insurance companies who have agents and head offices in this province -- and I've carefully examined the facts, I've carefully examined the figures on the Saskatchewan plan which they think is the answer to all questions in automobile insurance. I well know and I think you well know, Mr. Speaker, what was that Saskatchewan plan. That was a social experiment. It was a social experiment by a CCF administration.

MR. BILL URUSKI (St. George): It worked too.

MR. McKENZIE: No but nobody can deny that, Mr. Speaker. And I know that the Premier and I know that his government and his colleagues are over the proverbial political barrel on this issue, because they've promised their supporters -- this has been on their literature for as long as I have been in the political arena -- that a plan similar to the Saskatchewan or that old CCF administration is the answer to all the problems of insurance. But I humbly submit to you, Mr. Speaker, and I humbly submit to the members of this Assembly tonight, that the Premier should desist and he should abandon all plans for such a scheme as that Saskatchewan plan. If the Premier in his wisdom and the government in their wisdom wants to substantiate my remark, I only ask you to take a real hard, close look at the brief which was presented to your government by C. I. S., Co-op Fire and Casualty, whose head office is in Regina. This socially, economically-oriented firm represents some 36 people's organizations across this

(MR. McKENZIE cont'd.).... country with a membership of well over 300,000, and they have some 28,000 or more policyholders right in this province. A people's organization. And what message did they offer, Mr. Speaker, to the committee? They said the auto insurance industry in this province should remain as it is with the private company, the mutual company and the cooperative company competing with one another, and if these three groups cannot offer the best possible automobile insurance coverage competing against one another, how can this government, Mr. Speaker, with its bureaucracy, improve on the efficiency of an industry such as I have pointed out to you?

Mr. Speaker, the average citizen on the street in Winnipeg, in Roblin, in Grandview, in Brandon, he hasn't got a clue in the world as to what all this NDP hoopla is about in the insurance industry. He doesn't know what we're talking about. Mr. Average Citizen, in my opinion, Mr. Speaker, is hoping he's going to get something for nothing - and who wouldn't want that? And this is where these NDP supporters have been, you know, brain-washed through this exercise that they're going to get something for nothing. Well, I humbly submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that there's nothing free in this world and there's nothing free in this society. And let me assure Mr. Average Citizen in Manitoba, it just doesn't work that way. It just doesn't work that way. Statements have been placed on the record, Mr. Speaker, by this government that they can provide government automobile insurance 13 percent lower than is now being provided by the market that is available today. Do you believe that, Mr. Speaker. Do you believe that? How can any government, how can any government in its rightful mind make such a ridiculous statement when they have no knowledge whatsoever of -- I ask you only one thing: what's the claims experience of an insurance company in any one given year? Can you project it? Can you project it? Can you project it? It can't be done, can't be done. You can't project what's going to happen in this province within the next twelve months and I bid you here and now, Mr. Speaker, how can you set the rates? How can you tell the people of this province that it's going to be 13 percent reduced?

I'm all for change, Mr. Speaker, and I'll support this government if in its wisdom it will improve upon the industry as it operates in this province today, because I think there is room for improvement. I support the views offered by honourable members from the -- the Honourable Member from Assiniboia as an example, and others who have suggestions as to how we can improve upon the industry as it operates in this province today and hold costs down. There's many fields that are open, and I had a little brief come to me in my mail during the past year, and possibly all the members have gotten one. It's by -- it says auto rates, a big picture, I don't know, but they have some suggestions here and I will table this record maybe, but I'll give you a couple of them. How can you hold down the cost of your auto insurance? Well here's a couple of suggestions, Mr. Premier and Mr. Speaker. If you own more than one car, insure them all with the same company to take advantage of the lower rate. There's a lot of people don't -- they don't know that.

MR. GREEN: One company.

MR. McKENZIE: If you have a young driver in the family, have him or her take an approved driver training course. Now this program is well under way now in this province and we're getting the benefit from it. If the young driver in your family is away at school or college more than 100 from home, a premium credit is allowed under many company ratings. Buy a deductible policy. Who in the industry today buying a policy really understands the deductible aspects of insurance. Make sure your car is properly listed, etc. etc., and so on and so forth.

A MEMBER: Good advice.

MR. McKENZIE: I offer my few remarks in great respect but I sincerely believe, Mr. Speaker, that the insurance industry in this province has done a great job. There's always room for improvement. I have no quarrel with that, and let's take a look at the industry, let's shake it up if necessary, but I humbly submit that this is not the time nor the day for the Province of Manitoba to get into the automobile insurance industry.

Now, Mr. Speaker, may I dwell for a moment on the matter of property taxes, and I ask you, Mr. Speaker, and I ask this government: is there any way that we can remove all the school costs from property taxation? Is there any way? Sure there is. I've heard many suggestions and a Liberal resolution is one that I've looked at with great respect, but I think this is something that we must offer real quick in the form of relief for, let's say our old age pensioners. Let's start there. Just some form of property tax relief for our old age

(MR. McKENZIE cont'd.)... pensioners by possibly freezing the mill rate when one reaches 65 and he's involved with the means test. And supposing if you own a house, Mr. Speaker, you pay a property tax directly as part of your mortgage payment. If you rent a house or an apartment, part of that rent money of course goes to the landlord's property tax, and I was able to pick up some interesting figures on the weekend, Mr. Speaker, which may be of some interest to you. On the average - these are national of course - property taxes add 25 percent to the Canadian shelter costs and here are the figures that I have gathered, Mr. Speaker. The total Canada shelter costs today is \$5,790,000,000. Now that's the total rent, taxes, insurance, maintenance, etc. Those were taken from DBS 1967 accounts. The tax portion was \$1,173,340,000. Net shelter costs without tax - \$4,616,660,000.

Now can you visualize, Mr. Speaker, anybody wanting to own a home or a farm at these rates? I was pleased last session when this House debated at some length and passed unanimously a resolution asking for exemption of the first \$2,000 of municipal assessment on the residence. -- (Interjection) -- All right. I well reckon it and we debated it, and lo and behold, what happened? Last week, Mr. Speaker, the government House Leader he stood up and he says: Well, this government is not obligated to act upon resolutions passed in this House -- (Interjection) -- or election promises, and the debate no doubt will go on for some great length at that time. But tax reform, I humbly submit, Mr. Speaker, must be faced at once because it concerns every citizen of this province, and if we get into the plight of assessment which is starting to raise its ugly face within the boundary of Metro which, if the stories are true that I hear in my few days in the city this week, I humbly submit that we are into a real bind because the assessment figures that are being given to me by citizens of the Greater Winnipeg area are staggering, and it's one that must be met, if not at this session, I think we should prepare ourselves for meeting this problem headlong as quickly as we can.

And now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to dwell briefly on agriculture. I can imagine the plight or the thoughts that would go through the farmers of this province if they had heard the Minister speak here this afternoon. I have never heard such an exercise in frustration in all my life as I heard from this Minister of Agriculture that we have. How can a farmer feed his family without a cash crop on what he said this afternoon? How can a farmer pay these high property taxes without a cash crop, adding on what he said this afternoon? -- (Interjection) -- Nothing, absolutely nothing. There's enough problems for any one sector of our citizens in an ordinary society, but the farmers, the farmers I humbly submit have a real problem today. But what can we do to alleviate those problems that they face in Roblin constituency, the farmers in Roblin constituency? Can we lower the assessment? Can we cut it off like they done in 1925, because I humbly submit that they cannot pay. This coming fall there will be many many people in Roblin constituency that will not be able to pay their taxes, because what are you going to pay it with? -- (Interjection) -- I beg your pardon?

MR. SCHREYER: Did you reduce the assessment in 1960? You were in power.

MR. McKENZIE: There was acreage payments. I wasn't a member of the Legislature in 1960 and I'm not sure about what happened. But, Mr. Speaker, I humbly submit to this government that they should take a hard close look at the possibility. Let's reduce the assessment on those that are in this bind. I don't know how but we've got to face this. We certainly can't let it go up; it's got to go down, and in my humble opinion, Mr. Speaker, some way must be found to meet this problem headlong.

MR. SCHREYER: I know your way, charge them 204 a year for hospital and medicare - 204 bucks a year - that's the way to help the farmers in distress; nail them for \$204 a year.

MR. McKENZIE: This government and this Premier thinks that they have answered all the problems in Manitoba because they reduced the medicare scheme, and that's all they have done.

MR. SCHREYER: By \$20 million.

MR. McKENZIE: How many people in my constituency are exempt? Look at the people that were exempt out there. Let's not get into that political arena; that's water under the bridge. I'm not scared to meet anybody on the hustings of Roblin constituency about medicare today. I'm for medicare. I'm for paying as we can but -- (Interjection) -- I'm not going to get into this exercise, but I am most concerned....

A MEMBER: You don't have to be.

MR. McKENZIE: ... and I'll debate it on the hustings any day, Mr. Speaker. But I am concerned about the one thing in my constituency today that is a very very serious problem and

(MR. McKENZIE cont'd.),... that is agriculture, and I submit, Mr. Speaker, that there is no time for a patch-up job such as the Minister of Agriculture tried to place across here this afternoon - a patch-up job on a farm policy - because the farmers of this province cannot afford another mistake, Mr. Speaker. In fact many many farmers have exhausted their supply of credit and will not be able to stay on their farms long enough to receive their 1970 notices, let alone have an exercise in frustration and mistakes such as we had from the Minister of Agriculture this afternoon. And I shall not dwell on this course very long, but the main thing, as I stand here before you tonight, Mr. Speaker, is a solution, and we need a solution to this problem.

HON. PETER BURTNIAK (Minister of Tourism and Recreation)(Dauphin): Let's hear it, let's hear it.

MR. McKENZIE: Right. I'm very distressed and very upset that our Minister of Agriculture hasn't come up with an answer. I'm very concerned that he hasn't called the Committee of Agriculture to deal with this problem. -- (Interjection) -- Why didn't he call the committee? He never called it. And let's lay Manitoba's case on the line. Does he want to lay it all by himself on the table or does he want some help? Mr. Speaker, he stood up in the House here this afternoon and tried to give us what he thought, and I say that is not the answer. So I again appeal to the Minister to call the committee as quickly as he possibly can and, if necessary, call all the farm leaders in this province together, but let us try and resolve Manitoba's problems and no one individual is going to be able to do it. I think it needs the knowledge, and the brains of the best people that we've got. And let's forget about Ottawa. Let's forget about Ottawa. I think we can come up with ideas and suggestions that will be very helpful and will add much to that debate. Of course the Minister is again over a barrel on this issue because he never did support the acreage payments of the former Agricultural Minister and that's one that we've supported for a long time. He came out with the two-price system. Remember the debates in the Legislature on the two-price system? Read that into the record. This is one of the Grits or the Liberals. They were great speakers on this. Nevertheless, now we're back to where we started, to the acreage payments, and while it is a negative approach to the agricultural policy, I think very sincerely that maybe there is some help for the farmers if we could get into a positive vein.

It was interesting for me, Mr. Speaker, to pick up the Dauphin Daily Bulletin, I think it was the March 2nd issue, and there in glaring headlines in that paper it said: "Manitoba's Agricultural Minister, Sam Uskiw, termed the federal decision to introduce a form of acreage payments to take wheat land out of production a step in the right direction." Big statement! Big statement! Was that government policy when you were speaking that day?

Let me further that article, Mr. Speaker. He went on to say that "Acreage payments had been sought by the Manitoba Government as the principal means of getting production of wheat in line with market demands." Do you believe that statement, Mr. Speaker?

A MEMBER: Do you?

MR. McKENZIE: I know I don't, but...

A MEMBER: Do you have a solution?

MR. McKENZIE: Can you believe that that was a statement that would come from the Minister of Agriculture of this province, a Minister of Agriculture who is supposed to be representing the farmers of this province? I just can't believe it. This man, who has completely reversed himself in the space of 12 months. In 1969 he spoke and he voted against acreage payments. He voted against acreage payments. Now today, in a very short few months, he's supporting acreage payments. You know, he's almost a dead ringer for that Minister of Agriculture they've got in Ottawa. The same one in Ottawa - and this was interesting - I'm sure you'll find it interesting. -- (Interjection) -- Well, the one that's in charge of wheat. They're so mixed up down there I get confused because they change their responsibilities from there to there.

Nevertheless, this one in Ottawa, who recently said in a press report, and I quote from this press report - and this is the Minister in charge of wheat who I submit is Mr. Lang - and he said, "A sharp reduction in wheat stocks would greatly enhance the continuing effort to strengthen international prices." Now surely, Mr. Speaker, that Minister couldn't be serious. Surely -- (Interjection) -- Right. Of all the grave mistakes in wheat by Canada, he couldn't have meant what he said by that press release. That statement, Mr. Speaker, in my humble opinion, is the height of idiocracy, and I say, Mr. Speaker, that the present efforts to

(MR. McKENZIE cont'd.).... strengthen our wheat prices can only benefit our other exporting countries. We pay the bill to the tune of - what does it cost for us to send a bushel of wheat down through the Wheat Board system? Twenty-six cents. Twenty-six cents per bushel roughly per year. And the other fellow who - the American, the guy in Russia, they share the benefits. Is that good business for the farmers of this province?

I say, Mr. Speaker, that we must forget this ideology, this dream of a sort of a Mission Impossible nature who are thinking of firming up the international prices of the world and forget about the fact we can't sell a bushel right here where we stand. I humbly submit that they and this Minister should get busy at once and take a look at that ideology and place every known Manitoba resource and every Canadian resource behind a program of selling Canadian wheat. That's their job; that's the job for the Minister of Agriculture in Ottawa and that's the job for this Minister here; and let's get on with the job and let's do it as fast as we can.

I find it very interesting to see a press release that came out of the office of the U. S. A. Secretary of Agriculture the other day when he said: "I salute our Canadian neighbours for their determination to make a gigantic contribution to the solution of the world wheat surplus problem." Well he should salute us; well he should salute us. Well, he should salute that Minister of Agriculture that we have in Ottawa today.

MR. SPEAKER: Order. May I remind the honourable member he has five minutes remaining.

MR. McKENZIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And well he should send a salute or a telegram to this Minister of Agriculture, because our holding for higher price policies have put millions and millions and millions of dollars in the pockets of our American neighbours. We cannot sell our wheat, Mr. Speaker, in competition with other exporting countries of the world under present policies, which is a very very sad ending for our Canadian farmer who grew the finest wheat in the world and at one time, for almost 50 years, exported more than any other wheat exporting country in the world. Can we not lower our prices, Mr. Speaker, so that we can sell our wheat on the world market? Thank you.

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MR. SCHREYER: Mr. Speaker, I should like to do the traditional thing and offer you my sincere good wishes for your tenure in the office of Speaker, and while I say that it is traditional that this should be said, I want to impress on you, Sir, that I say it in a genuine way. I think that most members, if not all in this Chamber, would agree that in the time that you have occupied that Chair at the last session and at this, and hopefully for many sessions to come, that you will continue to conduct the duties of the office of Speaker with the same judiciousness that you have already well shown.

I should also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. Both members are new to the Legislative Assembly and I felt that they spoke with an ease that demonstrated that in the days ahead in this session and in sessions to come, that they will make a good contribution to debate and deliberation of public business here in this Chamber.

I must say, Mr. Speaker, it's difficult to follow someone like the Honourable Member for Grandview — (Interjection) — or the Honourable Member for Roblin. I have Grandview on the mind, obviously. The honourable member is such an affable person that I regret that I wasn't here for the past four years while he was Member for Roblin, because I should think that he kept honourable members well entertained, even if not well informed, well entertained for all those years from 1966 until now. The Honourable Member for Roblin made mention that I had some particular kind of attachment or roots in the constituency of Roblin, and in an indirect way I suppose this is true. That being so, I rather look forward to the next election campaign, whenever that may be, because unfortunately — you know I really would have liked to have met my honourable friend in the last election but it was such a hectic one, lasting all of 2 1/2 weeks, that it wasn't possible to spend more time in the constituency of Roblin.

Every constituency becomes well known for a certain product which it specializes in. For example, the constituency of La Verendrye — I'm sorry the honourable member isn't here — it has always been known as the "milk shed of Winnipeg," and when one thinks of La Verendrye one thinks of Holstein cows and the like. And I understand that the area where my honourable friend comes from in the Inglis district, that it has quite a reputation, just as Dropmore has a reputation for horticultural stock and nursery stock, that the Inglis district where my honourable friend comes from is supposed to be a good place to raise Aberdeen Angus steers. And I must say, Sir, that every time I look across at my honourable friend I say to myself, they do indeed grow very good Aberdeen Angus steers in Inglis.

I want to say a few words about the Honourable Leader of the Opposition. It is customary for the Leaders on both sides of the House to comment on the condition of health of their principal opponent, and I must say that being in the Opposition has certainly not done any harm to the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition. He seems more rosy-cheeked and ruddy-complexioned than ever and his hair is as sleek as the fur on a healthy beaver. I really think that, you know, the job of Premier didn't go that well with him because I happen to, in a personal way, rather like the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, and for that reason and because of the fact that I happen to know that his better half really prefers things this way, I want to assure my honourable friend that we will not do anything to help him come back on this side and suffer the anguish of being Premier. And I suppose that — (Interjection) —

MR. CHERNIACK: You'll be betting plenty.

MR. SCHREYER: I'm glad to see that I was forced to comment on this last session, Mr. Speaker, but it seemed so obvious to me, Sir, that the Honourable Member for Fort Garry and the Honourable Member for River Heights back last fall in the first session seemed to be of such mournful countenance and gloomy look that I felt that there was something wrong, which I couldn't understand until I was told by way of rumour that they had had designs on the leadership of the Conservative Party and that they felt themselves thwarted somehow by the defeat of the last election. But I'm glad to see that the Honourable Member for Fort Garry is much more cheerful this session and he has managed to adjust to being a member of the opposition benches which at times has its advantages. The Honourable Member for River Heights unfortunately does not seem to have adjusted at all and that would explain his rather strange and curious, if not irrational antics, of the past few weeks and days.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech Debate, everyone knows that it is a time when members of the opposition add up all of the grievances that they believe exist, or think exist in the body politic and they come to the Chamber well armed and they criticize the actions of the government. And that's understandable and it really should be so, it must be so, so no

(MR. SCHREYER cont'd) one on this side and no one in the public is at all surprised that there have been a number of fairly negative things said about this government in the past few days during the course of this Throne Speech debate. But one would have hoped that at least some of the criticism would have been interlaced with some constructive ideas, that at least some of the criticism would have been tempered a little by the fact, and it is a fact, that when the critics were on this side in government, as they were for ten years, they had ample opportunity to right some of the wrongs that they feel exist in our society and to make corrections.

They talked about municipal taxation being high and assessment as being high. Well of course it's high. But I would like them to compare the percentage increase in municipal assessment and taxation between 1958 and '59 with now. Municipal land assessment did not start to escalate in 1969. There has been assessment and reassessment every few years by the Provincial Municipal Assessment Branch. People have been unhappy about assessment ever since I can remember, and taxes, land taxes have increased. They've been increasing in a rather dramatically unsatisfactory way right through the period of the whole 1960's. And I certainly agree with those who say that in the farming areas of our province the combination of low sales, low cash income and increasing municipal taxation is causing very serious problems. We have never pretended otherwise, Mr. Speaker. But I want it clearly understood, it should be understood but apparently it isn't, that last fall we took a course of action that I felt - we felt and feel now - was more directly beneficial to people on fixed incomes, more directly beneficial to farm families, particularly in times of low grain sales, than any other single thing we could have done. We reduced the Medicare premium by 90 percent, and the Medicare premium reduction, Mr. Speaker, applied -- (Interjection) -- Well now, I'll come to wheat in a few minutes. The Medicare premium reduction was of benefit to every family in this province. And those who are on fixed incomes who could stand to have some relief by way of municipal tax reduction, by way of having the senior level of government relieve some of the tax burden on local ratepayers, these people could, every one of those . . .

MR. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, . . .

MR. SCHREYER: Mr. Speaker, I'm not entertaining any question just now. Every single family in those disadvantaged circumstances who would benefit from relief on municipal taxes benefits from reduction in Medicare premium, every single one. So the most universal way that we could have proceeded to grant tax relief to those on fixed incomes and low incomes was by way of reduction of a flat tax such as the Medicare premium was. And I hazard to say that by reducing Medicare premium taxes by \$24 million - my honourable colleague nods his head - I repeat \$24 million, is a shift in taxation off the shoulders of those less well able to pay, a shift of a degree and magnitude that my honourable friends opposite would have never had the guts to try. I won't ask my honourable friends if at any time during the entire ten-year period of the administration of the Conservatives in Manitoba, did they ever effect a shift in taxation of \$24 million. -- (Interjection) -- My honourable friend from Lakeside says, in a flip and casual way, "sure." I'd ask him to specify because certainly it was never done with respect to municipal land taxation.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable First Minister, in his flippant way, has denied me any opportunity to enter into the debate at this time and I really don't think . . .

MR. SCHREYER: There you have it, Mr. Speaker. I have the floor and the Honourable Member for Lakeside gets up to voice his complaint, his discontent that he hasn't been allowed to enter the debate. No one stopped him until now, and when he has the floor I wouldn't presume to get the floor to enter into the debate. My honourable friend will have an opportunity tomorrow.

But I repeat, Mr. Speaker, for emphasis and just to be sure that it is understood, that never in ten years did the Conservative Government of Manitoba effect a shift in taxation off the backs or shoulders of the less well able to pay of that magnitude that we did last fall. And I want to tell my honourable friend something else, that having done this, having effected such a large shift in taxation and put it on a basis of ability-to-pay, we have it in mind, and it will well come about I should think within our first eighteen months, to effect a second shift, but having done so in the first year of office we can hardly be expected to make two such massive shifts in taxation in one single year. My honourable friends must be completely naive and unrealistic if they think it's possible. But we shall do at least a little bit better than my honourable friends, every eighteen months or thereabouts, and I pause now to let them consider that for a little.

MR. PAULLEY: They haven't the intellect to consider it.

MR. SCHREYER: Of course, Mr. Speaker, you cannot change the incidence or bases of taxation without displeasing some people, and when we did reduce the flat, pole-type type of tax, the Medicare tax, the combined health tax of \$204.00 per family per year, we had to find revenue, quite a bit of revenue - my colleague tells me \$24 million almost - from some other source. Well if you're not going to tax those who are less able to pay you'll have to tax those who are more able to pay, and that's what we've done. That's what we did last fall and of course we have incurred the displeasure of some, and of course that I think overjoys my honourable friend the Member from River Heights because some companies happen to be a little dissatisfied, and I rather suspect that my honourable friend is quite happy about that, politically speaking.

But this is a responsibility which we assume, the repercussions of it we assume, Mr. Speaker, and if there is support to be received from those who are in accord with shifting taxation rather more away from those on lower income to those on higher, then we are entitled to that support. If there's criticism to be received, we'll accept it. But what has been the result, Mr. Speaker? There have been some few company spokesmen who have voiced displeasure publicly and we can expect that one or two or three or four may threaten to move, one or two may, but I want to say that the majority of businessmen that I have spoken to and have had dealings with, they realize that if you want to bring about tax reform and if you want to ease tax burdens on those on fixed income or on low income you have to make changes of that kind, and most businessmen in this province have so conducted themselves that I have no adverse comment or complaint to make at all, which is something that might not please my honourable friend from River Heights.

MR. ENNS: It may not please the Honourable Member for Crescentwood either.

MR. SCHREYER: Now I come to the matter of agricultural policy, Mr. Speaker. I really regretted very much that I wasn't able to be here when the Honourable Member for Morris spoke. I see he isn't in his place now; I'll leave any further reference to him aside 'til he gets back and I will make reference instead to the general matter of agricultural policy and conditions in our province. The industry is in trouble; it's in serious trouble. But I could not understand from my honourable friend the Member for Roblin whether he was suggesting that the Government of the Province of Manitoba should get involved in the business of selling grain, because if that's what he is suggesting I know my honourable colleague the Minister of Agriculture is a reasonable, logical man and he will give it consideration. But what strikes me as very strange is that if you really believe that, then why did you not make representations to the former government back in the early sixties when grain wasn't moving very well either?

MR. MCKENZIE: There wasn't the same problem as there is now.

MR. SCHREYER: Ah but there was. In the late 1950's the farmers on the prairies were experiencing surplus conditions to a degree almost equal to that of today, and I notice that the former Minister of Agriculture is shaking his head and — (Interjection) — Yes, that's the one thing that I can agree with my honourable friend about, is that the one single, solitary thing that was done by the previous federal administration was the acreage payment in the early 1960's, and if it had been done, if it had been put on a sustaining basis, then I could have nothing but praise and support for that particular action, but it was done as a one-shot deal. I — well, the fact of the matter is that agriculture in western Canada has been basically in trouble since the early 1950's, and a demonstration of the fact that the agricultural industry has not been in a healthy condition all through the '50's, all through the '60's, is that it takes only one, at most two bad years and there is grave crisis conditions. In a country that has an agricultural commodity stabilization policy worthy of the name, the industry can survive a couple of bad years, even three or four, but in Canada the federal authorities have never seen fit to give any meaningful kind of price support to western farm commodities. So it's small surprise, Mr. Speaker, the bad year comes along and things are very difficult - and they are at the present time.

The honourable members opposite can check through the Hansards of all the years from '58 to '65 when I sat on that side, and I had quite a few things to say about agriculture and provincial agricultural policy, but nowhere will they find any suggestion, any statement by me, to the effect that the province had any responsibility for farm income support or for export trade, export sales of farm goods. I never accused the former provincial government of being responsible for poor sales or poor farm income because I had always maintained that that is something that comes under the purview of the Federal Government. Now I expect an equal kind of

(MR. SCHREYER cont'd) responsible attitude and position from honourable members opposite, that if there are grave and serious farm income problems, they are to be traced back to the Federal Government, and if they've come forward with a new policy now, as they have in recent weeks, we don't intend to stand here and accept criticism for its shortcomings, because it's not our policy; we didn't ask for it; we haven't endorsed it. My honourable friend the Member for Roblin can quote all he likes from the Dauphin Herald or some -- or was it the Grandview Exponent or the Roblin Daily Bulletin? The fact is that the Minister of Agriculture has promised only one thing and that is to give a very close and careful scrutiny to all of the details and ramifications, possible implications of the new federal acreage diversion policy, and he is going to be making a comprehensive statement I should think within a few days. And I can tell my honourable friend that when the Minister of Agriculture does so, that we can all expect a statement that will be logical in every respect and closely reasoned, and something that we can put to the Federal Government and the federal Minister of Agriculture with pride and with confidence; that it won't be nonsense.

Does my honourable friend want me to go into detail as to what we think of that acreage diversion policy announced recently by the Federal Government? Well, the most that can be said for it is that it is a slight step in the right direction, but that's all. By reducing, or rather by eliminating the unit system of delivery, it militates against every small grain farmer on the prairies and this is what is likely to happen; and also by putting the quota delivery on summer fallow acreage basis, that too will have the effect of working against Manitoba's interest. Well this will be coming out but it will be coming out in a comprehensive and closely reasoned way.

And I want to say something else to my honourable friends, in case they haven't been aware of it, that despite the fact that it is not the responsibility of provincial governments and no one has ever tried to say so, not their responsibility to assume the financial burden of trying to support farm income, nevertheless we as a provincial government in Manitoba are prepared to make supplementary cash advances available to farmers if we can get the cooperation of the federal agency in recovering of the money on a proportionate basis. And we have put that proposal to the Federal Government in writing twice -- (Interjection) -- Pro rata. Pro rata. This was never even suggested by any other provincial government anywhere on the prairies, but we stand ready, Mr. Speaker, to do it because we realize how critical the farm income situation is, so therefore to me it is passing strange, it is simply incomprehensible that they over there should look at us as not having any feeling for the problems in the farming industry as though we have had no ideas or new proposals to put forward.

Mr. Speaker, obviously they are doubting Thomases, but I would just invite them to look at the estimates when they come out. You will see in the estimates of the Department of Agriculture -- I can't say too much in advance, Mr. Speaker. Let me just say, look at the estimates of the Department of Agriculture. And while doing that, Mr. Speaker, while they are looking at the estimates of the Department of Agriculture, looking to see what the increase is and what percentage it is, let them also remember that late last fall the Minister of Agriculture, the present Minister of Agriculture, brought in a new credit policy, made arrangements for capital supply for agriculture that will amount to some twelve or fifteen million dollars. A difference in degree, Mr. Speaker, that amounts to a difference in kind of policy. What did my honourable friends opposite do when they were the government? They knocked the Farm Credit Corporation. They knocked it on the head and killed it. We had to revive it. We had to pump \$15 million in, and then they say "no new ideas."

MR. ENNS: After we put \$50 million in . . .

A MEMBER: Sit down. Sit down.

MR. SCHREYER: But the fact remains that my honourable friend, largely him by the way, knocked it on the head and killed it, and we had to revive it.

MR. ENNS: And the great creative genius on that side, all they could do was revive the program -- of our program.

MR. SCHREYER: Because you killed it we had to revive it. I know that the Member for Morris had a lot to say about our farm policy. Well, it's too bad that my honourable friend could not give us more of a lecture on farm policy and farm politics, because he's an old soldier at it. I remember my honourable friend the Member for Morris, back in the middle 1950's when he was a member of the Manitoba Farmers Union, talking in support of parity prices. He was elected Member of Parliament in 1958 and . . .

A MEMBER: Parity, not charity.

MR. SCHREYER: . . . and the Member for Roblin said that - he talked about a conversion, a sudden conversion. He was referring to my colleague the Minister of Agriculture. I think that perhaps the most amazing conversion of all was the conversion of the Honourable Member for Morris. Champion of parity prices for farmers in 1956-57 and in 1958-59 he'd forgotten about it.

MR. JORGENSEN: I wonder if the First Minister could quote any speech that I've ever made in which I advocated that sort of thing?

MR. SCHREYER: Oh, I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, without any difficulty, which I shall . . .

MR. JORGENSEN: Before you say that I have made those statements, prove it. Submit the proof.

MR. SCHREYER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I can do that without any hesitation because I happen to know that the Honourable Member from Morris in the middle 1950's was a sub district director of the Manitoba Farmers Union and this was one of its principal points of policy.

MR. JORGENSEN: Not me.

MR. SCHREYER: Well, I never heard of a Manitoba Farmers Union or a National Farm Union spokesman at any time in the 1950's talking about major policy other than parity prices, unless my honourable friend was a kind of fifth wheel as he appears to be nowadays. I think that the Honourable Member for Morris disappointed us because he had a lot of negative things to say about our farm policy, ignoring completely the points that I've just made in the past 10 minutes, that this government in fact is putting more effort and more money, both through credit and through current estimates, into the agricultural industry in Manitoba than my honourable friends ever did in any year that they were in office, but I'm not surprised that . . .

MR. ENNS: We never put the agricultural industry in the mess . . .

MR. SCHREYER: I'm not surprised - Mr. Speaker, there you have the classic example, the classic example of the blundering statement. He said that we never put the agricultural industry in the mess that it is in today. If my honourable friend by that tries to imply that we have, then I say to him nonsense, because how could we in eight months have put the industry in a mess? How could we in eight months, how can we hope to undo some of the shortcomings that you are guilty of when you formed the government?

The Member for Morris, I'm not surprised really that he is -- and I don't mean it in the harsh way - not surprised that he is ignorant of some of the important points of our farm policy because he hasn't really kept up with current developments. I noticed in his last speech in this Chamber last September, and again last week when he spoke in the Throne Speech, both times he talked about little red hens and pullets, and chicks. Mr. Speaker, I know the first time he spoke about this last fall, about red hens and chicks, pullets, I thought well, it's just a passing fancy, but when he does it again in this session I have no other conclusion to draw other than that it's a preoccupation with him, and I would advise my honourable friend that a preoccupation with little red hens is something best left to roosters, not to my honourable friend, although I'm told, Mr. Speaker, that in a figurative sense, not a literal sense, in a figurative sense my honourable friend has been known to be a bit of a rooster himself.

I go on now, Mr. Speaker, to deal with some other matters that were points of contention in this Throne Speech debate. I want to make specific reference to the following: that we are far from not having lived up to our commitments and our promises. In my view, this government has done very well in living up to the major commitments made in the last campaign. I've already made reference to the major change we made in Medicare premiums. I've already made reference to the important changes made by the Minister of Agriculture with respect to the availability of farm credit, with respect to the bonuses and incentives being given by way of interest-free money through the Agricultural Credit Corporation to stimulate the livestock industry in order to get the cow-calf industry in this province to where it should be.

My honourable friend from Lakeside talks about things getting to be a bit of a mess. I want to say that the fact that the cow-calf industry is at such a low level in this province is something that didn't happen yesterday. It started five years ago while they were in office and you can't fix it overnight. Look at the statistical data and you'll see what happened to the cow-calf industry in the province. In the mid-1960's it started to plummet in terms of production and went down pretty quickly, so we're going to try and make some improvements but it takes

(MR. SCHREYER cont'd) time.

Other major commitments and undertakings that we gave we have already moved on and we shall move on those still left to be done. We said for example, Mr. Speaker, in the last campaign that we would do things to improve the quality of government, that we would bring about open government and that we would let the public in on more of the transactions of government - and we're doing exactly that, Mr. Speaker. I feel that we have started very well in this respect. We've said that we would do something to try and put more emphasis on things non-material; for example, to try and do something to improve the legislation we have respecting civil liberties, civil rights. My colleague the Attorney-General will be introducing legislation to establish a Human Rights Commission, legislation respecting a Bill of Rights, legislation to compensate victims of crime, because surely it follows, Mr. Speaker, that since society has the obligation to protect its citizens from criminal acts, if people suffer from criminal acts it is because society has not fulfilled its obligation and therefore there is a financial or monetary onus on society to pay some compensation. It is a principle that we would want to embrace, I am sure, and we are embracing it, starting this session, with a new Bill.

After dithering for 10 years on the question of establishing an Ombudsman, the office of Ombudsman was established by legislation of last fall. All arrangements have been made, physical, etc., and the office will be operational in just a matter of days now.

And still in the same vein, the non-material, the preservation of the rights of the citizen, the civil liberties of a citizen, the victim of a crime. In the same vein I come now to mention changes that we would like to make with respect to our cultural and linguistic mosaic. It may not be important to some but to many of us it is very important that now, in our Centennial year, especially because it is our Centennial year, it is the time to do something tangible, to demonstrate to those Canadians, to those Manitobans who happen to be of minority ethnic or linguistic backgrounds that they need not feel in any way impinged upon or prevented from using their language, to teach their young children the language of their ancestors, and that is why there will be legislation in this session enabling certain minority groups to use their language as a teaching language in the schools. And this will apply not just to minority groups of ancestors from European or other countries across the sea; it will also apply to certain groups within our own native Indian ancestry and culture.

All this, Mr. Speaker, is consistent with our desire to move toward a more open society, a more -- after all, we've talked for years, Sir, about the value of the mosaic; how nice it was to have this cultural diversity, this mosaic. Well, it's no longer good enough to give lip service, Mr. Speaker. In a sense we are at the eleventh hour, and if we don't act now some of these languages, these cultures that make up part of the mosaic, will be lost; and I've always maintained that if a language goes, the culture goes with it; if it survives, it survives only artificially. So if we mean what we say - and I think we have all, the vast majority of Manitobans and Canadians have always felt some value in the mosaic, now we're going to move to try and give it sustenance and nourishment by trying to preserve the language, doing this by way of enabling the teaching of it right from Grade One, which is where it counts most. And that's all part of an open society, a more tolerant society, a more liberal society. We've said we'd do this but up until now people have felt that it was too sensitive an issue, politically too dangerous. Mr. Speaker, if you feel strongly enough about something, you'll move to try and bring it to reality.

I have no hesitation, Sir, realizing the hour, in asking for your indulgence for another 30 seconds. -- (Interjection) -- That's right; another 30 seconds, Sir, to say that having listened to honourable members opposite and having considered what they have to say, and having put forward counter arguments, I feel that the majority of members in this House will have no trouble at all in making the decision now to give confidence to this government, to reject the motion of non-confidence moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. SPEAKER: It is now 30 minutes before ordinary adjournment and our rules provide that the question must be put and all amendments before the House. The question will first be put on the sub-amendment of the Honourable Member for St. Vital. Are you ready for the question?

MR. SPEAKER put the question and after a voice vote declared the sub-amendment lost.

MR. SPEAKER: The question on the amendment of the Honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to call the ayes and nays on the sub-amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: Call in the members.

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

YEAS: Messrs. Bilton, Craik, Einarson, Enns, Ferguson, Girard, Graham, Hardy, F. Johnston, Jorgenson, McGill, McGregor, McKenzie, Moug, Sherman, Spivak, Watt, Weir and Mrs. Trueman.

NAYS: Messrs. Allard, Barrow, Beard, Borowski, Boyce, Burtiak, Cherniack, Desjardins, Doern, Fox, Gonick, Gottfried, Green, Jenkins, Johannson, McBryde, Mackling, Malinowski, Miller, Molgat, Patrick, Paulley, Pawley, Petursson, Schreyer, Shafransky, Toupin, Turnbull, Uskiw and Uruski.

MR. CLERK: Yeas 19, Nays 30.

MR. SPEAKER: I declare the sub-amendment lost.

MR. SPEAKER put the question on the amendment to the main motion and after a voice vote declared the motion lost.

MR. WEIR: Ayes and nays, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Ayes and nays. Call in the members.

MR. BILTON: Mr. Speaker, I don't hear the bell ringing calling in the members. The normal procedure.

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

YEAS: Messrs. Bilton, Craik, Einarson, Enns, Ferguson, Girard, Graham, Hardy, F. Johnston, Jorgenson, McGill, McGregor, McKenzie, Molgat, Moug, Patrick, Sherman, Spivak, Watt, Weir and Mrs. Trueman.

NAYS: Messrs. Allard, Barrow, Beard, Borowski, Boyce, Burtiak, Cherniack, Desjardins, Doern, Fox, Gonick, Gottfried, Green, Jenkins, Johannson, McBryde, Mackling, Malinowski, Miller, Paulley, Pawley, Petursson, Schreyer, Shafransky, Toupin, Turnbull, Uskiw and Uruski.

MR. CLERK: Yeas 21, Nays 28.

MR. SPEAKER: I declare the amendment lost.

On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for The Pas. The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Speaker, if no one else wishes to speak, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Lakeside, that debate be adjourned.

MR. SPEAKER presented the motion and after a voice vote declared the motion carried.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, debate being exhausted, I would move, seconded by the Honourable the Minister of Labour, that the House do now adjourn.

MR. SPEAKER presented the motion and after a voice vote declared the motion carried and the House adjourned until 2:30 Tuesday afternoon.