

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, 4 March, 1988.

Time — 10:00 a.m.

OPENING PRAYER by Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER, Hon. M. Phillips: Presenting Petitions . . . Reading and Receiving Petitions . . . Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees . . .

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

HON. V. SCHROEDER: I beg leave to table, pursuant to The Regulations Act, a copy of each regulation filed with the Registrar of Regulations since the regulations were last tabled in this House in April of last year.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation.

HON. J. WASYLICIA-LEIS: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the Annual Report 1986-87 for the Manitoba Arts Council.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Business Development and Tourism.

HON. A. MACKLING: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am pleased to table two reports: one under The Trade Practices Inquiry Act and another under The Insurance Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. E. KOSTYRA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to table the Quarterly Financial Report for Nine Months, April-December 1987.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Madam Speaker, I wish to table the first report of The Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation for the three-year period, 1984-1986.

MADAM SPEAKER: Notices of Motion . . .

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MR. A. DRIEDGER introduced, by leave, on behalf of the Honourable Member for Brandon West, Bill No. 6, An Act to amend The Labour Relations Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les relations du travail.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Final offer selection legislation

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Labour.

Speaking about labour legislation this morning, I wonder if the Minister has been informed that since her government has proclaimed the final offer selection legislation earlier this year, there have been eight applications before the Labour Board for the use of this law which the government, at the time that it introduced and debated the law, said would be rarely used and would be just another tool in the hands of labour relations in this province.

Has she been informed that in less than two months there have been eight applications for use of that final offer selection legislation?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Labour.

HON. M. SMITH: Madam Speaker, there is a large flow of cases that come before the Labour Board. I think a judgment on the frequency of use of any legislation has to be measured over time, so I registered the member's concern, but I think it's very premature to make a judgment.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, I wonder if the Minister has been further informed that seven of the eight applications for use of this law have been applied for by the Manitoba Food and Commercial Workers Union under their president, Bernie Christophe, and in every case he's used the 30- to 60-day window prior to the expiry of the contract.

HON. M. SMITH: Madam Speaker, I query the relevance of that question.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, I'll give the Minister an indication of the relevance of that question.

Will she now admit that this law will undoubtedly be widely utilized, that it will have dramatic ramifications on labour relations in this province, and that it is being put forward simply for the use of one Bernie Christophe and it is nothing more than a "Bail out Bernie" bill?

HON. M. SMITH: Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition seems to have a magic crystal ball that gives him the power to predict the future. He also seems to have a preference for strike action. I just can't really make any sense in the question and, therefore, really have no comment.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Madam Speaker, I may defer my question because the Minister of Health seems to have left the House. My questions were to the Minister of Health.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

It's not in order to refer to the presence or absence of a member.

Ritalin abuse - children

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: I thank you, Madam Speaker.

On August 17, I wrote to both the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Education about the possible abuse of the drug Ritalin. I was assured by the Minister of Education that there was no substantive data to support allegations of abuse and that there was no pressure by teachers to place children on Ritalin. I was assured by the Minister of Health that Manitoba Pharmacare claims are reviewed for possible drug abuse.

My question is first to the Minister of Education. The parents of Devlin Stevens have informed me that their son was not allowed to return to school unless he was on the drug Ritalin.

Will the Minister order an immediate survey of school-age children in Manitoba to determine the number, sex and age of children on Ritalin in the Province of Manitoba?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

HON. R. PENNER: There's almost a non sequitur there. One parent advises the Member for River Heights of an allegation which she takes as gospel, and on the basis, asks for the expenditure of a considerable amount of money to survey something which may not even be surveyable.

I will take the question as notice, first of all, to determine, if I can, what substance there is into the allegations in the one instance given, and beyond that, we will take it on the basis of information received and verified. I do not propose to commit vast expenditures by the province on the basis of one reported incident without looking into it.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: With a supplementary question to the same Minister, Madam Speaker.

All school divisions keep lists of children on prescribed medication. So would the Minister get in touch with the school divisions and ask for those numbers of those children who are prescribed Ritalin?

HON. R. PENNER: Yes, certainly, we would be more than pleased to do that so that we can begin to get some hard information together. The fact that the school keeps a list of those who are on prescription does not, of course, mean that the school divisions have required that they be on those prescriptions.

Pharmacare - possible Ritalin abuse

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Madam Speaker, with a follow-up question, actually, to the Minister of Health.

In his letter he indicated to me that Manitoba Pharmacare claims are reviewed for possible drug abuse.

Can the Minister of Health explain how Ritalin is reviewed for possible abuse when no statistics, according to his own department through a phone call yesterday, are kept by Manitoba Pharmacare about the number of prescriptions for Ritalin issued in the province?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. W. PARASIUK: Madam Speaker, there are literally millions of prescriptions written out. We have had discussions with the College of Physicians and Surgeons whereby a triplicate form could be developed so that there would be records kept of prescriptions as to their type, number, by physicians. The College of Physicians and Surgeons would be the group to look at this providing pertinent information when required to the Manitoba Health Services Commission. Work on that is proceeding, and we hope that by the autumn of this year, Madam Speaker, we will be in a position to have much better information.

MMA - current fee negotiations

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health.

Madam Speaker, approximately three years ago, this government entered into binding arbitration with the Manitoba Medical Association as a method of settling fees to be charged by fee-for-service doctors in the Province of Manitoba. Approximately a year ago, the first award by binding arbitration was brought down - binding arbitration being the method that this government suggested would allow the medical profession to concentrate more on cooperation for reform of the system instead of concentrating resources towards simple fee negotiation with the government. The government was not satisfied with that first arbitration award, unilaterally cancelled the binding arbitration, i.e., took their ball and bat and ran home from the game.

Madam Speaker, given that binding arbitration is no longer in place for fee establishment with the MMA, can the Minister indicate the status of current negotiations with the MMA and how well they are progressing on a new fee schedule for the doctors of the province?

HON. W. PARASIUK: Madam Speaker, I would be pleased to deal with this matter. There was, indeed, an agreement signed with the option for both parties or either party to withdraw. That was done according to the agreement. The MMA, itself, raised some concerns about clarification of that particular award.

We have been negotiating with the MMA. Indeed, while negotiations have been taking place, doctors have, through volume increases, been able to increase the average of their incomes by some \$3,500 this year, on average, because of volume increases that they in fact have.

We have had 11 meetings and some informal meetings with respect to the MMA. Our latest offer - and we have had some movement - to the MMA was for 3 percent this year, 3 percent next year, which really reflects the type of offer that we've been making to ordinary Manitobans in all walks of life.

In addition to the volume increases that they would have, this would entail a 13 percent increase over two years. That would, in fact, provide for something that we think is quite reasonable. It would amount to some \$3,800 with respect to fee increases, and some \$2,000 to \$4,000 extra with respect to volume increases, which we think is a reasonable level of compensation with respect to doctors who indeed do perform a valuable service within the health care system.

They have asked for 14 percent, which amounts to almost \$17,000.00. If you take into account the volume increase that they would have, that comes out to an increase of some \$20,000, Madam Speaker. Given the various demands on the health care system that people raise from time to time, we think that \$20,000 as a total compensation package per doctor is unreasonable, and that rather something in the order of 3 percent is a reasonable figure. We would hope that people act responsibly in response to that.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Madam Speaker, inherent in part of the Minister's answer, one could detect an inherent blame on the physicians of this province for an increase in volume of patients seeing doctors, in other words, patients who wish to have this NDP-alleged equal access to quality Medicare.

MMA - consultation re: health care reform

MR. D. ORCHARD: Madam Speaker, can the Minister indicate to the House, given that the binding arbitration process is no longer in place, the level of consultation with the MMA that this government has undertaken in the last year regarding the reform and innovation in the health care system? Particularly, can the Minister indicate the level of consultation with the MMA that was undertaken when this government decided to close 111 beds in the City of Winnipeg hospitals?

HON. W. PARASIUK: I would, in fact, be pleased to talk about the level of consultation with respect to the MMA with respect to health care improvements. We indeed have had about three meetings in that respect. One of these, I think, lasted for well over four hours. We discussed various matters relating to improving the health care system because I think it's important, Madam Speaker, to separate a collective bargaining process, which basically is a negotiation over money with respect to individual compensation, not unlike negotiations that take place between management and the union, and the doctors through the MMA act as a union with respect to fee negotiations.

On the other hand, we have had discussions with them and a whole set of other doctors of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, medical directors, the Faculty of Medicine at the university, individual doctors, with respect to improving the health care system. We have, in fact, invited the MMA to formally be part of that process, to sit on an advisory committee to the Minister, to sit on an advisory committee that in fact would establish studies, implementation plans. That, I hope, will be in fact responded to by the MMA as well as other groups that we are asking to participate in this collaborative planning process.

So I would hope that the MMA would separate the matter of fee negotiations from the larger matter of trying to work with all Manitobans, both consumers and health care providers of all walks, to improve our health care system and meet the challenges that they raise from time to time, meet the challenges that members opposite raise from time to time, and meet the challenges that we on this side, Madam Speaker, have recognized and want to make sure that we deal with in the future.

MMA - current status negotiations

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

MR. M. DOLIN: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Member for Pembina raised what I consider some pretty important questions I'd like to ask. In relation to his response to those questions, there seems to be a substantial difference between what the MMA is asking and what the province is willing to give in thousands and thousands of dollars. I'm wondering if the Minister can inform the House what the current status of negotiations is with the MMA.

HON. W. PARASIUK: Madam Speaker, I think that we in fact made an offer some two days ago. We have not heard yet formally from the Manitoba Medical Association. I would hope that they would seriously consider that offer. We have indeed only been meeting with the negotiators and the president of the MMA. I believe that this is a matter that's been discussed by their executive.

I would hope that the entire community of doctors in Manitoba - and I think there are some 1,800 of them - take a very close look at the offer that Manitoba through the Manitoba Health Services Commission has offered to doctors, because \$3,800, Madam Speaker, is a very substantial increase in income given the base level of doctors' incomes in comparison, for example, to what's been accepted by people who earn \$15,000 a year. A 3 percent increase for those people amounts to some \$450, Madam Speaker.

So I think something that is in the order of \$3,800 as a fee increase, plus some \$2,000 to \$4,000 increase through volume, Madam Speaker, provides a significant increase in income for doctors, one that we think is reasonable, and we would hope that the doctors themselves in the community of Manitoba would consider to be reasonable as well.

MR. M. DOLIN: A supplementary to the same Minister.

I'm wondering has the MMA given any indication to him or the Manitoba Health Services Commission about any job action, if this gap is not closed between the offer made by the commission and what the doctors requested.

HON. W. PARASIUKE: Madam Speaker, from time to time over the course of this period, the MMA has threatened that it would undertake job action which would entail the withdrawal of services. That has in fact taken place in 1982 as well. There was a rotating withdrawal of services throughout Manitoba.

But given the situation that we have in Manitoba where we have pressing needs for health, where I think we've had a very conciliatory attitude on the part of most people within the health care field to accept 3 percent as a reasonable wage or fee settlement, I would hope that the doctors themselves would not pursue the course of withdrawal of services, and would treat this matter reasonably and responsibly, Madam Speaker, because I think they shouldn't be out of step with the rest of Manitoba.

Ophthalmic services - Northern Manitoba

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River East.

MRS. B. MITCHELSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health as well.

Dr. Fitzsimon has for 10 years provided needed eye care service to patients in Northern Manitoba communities on a fee-for-service basis. He has flown to these communities, Madam Speaker, at his own expense. Under the new policy, Dr. Fitzsimon will not fly at his expense to these communities, but patients will be flown to see the doctor in Thompson at taxpayers' expense.

My question is did the Minister approve this policy?

HON. W. PARASIUKE: Madam Speaker, I will in fact have to take that particular question as notice. I know that there had been some differences with respect to ophthalmologist services in Northern Manitoba. I'll have to check out the specific instances, because I know that in one instance - there were some instances where there was a dispute - an ophthalmologist was going into northern communities and I think charging a fee for service and seeing some 120 patients per day, I think at a fee charge of some \$25, which was amounting to a very, very heavy cost.

We would hope that we would be able to develop this in a reasonable way whereby a person would go into a community, with our paying the services of that person going into the community and we would pay that person's air fare, we would pay the person's expenses and we would pay them a fee for that day for seeing people, Madam Speaker. We thought that was a reasonable approach to take and we would hope that we would be able to work that out.

MRS. B. MITCHELSON: Madam Speaker, I question who's running the Department of Health.

My second question to the Minister of Health is how much more will this change in policy cost the taxpayers,

when instead of having the doctor fly in at his expense to see the patients, taxpayers are now going to have to pay to fly each patient to see the doctor? There might be 120 patients who have to be flown out, Madam Speaker.

HON. W. PARASIUKE: Madam Speaker, I think that what we are trying to establish is something that's reasonable from the taxpayers' perspective and fees in the order of \$3,000 per day. If one extrapolated that fee structure over a year, you would be talking about \$600,000.00.

Well, we were in fact prepared to pay the air fare but if in fact the Conservatives want to in fact get involved in lobbying on behalf of \$600,000 potential fee systems, as opposed to one which we think would be fair and reasonable, let them take that position.

We believe that there are better ways of doing it and we have said to the doctors that we want to sit down and provide a fair return, a fair fee structure, a fair payment for going into Northern Manitoba. But I think \$3,000 a day, Madam Speaker, is something that if we in fact hired a consultant of \$3,000 a day, the members opposite would be on their feet screaming that we're paying too much for that consultant, Madam Speaker.

MRS. B. MITCHELSON: My final supplementary to the same Minister is: My goodness, there are 120 patients being seen in one day by one doctor and are receiving needed care - and my question is twofold - is this why the transportation costs have been increased by 13 percent in northern areas? And will this Minister get his act together, reinstate the 10-year-old method of payment to Dr. Fitzsimon, and stop rationing eye care services to Northern Manitobans?

HON. W. PARASIUKE: Madam Speaker, I would hope that the Member for River East would get her facts straight. Dr. Fitzsimon is a general practitioner who has a degree, a diploma, in ophthalmology. He contracted with the Federal Government to go to northern remote Indian reserves to conduct eye examinations. The Federal Government pays his return air fare, his accommodations, his meal allowance and for nursing assistance, in addition to the amount billed by the doctor for the examinations. I believe that the Member for River East said this person was paying all of these costs himself.

Madam Speaker, we were indeed prepared to pay a fee structure for the day, which we have done with other doctors in Southern Manitoba or Northern Manitoba who have indeed gone up on a consultation service into rural Manitoba or remote communities. Madam Speaker, they have tried to be very fair about this. Groups from Southern Manitoba, including the medical faculty, have gone up into communities like Churchill or Island Lake. They provided needed services. We have respected that, we have appreciated that, and so have the people there, but they have not had this individual fee system that, in fact, could lead to situations where you'd have \$600,000 or \$800,000 being paid out in fees to one person, as opposed to providing a group service for needed services to Northern Manitobans. That's the approach that we want to pursue, Madam Speaker.

We still continue to pursue that approach and I'm astonished that if we extrapolated \$600,000 to \$800,000

for about 1,000 doctors, Madam Speaker, we'd in fact run our Medicare system completely into the hole and that's what . . .

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MRS. B. MITCHELSON: Yes, Madam Speaker, my final supplementary to the Minister is who pays the travel costs when that doctor goes into non-Native communities in Northern Manitoba at his expense? Fine, the Federal Government is picking up their share and their portion. What is this Provincial Government doing for this doctor who is travelling into non-Native areas in Northern Manitoba to provide needed services which are going to be rationed as a result of this new policy?

HON. W. PARASIUK: Madam Speaker, most of the communities are indeed beside reserves - are right beside reserves. We indeed are pursuing contracting with another ophthalmologist or an optometrist to go in and provide those services on a reasonable fee basis, Madam Speaker.

We think that that's taking the responsible approach, as opposed to taking something quite out of context, which is still being reviewed by the committee that reviews these matters when there is a dispute and getting up here and taking, I think, a little bit of a hysterical approach with respect to it. Madam Speaker, what we're trying to provide, and what I think we've done a pretty good job of trying to do, is providing health services into remote communities because there are many doctors who won't go up into those remote communities to live, so we have to provide a reasonable way of providing those health services to reserves and to off-reserve communities.

Abortion - government's position

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Norbert.

MR. G. MERCIER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have a question, too, for the Minister of Health, noting his concern for cost.

My question is a simple straightforward one to him: Is it the government's intention and policy to pay for abortion-on-demand services at the Henry Morgentaler Clinic?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. W. PARASIUK: Madam Speaker, I believe that we do not have a clinic that is operational and it certainly is hypothetical at this particular stage.

Our policy has been quite clear on that. We have said that we would indeed prefer that therapeutic abortion services, following counselling which is non-directive, after informed decisions do take place, will be done in non-profit community board facilities or hospitals, Madam Speaker.

We do have a situation where the College of Physicians and Surgeons has indeed provided a conditional licence. We will see what transpires over the future, but I state our preference quite clearly, and

that is for non-profit, community-based facilities. We have never been in favour on this side of the House of private, profit-making facilities providing health care. That position is quite clear.

We would hope that events would evolve whereby you will have a balanced set of services, and we have said that consistently, and I ask people to develop even better counselling services, Madam Speaker, so that people do in fact make informed decisions. I don't want to take extreme positions one way or the other, and I think this government has taken a very balanced, reasoned approach on this matter, Madam Speaker, and I would hope we would have the support of all people in this matter.

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, the Minister knows very well what the terms of approval are at the Morgentaler Clinic. Would he supply a simple straightforward answer to the question: is the Government going to pay for abortion on demand at the Henry Morgentaler Clinic? Yes or no?

HON. W. PARASIUK: We do not believe in abortion on demand on this side of the House, Madam Speaker. The interesting thing is that I believe a therapeutic abortion involves a medical decision by a doctor, Madam Speaker, and I believe a doctor would have the integrity, both morally and in terms of his own professional ethics and in terms of the Hippocratic oath, to provide medical care to patients.

If this government wants to be the Big Brother who puts itself into a consultation between a doctor and any patient about anything, be it sexually transmitted diseases, be it mental illness, Madam Speaker, then they can state that position, that they would expect the government to sit in on a consultation of a medical nature taking place between a doctor and that patient. We on this side have always respected that relationship between a doctor and a patient, as we have with respect to a lawyer and a client.

Madam Speaker, we have faith in the integrity of doctors in this respect and in the formed decisions of patients after sufficient and non-directed counselling. We believe that to be a reasoned position.

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, a supplementary question for clarification. I'd hoped to have only had to ask one question.

Is the Minister saying yes, we will pay for abortion on demand at the Morgentaler Clinic, or no, we will not, or maybe we will after further investigation?

HON. W. PARASIUK: Madam Speaker, this government will not pay for abortion on demand; it does not believe in abortion on demand. It believes in therapeutic abortions that are based on a medical decision.

Tourism Dept.- information restriction

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie.

MR. E. CONNERY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Tourism.

Madam Speaker, one of our researchers was trying to put some information together for us and phoned

all across Canada to the various provinces getting information on tourism, until our researcher phoned the Manitoba Department of Tourism and was informed that any information would have to go through the Deputy Minister. Madam Speaker, I was also given that same answer, and that is the first time this has happened.

Is this Minister trying to restrict the flow of information to the elected representatives of this House so we cannot adequately advise or chastise the government? Madam Speaker, has this Minister muzzled his staff?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Business Development and Tourism.

HON. A. MACKLING: Not at all, Madam Speaker. The honourable member knows that any time he wants information my door is open, and I've invited him to functions.

I know that he wants to posture, Madam Speaker, but he knows that my department is free to provide information. He should make the request of information to me so that at least I know what he's seeking.

Tourism agreement - private sector involvement

MR. E. CONNERY: Obviously, he's very sensitive. Madam Speaker, this Minister says the new tourism agreement will lever large amounts of private sector money. Can he tell this House why only three private sector agreements have been funded, and only to the tune of \$2.4 million, keeping in light, Madam Speaker, we're nearing the end of the third year of a five-year agreement?

HON. A. MACKLING: Madam Speaker, the honourable member knows that agreement is for a five-year term. We're about midway in the agreement; we have very significant developments that are under consideration. But we, as a government, are not going to panic or push private entrepreneurs to make substantial investments without their being assured that those investments are reasonable. We believe in being fair with private entrepreneurs, Madam Speaker.

Tourism promotion - cost

MR. E. CONNERY: Madam Speaker, unless the agreement is extended beyond 1990, funds will lapse.

Madam Speaker, this government has cut the tourism budget this year. Madam Speaker, this afternoon at one o'clock, there is an extravagant party the government is putting on at the IMAX Theatre to put their image forth to the tourism industry. I'd like this Minister to inform the House how much this little party is going to cost the Tourism Department. Madam Speaker, this sensitive Minister, I'd like him to inform me why the Liberal Party was invited to this function but the Conservative Party was not?

HON. A. MACKLING: Madam Speaker, I'm certain I heard the honourable member talking about sensitivity, and this member being sensitive to his questioning. I'm delighted that he references the official opening at one o'clock of our tourism promotions.

The honourable member met me the other day and indicated his concern about the fact that apparently, somehow, the Leader of the Liberal Party had got an invitation somehow. I tell you that it wasn't by direction of this Minister. He indicated a concern that he'd like to be there, and I have indicated that he would be welcome, and he knows that. I instructed my staff to ensure that . . .

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

The Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie, on a point of order.

MR. E. CONNERY: Madam Speaker, the Minister said that I was welcome to the function. Madam Speaker, the Minister did not make any comment to that extent. In fact, the Minister said that I wasn't invited because they are very sensitive to the criticism and the accurate criticism we've been making of his department.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

A dispute over the facts is not a point of order.

The Honourable Minister, to finish his answer briefly.

HON. A. MACKLING: Madam Speaker, I indicated to the honourable member that certainly, as an honourable member, he would be welcome. He's the critic, and I instructed my staff to ensure that. But I did ask him, as an honourable member, not to poor mouth Manitoba and its tourism promotions when he's there at our invitation. I expect him to do that, Madam Speaker.

Cancer Foundation - tabling of internal report

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Gladstone.

MRS. C. OLESON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Health.

Last week, I asked him for a report which was prepared for the Cancer Foundation early in 1987. I'm wondering today, as a member of that board, if he would be pleased to table that report in the House today.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. W. PARASIUK: Madam Speaker, I took that question as notice. I don't have the report available, and I'll certainly look into that and report back to the House next week.

MRS. C. OLESON: Last year, I asked for that report. I didn't get it. This year, I'm asking for the report. What is the Minister trying to hide by repeatedly denying information from the Cancer Foundation? Is it more important to have the NDP elected or is it more important have cancer patients treated?

HON. W. PARASIUK: Madam Speaker, I quite reject the grandstanding of the Member for Gladstone. For me, cancer is a very serious issue. I spent the morning talking with a doctor about cancer, who is involved with the Cancer Foundation. So I don't think the Member for Gladstone should take this lightly.

Madam Speaker, I wasn't the Minister last year. I was asked the question. There are a whole set of questions and, when I get the information, I'll bring it back to the Member for Gladstone, Madam Speaker. But let me assure people in this province that I've got a particular interest in cancer. I'll be making sure that things are done within reason to ensure that we have good services not only here in Winnipeg, Madam Speaker, but out-reaching beyond Winnipeg. That's what I spent this morning talking about, making sure that we could have cancer services outside of Winnipeg because, Madam Speaker, all of us have close access here but there are many people who have to travel hundreds of miles for chemotherapy or other services, and we want to make sure that is available to people.

Special needs education - funds transfer

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Roblin-Russell.

MR. L. DERKACH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Education.

On Tuesday last, I asked the Minister if school divisions are now able to transfer funds for special learning students to other institutions? In his reply, Madam Speaker, he said that we ought to know that this is a direct responsibility of school divisions.

Madam Speaker, in view of the fact that on January 12, this Minister's department wrote a letter to superintendents in this province telling them of the new policy with regard to transferring funds to institutions like the Laureate Academy, will the Minister now table the new policy that he based this letter on?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

HON. R. PENNER: Yes, of course, Madam Speaker. As I said at the time, it's a public document. It doesn't bear the interpretation that the member would like to give it. It says quite clearly what the policy is. It's a continuation of an existing policy, namely, if a school division decides that there's a program that ought to be provided for a child that is not available in the school division, it can arrange for the transfer of that child to another school division. It negotiates or contracts with the adjoining or other school division for that to take place. It's a decision which, in the first instance, is made by the school division.

What the letter says and I will table it - I'm going to table it right now - is that the involvement of the department is a case where assistance from the province could be provided, and the assistance that's provided by the province is in assessing the program and in assessing the child. That is the policy, that has been the policy. It's a policy which I think has worked well, no problem in tabling it.

MR. L. DERKACH: Madam Speaker, I have been in touch with several superintendents across this province

who had no knowledge that this in fact was the provincial policy with regard to transferring funds to a private institution for services that may not be available within that school division, although there have been in the past transfers of funds from once school division to the other.

Will the Minister now indicate whether there is a new policy which indicates that institutions like the Laureate Academy are eligible for special learning funds from the province?

HON. R. PENNER: It's the same policy. There is no change in the policy, Madam Speaker, namely that school divisions can negotiate with respect to the transfer of a child who requires a program that the school division is unable to provide.

The school division may - and it's up to the school division - arrange with another institution that's a recognized institution or another school division to transfer the child. It must then arrange for the transfer of the funds that are received for that child and arrange any negotiations with respect to residual costs.

The Laureate Academy is a recognized school that concentrates on a certain program with respect to special needs, a limited number. All of the teachers there have to be certified. Its program has to be certified, and it receives general funding as a private school. It doesn't mean that a school division would be able to transfer a child to a non-recognized school but to a school division or a recognized school that has always been the policy. Superintendents who say that they didn't know that this was the policy ought to go back to their general manual of administration.

MADAM SPEAKER: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUDGET DEBATE

MADAM SPEAKER: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Finance and the proposed amendment thereto of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Roblin-Russell.

MR. L. DERKACH: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I am pleased to rise this morning and address the Budget Speech. Madam Speaker, it's a privilege that I respect on behalf of my constituents, but I rise today somewhat concerned because of the kind of message that we received from the Budget that was presented last Friday.

Before I begin, Madam Speaker, because you were not sitting in the Chair at the time I made my remarks with regard to the Throne Speech, may I wish you well. Although we are into the Session now, may I wish you well, and I hope that you will preside in fairness over the proceedings of this House for the duration of this Session.

Madam Speaker, when the Throne Speech was made to this House, I think that members had a very good opportunity to have their remarks recorded on it. I think there was a consensus that the Throne Speech was

hollow; it was shallow; it lacked vision. Last Friday, Madam Speaker, we were presented with a Budget that, once again, was marked by hollowness. As a matter of fact, Madam Speaker, it was one that - (Interjection) . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

Will the honourable members carry on their private conversations elsewhere so we can hear the Honourable Member for Roblin-Russell.

MR. L. DERKACH: As I was saying, the Budget speech gave the impression that this government was going to take control of its affairs. It was going to begin to control the deficit, to control government spending. Madam Speaker, it was all nothing but a facade. Again, it was a way of creative accounting, I guess, that this government has adopted over the past few years, and it did nothing but mislead the people of this province, and probably to a greater extent than we have ever seen in the past.

Last year's Budget, Madam Speaker, is one that probably took the biggest tax bite out of the people of this province in the history of this province. Only now are Manitobans beginning to feel the effects of this Budget. I guess, before the Minister came in with his Budget, we were all anticipating that, as a result of the high taxes that were imposed on Manitobans last year, the increased fees in every conceivable fashion that were imposed on Manitobans last year, would result in a Budget this year that would really address the deficit, would really address government spending, and would somehow give Manitobans the break that they really require. Well, Madam Speaker, we were all disappointed last Friday when the Minister responsible for Finance gave his message.

Madam Speaker, I would like to deal today with some of the things that I think are important in terms of what the government left out of the Budget and in the message that the Minister gave last Friday. I think his theme or his attempted theme was deficit control, control over government spending. But in fact, Madam Speaker, it was all hypocritical because of the fact that here we have a government that is going to be spending 8.5 percent more than what they should be, as a matter of fact; 4.3 percent more than the rate of inflation. Our deficit is still climbing.

Our public debt on Manitobans is increasing and, if you take a look at the most devastating part of the Budget, I guess, it's that \$523 million in interest charges, because this is money that cannot be used to buy programs for Manitoba, whether it's health care, whether it's education services, whether it's assistance to farmers or social programs. That money, Madam Speaker, is lost. It is wasted as a direct result of this government's inability to handle the affairs in an appropriate fashion. It took a hundred years, Madam Speaker, to build up half of the debt or the kind of debt that this government has been able to impose on Manitobans in seven short years, and that is incredible. We are going to be paying for it for a long time, not only us but our children and our grandchildren. That is almost criminal that we should be imposing that kind of a debt on our future generations.

Madam Speaker, it appears that this government has been able to bungle everything that it puts its hands

on, whether it's the health system, whether it's the education system, whether it's agriculture or whether it's a Crown corporation. At the same time, it continues to surround itself with bureaucrats, with apple-polishers, with communicators who do nothing but present an image that this government is the kind of caring government that they are attempting to portray.

Madam Speaker, in the Minister's address to the House last Friday, he said that his government has a commitment to defend the right of all Manitobans to live in a just and equal society. Well, in the last couple of days - as a matter of fact, yesterday - we were given an example of the kind of just and equal society this government is creating. Why were the people from Berens River in front of the Legislature yesterday? Is it because they are being treated in a fair and just way? Why were the ambulance drivers in front of the Legislature yesterday? Was it also because this government is treating them in a fair and equitable way? No, Madam Speaker, they are there because there is an unjust and unequal way of treating people in our society by this government.

Madam Speaker, this Minister also made another commitment. He said, a commitment to create jobs by supporting economic development. Well, Manitoba is potentially a province that should be attracting business to it. Winnipeg is the hub of the continent, the hub of the country and, if the climate was right, Madam Speaker, we would be attracting businesses from all over North America to locate here in Winnipeg. But instead, what is happening? We are seeing an exodus of businesses from this province. Businesses are avoiding this province like a plague, and there is a reason for it. That reason is sitting right across from us. That reason is the present government that we have sitting and governing the Province of Manitoba.

It is not only business, Madam Speaker. We can take a look at something like tourism. Manitoba is a beautiful province. If you travel across it, you will find that it's probably got the most picturesque scenery anywhere in North America. We have people who love to come to Manitoba, who love to enjoy fishing up in our northern lakes, who love to enjoy the hunting. Many of the people who come here don't come from overseas. They come from other provinces and they come from the United States.

But look at the climate that we have developed here through this government, and take a look at what's happening to our tourist industry. It is going down. This is a resource, Madam Speaker, that is one that we could all benefit from, that we could reap benefits for a long time from but, because of the attitude of this government, we cannot. As a matter of fact, they have placed the Minister in charge of tourism who does nothing but stand up and shout across at the neighbours to the south, who in fact have been our major tourist people. He stands up in a high school in Manitoba and says that, if the Free Trade Agreement goes through and if in fact the Americans might want some energy, they will send the Marines in. Madam Speaker, is that the kind of responsible attitude that a Minister responsible for Tourism and Business Development should have? I think he is a Minister that the Premier should remove immediately.

But that is not the only area that we have problems with. It seems that everything this government has

attempted has turned out badly. We can take a look at Crown corporations. This government is very sensitive about Crown corporations. They say that every time we stand up to speak we are talking about how badly they are handling the Crown corporations, and it's true. They are handling them terribly.

For seven years, every time this government has put their hands on a Crown corporation or has constructed a new Crown corporation, they have managed to run it into a deficit, to run it into a situation where it's losing money for the taxpayers of the province. I would say that the Crown corporations in our province right now are the disaster of all disasters.

The Minister responsible for Crown Investments last year admitted that, yes, there were problems in the Crown corporations, and it wasn't only the Manitoba Telephone System and MTX, but there were others. This year, he has finally realized that a lot of the debt cannot be paid for, so they have decided to write the bad debts off to the tune of \$185 million. But what does this mean? What does the \$185 million write-off mean? Does that mean that debt is just simply going to walk away? - absolutely not. It means that debt is put on the future generations of this province. They are the ones who are going to have to pay for it, because this government cannot.

You know, Madam Speaker, the Budget can be made to look awfully good if you keep writing off debts like the Crown corporation debts. It can give the impression that this government is doing something without including those kinds of figures in its actual Budget.

So, if you take - instead of the \$334 million which the Minister says is the debt for this province or the deficit, we should probably be adding the \$186 million to it, which would bring it up to \$519 million. That is really the actual figure that Manitobans are going to be faced with paying back.

Madam Speaker, let's take a look at Autopac. Here's another Crown corporation. In its inception, the Premier lauded this particular Crown corporation as the golden goose. Now, I think they've just killed that golden goose, Madam Speaker, because -(Interjection)- They've choked it to death all right, because this year we even find this Crown corporation has lost an incredible amount of money. Why? Why did it lose money? If we go back to the history, let's be honest about it. It lost money because of political tinkering in that Crown corporation. This is why most of the corporations have lost money, political tinkering in the affairs of the corporations.

It didn't start this year, Madam Speaker. It started in 1984 and in 1986, especially in 1986 when we had the election and this government decided no, it wasn't going to have an increase in Autopac because that might look bad in the time of election. So they postponed the increase. Then, all of a sudden, they found themselves in a situation where they had to increase rates in an exorbitant manner.

What was this public corporation doing insuring things like palm trees, and what was it doing in the reinsurance business? It had no business being there. Manitobans didn't want this corporation to be involved in those kinds of affairs. The responsibility of Autopac was to look after the province's auto industry and the insurance of that, not be to insuring in the space shuttle, and in Bhopal, India and everywhere else.

That is why they got themselves into trouble. It was another kind of affair like they tried with MTX, and it didn't work. Anything they try isn't going to work. When they realized, finally, that the gas corporation wasn't going to work to their benefit, they abandoned it, and thank God they did, Madam Speaker.

Now the Minister is saying that we are going to have increases next year. Why are we going to have increases in Autopac next year? Not so much because of the claims, Madam Speaker, but because we have to catch up to the losses that have been incurred over the last number of years. But I'm wondering, Madam Speaker, if we were to have an election next year whether this Minister would again tinker in the affairs of Autopac and make sure that there was no increase when the next year's premiums came out. I would suggest that he probably would, and then they'd probably hold back the Annual Report as well.

But, you see, Madam Speaker, the Crown corporation losses are not allowing this government to provide the kinds of services that a government should. One of the areas that some support has been required in has been agriculture and the statistics show that the rate of bankruptcies in Manitoba is higher than anywhere else in the country, and there is good reason for that.

The reasons are that this government has done nothing to support agriculture in Manitoba - absolutely nothing. Instead, the former Minister of Agriculture would stand in his place and he would constantly bash the Federal Government for not providing enough assistance to farmers.

Now we have some very difficult economic times in the agricultural area at the present time and we have to support the agricultural industry because it is the backbone of this province. It is still the backbone of our country. If we're not going to support them, we're going to see the kind of statistics that have been revealed in Manitoba, terrible bankruptcy rates, not necessarily the fault of the farmers, but because of the economic times that they are going through.

What did the Minister do last year to support agriculture? Well, he came up with two initiatives, one was Bill 4 or The Family Farm Protection Act. Now was that any kind of a program that would help farmers in the long term? We already had a Federal Farm Debt Review Panel that was doing this, but now we had the Provincial Government that said no, no, we can't take part in anything the Federal Government was doing. After all, they are Conservatives, so we'll set up our own debt review panels because they are really going to do the job.

Well, I think, Madam Speaker, the record can show that in fact the panels which were set up by this province have not been doing nearly the kind of work that has been done by the Federal Debt Review Board, and why? Because the Federal Debt Review Board was set up to assist farmers, not to deceive them, and if this government really wanted to help farmers last year, they could have said okay, we'll augment that program, we'll assist it and we'll maybe lend some support financially to that program to see our farmers through some difficult times, but they didn't do that because it was a political decision and they were wanting to build some points for themselves.

So then they came up with another program, and that program was the Farm Start Program. Well, that

was going to really help the young farmers get into the farming business. I mean, instead of the government or banks supporting the young farmers in terms of loans, instead of MACC supporting these young farmers with low interest loans, now these young farmers were going to get their low interest loans from the retiring farmers. And hasn't this program been a success? I think the Minister is still waiting to have his first application for that particular program, and this is the kind of initiative this government comes in with, time and time again, initiatives that don't work. They don't consult with anybody, and if they do, they don't listen to them.

I'm wondering who the present Minister of Agriculture is consulting with in terms of assisting farmers. Is he consulting with the CAP? Is he consulting with the canola growers, the wheat growers? Is he consulting with the hog producers, the cattle producers? Who is he consulting with?

Last year this government had to be dragged into the sugar beet tripartite agreement. At the last possible moment, they finally said okay, we'll come along, kicking their feet. This year we have the same attitude portrayed by a Minister who I thought would know better because he comes from a rural area that is a high grain producing area, a high livestock producing area, people who are interested in maintaining that kind of a livelihood. I thought he would really be sensitive to the needs of agriculture. But all we see once again is the fact that he is pointing at Ottawa and saying it is their fault that farmers are not getting enough support.

Why doesn't he take a look at Saskatchewan, at Alberta, and see what programs are being developed there that are really assisting farmers. He doesn't have to reinvent the wheel again. All he has to do is take a look at those programs and perhaps modify them so that they would suit the needs of Manitoba farmers and implement something of that nature which is still assisting farmers in Saskatchewan and Alberta.

The Minister also indicated that he was going to be coming in with a beef feedlot stabilization plan. Well, it's going to be interesting to see this bill come in and this legislation come in.

We have been asking for this kind of support program for years, Madam Speaker. Our side of the House saw that the beef industry was in problems. We saw that our packing industry was in a difficult time. We indicated that we were going to lose our beef industry if we continued on the route that we were going.

Madam Speaker, the beef industry is just about gone out of this province. The packing houses have closed. We see cattle leaving the province before they are finished. They are not being slaughtered in Manitoba and that means jobs are lost, that means our feed grains are leaving the province. Madam Speaker, why is this happening? Because this government has failed to address the needs of those people.

Now after that industry is just about finished, just about killed, this Minister says we are now going to come up with a feedlot plan. Well, Madam Speaker, I hope it's a good one, because farmers really need that kind of a plan which is going to be positive and constructive to them. But I have some hesitations about how this government is going to approach that.

I mentioned the business climate in the province before, Madam Speaker. I would just like to say that

this province needs investment. We need businesses to develop in this province because they are the people who are going to provide jobs to the many Manitobans who need them, they are the people who are going to pay taxes, who are going to support the programs; the social programs, the health programs, the education programs. So instead of having an anti-business climate, I beseech this government to change their attitude and take on a positive attitude which is going to attract business into this province.

But why don't businesses come to this province? Well, because we have such things as the payroll tax, a very large disincentive; we have such things as labour legislation which is anti-business; we have a Minister who does not believe firmly in private enterprise, who does not believe in businesses being developed by private people to grow; we have a tax scheme in this province that is not working to the benefit of businesses; our compensation program is in shambles.- (Interjection)- Yes, Mr. Minister, it is in shambles, you know it, and you haven't done anything about it.

So, Madam Speaker, these are the reasons why we are not getting business being attracted to this province. It's the same thing with tourism, and I mentioned tourism before. The Member for Portage has stood up on many occasions and has indicated to this government where the shortcomings are and where they should improve.

I'll tell you, Madam Speaker, when you take a look at the federal programs that are made available to this government and you take a look at how they haven't used them, it's a shame, because there are people in Manitoba who would like to take the initiative to go ahead and develop projects. But it is this bunch that is not allowing them to; it is this Minister. I don't know why he is occupying that chair to tell you honestly, because he really hasn't done anything in this area since he has been made Minister.

Madam Speaker, another commitment the Minister had talked about was a commitment to protect and enhance health, education and other vital services which improve the quality of life.

Well, Madam Speaker, if I can spend a few minutes talking about health, I could tell you that I come from a rural area, and right now we have a very big problem in health. I'll get to education shortly and you'll hear about that as well. But in the area of health, Madam Speaker, people in the rural areas are starting to feel the lack of services very drastically.

There was a meeting held a few weeks ago in our area regarding the shortage of doctors in our areas. We have hospitals there, Madam Speaker, but the doctors are not coming out to our areas. There is a real need for services, health services, in rural areas. And why aren't doctors coming out to the rural areas, Madam Speaker? There are many reasons. But one of the reasons is that there are no services provided in those rural hospitals. There are perhaps geriatric wards or babysitting areas or perhaps they are just kind of a halfway house for patients to come to before they are transferred to Brandon or to Winnipeg. So, Madam Speaker, there has to be a new approach in terms of the services rural people receive.

I received a call just a couple of days ago from a young mother who had to be transferred from my community to Brandon by ambulance, and then from

Brandon to Winnipeg by ambulance. The mother is unemployed; her husband is unemployed, and they were charged over \$600 for ambulance fees to bring the mother into Winnipeg. Now, had they lived in Winnipeg, Madam Speaker, that service would have been provided at a far less cost. I'm wondering whether or not this Minister can take into account the fact that rural people do have to travel large distances to get specialized medical services and that they should not be burdened and that the Minister of Finance should apply the principle of a just and equal society when we talk about health.

The Minister of Health this morning, Madam Speaker, talked about his close affiliation to and feelings towards people who are afflicted with cancer. You know, when we take a look at hospital bed closures, I guess we look at it from a distance and it doesn't affect us until someone in our own family, someone who is close to us, requires the services. Unfortunately, I had an experience like that, Madam Speaker, where a family member needed some cancer treatment and he had to wait for four or five weeks before he could get the treatment; but nevertheless, when he did get into Winnipeg to take his treatment he became very ill, and we had to rush him to an emergency ward in the hospital. As a matter of fact, it was in the Health Sciences Centre, Madam Speaker. For three days this patient lay on a stretcher because there wasn't a bed available for him in the hospital, not that the beds weren't there, they were just closed, Madam Speaker. And that's when one gets angry.

We, as Manitobans believe that we are paying for a health care system through our taxes that will take care of us when the time comes. But, Madam Speaker, time and time again that is not the case.

I had another incident in my community, Madam Speaker. A gentleman who needed heart surgery and he had been scheduled for heart surgery and because of the backlog it was postponed. Then he was scheduled again, and it was postponed once again. Finally, he was about seven days or eight days away from his surgery when he suffered a major heart attack and died. This is the kind of thing that is happening throughout our province, Madam Speaker, because this government has failed to address the health care needs of people in this province.

In terms of education, Madam Speaker, education is near and dear to me and I can say a lot about this particular topic. I'd like to start out by talking about, first of all, the funding that is received by school divisions - public school divisions.

The Minister made an announcement on January 15 with regard to support to public schools in this province and he said that public schools would be receiving over 4.4 percent for their operating expenses for the year of 1988-1989, but when the figures were finally filtered through, we found out that some school divisions, yes, would be receiving as much as 14 percent, others would be receiving as little as 0.41 percent.

Madam Speaker, I ask the question: Is this what this government means by just and equal? Some school divisions, because they have practised efficiency, because they have been effective in the way that they have managed their affairs, have actually been penalized because of the way this government has implemented its funding formula.

Those school divisions who have increased enrolments enjoy the increases in funding; but what I am saying, Madam Speaker, is that this isn't fair and that whole formula has to be changed. I am thankful that the Minister has finally indicated that there is going to be a review of the Nicholls Report which was never fully implemented in the initial stages.

So we have heard for the past two years, this government is going to - or longer than that, Madam Speaker - move to 90 percent funding for public schools. As a matter of fact, that funding has dropped down, Madam Speaker, to something like 73 percent, and in some individual cases it is even less than that.

Education goes beyond that, beyond the funding. It is the services that we provide to the youth of our province, the future generation that is going to perhaps govern this province and make the many decisions that are needed in this province. So we have to take a look at curriculums; we have to take a look at programs and the funding for those programs as well.

Madam Speaker, we are finding that across Manitoba, school divisions are having to cut back on programming because they are not receiving sufficient funds. School divisions are having to cut back on some of the programs such as music, industrial arts, perhaps languages, and even some of the more important courses because of the fact that funding has been cut back. They can no longer afford to continue in the way that they did in the past.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker, C. Santos, in the Chair.)

Yesterday, we saw a school division come in and meet with the Minister of Education and request additional funding for special needs because in the new formula, in the new approach that the Minister announced, they were receiving, in fact, less than what they require. Although I know school divisions will continue to demand more and more, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this particular instance, the funding has gone down. There isn't adequate funding to address the special needs, learning situations, of these students.

Is this the new approach that this government is going to take? Are we now going to start negotiating with school divisions on an individual basis as to how much funding they're going to get?

Our education, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is in a state of chaos, our public school education system. We had the High School Review that was begun over a year ago. We are still waiting for the report from the High School Review. Why was the High School Review initiated? It was initiated so that we could review the programs that high schools were offering because those programs were short-changing students. They needed revamping; there needed to be a different approach taken. We are still waiting for the report.

I wrote a letter to the Minister of Education, asking him whether or not in fact he would provide me with a copy of the report or would indicate what the status of the report is. To date, I have not heard from the Minister as to which way he is going.

When we talk about university funding, Mr. Deputy Speaker, something interesting in the Budget struck my eye. That was that the Minister announced an \$800,000 Access Fund to universities to allow those students out in rural areas and remote areas, those

groups of people who may not have had the opportunity to access university education to get proper access to university education.

At the same time, in the Budget or in the Estimates, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we find that Student Aid is decreasing by some \$400,000.00. Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, do you not find it somewhat strange that, when the province is announcing an Access Fund of \$800,000, at the same time, they are reducing Student Aid by over \$400,000.00? Is that really allowing equal opportunity for access to universities? I tell you, that is not.

Yesterday, the Minister of Education in his address to the Budget speech, said that the Member for River Heights did not have her figures correct with regard to funding to universities and to education. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it would be wise if the Minister of Education would get a calculator for himself, because in fact the Member for River Heights' figures were closer than the Minister's were when he gave them yesterday.

He indicated also that, although the enrolments in schools has dropped, the support has gone up. Well, that is right. The support has gone up by over 20 percent over inflation, but he didn't mention the costs that have gone up. He didn't mention the new programs that were established, which create additional costs. He didn't mention any of that. All he indicated was that their funding had gone up by over 20 percent.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we talk about funding - (Interjection)- yes, and I'd like to - this government stands up in the House and it says that the Federal Government is not living up to its responsibilities in terms of funding to universities. I would like to just quote something that the Premier of this province, the now Premier of this province, said in 1981. He said: " 'The Manitoba Conservatives' policy of dependence on Ottawa contains the seeds of financial crisis,' according to the Opposition Leader, Howard Pawley, who said, 'The diversion of provincial funds must stop.' He also said, 'It is essential to again make a genuine commitment to the universities, rather than combine provincial restraint with dependence on Ottawa. The diversion of provincial funds must stop.' "

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what do we hear now? We hear them get up in the House, and what do they do? They blame Ottawa for not funding universities in this province. They blame Ottawa for not funding the hospitals, the health care system of this province. Why do they do that? To try and deflect the responsibility that they are supposed to have from themselves. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that isn't working with Manitobans anymore. Manitobans know where their responsibility lies. They know who is at fault, and they are not going to take it for much longer.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, during the election campaign of 1986, the Minister of Education, at that time the Member for Logan, filled her Santa Claus bag and went around the province and announced new building projects. There were three building projects she announced during the election campaign in my own area. Well, we have seen two of them. One of them we're still waiting for. It was announced, but we're still waiting for it.

At that same time, during that election campaign, the Minister also made an announcement with regard to a new library at Red River College. She said, "A

new resource centre at the college has been badly needed for some time. The present facility was designed to serve less than half the number of students presently enrolled at the college and the new centre was made a top priority and will become a reality in the near future."

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Red River Community College is still waiting for its library, they have not even seen the sod turned yet, and this was going to be a reality in the near future. It is true, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that that facility is far outdated, it is far too small - they need a new library.

Where is that library? Where is that promise that was made during the election? Where is that? Are we going to see another bag of goodies in the next election when the Minister of Education will dress himself up and traipse around the province and make a whole bunch of announcements again that they will not live up to? When will this library become a reality? - (Interjection)- Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have the Member for The Pas making comments with regard to education. The Minister would do well to keep his nose in an area which he has responsibility for instead of bungling that area. He has bungled that badly enough for the people of this province. He doesn't need to stick his nose into other jurisdictions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is the way this government has been handling its affairs from the beginning. Whether it's Crown corporations, whether it's the health system, whether it's agriculture or whether it's education, the approach is always the same. It's always someone else's fault; they fail to take the responsibility.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the last few days we have raised the issue of special needs in this province. Special education and learning disabilities of students have surfaced because of the bungling of this Minister, the bungling of the former Minister, the inability of this government to take hold of the situation. There is no policy with regard to what is happening in special needs. There are students who are falling through the cracks of the system. Why? Because there is no direct policy, there is no line of attack, there is no responsibility on the part of this government.

MR. L. DERKACH: So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our educational institutions across this province are not getting the attention that they require. We can't keep calling for more and more funds all the time, but what we have to do is make sure that the resources that we have are spent more effectively and more efficiently. Regardless of what area of the Budget we look at, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the commitments that were made by this particular Minister are not, in fact, being looked up to. As a matter of fact, the Budget was nothing but a hoax, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it has deceived the people of this province.

Thank you very much.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Employment Services and Economic Security.

HON. L. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'd like to add a few words to the debate on the Budget and review parts of the performance of our department, review the economy of Manitoba, and make some general observations on the Budget itself.

But before doing so, I couldn't help but hear the remarks of my friend, the Honourable Member for Roblin-Russell, talk about the Brandon University library. He is talking about a subject that I'm very familiar with and I want to advise him that the funding of the Brandon library is part of a \$7 million capital projects program that has been approved by the government through the Grants Commission.

This particular approach to the capital funding is based on several months of discussion between the Brandon University administration, namely the Board of Governors, and also the senate of Brandon University - a proposal that they made to the government to assist them with the problem that they particularly have, and that is the inability to pay off the balance of the music building. So they had, unfortunately, accumulated a large \$2 million debt.

It was at the request of the university that we provide, in advance, from the library grant to which we've committed, \$5.5 million to the university at this time to help them out. This was their request and we acceded to their request. This is a plan, a rational approach. The university is doing an excellent job in fundraising. They've got over \$1 million already in pledges and cash, as I understand, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and they're very confident that they're going to be able to raise the balance to have the library built in plenty of time.

When I say that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I should say to have it built on schedule, because no matter how much money we have at the moment at Brandon University, they cannot proceed with the music building until a new steam plant is put in place. The existing steam plant does not have the capacity to provide the heat for a library building and that is the physical fact of the matter - you just can't do it.

So the proposal is that we proceed forthwith to assist the university, and the Minister of Education and the government has committed that \$1.5 million to a steam plant and that construction will begin to take place in this year, 1988. Hopefully, the completion date will be early 1989, and at that point, the university should have raised the balance of the money so that it's ready to go with a new library - a \$5.5 million library.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the fact is I know the member wasn't an M.L.A. at the time, but I was in the Opposition at the time and I could tell him that the university was very saddened at the time. When you talk about letting down the institutions of higher learning in this province, I'll tell you Brandon University was very sad. In fact, they were very upset, and at that time, the students were demonstrating right in front of this building for a library. There were bus loads of students right in front of the Legislature here demanding, of the Lyon Conservative Government, some action on a library. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was absolutely nothing forthcoming from the Conservative Government at that time.

In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, nothing happened at Brandon University in the way of new facilities. There was no music building, there was no students' union building, which we financed partially through the Manitoba Community Places Program. They have a beautiful students building there now. A lot of it comes from students raising money through fees, etc., but we did contribute some very important seed money. So you've got a music building - a beautiful music building

- you've got a students' union building, you've got a commitment now to build a steam plant that is needed, and the monies are available to build a library.

Compare that with what happened in 1977 to 1981: not one brick was put in place, not one nail, not one board, and the students were demanding action in front of this building - talk about demanding action - not to speak of the faculty and other people involved at the university.

Not only that, what disturbed me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was the fact that when you looked at the operating money of Brandon University and you took into account the inflation by the end of the Conservative Government in office, Brandon University had less real purchasing power, less real dollars to run that institution than they had when the Conservatives came in office in 1977. So that's what the Conservatives did to Brandon University. They, in reality, cut their ability to - (Interjection)- It is true.

In real dollars, when you take the Consumer Price Index, you see what's happened to inflation in real dollars because I remember doing the research on that some years ago. The university had less ability to fund and operate its programs of higher education. As I said, if they were waiting for the Conservatives to build a music building or help them, they'd be waiting forever because there was absolutely no way that they could have had a music building under the previous government because there was absolutely nothing promised.

This is a fact because I was very close to the students at the time because they were giving us their concerns. The faculty was expressing their concerns; the administration was very concerned. There was discussion of how they may build a music building, but you know it was mission impossible. The formula that was proposed, they would have never ever been able to build a music building. It was just mission impossible.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm proud of the fact that we have not only helped that university, in terms of needed facilities and maintaining programs, but we've added to the programs. We've approved a Bachelor of Nursing Education Program and that costs a lot of money. It costs several hundreds of thousands of dollars. But now in Western Manitoba a person can get a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing Education. This was brought in a couple of years ago and has been announced by our government and the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Education. We're now on the way to launching a rural development institute, a major institute at Brandon University, that is welcomed by all members of this House, I'm sure.

At any rate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I really hadn't planned to talk about this. I'd like to get on and make some observations about the Budget. I think we've proposed, the Minister of Finance has proposed, a fiscally responsible Budget, a Budget that is trying to cope with the debt and the deficits and at the same time maintaining our health, education and social services, indeed, enhancing these social services, enhancing health care, enhancing education in this province.

The figures are there for us to see that the revenues per capita, which I guess when you look at revenue per capita you're reflecting the tax burden, but we're the third lowest of the 10 provinces in terms of revenue

received per capita. So I would suggest that we're certainly not out of line in how much money we receive from the citizens of Manitoba.

In terms of the national average, we're well below the national average in revenue received from Manitobans per capita. As the Budget document itself indicates, if you look at various categories of income, people who are tax filers and earning \$20,000 per year; this is a tax filer with a spouse and two children, that person in Manitoba, relating that person to the other 10 provinces, can see that he or she is paying the second lowest level of taxes in the country. Of the 10 Canadian provinces, Manitoba is the second lowest.

In terms of a tax filer with a spouse and two children having an income of \$35,000, that person could see that he's paying or she's paying third lowest of the 10 provinces. Similarly, when you go up the line at \$50,000, even at \$50,000 we're paying below six other provinces. We're below Quebec, Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Ontario.

The deficit per capita is mid-range, fifth lowest in the country, slightly above the Canadian average, but nevertheless when you take it compared to the other provinces we are somewhere in mid-range.

I think the Budget gives the people of Manitoba a clear direction of where this government is going. We're trying our best to balance with the limited resources that we have, and at the same time we want to protect our health care system which I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the finest you'll find anywhere in the world. We want to protect it, we want to enhance it.

I know a lot has been talked about the bed closures and so on. The fact is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a challenge to us in Manitoba today. Because of our limited financial resources we have to be more efficient in terms of delivering health care in the province. Health care takes over approximately one-third of our total spending. I know everybody gets very upset when they talk about bed closures or reductions in beds. But as I understand it the experts are telling the government, telling the Minister of Health that frankly, when you compare us with other jurisdictions we are well endowed with the number of beds per thousand people or any ratio you want to take. In fact, an argument could be made that we have too many beds, and that we're better to direct the resources, not to having X number of beds, but to have better technology to enhance the technology that we have, and to make sure that we can deal with the new diseases that are coming along; that we should spend more money on health care prevention, more money on community health care services, so that as Manitobans we can maintain and hopefully improve, as a matter of fact, the quality of health care within our limited budget.

I go back to again using an example in Brandon. The fact is that there has never been a cutback in the budget of Brandon General Hospital. Every year the General Hospital in Brandon gets more money. There has been no freezing of hospital funding. In Saskatchewan last year health care funding was frozen. There have been no freezing of funds at Brandon General Hospital. There have been large increases in funding at Brandon General Hospital.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to carry on with my speech. I use the Brandon General as an example, too. What has happened in Brandon General Hospital?

Brandon General Hospital today has ultrasound services that have been proved two or three times. They have a dialysis unit for people with kidney disease that they didn't have before. They have a day surgery; they have not-for-admission surgeries it's called. There are other services that have been put in place in that hospital. Of course, most lately, there's been a brand new CAT scan put in place in Brandon Hospital.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I, along with the Minister of Health, was at the official opening. I heard the representative of the company that installed the CAT scan; he told everybody there he wanted you to know that you're not getting some second or third-rate machine. He said to the people gathered there, this is the top of the line, this is the same kind of machine, same kind of device that they use in the Mayo Clinic in the United States, the same kind they use in the Henry Ford Hospital, the same kind that you get in the best facilities in Toronto, Vancouver and so on. So we're getting the best. So that is a great deal of money. It's well in excess of \$1 million, hundreds of thousands of dollars extra to operate it. So I'm saying that's the way to go. We need a CAT scan, let's make sure we have the monies. But if we find that we've got excess beds, we have under capacity utilization of beds. Well, for goodness sakes, why are we spending money keeping X number of beds that we don't necessarily need?

As a matter of fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the interesting thing is while they have reduced the beds in the Brandon General Hospital, the waiting list has also shrunk. There are fewer people on the waiting list for elective surgery and so on, today than there were a year or so ago.

So I said there's a clear direction in the Budget. We want to maintain and improve health care services, similarly with other social services; day care, I guess, is simply one example. There are examples in my own department where we're trying to improve the social assistance program. Of course we have many employment programs that we're very proud of, that we want to continue to provide training, counselling, and to bring people off of welfare, to bring people into the work force.

But it is difficult to be in government today. It's difficult no matter whether you are Federal or any Provincial Government. Let's face it, it is difficult. There are great expectations out there, and while everyone can say well, cut back and be more efficient, when it comes to their particular area, when you are starting to maybe squeeze a bit, then people don't think that's such a good idea. So it is a very difficult thing. There's the challenge of meeting those expectations, but that has to be put alongside our ability to pay. So it is a difficult time to be in government.

I wonder where the Opposition is coming from though and where exactly are they going. I think I know, because I know they always express concern about taxes and they think taxes are too high. Believe me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, no government likes to increase taxes, although there's been no significant tax rate increases in this Budget.

But nevertheless, no one likes to see taxes rise, whether you're in government or whether you're the taxpayer. But the Opposition have become very exercised about the tax structure. They continually harp about what they refer to as the payroll tax, the health

and education levy, and many other taxes. And at the same time, they're concerned about the deficit, they're concerned about debt, and I gather then that their solution will be to cut programs.

Now I know they continue to talk about well, we'll be more efficient, they'll be more efficient at running Crown corporations. They will have no communicators. I have to remind members across the way that they had many communicators when Mr. Lyon was the Premier of Manitoba - plenty. But the fact is that you could eliminate all communicators; you could have no deficits on the part of any Crown agency. I might remind members opposite there were a lot of deficits of Crown agencies, such as CFI or Manfor, when they were in government - lots of deficits.

The fact is you can do all those things and you'll still have major problems in trying to pay for the various services the Provincial Government of this province offers to the people. And so, unless you cut programs, and I gather and I guess that is the message that the Conservative Government, if and when it ever becomes Government of Manitoba again, will cut programs.

As a matter of fact, I guess the Leader of the Opposition hinted at that in his reply to the Budget last week when the Member from Tuxedo said that Mr. Kostyra, who made some reference to some reductions in certain areas, said, and this is what was quoted in, I guess it's in Hansard, "Just imagine what a real Conservative Finance Minister could do, what a real government Conservative could do, a hell of a lot more than this bunch ever could." That's from the Leader of the Opposition. In other words, that will be their approach.

They will do what we're seeing right now in Saskatchewan and in Alberta. In Saskatchewan, in education last year, they fired 142 technical institute instructors, or community college instructors we'd call them here. The school divisions had an absolute funding cut of 1 percent. The Gabriel Dumont Institute had a 20 percent cut; the University of Regina operating grants were frozen; the student bursary program was eliminated and replaced with a form of student loan program, and over 1,000 technical institute spaces were abolished.

In terms of health care, as I indicated previously, hospitals' funding was frozen. The community clinics' funding was also frozen.

In Alberta, to the west, a Conservative Budget last year meant that education was cut by 3 percent for special funding, special funding to school divisions. We talk about special funding in this House - well, they cut it in total by 3 percent. They cut 3 percent to post-secondary education; they cut general grants to Alberta schools by 4.7 percent; they cut community schools funding by 50 percent, and the loans, grants and scholarships for university and college students were cut by 9.5 percent. They cut grants to acute care hospitals by 3 percent.

I repeat, we have not cut back on grants to our acute care hospitals. We have, every year, increased the money. We have put more money on the table for the running of our hospitals.

Operating grants for extended treatment hospitals, there was no increase, and at the same time, they have health care premiums there, a flat-rate tax. They increased those flat-rate premiums, that type of tax,

by 28 percent. So I guess that's the Conservative approach and I guess that is something the people of Manitoba will have to decide on. Do they want a party that will go in and reduce the size of government and reduce programs and reduce services? One could argue, from a philosophical point of view, that that is a legitimate philosophical point of view, that governments should be shrunk.

That was the view and that is the view, I believe, of the former Liberal Premier of Manitoba, D.L. Campbell, a gentleman whom I respect, a very fine person, and one who's given great service to the Province of Manitoba. But Mr. Campbell, although a big "L" Liberal, is really a small "c" fiscal conservative, and I believe he takes the view, and I say it's a legitimate view, that governments should be smaller rather than larger. There should be fewer programs rather than more programs, so I'm not knocking the philosophical approach. I don't agree with that approach. I don't agree with the policy approach, so there's got to be legitimate differences between one side and the other, and I presume that's what it is.

So the leader of the Conservatives has given the clue that they will do a lot more in terms of cutting programs and cutting jobs in the government service. As I said, this approach is a balanced approach - no major tax increases, but enhancement and maintenance, as much as possible, of certain required programs.

I'd like to talk for a moment about the economy because again the speaker who preceded me, the Member for Roblin-Russell, talked about his concerns with the economy of Manitoba. I had mentioned this in the past because it's only the comparison that proves. It's a comparison of what's going on in Manitoba with the rest of the economy in this country, the other provinces, that gives us some clues as to where we're going.

Because we are subject to the national business cycle, if there's a national economic recession, we will get hit in Manitoba. We can't escape it no matter who's in government; you just can't escape it. You're part of the national economy. As a matter of fact, we're part of the North American economy; we're part of the western economic system. So we've got to look at how we compare with what's going on in other provinces.

If you gather the statistics of our overall economic growth - and this is measured by Real Domestic Product, this is the indicator of your overall economic performance - and you look at what has happened in terms of economic growth, since we've been elected to office in the end of '81, the beginning of '82, right till now, and then you compare that with what happened in the Lyon years in government, when the Conservatives were last in office in this province, you will see - and the figures are available to anyone who wants to look at them from Statistics Canada or the Conference Board.

I guess the Conference Board is easier to get because they've put them together on a nice, comparative basis to be able to look at very easily. But when we were last under a Conservative Government in Manitoba, our rate of economic growth was the third lowest in the country, far below where we are now. We are fourth in the average - this is the average of economic growth. Since we've been in office, we rank fourth out of the ten provinces. When the Conservatives were in office, we ranked 8 out of the 10 provinces.

MR. D. BLAKE: Oh now, come on, let's be fair.

HON. L. EVANS: I am fair. This is the Conference Board. I'll be glad to share the reports with my friend, the Honourable Member for Minnedosa, a bank manager who knows how to read some statistics and so on, a good man, good man.

In terms of investment, similarly, what's been happening to total capital investment? In our period in office - we're not at the top - but we're fourth from the top. We're fourth in average percentage growth in total investment, total capital expenditure. When the Conservatives were in office, we were No. 10. We were 10th, we were at the bottom of the totem pole in terms of capital investment - that's total. You might say ah, but that includes public investment. Let's just look at private investment. Well, even under private investment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitoba has been doing better in terms of our ranking among the provinces than we did in the Conservative years. I can read all these numbers and so on, but we're far along the scale.

We were sixth highest in terms of private capital spending in this period of time in office. Under the Tories, we were number 8 out of the 10. So, even with private investment spending, we rank higher in comparison to the other Canadian provinces.

In terms of public investment we've been No. 1. Partly because of hydro development and so on, we're top of the rank. Under the Conservatives, we were the lowest; we were 10 out of 10 for public investment. As a matter of fact, from 1978 to '81, we were in a negative position. It was minus 4 percent. The average rate of investment spending under the public sector was actually negative. But that's in keeping with that philosophical approach, but that is the fact of the matter.

What's happened in terms of job growth? Again, in Manitoba we're not at the top of the heap, but we're not at the bottom of the heap either. In the period of government of the Conservatives '78 to '81, Manitoba ranked 10th out of 10 in terms of job creation. Our performance in this economy - we were the lowest on the totem pole in terms of job growth.

In the case of unemployment, we've tended to be third lowest or among the third lowest in the country, historically, and indeed, when the Conservatives were in office, we were third lowest. However, during our period in office, we've been second lowest, on average. So even there we've improved slightly.

If you go to population growth, which is an overall figure in a sense and reflects a lot of things, I will be the first to say the reason people left Manitoba was because at that time there were a lot of opportunities in Alberta, Saskatchewan and B.C. That's the truth. There was a boom and people were sucked out of the province; that is a fact. They were sucked out of Ontario, attracted to Alberta and so on.

But, in addition to that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what happened, particularly in the first couple of years with the large cutback or restraint, exercise of acute protracted restraint of the Conservatives at that time, exacerbated the situation and added to the dampening relative economic situation that we had here.

In a relative sense, it made things worse so that what happened in '78 to '81, Manitoba - and on average, one year or two years were very, very bad, but on

average, it was negative. Our population growth shrunk. Right now I'm talking about the actual level of the population. There were fewer people in Manitoba at the end of the Conservative's period of office than there were at the beginning.

I say, and I admit, we don't live on an economic island unto ourselves. We live in one big, national North American economy. But, just recognize - people don't want to recognize that government spending does stimulate the economy.- (Interjection)- Listen, the Mulroney-Reagan trade deal - the issue is not free trade, because we all agree on free trade.- (Interjection)- Well, you know, just as an aside, I really don't want to get off - but my friend from Lakeside. It still boggles my mind where the National Conservative Party - and forget about the provincial level - has changed its philosophical position, because in this country, traditionally - the party of Sir John A. Macdonald, of Robert Borden, the great protectionist. I was quite proud of Sir John A. Macdonald, the National Railway, the National Immigration Policy and the National Tariff, the three pillars of economic development -(Interjection)- That's an anomaly too; that's very strange, too. We weren't around, so we don't have to explain. But you know, I'm still trying to understand this switch in positions. It is a conundrum. It is a switch in positions, because we are not living in the tradition of the National Conservative Party. In fact, old Sir John A. Macdonald would turn over in his grave if he really understood . . .

A MEMBER: And John Diefenbaker is.

HON. L. EVANS: . . . and John Diefenbaker is, because John Diefenbaker, too -(Interjection)- At any rate, I just wanted to go on and talk about - we've got a lot of other figures. I don't want to bore you with reading all the numbers, but I tell you that the figures generally show that - and these are the facts, they're not my figures, they're from Stats Canada; Conference Board reports them as well - Manitoba's economy has done better during our period in office than in the previous Conservative Government's period in office. If you look at all the major indicators, those are the facts.

A MEMBER: We had a drought, we had a flood, and we had a national recession.

HON. L. EVANS: Well, whatever you had, that's beside the point you see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I said we're talking about the relative position of the province. As a matter of fact -(Interjection)- it's a relative position. I'm talking about only the relative position, because you could argue we've got more unemployment today than we had in some years you were in office, and that is true, but we've got more unemployment all across Canada. That's the fact, so let's be rational about this. Let's look at the data.

A comparison proves, and a relative position or a comparative position is that we have been better off in the last five or six years of this government than we were during the preceding government. Those are the facts, that is what has happened.

While I recognize there are many economic factors that impact on the economy of Manitoba, the role of

government is still one of those very important factors, a very important instrument, you might say, in terms of what happens to the economy, what we do with our spending, who we tax, and how we distribute the money, and generally what our investment policies are.

I'd like to spend a moment on the employment situation in the province and tell you that - and I'm not going to read all these figures. They've got so many figures here, we could spend days and days analyzing the data. But generally speaking, in '87, we had an improvement in our labour market situation that's been the fourth year of improvement since the '82-83 recession.

Last year, our average unemployment was 7.4 percent, which ranked as third behind Ontario and Saskatchewan. Ontario was 6.1 percent; Saskatchewan, 7.3 percent; we were 7.4 percent; the national average was 8.9 percent. This is the year as a whole in 1987. So there's been continued improvement in the unemployment rate. There's been an increase in the number of people working in Manitoba. Between '86 and '87, we created 4,000 more jobs on average, and that's the fifth consecutive year that jobs have increased, that we've had employment growth in the province.

There are areas of weaknesses. I guess the weakest area - and that's no surprise - is the agricultural sector where employment declined by 5,000 in 1987. On the other hand, the non-agricultural employment sector expanded by 10,000, which was faster than the long-term annual average between '75 and '87.

I might observe, however, that the weakness in agriculture in this province wasn't as great as in our sister provinces to the west, Alberta and Saskatchewan. Perhaps that's understandable, because agriculture is still probably more significant, particularly in Saskatchewan, in a relative sense than it is in Manitoba. It's important in Manitoba, but we have a more diversified economy than either Saskatchewan or Alberta.

We have been trying through our department to do our share in helping to reduce unemployment. Particularly, we're zeroing in now on people who are on welfare, people who are on social assistance. We have had a cooperative effort with the Federal Government under an agreement that we signed a year ago, and we're hoping that there may be some expansion in that area. I think it's maybe too early to judge totally about the success of the program. It's \$6 million a year, each government putting in 50 percent, for a two-year period, a total of \$12 million. But we are zeroing in on people who are on social assistance under that program, helping youth, helping the disabled, and helping single parents. I'm hoping that when we get some reports in the next month or two that those reports will reveal some of our early impressions are correct, and that is that we are indeed helping people to get off the social assistance rolls.

Having said those nice things about my counterparts in the Federal Government, I do want to express a concern about a cutback in Canadian Jobs Strategy funding in the province. I've said this at Federal-Provincial Ministers' conferences and we are not alone. Other provinces have been cut back as well. But the fact is that the actual spending by the Federal Government under the Canadian Jobs Strategy funding

umbrella has actually declined quite substantially in the last few years.

The actual expenditures in Manitoba decreased by over 20 percent between '84-85 and '86-87. That's a 20 percent decrease, Mr. Deputy Speaker, while in Canada as a whole the decrease was only 7.1 percent. Maybe it could be argued well, that's because your unemployment situation is not relatively that bad. To some extent it's true. But it does make our job at the provincial level much more difficult when we have these cutbacks.

So whereas in '84-85 we had an allocation of \$92 million in Manitoba, it looks like this year the allocation will be down to \$60 million. That's a lot of cheese sandwiches, \$92 million down to \$60 million approximately, in terms of allocation. That means that there is less money for the colleges; that means there is less money for private employers to have various training programs. While we appreciate all the money that is being spent, the fact is we have less money being spent by the Federal Government on job training and job creation today than we had in 1984-85.

If you look at the community colleges there is a planned cutback, a 39 percent cutback. Flora MacDonald, the Minister, advised the Provincial Ministers about three years ago in Ottawa when she was Minister of Employment and Immigration, and indeed they've carried that out. So that in 1985-86, Manitoba received - I'm going to round this off - \$24.8 million funding direct purchases by the Federal Government in our institutions, namely, the community colleges. Today we're down to an allocation of \$15 million. We're dropping from \$24.8 million down to \$15.2 million.

That, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a serious cutback. How are we supposed to maintain our community colleges? How are we supposed to maintain these kinds of institutional training programs with this kind of shrinking Budget? Other provinces have been cut back as well. But I'm saying we've been cut back in an area that's been, in my judgment, vital to training the young Manitobans, old Manitobans training in the skills that they need to fulfill the occupational requirements of our industries that are public institutions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I see my time is coming to an end, so I guess I will close on that note. I'm hoping we can persuade the Federal Government to change its position. We have good arrangements on a one-to-one basis with Mr. Bouchard and so on. I'm not suggesting there isn't cooperation. But nevertheless there is this shrinking Budget and it does make it more difficult on the part of all the provinces to try to maintain the job training programs which I believe are essential for economic growth.

Thank you very much.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: the Honourable Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I attempted to listen and because of my laryngitis over the last several weeks I've listened to a lot to debate in this House. You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can't tell you how dismayed I am at some of the justifications that come from the New Democratic

front benches and back benches of the abysmal mess they have made of governing this province in the last seven years.

The last speaker, the Member for Brandon East, took the Hon. D.L. Campbell as an example of a fiscal Conservative who ran the province on a balanced budget as if that was a horrible thing to do.

I remind him that during the years of the Hon. Duff Roblin, as Premier of this province, the Budget was balanced, it was in surplus position, and as a result of that we have the Winnipeg Floodway; the Disraeli Freeway; we have the Asessippi Dam; we have schools; we have highways; we have hospitals; all built by Duff Roblin and his administration on a balanced budget. Now these people on that side of the House, the New Democrats, are now saying that we have to now deficit finance everything in the Province of Manitoba.

And the man that's looking at me from the loge over there, the Member for Flin Flon, I will never forget in 1982 when I sat two seats down and he sat behind me, as Deputy Speaker of this House, when this incompetent regime came into power with a \$500 million deficit. I turned around and I asked the Member for Flin Flon, "How can you do that?" And do you know what his response was to me, Mr. Deputy Speaker? He said, "A \$500 million deficit is manageable."

Well, I want to tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what it's down now - even NDP's are recognizing they can't run deficits. That man obviously learned a lot or has no say in Cabinet because the deficit is gone down because it isn't manageable. His economic theories, when he was a fresh MLA in this House, have been proved totally wrong to the desperate fate of Manitobans.

And for the Member for Flin Flon, I'd like him to justify to his father, who farms in Southwest Manitoba, that a \$500 million deficit is manageable. His father would give him a rather brutal lesson on economics. He might even take him out to the woodshed and give him a switching.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair.)

To my honourable friend, the Member for Brandon East, when he talks about Conservatives hacking and slashing programs, sir, you are part of a Cabinet and government that is hacking and slashing at health care and other social programs because you have so financially mismanaged this province that we are close to rack and ruin.

You, as socialists, are cutting health. You have cut beds; you are rationing services. In Northern Manitoba, people will not receive the same level of eye care service because of your change in policy because your deficit is too high and you can't afford to carry on with normal service delivery that was going on for 10 years in the case of the eye doctor in Northern Manitoba.

I simply ask my honourable friend from Brandon East, who is so wont to give us statistics from time to time: Is there not an obligation on governments to introduce programs that they can fiscally afford and that are within the means of the taxpayers of this province? Is that not an objective that we should all seek out? Because that is what great Premiers and administrations of this province like the Hon. Duff Roblin, like the Hon. D.L. Campbell, did. They spent within the taxation means

of this province. They built the infrastructure and foundation of this province that NDP administrations, for 17 out of the last 20 years, have squandered on the people of Manitoba.

Now, Madam Speaker, they are saying that Conservatives are going to hack, cut and slash. They are hacking, cutting and slashing right now. When socialists have to do that, that tells the people of Manitoba how in dire straits the Schreyer administration and the Pawley administration have put the financial viability of this province over their incompetent terms of government.

Madam Speaker, I want to put a small quotation on the record. This is from none other than the Leader of the Opposition, a statement by Howard R. Pawley, February 23, 1981. I'll preface this statement, Madam Speaker, by saying that these people now in government are saying that the Federal Government is the problem in Manitoba because the Federal Government is reducing their funding, which is not a factual statement, but every problem in health care, education, highway spending is the Federal Government's problem.

Do you know what one Howard R. Pawley, Leader of the Opposition, said on February 23, 1981? He said, "The Manitoba Conservative's policy of dependence on Ottawa contains the seeds of financial crisis." Yet they are coming to us and saying to us today the Federal Government should give us more money when that same Leader of the Opposition, now Premier, said dependence on Opposition contains the seeds of financial crisis. What a difference seven years makes, Madam Speaker. What a difference seven years makes.

Madam Speaker, little did we know what the hidden message was in the Leader of the Opposition's statements, now Premier's statements, of 1981, because what he was really saying is that the Conservative administration, under Sterling Lyon as Premier, was wrong in that we cut income taxes to the people of Manitoba.

He was saying that we were wrong because we froze the hydro rates to the benefit of every consuming Manitoba in this province. He was saying we were wrong to reduce the enormous deficit we inherited from the Schreyer administration in 1977. He was saying we were wrong to have opened many hospital beds, many personal care home beds, from new construction compared to today's record of closing both personal care home beds and hospital beds in the Province of Manitoba. He was saying that we were wrong to bring in SAFFR AND SAFER, the rental support programs for seniors and families. He was saying that we were wrong to increase the property tax rebate to our senior citizens of Manitoba.

What the Premier was saying in 1981, as Leader of the Opposition, is that Manitoba should be taxed more. That was the hidden promise in his statement, and Lord how they've delivered that promise, Madam Speaker!

Madam Speaker, I was incredibly angered by one chart in this financial statement put out by the Finance Minister. It's contained on page 2 of the Financial Statistics, and I refer it to all Manitobans and to some of the members over there who obviously don't know what's in the Budget.

The chart shows Manitoba revenue by source, and the objective of this is to point out, to the revulsion of

Manitobans, that the Federal Government, through transfers, is providing lesser money to the Province of Manitoba. It's a skillfully hidden, deceitful chart, Madam Speaker, that hides the truth because percentages mean nothing. Real dollars are what tells the truth. Madam Speaker, I want to give you the real figures.

Contrary to the implication from that chart, on page 2, that federal support to the Province of Manitoba is down, it's indeed up, Madam Speaker. It's up from \$834 million in 1980-81 to \$1.273 billion in '88-89, an increase of 52 percent. But you see, Madam Speaker, again the hidden message from the Premier of this province, as Leader of the Opposition in 1981, comes through with the other two areas that are contained in that chart; namely, Manitoba income taxes, namely, Manitoba collections.

Madam Speaker, again I say the Premier delivered on that hidden promise of taxing Manitobans more because income taxes in '80-81 were \$524 million and today are \$1.273 billion - a 142 percent increase to Manitobans.

Manitoba collections - if you think that is bad - have gone from \$614 million in '80-81 to a whopping \$1.652 billion this year, an increase of 169 percent in the Pawley administration's term of office. How true they were to keep their promise of increasing Manitoba taxation.

Madam Speaker, this chart - and I used to have a lot of faith in the credibility of the Finance Minister. We had no faith in the former Minister who was wont to baffle-gab, distort, and do everything but tell reasonable figures to the people of Canada and the people of Manitoba. I used to have some faith in the present Minister of Finance until he developed this chart. What that chart proves, Madam Speaker, is that age-old adage that figures can lie, and liars can figure. That's an age-old adage, Madam Speaker, and I'm not accusing anyone of anything, in case you wish to get up and call me to order. But I'm simply pointing out that that old adage is very much true and is proved in this chart.

Madam Speaker, I listened to the Minister of Education the other day and he talked about the deficit not really being so bad. I remind my honourable friend, the Member for Flin Flon, again what he told me in 1982 in this House that a \$5 million deficit was manageable. Well, Madam Speaker, what do they mean? - (Interjection) - Oh, the Brooklyn Dodger is not even in his own seat when he is talking, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the interest costs from 1981 to 1989, what have they done on this manageable deficit, according to the Member for Flin Flon? What have the interest costs done?

In 1981, the last year of a Conservative Budget in Manitoba, the interest costs were \$94 million. Today, if we use the figures given by the Minister of Finance, they are allegedly \$523 million. But again that old adage of figures can lie comes in, because that's not a truthful number in terms of the interest costs. But even if we use his figure, the increase is better than five-fold of interest costs. But if we add in Manitoba Properties Incorporated, and we add in the Hydro Rate Stabilization Interest Subsidization, the increase in interest costs is over \$530 million in a seven-year period of incompetent government by the NDP; \$530 million in increased interest costs.

I simply want to tell you, in seven years, in seven short years, Madam Speaker, these people have taken

interest out of the pockets of Manitobans, interest that would pay for the entire Medical line, in other words, every fee for service for every doctor in Manitoba. The entire Personal Care Home Program would be paid for by that interest cost increase in seven years. The entire ambulance service would be paid for, and the entire Pharmacare Program would be paid for, and we'd still have money left over to run Business Development and Tourism, and the Department of Corporate Affairs. That's how massive an increase in interest costs because of your mismanaged spending is denying Manitobans programs today.

Two years from now, Madam Speaker, the interest bill by this Pawley administration will equate to the entire funding of every single hospital in the Province of Manitoba. That's how much the increased interest cost will be for Manitobans. The entire hospital budget of \$750 million, and this is the manageable deficit that the Member for Flin Flon told me was quite appropriate at \$500 million in 1982. I mean fools can speak, but seldom do they make sense, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, one of the things that I want to draw my honourable friend's attention to, and I did this last year, and I want honourable members to bear with me because I truly and sincerely want the Member for Brandon East, who is so quick to bring up his statistics, to look at the 1981 Budget Address.

Madam Speaker, from time to time my honourable little friend from Flin Flon attempts to interject with nonsense, and I think now he has to admit it was nonsense when he said that \$500 million deficits were manageable in 1982. He speaks nonsense, Madam Speaker.

I simply want to take my honourable friends to a couple of pages in the Budget documents. Go to the 1981 Budget, and it is in the financial statistics, and what it demonstrates for Manitobans is the amount of refinancing of provincial debt that is required over approximately a 25-year period hence. Take that page - and I beg the Member for Brandon East to do it before he leaves this House in ignominy - because if you take a look at that and you compare it, for instance, to the identical chart produced on page B-11 of last year's Budget and you compare it to the same chart - I will quickly find it in this year's Budget - page 9 of the Financial Statistics - take a look at those three charts. What you will find - and here's the interesting numbers and I want you to bear with me as I give them to you and I want you to think seriously about them - in the 1987 Budget, the last Budget of this Finance Minister that he presented to this House, the amount of debt to be refinanced from the year 1999 to the year 2017 in last year's Budget was \$971 million.

Look at the statistic in this year's Budget, one year later, and includes only one additional year, namely from 1999 to the year 2018, and you will find in one year the amount of refinancing required by future Manitobans has risen to \$1.446 billion, a \$475 million increase in one year - 49 percent year-over-year.

Madam Speaker, we have the Minister, the part-time Attorney-General, tell us that the Free Trade Agreement is not good because it binds future generations and he says we should not go for that. How has that incompetent \$2 billion-bonzo Minister of Finance justify the tying down of future generations by, in one year, the amount that has to be refinanced by yet unborn Manitobans, an increase of 50 percent in one year?

But, Madam Speaker, those aren't the frightening figures. Let me take you back to the 1981 Budget. My honourable friends will be interested in seeing that. In the 1981 Budget, the time period from 1990 to 1994 - at that time some 10 years to 13 years out - the amount of refinancing on the debt incurred by all governments in 110 years of government was \$600 million in 1981.

Do you want to know what it is today in this most recently tabled Budget? I want my honourable friends to listen to this, because in the time period now, 1990-1994, we aren't going to refinance and reborrow, on behalf of Manitobans, \$600 million. No. We are going to be forced to reborrow \$2.158 billion, 3.5 times the amount in seven short years of fiscal mismanagement by the NDP- (Interjection)- Yes, my honourable friend from La Verendrye says, "How do you blame the feds for that?", and that is an interesting question.

Madam Speaker, let me just develop one more statistic from the 1981 Budget because it is even more shocking. The 1981 Budget, the amount of money to be refinanced from that time period, 1995-1999, was \$310 million as a result of debt incurred by 110 years of government in this province.

What is the comparable figure for the 1988 Budget? I had to do one thing. I had to add in one figure and that was the previous year's figure for 1999, because that particular period is lumped into a five-year group now. Madam Speaker, in 1981, we had to refinance \$310 million. In 1988, for that same time period of 1995-1999, we have to refinance \$1.892 billion, a six-fold increase in the amount of refinancing.

Now, Madam Speaker, do honourable members opposite understand what they have done to founder the future of this province in their seven years of administration? And I lay the blame entirely on the former Minister of Finance, the man who gave us \$500 million-plus deficits per year, and even had to have the Provincial Auditor tell the people of Manitoba that he even cooked that figure and it was too low.

My honourable friend, the Member for Brandon West, calls him, "Dr. Debt." I'm not as kind. I call him the "Two Billion Dollar Bonzo," because that's what he has saddled future generations of Manitoba with, in terms of debt which costs us \$200 million every year, the entire cost of operating every personal care home for every senior citizen in the Province of Manitoba, given to us by the Member for Rossmere. Little wonder they left him out of the Finance portfolio after the last election.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to ask my honourable friend from Flin Flon if, after reviewing those documents - and I realize he probably won't believe the figures I put on the record today, but surely he will take the time to go to the 1981 Budget and compare those figures to the 1988 Budget, and simply tell me - I'd like the Member for Flin Flon to tell me if a \$500 million deficit is manageable, because future generations of Manitobans, future businesses in this province are going to have to pay not only the capital cost of that debt, but the interest on it in every ensuing year.

And that is why this socialist government which deems to care and share for Manitobans is having to cut hospital beds, ration medical services, reduce funding to universities, hospitals, to offload costs to municipalities, as in the case of ambulance costs, as

in the case of education costs, as in the case of RCMP costs. These people have financially bankrupted this province.

Madam Speaker, I simply want to say that when a government is faced with budgetary decisions, they have two things they can do. They can raise taxes to control the deficit or they can cut spending. That's one of the two options. This government has consistently increased spending at double the rate of inflation. They have raised taxes, and then they have still borrowed enormous amounts of money and saddled future generations.

Now, Madam Speaker, we didn't have tax increases this year. As a matter of fact, someone told me - and it's coincidental that this came true - someone told me that it was so cold in the middle of January that Howard Pawley had his hands in his own pockets. Madam Speaker, obviously that's true, because Howard Pawley and the NDP, in mid-January, were drafting this Budget and they elected not to increase very many taxes. So obviously they did, for a short period of time, have their hands in their own pockets.

Madam Speaker, why didn't they increase taxes? I simply tell you they didn't increase taxes because taxation in Manitoba to the individuals in this province have reached the saturation point, where you no longer can get any more return from raising taxes.

Your liquor taxes are not on a rise which would justify the increased rate of taxation, because you have saturated. What you've done is you have now a taxation regime in Manitoba, Madam Speaker, that fosters an underground economy, the development of an underground economy where people are doing work for cash, providing services for cash - unreported to the tax man - because this NDP administration has driven the rate of taxation beyond what is bearable by those working Manitobans. And a working Manitoban is certainly breaking the law when he participates in the underground economy, but he has no option because he has to feed his family. He has to provide for the education of his children and their university

MR. D. BLAKE: He has to buy Autopac.

MR. D. ORCHARD: And above all, Madam Speaker, as my colleague for Minnedosa reminds me, he has to buy Autopac and pay his telephone bill and his hydro rates - all driven up by this incompetent NDP Government.

Madam Speaker, what disturbs me about this government is the entire arrogance with which they approach governing in Manitoba today. This is the most arrogant, uncaring administration I've ever seen. We ask straightforward questions in this House. Do we get answers so the people of Manitoba can know what the NDP are doing? Of course not. We get answers that ooze with arrogance from members opposite in the Cabinet. And, Madam Speaker, it shows up every single day on the television screen as question period is televised.

I hate to say this, because we would like to get direct answers from this Cabinet. But the longer you give answers that ooze with arrogance, the more offended and the more turned off, and the more firm in the

commitment Manitobans will be to get rid of you next election.

So keep giving your arrogant answers to the people of Manitoba. They're watching you and they are disgusted. They're absolutely disgusted with a government that can't take responsibility for its actions.

You have a Minister who had his files shredded, who didn't tell the people of Manitoba about losses in Autopac prior to the last election - and his reward is to be shifted laterally out of the portfolio so that the slick-talking Member for the Interlake can come in and try to bail the government out of massive increased rates in Autopac.

Now, Madam Speaker, the people of Manitoba - I am very sorry that I mentioned that the Member for Interlake, the Minister responsible for MPIC, was "Mr. Slick Minister," because that honour belongs to the Minister responsible for MTS. He is the "Mister Slick" in this House

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. D. ORCHARD: . . . and I apologize profusely to my honourable friend, the Member for Concordia. I hated to take away his reputation as "Mr. Slick" in this House. Madam Speaker, I think I hear the faint cries of a pack of jackals from the opposite side. This group of government who pretend to have a handle on the future of this province don't know what they are getting the province into. If they do - and they are proceeding willingly along that path - then truly they are the most insincere government that has ever represented the people of Manitoba and have done more to mortgage the future of Manitobans than any Free Trade Agreement can do, than any government by Mr. Roblin, Mr. Campbell, and other distinguished Premiers.-(Interjection)- Madam Speaker, I will continue with my remarks

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

The hour being 12:30 p.m., I am interrupting the member who will have 13 minutes remaining when this matter is again before the House. The House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 p.m.

(English translation of Hon. G. Lecuyer's speech in Volume XXXVI, No. 14, pages 415-418, Tuesday, March 1, 1988)

HON. G. LECUYER: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Since this is the first opportunity I have had to speak since the beginning of the legislative Session, I would first of all like to congratulate you and offer you my best wishes in carrying out your duties.

I would also like to point out the tremendous progress you have made in your command of the French language. I am also confident that you will carry out your duties in a just and equitable manner and with all your customary wisdom. I would, Madam Speaker, also like to acknowledge and thank the voters in the constituency of Radisson and, on this occasion, reiterate my commitment to serve them conscientiously and diligently to the best of my abilities.

Thirdly, I would like to congratulate the Minister of Finance on having presented to this House a Budget

which is the result of a long hard search for equitable measures for the taxpayers of this province. In particular, it is clear that this Budget takes into account the needs and priorities which most closely affect Manitobans in their daily lives, because it is aimed at creating jobs and maintaining a balanced and progressive economy.

This Budget is also aimed at maintaining the best and most envied social programs on the North American continent. I am of course referring to health programs, care for the elderly, day care for children and education, to mention only a few.

I would like to salute my colleague, the Minister of Finance, for having guided this process with such mastery. I say process because the preparation of the Budget is an arduous task which requires that all possible data be obtained and the impact of all options be measured.

He made balanced and responsible choices, recognizing our obligations to provide services and programs that are accessible, and to maintain taxes at a fair and competitive level, and finally recognizing that it was necessary to make a major effort to reduce the deficit in order not to compromise the future.

Madam Speaker, a reduction of \$81 million, a reduction of 19.5 percent in the deficit illustrates better than any words what I have just said. Although the Mulroney Government committed itself to presenting a budget without a deficit before the end of the decade, this Minister of Finance, Mr. Wilson, is now saying that this will not be the case before 1995. And if the Conservatives are re-elected in a few years, they will tell us that a budget without a deficit will not be attainable before the year 2000.

In the interim, they continue to present budgets with deficits beyond \$30 billion as the Liberals did before them. And like the Liberals before them, they are not concerned with re-establishing justice and equity in the imposition of taxes. I repeat, Madam Speaker, they are not concerned with re-establishing justice and equity in the imposition of taxes, despite their commitment to do so during the last election campaign - once again, empty promises.

They announced the program of fiscal reform and stopped at that, with the result that, once again this year, many high-income earners will not pay any taxes or at least not their fair share. Meanwhile, the majority of low- and middle-income earners will once again have to pay more, not only for essential services but also to pay for luxuries and privileges for these rich gentlemen and, what's even worse, to pay for toys such as nuclear submarines and planes, while at the same time cutting the percentage of contributions to the provinces to finance health and post-secondary education.

This, Madam Speaker, is where the priorities of the Conservatives lie. These are the priorities they have in Ottawa, and we don't imagine that their priorities would be any different here in Manitoba.

Our government has maintained its commitment to priority programs in this Budget, such as employment, health and education. For the NDP, these do not only include programs for the rich but rather programs which must be accessible to all Manitobans, because this is their right.

This is an attitude which goes back to the time of Tommy Douglas. He himself told the story one day of

how he had injured his knee, and that the injury had affected the bone. He had osteomyelitis. His father who worked at a foundry could not afford to pay for specialized care. Three or four years later, the condition worsened and the family doctor examined the child and said to the father that the leg would have to be amputated. Luckily, an orthopedic specialist was looking for cases to treat as a part of his medical teaching. It is in this way, through charity, that young Tommy Douglas underwent surgery and had his leg saved. From that moment on, Tommy Douglas promised that, if one day he had the opportunity, he would see to it that no child in Canada would ever be denied medical services because his parents were too poor. And he kept his promise. He didn't forget when he had the chance, and he instituted the first health care program, Medicare, as we know it, in Saskatchewan. That is the program which was the forerunner of the Medicare Program which we all have access to and take for granted today.

For us, as New Democrats, we know very well that the other parties, the Conservatives in particular, are much less committed to maintaining the Medicare system. And according to the statements we have heard from some of the members opposite lately, we might even ask ourselves whether they really intend to maintain this program.

We need only look at what is happening in some of the neighbouring provinces to realize that gradually supplementary premiums, fees for rooms, etc., are being introduced. We know that Medicare, the system that makes the best health care available to everyone will only survive if we are committed to it.

It is for this reason that, once again this year, there will be an increase of \$111 million for health care, \$40 million of which will go toward a trust fund of \$50 million to promote innovation and reform, which alone will enable us to maintain Medicare. Another \$500,000 will go toward research.

This Budget also contains considerable financial support to maintain quality services in education, social welfare and day care, etc.

And finally, recognizing that difficulties persist in the agricultural sector, the Budget indicates that measures announced last year will be maintained to provide assistance in this sector and, in particular, benefits in the amount of \$12 million which farmers will receive in the form of the Special Farm School Tax Assistance Program, as well as an increase of 28.2 percent over two years in the budget of the Department of Agriculture. We are also planning assistance in the amount of \$48 million through the Agricultural Credit Corporation.

Madam Speaker, our commitment in the area of health care is valid for all Manitobans, whether rich or poor, and we have also incorporated this principle in the policies implemented in the department for which I am responsible, both in the area of workplace safety and health and the environment. I was, therefore, able to announce a few weeks ago two measures, in addition to the measures which have already been adopted over the last four or five years. I am referring to two regulations. The first is the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System of WHMIS, and the Health Hazard Regulation.

The first of these regulations is aimed at identifying and the other controlling health risks in the workplace.

We are hoping in this way to significantly increase the right of employees and employers to information and participation so as to allow them to intervene in the area of safety and their health and safety through joint committees.

They will, Madam Speaker, in this way be able to make decisions or contribute to the decision-making process to ensure their own well-being. These are preventive measures which will have an enormous impact in decreasing occupational illness, on the condition of course that there be cooperation, consultation, consensus and evaluation on a continuous basis between employers and employees.

This is not simply once a year when it's time to collect employers' contributions for the Workers Compensation Board. It is not simply a matter of discussing workplace safety and health once a year. It is, Madam Speaker, on the basis of this preventive measure that workplace safety and health can be attended to throughout the year, and it is in this way that we will be able to decrease the number of occupational accidents and illnesses.

In Canada, a worker is injured every 12 seconds. This is unacceptable, of course. The Dupont Corporation has evaluated that each accident represented an average of \$18,650 in direct costs in 1985, and that indirect costs for occupational accidents and illnesses represented four to ten times that amount. Of course, the suffering, trauma and concern experienced by workers and their families cannot be measured in terms of dollars.

Madam Speaker, the principle of equality, opportunity and accessibility are, according to our government, fundamental to the Canadian federation. The Leader of the Opposition has said that the government has no vision. Not only is this a false and unfounded statement, but it is also a rather curious comment on the part of an individual who hopes one day to become the leader of the province, although he has never himself expressed a single idea indicating his plans for the future and his long-term plans for Manitoba, not even during the last election campaign, except perhaps to indicate that we would maintain existing programs and reduce the deficit while, at the same time, proposing \$300 million in new expenditures and abolishing the payroll tax. When asked how he proposed to accomplish this miracle, he answered that they know how to administer effectively.

Of course, Manitobans didn't elect him because they didn't believe him, and with reason, knowing what the Conservatives have done under the Lyon dictatorship, when expenditures in the areas of health and care for the elderly had been frozen unilaterally and without consultation, and positions unjustly cut without any concern for the unemployed. What the Tory Leader was proposing in 1981 and still is today is to make drastic cuts and to adopt the same *laissez-faire* attitude which led the province into the depression.

Their leadership, Madam Speaker, is based on the following principle - the strongest will win. Manitobans know that the current government has a vision for the future and know that this vision is shared by the majority of Manitobans.

Madam Speaker, the citizens of this province were not tricked by the untruthful slogans because they had in their daily lives experienced unemployment under the former government. They experienced the lowest

minimum wage in the country. The lack of concern for health and safety was another factor to which they were accustomed. There was, Madam Speaker, a general lack of concern for social programs.

Manitoba was in last place or among the last, economically. The economy was on its deathbed. Today, the Leader of the Opposition has the nerve to say that we are in the process of creating an economic desert, while Manitoba is at the top of the list in terms of employment and construction, etc.

Madam Speaker, we need only look at the statistics and prognoses of the major financial institutions, whether it be the Bank of Commerce, which says: "Manitoba will have the best growth record in Western Canada," or the Royal Bank, which said in December 1987, "The main source of growth in Manitoba this year has been the construction sector and related industries spurred by continuing work on the Limestone Hydro Project."

We could, Madam Speaker, give several examples. There is also the Bank of Nova Scotia, the Investment Dealers Association. There are numerous examples to indicate that today with regard to economic indicators, Manitoba is in a good position in relation to the other provinces. Lastly, I would like to quote the comments made in the Dominion Securities on January 15, 1988, with reference to Manitoba's economic future, and I quote: "Manitoba's gross domestic product is expected to rise 3.2 percent in volume terms in 1988. This represents a repeat of the estimated growth in 1987 and counters the trend of decelerating growth at the national level."

A little further on, Madam Speaker, it says: "Manitoba enters its sixth year of economic expansion backed by solid economic fundamentals and a minimum of unsustainable imbalances. The consumer sector will benefit from lower interest rates through much of 1988 and a further decline in the unemployment rate."

The future of Manitoba under the New Democratic Government is being spoken of in positive terms.

Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition claims that he would balance the Budget if he were in power. He says that he could make the necessary cuts, and he accuses the current government of creating a deficit and spending too much. However, he congratulates the government in Ottawa, despite the fact that it has not been able to maintain its commitment to balancing the budget. The government in Ottawa is spending more than 27 percent of its revenues on interest on the debt. I would like to add that, in Manitoba, it is costing us 11 percent of revenue to pay the interest on the debt.

In addition, this government in Ottawa contributes less than 20 percent of the Federal Government's revenues to the provinces for health, education and welfare. More and more is being paid to finance the debt and less to maintain social programs. This is what the government in Ottawa is doing.

This government is also being praised by the Leader of the Opposition for its so-called tax reform which, in reality, favours those who earn more over those who earn less. If there are any doubts in this regard, Madam Speaker, allow me to quote a few more passages, and I quote from the Brandon Sun of February 11, 1988, on the Wilson Budget: "The richest people in the country are the biggest winners," Shirley Seward, the Director of the Social Policy Studies Branch at the

Institute, said this week. The Budget presented by Finance Minister, Michael Wilson, makes virtually no major tax change except for an increase of 1 cent a litre in the tax on gasoline." I will come back to that, Madam Speaker.

Also in the Sun of the same date: "In the first three fiscal years of Conservative rule, personal income taxes brought in an extra \$8.6 billion to the Treasury, an increase of 29 percent. Corporate taxes, by comparison, brought in only 5 percent more revenue in the same period. Who's paying?"

In the Winnipeg Sun on February 15, and this message is for the Leader of the Opposition, "Filmon sounded more like he was a candidate for the federal Tories rather than an objective politician discussing the benefits or liabilities of the Budget for Manitoba." At the end of the article, it says: "Filmon says after last week's Throne Speech, that the NDP had no plan, no blueprint. Well, he should take a look at his own words. Praising deficit cuts of 2.4 percent nationally, and criticizing cuts of 30 percent provincially is hardly a stellar plan for the economy. The Tory Leader had better start to create a consistent policy, not one on which he automatically praises anything done by the federal Conservatives, and automatically criticizes the Manitoba Government. He is, after all, supposed to be running to lead Manitobans, not angling for a seat at Brian's right hand. If he wanted a federal apologist, we would have drafted Jake Epp."

This is what the papers have been saying. In 1987, 3,000 new businesses and 9,000 new jobs were created in Manitoba. Madam Speaker, is it not the Leader of the Opposition who has lost all notion of reality? And the desert to which he was referring, could it be in his head?

Madam Speaker, our government is not perfect, because there are no perfect governments. We have made mistakes, and we will make others, but they will in general be errors which are the result of efforts and measures made on behalf of Manitobans. Even if we are not always successful in obtaining the desired results, there is within this government a will and conscience ready to serve the citizens of the province. We are not trying to wash our hands of our responsibilities as is currently the case, for example, in British Columbia. On the contrary, because in 1981 at the height of the recession, we established objectives for the creation of jobs and economic development, and implemented programs and budgets in consideration of this.

It is, therefore, not an accident that today this province has the second-lowest unemployment rate among the provinces, nor is it an accident that we are in second place in terms of economic development, well ahead of the performance of even the richest provinces in terms of resources in the West, which are administered by our cousins from the Opposition.

It is not necessary today, as the Conservatives did in 1981, to convince Manitobans and to convince ourselves using slogans such as, "Sitting on a gold mine," and, "Don't stop us now," while they left the responsibility of watching over economic progress in this province to the private sector.

In Manitoba, it was of course necessary for our government to obtain additional revenues to provide Manitobans with the essential services they claimed.

However, for Manitobans who earn \$20,000, the tax burden is the second lowest in the country. For someone earning \$35,000, we are in fourth place in terms of

taxation and, for those earning \$50,000, we are in first place. So the people who earn more pay more, not less, as is currently the case with the Wilson Budget.