

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, 16 February, 1988.

Time — 1:30 p.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 Minister of Finance.

HON. E. KOSTYRA: Thank you, Madam Speaker.
I would like to table two reports. Firstly is a report required under section 8 of The Natural Resources Development Act, which is the Annual Report of A.E. McKenzie Co. Ltd., together with the Auditor's Report; and also, as required under section 14.1 of The Civil Service Superannuation Act, the Actuarial Report of the Civil Service Superannuation Fund as of December 31, 1986.

MADAM SPEAKER: Notices of Motion . . . Introduction of Bills . . .

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MADAM SPEAKER: Before moving to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery where we have, from the Lifeskills Training Program, 14 students sponsored by the Limestone Aboriginal Partnership Directorate Board. These students are under the direction of Mrs. Connie Forbister. The group is located in the constituency of the Honourable Minister for Northern Affairs.

On behalf of all the members, we welcome you to the Legislature this afternoon.

We also have, from the Laidlaw School, 68 students from Grade 9, under the direction of Mrs. Janet Blizzard. The school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

On behalf of all the members, we welcome you to the Legislature this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Autopac - Silver contract

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation.

I wonder if he will be tabling today the contract that the government has entered into with Mr. Robert Silver as part of the agreement by which he is stepping down

as president of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister responsible for MPIC.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, I will take that question as notice. I don't have the contract here with me.

MR. G. FILMON: I wonder if the Minister can indicate whether the contract has been written and signed as of yet.

HON. B. URUSKI: If all the details are not complete, I'll take that question as notice, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the contract has been finalized. I'm not certain that it has been signed

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, I wonder if the Minister could indicate.

It is my understanding that the contract is for \$90,000 for the services of Mr. Silver for one year, that Mr. Silver will be allowed to work at other consulting work during that period of time.

I wonder if the Minister could indicate whether or not Mr. Silver, by this contract, will be committed to spend any particular minimum amount of time working for the corporation.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, I'll take the specifics of the question as notice. I want to . . .

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, yesterday, we were being accused of hiding Mr. Silver, that he was being let go and that he would not appear before the legislative committee. Today, we are saying now that we have him, we don't want him, because we want you to hide him.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, the Minister indicated that Mr. Silver was stepping down as president. He indicated that part of the agreement involved a contract - a contract between MPIC, or the government, and Mr. Silver, worth at least \$90,000.00.

All I'm asking is a very simple question. Is Mr. Silver required to spend any particular minimum time doing work on behalf of the corporation for that \$90,000.00?

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, Mr. Silver has other duties for the government as well as for the corporation. He is also on other boards for which he will be performing, and he will be performing duties for the corporation and he will be appearing before the legislative committee.

MR. G. FILMON: Well, Madam Speaker, given that Mr. Silver is also able, as I understand it, under the agreement, to enter into other consulting work, has he

any commitment to MPIC to give them any amount of time for the \$90,000.00?

HON. B. URUSKI: Yes, Madam Speaker.

MR. G. FILMON: Well, very simply, Madam Speaker, then, will the Minister indicate what that commitment is?

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, I have taken that part of the question as notice and I will bring that information back to him.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, does the agreement contain any clause that would limit Mr. Silver's right to speak publicly about the corporation or his differences with the government on policy matters with respect to MPIC?

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, obviously, Mr. Silver has been able to speak out - he has spoken with the media yesterday - and I am sure that he will be free to speak out.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, are there any limitations in the agreement with respect to his ability to speak publicly?

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, I have indicated that I will be bringing the details of that contract back and then the Leader of the Opposition can see for himself.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, I wonder if the Premier could indicate when he was first informed of the agreement whereby Mr. Robert Silver was stepping down as president of MPIC in exchange for a \$90,000 consulting contract.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, towards the end of last week.

MR. G. FILMON: Was this a matter that was approved by Cabinet, Madam Speaker?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, it was approved by myself.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, I wonder if the Premier could indicate whether he has been fully informed of the details of the \$90,000 contract that was signed with Mr. Silver in exchange for his stepping down as president of MPIC.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, yes, I believe the Leader of the Opposition has received a commitment from the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation to provide the details.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for MPIC.

Yesterday, he was not prepared to indicate when discussions were first initiated with Mr. Silver regarding his dismissal. Will the Minister today indicate if the reason for this settlement that was given to Mr. Silver is because it was on rather short notice and he was able to write his own departure?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister responsible for MPIC.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, the honourable members want to dwell in innuendo and muck. Mr. Silver was — (Interjection) — Madam Speaker, Mr. Silver's employment with the government and as chief executive officer of Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation, his position was not terminated. It was by mutual agreement.

Mr. Silver met — (Interjection) — Madam Speaker, I have a letter from Mr. Silver indicating his reasons for departure. He has wanted to go back to the private sector. He has indicated to the media. He's met with a number of reporters both from the print media and from the television media. Madam Speaker, if the members of the Opposition wish to lay innuendo and muckrake, I will leave that to them, Madam Speaker. I will not go into that kind of a discussion.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: My question is to the same Minister.

Will he table the letter that he just referred to? Further, I wonder if he would now indicate what the policy differences that were arising between himself and Mr. Silver might have been that Mr. Silver alluded to.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, I've indicated, just like there have been differences between the Leader of the Opposition, the Member for Pembina and the Member for Morris on issues within their own party, there are always differences between individuals as to issues.

Madam Speaker, Mr. Silver and I and the board of directors have worked well as a team, notwithstanding the difficult time in the insurance industry, not only here in Manitoba but across the country. He has and he will continue to provide valuable advice and information during the transition period, Madam Speaker.

Autopac - recovery date

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Perhaps, Madam Speaker, I could ask the same Minister if he is now prepared to put before this Legislature an estimated date of recovery by MPIC, Autopac Division, to rather than the red side of the ledger to the positive black side. What is his objective?

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, I am pleased now that members opposite are asking questions to say, what is the claims situation going to be like? I've tried to put that point to them over the last number of days of questioning.

Madam Speaker, we believe on the best estimates that we have that it will be maybe longer than a year or two before the corporation is totally in the black. In fact, the original projection was that we likely may

not break even under the original rate proposal. The changes that we made will extend that period of time, but it is all conditional upon the number of claims, the frequency of those claims, and the extent of claims costs that will impact on when the corporation breaks even, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Ste. Rose, with a final supplementary.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Well, obviously, Madam Speaker, the Minister either does not have a plan for the recovery of this corporation or he's unwilling to share it with us at this time. Does the corporation, at any point, pay for its share of public opinion polling?

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, I'm not certain of that question, but I'll take it as notice.

Osborne House - building replacement

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Housing.

The Minister, as well as members of the Opposition, Madam Speaker, has been deluged with petitions protesting the living and working conditions at Osborne House, Winnipeg's women's shelter.

When will this Minister replace the building presently occupied by Osborne House, including facilities for its multifaceted work, including space for counselling, child care, as well as living accommodations?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Housing.

HON. M. SMITH: Madam Speaker, the program to deal with battered women is one where Housing looks after the basic housing portion and Community Services looks after the program. There has been a study of Osborne House which our department has been reviewing, along with Community Services. Again, they found that the basic condition of the house was really sound. It was a question of the level of programming, and there is a cooperative process in place with Community Services to work out the program issues.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: With a supplementary question to the same Minister, with all of the expertise available to the Housing Department, why was it left up to Osborne House to provide outside experts on such things as construction for this option to be presented to the Housing Ministry?

HON. M. SMITH: Madam Speaker, my understanding was that it was their request that they have help with the study. I was not Minister at that time, and I will review the agreement that lead up to that study but that is my understanding at the moment.

MHRC - Native Women's Shelter

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: With a final question to the same Minister, Madam Speaker, the Native Women's Shelter has tragically lost its appeal to the City of Winnipeg for a variance for construction of their shelter on the corner of Salter and Matheson. Despite promises by MHRC to help them in the preparation of that variance request, they received no help. Why did they receive no help, and will they receive help when they make a second request?

HON. M. SMITH: Madam Speaker, I absolutely just digress from the opinion expressed by the Member for River Heights.

MHRC was involved very closely with assisting the Native women to acquire that house and we did have an option on it. We were very hopeful that they would not have - they did appeal to the community committee and received permission for rezoning. It was only at a higher level of appeal to the city where they lost the appeal.

My understanding is that we gave an appropriate support for that. We certainly supported the project and, therefore, I'm at a loss to understand what the member thinks we could have done. In addition, we are now actively supporting them in their search for an alternative house.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Madam Speaker, just as a question on the basis of the Minister's answer, if they provided so much help, why did they not appear at the variance meetings?

HON. M. SMITH: Madam Speaker, as I understand variance hearings, it is the responsibility of the sponsoring group. I think the role of Manitoba Housing as the mortgager for the purchaser and mortgager of the property was not crucial to the hearing. As I understand the gist of the hearing, it had absolutely nothing to do with MHRC's role. We had been supportive. We had an option on the property and, as I understand it, that information was well-known by the group hearing the appeal.

Autopac - Silver dismissal

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Rhineland.

MR. A. BROWN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Crown Investments.

I wonder if the Minister would tell us when he was notified of Mr. Silver's dismissal from MPIC. Was he part of that decision?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister responsible for MPIC.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, the information dealing with Mr. Silver's departure from the corporation has been brought forward to this House, and I have given the information to my honourable friends.

Autopac - Crown Investment involvement

MR. A. BROWN: My question again is to the Minister for Crown Investments.

The Minister made a statement to the press on June 4, 1987 that 25 financial professionals would be hired to assist with Crown Investments. My question is: How have these financial professionals contributed to the financial mess that MPIC finds itself in?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Crown Investments.

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

I hope the member opposite is reading the Provincial Auditor's Report. I'm sure the member opposite was at committee, or read the Hansard from committee, when the Provincial Auditor stated that the financial measures that have been in place with the new holding company, which was proclaimed in September, are a strong improvement over the former system and are very, very positive in terms of the accounting procedures and auditing procedures for Crown corporations. I would recommend to the House that they read the Auditor's comments on the holding company. I'm sure the member opposite wouldn't have asked a question like that, if he hadn't read that document.

MR. A. BROWN: My question is to the same Minister, Madam Speaker.

The Minister has a budget of \$2.5 million and he has a staff, I believe, of about 25 people. I would like to know just how have they been involved in assisting MPIC in the mess that they find themselves in.

HON. G. DOER: Madam Speaker, the holding company legislation, which was passed last July in this House, was proclaimed in September. We have been hiring a few staff in terms of the holding company. I believe we have some out of the Auditor General's Department who had been in Winnipeg and are now hired in the holding company. We have now four expert accountants, some from the private sector and some from the public sector, who are dealing with the monitoring.

As I stated last year, Madam Speaker, the holding company would take some time to get staffed up with people. We are trying to have an orderly implementation of the legislation which we passed in last Session and which was proclaimed some five months ago. We think we have the beginning of some very, very competent staff in terms of the monitoring of Crown corporations and the financial systems in Crown corporations. Indeed, we were glad that the Auditor did indeed recognize that in both his annual report and in his comments to the Legislature, addressing the questions from the Member for Morris.

We didn't plan on hiring 25 staff on September 1, but we are bulletining some number of positions, and we hope to be fully staffed by June of 1988. Indeed, Madam Speaker, it's also our intention to abolish the old Crown Investments Department, as we stated last year.

Autopac - hit and run coverage

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have a question to the Minister of the Public Insurance Corporation on Autopac.

Madam Speaker, are Manitoba drivers or individuals covered under Autopac when they are involved in an accident causing vehicle damage and charged with leaving the scene of an accident?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister responsible for MPIC.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, the honourable member is asking for a legal interpretation. I'll take this question as notice.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Madam Speaker, the question is fairly straightforward. Are individuals who are involved in a vehicle accident causing vehicle damage, leaving the scene of an accident or charged with leaving the scene of an accident, covered by the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation?

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, the question is a legal question. There are certain exclusions to every insurance contract, whether it be under MPIC or any private contract, for certain offenses that an individual may have been convicted of. I'll take the question as notice.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Madam Speaker, I am sure that it's very obvious to the people of Manitoba why they're in such trouble when the Minister can't answer such a simple question.

I have a further question to the Minister responsible for Government Services, Madam Speaker.

I would like to know, and the people of Manitoba to know, how much the damage was to the government vehicle driven by the Minister of Northern Affairs, and who paid for the repairs to the automobile during such a similar incident?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Government Services.

HON. H. HARAPIAK: Madam Speaker, the vehicle that was in an accident, at that time driven by the Minister of Northern Affairs, has been repaired. The cost of the damage was in the vicinity of \$1,600 and, yes, the Minister who was responsible for the accident is in the process of paying for the accident at this time.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Arthur, with a final supplementary.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Yes, Madam Speaker, to the same Minister.

I want to be clear. Has he indicated that the Minister is paying for or has paid for or will pay for the \$1,600 damage to the government car?

HON. H. HARAPIAK: Madam Speaker, he is in the process of paying for the repairs of the car.

Day care closure

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

MR. M. DOLIN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister of social services.

Yesterday, I got a call from some distraught constituents who have children in the Tiny Town Day Care Centre on McPhillips, which is a private day care center where the owner is saying he was closing up. I noticed in the paper today that they have contacted the department.

Can the Minister give the parents some assurance that the day care centre will remain open while negotiations are going on for some future to that day care centre for the 52 children there?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Community Services and Corrections.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

While I'm not able to give assurance that the day care will stay open, Madam Speaker, I am able to give assurances to the parents that we are in the process of successfully finding alternative spaces for them. By eleven o'clock this morning, six of the parents and the children have been placed in alternative places, and we are in the process of contacting all of the other parents.

We have done a search to find out what day care spaces are available in the surrounding communities, and the information that we have suggests that they all should be able to be accommodated in existing day care spaces. The role that we are taking is to get information to them about what is available and to help them get that information and get their children into appropriate day cares as quickly as possible.

MR. M. DOLIN: I thank you; and through you, to the Minister, I thank her for the action.

I would like to know on behalf of the parents: Will the physical facility be able to be made available to the parents, should they wish to establish their own day care centre or some form of co-op?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Actually, the Member for Kildonan is raising a question that I thought of initially when I first heard of the problem. That is that the parents might want to take over the day care and form a co-op. However, in looking into it today, we have found that day care was identified as being unviable financially early on. Before the existing owner opened up the day care, the department met with him and told him that it was not a financially viable operation. He was paying something like \$2,500 a month which makes it impossible, not only for him but, at that monthly rent, also for the parents to take it over, having to pay that monthly rent and make it a viable cooperative.

If they want to form a cooperative, I think they will have to look for other accommodation where the rent would be at a level that the day care, whether a cooperative or a private day care, could handle.

Day Care - formation assistance

MR. M. DOLIN: Madam Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Co-op Development in light of the answer of the Minister of social services.

Is the Department of Co-op Services prepared to assist these parents, should they contact them, in forming a co-op either in that facility or another facility to ensure that the children have continuing day care operations? Does the department do that kind of thing?

MADAM SPEAKER: That question is hypothetical. Does the Honourable Member for Kildonan wish to rephrase?

MR. M. DOLIN: Yes. I'd like to ask the Minister of Co-op Services: Does the Department of Co-op Development have services to parents to assist them to form their co-op day care centres.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Co-op Development.

HON. J. COWAN: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Indeed, the Department of Cooperative Development has those services, and is pleased to provide those services to parents in the province who require day care services and wish to structure a co-op in order to provide those services to themselves for the benefit of their children. What I would do in this particular instance is have my staff contact the Member for Kildonan directly to seek out a contact person within the group of parents, and we can initiate discussions with them.

Of course, that action will be taken with the caveat in mind that day care co-ops, which are extremely successful in this province - and I believe the members of those co-ops who have worked hard to develop that system within the province should take some great pride in what they have been able to accomplish and the leadership that they have been able to show the rest of Canada in respect to developing day care co-ops. The caveat, of course, is that it be a viable co-op. We will work with the parents to look at every opportunity, to look at every potential, to look at every way that we can make that co-op viable, if it can be made viable, in order to provide those types of services.

I know the Member for Sturgeon Creek does not want to hear about the successful things that Manitobans are doing for themselves, Madam Speaker, but it is important that they know the opportunities they have to benefit their own community and to benefit their province by working with this government.

WCB - accountability

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie.

MR. E. CONNERY: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the people of Manitoba were outraged over the increase in Autopac rates but, in terms of alienating the business community and the subsequent loss of jobs, the mismanagement of the Workers Compensation Board are manifold more

damaging to the Province of Manitoba. Madam Speaker, the Minister in charge will say it's because they have been assisting the workers and their families, but the mail that I get indicates that this just isn't so. The workers are not happy with the operation of the Workers Compensation Board.

Madam Speaker, will the Minister responsible for the Workers Compensation Board outline his plan to this Assembly that will make the Workers Compensation Board accountably viable and legal within the context of the act?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister responsible for Workers Compensation.

HON. H. HARAPIAK: Madam Speaker, the Member for Portage la Prairie makes a very interesting assumption when he states that Workers Compensation rates have increased because of the services to injured workers, the families and their dependents.

If the Member for Portage la Prairie would take the time to talk to some of his colleagues who were in government from 1977 to '81, then he would understand the difficulty the Workers Compensation is experiencing at this time. When the Workers Compensation Boards right across the country were increasing their rates - next door to us the Saskatchewan rate was \$2.35 at that time; Manitoba's rate at that time was 87 cents. Everybody knew that they were going downhill with the assessment rates they were charging at times. We also knew that the services weren't being received by the workers.

Madam Speaker, that is why, because of the public outcry that was being heard at that time, the Minister responsible for Workers Compensation at that time called an inquiry to deal with the workers compensation system.

The Lampe Report was brought forward at that time and it showed very clearly that services were not being delivered to the injured workers, and the government at that time acted on it. They acted on two of the recommendations - 2 out of 78. They increased some computer systems and they put in a telephone in the outlying areas so they can improve the services. That was an improvement to what was going on before, but the injured workers till now were not receiving the services.

When we formed government in 1981 there was a massive outcry from the injured workers in Manitoba dealing with the lack of services that they were receiving at that time. Now we recognize that and that's why there was a new board put in place to deal with all the lack of services that were being put forward by the Workers Compensation. There was the Cooper Report at that time as well that said very clearly it was an anti-worker compensation board that was not delivering services to the injured workers at all.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

I remind honourable Ministers to keep their answers brief.

The Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie.

MR. E. CONNERY: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would have thought that by now, since the last Session, the Minister would have destroyed his

recording and learned a little bit about Workers Compensation.

Madam Speaker, last year the Minister gave us a financial plan that was going to show in the year 1999 where accumulative and annual deficits of the Workers Compensation would be paid off. This was a different plan than the previous Minister or different date.

According to Mr. King, this plan is not factual and it will not work. Why did the Minister mislead the Legislature and tell us that the plan would be paid off by the year 1999?

HON. H. HARAPIAK: Madam Speaker, I am looking to you for direction, but the Member for Portage la Prairie said I misled the House. I did not mislead the House at any time.

MADAM SPEAKER: I interpreted the honourable member's question as not accusing the Minister of deliberately misleading. I hope I was correct.

WCB - inquiry re increases

MR. E. CONNERY: Madam Speaker, I did not accuse the Minister of deliberately misleading, but I'm sure glad that the Minister is now looking to somebody for direction. He sure needs a lot.

Madam Speaker, in acknowledging the devastating effect that the Workers Compensation increases have had on the business community, will this Minister have the decency to put a moratorium on increases and once and for all call for a public inquiry into the operation of the Workers Compensation Board?

HON. H. HARAPIAK: Madam Speaker, it's interesting that the members opposite would be calling for a public inquiry. There have been five public inquiries in the last eight years. — (Interjection) —

The Member for Arthur looks for the results. I just shared with him the results of the Lampe Report. They acted on two of the recommendations, and since that time we have acted on more than 75 percent of the recommendations of the Lampe Report. The member should also be aware that there was a Legislative Review Committee that tabled their report last year.

On the strength of that Legislative Review Committee, we have put in place an implementation team who are dealing with the recommendations that were brought forward by the Legislative Review Committee. — (Interjection) — The Member for Portage la Prairie asks about the freeze on the rates. Very recently the board made a recommendation or they made the assessment increase of 20 percent, and that is what is in place at this time, a 20 percent increase, an average increase in cost; and if they were to take care of all the operating deficits, they would have asked for 41 percent. But after consulting with both the business community and the labour community, they came up with a report to ask for a 20 percent increase this year.

Norway House Band - education meeting

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Roblin-Russell.

MR. L. DERKACH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have a question directed to the Minister of Education.

Recently some educational problems have developed in the Norway House area which has resulted in the chief of the Norway House Band, Chief Alan Ross, to request an emergency meeting with the Minister of Education, a meeting which he was denied, Madam Speaker.

I'm wondering whether the Minister was at least aware of such a request.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

HON. R. PENNER: Madam Speaker, the meeting was not denied. Arrangements are being made for the meeting as soon as it can be scheduled. The situation which has been referred to is not of that character that a meeting has to be held within six hours of a request. It deals with differences in the community as to the appropriate place for schooling for the community.

There's a problem that is not unique to Norway House where there is schooling in the community and schooling on the Reserve, and it is our hope that in those situations a collective or a consensual resolution of those problems can be achieved; and I would certainly be prepared to work, both with the community and with the band to see that that happens in Norway House.

The community has concerns which are different than the concerns being raised by the reserve. I have to take account, obviously, of both sets of concerns and I'm certainly more than willing to meet with the chief of Norway House - as I am more than willing to meet with the mayor of the community - and I have said so to both the mayor and the chief, and those meetings will take place.

MR. L. DERKACH: Well, Madam Speaker, in view of the fact that this government prides itself with openness and fairness, I ask the Minister whether he would consent to meeting with Mr. Alan Ross today, since Mr. Ross is in the gallery and would be available to meet with the Minister on this emergency matter today?

HON. R. PENNER: Yes, since the chief is in town, I would be prepared to try and rearrange my schedule to meet with him at about 5 o'clock this afternoon. — (Interjection) — Oh, he lives in town? Well then, there's no difficulty, there's no great emergency. But nevertheless, since he's in the gallery and it's cold outside, I will meet with him at 5 o'clock this afternoon.

MR. L. DERKACH: Madam Speaker, it's unfortunate that the Minister makes light of this situation and, in fact, the meeting has nothing to do with what the temperature is like outside. I think the chief should at least be afforded an apology by the Minister.

School funding inequities

MR. L. DERKACH: Madam Speaker, I have a new question to the Minister. The funding approach that was announced by the Minister for 1988 has created probably the greatest inequities in school funding that school divisions had ever experienced. Some school divisions are receiving as much as a 14 percent increase in their funding, while others are receiving less than 1 percent.

In view of the fact that this government has, in its Throne Speech, pledged equal access to opportunity of education, I ask the Minister of Education whether he is now prepared to amend his approach so that those school divisions who are receiving less than 5 percent will be treated in a more equitable and fair fashion?

HON. R. PENNER: What the Member for Roblin-Russell appears to be unaware of or not be paying attention to is that the differential in the way in which the grant is distributed is indeed because of an attempt to implement an equalization formula.

Equalization means, among other things, that it will be in the very nature of things that some of the poorer divisions will get more than some of the more affluent divisions in terms of the rate base. That's what equalization means. When we implemented portions of the Nicholl's Report in '85, it was an attempt to narrow the gap between the richest and the poorest, and we have succeeded to a considerable extent but - I will say this - not yet enough.

That is why we have announced a very carefully articulated review of educational finance to try to deal with some of the continuing problems. That we will do, and that we will do with full consultation. But it should be clear that if a 5 percent overall grant were distributed evenly to every school division, then indeed we would be widening the disparity between school divisions and that we don't want to do.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Roblin-Russell, with a final supplementary.

MR. L. DERKACH: Madam Speaker, on many occasions, we have heard the Premier and this government indicate and pledge that they would be moving towards 90 percent provincial funding of education in this province.

I have a copy of a letter, Madam Speaker, which was sent to Mr. Tim Sale from a small school division in this province, which says that the special levies that are collected in this particular school division amount to \$2,554,899 out of a total budget of \$5.033 million. Madam Speaker, that means that the education in that particular division is largely paid for through special levy.

I ask the Minister: Is this what this government means by a 90 percent provincial funding program?

HON. R. PENNER: Madam Speaker, one takes, as one must, the total cost of public school education in the Province of Manitoba and attributes to the cost the amount that the province pays with respect to capital costs and the interest on capital costs, with respect to the pension plan, with respect to the various grants for operations. Then in fact the province, from its revenues raised in various ways, is paying over 90 percent now of the total cost of the operation.

The pledge that we made with respect to 90 percent did deal - let me acknowledge immediately - with one aspect of the total cost, namely, operating costs. It was an expression of our philosophy where we believe that likely the income tax system is more progressive than the property tax system.

We are pledged to continue to work towards shifting towards a more progressive form of raising taxes to finance the public school system. That remains in place. But, Madam Speaker, I conclude, even if we were to reach, on the operating side, 90 percent or some figure close to it, it would not be, given the nature of this province and the fact that the rate base in some divisions is weaker than others, it would not mean the identical percentage in each school division.

MADAM SPEAKER: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

MADAM SPEAKER: On the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for St. Vital, and the proposed motion of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and amendment thereto, the motion stands in the name of the Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie.

MR. E. CONNERY: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, when I initially decided that I would like to run for the Legislature of Manitoba, it was for some pretty strong convictions and for some pretty strong reasons. I didn't like the direction that this province was going.

Madam Speaker, it seems to be traditional, when one gets up to address the Session, the first speech in the Session, that we wish other members well. But, Madam Speaker, I refuse to be a hypocrite. I came here to get rid of these guys. I didn't come here to wish them well. My desire is to move them out of that side of the House and put Manitoba back on the track that it should be on.

Madam Speaker, when I saw the deputy leader get up yesterday and say that theirs was a caring and sharing government, that the social democrats were a caring and sharing group of people, it was just a little bit difficult to accept.

Madam Speaker, what did that Minister do as Minister of Community Services as a caring and sharing person? While she was in control of Community Services, babies died. Many, many areas. Abused women that she is so concerned about did not get the funding that they needed. Madam Speaker, there was a litany of problems in Community Services.

But in my constituency, the constituency of Portage la Prairie where there's the Manitoba Developmental Centre, Madam Speaker, is an institution that needs an awful lot of care and upgrading. When we brought these problems to her attention, Madam Speaker, she didn't care. She wasn't prepared to share some of the funding of this government with those people at the Manitoba Developmental Centre, people who are not able to look after themselves because they're mentally handicapped. Madam Speaker, when it gets up to something like 95 degrees Fahrenheit in that facility, it's pretty unbearable for those residents to live and for the workers to care for them.

Madam Speaker, we're dealing with a government that has one concern on its mind, and that's power.

Madam Speaker, these people are hungry for power and they're mad for power. Madam Speaker, I'm sure you can appreciate that, attending some of their caucuses, you must have an insight into the discussions that are going on and how they're being devious in planning what they're doing.

Madam Speaker, this government, this NDP Government, is selling the future generations of Manitoba just so that they can remain in power. — (Interjection) — Yes, Madam Speaker, the Member for St. Vital, I didn't think it was constructive criticism as the Premier said, it sounded more like a condemnation of the government that has outlasted its time. I would hope, Madam Speaker, that the Member for St. Vital would take a hard look at his responsibilities, as he outlined them, and the criticism, if it really was valid, that he would move across the floor to vote against the government on this particular bill.

Madam Speaker, you continually mention that all members are supposed to be honourable. But, Madam Speaker, if all members were honourable, they would act in an honourable way. Madam Speaker, trying to portray themselves as caring and sharing while they're not is not portraying themselves, in my estimation, in an honourable way.

Madam Speaker, in the community, and I can speak very knowledgeably about the community of Portage la Prairie, when I look at the efforts of the people of that community - people who are caring and sharing, people who are prepared to go out and work, people who are going out in the United Church drives, people who will work for the recreation, the sports groups - they're giving of their time and of their money. You know, Madam Speaker, I don't see the socialists out there. The socialists, by and large, there's a few, I'll grant it, there are a few, but there are very few who are caring and sharing. I'll say to the leader of the Liberal Party, I see a lot of good Liberals out there caring and sharing. It's just unfortunate that the policies of their leader are not that great for the province as a whole.

Madam Speaker, this Premier of Manitoba talks about caring and sharing, but when he made the faux pas of making his tax return public, we found out what a caring and sharing Premier gives to the charitable community. I think it was something like \$165.00. I believe the Leader of the Opposition was in the area of \$2,500, and the Liberal leader, I think, was somewhere over \$2,000.00. I compliment those two people for their generosity to the community - caring and sharing.

A MEMBER: Harvey, you can take the lesson.

MR. E. CONNERY: Madam Speaker, they talk about the Member for Ellice. He's very caring and sharing, too. We see his tenants suing him for a proper electrical system. I find that repressive that this would come about.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

Could I caution the Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie that personal attacks not dealing with a member's position on issues, etc., is not parliamentary.

MR. E. CONNERY: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for drawing this to my attention.

Madam Speaker, this government did not get into power by being an honourable, forthright, honest group of people during the election. Madam Speaker, there are many ways to tell a lie, and one of them is by not telling all of the truth and hiding the truth from the people of the province. Madam Speaker, this government really did an excellent job of hiding from the people of Manitoba the facts of life that pertain to the financial difficulties that this province was in.

Madam Speaker, the Third Quarter Financial Statement, the latest that a financial statement has ever been released, hiding because it showed a tremendous additional deficit. Madam Speaker, the annual report of MTS was delayed longer than any other report was because, in that report, it flagged the problems at MTX, and we know the subsequent millions of dollars, \$27 million, that has been lost to the people of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, we can look at the changes of the year-end for MANFOR. MANFOR showed a deficit or a loss of \$31 million in the operations, but they didn't take into account the interest on the \$252 million that the people of Manitoba have invested in that company. Madam Speaker, I hope that they can sell it to a group of people who will run it in the way that it should be run, because that was an excellent facility for business for the people in that community. I would hate to see it die but, unless something happens in a meaningful way, it will. We see now they're projecting for the sawmill side an additional loss of \$4.5 million to \$5 million.

What about the losses of the cover-up in MPIC, Madam Speaker. I'm sure that it must distress you to see that sort of thing happening. The shredding of the documents from the cartoon in the Free Press of the Premier saying, "not my bucky." I hope that nothing was deliberate; in fact, we're sure they weren't. But the fact that they were shredded shows that there is a tremendous amount of incompetence.

Madam Speaker, the cost of the WCB was not shown until after the election. When these people talk about being an honest, straightforward, upright group of people, Madam Speaker, my devotion, my dedication is to see that there be a change in government and that these people will be doing something else, trying to earn an honest job.

Madam Speaker, I read the Throne Speech that, I'm sure, the Honourable Lieutenant-Governor George Johnston must have had some difficulty swallowing as he read it because the Lieutenant-Governor, a former member of this House, is a very intelligent and a very caring and sharing person, and to read such dribble must have really stuck in his throat.

Madam Speaker, the Throne Speech is reminiscent of a party that is admitting defeat before it has even gone to the polls. Madam Speaker, there are quite a few areas within this Throne Speech that should require some comment and I outlined them, Madam Speaker.

In one place it says, "More Manitobans than ever before are working at productive jobs." Madam Speaker, our statistics show when they say a productive job, I would think it means something in the way of a long-term job. Madam Speaker, statistics show that since this government took office, 50 percent of the male jobs created are part time. And, Madam Speaker, 25 percent of the female jobs created by this government are part time. Now if that means that they

are working at productive jobs, Madam Speaker, this government's got a long ways to go to understand what productive is.

And they say our economic development has outpaced the Canadian average. Well, so has our debt outpaced the Canadian average, Madam Speaker. We heard the Leader of the Opposition, yesterday, indicate that we have the second highest per capita debt of all provinces. Only Newfoundland is higher. And, worse off yet, is that we have the highest foreign borrowings per capita of all the provinces in Canada.

Madam Speaker, they go on to say in the Throne Speech that they've listened carefully to Manitobans as they have shared us with their hopes and creative ideas for the future. Madam Speaker, I've talked to a lot of individuals who have come before this government, before Cabinet Ministers, to talk to them and, yes, I would have to say that they gave them an audience. But, Madam Speaker, talking to this government, talking to any Cabinet Minister on that side of the House, is like talking to a speed bump. — (Interjection) — I'm glad, Madam Speaker, that I've finally got to them something that they could understand. It takes quite a while.

Madam Speaker, they talk about in the Throne Speech of ensuring equitable treatment and fair opportunities for all regions of Manitoba. Well, Madam Speaker, that is the furthest thing from the facts of life. We have a program called Community Places, and when we added up the dollar bills spent in the last bout of Community Places grants, 76 percent went to NDP ridings. That is called equitable treatment and fair opportunities for all regions.

Madam Speaker, in the constituency of Portage la Prairie, a Native school, teaching Native people, applied for a \$10,000 grant for a library. Madam Speaker, they were refused. Madam Speaker, one of the things your party says is they are in favour of day care. The one in Portage was turned down when they requested a \$25,000 grant from the Community Places. But, Madam Speaker, they had \$75,000 to give to a snowmaker for the ski slope at Thompson. They had \$75,000 for items that are that. I'm not against helping out those areas, but we have to prioritize, Madam Speaker. We don't have all of the money we would like to have to give to everybody.

Madam Speaker, in all of the things that this government has done, and the way that they have handled their money, it's obvious that they're concerned about 30 constituencies, because they believe that if they look after 30 constituencies, they've got a chance at being re-elected. Well, I don't believe they have. But they're sure going a long ways to doing that. Madam Speaker, what it says when this government abandons another 27 constituencies, that they're saying that people who supported the NDP party don't count, that's the caring and sharing of this government that they have said to those NDP supporters, "Well, you're expendable because you won't help us get elected, and we're not going to make sure that you get your share."

Madam Speaker, in the Throne Speech, the Premier tried to deflect as much as possible away from the problems of Manitoba by throwing in free trade. This Premier hopes that this Legislature would devote a lot a time to free trade and forget about the important things that are happening here in Manitoba. Well,

Madam Speaker, I can assure you that we will debate free trade, but we're not going to let it become the focal point of this Legislature. The true concerns of Manitobans and the folly of this government will be debated first.

Wasn't it ironic that he wanted Prime Minister Brian Mulroney to call a federal election over free trade? Madam Speaker, we asked this Premier to reconvene the Legislature so we could debate the free trade issue here in this Legislature so that all people could have an opportunity to put their side forth. What did the Premier do? He embarked on a dog-and-pony show, crisscrossing the province, with an orchestrated program to try to convince people in the news media that the people of Manitoba are against free trade. I can assure you, Madam Speaker, any knowledgeable person who has studied free trade and has any comprehension of what it can do for Manitoba is in favour of it.

I really am very, very disappointed in the leader of the Liberal Party, Madam Speaker, to also be opposing free trade. In my experience over the years, although it's changed a little, is that the Liberals were an aggressive group of people, and it's I think shameful that the leader of the Liberal Party would say that she's against free trade. I'm sure that her husband, who works for Inter-City Gas, maybe has some different opinions, but it's quite common these days for women not to talk about business with their husbands at night.

A MEMBER: Are you talking from experience, Ed?

MR. E. CONNERY: I think Sinc Stevens would understand that.

Anyway, Madam Speaker, I'd like to continue. While I say that we will get back to free trade later, it will not become the focal point of our concerns in this Legislature. Madam Speaker, when we go further down, it says "to the continuing employment growth." Madam Speaker, this government tries to say that they've done a good job in creating jobs, but they've been very, very selective, because if they gave out the whole story, then of course the people of Manitoba would realize that it hasn't been that way.

They laughed at one time when Manitoba was in a recession and Alberta was having a real high in their oil exploration, and a lot of people went to Alberta to try to make some quick money, including my son - went there for a couple of years. He didn't come back with a lot of money but he did make a lot when he was there. Madam Speaker, we see the out-migration from Manitoba again going. Each month it's getting larger and in the first six months of 1987, 1,600 people left this province for better climes and for better business opportunities.

A MEMBER: Less taxes.

MR. E. CONNERY: Less taxes. But, Madam Speaker, when we look at figures, they say that they've increased 10,000 jobs in the non-agricultural sector. So, Madam Speaker, when you look at and it was very interesting to get the January labour stats. I don't know where the Member for Brandon East is, but he likes stats, but he only likes them when they're a little bit favourable

to him. — (Interjection) — That's right, he can make any stat.

Madam Speaker, one of the tragedies is that between January of 1987 and January of 1988, we lost 6,000 people from the labour force - 6,000 people! Where did they go? Did they leave the province, or did they just run out of UIC benefits, or are they on welfare? What are these people doing? Madam Speaker, on the employment side, we have 4,000 people less employed this January than a year ago. We're comparing bananas to bananas because January to January is the way we should be looking at it. Madam Speaker, they try to talk about how good their unemployment rates are. — (Interjection) — Oh, but, Madam Speaker, yes, I made a note.

In 1981, when this government took over, there were 20,000 unemployed people in Manitoba; today there are 46,000, and they talk about their record of job creation, their caring and sharing.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. E. CONNERY: Now there's the Member for Radisson, now there's an example of competency in caring and sharing. The Minister who thought the tax scams were good and got involved in it. He didn't have enough money to pay out so he had to borrow it, and then forgot that he had borrowed it, Madam Speaker. I think that goes to show the caring and sharing that this government has.

Madam Speaker, the unemployment rates today, January — (Interjection) — What did he say?

A MEMBER: He called you a liar.

MR. E. CONNERY: Madam Speaker, I would normally ask the member to withdraw, but realizing where it came from, I can accept that.

Madam Speaker, Manitoba's unemployment rate in January was 7.5 percent. Manitoba has traditionally been 2 to 3 percentage points below the national average. The national average today is 8.1 percent, .6 percent below the national average. Madam Speaker, the federal unemployment rate, Canada, nationally, has been dropping very dramatically. Madam Speaker, Manitoba has not been keeping pace with the drop in unemployment that the federal have.

Madam Speaker, it also says that members will be asked to support an Employment Standard Code to facilitate improved relationship between employers and employees. Well, Madam Speaker, this government will never ever improve their relationship with the employers and the employees because of their attitude towards business in this province. The disgrace of the whole thing is the Minister that we have in Business Development and Tourism is one who put in so much of the labour legislation that is so controversial and so damning to business in this province and has not been in the interest of the workers as they go.

Madam Speaker, they also talk about their mental health services, and while they're talking about improved mental health services, we see so many of our psychiatrists leaving this province. So it doesn't matter what they shift it to, whether it's the central base or into the communities, if we don't have the

psychiatrists to work with the mentally ill, we're not going to be able to do much good.

Madam Speaker, it got very difficult when it got down to the sector called, "Building Rural Manitoba." When you read what this government says, and it says, "My government is pleased that farm income losses will be partially offset by payments from the Western Grain Stabilization Program and the Special Grains Program," Madam Speaker, there wasn't one innuendo or little insight into the fact that these were federal programs, that the Western Stabilization Program has not the money from the province but money from the Federal Government and from the farmers themselves.

The Special Grains Program, not one cent came from the Provincial Government, but they put it in here trying to reflect or deflect that this was a provincial program, thinking that the farmers of this country aren't wise enough to know it.

Madam Speaker, the farmers of this province know that this government is doing absolutely nothing for the farm community. It says, "The assistance provided by these programs clearly points to the need to revamp federal income support programs so they more adequately protect farmers from income declines experienced over the last three years." Madam Speaker, only since 1984 have the farmers of Western Canada been treated with some sort of grace by the Federal Treasury to support them in their time of need. Trudeau gave them a finger and said go sell your own wheat. This Provincial Government does absolutely nothing to help the farm community.

Madam Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan spends somewhere in the area of .5 billion, and Alberta is well above that level of support, where this province only has somewhere in the area of between 80 and 85 million in total that they're giving to the farm community. Madam Speaker, the farm community understands what this government isn't doing, and in spite of the Minister of Agriculture saying on TV that the Keystone Association was pleased with what his government was doing, when the reporters went to the president of Keystone, Madam Speaker, he couldn't understand where the Minister got that idea because they absolutely were not pleased with the plans of this government.

Madam Speaker, the people of Manitoba, the farmers of Manitoba have come to this government for assistance in a time of need. The Federal Government is prepared to assist, but when they came for a sugar beet stabilization program which was tripartite, Madam Speaker, this government fought kicking and screaming and shouting that they didn't want to help. They delayed so late last spring that with the moisture loss the loss in the yield was greater than any subsidy that this province will pay over the 10 years of that program.

Madam Speaker, it's really distressing to see that the Member for Rossmere has so much influence over the Minister of Agriculture because he was the main architect of blocking that signing of that agreement.

So, Madam Speaker, I am very concerned that this government should begin to take a look at the needs of the farm community. We look at bees, and the people that raise bees want to have some sort of support program so that they can maintain their position in the honey market and they're having a very difficult time. The only good thing that I can say that came out of this report is that now they are finally going to look at a beef feedlot stabilization program.

Madam Speaker, we've been after them since we've been into this Legislature, asking them to implement a feedlot program. Madam Speaker, as usual, this government will wait until it's far too late, the feedlot people have closed up. How many have shown bankruptcy or just closed the doors - and I go by the one at Carman - a huge beef feedlot operation not operating at all. I used to go by there and it would almost light up the night with the lights on and all the cattle in there that were being fed.

What did that do to our packinghouse industry, Madam Speaker? We see Canada Packers closed - over 700 direct jobs - and how many indirect jobs did we lose with the closing of Canada Packers? We see our calves leaving this province, going to Saskatchewan, Alberta, Ontario and we don't see them staying here to make jobs for Manitobans; and they talk about their School Farm Tax Assistance Program - it really did not help the farm community all that great.

I'm surprised that the Member for Lac du Bonnet hasn't told his government how stupid the way they've administrated that tax assistance program. It did not help all of the farmers very substantially. In fact, some farmers didn't, if they rented out their land. Madam Speaker, they could have done it very easily by taking it off the levy until every acre got some sort of assistance; but then that didn't help some of the supporters and we see a lot of it going to the small hobby farm which, Madam Speaker, was not the intent, I didn't think, of what we were requesting.

Changes to the Telephone System is some encouragement and I'm glad to see that the government is moving along that line. I hope it's in the area of private lines - that's what the farm community seems to want. So I will say that that is a little bit of good news. So there are a couple of very rare moments within it, but I do compliment the Minister in charge of MTS for doing that initiative and hopefully the farm community will benefit.

Madam Speaker, they also make mention of the support for aboriginal people. Its only two-and-a-half sentences but, Madam Speaker, the deeds and the doings of all governments have been terrible in their handling of the aboriginal people. I'm ashamed as a Manitoban that all we've done to the aboriginal people is placate them a little bit. Well, I see that the joker from Radisson is still with us, Madam Speaker.

A MEMBER: Still alive.

MR. E. CONNERY: He's still alive, and every once in a while he comes up for breath.

Madam Speaker, it ends up in the final address that my government has set out a clear agenda for this Legislative Session which will address the priorities and concerns of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, having gone through this Throne Speech, there is very little that addresses the concerns, the needs and the wants of this province, and I think it's an absolute disgrace that this would even be called a Throne Speech and that we would ask the Lieutenant-Governor to come in and read this.

Madam Speaker, there was an awful lot that wasn't in the Throne Speech. Madam Speaker, tourism for some reason with this government almost receives no

attention at all. I look back through the two previous Throne Speeches and the two previous Budget Addresses and tourism is a neglected industry.

Madam Speaker, tourism in Canada is one of the fastest growing industries, and I would hope that the Minister of Business Development and Tourism would pay some attention to the tourism industry. It hires some 30,000 people, Madam Speaker, in Manitoba. A lot of them are young people getting their first job. It's tremendously important that we build on this.

As the previous Minister said, they were looking to have a billion dollar industry by year 1990. Well, Madam Speaker, I think we're stuck somewhere in the area of between \$700 million and \$800 million that is generated through activity in this province through tourism.

Madam Speaker, if you look at it from a business point of view, for every dollar spent on tourism by anybody, whether it be a Manitoban, another Canadian or a foreign visitor to this province, 10 percent of that money goes to the provincial treasury, quite a bit goes to the federal treasury and some goes to the municipal treasury.

When we look at tourism, Madam Speaker, we have to look at it in the sense of seeding. We have a few farmers in this House who know what it is to seed. By the government paying attention to tourism is like sowing the seed that will reap many, many millions of dollars for this province - millions of dollars that, as caring and sharing legislators, we can give to those areas that require more funding in this province or help us reduce the deficit.

Madam Speaker, at this point in time, tourism is really a liability to Manitoba because between our interprovincial and international trade deficit, we're in the area of \$200 million. The Minister laughed, but obviously he, like the Minister in charge of the Workers Compensation Board, hasn't really done his homework to learn what his department is all about.

Madam Speaker, I'm disappointed that this present Minister is not willing to talk about tourism publicly. I used to enjoy at least the previous Minister getting up and making statements because she had a flair and that member had a real ability to handle a mike and to generate some enthusiasm. She didn't understand the portfolio all that well but at least she lent some class to it. Now we've got a Minister who is falling back on his Deputy Minister to make comments.

Madam Speaker, the Deputy Minister said we are doing well in the foreign tourism. Madam Speaker, foreign tourism increased 1.2 percent this year. I hope the Minister does not think that this is a good increase in tourism - 1.2 percent. Then the Deputy Minister said that Manitobans are making up for what we haven't got from other people. Well, that's the same scriptwriter that wrote for the previous Minister.

Madam Speaker, the other statistics don't bare out those facts. Accommodations in the first six months of this year of '87 were down, food sales are poor, retail sales are not doing well. So again, what are these people who are touring Manitoba doing?

Madam Speaker, just as an aside to this, in the food sales sector, the fastest growing sector in the food sales was the take-out food sales. The month that the 7 percent clicked in, the additional sales tax that wasn't there before, the fast food sector took a nose-dive and has been declining ever since. So that is an indication,

Madam Speaker, what ridiculous taxation can do to business in a province. I would hope that they would stop and take a look at it because it would help them in some of their other decisions that they have to make.

Madam Speaker, when you look at the comparisons of other provinces and you see what's happening with tourism there, you see most of the other provinces increasing. Last year, Manitoba was the only province to show a decline in foreign tourist trade. But, Madam Speaker, this year, there's a couple of other provinces that aren't doing as well, along with Manitoba. Saskatchewan and Alberta are doing very well. Ontario is doing excellent in their tourism. Madam Speaker, they have governments there that have a little bit of business sense, a little pizzazz, and they're going out and they're attracting tourists to their province.

This government seems to hate tourists because there might be a marine in there somewhere, Madam Speaker, and the Minister would be all upset if there was a marine in there. As was said earlier, Madam Speaker, now they're going to sell all the beaches so there's no place for the marines, or not let the Americans buy beaches so they wouldn't have any landing points and the marines can't come to Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, one of the areas that I would hope the Minister would look at is some sort of coordinating of the tourism industry in Manitoba. We see the City of Winnipeg going in one direction, the Convention going another, and in the rural and the province, and I think if we coordinated our tourism industry, we could eliminate some of the overhead and get more "bang for our bucks," as the previous Minister used to say. We also need to put in a little more gunpowder into that shot so we can do a little better job. The news media is one area that we're very, very poor at.

Madam Speaker, what also distresses me is that this government now appears to have neutered the Department of Tourism. Madam Speaker, we see people - we see the previous Assistant Deputy Minister gone, we now see the previous director, who took over, is gone, other people have left, and I don't see anybody replacing them. Madam Speaker, we need people in there that are out promoting Manitoba and I hope that this isn't one of the areas where they're conserving, because their apple polishers who are putting out all this free trade literature and advertising for their monopoly in MPIC, we could get rid of them an awful lot sooner.

Madam Speaker, they talked about regional concerns in all the regions, that every region in Manitoba get equal share, but in the tourism agreement all regions do not get an equal share. In fact, they've outlined where the money that's spent on tourism will go and it's only to a few very large firms that the tourism money is being spent up in Nejanilini Lake, which is way at the top end of Manitoba; Big Sand, way up in the center of the North. While this is great, a lot of other people are saying, hey, how about us little fellows? We create a lot of jobs too, and we feel that we're spending money on taxes. Why don't we get some of the assistance too?

Madam Speaker, in the Tourism Agreement there is nothing for the south or the southwest part of Manitoba, and Brandon is excluded from any assistance in those agreements.

Madam Speaker, the Minister of Business Development should be very ashamed of what's

happening. I honestly believe, and the members on this side of the House believe, that business is the vehicle that will regenerate this province. It's the vehicle that will create the wealth so that we can afford our social services, our health care, our education, and it'll also create the jobs that this government tries to say they're creating but really aren't.

But, Madam Speaker, I guess the distressing thing is the attitude that this government has for business in general. They just have no desire to work with business. In fact, anybody can be the Minister of Business Development. It's obvious that the Premier has made the Department of Business Development and Tourism a garbage dump for Ministers that have failed miserably in other departments.

It's obvious the present Minister was a disaster when he was Minister of MTX. He passed labour legislation that the business community said was absolutely insane. We have the Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology now sharing the Attorney-General's Department and I don't see anything much coming out of that department. So what have we got? A Minister that has a chip on his shoulder.

Madam Speaker, if we don't get the business community, the business sector in this province, back to work very soon, then we're going to miss out on all of the opportunities that we're going to have in free trade. Regardless of what the First Premier of this province says, free trade will go through and Manitobans, along with Canadians, will reap the benefits of free trade.

Madam Speaker, this government, as I said earlier, has misled the people of Manitoba. In the election campaign, in the first Throne Speech and in the first Budget, there was mention of a new \$50 million small business loan fund. Madam Speaker, to date, there's been no indication of a \$50 million loan fund to business. They just don't give much incentive to businesses.

Madam Speaker, in the election campaign, they said they were going to have business assistance to the rural communities and they were going to establish small business centres in the regional development centres. This did not take place either. This government has ignored the rural people and the rural business community, Madam Speaker, unlike the Federal Government who are working with the regions in Manitoba.

They've got a program called Community Futures, and I believe the figures are something like \$1.5 million per region that they're prepared to spend. The total of business development in the last two-and-a-half years in the way of programs, I believe, is around 2.5 million for the total province. Once again, here is this bad Federal Government who does nothing, in the eyes of the Government for Manitoba, carrying the share in rural Manitoba, carrying the total load, as a matter of fact, in rural Manitoba for the farm community.

Madam Speaker, they're afraid of free trade. But, Madam Speaker, we've got an industry in Portage la Prairie that I'm pretty proud of, and it's Vicon, or Cereal Implements. Madam Speaker, we see that those people are going into the United States opening up a sales distribution centre because they are able to compete with the Americans. There are no tariffs on the implement business - hasn't been for years - but when we see entrepreneurship and the skills and ability to

manufacture a good product, Madam Speaker, we in Manitoba can compete with anybody, and I think it's just a darn shame that this government and these two Ministers of business can't see that Manitobans are very capable of carrying the way and creating a lot of jobs through the creation of business in Manitoba. — (Interjection) —

I'm glad to see, Madam Speaker, my previous opponent, who I enjoyed debating with. Madam Speaker, also, we see . . .

A MEMBER: You don't enjoy debating with me, Ed?

MR. E. CONNERY: You haven't said anything yet. When are you going to say something? Then we'll debate. You know, I've never seen a dog with its tail between its legs so badly as this present Minister.

Madam Speaker, how many minutes have I got left, Madam Speaker?

MADAM SPEAKER: You have one minute left.

MR. E. CONNERY: One minute. Well, Madam Speaker, I had a whole lot more material that I would liked to have discussed with you. I would like to have discussed a lot on Workers Compensation, which I didn't have time to, and so another day we will have the opportunity with the various Ministers to get into debate.

So, Madam Speaker, in winding up my Throne Speech debate, like I said when I started, my goal was to rid the province of the NDP Government. Madam Speaker, I'll devote all of my time and energy to make sure that the people of Manitoba have an honest, caring and sharing government for the future years and for the future generations of this province.

Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speech from the Throne said: Manitoba is not a province of people who are content to dream. Manitobans have continued to forge a province at a future upon their dreams.

The unfortunate dilemma facing most Manitobans today, Madam Speaker, is that their dreams have become illusions. They are like those who live on the desert; that when they eventually believe they are coming closer to their dream, it is a mirage and it disappears in a puff of smoke or turns like ashes into dust. And the unfortunate part of the dreams that the social democrats have is that in their terms of reference, when they look at economic disaster after economic disaster, there seems to be a lack of understanding of what kind of social programs could have been generated with those incredible losses of funds.

If we look at the MTS disaster in Saudi Arabia, for example, we know that is money that could have been used to provide better rural service to Manitobans, many of whom still have to exist on party line service, many of whom cannot take advantage of new technology because they cannot use computers, many who find it impossible to dial for ambulance service, to dial for their local district councillor, to phone for

their school board or to make sure that a child at school is not ill. They cannot do that without a long distance charge. So when we went on the great adventure to Saudi Arabia, why was there no concern that this money could have been used to fulfill that essential function of the Manitoba Telephone System which was to preserve and to promote service to Manitobans?

If one looks at the successive deficits of Workers Compensation - now at some \$198 million, with another \$11 million forecast for this year - we know that ultimately the sufferers will be those very Worker Compensation claims, those claimants who require funding, but eventually will not get it because the corporation will be broke.

(Mr. Acting Speaker, C. Baker, in the Chair.)

When we look at the reinsurance industry and our MPIC, and we look at the \$18 million loss, and we look at the disasters that we have been involved in - payment on behalf of reinsurance - Bhopal, the Challenger and the Brighton Hotel, then again we must say, what could that money have been used for in Manitoba if we had not taken such a wild venture, if we had not entered into a field for which we had no training, no expertise, and instead have kept that money in the Province of Manitoba?

When we look at the deficit of this government and we realize that some 79.1 cent is the only thing left to spend on services, then we realize that our deficit has reached such proportions that what it is, is denying this government the opportunity to develop their programs, that health care and education will suffer because the funding is not there. The funding is being used to pay for the debt.

When we lose, as we have over the last two years, some \$575 million in foreign exchange, then we know again that this funding - had it been wisely invested, had there been some security involved in the attainment of that loan - then we would have had more of that money to spend on the citizens of Manitoba. And yet there has been never any concern, at least expressed here, at the magnitude of the losses vis-a-vis the program suffering that takes place, and that is the real tragedy, not that the money has been lost, but what has suffered as a result of the money having been lost.

If one looks at their overall objectives, and that is, I think, to provide better service for Manitobans, then one has to fault them on the economic side. One cannot just excuse them as being poor money managers; one has to make them accountable to the citizens of Manitoba for the lack of programming, suffering that is going on.

But it is when we take a look at the directions of their actual social ministries that they must be held most accountable. If we look, for example, at the health care ministry, and we look at the Speech from the Throne in which they announce new initiatives in preventive health care, then we have to say, if you are genuinely interested in preventive health care, why did this government make the home economists obsolete - home economists who were providing nutrition counselling, which is a preventive health measure. Why have we limited the number of public health nurses that are now going into our public schools throughout Manitoba, public health nurses that in earlier years did

monitor such things as head lice, but no longer do; public health nurses that used to run anti-smoking programs, but no longer do. So where is this new direction for preventive health medicine? Certainly the record in the last two years has been abominable in the same area.

We heard nothing in the Speech from the Throne this year about home care. Last year, if you will remember, we heard a reference to a 40 percent increase. And everyone was delighted with that because we thought finally there was going to be a movement away from acute care facilities only. But when the Estimates were examined in detail it became readily apparent that that 40 percent increase was only a 2 percent increase because they had over expended in home care by some 38 percent the previous year. So there was no new movement in the home care facility.

In terms of the issue of psychiatric medicine in Manitoba, it is indeed a most unfortunate scenario, because while we closed psychiatric beds last summer - 15 at St. Boniface and another three at Victoria - no consultation had taken place between the ministry and the departments of psychiatry throughout the province.

(Mr. Acting Speaker, M. Dolin, in the Chair.)

We know now that the beds at McEwen will be closed during the summer at St. Boniface, and we know when they re-open the same numbers will not be there that were there in the past. At the same time, we are not providing any new initiatives in community care for the mentally ill. We are in danger, Mr. Acting Speaker, of losing our accreditation in psychiatry. It is up for evaluation in two years. If senior psychiatrists keep leaving the province at the rate they are presently leaving, there will be no instructors. And the College of Physicians and Surgeons will say, "I'm sorry, but you cannot continue this program as an accredited program because you do not have the teaching in place."

In terms of overall initiatives in the health care department, no, we have not moved from an acute bed model. That is still the way in which we are operating our care. And I have not criticized this government for closing beds because I hoped against hope that they would announce the alternative programs available. But we continue to close beds and we do not announce alternative beds, alternative care programs.

If we move into the social ministry of the Attorney General - and I believe the Attorney General is indeed a social ministry - what announcement did we have this year? Well, we had the announcement that the Law Reform Commission was to be disbanded. The dream of a more perfect society, by laws which reflect the needs of that society, laws which make everyone equal before the law, that is going to disappear under this so-called social democratic government.

This social democratic government does not even provide for the security of person because it insists on closing RCMP detachments. And there seems no understanding on the part of this government that when you close RCMP detachments, the eventual result will be an increase in the crime rate, the eventual result will mean more drains upon the Community Services and Corrections Departments. So you have saved absolutely nothing. There is no one living in Winnipeg

today, with our murder rate already at five so early in the year, that is not concerned about the high incidence of crime in our capital city, and this government seems to have no direction in that field.

When we move into the area of Community Services and we deal with the mentally handicapped, we were all shocked, as I'm sure the government was itself, with the death of a young man living in a group home - a young man who had been brought from the Manitoba Developmental Centre and put into a group home. And we must examine why those group homes are not working. Well, they're not working because there aren't any rules; there isn't any training; the salaries paid are atrocious.

While we have made excellent movement in Manitoba in day care, and I have congratulated this government for setting the rules so clearly in terms of training, we have not done this in the field of the mentally handicapped. Yet the mentally handicapped so often are more vulnerable than the children because the children have parents as advocates. The children are picked up on a daily basis and spend time within their homes. Parents are aware very quickly if a child is unhappy. But those kinds of opportunities are not open to the mentally handicapped. So where rules and regulations and training were even more essential than in day care, here we have failed miserably.

We speak frequently about the need for Integration. Yet parents of the mentally handicapped are distressed at the lack of day programs available. Surely, we must listen to some parents who have spent 21 years of their lives raising these children, now adults. Surely, they know something about the needs of these young people, and yet they are not listened to. This government would prefer to take the line that integration is the absolute; that integration for all mentally handicapped in day programs is not the optimum.

We must listen if we are going to say we are socially responsible. If we deal in the area of day care, we still run a system in Manitoba that subsidizes every single place in public day care no matter what the income level of parents. While we still have a lack of numbers, surely, all of the dollars that we have for day care must be directed to those children whose parents are in financial need.

When we look to the movement that this government initiated in terms of community-based regional services for community service, it was a positive move. Yes, you are going to serve the community better if you put the social workers in the community rather than leave the social workers in a downtown Winnipeg office. But we haven't matched our dollars; we haven't organized our programs in the most efficient manner.

If we take a look, for example, at the present plight that many of the agencies find that there is money for foster care but there is not money for respite care, then we have set a wrong priority. If children are taken from families for no other reason than a financial reason, then surely the direction must be to put some money and financial resources in that family, but the agencies cannot control that. The agencies find themselves promoting foster care because foster care comes out of general revenues and not out of the agency revenues. That indeed is not a socially conscious decision.

In terms of education, we must also say where is the direction of this government? Let's take a look at some

of the recent announcements by the Department of Education. No one can complain, quite honestly, that a 5 percent increase in funding for public school education in a time of dire fiscal necessity is a wrong move. They have been generous to education - at least, we have to wait for the final Budget - but it would appear they have been generous.

But let us look at some of the things they have done. One of the things they did was to cut the textbook grant. Well, one has to understand that textbook materials have grown by incredible amounts. When you limit the resources available to teachers in the classroom, then you are going to offer an inferior educational program. Textbooks are a significant part of that education program, particularly in the senior grades.

When they decided to go to a per capita low incidence funding or special needs funding, what they forgot to realize is that certain pockets of Manitoba have greater needs for special needs funding than do others. By going on a per capita school board basis, what they have done is to deny the opportunity for many children in many divisions to get the optimum help required. If we have, for example, school divisions that had few per capita children with low incidence needs, or special needs, then that school division will still get the dollars. Yet we know that our Native children, rather than having a special needs of 5 percent of the population, indeed have a special needs of 10 percent of the population. So in the core area of Winnipeg, the funding will actually decrease for those children instead of increase.

When we look to the Housing ministry in terms of how it reflects its social democratic message, we ask when will Osborne House get a new shelter. I asked that question today, Mr. Acting Speaker, because I wanted to push the ministry, if I possibly could, into making some decisions because that house is overused. There are no physical facilities for counselling rooms, for quiet rooms. The day care is inadequate. The second floor has an exit from it at which any child could fall off the second floor roof. There is no fencing around the yard. No day care could operate in this province without a fence around the yard, but our women's shelter, where men may choose to come to grab their children, operates without a fence around its shelter.

The Native women, of which I also asked a question today - and this government supported the Native women in their desire for a Native women's shelter, and I thank them for that - but the Housing ministry has specialists in how to obtain variance permits. Specialists, but what do they do? They let four Native women who have never appeared before a variance committee before, never gone before the overall City Council Committee on an appeal - and they let them go by themselves - all of the expertise available and they do not help to provide that expertise. The Aboriginal Justice Committee has already lost one halfway house because of the failure of Housing to act, and if it doesn't act soon, they may indeed lose a second.

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

Perhaps, however, the social policy that has been most neglected in this government is the whole issue of our Native people. I think that all of us should have

looked with some chagrin on the weekend to the once-again portrayal of the Native. There we were at the Olympic Games and they were all brought out in their wonderful costuming and they played their drums and one of them sang "O Canada" in his Native tongue, and we said isn't it wonderful, the noble savage.

Well, the noble savage lives in this province as it does in every other province, with the highest unemployment rate, with the lowest educational standard, with the poorest medical health care. We read on Monday morning of a Native child who had died of frostbite, a Native child, 21; a young man, I suppose, who died because he saw no future, a child with massive learning disabilities.

I ask this government, even though I recognize full well that education of the Native bands is a federal responsibility, why don't they take the salaries for the 144 communicators and develop 144 special needs educators and put them on the reserves of this province so that that does not happen in the future. Why do we have a Native Affairs ministry in the Province of Manitoba if it does not act as an advocate for the Native peoples? Why are they not lobbying on a day-to-day basis for better funding for our Native people? Why is it only Native children in Manitoba who live on reserves who do not have the opportunity for special needs funding? Why are they the only ones, and why has this government failed to advocate on their behalf?

If we look to agriculture, it is indeed a sad state in Manitoba, which has the lowest level of provincial support of any province in the country despite the fact that we also have the biggest per capita Budget deficit. Could none of that money ever be found for agriculture? And even when we do initiate agricultural programs, we provide \$400,000 for the duplication of a federal program, instead of providing \$400,000 for new initiatives. When we bring in a loan write-down program, it doesn't make sense to bankers and accountants, let alone farmers, so they don't access it. What happened to your dream of fairness and equity?

A MEMBER: Are you talking about the NDP?

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Ah, yes.

But perhaps what dismays me the most of the Throne Speech is its reference and the earlier references by the Premier that free trade was to be the major initiative of this government. Well, let me make it very clear to both sides of the House that I think that the present Prime Minister negotiated a rotten deal. But that doesn't mean that free trade in some areas is not a valid objective and indeed not a good one, but I think that we have received most of our benefits out of GATT negotiations and we will continue to receive most of our benefits from GATT negotiations, and certainly not in an agreement such as the one that our present Prime Minister has drafted.

But if we are going to deal with a federal issue, then let's deal with a federal issue which impacts on Manitobans in a way which will be long lasting, and that is the Meech Lake Accord.

If we want to talk about the dreams of this nation, the dreams of equality, then the Meech Lake Accord does everything it can to destroy those dreams. It destroys the dreams of our multicultural people; it

destroys the dreams for women's equality; it destroys the dreams of aboriginal rights.

If we are going to concentrate on a federal issue, then let us concentrate on that issue. Let us not forget that Prime Ministers representing both the Conservative and the Liberal Parties, and men who have led the New Democratic Party as well have had big dreams for this country. They have seen a vision of Canada which was a gentle vision, where services would be offered to Canadians from one coast to another with some sense of equity - that a child living in Newfoundland could receive an education, could receive health care somewhat comparable to what was received in downtown Toronto.

If we move to opting-out formulas as recommended in Meech Lake, then that dream of a gentle Canada will not continue into the future. If my colleagues on this side believe that we will ever get any concept of a Triple E Senate, once we have a Senate which can only be reformed by all 10 provinces agreeing, then I'm sorry that their dream will never be fulfilled because I, too, believe in that kind of a development for Canada, and particularly for Western and Eastern Canada. When I refer to Eastern Canada I don't refer to the big provinces of Quebec and Ontario; I prefer and refer to the Provinces of Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

If we are to move this government, I would suggest that they examine their own motivations. Where is their social agenda? Where are their new initiatives for children, their new initiatives for the aged? We were promised in the last Throne Speech that there would be some movement done on seniors abuse. Well this year, not only was it not done, it was not even mentioned, not even a whisper of any program directed in that particular field.

Where are we going to provide services for people, and I make note of one group in particular to conclude, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There are a number of people on home care, who feel that they constantly strive against the bureaucrats. Their service is delivered by paid personnel directed by the Ministry of Health. All they have asked for year after year is a patients' advocacy group - someone that they could go to, to voice their complaints. Right now they complain to the very people who perform the service. It is an uncultured venture. You can get people prepared to serve on that committee who will charge you nothing. Why can we not move in something as simple as that, in terms of meeting a social mandate?

So our imagination takes us to look not at high expensive programming, not at ways in which you will further add to the deficit, but ways in which we can achieve equity for people without spending vast sums of money. If this government feels that they have lost the faith of Manitobans as a result of the last poll, it was not simply Autopac that did that. Autopac was the culmination of dissatisfaction. It was a belief that the individuals represented on the government's side no longer care about the citizens of Manitoba, and if you don't care, then do the honourable thing and resign.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want it very clear that while I will be supporting the Leader of the Opposition's motion, I do not agree with one of his premises with regard to free trade; but I believe the overall intention of his motion is such that the leader of the Liberal Party will support it.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

It is an opportunity that I'm going to enjoy having an opportunity to address this Speech from the Throne. However, I'm afraid it would be a much more auspicious occasion if there were something in the document that could be considered providing leadership, providing financial foresight for this province.

In fact, when I look at this government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it reminds me very much of the fellow who was ironing his shirts at home and ended up having an accident. He went to the doctor and he said, "Doctor, my ears are swollen and sore." And the doctor said, "My goodness, what happened?" He said, "While I was ironing my shirts, I had to answer the phone and I forgot which hand the iron was in." And he said, "Well, that explains one ear, what happened to the other one?" "Well," he said, "The fool phoned back." Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's what happens to this government every time they open the door and look at another Crown corporation. Every time they examine the operations of their departments, they burn another ear.

Frankly, what we saw in this Speech from the Throne was a cynical document that was an affront to the expectations of the people of this province. We should have seen vision and leadership, and instead we saw a scared, weak and tremulous government that has once again had to come before the people of this province and explain what they're doing with the reins of government. Frankly, in the wording of the Speech from the Throne, it would appear that they want to appeal to the fears of Manitobans. They want to open the anxiety closets of every working man and woman in this province. They want to open the anxiety closets of the farmers and the manufacturing sector. They want to create spectres of fear so that they can say to the Manitobans don't worry, we'll protect you, just trust us.

Listen to the ads on the television, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What does this really mean to agriculture in Manitoba? Is your job really protected? Is that the kind of government that the people of this province want? The people of this province want the truth. They don't need fear and anxiety flashed before them on the evening television without giving the facts. The anxiety that is created in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a result of the anxiety of that government that is afraid to face the reality of what will happen to their policies when this government cannot stack up against the problems that will be realistically compared between this province and other provinces when people look to future areas of development.

I see the former Minister of Education is getting quite exercised. Perhaps he wishes that he had taken gas rather than try to buy it. Frankly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this speech reminds me of a little boy who just came back from the woodshed. He says, "You know, I know I have a problem. I was wrong. You know, we shouldn't have done things the way we did, so we are going to have accountability sessions now for our Crown corporations. Believe me, we're really nice guys. We

didn't mean to hide these facts from you. We didn't mean to stick these irresponsible increases on at a time like this. It was just some silly little mistake that we made and, you know, if you would just trust us, you'll still love us, I'm sure, and just stick with us."

This is from a government that shut down the Committee of Natural Resources last year as soon as we got into some very interesting discussions on MPIC. This is the same government that had the Autopac losses and the reinsurance prior to the last election. And they are saying to the people of this province, "Trust us. We're really nice guys and gals. Trust us."

We had to back them into MTX. They had to be cornered and backed up so that they would admit to what had happened when they invested in the sand dunes of Saudi Arabia, but "trust us." You know, we didn't really mean to mislead the people of this province. Just trust us." You know, I'm sure that every one of us isn't so old in this Legislature that we can't remember how we tried desperately to get our parents to forgive us after we had really made a mess of what we were supposed to do. Trust me, it won't happen again, I swear. I will come home earlier. I will not forget to do the chores. They are like a bunch of little kids who came back from the woodshed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm sure the members opposite would be a little bit disappointed if I didn't refer to Autopac in some roundabout way in my reply to this barren document that we refer to as a Speech from the Throne. Frankly, it has been an unmitigated disaster. But the total inability of this government to manage its Crown corporations has now been galvanized in the eyes of the public because MPIC is only one of the problems that this government is going to have to grapple with. In fact, their handling of the Crown corporations, their handling of the MPIC has become an embarrassment to the people of this province. They have been meddling and they have been incompetent. They have shamelessly, politically interfered in the operations of the Crown corporations of this province.

That is a result — (Interjection) — Well, the Minister opposite would like to talk about Hydro. Hold on. We'll tell you what we think of what you're doing there too. Just keep your shirt on. — (Interjection) — Mr. Deputy Speaker . . .

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please, order please. Order please.

The Member for Ste. Rose has the floor.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I see that members opposite are somewhat concerned that someone might try to shed a little light on what they've been doing in the management of this government and with the Crown corporations. That they would denigrate the principle of service of cost and efficiency deserves the scorn that the people of this province have been heaping upon them. Frankly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Autopac simply helps to shed some light on to what has been going on at Hydro, what has been happening with the Workers Compensation Board and what was the underlying problem when they backed themselves into their problems in Saudi Arabia with MTS and MTX.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, how can we trust a government that would allow the operations of these Crown corporations to become so out of control that they have to be dealt with in the manner that we have been dealing with Crown corporations in the last two years of this government? Why does it take a disaster like this to focus the minds and the anger of Manitobans on this government before they will start to make adjustments in the manner in which they handle the Crown corporations?

Frankly, I think it's because they have been able - successfully, I must embarrassingly admit - to convince the people of this province, "Trust us; we're the good guys. Look at those fellows across the way; they represent the hard-nosed business people; they don't represent Manitobans."

That's what they portrayed us as. And they go ahead and hide losses in the Crown corporations. They will not come forth with the correct figures prior to an election, on Autopac. They are the ones who will invest in a sub-department of a Crown corporation in Saudi Arabia.

The people of this province have been deceived, and they've had enough. That's what they've been telling this government for the last six weeks, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They are saying that the time has come when the government of this province has to be accountable; the government of this province has to have the trust of the people; it has to have the respect of the people.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair.)

When they come into this House - again, I repeat - they look like a bunch of little boys and girls who have come back from the woodshed because they dearly hope that once again they can fool the people of this province into believing that we have an economically responsible government, that we have a morally responsible government, and that we have a government that is willing to govern on behalf of people and not simply govern to perpetuate their own jobs.

Madam Speaker, that is what happens when governments use Crown corporations as an extension of their social programs, as an extension of their ability to provide the "goodspeak" to the people of the province about what is happening.

What has happened to Autopac, Madam Speaker? Is this simply a malaise that sinks into a Crown corporation after a period of time, or is this because they have lost their bearings because of lack of leadership, political or otherwise? Or is this because they've lost their initiative to be innovative and dynamic because they've never been given the freedom to operate in a manner which is solely within their mandate?

Their mandate was to provide low-cost, practical, basic insurance to the automobile drivers of this province. Their mandate was not to be investing in reinsurance through the other arm of the MPIC corporation. Their mandate was not to take money from Autopac profits to study whether or not it was feasible to go into life insurance as another branch of this corporation. It was not their mandate to drive other corporations out of the province by getting into an area that was not delineated and not discussed in the early debates when MPIC was first introduced to this Legislature.

Madam Speaker, it seems to me that when a corporation is given a mandate to operate, any politician who would allow that corporation to stray beyond its original mandate does so in the form of risking the wrath of the electorate. That is what we see the government today suffering from, the wrath of the electorate, because they see their Crown corporations being used as a political arm of the government rather than a corporation that is supposed to provide service and provide it at a practical and reasonable manner to the people of the province.

We don't need to be looking at Crown corporations in terms of what will happen politically. We should be looking at Crown corporations in the light of what they can do to enhance the atmosphere of business, to enhance the atmosphere of service to the public within this province. The decisions that are made about Crown corporations going into areas other than what was their original mandate are damaging; they are wrong, and the people of this province now realize how wrong they are.

The very time when we need accountability in MPIC, at the very time when we want to know what has created the situation this corporation is now in, in fact, the very time when we would like to have some facts and figures as to precisely what is happening in this corporation, we now see that we are going to have a change in the new chief executive officer.

What we need is an early and open session of the Public Utilities and Natural Resources Committee so that we can ask some probing questions. We need the commitment of this Minister and of the Premier that we will have access to the corporate heads, not just Mr. Silver, but the other departmental heads and vice-presidents that can provide information.

The people of this province will not be satisfied with a scrubbed version of what has gone on at MPIC. They will want to know all of the facts. They will want to see all of the dirty underwear, and it will be our job to provide that to the people of this province. — (Interjection) — In this case, it might be dirty underwear rather than dirty linen.

Madam Speaker, it seems to me that our request to have the Crown corporations of Hydro and MPIC appear before the Public Utilities Board is both reasonable and practical in terms of providing information to the public. No matter how we cut the manner in which this province operates, the manner in which we bring the Crown corporations before the Natural Resources Committee of this Legislature, we do not have the opportunity or the resources to be able to force the corporation to provide the information that it can be required to produce at a Public Utilities Board hearing. That is really the bottom line, because a Public Utilities Board hearing puts more requirement on the corporation to be more forthcoming about what goes into the construction of the rates.

Quite simply, while there would be some expense to the corporation the initial year that they went before the PUB, because the automobile insurance industry is one line of insurance, the additional cost year over year should not be large. In fact, that is the only real way to have the people of this province in a position that they can understand the rate changes that are going before them.

If any government at that point tries to snowball the situation or stonewall the information to the public, it

will be a far more serious breach of public trust than it is to get into a political hassle in the committee as to whether or not certain information can be revealed. I think the situation that Manitoba Hydro finds itself in right now is a clear example of that.

Madam Speaker, when we have a Crown corporation that is a monopoly, that monopoly has responsibilities that are inherent with it being given a monopoly position in the province. I think that within the next six months, this corporation needs the opportunity to review what it is doing in terms of the coverage that it is providing to the people of this province and it needs an opportunity to have a reexamination of the public insurance situation in this province, because frankly, as a monopoly, they have the ability to change the ground rules annually when rates and basic coverages are produced, and frankly, they have made it so that the private competition is not interested in coming to this province because they know that by a simple change of the regulations on the basic insurance coverage that there is not an opportunity to start a portfolio of extensive private insurance as an extension to Autopac because, quite simply, that monopoly can turn around and change their basic and destroy that portfolio within one year, and certainly no company wants to spend an extensive amount of money going into that situation.

The people of the province are so upset with what is happening today in the automobile insurance industry that my colleagues and I, and I'm sure the members across the way, are receiving a lot of very probing questions from the public saying: has Autopac run out its string; has it now put itself in a position where competition must be returned to the industry? These are serious questions that need to be asked and discussed, and the mandate of Autopac, MPIC, has to be reexamined on the basis of the reality of 1988-1989.

Frankly, when you deal with a monopoly as we do in this province, the driver has no advocate when he is having his insurance settled, and in dealing with a monopoly corporation, the drivers of this province, when they have need of insurance coverage, find themselves dealing with a monopoly that has unfortunately become somewhat of a bureaucracy with that ever present overburden that so often happens in a monopolistic government-run organization and is left, quite frankly, without an advocate to either defend or to protect that user of the insurance.

And, you know, we have an additional complication, Madam Speaker. I have a letter here dated February. It says from the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation. I'm not sure if this is off of the S1 or the S2 list, but this is a letter that I guess has gone out to all the seniors in this province, and I'm not sure whether my mother-in-law is an S1 or an S2, but that's irrelevant. I suspect she may be struck from the list after today. But it seems to me what we have here is not only do we have the corporation spending great gobs of money advertising "Manitobans, we agree with you" and talking about the changes that were instituted recently and hurriedly in early February, we now have a philosophical letter coming out from the Minister's office . . .

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Which Minister is that?

MR. G. CUMMINGS: This is from the Minister responsible for the Public Insurance Corporation.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Oh.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: And it talks about the advantages of the Crown corporation and how well it is doing. It's been in this province for 17 years, I believe, but all of a sudden now it has to defend itself about how well it's doing and perhaps . . .

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Did Billie send that out to the seniors now?

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Well, yes. It doesn't matter what class of driver you are. It says on the basis of age or gender, so certainly the seniors of this province will be glad to know that as long as they have their merit points in place, they're eligible for discounts.

But it says here: "Manitobans can be confident that it will continue to be in a strong position to provide top quality benefits and service at the lowest rates possible." The word "possible" is a new wrinkle in the Autopac discussion, because last fall, in fact prior to Christmas, I believe the Minister was saying the lowest rates in the country, but now its the lowest possible for the people of Manitoba. But it says: "If you would like more information, contact my office."

Well, Madam Speaker, there have been hundreds of Manitobans who have been trying to contact the Minister's office. The phone lines are certainly jammed, and I have a feeling somehow that he might be getting a long ways behind in his mail lately.

Madam Speaker, this is not an acceptable use of the Minister's mailing privileges, as far as I am concerned. I hope some day that he will be prepared to table the costs of that type of information, that type of mailing with the Legislature, so the people of this province can know how many other places we have hidden the goodspeak in this government. They're not worried about the economics of government, they're worried about the image of government. The image, the perception is more important than the reality. The only thing is that the people who wrote the Speech from the Throne didn't get either one right. Because it is not perceived to be a good speech, it is not, and the reality of it is that it never will be seen that way.

Madam Speaker, I would like to move off of Autopac, but I would like to make one more comment. We had some very rapidly implemented changes at MPIC, Autopac Division re merit points consideration. There are so many inequities and holes in the way this system was implemented, it is driving the agents crazy, it's driving the MPIC employees crazy. Well, frankly, I'm not sure what it's doing to the Minister. But let me tell you that I feel sorry for the people of the Motor Vehicles Branch, because I'm sure that they did not have any forewarning that all of a sudden the records that they keep regarding merit points were going to be so vitally important before the end of February. So everybody is going to want to be sure that his merit points are up-to-date so that he can get these discounts that the Minister promised.

I talked to an MPIC agent who said he hasn't written a discount yet that exceeded 35 dollars on an Autopac

renewal. I think we've had a little bit of deception again in the way that the figures were put forward to the people of this province. There were a lot of people who thought they were going to be eligible for a \$50 discount. Well, it didn't work out that way and, frankly, I think that what we have is an untenable situation for the people of Motor Vehicles Branch. They've been put there because of this Minister, a Minister to whom they do not directly report. The Minister of Highways, unfortunately, has his staff at Vehicle Registration in a great turmoil at this point.

As a monopoly, I hope that we will get the opportunity. I hope the people of this province will have the opportunity to tell this Minister and tell this corporation it is no longer acceptable that a monopoly may have the opportunity to deny insurance to people of this province if they do not meet certain circumstances and, unknown to themselves, can be in an accident where they can be denied coverage. That's the kind of correction that the monopoly corporation in this province needs to be examining this summer so that when massive changes that I'm sure will come into place next year, if they are not implemented by us, the corporation will have an opportunity to implement those changes with the correct input from the people of this province.

I do not wish, however, Madam Speaker, to reflect upon the investigation or the review that is going to be done by Judge Kopstein. But let me say this. I presume, because Judge Kopstein will be hearing from the people of Manitoba what they want to see changed, that the Minister and this government will allow us, as elected members of the Legislature, on behalf of the people of Manitoba, to ask what caused this upheaval within our Crown corporation. What caused these massive changes? Madam Speaker, one will not provide a satisfactory answer without the other, and I presume that we can assume that is — (Interjection) — the Minister says no! Madam Speaker, that makes my case to go out and ask the public: what more do you want from Autopac? Madam Speaker . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister on a point of order.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, I ask the honourable friend to withdraw that imputation. I did not say that I will not. Madam Speaker, I have made no such comment.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Madam Speaker, I am sorry. I mistook the motion of his head to indicate that he was denying what I was saying. I'm prepared to accept his comment that we are now assured by the Minister that we will have open access to the information through Autopac, through MPIC, about what has happened in this corporation over the last number of years.

HON. B. URUSKI: Yes. Did you hear me?

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Yes, I read your lips, thank you. Madam Speaker, as a rural member of this Legislature, I would be severely chastised if I did not touch on Agriculture and Highways. Madam Speaker, the present Minister of MPIC, however, has left a

considerable legacy in the Department of Agriculture before he moved over to this auspicious location that he's now in.

Madam Speaker, the present Minister of Agriculture says we are going to have a feedlot program. Well, that's just cute, because there are hardly any feedlots left. You know, you would almost think that was deliberately planned. Madam Speaker, at least the present Minister of Agriculture recognizes the reality of the problems of the feedlot industry, but he did not indicate any time frame. He was afraid to indicate that it will be done in a practical and readily available program to the people of this province.

He said he's going to hold discussions and information meetings. Well, if these are the same kinds of information meetings we had about the discussion to enter into tripartite stabilization, what this will mean is another propaganda session where both sides of the issue may not be very clearly laid out for the people of this province. I hope that the cattlemen of this province go out and listen carefully and demand, Madam Speaker, they will have to demand to be told the full facts on both sides of the story, because they were not given the full story under tripartite.

Madam Speaker, MACC has been a pet peeve of mine before I ever came into this Legislature, and certainly has become more of a bone in my throat than almost any other part of agriculture that this department is responsible for. What we have simply is a section of the Department of Agriculture that has become neglected. It has not been used in a manner that would make it practical so that it could readily address the problems of agriculture. This is the one vehicle this government could use to address the problems of agriculture and they have refused to do it and, so help me, I can't understand why.

They talk in the Speech from the Throne, Madam Speaker, about the mediation panels, about the farm debt review panels, the results of Bill 4 that we debated so long and hard in the first Session of this Legislature. — (Interjection) — Well, you know, it would seem that agriculture is really not a priority of this government, never has been and it doesn't appear that it ever will be. Now what we see is a Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation that needs staff. All it would need right now to ease the pain of some of the farmers in financial stress in this province would be to put some staff into MACC.

We have farm debt review panel hearings that were completed at the end of November, Madam Speaker, and the only creditor that will not give them an answer prior to Christmas is MACC. They still don't have an answer from this corporation. They are going to go broke because this corporation will not give them an answer. If they even said no, they could go and seek other financing and see if it was available. They will not attempt to bring this corporation up to date. They let it go on, on the strength that if they defer the problem long enough, perhaps it will go away. Frankly, I'm afraid that seems to be the position of this government on far too many problems - I hope it'll go away; if we ignore it, maybe it'll go away. But remember, they've sold themselves to the people of this province as the good guys - we'll hold you, we'll protect you; if we weren't here, Ottawa would probably love you to death or something like that.

I'm not sure what their problem is, but the example of this corporation is so acute to rural Manitoba that I can tell you there are very few farmers out there today who have any confidence in the ability of this corporation to deal with the problems that they bring forward.

They brought forward a program where they would help finance the purchase of livestock feeders, Madam Speaker. I can give several examples where they gave the farmer the right and the direction and the financing to go ahead and buy feeder cattle, and then they forgot to make sure that they could transfer the money to them. The auction marts, if these had of been large purchases, would have been in financial stress. If you think that the bankers weren't a little excited, these were people who told the bankers that they had assurances from MACC that they could go ahead with these purchases. Madam Speaker, it's not a sinister plot, it's a lack of staff and a lack of commitment in this corporation and that has to fall directly on the Minister of Agriculture and his predecessor.

Madam Speaker, free trade seems to have kind of caught the attention of the present government. They want to talk about free trade, and is your job safe, what will this really do to agriculture. I'll tell you that the very wording of those ads indicate their lack of understanding of how trade will benefit this province. They are standing up for the eastern power bloc; they are not standing up for Manitobans. They are not standing up for Manitoba agriculture and they are not protecting Manitoba jobs. Because they are weak and scared and timid doesn't mean that that's the way the rest of Manitoba is.

Madam Speaker, the GATT negotiations will have a significant impact on the future of agricultural trade in the world, but we are sitting on the doorstep of one of the largest consuming nations of the world.

A MEMBER: It's going down the toilet.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: There's an interesting observation. One of the leading socialist lights of this province says the American economy is going down the toilet. I wonder what he thinks of MPIC arithmetic. Just hang on on your way down.

Madam Speaker, we are a nation of people who have always been able to profit from our natural resources. What is wrong with developing natural resources and developing jobs here, and you have access to a population as enormous as the Americans have? We are sitting here in the middle of the continent where our transportation expenses are high. We have to access some of that north-south opportunity for trade.

Madam Speaker, as a rural Manitoban, and I'm sure my colleagues from rural Manitoba will be mentioning this in more detail, but let me simply say that the godfather of MPIC is now the Minister of Highways. I'm afraid that he is now applying the same type of thinking to the way that he directs the Highways Department as he did to the direction of this Crown corporation, this much abused and maligned corporation, unfortunately.

Frankly, he talks about how he's going to upgrade Highway 75; 75 is a north-south link that will bring tourism to this province. That's the first impression that many people coming up the eastern side of this province

will have is the backlog of vehicles on that road and the condition of that road. It was pledged to be twinned many years ago.

This Minister said, well, we're going to build 15 kilometres. That would be right on target. In four years, we'd have her finished. Right? Fifteen into 60 kilometres, that's approximately the way it works. The only thing is, he forgot to figure out how much money it would take to build 15 kilometres.

He was called a liar in the newspaper in this province, and he didn't refute it because he misled the people of the community about how quickly that highway would be finished. He didn't want the public to understand that you can't build 15 kilometres of road for \$2 million or \$3 million. To say that 15 kilometres would be finished was a misrepresentation of the facts.

Madam Speaker, the trucking industry of this province would like nothing better than to see some improvement in the regulation on their load limits, the regulation on vehicle size. The department and this government have denied that there is a financial benefit to the consumers of this province. They feel that it would cost \$70 million to upgrade the roads and the bridges in this province to the standard that would be required. The fact is that after the fiscal benefits are computed in - and these are figures taken not from the trucking industry but from the Departments of Highways across this province - there is a net benefit to this province of some \$5 million to \$7 million annually if they will consider allowing, by permit, more of this type of transportation.

Madam Speaker, I'm committed to the defeat of this government, I'm committed to the amendments brought in by my leader, and I'm committed to trying to restore the economic management and the leadership of this province in a manner that will make the 1990's a favourable era for Manitobans.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Urban Affairs.

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

It's indeed an honour to join the debate in our third Speech from the Throne, Madam Speaker, and I certainly add my words from this side of the House against the amendment and for the Speech from the Throne that was presented here last week.

Madam Speaker, I again would like to pay tribute to you in your office as Speaker of this House. I'm sure the Session will be feisty and require all your skill and impartiality and I know you will fulfill that office, as usual, with a dignified style that is so appropriate.

Madam Speaker, it's again interesting to meet all members in this Chamber and I'd like to add a personal note. The Member for St. Boniface has handed in his resignation, Madam Speaker, a person who's been in this House for a number of years. I happen to have a great deal of respect for the Member for St. Boniface. I think and I know he's performed a public function to this province and to the citizens of this province for a number of years in terms of the health care system he has left us, also in very good hands with the present Minister.

Madam Speaker, the Member for St. Boniface was my predecessor in Urban Affairs. He gave me lots of good advice. I am sure that he will do a good job on

behalf of Manitobans in his new capacity at the Manitoba Health Organization, and I wish him very well, Madam Speaker. Quite frankly, I was absolutely shocked yesterday to hear the Leader of the Opposition use him as an example of ethics in government. Madam Speaker, if we can all have the kind of cooperation and contribution to this province that the Member for St. Boniface has left us, I think we can all be very, very proud.

Madam Speaker, I suppose the members opposite are a little touchy about ethics in government. I guess the saying going around Ottawa now is, Madam Speaker, that one more and they'll have enough for a baseball team. So I imagine they're very touchy on that item, Madam Speaker, but I would again like to pay tribute to the Member for St. Boniface.

We all face a number of challenges as members of government across Canada, Madam Speaker. Just recently, I was pleased to listen to an independent assessment on the radio from Environmetrics - Mike McCracken, I believe his name was - who was going through the various economies across Canada and the strengths and weaknesses of the Manitoba economy. It was nice to hear, Madam Speaker, a person who is from outside the province taking a look at the economy in an objective way and was very positive about job creation, job maintenance, the cooperative kind of environment in our economy, the growth levels in the past number of years and predicting growth levels that would equal and exceed any other province in Canada in the 1990's.

Madam Speaker, I was also very surprised to hear very muted comments from the Leader of the Opposition and his proposed amendment to the Speech from the Throne. I was very surprised to hear his comments, muted comments, on the deficit, because he will have to recognize that our present performance in terms of the deficit equals and exceeds the comments that he made on Michael Wilson's deficit reduction just last week, Madam Speaker. Therefore, he was very clearly changing his tune in terms of his amendment, because he knows our performance is superior to that of Michael Wilson in Ottawa and superior to the Federal Government in terms of percentage decline in the year-over-year deficit in this particular province.

Madam Speaker, I believe we have a number of fundamental and key decisions that we have to face in the future and Manitoba, as part of that future, has to face.

There are three issues I would like to speak of that I believe are of a national nature but also have major implications for this province. I believe that the decisions we make in the next couple of years in terms of these major issues will indeed reflect the type of country we will have in the 1990's and indeed leading into the 21st Century.

The first area, Madam Speaker, that we're at critical crossroads in this country, in my belief, is in health.

The second area, Madam Speaker, that we're in a very critical area, and governments of all political stripes are in this critical area, is in tax reform.

The third critical area, Madam Speaker, is of course the trade deal that members have been discussing from different perspectives in this House.

All three issues, Madam Speaker, I believe, are fundamental issues and place before us the type of

decisions that we will have to make as citizens that are beyond the usual decisions of who has the whiter teeth and prettier face but force Canadians to look at fundamental issues of the type of country we want and the type of society we want as Canadians. I think those issues are very, very important.

Let's deal with health care first, Madam Speaker. We cannot talk about provincial priorities and provincial spending and provincial issues without talking about an issue that is basically one-third of our provincial Budget. It was the same when members opposite were in government and it is certainly growing as a percentage of our spending and therefore is a major and significant issue to discuss in any speech from the Throne.

Madam Speaker, we had a health care system in this country that all political parties supported in the late Sixties that had as its initial stages - I guess, out of the roots of Saskatchewan, of Tommy Douglas - a 50/50 national health care program in Canada that through the late Sixties and Seventies was supported by all provincial governments and all the federal governments that were in power. Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, a national Medicare Program that we all were very proud of, and it lasted some 10 years in this country, began to be eroded in the late Seventies. We slowly moved from a different form of funding of 50/50 to a funding that meant that health care in this country would be reduced on a 1 percent-per-year basis to where we have a situation now in Manitoba where 58 percent of the funding for health care comes from the provincial Budget and 42 percent comes from the Federal Government.

I think this has implications far beyond the usual feebashing implications in terms of our country. This means, Madam Speaker, we are on the slippery slope, year by year, of going from a national health care program to indeed a program that does not have any national priorities and national spending and eventually will be relegated to a very, very regional type of health care program in this country. It is a major issue.

Madam Speaker, I thought we had an excellent two-party discussion of health care last year when both parties had the meeting with the federal-provincial people, the civil servants, the non-partisan civil servants, that was requested, I believe, by the Member for Morris to review the funding of the health care system in this province and, indeed, the implications for health care in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, when we looked at all the numbers and all the projections and all the figures in our spending for health care and the amount of money that was coming to our province, the question was simply asked: do you believe our health care funding should be GNP, minus 2 percent, per year; should it be GNP; or should it be GNP, plus 2 percent, to meet the existing and growing needs of health care in this province? Quite simply, the models showed for both parties that with an aging population and with increased technology available that this province could maintain its health care.

For the Federal Government to maintain a national health care program required a GNP, plus 2 percent per year, similar to what our provincial Budget is. Every year in the last three years, our Budget, or last four or five years indeed, has had to have money over the

level of inflation, over the level of growth, just to sustain the services in this province. And when you're asked that question, Madam Speaker, you're faced with an inevitable conclusion that we must have a national Medicare Program that pays not the GNP, minus 2 percent, which is the present formula, but rather the growth in our nation and growth in our provinces, plus 2 percent, to deal with the aging population and to deal with the situation of the new technology.

Madam Speaker, I was quite frankly very surprised yesterday when I heard the Leader of the Opposition talk about the California health care system, the Orange County health care system. I do not want to go to a Californian or Orange County health care system, Madam Speaker, and I do not believe the people of Manitoba want to go to an Orange County health care system. I believe that we should continue the course in terms of funding our health care system properly and we should indeed move with wellness. We should indeed move money, year over year, from institutional care over to the community care and over to preventative care. There's no question of that, Madam Speaker. But I also believe we must maintain, as one of the top priorities, and I hope it's one of the top issues in the next federal election, a return to 50/50 funding in this country for a national Medicare Program in the country of Canada.

A second critical issue, Madam Speaker, for this country, and indeed I believe for Manitobans, is the whole issue of tax reform. Madam Speaker, we have had study after study of the whole area of how all the tax systems in this country are hitting the average wage earner in this country. Madam Speaker, we had the Carter Commission on taxation. In fact, it was produced by a Conservative Commission under John Diefenbaker years ago. It wasn't perfect, the Carter Commission on taxation was not perfect, but it really had, in essence, a buck is a buck and it should be considered as such for purposes of taxation. Madam Speaker, I believe 90 percent of the elements of the Carter Commission should be the plank and platform of tax reform in this country.

Madam Speaker, the Federal Auditor General has identified some \$45 billion that was written off on page 1 on the income tax forms in this country. I think what we could do, Madam Speaker, if we as a country would have the collective will to tax fairly the loopholes that are on page 1 of the income tax form, we not only could reduce the deficits, Madam Speaker, but in the Federal Government, we could fund the health care system 50/50, and indeed, in provinces that have had to bring in other taxes, such as Manitoba, could look at dropping those taxes because we're able to get at page 1 of the income tax form instead of only getting at page 2 where the average wage earner has to declare the majority of their income - and the average wage earner, quite frankly, gets clobbered by federal governments, by provincial governments, of all stripes, Madam Speaker, and let's be honest about that because provincial governments cannot get at page 1 of the income tax where the \$45 billion is written off in loopholes every year in this country.

Madam Speaker, what did we get in tax reform from Michael Wilson? And I was hoping, quite frankly, that we would get major tax reform in this country. I really wanted to see us attack page 1 of the income tax form

and relieve pages 2 and 3 of the income tax form where the majority of our constituents, quite frankly, are getting clobbered by all governments, Madam Speaker. We've got the crumbs off the proverbial table. That's what we've got in terms of tax reform. Many of the corporations - and I have no problems with corporations making a fair return - but I think it's wrong, Madam Speaker, when corporations can literally write off hundreds of millions of dollars in profits with various techniques developed by accountants and sharp tax lawyers to not contribute to the welfare of our country and to allow average wage earners to contribute a lot more.

The analysis done by financial institutions and banks and many other corporations in terms of the Wilson tax reform - and I applaud him for going one step beyond what the federal Liberals had done before. But the amount of money that a number of large corporations and banks will be able to save by these measures would be better placed, Madam Speaker, in contributing their share to our national economy and therefore allowing people who are paying more than their fair share, the constituents that many of us have, to get some break on taxes, as I say, not only on federal but hopefully on provincial.

The third issue, Madam Speaker, and a major crossroads for our country is the whole trade process and trade deal that we're debating. I think it's a great debate, because it's not an issue of personality politics and it's not an issue of the usual opportunistic politics. It's really an issue of principle in terms of this country and how this country will be run and how we see it being run in the future, Madam Speaker.

Let's talk about the trade deal. We've heard comments from the other side and I respect the opinions of the other side. I just don't agree with them, Madam Speaker, in terms of this trade deal. There's no question, Madam Speaker, that the process of the trade deal, I think, was wrong. To be on this fast track, to be on a timing that's basically set up by an American Congress, I think, was wrong. It did not allow a sufficient time for debate in this country in terms of the implications of it before both sides are locked into it in a take it or leave it situation, Madam Speaker.

Secondly, Madam Speaker, I believe that there has been the odd gain in the trade agreement. There is no question, Madam Speaker, that there will be some consumer goods that will be cheaper as a result of this trade agreement. Certainly some textiles, some consumer goods, cheaper cotton underwear, for example, will be cheaper potentially under this trade agreement. California wines, people will be able to save 15 cents, 20 cents, maybe 25 cents on a bottle of California wine, Madam Speaker. So there will be a few goods that will be cheaper as a result of this trade agreement on a consumer basis. There is a disagreement between the Consumers' Association of Canada and various other economists on the actual total impact. In fact, I believe there's a disagreement even in the Consumers' Association of Canada in their own membership of the impact on consumer goods.

There is a disagreement, Madam Speaker, on the job impact on Canada. There are some models that show there will be increased employment; there are some models that show there will be decreased employment; there are certainly models that show there

will be winners and losers in various industries as a result of the trade agreement.

I wish, Madam Speaker, we could have the study that the Federal Department of Labour prepared that I understand Mr. Bouchard commented on, and then the leash was dragged back and he was not able to make that document public. So I believe there would be a little saving on some consumer goods. There will not be the savings that some people think.

I was up in Dauphin-Swan River one day and the word we were getting was that there will be no more border guards when this free trade agreement comes in, and you will be able to bring cars and everything else into this country tax free. Madam Speaker, we know the federal tax will still apply. We know the provincial tax will still apply. We know the dollar exchange will still — (Interjection) — That's right. Let's be honest though, Madam Speaker, let's be honest. The taxes will still apply; the exchange rate will still apply. When you compare it, Madam Speaker, a person will not get a saving if they bought a Ford Taurus in Grand Forks versus buying a Ford Taurus in Steinbach. So let's not fool the people because I think this is too important a debate to talk in terms of bringing cars over duty free. That's just simply not true. But we will get some consumer goods on a cheaper basis.

Madam Speaker, what did we not get in terms of this trade agreement? Well, we did not get an exemption from the U.S. Trade Bill. I do not see anywhere, in terms of the Canada-U.S./Mulroney-Reagan trade deal, an exemption for Canada in terms of the bill before Congress and the Senate.

Now why do you think that's important, Madam Speaker, when you go from the trade agreement to the binding dispute mechanism, the binding dispute mechanism can only interpret the U.S. or Canadian law.

Madam Speaker, those people who are saying that we had to have this trade agreement because we have these tremendous fears about this U.S. congressional omnibus trade deal, that argument would have some merit for me if I was able to see the exemption in the proposed deal from the Canada-U.S. Trade Agreement.

We've got a Canada-U.S. Trade Agreement over here with Simon and Peter Murphy, and we've got a trade bill in the United States with the Congress and the Senate that's it's an omnibus bill that contains no exemption for Canada.

A MEMBER: How was your holiday?

HON. G. DOER: My holiday in Mexico? That was great, thank you.

Madam Speaker, the second issue that I really worry about is that when we're talking about removing tariffs or lowering tariffs, or having an economy that goes from an 80 percent tariff fee to 90 percent or 95 percent, that's certainly something we can listen to.

But, Madam Speaker, I do not like a North American agreement or deal on energy. I believe that our trade agreements on tariffs and removing tariffs should not include a North American continental policy on energy.

I believe that our energy supply, we should export it when we can when we can maximize our sales. We should maintain it for local consumers when we can maximize it for our own industrial base and for our own manufacturing base.

Madam Speaker, I think it's absolutely insane to give away our best card in a North American economy, which is our energy and our energy resources, and put that in a continental Reagan-Mulroney agreement, and that's not freer trade - that's stupid trade.

Madam Speaker, the last issue in terms of this trade agreement is the whole strategy of dealing with one partner in fortress North American versus the trade agreement with the other trading countries in both the Pacific Rim and also in the GATT countries.

That is a very, very important issue. It can be debated from both sides. You can see the argument that we're North and South, and we're closer to the United States, the majority of our trade is with the United States, and therefore it's absolutely appropriate that we have a trade agreement only with the United States in terms of that image it presents to the rest of the country.

There is another argument, Madam Speaker, that says that we should not tie ourselves to an economy - and a marketplace economy at that - that is basically on the way down, relative to other stronger economies in the Pacific Rim and in Europe versus the United States. Madam Speaker, I think that's a very important issue to be debating, what type of trading relationship do we see for the future?

It may have made sense that in the past the United States was the most appropriate trading partner, and I certainly have no problem with our appropriate 80 per cent trading with the United States as it exists. But when we look to the future - the future economies of this world, whether we like it or not, in terms of their strength and their predictable strength into the 21st century, Madam Speaker, it's quite frankly not the United States.

Every economic indicator that you look at shows the United States economy going down and other economies getting stronger and stronger. So I believe we should have had a stronger agreement with the GATT countries rather than establishing "fortress North America." Quite frankly, "fortress North America" that has some questionable benefits for Canada with the U.S.

Madam Speaker, it is appropriate, and I appreciate the fact that from a philosophical perspective it is only natural that members opposite would cite a free market economy, a free trade agreement; would want to take their hands off some of the levers, the economic and investment levers and the energy levers, in terms of their belief that the free market system is the best way to go, and they will cite Ronald Reagan - and I appreciate that - and they will also cite Margaret Thatcher. I respect that vision, Madam Speaker. It's a philosophical difference; I respect their vision. I don't agree with it.

The Liberals, Madam Speaker, don't have any vision. Don MacDonal has one position; he wrote the economic study, "A Leap of Faith." John Turner has another position, Madam Speaker; Bourassa has another position in Quebec; and Peterson has another one in Ontario. The Liberals do not have a free trade position. Madam Speaker, let the record show that when the trade agreement was first announced the Member for River Heights said she supported it, and when the wind started to blow the other way the Member for River Heights said she was opposed to it. That's the Liberal position on trade; they don't have one.

Madam Speaker, I think it's appropriate that the New Democratic Party would have a position that believed we should maintain our hands on the levers of our economy. I believe strongly we should maintain our hands and public hands on the levers of investment in this country. I believe strongly we should maintain our hands on the levers of energy, Madam Speaker. And I believe strongly it is only appropriate that a New Democratic Party would want a government that believed in cooperation between the private and public sectors, and believes that the governments have a role in planning the economy similar to the economies of Japan and West Germany rather than the downward-heading economies of the United States.

So, Madam Speaker, I think this vision and this discussion is appropriate because I think we do come from this position appropriately. So I believe that this is the most important issue facing this House and, indeed, when you take a look at health reform, tax reform and trade agreement, we indeed, as Canadians, have an excellent opportunity to make decisions about the type of country we want for our future.

Madam Speaker, I would like to say a few things about the Manitoba Telephone System; it has been referenced in the Speech from the Throne. We had some excellent meetings throughout this province and the meetings were very, very useful. The Manitoba Telephone System had excellent meetings around the province, we got excellent advice. Many of the MLA's from all parties participated in those discussions, and I hope to have a plan that would be worthy of the public investment in Manitoba in the Manitoba Telephone System.

Madam Speaker, I think, when we go through some of the debate about the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation, and there is no question that this is a very heated debate in Manitoba, I reject categorically the idea proposed by the Member for Ste. Rose that we should privatize the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation.

Madam Speaker, not even getting into the argument of rates, I think it would be terrible for the residents of Ste. Rose Constituency to lose the hospital loan funding of \$378,000 from the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation; to lose the money from the Municipal Government of \$16,000; to lose the hospital funding of \$217,000 in Neepawa; and the \$342,000 the Community of Neepawa has from the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation. Let's not forget, Madam Speaker, that public insurance is not only about rates and service, it's also about the \$250 million of Manitoba ratepayers' money that stays in our province, and I reject the idea of privatizing the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation.

Madam Speaker, as a government we're not perfect, we've made mistakes, but when we do make mistakes, we admit it and we move on to correct it. We will correct our mistakes; we will admit we made mistakes. We will correct our mistakes and we will move on to maintain our employment, to maintain the health care system and reform it in the best way possible in Canada, to revitalize our urban communities in the Core, in the East Yards, in North Portage, to strengthen our rural communities, to build the strongest northern community in Canada, and I am proud to be part of this Speech from the Throne of this government, and I know that we will meet the challenges moving into the 1990's.

Thank you, very much, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I rise to speak today on the Throne Speech and am pleased to be able to follow the Member from Concordia, the parachute who had to go in and pick it up for the NDP, much against the wishes of the N.D. Party. Of course, his record speaks very clearly for itself, and it fits into my response, Madam Speaker, when I make reference to the Throne Speech.

There are four things basically lacking as far as I'm concerned. It lacks in sincerity, it lacks in substance, it lacks direction for the province, and it lacks the truth.

But there is one positive thing, Madam Speaker. The positive thing is - the Throne Speech is so terrible, and the government is so terrible - that it was short and it didn't put the people here visiting the day of the opening through a lot of time to hear nothing.

Madam Speaker, we should acknowledge the leaving of a long-term member of this Legislative Assembly and, in doing so, we have to think back as to why he was a member of the present government. It was on his record that he voted with the New Democrats to bring Autopac into the Province of Manitoba. He is the one who goes down in history as having cost the people of Manitoba horrendous amounts of money that have been mismanaged by the New Democratic Party. That's the legacy that he leaves this Assembly and the people of Manitoba. It was his support for the New Democratic Party that has given us a lot of the problems and the taxpayers the problems that we have today.

Madam Speaker, the question of privatization - and I think the Member for Ste. Rose wants to check his comments because I didn't hear him say that he was in favour of privatizing Autopac - I don't believe that that was said. He didn't say it in this Assembly, and I didn't hear it. I would expect the Member for Concordia to withdraw those comments. If he said it fine, but I think the member will have the opportunity to clarify that.

Madam Speaker, comments have to be made dealing with your performance and no reflection on the Chair, but I think one should recognize the fact as Speaker of the Assembly that you should not only be seen to be nonpartisan but to carry that through to the fullest. I think the people of Manitoba will be left to judge on that as well, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the most amusing part of the Throne Speech response is the movement of the Throne Speech by the Member for St. Vital, his absolute condemnation of the Premier, of the Cabinet, and the New Democratic Party, and what does the Premier say? "Oh, there's nothing wrong with a little constructive criticism." Well, I'll tell you, Madam Speaker, if that's constructive criticism, no wonder the province is in the difficulty that it's in. He thinks that was constructive criticism. It was a condemnation of the worst government in the history not only of the Province of Manitoba but of all of this nation, and I'll just touch on the point.

He said nobody - nobody - is looking after the store. Nobody's been looking after the store for the last six years. And he's right. He's right. Free trade is a national

issue, a federal issue. Why are we burning up all the energy, the taxpayers' money, advertising against it, trying to prop up the position of Howard Pawley, Howard Pawley and his free trade opposition? I'm sorry, the Premier of the province, Madam Speaker. I shouldn't make reference to the person's name because it may go down in the history books, Madam Speaker. And the Premier says "nothing wrong with a little constructive criticism." Made some good recommendations as far as Autopac is concerned, again some good constructive recommendations, and they were. But, Madam Speaker, again, the point has to be made - it's very clear as to why the province has the difficulty that it has when a Premier can't tell the difference between constructive criticism and a condemnation of him and his activities in the policies of his government.

Madam Speaker, as well, I want to say that I was pleased, as a member of the Legislative Assembly, to have had the opportunity to participate in the carrying of the torch across Canada. I had a chance at Oak Lake to participate with my constituents when the torch passed through that small community and the Olympic '88 Awards were presented to some outstanding community citizens. I was really proud as a Canadian to see the way Canadians and Manitobans were touched by the very fact that an international event of such import was taking place in Canada and it truly did bring the pride of Canadians out. It really brought forward Canadian unity and that's what I think we all have to continue to strive for. That was a feeling that I'm sure each and every Canadian has as it built up to the exercise of the games. As well, I want to wish all the contestants from Canada well in their competition.

Madam Speaker, I should start with the beginning of the Speech from the Throne and go through it, but there are some points that I want to touch on right at the beginning. I think it's important to see the other side of this issue. I go to page 3 and this is the agenda of the Premier and his government.

"Our agenda must include more employment opportunities and creative job training that will ensure Manitobans have the jobs and skills which will be so necessary in a rapidly evolving future." Madam Speaker, what does he think the free trade agreement will not do for him? That's what it's all about, the creation of employment and opportunities for the people of Manitoba, for the people of Canada. That's what they say; that's what it's all about. I will set some examples for the Premier as well, Madam Speaker, as to how it can work.

Let's make a direct reference, Madam Speaker, to the farm machinery industry in Canada. Farm machinery industry in Canada has had free trade for how many years? Probably since the 1930's. I challenge the Premier of this province to stand up before the farm community and say free trade is bad for the sale of your agriculture commodities, that it's got to be bad for the purchase of your agriculture production goods and it's bad for what you sell, but it's good for what you buy. We wouldn't have a Versatile in the Province of Manitoba creating 800 or 1,000 jobs if it weren't for free trade in farm machinery, Madam Speaker. Wake up, Mr. Premier. We're in the modern day times.

A MEMBER: Did you like that American investment?

MR. J. DOWNEY: Yes, Madam Speaker. Did he like that American investment in Versatile which fixed those jobs up? Did he like the \$45 million interest-free loan that the Federal Government gave Versatile or Ford? You bet, Madam Speaker. He isn't condemning that. Yet he's prepared, Madam Speaker, to condemn the sale of our agriculture commodities into a guaranteed market in the United States, and I'll make an example of that as well.

I did some checking this morning. Do you know what the price of wheat is in the state of North Dakota? The price of wheat in the state of North Dakota this morning for 15 percent protein, which a lot of our wheat is, is \$3.10 American; add 30 percent gives you \$4.20. Do you know what the price of No. 1 wheat is in Manitoba today? - \$2.60. You may get a 20 cent or 30 cent payment. I'll give them the benefit of the doubt. We may get \$3 final payment for our wheat. We have to add on the subsidy payments from the Federal Government which can pick it up to some degree.

But let's forget about the subsidies in the States and let's forget about the subsidies in Canada. Let's work on the elevator price of wheat, about \$1 a bushel difference - \$1.25. Do you know how much wheat Manitoba has sold annually over the last 10 years, average? Probably 200 million bushels. Well, 200 million bushels times \$1 a bushel is \$200 million that his position on free trade is stopping our Manitoba producers from achieving.

Madam Speaker, where is this Minister of Agriculture getting his information from? It's mind-boggling, Madam Speaker, how this Premier, speaking for a community, a province that is based on agricultural production - that's the backbone - is opposed to bettering that industry by enhancing and guaranteeing market opportunities.

Madam Speaker, what about the mining industry in Manitoba? Who buys the minerals out of Northern Manitoba? Do we consume them all in Manitoba? Do we consume them all in Canada? No, Madam Speaker, we depend heavily on the United States for the purchase of those raw materials, and yes, Madam Speaker, those jobs that he talks about in the Throne Speech. Yet the Minister who just spoke - what is he, the Minister of Urban Affairs? - says we want our hands on the controls of the levers of government. Ah, I've got a correction for him, Madam Speaker. He feels more comfortable with his hands in the pockets of the taxpayers, of people, not on the levers of the economy, Madam Speaker.

And, of course, the Minister who wasn't responsible for Autopac, and should have been, sits in the front row with a great big grin on his face. He should have been fired from Autopac and from the Government, Madam Speaker, not Carl Laufer, not Mr. Silver. How many people do they have to fire out of the Crown corporations before the Premier and the people of Manitoba realize who's at fault? Who's at fault, Madam Speaker? It's the government, their mismanagement. It's their inability to deal with public affairs, Madam Speaker; that's the difficulty.

Madam Speaker, let's go on to the next one. They talk about maintaining and improving our health and education services. The worst problem we have is a stagnating economy. We need to broaden the tax base that feeds the health and education systems; that's where it comes from, Madam Speaker. There's not going

to be privatization user fees. That will never happen in this country, I'm sure, because of the political touchiness of it or concern. I don't think that there'll be any politician who would stand and say that you're not going to have free medicine. While you may not have any medical care, like the NDP - and Howard Pawley's option is no medical care - but, Madam Speaker, you have to have an improved economic condition, a broadening of the tax base, which will happen if we open up and guarantee a market to 250 million people to the south of us. It will guarantee us strength for our health care system.

It will generate money, tax money, that they love to go after, Madam Speaker, to keep the system strong, again another reason why he should be supporting the free trade deal.

Madam Speaker, I touched on agriculture and the rural community. Let's talk about the relationship between the Federal and Provincial Governments. The Member for Concordia, in his comments about going after the Federal Government for more share of the health care money. That's the problem with this government, they continually cry for more money; their solution to every problem - more money. Their solution is more taxpayers' money.

Lets look at what's happened; here's where we're at. Manitoba Telephone System, \$27 million loss. What do they want - more money thrown at the Telephone System? Well, they are because they're increasing the rates. Manitoba Forest Products, a question has to be asked. A year ago they said they were going to sell it. Has it been sold? To whom, and for how much money, and have they guaranteed reforestation?

Madam Speaker, I want to just touch on something else about Manitoba Forest Products. Manitoba Forest Industries lost \$31 million prior to the last year - \$31 million. Do you know some of the reasons that they lose such massive amounts of money?

Madam Speaker, a policy of Manfor forest products was to make sure that any logs they bought were bought or the unionized trucking firms were used. They excluded truckers from Swan River. They had 25 trucks not working this December because they were not - well, there have been some changes, but I'll tell you, the Swan River trucking firms weren't able to haul logs because they were non-unionized. Do you know what the difference was, Madam Speaker? Here's the important point. Madam Speaker, one of the concerns was that they were non-unionized. They were paying \$125 a cord for unionized haulers and \$80 for non-unionized haulers.

A MEMBER: No.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Yes, that's right. That's what it cost to support unions in The Pas, you see. It's the taxpayers again who get called upon to support their ideology and their policies. I hope the issue has been corrected. I hope it has been solved. Because, if it hasn't, the Member for Swan River has a lot of answering to do to his constituents.

Madam Speaker, Flyer Industries cost us \$1 million to give away \$100 million - it cost \$1 million to give away \$100 million. That's the deal with Flyer Industries. Of course the former Minister of Finance was responsible for one of those deals.

Let's get down to Workers Compensation. Again the Premier says in his Throne Speech - we want to create employment. Who in the devil today would create employment in Manitoba and hang the albatross of the Workers Compensation around their neck with the horrendous increases that they have to pay just to carry the administration of Workers Compensation without touching the debt of a \$184 million commitment?

Madam Speaker, do you think it's the responsibility of the employers of this province to buy new cars for the commissioners at the Workers Compensation? Do you know that every employer that's involved in Workers Compensation payments buys news automobiles for the commissioners who live in Winnipeg? We provide them with expense accounts, Madam Speaker. Where in the devil do they think the employers are getting this money?

Of course, NDP's philosophy and the administration believe that profit is bad so you take it away from them so they don't have any profit. But I ask the Minister who's responsible for Workers Compensation - is that a priority that we buy new cars for the commissioners who live in Winnipeg, who should be buying their own cars? Madam Speaker, I can't believe it. I can't believe it's that badly out of control, and again the workers and the employers are the losers in this whole deal.

Madam Speaker, we've got the 2 percent income tax increase imposed on us. We've had the sales tax go to 7 percent. Telephone rates are up 11 percent, Madam Speaker. Hydro rates are up 9.5 and then a proposal of 4.5. There's another one, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Emerson, on a point of order.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Madam Speaker, I thought it was forbidden to read newspapers in the Chamber here. I see a member opposite is holding it like that where we can all read it.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you for the reminder. The honourable member well knows the rule.

The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Madam Speaker, again, increases in hydro rates are proposed to go up almost 5 percent the first part of April. Hydro, Madam Speaker.

Again the Premier of this province talks about the free trade agreement, how bad it is going to be for the people of Manitoba. In fact, he thinks it's so bad and his priorities are so screwed up that he is hiring air time on radios to use taxpayers' money to support his political position. I would like to know, Madam Speaker, how many hospital beds per day one ad would pay for? I believe, Madam Speaker, for every ad we hear, we could keep one more hospital bed open for one day. Madam Speaker, I would believe that. Every time you hear - and I want the public to know this very clear - a free trade ad, that they are deprived of a hospital bed for one of their loved ones or a sick member of their family. That's the priority of this government. Free trade ads mean cutting out more hospital beds because that's the prioritization of the NDP Government. You see, Madam Speaker, that's where it has all gone wrong. The Member for St. Vital was

absolutely right. No one is looking after the store. No one is looking after the expenditure of money in a responsible way.

Madam Speaker, I think it was very, very well pointed out, and I compliment my colleague, the Member for Ste. Rose, in the work that he has done, my colleagues have done, in making the point loud and clear how badly the people of Manitoba feel about the mismanagement of Autopac in the Public Insurance Corporation.

Madam Speaker, it's the only language this kind of government understands. They increased the rates to try and cover up the dishonest approach to Autopac and the way it was being handled part of last election. Then they come into office and say well, we're at a low ebb in the polls, we might as well jab it to them anyway. The heat hits them because it was orchestrated by my colleagues and there was a knee-jerk reaction, not thought out as to what would be the best way to handle them, but a knee-jerk reaction because the political heat got too much for the Premier and he had to have something done.

Well, Madam Speaker, as a result, we've seen them back off because of the political heat. We've seen the Minister responsible fire the president or he says it was a mutual agreement. Do you know what it's costing everybody per day, Madam Speaker, to get out of this agreement? Just stop and figure, we all say \$90,000.00. We know it's a lot of money, \$96,000.00. If it were that number, just to make calculations easier, \$96,000 would be \$9,000 a month. Break that down into weekly payments, how much is that? That's \$2,000 and some a week. Five days a week, that's \$450 a day that every taxpayer, every Autopac user has to pay because of another bungle by this Minister in this government - 450 bucks a day! Everybody out there who's working in a factory, who's working cleaning buildings, who's a farmer, everybody would like to have \$450 a day to do what, Madam Speaker? - to be bah hah, because they are covering for incompetence of this government. Those are the terms we should look at, not \$90,000 and say that's a lot of money. Let's bring it down to where people can understand.

The people of Swan River who are out cutting logs or out looking after their livestock, Madam Speaker, when they know that it's costing \$450 a day because of the incompetence of the Member for Gimli, and now the Member for Interlake, \$450 a day. Everybody would love a sweetheart deal like that, wouldn't they? And you know why? It's not to produce one thing; it's not to do one thing. It's just to keep him quiet to get him out of the hair the political mess that these guys have created and these women have created.

Those are the terms that I want the public to know, Madam Speaker, \$450 a day to cover up for incompetence. That's only one, that's only one, Madam Speaker. They've got to hope . . .

A MEMBER: Everything!

MR. J. DOWNEY: That's right. The whole forest of it. Of course, these people can't see the forest for the trees. Madam Speaker, it's incredible; it's absolutely incredible.

A MEMBER: . . . could have fired the Minister it will only cost us \$200 a day.

MR. J. DOWNEY: You know something, I've got a better suggestion. We want a by-election in St. Boniface. The Premier doesn't want any kind of election. I don't think we need to have a by-election in St. Boniface. I think we need a general election in the province, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, you know why? Every telephone call I get, every constituent who comes to see me, the first question is how can we get rid of that incompetent group. The Member for Interlake was puffing up his chest again, saying the Member for Sturgeon Creek said that I wouldn't be back and that we were going to win the Interlake riding during the French language debate. Well, I take some responsibility, Madam Speaker. We should have used the language issue during the last election more aggressively, but we didn't. We were nice people and they won the election, Madam Speaker.

But I'll tell you, Madam Speaker, people aren't going to forget 25 percent to 50 percent increases in Autopac rates. They're not going to forget 100 percent increase in Workers Compensation rates over a period of five years and still have debts. They're not going to forget \$450 a day for the dismissal of the head of Autopac. Madam Speaker, and they have to pay it out of their rates to cover up for the incompetence of the Member for Gimli who screwed it up and lied to the public prior to the last election - and I'll say intentionally lied to the people of Manitoba prior to the last election.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

Would the honourable member please withdraw those last comments?

The Honourable Member for Arthur. — (Interjection) — I requested the Honourable Member for Arthur to please withdraw those last comments.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Madam Speaker, I'll withdraw the intentional part if that's the part that's offensive to the Assembly. I'll withdraw the . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: That's part of the part that's offensive, but it is also offensive to the House to call another member a liar.

A MEMBER: No, it isn't.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Well, Madam Speaker, I thought it was the word "intentional" - "intentionally lied" was the word which was causing you some difficulty. I'll withdraw, Madam Speaker, the part that's offensive to the House.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. J. DOWNEY: But I won't apologize for a man who intentionally misled — (Interjection) — Madam Speaker, I withdraw again. It was a slip of the tongue and I withdraw. I withdraw, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Madam Speaker, how can I put it that the Premier and his government, prior to the last election, did not tell the people of Manitoba what kind

of financial condition the Public Insurance Corporation was in; how much money that was actually owed; just how bad a condition it really was in financially, that he and his government didn't tell the people as it was - prior to the last election - for the purpose of getting elected? Is that okay, Madam Speaker? Well it's not okay. It's okay the way I say it, but it really isn't okay, Madam Speaker, because it is wrong. It is absolutely rotten and wrong that the people of Manitoba should have been dealt such a hand.

A MEMBER: You better believe it, cover-up.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Yes, cover-up, and I'll tell you, Madam Speaker, the people won't forget. They maybe forgot and softened on the language issue; this time they won't forget. They won't forget the thousands of people who marched on this Legislature in protest of being jabbed 25 percent to 50 percent by a government who should have had more integrity, and to come with a document like this and lay before the people of Manitoba. They want an election in Manitoba; they want to kick this government so hard and so far out of the handling of the affairs of the public that it isn't funny.

Madam Speaker, let's talk just a little bit more - I've got another concern. Madam Speaker, could you indicate how much time I have left?

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member has 14 minutes remaining.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, let us talk about the agricultural portion of the Throne Speech. We have the new Minister of Agriculture - well what is his first claim to fame? Well, Madam Speaker, the first thing he does is come in and fire the deputy. — (Interjection) — Oh, there's no issue over that. When we were elected in 1977, we fired a deputy too and it was a national issue, Madam Speaker. Yes, do you remember "Red Bill" Jensen? We fired him because he wasn't competent . . .

A MEMBER: He's back on the payroll.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Yes, Madam Speaker, because he was philosophically out of line. The right thing was done; he was replaced. Well, we now have a different government that does the same thing. Nobody makes an issue out of it, nobody knows why. They hired him, sure, but they fired him. That's his first claim to fame. Goodness knows, he was in the right political wavelengths. I've known the man for a long time. Why did he dismiss him? Was it he who was standing in the way of development of agriculture in the province? No, I don't think so, Madam Speaker. I think it was the misguided policies of the New Democratic Party. We want it known, Madam Speaker, from the Minister of Agriculture, why he fired his deputy.

Well, Madam Speaker, we have the government announcing a feedlot program. Boy, that's cold comfort, that's cold comfort. That's like sending flowers to a person who's passed away five years after they've been buried. That's really the kind of a tip of the hat, that is. They're already out of business, Madam Speaker, they're already gone.

The Canada Packers workers who were sitting unemployed waiting for somebody to produce slaughter cattle in Manitoba, I'm sure they're elated. You know, they say, boy, we got a feedlot program; they're going to be fat cattle in Manitoba. But gosh, where are we going to go to work to kill them? Canada Packers is gone. Isn't it a shame, Madam Speaker? Again they're trying to buy favour with the cattle producers in Manitoba. What the cattle producers want is for them to sign the tripartite stabilization program with the Federal Government. Again, the Federal Government have money to put into it. These people haven't any money, they're bankrupt, Madam Speaker. What kind of a program are they going to put forward? If they start into the feedlot program subsidy, I'll tell you what it means to their treasury. They ain't seen nothing yet. But again, Madam Speaker, an honourable mention for the feedlot producers who have passed away several years ago.

The school tax rebate, Madam Speaker - let's talk about school tax rebate. Well, Madam Speaker, I'm sure that they never listened to one municipal secretary in the province. They put \$12 million out, not to give tax relief to the landowners. They put in place another farm support program. These people can laugh all they like because it'll be the last laugh that they have as Ministers and as government I'll tell you, because they're going to be "pfft" so fast out of this office. But the School Tax Rebate Program, Madam Speaker, they didn't listen to anybody - the biggest administrative boondoggle that ever has been introduced at the municipal level. Farmers farm all their life, rent their land out, don't qualify for tax rebate. Now that's their reward for farming in Manitoba all their lives. The person who's renting the land gets the rebate - nothing to do with the person who's renting the land. It's the farmer who owns the land, it's the retiree.

Madam Speaker, the point is if they had handled the thing properly, it would have been of some use and still helped a little bit. They said the reason we didn't want to give it to everybody, we didn't want to help those terrible banks - the banks. But only one organization can get \$500 once. They weren't going to give the bank \$500 and \$500, so they gave the Royal Bank \$500, one shot. That wasn't going to make or break the Royal Bank or the Bank of Commerce - \$500 - one shot to the bank that owns land. Not very tough administratively to figure out. But of course if you're a New Democrat or the former Minister of Agriculture you can make anything complicated, as he's trying to do in the Autopac program.

Well, our commitment, Madam Speaker, was \$20 million to the relief of education taxes off the farm community. Now, Madam Speaker, that hasn't changed as far as I am concerned, and I'll you we'll be pumping that just as hard come the next election as we did the last one.

Well, Madam Speaker, one cannot go through this debate without paying some attention to the consumers of this province. Everybody is running around in the government saying, well, we're worried about the textile industry and free trade. Textile industry and free trade. Yes, we want the jobs, but what does it mean if you get cheaper textiles? Maybe it means your suit or your overalls or your shoes, or whatever textiles are made into, might be just a little less costly. I mean, did they

ever stop and think that they have a responsibility to the consumer? They expect me to produce cheap food and my farmer friends to produce cheap food for the consumers. Why not the textile industry to produce cheaper clothing for the consumers? That's where it's at. Certainly, we're concerned about the textile manufacturers, makers of clothing, but it's the consumers who are the eventual beneficiaries of it. That's where it's at.

But, Madam Speaker, the real one that has to be talked about for a minute or two is the Member for Brandon East and his promise to cheapen up the price of gas in Brandon. You know, we had the Premier of the province running around prior to the last election. He was certainly concerned about the price of gas, and he had to bring it down 8 or 9 nine cents a litre. That was his promise. What have we had? How many thousands have we spent in studies and commissions? Two now?

Have you filled up with gasoline outside the City of Winnipeg in the last two years? The Member for Brandon East saw it as a major problem in his constituency. Gasoline in Brandon right now is about 50 cents a litre - 50 cents a litre, \$2 a gallon. What is it in Winnipeg? Thirty-nine cents, on sale, these last few days. Well, the Member for Brandon East is going to give the people of Brandon cheap gas. He's going to set up a co-op. He's going to sell membership in a co-op. Well, you know, that's a real insult to all the co-op stations we see up and down the highways. Federated Co-op has got co-op gas stations throughout the province. Their gas isn't any cheaper; it's consumer owned. Why isn't it? What's a co-op going to do, Madam Speaker? Who's the co-op going to buy the gas from? Again, he's trying to fool the people of Brandon East that he's able to do something about gas prices.

Madam Speaker, the problem is that the promise was made for all the people of Manitoba, not just the people of Brandon East. Howard Pawley - pardon me, Madam Speaker - the incompetent person who's running the province is called Premier - said that we were going to get cheaper gas for everybody in Manitoba. That's gas for your car, that is. Well now, we haven't got it any cheaper. It's 50 cents a litre, \$2 a gallon. We're still waiting, Madam Speaker. What's he going to do come to the next election? Is he going to promise cheap gas? They're going to say, "Aha! Howard Pawley, you sure as hell - pardon me - lived up to the last one, didn't you?" You know, it's that kind of stuff that's going to beat them, Madam Speaker. It's going to kick them so far out of office, they won't know. In fact, Madam Speaker, the taxpayers will kick them so far out of office, it will cost \$100 for them to send a letter home. That's how far they're going to be sent.

Madam Speaker, gas prices - we've had the to-do, you know, and here's the other - I want to conclude on this point, Madam Speaker. I want to conclude on this point because I think it's important to the people of Manitoba. Now I may conclude on this; I may not. Gas, Madam Speaker, was on Howard - on the Premier's mind - it was on the Premier's mind - and he was going to do a lot about lowering the natural gas prices in Manitoba. One hundred dollars per home, that's the pledge. They ran a survey, they ran a poll; that's the popular thing. So we go and buy a gas

company. Run another poll; it's not the popular thing. So now we get out of it. We take the credit for what? No. 1, deregulation. Deregulation by the Federal Government was one of the biggest things that gave us lower gas prices, and also the reduction of the automotive tax in the Province of Manitoba was the other, Madam Speaker. It had nothing to do with the proposed purchase of Inter-City Gas, Madam Speaker, but the record was so bad in the public's mind that when they were asked the question - do you want them to spend another \$175 million to give us another MTX, another Autopac? - all these boondoggles that they've had on their hands, Madam Speaker - the people said no, enough is enough. Enough is enough. Now they aren't going to take it any more.

Madam Speaker, given that the Premier is guided so strongly by polls, I suggest that he call a provincial election and take the decision of the public. That's the true poll that should be taken.

Madam Speaker, as critic for Native Affairs, I am somewhat disappointed that there was lack of acknowledgement in the Throne Speech dealing with the Native communities and I'll plead with the government again. There are two things I would like to see, Madam Speaker, one exercise, but two things in particular I would like to see accomplished on behalf of the Native community.

No. 1 - I would like to see, Madam Speaker, legislative hearings throughout the province so all members of the Legislature can proceed to the Native community and try and find out what they mean when they say they want self-government. I want the grassroots people of the Native community to tell legislators of this province what they mean by self-government.

No. 2 - what could be accomplished, Madam Speaker, is that I would like to see the living conditions, I would like to see the educational opportunities enhanced for the Native communities, the job opportunities. I would like to see, Madam Speaker, for the Native community, a rekindling of the pride in this country that I am sure they have. Yes, Madam Speaker, I don't think that we should always be trying to deal with the problem until we get to the bottom of it and really know what is forcing them to do certain things.

Let's do that with a sincere legislative committee, Madam Speaker. Again, lacks direction, the government lacks direction, and I would hope he would take it as a positive suggestion.

Madam Speaker, the Meech Lake Accord, why haven't we heard any more in this about the Meech Lake Accord? You know why, Madam Speaker? Because he's fallen out of favour with who? Not the people of Manitoba, the Federal Government, because a few party members started to hammer him on the Meech Lake Accord, not because the Meech Lake Accord may be a good deal.

I ask the Premier what kind of a mechanism is he going to set up for hearings? Has he clearly discussed this with the Union of Manitoba Municipalities because I am sure there are mixed feelings out there?

Madam Speaker, my suggestion to the Premier would be if he wants to take it as constructive criticism, or condemnation, I don't care what, my suggestion to him would be to come forward as the Premier of this province and discuss with this Assembly what he truly understands the Meech Lake Accord to be; what it will

or what it won't do for the people of Manitoba. I suggest, Madam Speaker, it would be very helpful.

I have no difficulty, Madam Speaker, in Ottawa losing some power to the provinces. That's been part of our problem in this nation, they have truly had too much power in a lot of cases, and I can certainly live with some of that in the hands of the people of Manitoba. I don't have any trouble in trusting power to the governments of Saskatchewan and Alberta and B.C. and the Maritimes. Madam Speaker, I think they are quite mature and capable to handle some of the power that is now centralized in Ottawa. I don't have a bit of difficulty with that; in fact, I think it may enhance the opportunities for the regions in this country. So I have no difficulty in supporting the Meech Lake Accord, as I know it to date. But, I'll tell you, there is very little information that would come from this government as far as one getting a clear handle as to where we're going as partners in that agreement.

Well, Madam Speaker, I'll conclude my remarks by saying that I think that the Throne Speech lacks the truth, lacks direction, lacks substance and lacks sincerity, and the quicker that the people of Manitoba are given the opportunity to vote this government out of office the better we all will be.

Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Energy and Mines.

HON. J. STORIE: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, it is difficult to know where to begin in attempting to deal with some of the nonsense, if not all of the nonsense, that's come from members across. And I have to say, Madam Speaker, that I fear that the tone of this debate has degenerated considerably since its initial giving.

Madam Speaker, I, and I am sure members opposite, have read with a great deal of interest and with a certain amount of care the remarks by the Leader of the Opposition, and the word "fatuous" comes to mind.

The Member for Arthur suggested that there was a lack of sincerity in the Throne Speech Address, Madam Speaker. I can only say that if indeed that was the case - and I don't believe it was - certainly the responses have been insincere. There has been more than a modicum of misinformation spread by Members Opposite and I know that is part of their strategy, not to inform Manitobans, but to misinform.

Madam Speaker, I guess we could begin by talking about a couple of the suggestions by the Leader of the Opposition. Somewhere in his speech, and it struck a rather ironic note in my mind, the Leader of the Opposition was talking about morals and ethics in government. Madam Speaker, given the understanding that Canadians and Manitobans have of Tories from coast to coast wallowing in the public trough, this is indeed an irony, the hypocrisy, Madam Speaker, which has not been talked in this Legislature for some considerable period of time.

Madam Speaker, we have the image of Conservative members in Nova Scotia being turfed out of office, being kicked out of the Legislature - Tories from coast to coast, Madam Speaker, their integrity being impugned as individuals, the party's reputation, the

Progressive Conservative Party's reputation being impugned from coast to coast for justifiable reason. A record eight Conservative Cabinet Ministers at the federal level have resigned so far, in a very short interval. Madam Speaker, if Mr. Epp had had any intestinal fortitude, perhaps he would have resigned.

Madam Speaker, I want to indicate, not that I believe all of the things that are happening in other Legislatures, in all of the press reports you get about members' indiscretion, are necessarily accurately reported. I simply want to indicate that it is a bit galling, shall we say, for members of the Progressive Conservative Party to talk about moral integrity and point at this side of the House, when no member on this side has ever had to resign in disgrace as Conservatives from coast to coast have had to do. So, Madam Speaker, that's just one example.

The Leader of the Opposition and members opposite, including the Member for River Heights, the Liberal member in the House, talked rather glibly about health care cuts and cuts to education. Madam Speaker, there have been no funding cuts to education or health.

The Leader of the Opposition referred to cuts in education. The only cuts to educational support in the Province of Manitoba, the only cut to training supports in the Province of Manitoba have come from the federal Tories, rather mechanically supported by members opposite, including the Member for Brandon West, whose community college has felt the repercussions of a 40 percent funding cut in direct purchases to our community colleges in the province.

Madam Speaker, I don't want to dwell on all of the inaccurate presentations that members opposite have put forward in response to the Throne Speech. They talk about the economic prospects for this province. Madam Speaker, the economic prospects in this province are better than virtually any other province in Canada. Our economic record in terms of creating employment, in terms of attracting investment, are second to none. Our unemployment level, Madam Speaker, is the second lowest in the country.

Madam Speaker, we have been a prosperous province since 1982, and for all of the shortcomings, for all the problems that this government has faced partly because, clearly, of mistakes that were made by the government and also because of exigencies, things that happened which were not within our control, we have dealt with them. The members opposite may try to distort the public record, either in terms of our economic record or in terms of providing social justice in this province, but it isn't going to work.

Madam Speaker, no one can deny the fact that the increases in Autopac rates were a major source of frustration and created some anger. Madam Speaker, they were significant increases. I don't believe that Manitobans want to dismantle Autopac, as the Member for Ste. Rose has suggested, or the Leader of the Opposition. That's what they are after.

I want every university student, I want every community college student, I want every high school student over the age of 16, I want every young person under the age of 25 to know that's what their agenda is, and their insurance rates will double, triple or quadruple.

That's their agenda, Madam Speaker, and we should be clear on that because the Member for Ste. Rose

and the Leader of the Opposition have announced that

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

HON. J. STORIE: So, Madam Speaker, the public record is there for all to view, and if the Member for Sturgeon Creek cares to read the speech by the Member for Ste. Rose publicly on TV the other night, I can attest to the fact that I saw him and others can as well.

Madam Speaker, I don't want to dwell on the misinformation that is being disseminated by members opposite. Madam Speaker, I simply want to say that the speeches thus far have been replete with the usual trite diatribe. We hear from the members opposite about their ideological hang-ups and their consternation that this government does have an agenda, has set goals for itself, and that progress is being made in the province.

Madam Speaker, I want to talk about two I suppose related aspects and they deal with energy. One of them relates to the energy policy which was announced by the Premier on June 9 of last year. Madam Speaker, members opposite and the Member for Arthur did, in his remarks, comment on the fact that he was of the opinion that the efforts of the Manitoba Government in pursuing the acquisition of ICG had nothing to do with the lowering of natural gas prices in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, I want to make it very, very clear, and I'm going to give you a chronology of events which will indicate that members opposite are totally wrong, totally insensitive to the fact that consumers in this province are benefiting from the action of this government. I'm going to show, Madam Speaker, and put on the record, as has been done in the past, the facts of this matter which will show that neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives have any kind of intestinal fortitude, who were prepared to take on this matter which revolves around I suppose the implementation of the federal desire to see deregulated gas and oil markets. Madam Speaker, neither of the Official Opposition Parties seem to show any concern that Manitoba consumers were being hosed to the tune of tens of millions of dollars.

Madam Speaker, the Western Accord was signed in 1985 and the intention of that accord was to introduce competitive pricing into the natural gas and oil markets. Madam Speaker, the original intent of the accord was to see a one-year transition period during which time the market would become more accommodating in terms of the pricing changes that were about to occur.

Madam Speaker, in the fall of 1986 this government announced, through the Minister of Energy and Mines, its concern about the deregulation process, about the fact that deregulation was not looking to benefit Manitoba consumers in particular, but Manitoba homeowners and small businesses in particular, as it was originally intended. Madam Speaker, the government made representation to ICG and TransCanada Pipelines and said we want to see some of that benefit. Three days, Madam Speaker, before the November 1 deadline - pardon me, did I say three weeks?

A MEMBER: Three days.

HON. J. STORIE: Three days. I should back up. On October 23 - I don't know how many days it was before the November 1 deadline - ICG signed a contract with Western Gas Marketing in which it agreed to bring gas to Manitoba at \$3 per thousand cubic feet. Madam Speaker, we had informed those parties; we had informed the public and the Opposition through public communication that that was an unacceptable level. That did not — (Interjection) — The Member for Portage la Prairie is laughing, Madam Speaker, because he knows that it wouldn't matter what the government said, they had no intention of acting to protect consumers, no intention whatsoever.

So, Madam Speaker, the public knew in the fall of 1986 that we were getting hosed in Manitoba. We indicated to ICG that wasn't fair. We indicated to them that we wanted the prices renegotiated. We wanted the prices negotiated downward because the competitive market said that those prices, the \$3 per thousand, were totally out of line.

Madam Speaker, ICG maintained that was the best possible price and they were going to stick to that two-year agreement, which would have meant Manitobans paying \$3 per thousand cubic feet from November 1, 1986, till November 1, 1988. Madam Speaker, we knew and subsequently proved to the satisfaction of all, I believe, that in fact lower prices were possible, that gas supplies at almost one-half of that - not quite, certainly around the \$1.82 per thousand cubic feet was available and could have been transported to Manitoba if we had access to the pipeline.

Madam Speaker, all through the fall and winter of 1986, through until May of 1987, ICG maintained adamantly that those were the best possible prices that they could get for Manitobans. They maintained that. Did one single Conservative member of this Legislature, or the single member of the Legislature who is a Liberal, raise any issue about gas pricing? Were they saying to the government please act on behalf of our consumers? Was the Member for Riel saying please act on behalf of my constituents? Was the Member for Kirkfield Park saying please act on behalf of my constituents? No, Madam Speaker, no one was saying anything.

The Public Utilities Board said unequivocally that, yes, the prices that were being charged to Manitobans were excessive. Madam Speaker, subsequent to that, the Premier enunciated the natural gas policy which included a provincial effort to acquire the assets of Inter-City Gas. As a result of the public announcing of that intention, the Provincial Government, through the Minister responsible, got directly involved in negotiating a new price of gas for Manitoba to commence November 1, 1987.

Madam Speaker, I want to say to the Member for River Heights that price is, in fact, lower than the average price that Ontario received for the same natural gas; and I want to say, categorically, that the involvement of the Provincial Government in negotiations was the reason Manitobans can now face the prospect of about \$26 million savings in natural gas costs, as well as, with the elimination of the motor fuel tax, another \$12 million in savings, a total, Madam Speaker, of \$38 million.

Madam Speaker, that is not the end of this matter. There are additional savings to be had on behalf of

Manitobans. The fact of the matter is, Madam Speaker, if the National Energy Board had not ruled - and I believe incorrectly ruled - that Manitoba oil and gas should not have access to the pipeline to flow cheaper gas to Manitoba, then in fact Manitobans would have experienced an additional 10 percent or 15 percent decrease in the price of gas.

Madam Speaker, I want to know where members opposite are. Do they believe that deregulated markets for natural gas should obtain? Do they believe that, if we're going to have a deregulated market, Manitoba homeowners and Manitoba small business should have access to lower natural gas prices? Are they prepared to stand with us, with this government in pursuing access to the TransCanada Pipeline, which is a public highway for which Canadian taxpayers paid dearly?

Madam Speaker, this matter has not concluded. Regardless of whether members opposite want this government to pursue the interests of consumers in terms of natural gas pricing, we are going to do it. There are additional savings that can be had and they can be had for the consumers in Winnipeg and the consumers in Portage la Prairie and the consumers in Brandon. Madam Speaker, there is much that can be done.

So, Madam Speaker, the members opposite are wrong. They are wrong about the reasons negotiations concluded with ICG. They concluded over one issue about which there was no agreement and was unlikely to be agreement, and that was the imposition of a federal tax with a liability of approximately \$34 million. So, Madam Speaker, let there be no doubt about why the province chose, obviously in discussions with and as part of the discussions with ICG, to suspend those discussions. It was simply because there was no way the province was going to assume a \$34 million potential liability on behalf of Manitobans, Madam Speaker.

The Member for Sturgeon Creek continues to chirp from his seat that it wasn't what I told the Federal Government. Madam Speaker, the Member for Sturgeon Creek is casting aspersions on the integrity of ICG, because ICG told the Federal Government exactly - in fact, they initiated the contact with the Federal Government and told the Federal Government exactly what the Province of Manitoba did. So, Madam Speaker, let's set that aside.

When it comes to protecting consumers, Madam Speaker, this government is not afraid to act. Madam Speaker, we hear all kind of moans about the consumers when it comes to MPIC and Manitoba Hydro rate increases, but they do nothing. There is a little bit - in fact, there's more than a little bit, Madam Speaker, of ingenuousness when it comes to hydro rate increases, because this interfering Opposition, when they were government, meddled in the affairs of Crown corporations on an unparalleled scale.

Madam Speaker, in 1979 or 1980, when hydro rates were frozen, there was a quid pro quo for that decision. Madam Speaker, it was then decided that the taxpayers of the Province of Manitoba, the taxpayers of Manitoba would pay for what is called The Energy Rate Stabilization Act. Madam Speaker, so let there be no moaning and groaning about how Simon Pure members opposite are when we talk about managing Crown corporations because that action alone has not cost ten of millions of dollars; hundreds of millions of dollars

are going directly from taxpayers into support for a Crown corporation. Hospital beds, all of the arguments that members opposite use which frankly, Madam Speaker, I agree with in terms of the operation of Crowns, have been wasted and were wasted. To suggest that political interference is rampant on this side when the facts would indicate, Madam Speaker, that the hundreds of millions of dollars that have gone from taxpayers to support Manitoba Hydro were initiated by the callous and wrongheaded policies of members opposite.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to deal in my few remaining minutes with the issue of free trade and more particularly the issue of free trade when it comes to energy. Madam Speaker, I want to preface this by indicating that what I hear from members opposite including their federal counterparts is only rhetoric, only rhetoric. Madam Speaker, we did help hold public hearings on the issue of free trade across the province and a number of Conservative MLA's chose to attend. But, Madam Speaker, they added virtually nothing to that process. The reason they added nothing to that process is because they come with no information. Madam Speaker, I have with me today a document that has cost roughly 300 or 400 times as much - because these were distributed across Canada - as our effort to date to inform people about free trade. Madam Speaker, this is the most - (Interjection) - sycophantic document.

Madam Speaker, the Member for Portage la Prairie is outraged. He's also wrong. Madam Speaker, the Member for Portage does not tell us the truth. Madam Speaker, the fact is that we, in our trade meetings, handed out the federal summary of the agreement along with our criticisms. Madam Speaker, this particular document - and I invite members opposite to read this one, to read the same kind of a document on minerals - there is absolutely nothing in this document which will tell Canadians one iota about the implications of this agreement. There is no detail in these documents. There are graphs, indeed there are graphs, telling us about how much trade we're doing in energy, how much - (Interjection) - Madam Speaker, what this does - the Member for Portage la Prairie doesn't have any intelligence - this talks about the implications of the agreement.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

The Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie had his opportunity to speak in the debate.

HON. J. STORIE: Madam Speaker, I defy the Member for Portage la Prairie to show how telling me how much investment in energy in 1986 or 1987, how that tells me what's going to happen as a result of free trade.

Madam Speaker, no one has ever denied that trade between our countries and trade on an international basis isn't good for Canada. You can't tell me that, because Manitoba does \$1.4 billion in trade, that in itself is some kind of a justification for getting into a trade deal which is, in our opinion, much more than trade. Madam Speaker, this informs not a bit. Madam Speaker, I want to ask the question why are we into this Mulroney trade deal?

Madam Speaker, I don't know whether members opposite remember this or not, but you know it was in 1984, only four short years ago, when Brian Mulroney said don't talk to me about free trade. It'll cost Canada its sovereignty. I'll have none of it, in his usual kind of bombastic way. Madam Speaker, only two short years ago, only two short years after those momentous pronouncements, Mr. Mulroney and the federal Conservatives found free trade was not only acceptable, it was now our salvation.

Madam Speaker, I want to deal with the suggestion by members opposite, including the Leader of the Opposition, that somehow this trade deal was going to have benefits for Manitoba. Madam Speaker, the fact of the matter is the Leader of the Opposition has quoted a federal document and one that comes from the Economic Council of Canada which suggests that the benefits of this Free Trade Agreement, this trade agreement are going to be some 350,000 - and that was the optimistic side - jobs for Canada, 15,000 jobs for Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, I want the members opposite to tell me how many jobs were created in Manitoba without free trade - 11,000 in one year. How many jobs is Mr. Mulroney claiming credit for creating in this country in three years? More than a million. So, Madam Speaker, let's not delude ourselves. Let's have the Opposition quit trying to delude the public about the benefits of this agreement.

Madam Speaker, what about consumers? There has been all kinds of rampant speculation about what this agreement means for the consumers in this province. Madam Speaker, the fact of the matter is - and members opposite parrot this quite often - 80 percent of our trade is already free. It doesn't take much to therefore conclude that what we're talking about giving away in this agreement in terms of energy security and energy management and control over our resources is 20 percent, the remaining 20 percent. Madam Speaker, we have given away, by virtue of this agreement, far more than we can ever hope to recoup by way of economic advantage, advantage to the consumers or job creation.

I want people to reflect on the fact that all of the things that we're giving away, if they create 15,000 jobs, if they do - and I think we could argue about whether that's realistic - is giving away the control over investment in our country and, more importantly, Madam Speaker, as the Member for Sturgeon Creek chuckles in this seat, control over energy.

I want to say that other countries in the world have gotten into bilateral trade agreements. Israel got into one; Mexico got into one. Not one country in the world has ever given away the kind of energy advantage that our nation has for nothing.

Madam Speaker, the Member for Sturgeon Creek says, "What did we give away?" I don't know whether he hasn't read the agreement or he doesn't understand the importance of energy to Manitoba and Canada. Energy in Canada, Madam Speaker, is not a luxury. By virtue of the distances that separate us across this country, by virtue of the climate, this country relies on energy. We had an energy advantage, Madam Speaker, which this government, with unfortunately no business sense, has traded away our one major business advantage, and that's our energy advantage. They've said we're going to eliminate discriminatory pricing.

Madam Speaker, if Manitoba today - if in fact this agreement comes to fruition, which we hope, pray that it doesn't for the sake of young people in this province who may want to manage at some day the energy resources of the province - we've given it away; we're about to do that - if members opposite decided some years in the future that they wanted to establish an aluminum smelter in the province, we could not use our energy advantage to attract them because if the aluminum smelter was placed in Manitoba and was provided with cheap energy by virtue of the fact that we have an abundance of it, countervailing duties would be imposed on the products of that company.

Madam Speaker, we took our one business advantage in Western Canada certainly, and we've given it away. We've given away the right and the obligation that we have to manage our energy for the future. We've given away, Madam Speaker, the political power that this Legislature and previous Legislatures have had and that future Legislatures want. We've given away the right to manage a resource that is important to this province and this country, and we've given it away for nothing, for a piece of paper that's going to be used as an election gimmick.

Madam Speaker, I am one who believes that, over time, probably the little decisions that we make, yes or no, do or don't do, have very little consequence. But I believe that periodically there are decisions that are of enough significance that they make a difference. I don't feel strongly about many issues. This issue I feel strongly about because Canada is not the sum and total of its businesses. Canada is a nation. It stands for some things, principles beyond simple financial expediency, simple principles beyond financial expediency.

Madam Speaker, the people who I see promoting free trade are doing so out of financial expediency with no consideration, no concern for future generations in this province and this country, political expediency even more so on the part of the Federal Government and its apologists who sit opposite who have done no thinking about the implications of this agreement.

Madam Speaker, this agreement cannot be allowed to become a part of Canadian law. This agreement does not deserve to be law because it jeopardizes what I believe I stand for and other Canadians stand for.

The most eloquent testimony, Madam Speaker, to the lunacy of us getting involved in this in the first place came from a very young gentleman in Brandon when we were holding our public hearings. Madam Speaker, he stood up and he said, I don't come to meetings like this. He said, I normally don't get excited. I'm not politically motivated, but I don't understand what we're doing here. He said, the first mistake we made was in the way this was approached. He said, you know, if I go to buy a car, I don't go up to the dealer and say, hey look, before we start negotiating, I've got to have that car.

Madam Speaker, for a year-and-a-half, Mr. Mulroney, predating the final signing of the agreement, was saying we've got to have this, this is our salvation, and it was motivated by fear, not by any real sense of what it was going to do for Canada or for Manitoba. It was motivated by fear, the fear that somehow the Americans were going to introduce all kinds of legislation, protectionist legislation, which we couldn't accommodate or deal with in the fullness of time.

Madam Speaker, this gentleman made the comment, I think, that most Manitobans would make. We have been able, not just as a province but as a group of individuals - McLeod Young Weir and many other financial houses have been able to quantify what they see as the benefits. I believe that there may be some, at least temporarily, job creation in Manitoba because of this. Some 15,000 may be a reasonable figure. I believe that consumers may benefit. Our estimate, and that of the Economic Council, is perhaps as much as \$200 a year after 10 years.

But, Madam Speaker, there is a cost, and none of the proponents of this agreement - not the Member for Steinbach, not the Member for Sturgeon Creek - have in any detailed or systematic or thoughtful way said what is the cost to Manitobans, what is the cost of this agreement in the long term for our Canadian identity and our identity as a province. No one. All we have heard is the cheap rhetoric of jobs. We live on trade. Fluff! Fluff from the Leader of the Opposition; fluff from members opposite. Madam Speaker, we need some thoughtful dialogue and we haven't had it to this point.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Your argument boils down to Canadian identity, is that it?

HON. J. STORIE: Madam Speaker, the Member for Sturgeon Creek still has not got the point.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Well, that's what you said.

HON. J. STORIE: Madam Speaker, we have an energy advantage which we are trading away for no benefits. Madam Speaker, when the Federal Government started this exercise, they said we need access to the American market as if that was some kind of panacea. It is not a panacea. Madam Speaker, I have pointed out, others have pointed out, there are many midwestern states which have access to the U.S. market, that huge 250-million-person market. They are not economic gold mines. Madam Speaker, Grand Forks, North Dakota is not bigger than Winnipeg, nor is Billings, Montana. Madam Speaker, it is no panacea.

The second point is that we have no guaranteed access. Madam Speaker, legal views from across this country have said that the binational panels are a sham. They guarantee us nothing. They do not protect us from anti-dumping or the imposition of countervail duties. Madam Speaker, it's a sham.

What the Federal Government said we were going to get out of this, we haven't got, and now no one wants to take stock and say: what have we lost on account of it? What have we given up? How is that going to affect our ability to function as a province?

Madam Speaker, there are so many other far-reaching implications if this agreement is concluded that I think, as a prudent and responsible government, despite the fact that it is a federal matter in the main, because they do have constitutional authority to sign international trade agreements, the fact of the matter is that it behooves us as legislators, it behooves me as a Manitoban, as a representative from the North, to say: what is the impact on the people of Manitoba in the long term?

Madam Speaker, the signs are frightening, and what is also frightening is that we have nothing but propaganda from our Federal Government, information that is of no value in coming to any conclusions about what this trade agreement means, no value whatsoever.

Madam Speaker, that is only one of the issues we're going to have to deal with in this Session. Madam Speaker, I had said at the outset that if I had wanted to, I could have listed accomplishments of this government that go back to 1969 and beyond, but also legislative accomplishments in the last Session: legislation which enshrined human rights; legislation which provided adequate care and certainty with respect to day care; legislation which improves and tries to meet the needs of families in crisis in Manitoba, tries to meet the needs of children in need of care.

Madam Speaker, I could outline the allocation of funding in Manitoba for health and education and say that we have tried to maintain services and provide services to Manitobans in the face of economically difficult circumstances. We have, Madam Speaker, nothing to be ashamed of. We have made mistakes. We have not been as foresightful, as forward thinking as we should have, in certain circumstances, Madam Speaker, but the people of Manitoba know that our actions, both legislative and fiscal, are designed in the best interests of Manitobans. When we have a chance, Madam Speaker, to talk to people in small groups throughout this province, they know, despite our shortcomings, that we're much better than the alternative.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Opposition House Leader.

MR. G. MERCIER: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I believe there's an inclination to call it six o'clock, but I would move, seconded by the Member for Sturgeon Creek, that debate be adjourned, and then call it six o'clock.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member is also moving that the debate be adjourned?

MR. G. MERCIER: Debate be adjourned, yes, and six o'clock second.

MADAM SPEAKER: I have a bit of a problem with the honourable member moving the debate be adjourned, considering his motion yesterday.

MR. G. MERCIER: There's no problem here. Trust me.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

HON. J. COWAN: Madam Speaker, by agreement, we've agreed that the debate can stand in the name of the Member for St. Norbert, he having seconded the adjournment of the debate, and I believe there's agreement to call it six o'clock, if that's acceptable to you, leaving the debate standing in the name of the Member for St. Norbert for when we commence debate tomorrow.

MADAM SPEAKER: My understanding was that the Member for St. Norbert used his turn yesterday to move his motion.

HON. J. COWAN: No, no.

MR. G. MERCIER: I moved the adjournment of the House.

MADAM SPEAKER: Right.

MR. G. MERCIER: I'm now moving the adjournment of the debate.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member rose yesterday, or in the debate, and moved the motion that the House do now adjourn and thereby lost his position to speak on the motion. — (Interjection) — I realize that the honourable member moved an adjournment of the House.

The Honourable Government House Leader.

HON. J. COWAN: Madam Speaker, if it was inadvertently done that the member, by moving

adjournment of the House, inadvertently relinquished his opportunity to debate, then we have no difficulty whatsoever in granting the member leave right at this time so that he can begin his comments tomorrow when the House next sits again. We have no difficulty with that.

MADAM SPEAKER: The debate will stand in the Honourable Member for St. Norbert's name, by leave. Is that agreed? (Agreed)

The hour being 6:00 p.m. then, the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow afternoon. (Thursday)

ERRATUM

For clarification, in Volume XXXVI No. 2, Friday, 12 February, 1988, page 15, right-hand column, the Minister of Sport is shown as the Honourable V. Schroeder. The Minister of Sport is the Honourable W. Parasiuk.