



Second Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(Hansard)**

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The Honourable Louise M. Dacquay
Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, December 12, 1995

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

*PRAYERS***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS****PRESENTING PETITIONS**

**Emergency Health Care Services—
Community Hospitals**

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Linnea Rindall, Charmaine Fast, Lindsay Dolhun and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care at community hospitals, as was promised in the 1995 general election.

**Emergency Health Care Services—
Concordia Hospital**

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of W. Cameron, J. Cameron, Rose-Marie Natyna and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care at Concordia Hospital, as was promised in the 1995 general election.

**Emergency Health Care Services—
Community Hospitals**

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Lillian Wittman, Kathy Taylor, Shirley Sawchuk and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care at community hospitals, as was promised in the 1995 general election.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Diane Cook, Destinee

Parisien, Karen Grouette and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care at community hospitals, as was promised in the 1995 general election.

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Kathy Katchurowsky, Janiro Kowalczyk, Genoweta Zemla and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care at community hospitals, as was promised in the 1995 general election.

Retention of Hogs Single-Desk Selling

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Brownie Kafara, E.T. Minish, Donna Ferriss and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) reverse his decision and retain single-desk selling for hogs in Manitoba under Manitoba Pork.

**Emergency Health Care Services—
Community Hospitals**

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Teresa Cwik, Kelly Allardyce, Gavin Panchuk and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record requesting the Premier to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care in community hospitals, as was promised in the 1995 general election.

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Madam Speaker, I would like to present the petition of T.G. Sewell, I.E. Schultz, M. Brewer and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record to request the Premier to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care at community hospitals, as was promised in the 1995 general election.

* (1335)

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS**Emergency Health Care Services—
Grace General Hospital**

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

An Honourable Member: No.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

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

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

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

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

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

**Emergency Health Care Services—
Community Hospitals**

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

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

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

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

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

THAT residents of Winnipeg and surrounding communities depend on emergency service at these community hospitals.

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

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

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

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

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

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

THAT residents of Winnipeg and surrounding communities depend on emergency service at these community hospitals.

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

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

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Yes. The Clerk will read.

* (1340)

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

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

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

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

THAT residents of Winnipeg and surrounding communities depend on emergency service at these community hospitals.

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

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

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

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

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

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

THAT residents of Winnipeg and surrounding communities depend on emergency service at these community hospitals.

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

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

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

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

THAT Manitobans deserve the greatest possible access to this care.

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

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

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

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

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

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

THAT residents of Winnipeg and surrounding communities depend on emergency service at these community hospitals.

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

* (1345)

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), I would like to table the Quarterly Financial Report for the Twelve Months Ended October 31, 1995, for the Manitoba Public Insurance.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw all honourable members' attention to the public gallery where we have with us this afternoon sixteen Grade 11 students from Immanuel Christian School under the direction of Mr. Jeff Dykstra. This

school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli).

We also have 25 students from Winnipeg Adult Education Centre under the direction of Mr. Ed Buchel. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Broadway (Mr. Santos).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Health Care System Emergency Services

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

Dealing with the closure of emergency wards at our community hospitals, we have had a number of contrary announcements by the government over the last 18 months.

In July of 1994 the Minister of Health said, I could not dare possibly close any of the emergency wards in our community hospitals at night. I use those wards myself, he said to us.

After the election in October of 1995, the government decided to close five out of the seven hospitals in the evening. They said they had a consensus, and then we found out later they did not. They said it was because of 4 percent volume in terms of emergent cases; then we found out that was not true. Now they are saying they have to reopen four of those hospital emergency wards at night because the holiday season is coming. I would like to ask the Premier, is it possible for the people of Manitoba to get a Minister of Health who can plan our health care system on the basis of knowing that a holiday season has greater volume? There was no reason to close those emergency wards at our community hospitals at night to begin with in October.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, the planning has not been done in isolation. It never has been with this government, unlike the

planning done by honourable members opposite when they had an opportunity.

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, this is the minister of chaos in terms of the Conservative government. He cannot plan 10 weeks ahead. He does not even know whether Christmas is coming or not when he makes his original decision. He is now 10 weeks later planning some reopening.

In light of the fact that the government is saying that this is not our final decision, our full plan—this next full plan, I might add—will be announced early in the new year, said the Minister of Health, I would like to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon), can he tell us what that full plan is? The Minister of Health told us last week he did not want to open emergency wards and then close them down again in the new year. Does this mean that we have a guarantee that the four out of the five that were announced today will be permanently reopened in our communities in Winnipeg?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, the honourable Leader of the Opposition should be aware that the emergency planning team has recommended that there be five sites for emergency services in addition to Children's Hospital. Those five sites would include two tertiary centres and three community hospitals. Because we are during the Christmastime and during a time of transition, for that intermediate time we have chosen to open four community hospital emergency rooms at night, but the configuration in the future will be two and three, and much work needs to be done in the meantime amongst the health care professionals involved in the process.

The honourable member may be interested to know that there is more than just emergency services carried out at our institutions. There are programs like psychiatry, pediatrics, cancer, medicine and critical care, obstetrics, geriatrics, surgery, various support services, diagnostics, and laboratory services.

All of those are programs of their own, and we are trying to get integrated planning throughout the city for each and every one of those programs. Each of those programs will have a planning team like the planning team we have for emergency services.

We appreciate the input these people are making. They are very, very qualified people to do that. They do not run the health system based solely on political considerations like my colleagues opposite would have us do.

* (1350)

Mr. Doer: The minister, in the last few weeks, has said that he did not want to open or reopen community-based emergency wards at night and then close them again in the new year; we needed a long-term plan.

Today he is again contradicting his own words where he is saying that we are going to reverse ourselves on one of the hospitals in the new year with the anticipated so-called full plan. I would like to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon), will today's announcement be the full plan in keeping with the minister's own words of last week?

We do not need these decisions to keep the emergency wards open and then close them and then open some and then close some again. We need long-term stability for our communities. We need predictability for our patients and for our citizens. Can we get that from the Premier today? We certainly cannot get it from the Minister of Health.

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, you see, the honourable member has to understand that we are following the recommendations made to us by the Urban Health Planning Emergency Services team. That is exactly what we are doing here.

So the honourable member wants us to close something. Let him tell us which one he wants us to close now or let the public know which one. He is asking that we close one; let him tell us which one that he would have us close. He now seems to agree that that is the thing to do.

Health Care System Emergency Services

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon) my questions because the Minister of Health has been wrong so often that perhaps the Premier can try to straighten out the situation.

Madam Speaker, can the Premier explain to members of this House and the public of Manitoba which of the many secret committees this minister has that made the recommendations that have the temporary reopening that was announced today, because he has not been listening and does not have recommendations from his Emergency Task Force committee? It is obviously the urban planning committee they set up, the executive committees that are making all of the executive recommendations about the future of health care in this province.

Can the Premier tell us which committee made the decision, and will he table the results of those recommendations and the data to back it up?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, the honourable member for Kildonan attended the forum last week facilitated by KPMG, which discussed some of these matters. He knows, unless he has forgotten already what he learned when he attended that forum, that we had an Emergency Services Task Force composed of all kinds of people providing all kinds of input.

Madam Speaker, not all of the input was the same. There were competing views put forward. The honourable member should not be surprised by that, so that the emergency planning team had the benefit of the input of all of the players of the Emergency Services Task Force before they made their recommendations to me.

Is the honourable member now picking and choosing which advice he wants to take from which parties at the Emergency Services Task Force table? If he is doing that, let him say which advice he wants to reject.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, my supplementary to the Premier (Mr. Filmon).

Can the Premier, who did not answer the question, or the Minister of Health, who also did not answer the question, perhaps inform this House and guarantee that the two hospitals whose emergency wards are going to be closed in the new year will not be permanently closed or converted to some other type of facility or function, which are the rumours that are rampant in the

health care community, and which, at those seminars I attended, everyone concluded was in fact going to happen, Madam Speaker?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, the role of hospitals that in future will not include in their role emergency services is very much the subject of discussion with the people at those hospitals, with the care providers, with the care providers at all of the hospitals in the city. I keep repeating for the honourable member because even when he goes to forums and takes part in discussions, he comes away as if he had not heard anything that went on there.

Madam Speaker, we are talking about integration of services so we can provide better services for Manitobans right here in the city, so that we can use the dollars that we have very effectively and so that we can use the talent, the training, the expertise that exists in our city to the best possible advantage for the people who need health care services in the city.

* (1355)

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, my final supplementary to the Premier (Mr. Filmon).

Can the Premier explain to this House why they are proceeding to close two hospital emergency wards at night on the recommendations of a minister who first said he had consensus and was proved to be wrong, on a recommendation of a minister who said he closed them in the first place because they were 4 percent utilized and he was found to be wrong—they are 11 percent utilized—on a minister who said it was closed to save money and then said it was not going to save money and now it may cost us more, on the recommendations of a minister who did not even listen to the recommendations of the Emergency Task Force Report?

Can he explain why, on the basis of not only that information and the incompetence of that minister, he is choosing to close two emergency wards in the city of Winnipeg when it is known by all health care providers those wards are needed?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, the honourable member thinks he knows more in the area of health

care delivery than Jack Litvack, the CEO of one of our tertiary hospitals, he knows more than Dr. Neil Swirsky who is the medical head of our Health Emergency Services Planning Team. The honourable member for Kildonan knows more than Betty Lou Roch, the nurse clinician manager member of this team. The honourable member knows more than all of these professionals who provide advice.

Well, that is astounding, Madam Speaker. I really have to rethink everything I have ever done now because I have not always followed the advice of the honourable member.

Michael Bessey
Tuition Fees/Cash Advance

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, according to the federal employee guideline rules, Section 28(1), public officeholders should not allow themselves to be influenced in the pursuit of their official duties and responsibilities by plans or offers for outside employment; Section 28(2), a public officeholder shall disclose in writing to the ethics counsellor all firm offers of outside employment that could place the public officeholder in a position of conflict; 28(3), a public officeholder who accepts an offer of outside employment shall immediately disclose in writing to the ethics counsellor, and so on. Saskatchewan, a public employee should not let himself be influenced.

Madam Speaker, does the Premier still maintain that there is nothing wrong with Mr. Bessey negotiating a material benefit with a senior officer of a corporation when both Mr. Bessey and that officer sat on the Faneuil ISG board and negotiated other arrangements with MTS and other companies?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I note that the member opposite is quoting all sorts of legislative sources other than the Province of Manitoba, which, of course, were developed by the government of which he now bears the political stripe.

Madam Speaker, given the fact that serious allegations have been made by the members opposite with respect to the relationships and indeed the actions

of a former public servant, I asked the Clerk of the Executive Council to convene a meeting with the Legislative Counsel and the Deputy Minister of Justice, and through that process, have requested that a review be made of all of the allegations and all of the information provided both in media reports and by members of the opposition.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, in the light of the Premier's answer, can he then confirm that the total value of Mr. Bessey's arrangements this year with Stanton Europa are approximately \$80,000?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, I have no knowledge of that.

Mr. Sale: Can the Premier tell the House whether the arrangements made by Mr. Bessey are for one year or for two years or for three years or for more years?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, I have no knowledge of that.

Community Colleges
Funding

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

During the last election, the Filmon team, clearly knowing of the reductions in the federal transfer payments, promised the people of Manitoba that they would expand the community colleges of Manitoba. Seven months later Red River Community College, in anticipation of a \$338,000 deficit, has fired an additional nine staff over and above the 27 they let go this summer, suspended courses and cut class sections.

I want to ask the Minister of Education to tell the House how she intends to keep those promises she made in full knowledge of the federal withdrawal.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, the member knows, or ought to know, that we have in our last go-around increased funding to community colleges. It is unfortunate that the federal government withdrew its direct purchase of seats in some instances.

* (1400)

The colleges have gone to self-governance. I think they have done a very good job, notwithstanding the current realities, of offering programming to their students, of bringing in new and innovative programs. I look at some of the things going on with distance education. I look at some of the work the colleges are doing in terms of interacting with universities, applaud them for their initiatives in that regard and for the continued high quality of service they give their students.

College boards of governors make decisions independently, as do boards of governors at universities, as do other self-governing bodies. Their task is not an easy one, but I do believe that this commitment by this government in terms of our own provincial funding to colleges compares very well with other enterprises across the country. Indeed, the increase we put into them last year for new initiatives, I believe, is very much appreciated by them.

Fee Policy

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, the end result is there are fewer students, there are fewer classes and fewer opportunities for young people, and those election promises meant nothing.

Madam Speaker, I want the minister to tell us whether the 10 percent increase in fees for Continuing and Distance Education proposed at Red River College—and a 10 percent increase in fees in one year is a huge amount for any student—will she tell us, is this what she had in mind when she promised, in that same election, to establish a provincial fee policy?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I note the member made a postamble and a preamble, but did this time at least follow it with a question, which she has not always done.

I would like to say that the member should go out and take a good look at what is happening in the colleges to understand the new and innovative technologies that are being offered, the interaction, not

just with colleges, not just with universities, but also with industry. Take a look at what is happening with the connections with the aerospace industry, for example, in terms of opportunities for students at the colleges, understand that our rates in Manitoba compare extremely well with rates of colleges in other parts of the country.

Madam Speaker, the tuition fee policy that we will be examining has not yet begun. She knows that we are looking at a tuition fee policy for post-secondary institutions to be delivered by the council on post-secondary education which has very close understandings of what is going on in post-secondary institutions. She knows that; yet, she speaks as if a fait accompli has occurred for a review that has not yet begun. I think that is a bit misleading, and she should be careful to be clear and accurate in her questions.

Desjardins Report Release

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

Over the years the government has benefited greatly through revenue created from gambling and has constantly downplayed the negative social costs of that activity which this government can take sole credit for.

We understand, through talking to the commission's office, at the very latest by this Friday this government will have the Desjardins report on gambling.

My question to the Premier is, in the name of open government, something that this Premier often talks about, will he make a commitment to make that report public immediately upon receiving it?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I do not have any confirmation of the information that the member is giving. The Desjardins commission is an independent body and will operate on the timetable that they have set for themselves in order to do the job they have been engaged to do.

We have indicated that report will be made public, and the process that we normally follow is that the

minister is able to receive the report and have enough time to be able to review it so that he can make intelligent commentary on it and then release it to the public.

Standing Committee Review

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Can the Premier allow for a standing committee to meet in the month of January in which members of the opposition will have an opportunity to question this government on its gambling policy, given that over the last number of years standing committees only dealt with Lotteries for maybe four or five hours in total duration over the last three, three and a half years?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, those arrangements are made between House leaders. I would expect that the House leaders will want to schedule an opportunity for that committee to sit so that the member can ask his questions.

Mr. Lamoureux: Would the Premier then be in favour of seeing the standing committee meet while we have adjourned for the winter, coming back no doubt sometime in the month of March? Will he make the commitment to have the standing committee meet to have this public debate?

Mr. Filmon: The member knows that I cannot make that commitment. That is the subject of negotiations between the House leaders, and that is the way the process should be.

Crime Prevention Government Strategy

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): My question is for the First Minister (Mr. Filmon).

With the highest increase in violent crime of all the provinces since 1989, this is the government that has refused to proclaim The Crime Prevention Foundation Act; has lots of phantom committees on crime like the Crime Prevention Council—it has never existed; promotes garage sales for youth programs and has a summit report on youth crime which has about two years of dust on it as of last week—not as much dust on

it as the Pedlar report recommendations and the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry report—while it cuts programs at friendship centres.

My question to the First Minister is, how has he the gall to write in last week's throne speech such nonsense as: The government has, and I quote, "an already impressive record of crime prevention"?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to reiterate what was in the throne speech last week in terms of this government's record in the area of crime prevention. Let me start in the area of policing. Money for 40 more police officers in the city of Winnipeg; more money to the RCMP; work with communities in terms of work where citizens can participate; continued work in terms of youth justice committees in the effort to make sure that young people do not return to a life of crime.

The list is very long. The member across the way has never supported any of the programs but the citizens of Manitoba certainly have.

Mr. Mackintosh: Would the minister, since the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) will not now stand by his puffery, care to explain why these gestures have failed to impress the national victims' rights organization, CAVEAT, which has reviewed the crime prevention efforts of all Canadian governments and issued a report card which concludes there is little evidence of a commitment to crime prevention in Manitoba, and instead of getting an A or a B like some governments, this government got an F?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Speaker, the member is quite wrong. This province did not get an F. However, we did get a D, and I will tell you why.

The reason this province got a D is because we would not support Bill C-68, compulsory federal gun registration.

CAVEAT made it very clear. The member is wrong. He does not ever stick to a single position; he talks out of both sides.

* (1410)

Point of Order

Mr. Mackintosh: I am sure the member does not want to mislead this House or suggest that I am misleading this House. This government got a D-minus overall, and I will table the report card on crime prevention which is what I am talking about where it got a big fat F.

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

* * *

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

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to table also CAVEAT reality check, and the efforts that—they said, contact your M.P. today; I would like to register with CAVEAT my support of Bill C-68, the firearms act.

The provinces that got a D were Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario, provinces which did not support Bill C-68.

An Honourable Member: What did Saskatchewan get, Rosemary?

Mrs. Vodrey: My understanding was that they did not support it either.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Before recognizing the honourable member for St. Johns, I want to remind all honourable members in this Chamber that today we have in our public gallery a number of high school students who I am certain do not appreciate rudeness, and I would ask the co-operation of all honourable members. There is no room for shouting in this Chamber.

Point of Order

Mr. Mackintosh: I want the record straight, Madam Speaker, and I am sure the Justice minister will do so.

Just to confirm that she is misleading this House when she says that the provinces opposed to the gun control bill got Ds, Saskatchewan got a C-minus.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. May I please ask the honourable member for St. Johns for co-operation in standing on points of order. Now this is the second point of order he has been recognized for, knowing full well that is not a point of order. It is clearly a dispute with the minister over producing facts.

* * *

Mr. Mackintosh: Madam Speaker, would the Justice minister then, who tactically, I note, never mentioned her so-called Crime Prevention Fund, confirm that she has at least impressed her own constituency, which last year received over one-quarter of all the funds expended by that hush fund?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Speaker, the Crime Prevention Fund is available to provide some funds, not ongoing funds, to communities who have a project which qualifies according to some criterion. So that is adhered to.

This government, Madam Speaker, I believe, has continued to follow our positions, our positions as stated. This government did not support gun registration. The other side we are not sure. This side believes in consequences for young offenders. The member for St. Johns, in November, ended up saying all they need is love. We simply do not know where he stands.

**Department of Natural Resources
Staff Biologist Dismissal**

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): Madam Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission.

Yesterday in this House, the Minister of Natural Resources told us that Dan Soprovich was fired for, quote, huddling with members on this side of the House during the Clean Environment Commission hearings.

Is it your government's policy to terminate civil servants' contracts on the basis of who they sit with at public hearings?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Labour): My learned friend knows that is an improper question to ask at this time when this matter is in fact being considered, that the employee may in fact have rights of appeal. I am certainly not going to interfere in an independent government agency.

Mr. Struthers: Madam Speaker, can the minister responsible for the Civil Service tell the House whether there is a new government policy in place that makes talking with members of this Legislature a dismissable offence?

Mr. Toews: Madam Speaker, I have answered that question already.

Mr. Struthers: He did not answer the question, Madam Speaker.

Could this minister respectively inform his colleague the honourable Minister for Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger) as to what does and does not constitute a dismissable offence in this government?

Mr. Toews: My honourable colleague may in fact think it is improper to interfere with those kinds of decisions. I do not. I will let the employee take any steps that he is legally entitled to and let an independent board make those decisions.

Copyright Canadian Distribution Rights

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, Manitoba's rich cultural life is clear in our small presses, for example, Turnstone, Pemmican, Watson and Dwyer, Blizzard, and the excellence of our writers: Governor General's Award winners and nominees like Patrick Friesen, Margaret Sweatman and Di Brandt, just to name a few. But the arrival of monolithic booksellers like Barnes and Noble and Borders could obliterate the presses and the opportunity for young, talented writers to publish.

My questions are for the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship. Has the minister pushed the

federal government to reform Canadian copyright to include Canadian distribution rights and therefore provide a measure of protection to Canadian publishers and writers, particularly of course Manitoba publishers and writers?

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Madam Speaker, indeed, our government's support for the cultural community is well known within the province and across the country, that as other levels of government both municipal and federal reduce their funds for cultural and artistic events, we have maintained our funding through the Manitoba Arts Council and through our department to encourage writers, artists of all sorts, to practise their trade and profession here in Manitoba.

On the issue of discussions with the federal government, we were about to have a ministerial meeting, the first one in some three years, early this month in Saskatoon. That meeting has been rescheduled for January, at which time we will have an opportunity to talk to the federal government about some of their policies involving the arts.

Bookstores Canadian Purchasing Policy

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Will the minister then negotiate with Ottawa to encourage incoming U.S. giants to exact commitments that they buy and must buy all their Canadian and agency books from Canadian sources?

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): I would say to my honourable friend that we have been in discussions in a number of departments and within my department with the federal government on a number of issues. We have not at this point had a lot of success in dealing with the federal government in terms of changing some of their policies and certainly affecting any of their funding decisions.

Publishing Industry Employment Protection

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Will the minister table in this House his plan to protect Manitoba writers

and presses and so protect the economic spin-offs which are somewhere in excess of \$2 million and also protect the 31 jobs in the publishing industry?

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Madam Speaker, our commitment to that industry has been maintained through a number of budgets. As I have indicated earlier in my first answer that whereas other levels of government are withdrawing their funding, reducing their funding, the best support that we can give them is to maintain our funding and I am optimistic that we will be able to do that in the upcoming budget.

* (1420)

Real Estate Industry Fraud Investigation

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Consumer Affairs.

Madam Speaker, dozens of first-time homeowners own overpriced homes that they cannot sell, thanks to the lack of action of this government. This government has known about this since it started; it has done nothing while this ring is operating to this day.

Will the minister finally take responsibility for this mess and tell the young, first-time home buyers who are watching this Question Period what you plan to do about it?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, subsequent to the member for Elmwood raising this issue, I had a discussion yesterday with the chair of the Manitoba Securities Commission. She told me that in fact it was the Manitoba Securities Commission investigator who uncovered this whole issue. They were the ones who blew the whistle on it. They were the ones who caused action to be taken and is now under investigation by the RCMP.

Mr. Maloway: I would like to ask the minister whether this government has made any recommendations to the Law Society, the real estate association and the CMHC over this ring that has been operating under his nose for the last two or three years.

Mr. Ernst: Madam Speaker, I think we will wait for the RCMP to conduct their investigation to determine what appropriate actions are necessary after that investigation is completed.

Education System Transportation Policy

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

Madam Speaker, this government has made a number of changes to the funding policy for school buses in the province, including eliminating a 22-year-old clause in the agreement to ensure there is funding for school buses in outlying areas in the city for Grades 7 to 12 students. This would mean that they are not going to have to rely on public transit for school buses.

This has been bad enough, but now the City of Winnipeg is going to eliminate some 36 Transit routes in the city. Six of those are in the constituency of Radisson. This is going to mean that many students and others will have no way of getting to school or to work. I want to table a copy of the various Transit routes that are being eliminated.

I want to ask the Minister of Education if she has had any discussions with school divisions, trustees or staff with the school divisions or the City of Winnipeg to address this problem so that students attending schools in the city of Winnipeg will have transportation. Currently, there is no school bus or public transit.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, the member knows or the member ought to know that the Department of Education funds transportation for students in Manitoba if they live in rural Manitoba over a certain distance, if they live in the city of Winnipeg over a certain distance, 1.6 kilometres or one mile.

If the school division in Winnipeg decides that they wish to transport their students, the school division can make decisions on routes. The school division can make decisions as to whether to contract out busing, to acquire their own buses. There are criteria for buses in terms of the kind of bus that must be purchased for

students' safety, and school divisions are elected and are accountable to make decisions with the funding provided by the government of Manitoba for transportation purposes.

We do not tell school divisions what routes to choose or whether indeed to bus certain grades of students. That decision is for them to make.

Ms. Cerilli: Madam Speaker, given that this government has contributed to this problem by eliminating the funding for suburban school divisions for Grades 7 to 12 students, I want to ask the minister, what is her approach going to be to solve this problem so that students throughout the city are going to have access either to public transit or to school bus transportation? Currently, there is a problem—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, it is true that some divisions in the city of Winnipeg had been transporting students in the high school arena, in the junior high arena. Other divisions in the city of Winnipeg have never transported students after they get to the high school or secondary level. That choice is the school divisions' to make. They make those decisions within their available funds.

Funding is provided for students up to a certain grade level within the city if the school division has a transportation policy, Madam Speaker. Again I reiterate, that decision is made by school divisions and some urban divisions have never bussed students in those upper grades.

Hog Industry Marketing System

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture is taking action that is going to hurt the pork industry in this province. In fact, he himself has stated that 85 percent of the producers in this province are against moving to dual marketing, but he is going to move to it anyway. He has set up a group of people whom he knew in their ideology would support the vertical integration and big business in the pork industry.

Madam Speaker, I want to ask the minister why so few producers were contacted in the study. In the spirit of disclosure, will he list the people who were contacted, the independent producers who were contacted and whose opinions are reflected in this study?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I want to make it clear to the honourable member for Swan River that there is only one industry, and that is the pork industry and it is inclusive. It includes packers, includes producers, it includes the feed mill companies that provide the feed. It is one industry that we are concerned about making sure that it is vibrant, that it is healthy and contributing to the economy of this province.

The instructions to the three-person commission that made that extensive report, not just for me but for the Economic Development Board of Cabinet, the instructions were that the very first party that they sit down to meet with was with the members of Manitoba Pork, with their executive and with their staff. I can tell you, Madam Speaker, through you to the member for Swan River, that they met on numerous occasions with Manitoba Pork, along with many other stakeholders in the industry in arriving at the conclusions, the recommendations in that report.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Speaker, since the minister bases his decisions on this report, I want to ask him why it is only the one recommendation—when there are many, many recommendations in this report, why he has just taken the one to move toward dual marketing when there are many people, members, letters coming in from across the province saying that producers have not been consulted and this is not good for the independent producers. It is not good for the pork industry in Manitoba. Why is he only taking that one recommendation and acting on it?

Mr. Enns: Madam Speaker, you know how I like to pay close attention to your rulings and the rules and traditions of this House. This is a subject matter that would be most legitimate in the debates on my Estimates, or on any issues, but let me tell her just one example.

The report also indicates that some \$300 million to \$400 million will be required in new capital on the farms. One way of securing that, of ensuring that the producers can get the millions of dollars needed for the expansion we talked about in that report, is to have stability in the marketing of the hogs.

The report refers to that as one way of achieving that, is through long-term contractual arrangements to secure the kind of funding that is necessary. That is one of the recommendations, Madam Speaker, also one of the reasons why the other recommendation with respect to a more flexible marketing system was accepted by this government.

Madam Speaker: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

Speaker's Ruling

Madam Speaker: I have a ruling for the House.

I am ruling on a point of order raised by the honourable member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) on November 1, as well as a matter of privilege raised by him on November 2 concerning the same matter. The issue concerns words the honourable member for St. Johns stated he heard the honourable Minister of Government Services (Mr. Pallister) use.

Having reviewed the printed Hansard and the audio tape, I find that neither attribute any words to the minister in question. Because there is nothing recorded nor did I hear any words uttered by the minister, there is no basis for a point of order nor for a matter of privilege.

Also, Beauchesne Citation 485.(1) and the appendices to our rule book are explicit on the point that unparliamentary words must be brought to the attention of the House as a point of order and not as a question of privilege.

I would also like to say to the House that if something has been taken under advisement, it is not good procedural practice to raise it again in another mode but to wait until a ruling is brought in on the matter and then perhaps to take further action.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE (Fifth Day of Debate)

Madam Speaker: To resume debate on the proposed motion of the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) for an address to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor in answer to his speech at the opening of session and the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer) in amendment thereto, and on the proposed motion of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) in further amendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable member for Riel who has 15 minutes remaining.

Mr. David Newman (Riel): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to continue the debate which held members opposite spellbound last night till ten o'clock. The honourable Leader of the official opposition should take a look at exactly what the profits recorded by the banks will mean for Manitobans. Also, he can calculate and hopefully appreciate the significant amount banks, insurance companies and other financial institutions pay in this province towards payroll tax and all variety of taxes in this province for the benefit of Manitobans.

The honourable Leader of the official opposition should also calculate how much they donate in time, dollars and gifts in kind to our charities, our arts and our people, including their education, training, motivation, self-esteem and, of course, the jobs and the income earned from those jobs.

Surely, with a little bit of discipline, honourable members opposite so inclined can resist condemning success, degrading excellence and provoking negative emotions. This Assembly and the people of Manitoba deserve and expect more from their elected representatives.

As I have already stated, it is an honour for me to rise this afternoon to respond to the Speech from the Throne. The people of Riel and the people of Manitoba have indicated their confidence in this government to lead the province in the right direction, to lead it into

the 21st Century. I look forward to the upcoming session. We will continue no doubt to make decisions which are intended to be fair for all, beneficial to all, and which will build good will and better friendships. That, Madam Speaker, is the truth.

I wanted to pick up on a few points that have been raised in the response to the Speech from the Throne. I heard one of the honourable members opposite make a comment about labour legislation.

In his remarks on December 6, the honourable Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer), in discussing a proposed amendment by the official opposition party, was suggesting that there should be more disclosure. There was sort of a pooh-poohing, a nit-picking in a very simplistic way about how there should be a disclosure of virtually everything. All of this growing out of the throne speech initiative to have public organizations that are supported by the public purse virtually, totally, disclose more about salaries and those sorts of things, and another proposal in the labour area that unions should disclose what they do with dues.

Now to suggest that this is an opening for the opposition party to advance an argument that everything should be disclosed in that simplistic way, it is submitted, is not a reasonable or sensible suggestion. Disclosure is a very complex issue in our kind of society, and disclosure, of course, should be made when appropriate and in the public interest. But it is complex because there are other matters to consider, always other matters to consider. I have referred frequently to the delicate ecosystem, the economic system that we have in this province and in this country and in the world, the most respected system at this time in our history and one that has stood the test of time. That ecosystem is dependent on proper nurturing and certainly, above all, knowledge and support of the people who have the power to make laws and regulations. The sunshine and oxygen of entrepreneurs is in the hands of legislators.

Just to give you an example in dealing with this whole question of union dues deductions. There seems to be a lack of appreciation for the government involvement in that, legislative involvement in that, and what that means. The sole source of income, the

revenue source of unions in this province, is union dues. The legislation that we have had for some time in this province is called a compulsory checkoff, a mandatory checkoff. It really means that, unlike most employer organizations, whether profit or nonprofit, the employer by law, by statute in this province, is required without any fee for service to perform a sort of administrative services function for the benefit of unions and deduct from employees' salaries and remit to the union, and that is to go through the process, deducting, remitting to the union, the sole revenue of unions. I mean, it is enormous, an enormous benefit to unions to have that privilege granted by legislation.

* (1430)

If we put it in terms of what if a private-sector business wanted the same benefit, the same sort of treatment under the law. Well, that would mean that we would be legislating that customers must pay, that customers must be members of a protector employer, that all of this is done free of charge. Let me tell you, every business as the beneficiary of that sure thing would not be taking any entrepreneurial risks. But we are not just talking about businesses. We are talking about nonprofit organizations that pay the same price in the public interest—if the legislation is in the public interest—to support unions in that fashion and union causes in that fashion. So we are talking about hospitals. We are talking about charities that are unionized. We are talking about women's shelters that are unionized, resource centres that are unionized, nonprofit organizations that for nothing, for no fee, allocate a portion of their budget to support unions in that way because of the legislation that we provide.

Now this is not the time nor the place to debate whether that is good or bad legislation, or whether with the experience that we have had with it over many years that is a matter that even deserves to be debated in this Legislature. But the point is that is an enormous privilege that unions have. I can assure you that professional groups do not have that privilege. The professional groups do not have that kind of mandatory dues deduction process. In the old days, even unions used to go out and collect the dues. So this is a very, very privileged position and a very, very distinct position. So, if we take that very distinct, that unique

sort of situation in our province, which has been expanded recently with canola producers and Keystone Agricultural Producers before that, I would concede should disclose where they have mandatory deduction, should disclose information, just as the union should. In logic it just makes sense. Where you have that privilege, you should also have that responsibility for disclosure.

But to use that as a premise to advance an argument that everything should be disclosed because this proposal is made in the throne speech, I submit, does not stand the test of common sense. A meaningful debate should not, cannot be generated from that sort of argument that is submitted.

Now, another point that has been raised is a concept about process. We have had just recently in the Question Period a misunderstanding it seems to me of the role of this Legislature in matters that affect the rights and freedoms of individuals who are seeking remedy through judicial and quasi-judicial processes.

To somehow suggest that there is something dishonest or irregular or inconsistent with standards of integrity when there is an unwillingness on this side of the House to disclose information about a matter that is either before the courts or about a matter which is before an arbitrator or in a grievance process is probably demonstrative of a lack of understanding, I would hope, not a deliberate attempt to use this forum to just create publicity, negative publicity, for the government and perhaps have a negative impact on the individual who is being publicized and others who are associated with that individual.

We are just one part of a bigger process as legislators. Some of us have come from other parts of that world, whether it be the world of academic freedoms, whether it be the world of self-governing bodies where you are a doctor or you are a lawyer or whether it be you are a member of a judiciary with the independence of the judiciary being a primary concern.

Certainly, when you are dealing with someone who has been terminated by an employer, and if that employer happens to be the Province of Manitoba, and the civil servants for the most part are in a bargaining

unit and have a bargaining union representing them, and if someone then feels that they are mistreated under the process of the employer-employee relationship, they can grieve. When they grieve, they have the ultimate judicial process, which replaces the broader judicial process by choice. That is done by choice under a collective agreement. The collective agreement, by virtue again of our legislation, says that that then is a substitute for access to the court system. So it is really the final recourse of an individual who feels mistreated.

No one, I would venture to suggest, in this Legislature with a complete enough knowledge of the roles of unions and the roles of the grievance and arbitration process would suggest that that is not a reasonable and fair process to deal with these matters. After all, it is agreed to between the union and the employer in the form of a collective agreement, and unions are the democratically chosen, or representatives at least, through a democratic process in representing the employee's interest.

So, when a matter goes to a grievance and ultimately it is to be decided by an adjudicator, we know that there is a process where the facts will come out. The facts will be determined either by agreement or ultimately by an adjudicator, and, if there is something wrong with that process, that is, whether it is handled in a less than competent manner, then there is recourse under an unfair representation provision of The Labour Relations Act. There is a recourse within the union itself if someone feels treated politically wrong by the union. In other words, there is a process out there that does the job of attaining justice when some civil servant or some employee belonging to a union feels improperly treated.

It is submitted that there should be respect for that process. It should not be dragged into a debate on the throne speech, or it should not be dealt with in Question Period. That is not showing proper respect for the other process which is out there designed to bring about justice. From time to time, we all need reminders of how those processes work in relation to the Legislature. I am one of those that has had to try them all to learn, so I have had that advantage, but I commend The Labour Relations Act and the many

learned and experienced union people in the official opposition party for guidance and counsel to those on the other side of the House that have not had that education or experience themselves.

But, hopefully, we will not have further attempts to disrupt and interfere with due processes through these other means which are more deserving and more suited to bring about the attaining of justice. The use of those processes here in the area of debate will be a disservice to the participants and to the process.

I thank you very much for the attention that I have received last evening and today, and I have been very privileged to participate in the debate in this House again, an Assembly which I respect, not only its traditions but all honourable members and the roles that they try to play to the best of their ability.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to address a reply to the Speech from the Throne. In doing so, I would like to wish you and your staff well in the holiday season and as you continue your work in presiding over this House, and I would like to wish all members and their families a refreshing and a rejuvenating holiday period.

* (1440)

Madam Speaker, a throne speech should establish direction, we might even say vision. A throne speech should paint the big picture, should allude to the big issues, should provide some insights into the government's direction in addressing those large issues. Robert Browning, in his poem which I am sure so many of us studied in high school, *My Last Duchess*, wrote lines that I think are emblazoned on all Grade 8 students' minds: One's reach should exceed one's grasp/Or what's a heaven for?

So a throne speech should establish some sense of what that reach is, what that vision of the broader future public good is. I would like, in beginning my response, to address the question of whether this speech does in fact have much vision.

First, Madam Speaker, let us address the question of health care. This government has had seven long years, long years for Manitobans, long years as Manitobans have waited and hoped and in some cases have prayed that the government would find some way out of the wilderness into which they wandered in 1988 when they took office.

In 1992-93, a former Minister of Health tabled a paper that was supposed to give direction for this government, a blueprint, one of two disastrous blueprints authored by this government. In that blueprint, Madam Speaker, the government quite correctly pointed out that health in the long term was related pre-eminently not to the functioning of the health care system but to socioeconomic well-being, to adequate income, healthy housing, clean and safe workplaces, adequate education, above all, to employment.

That same paper indicated a need to address within the illness care system, what we call the health care system, certain systemic drivers of costs. It identified these drivers very accurately. They were the fee for service, payment of physicians. They were the role of private laboratories. They were the inappropriate rates of unnecessary surgery. They went on and they addressed all of the systemic cost drivers which have been well identified by many health economists across Canada over many years, and then they proceeded to ignore them all. They proceeded to do nothing about any of them. Instead, they concentrated on what might be called the deck chairs of the health care system. They concentrated, Madam Speaker, on rearranging the deck chairs instead of getting at the questions as to why the ship was leaking.

Manitobans have now gone through some four months of incredible uncertainty about the most basic aspect of their health care system, namely, the function and availability of emergency wards. Manitobans have suffered in the form of poorer health care, poorer access to health care. They have suffered in terms of the uncertainty as to whether they will have access to emergent care or not. They have not known what is open and what is closed. The staffs of those emergency wards have suffered a great deal of anxiety and have

suffered from the sense that they are not free to do what they do best, and that is to care for sick people.

Manitobans have suffered, too, from a Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) that cannot seem to see that there is a material difference between 4 percent and 8 percent and 11 percent and is not apparently willing to acknowledge, Madam Speaker, that some 58 percent of Manitobans who go to emergency wards at night have a serious enough illness that their diagnosis depends on medical intervention immediately.

The intervention may determine that the illness is only an urgent case; that is, it only needs to be treated within four hours. But the determination of whether it is emergent or urgent cannot be made before medical intervention takes place. It is on the basis of the cardiac tests, on the basis of the diagnosis, on the basis of the health, the blood work-ups, on the basis of X-rays, on basis of clinical investigation that a decision is made whether this is urgent or emergent. So fully 69 percent of those who present to emergency wards after hours need medical attention. They are not malingerers. They are not abusing the system. They are not coming there for entertainment. They are coming there because they have a serious health issue, 58 percent of the time which requires medical intervention to sort it out and 11 percent of the time requires urgent medical care to save life or limb.

Manitobans have suffered under a lack of vision in health care, Madam Speaker. Manitobans have also suffered from a lack of the truth in regard to the costs of health care.

Madam Speaker, I would like to table today in the context of my throne speech, a chart which shows the proportion of Manitoba's gross domestic product which is spent on health care over the past number of years. This particular chart goes from 1983, but I could have drawn it back farther if I had wished to do so and the pattern would not have changed much. This government is spending a smaller proportion of Manitoba's annual income on health care this year than it was in 1983. In spite of an aging population—and we know that aging is very much identified with health care consumption, in spite of new disease entities like AIDS, in spite of new technology which is very costly,

like scanners, in spite of the growth of the needs of our First Nations people for health care, we are spending less today as a fraction of our total wealth in Manitoba than we were in 1983.

(Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

The Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) opposite and his government have spent a great deal of time trying to convince Manitobans that health spending is out of control, spiralling out of control. The truth, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that their ability to manage health care is out of control. They have never had the ability to manage it well.

It has been well known in health care circles across Canada that the way to make efficient health care delivery possible is to focus on community clinics, to focus on wellness, to focus on multidisciplinary teams, to focus on educating the public so that they can both attain and retain maximum quality of life, maximum health status for themselves and for their families. It has been some 12 long years since a community clinic was established in Manitoba. All were established under New Democratic governments. Promises have been made under this government to expand the working partnership. With what result? You are going to close the Village Clinic apparently. So we are going to go from 12 to 11. Apparently, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are not going to see any new funds available for community health clinics. So where is the vision in that?

More than a year and a half ago the Minister of Health had on his desk—in fact, almost two years ago—a report on midwifery. The report recommended strongly that Manitoba go to a midwifery system. It took a year, but, finally, the Minister of Health said this is a good report. We should do this. It is a year later. There are no midwives. There are no midwifery training programs. There are no plans. There are no dollars. There are no mothers in Manitoba benefiting from the service of midwives. Where is the vision?

Central purchasing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are going to be really efficient. We are going to be so efficient that we are going to cost ourselves \$6 million

in tax revenue. We are going to lose over a hundred jobs of private-sector companies now serving Manitoba hospitals in their purchasing. We are going to lose the competition among the private sector of which members opposite are so incredibly proud. We believe in the private sector. We believe in competition. So what are we going to do? We are going to go to a monopoly called Medbuy in Ontario. We are going to let them source our medical products while we wave good-bye to the medical service firms that have served Manitoba well over the last hundred years.

* (1450)

We are going to cut back on employment, valuable employment. We are going to impoverish rural hospitals who have depended on the Manitoba Health Services health organization purchasing plan, who have depended on the presence of competing suppliers. We are going to impoverish these hospitals while we save a few bucks for the seven big hospitals in Winnipeg by transferring purchasing power and transferring the taxes that went with it to an Ontario consortium. What intelligent planning. We lose jobs. We lose tax revenues. We impoverish rural hospitals, but we have Medbuy on board for the seven urban big ones. What wonderful planning.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the big issue over employment—John McCallum who is the vice-president of the Royal Bank of Canada, one of those banks that the member for Riel (Mr. Newman) was so vociferously defending in his speech—it certainly will be interesting for Manitobans to read his speech defending the big banks in the next little while. The explanation offered by Mr. McCallum, the vice-president of the Royal Bank, is that all of the loss of real income—and I am quoting now—is that all of the declining per capita income of the 1990s can be explained by one thing and that is the reduction in the share of the population that had a job.

Surprise, surprise. Employment and income are related. What a revelation. It is not a question, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of some other arcane forces at work in the economy. It is a simple question of jobs, and if this government were willing to be honest about the employment statistics in Manitoba instead of just trotting out some nice new numbers on manufacturing

jobs and was willing to say—and I notice the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey) is enjoying this, if he were willing to be so clear and direct as to say that should we have the same participation rate in our employment force among young people and among adult workers as we had in 1990 our unemployment rate would be over 10 percent, not where it is at around 7.8 percent. In other words, most of the apparent improvement in our unemployment situation has been because young people have not rejoined the workforce or sought to join it because of their sense of hopelessness, and older workers who have been displaced have not found their way back into the workforce because their jobs have disappeared.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the employment situation facing Manitobans is not a pretty one. I dare say there is not a member in this House who does not have either a friend or a family member who has been affected by loss of either total employment or partial employment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we should not forget that in the unemployment statistics only those who are seeking employment are counted. The discouraged worker is not. The person who has left the workforce because they have tried for years and years to find employment and have not been able to do so does not count as a statistic. Status native people on reserve are not even surveyed. They are not in these statistics. Manitobans who leave for other provinces, of course, make our unemployment pattern look better. Is that the way to solve unemployment, just to export those who are not working? I do not think so.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to turn now to the big-picture question of imports and exports, something that the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey) loves to speak about. But he speaks ever so selectively. I am quoting now from the third quarter report of the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics taken from Statistics Canada. To date this year, that is to the end of September 1995, we have had a very impressive growth in exports. The minister has been proud of that growth, and I would be glad if it were stronger. It has grown by 15.7 percent year over year. Very good.

However, what he never tells us about when he stands up to prattle about the strength of our exports is

that in the same period of time our imports grew too, but they grew by more, 17.4 percent. Not a lot more, but some more. In other words, the picture is not getting better. It is getting worse. What is the trade balance? Well, unfortunately here too, the member opposite does not ever take time to inform Manitobans of the real issue and to engage Manitobans in proposing creative solutions. His solution is to increase the pace of the race to the bottom.

The trade deficit for nine months this year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is \$981 million, right on track for another record, right on track for a \$1.3 billion deficit over the year, another Manitoba record.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, members on this side of the House are criticized sometimes for being negative. I think there is a substantial difference between being negative and being truthful. If the truth is a bleak picture, if the truth is that our real unemployment rate is over 10 percent and our real trade deficit is \$1.3 billion and our real import-export record is getting worse, if that is the truth, I think it is important that the truth be spoken.

If it is an uncomfortable truth, then let us work together to find a strategy to make that truth a more pleasant truth to quote instead of saying that those who speak the truth are somehow despairing. This side of the House is not despairing at all. We have always had a vision of a fairer society, a just society, a society that says employment is more important than capital, that says that when you have to have a contest, people come first, not the owners of production.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me turn now to the question of the incomes of Manitobans. In 1981 the ratio between those in the bottom 20 percent of the population in their income and the top 20 percent was about one to nine. The bottom 20 percent got \$1 of income from the market for every \$9 that the top 20 percent got. That was 1981. Twelve years later, the most recent year for which we have data, 1993, this ratio is somewhat different. In 1981 the bottom 20 percent got 4.8 percent of the market income in this country—not great. It got roughly a quarter of what their population numbers would suggest they ought to get in a perfectly fair world.

By 1993, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they got 2.2 percent, less than half what they got only 12 years earlier, less than half. The ratio now between bottom and top is one to 20. [interjection] It would be very interesting to have the member opposite's comments on the record for her constituents.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the bishop that is the bishop of the area that I serve, his name is Barry Curtis. He works out of Saskatoon. He is the Metropolitan of the Province of Rupertsland. He wrote in a letter that I received a couple of days ago that one of the major causes of violence in our society was economic injustice and income inequalities. Even as conservative a church as the one that the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) and I belong to, the Anglican Church, has recognized that economic violence is the same thing as physical violence. It causes people to be diminished; it causes people to have less of a sense of their worth; it causes people to fall out of the mainstream of society; it causes people to not be able to be full citizens of the country in which they live.

Over the last twelve years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Canadians have suffered grievously from the race to the bottom presided over by Prime Minister Mulroney and provincial premiers such as the one currently in office in this province. When you have worsened your share of income by a ratio of 20 to 1, instead of 9 to 1, then you have severely impoverished your population and their possibilities of full participation. Essentially, what these numbers are saying is that our employment policies have been a failure, that employment market income is not accessible to 20 percent of our population in any meaningful sense. These are not lazy people. These are not people that do not want to work. These are not people who do not want to participate. These are people for whom there are no employment opportunities. So on that issue of the big vision I do not see any high marks for this throne speech.

* (1500)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the question of environment, I will make only a couple of comments. The current debacle that is unfolding in Louisiana-Pacific's forestry licence application is yet another indication of this

government's inability to get it right. The science on which L-P's forestry application is based is so badly flawed that it caused a man of great integrity, Mr. Soprovich, to question publicly the assumptions of the sustainability of the forestry licence that was going to be granted.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Louisiana-Pacific is already claiming that the density of cordwood delivered to their yard is not of sufficient quality, and so, instead of paying someone for 19 cords on a truck, they are going to pay them for 15.5 or 16. So the volume is a problem already.

The assumption about the cut is that all of the forest is equally accessible. Anyone who has holidayed or hiked or camped up in the Duck mountains or Porcupines or in Riding Mountain for that matter knows that there are deep valleys, deep ravines, and if you log those, you will have the same kind of effect of clear-cutting that you can see in British Columbia. You have the same erosion, the same runoffs. L-P assumes that every tree is equally accessible. L-P's assumptions include that they will cut right up to the stream, no buffers, no 100-meter buffers, right up to the stream.

L-P's assumptions are that the forest regenerates in 70 years. Not according to the forestry officials. L-P's assumptions are that there are no losses to disease, no losses to fire. Tell that to Manitoba's fire officials and biologists. This application is a debacle; and, unless we have a federal environmental impact or a joint environmental impact process, Manitobans will not know of the debacle until too late.

Finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the Constitution. What do we see on the Constitution? Not a generous, broad vision that the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) and the other ministers spoke about during the crisis in Quebec, the crisis of the whole referendum question. Not the generous vision of which he spoke on the platform at The Forks when I stood with other members of government opposite and with our own members and supported a vision of Canada. Not that generous vision at all, but a me-first, I-want-mine. No willingness to look into the possibilities of new ways of going at constitutional reform. No openness to constituent assembly. No willingness to look at the

generosity that is going to be required to save this country.

So let me move then to what are the commitments that the throne speech makes. First, we had a member opposite, I hope he is listening, from the Chamber of Commerce, a former president from the Chamber of Commerce who does not seem to know yet that he actually represents Riel, not the Chamber of Commerce. He spoke at great length about the virtue of banks that make \$5.2 billion in profits while shedding employees like water off ducks' backs in one year. He spoke in favour of repealing the Rand Formula in effect, and I would ask him, if he is so interested in repealing some of that legislation, would he also like to repeal the fee guideline structures for the Law Society and the fee-for-service payment structures for the Medical Association? Would you like to repeal all of those guarantees for professionals while you repeal all the other labour things that you are going to repeal? That would be an interesting question.

Let us look at the commitment to openness, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Well, now we have a provincial senior civil servant no longer in the province sitting on a bunch of boards with a bunch of other people making arrangements. Some of them seem to be arrangements that benefited the civil servant in a fairly substantial manner.

Let us have some real openness on this one, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Let us have Ted Hughes or someone like Ted Hughes who is not one of the travelling companions of the former civil servant in question, one of the people who travel to Switzerland with the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the former civil servant and travel with the Premier to Boston and the former civil servant. Let us have somebody genuinely impartial, genuinely from outside, to investigate what really went on in this nesting set of deals.

It seems to me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this government's commitment to openness is another one of those questions of conversions on the road to Damascus. This is a government that stonewalled on Lotteries, that stonewalled on the Jets, that is going to try and stonewall on Faneuil, that stonewalls on health care. When we ask questions, we get lectures; we do

not get answers. So if indeed the throne speech is marking a genuine change of heart, which I sincerely hope it is, we will look forward and be very pleased to welcome that change of heart.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we opposite are often challenged to be positive and to talk about vision. Let me share a couple of things that I think would be very helpful if the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger) and others would like to take me up on them.

We have in this province an absolutely wonderful opportunity for focused research in some critical areas. Mr. Deputy Speaker, you represent a constituency in which one of the most important resources in this province exists, that is, the University of Manitoba. What many Manitobans do not realize, I am sure the honourable Deputy Speaker knows, is that on that same campus there are private research organizations, there are federal research organizations.

We have in this province, and I have spoken to the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger) about this with no response other than a very brief letter that had really nothing in it, about the Freshwater Institute and about the experimental lakes research centre for which David Schindler won an international award for his work in directing and developing.

We have an opportunity, if this government were proactive, if this government had a vision that it could express in a throne speech or in anything else, to focus our research on the natural environment, on dry-land farming, on the new cash crops in agriculture, on specialty crops. We have a great opportunity to focus our research in the area of production, the machinery requirements, the shipping questions, the refining questions. If we really had a strategy here, would it not be nice to hear about it in a throne speech?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have another wonderful opportunity in the area of health care. We have more community clinics per capita in Manitoba than in any province but Quebec. If we really believed all of the stuff that the government wrote about the role of community clinics and their value, we would launch an aggressive strategy to develop more community clinics owned and operated by citizens, focusing on wellness, using a multidisciplinary approach.

The government has instituted a regional health plan, but they have no idea on what basis it is going to be regionalized. Are we just talking about grouping together institutions or is this an opportunity to really look at the questions of health and wellness, look at the questions of the ownership of our health care system on the part of citizens who must take a responsibility for their wellness but who within our current system of delivery have a very difficult time in doing so, because the system is so topped down, so technically dominated by its major service providers?

Thirdly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a wonderful opportunity in the area of full employment. We have a possibility of a small province with a very, very good record of labour relations. Far from the gloomy picture painted by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) and others opposite who complain about Manitoba's labour laws we have, apart from Prince Edward Island, the best record of days lost to strike. We have a very, very good and progressive history of labour relations in this province, and that is generally a sign that our labour legislation environment is pretty well balanced.

* (1510)

Each side may have picayune complaints about the other, but in general, apart from the lamentable defeat of final offer selection, we have a pretty balanced situation in this province. Would it not be wonderful if the throne speech had the courage to say, let us talk about full employment? Let us talk about getting our unemployment rate down to 5 percent instead of 7.5 percent or 8 percent and really if we measured it in the way that we measured it in 1990, 10 or 11 percent. Let us make a commitment to full employment, not just a commitment to try and create some jobs—that is a good thing to do—but let us talk about full employment. Let us talk about partnerships with business and labour and education and have a strategy of moving towards full employment so that that terribly, terribly bleak picture of market shares of income which I spoke of earlier can be addressed and reversed.

Finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the Constitution. Surely it is time to stop the games. Surely it is time for the Prime Minister of this country to stop the games of trying to trap Mr. Bouchard into voting against a

motion. Surely it is time for him instead to pull together with his provincial counterparts a vision of a country that is worth offering to Quebec, that is worth offering not just to Quebec but to Canada.

What is this federal vision? The federal vision is no Unemployment Insurance worthy of the name. It is now Employment Insurance and it does not really cover much. No social service is worthy of the name. We are not in that game anymore at the federal level. We are just going to offload that to the provinces and devil take the hindmost. No health care system. We are going to offload that to the provinces. What kind of a country do we offer, not just Quebecers but Manitobans and Albertans and Nova Scotians? When the centre does not hold, Matthew Arnold says, mere anarchy is loosed upon the world. When the centre does not hold, when the centre has no vision, it is hardly a wonder that the constituent parts do not see much stake in that centre.

This federal government and the previous federal government have spent their time in office creating boondoggles and gutting social policy and social programs.

I hope the Premier of this province will take a stronger, clearer and more collaborative approach to constitutional renewal, will not seek unions with Alberta, for example, whose interests have never been Manitoba's interests in Canada, because we have a great deal of interest in a strong central government. Alberta does not seem to care about that issue. We do not have common interests with Alberta in that regard.

In concluding my remarks, I want to thank all members for giving me the opportunity to speak. I want to express the hope that future throne speeches will have more substance, more vision, more breadth and more generosity in them than this one does.

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Labour): It is indeed a pleasure to rise on this occasion in response to our government's throne speech for the Second Session of the Thirty-sixth Legislature of the Province of Manitoba.

While it has been less than one year that the constituents of Rossmere elected me as their MLA, I

found this experience both challenging and rewarding. Indeed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it has been a privilege to be an elected official and a member of the provincial cabinet. It is a humbling experience to join this prestigious group of men and women and in my own way I hope that I can make a difference. I think that is what politics is all about, trying to make a difference.

During the election and in more recent weeks I have spent a lot of time talking to my constituents in Rossmere on what they know to be important issues. Time and again my constituents in Rossmere have told me that governments should live within their means. People of all political stripes feel taxed to the limit, and it is important for the government to continue getting its house in order. It is my opinion that the recent balanced budget legislation goes a long way to ensuring that Manitobans do not pay more taxes and indeed ensuring a strong future for our children.

I am indeed proud of my government's accomplishments in this regard, and I would remind you that this is in spite of the sharp contrast to the dismal performance of the members opposite from 1981 to 1988, when in spite of a booming economy, the NDP with their tax and tax and spend policies increased the debt in this province at a time when they should have been running balanced budgets. At a time when it was possible to run balanced budgets, they were out of control.

I spent some time in Ontario. What was remarkable in the last couple of weeks in speaking to individuals is not so much the anger at Bob Rae and the New Democrats. They were angry enough at them for ruining that province, but they were also furious with Mr. Dave Peterson, the prior Premier, who in the best of times in Ontario, the best of times was running a \$3.5-billion deficit. At a time when the balanced books should have been there, he spent and spent and spent, and that was exactly the philosophy of the NDP government between 1981 and '88.

For job creation, and many of you will remember the job creation of the NDP back in those years, the \$200-million scam. They created jobs, of course none of which exist anymore today. They created jobs that in fact did not exist. Companies would lay off people

only to be hired by other companies because they could get these government grants. This went on continuously.

When lawyers in the Department of Justice said, let us get stiff contracts so that when people are being loaned money on these agreements, the response was always, well, we do not want to scare people away from getting this money. We want them to use this money. They wanted to spend the money. They did not care whether there were any permanent jobs created.

There is incident after incident after incident of jobs being created on the books when in fact no other employees were being hired, a simple shuffling of the cards, a simple shell game. That was the kind of job creation that the NDP did in the years from '81 to '88, and that is the kind of job creation that does not work.

We know that government does not create jobs. The private sector creates jobs, but governments can facilitate the creation of jobs by creating the appropriate environment in which to invest. I am satisfied, and I am speaking to the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe), that if he understood it, I could not make it any simpler and I will not want to go on on that point.

If they cannot understand that then we on this side should be continuing on with what we have to say, and I did not mean to slight the member for River Heights. I have a high regard for him and indeed I have a high regard for the members opposite, but it is not as high—but I do have a high regard for them.

In any event, in our throne speech, this speech refers to our government's commitment to focusing on fostering continued economic growth and job creation, real jobs and real job creation.

I would like to take a few minutes to talk about how Manitoba must adapt and change if we are to grow and prosper in the next millennium. There are two key global trends that are immediately apparent, trends that we ignore at our peril. Actually, they are not trends, they are facts.

The facts are, the globalization of trade and the globalization of investment capital. Canada is a trading

country. Manitoba is a trading province. Indeed, Canada probably relies on trade more than any other economy in the world, including Japan. In spite of Japan's well-publicized trade disputes with the United States, Canada is the United State's largest trading partner, and the United States, by far, is the largest market for Manitoba.

* (1520)

Manitoba products, even though we market our products to the majority of countries around the world, the United States is our primary market. All countries and jurisdictions around the world want to trade, so the competition is vigorous and only the most efficient will prosper.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I recently read an article in the business section of the Free Press in October 19, '95. I do read it from time to time to see what the other side is saying, but in this case the other side in fact is agreeing with our Ministry of Trade and Tourism. That article talked about Manitoba exports soaring. I would state that that is an article that should in fact have been on the front page of the Free Press.

I would like to quote from that article: Manitoba exports finished in 1994 nearly 30 percent ahead of 1993 levels and to date—that was October 19—they are up another 26 percent.

I admit there are imports, but that is the nature of business and developing your infrastructure so that you can trade.

We are no longer simply hewers of wood and haulers of water which the members opposite would like us to continue to be. The members who talk about retaining the Crow rate that held western Canada in chains for a hundred years. If you talk to the member for Wolseley's husband, who is a historian, he will tell you of the terrible effects that that Crow rate had on our economy, where we shipped all of our goods and products to eastern Canada so the eastern Canadians would get the value of our products here. When the federal government removed that Crow rate, western Canada should have been applauding. Eastern Canada should have offered to continue the Crow rate because, as a result, jobs and producers are coming to Manitoba.

We are benefiting from that progressive attitude towards trade. In my own constituency of Rossmere, Palliser Furniture is an example of a business that is prospering from trade. Officials of Palliser Furniture tell me that they are expecting to see a 30 percent increase in exports over last year. This is extremely positive economic growth which is occurring right in my own constituency. Palliser is poised to become the greatest private sector employer in Manitoba, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

You can go anywhere in Canada and people will talk about the quality of furniture that they produce in my constituency. I am glad that the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) recognizes the importance of that employer in his constituency.

An Honourable Member: I have five pieces of it in my house.

Mr. Toews: I am glad to see that he is buying that furniture. The trade that has developed as a result of opening up the boundaries has benefited this province.

Some people argue about free trade and say, let us not have free trade, let us keep the walls up. The fact of the matter is, whether we recognized it or not, free trade was happening, free trade was simply a recognition of the reality of the global marketplace. Had we kept up our boundaries, had we kept denying people entry into our country, world trade would have passed us by.

What we want to do in this province and what we have done and what we will continue to do is to create the climate that attracts the investments and creates the jobs in my constituency, in the constituency of the member for Transcona, in the constituencies around this province.

We recognize that we have to continually examine our laws to ensure that they are indeed fostering this growth, attracting this investment to create those jobs, because it is not simply jobs that they are creating. They are also creating the tax base, the tax base that goes to pay for our social programs, our health, our education, our family services programs. These are programs that we require.

In respect of some of the issues that we should be looking at, I recognize that Manitoba has a relatively good record in respect of its labour relations climate, and generally speaking I believe that our Labour Relations Act has served our community well, both business and labour, but clearly there are constituencies in our business sector, in our employee sector, indeed in our unionized employee sector that have not benefited from this act, that have been alienated from this act.

There have been concerns raised about issues relating to the Rand Formula, and you heard my colleague for Riel (Mr. Newman) speak about the Rand Formula. We all know what the Rand Formula is. What in fact the Rand Formula says is that those workers who are part of a bargaining unit, who get the benefits of a collective agreement, whether they are members of the union or not, should also pay for the services that the union provides to them. I have no problem defending the Rand principle, the Rand Formula. It is an historic compromise, and it in fact does a great good generally speaking for workers who need a collective voice.

The problem is some of our labour legislation does not recognize that employees wish to speak in a different voice, not just through the collective bargaining. We have to understand what these people are saying, but I do not think that means that we get rid of the Rand Formula. Do not throw the baby out with the bath water.

What I suggest and what I think, if you talk to many of the people who raise these concerns, is that they feel they do not have any say, any real say, in the operation of the union, in the accountability of the union to the employees, and so there are ways that one can address that particular concern. And I think, in 1985, when amendments were brought to The Labour Relations Act, the government of the day recognized that unions must be accountable to the membership which they serve, which they are simply, in law, agents of.

* (1530)

The union member or the employee is the principal; the union is the agent. The government in 1985 recognized that principal, and they brought about the

requirement that before you go on strike you must get the consent of the majority of the employees so that you have a strike vote, union accountability to the members which they serve.

Similarly, the government of the day brought in the duty of fair representation. They were required by law to fairly represent each member of that bargaining unit. Union accountability to the membership, that is placing the horse in front of the cart the way it should be.

I think in that context we have to look at other areas. Now we are requiring employees who are members of a bargaining unit, not just union members but all employees, to pay according to that Rand Formula, and those employees are entitled to know what their union dues are going for. They are entitled to know.

The member opposite knows. The members opposite know exactly how much money I earn, and it is right that they know. They know how much I spend, and they have a right to know. The reason they have a right to know is because my salary, my expenses are paid by the taxpayer of Manitoba. We take money under compulsion of legislation and give it to the Legislature to determine how that is spent. So there is a compulsion on the part of the taxpayer and that requires accountability on my part.

Similarly, if we say that employees are required by legislation to pay their own money to a union, similarly they are required—that is the union—to be accountable in a public way. In a public way they retrieve that money; in a public way they should be accountable. It makes sense and that is simply union accountability to the employees whom they serve.

In a recent meeting with the Manitoba Federation of Labour they expressed concern about the mandatory disclosure. This is an issue that I have raised with employers, with unions, with employees over the past six months, because I did want their input. This is what the Manitoba Federation of Labour said, they talked mandatory disclosure. This is an amendment that addresses a nonexistent problem they state.

For example, the Canadian Labour of Congress and the Manitoba Federation of Labour includes its

financial statements in convention kits that are distributed at every biennial convention. This information is distributed to delegates, observers, guests and news media, whether they are members of one of our affiliated unions or not, so they are saying, we disclosed this information already. Well, in fact, if the unions are already disclosing this information, what is the problem with the amendment? We are simply recognizing what the unions in fact already say they do. They say they give it to the news media.

So members opposite should say, well, if the governing party wants to introduce legislation that requires them to produce it, what is the big deal? The unions already are saying they are disclosing it; they are disclosing it to the news media. So it is not a big issue.

But, simply, what it does is remind the unions that they are accountable to the members whom they receive statutorily derived union dues, the members' own money, not government money—the members' own money.

I have said already, I support the Rand Formula. Let us not throw out the baby with the bath water, let us just put a little bit of accountability, as the unions were required in 1985.

One of the other ideas that we have been circulating is the idea about compulsory vote on application for certification. Now, prior to the 1985 amendments, the situation used to be that a union filed an application, and from the date of application to the date of the actual hearing, there was a long period of time, sometimes 30, 60, 90, 120 days. That situation was not acceptable because there was improper interference with union members' wishes during that period of time or employees' wishes. There is no question about that. That, in fact, happened, I agree.

So what in fact the government of the day said was, well, we will put in date-of-application legislation which says that the date that you file your application, an employee can never change their mind, and we will do it on membership cards. So you get somebody to sign a membership card, file the application. That employee can never have a second sober thought about

what in fact he or she has done. So we have moved from a situation where employers could take advantage of employees to a situation that is rife for problems regarding the signing of union membership cards.

What we are saying is, again, let us not remove the protection in respect of the interference by employers, but let us not let the unions have an open hand in terms of using improper tactics. Let us get balance in that respect.

The balance that I would suggest is appropriate is that when the union has signed up 40 percent of all members in a specific bargaining unit, they can then apply for certification. The union—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I have a couple of members who seem to want to have a conversation across the way.

The honourable Minister of Labour has the floor at this time, and I would appreciate hearing him, so if these honourable members want to carry on this conversation, they can do so in the loge.

The honourable Minister of Labour, to continue, please.

Mr. Toews: So what we are saying is that, yes, the union has a right to file for certification at 40 percent, of signing up 40 percent of the members. They can go to the Labour Board and have a secret ballot vote in a short period of time, five days, in order to prevent any improper employer interference, and not only the employer interference, but we can ensure then that the employee has a second sober thought in terms of determining whether or not he or she wants in fact to join the union.

I am not talking about changing the balance here. I am not talking about changing the balance between employers and the unions. What I am saying is, let us change the balance vis-à-vis unions and workers, so that the unions are truly accountable to employees, so that unions in fact are the agents of the employees as required in the preamble of that Labour Relations Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Could I ask the honourable members from the loge to please not heckle from there. I am really having a great difficulty with the voices coming across the Chamber.

Mr. Toews: In respect of any specific employers or employees, I want to say one thing: What The Labour Relations Act says is that union business is employee business, and what we want to ensure is a fair process, that in fact the employees have a fair voice in determining whether or not they want a union to represent them. We want to ensure that the system minimizes improper interference by employers and minimizes improper interference by unions, so we are talking about accountability of the union to the workers. That is what unionism is all about, in my understanding.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the criticisms that members opposite talk about in terms of changing the balance, I say those are invalid criticisms when one looks at the relationships between employers and the unions. I do not intend to monkey with that balance. If there is some fine-tuning that needs to be done, that is fine, but what we in fact want to ensure is that the employees have a fair shake in this system. That is what my concern is.

There are other things, I think, that members opposite could work together with me on in respect of changes to our legislation. I talked about creating a climate that is conducive to investment, conducive to the creation of jobs. We want to do that. That is what The Labour Relations Act should be doing, creating jobs, helping us create jobs, helping us employ people.

There are areas, for example the Employment Standards legislation. I know years ago studies were done on that, and we know we have to modernize that legislation, and I know years ago steps were taken to clarify what the law is so that small employers, so that employees, so that unions can understand the framework under which they are operating. We know that there are contradictory provisions and statutes that make it very, very difficult for people to carry out business. We have to look at some of this legislation that does not necessarily require any substantive changes but that sets out a clear code which can be

administered easily by government and followed by employees and employers.

If members opposite have concerns about the dedication of this government to protecting workers' rights, let us work together to clarify some of these laws. When we have inspectors going out into the workplace trying to determine what in fact should be done, a lot of times the most confusing thing is the legislation itself. So I hope that the members opposite have been somewhat reassured by my comments, that I am essentially satisfied with the labour legislation, labour legislation which in fact is accepted as principle right across Canada.

If we look at the 1985 legislation that was brought in here in Manitoba by the then NDP government, where did they get that legislation from? They got it from Tory Ontario. They brought it in from Tory Ontario, and they put a few bells and whistles on it and said here is our great reform in legislation. It was simply Tory legislation from Ontario that was brought in. Now when Bill 40 was brought in by the New Democratic government in Ontario and then Mike Harris changed it with Bill 7, essentially all he did was revert to the legislation that existed in Ontario in 1985 which was in fact adopted by the NDP government here in Manitoba. So the general principles of all labour legislation in whatever province you are in is essentially the same. We are not arguing with that. We just want some accountability, some more measure of accountability which clearly members opposite recognized back in 1985 when they brought in that Tory legislation from Ontario.

I would now like to take a few moments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to talk about health care. As mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, an affordable, accessible health care system remains a high priority as this House is well aware. The reductions in federal support will have a huge impact on Manitobans and that is all the more reason why we as a government and we as a Legislature need to keep our fiscal house in order so that we can provide an affordable and accessible health care system. That means that we will have to make reforms in the health care system. I totally support the Minister of Health's (Mr. McCrae) endeavours in this regard.

I would note that Manitoba devotes a higher percentage of its budget to health care than any other province in Canada. We agree with that position. Ninety percent of all new tax dollars go into those three essential areas of spending—Health, Education and Family Services. We are committed to that. I tell you, what then separates us from the New Democrats?

An Honourable Member: Fiscal responsibility.

Mr. Toews: Exactly. The member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) said fiscal responsibility or maturity. That is what we do. We have the same values that you have. We believe in a health care system. We want our old people to be protected. We want our young people to be protected, but what we want to do is ensure that our health care system is sustainable. That is why the people of Manitoba voted us in power here because they recognized that we are the party that can create a sustainable health care system.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the federal government's reduction in transfer payments has huge implications, and we have to work together. We must be proactive in addressing these issues. The recent labour unrest at the University of Manitoba is an example of what happens when institutions such as universities must become financially accountable. I know that there has been much criticism levelled against the professors in that strike. Well, I think that is only half the story.

My learned friend from Transcona (Mr. Reid) can snipe from the back benches because he does not have to come up with any constructive ideas. He never has, and he never will because he will be there. But I appreciate the fact that he is always chirping in the background because one day a miracle might happen. He may in fact have something positive to contribute, and I await that day. I have faith in human nature that some day that may in fact occur.

Now the universities must become financially accountable. It is not just a matter of saying the professors have to become financially accountable or responsible, it is the administration too, and it is the government. It is not just an issue of saying, well, let us lop off an arm here or lop off a leg here. We have to reform the institution. That is what we have to do in

education; that is what we have to do in health care. That is what we are committed to doing, and, in that respect, the positive contribution of members opposite is welcome.

* (1550)

I would also like to talk about the Workers Compensation Board which I am responsible for or the act which I am responsible for. We note that in places like Ontario, where the board is essentially financially bankrupt, \$12 billion in the hole, losing at one point \$100 million a month, a board of a government losing that much money. Our government here has moved from a quarter-billion-dollar unfunded liability to a point where within the next few years we will be at a balanced budget situation with that board without reducing benefits to workers.

Now tell me, who is protecting workers? The Ontario NDP who have bankrupted the system or the Conservative government here in Manitoba who, through wise fiscal management, has saved that board and ensured that those premium dollars keep on coming in from employers who support this program?

There are all kinds of things that we have been doing. What we have to ensure is that we adapt. I note the members across the way talk about my past association with Great-West Life. I am proud of that association. I was a public servant for 15 years. I went to that company, and I learned new ways of approaching problems. They, in fact, have adapted with the times. They are a company to be proud of. There are other companies such as Confederation Life, 125 years old, a major player in the insurance market that did not respond to the times and was gone, all their jobs gone, all the tax base gone, all the money for social programs gone. So what we want to do is encourage companies to come here to a financially viable situation where they can create employment and we can continue to care for our people who need the care of government programs in health, education and family services. Thank you.

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it certainly was a most interesting union-busting speech from the Minister of Labour (Mr.

Toews), heartily endorsed by a rather exuberant Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh). I noticed that the Minister of Labour spent approximately 30 minutes busting unions, five minutes on health care and then about five on education, so I suppose this is an indication of his priorities.

I want to say, as I begin, that it is an honour for me to represent the constituency of Osborne. My first duty, of course, in this House is to speak for all the people of Osborne, to voice the full range of their concerns and their issues. I will certainly endeavour to do this duty with responsibility, with respect and with diligence. Furthermore, as the critic for both the Status of Women and Culture and Heritage, I am proud to work for the full and equal participation of Manitoba's women and for the preservation and development of Manitoba's culture and heritage.

We live in a time of backlash. Many of women's hard-fought-for gains are under siege. We need only to look to Ontario—

Point of Order

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): I wonder if the member would be willing to entertain a question, for clarification, on one of her earlier comments in this speech.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member does not have a point of order. That will be up to the member when she has completed her speech.

* * *

Ms. McGifford We live in a time of backlash. Many of women's hard-fought-for gains are under siege. We need only to look to Ontario where second-stage housing for battered women and services are threatened or may have disappeared by now, so swift and swooping is Mike Harris. As well, we know that arts and culture and heritage are under seige. Heritage Canada and Mike Harris have both been busy. Manitobans are continually barraged with dizzying phrases like "doing more with less." Well, let us acknowledge once and for all that, while in some situations creative modifications in revisioning may

make this possible, in many situations doing less with more is like right-sizing, that is new-right dogma, mere cant and political language—as George Orwell would have put it, doublespeak. Doublespeak or political language for George Orwell, and here I quote from him, is language designed to make lies sound truthful and to give an appearance of solidarity to pure wind.

So I am pleased to rise today and join in the debate on the throne speech, to have the opportunity to respond to the speech, and to bring to this Assembly both the concerns and issues of my constituents and of my critic areas. These, I will say at the start, are not answered or even addressed in this throne speech. You will remember, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I was only elected in April. The speech on Tuesday, December 5, was my first real and direct experience of a Speech from the Throne, since the speech in May was really a warmed-up one. In my naivety, inexperience, I thought of the throne speech as a solemn, substantial, serious, even an inspirational document, a respectful address from government to the people. Well, I am thoroughly disillusioned.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

Personally, I find this document to be an exercise in obfuscation, the living embodiment of what F.R. Scott, the poet, called never let the one hand know what the other hand is doing.

This document reflects a formula or recipe. Throw in some self-congratulations, add a healthy dose of fed bashing, season well with implied threats, especially threats to the most vulnerable, add some ideological phrases and a good handful of political opportunism, mix it up, and what do you have? A Tory throne speech.

But this speech, really a blend of hypocrisy, schmooze, cynicism and miasmic meanderings, has unfortunately a darker side. On first hand I thought, well, this is harmless enough—cotton candy, insubstantial fluff, but harmless. On second reading, something different began to emerge. The speech remained inexact, replete with the qualities mentioned earlier, but I began pencilling in the margins more and more, perhaps ominous, seemingly ominous, definitely ominous.

If we read patiently between the lines, if we treat this document as a printed text that requires analysis, if we read between the lines and deconstruct the text looking for the gaps, looking for what is not there and should be and looking for what is there and should not be—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. McGifford: If we read this document carefully, then I think we find an imbedded code or a hidden message, the subtext becomes loud and clear and tells us that the worst can happen and probably will, or to put it another way, I'm in, Jack, thanks, pull the ladder.

Here I will share some more of my marginal notes on the throne speech. First, what is the difference between Ralph Klein, Mike Harris and the member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon)? Well, one lives in Alberta, one in Ontario and one in Manitoba, or to put it another way, the die has been cast, the pattern established, the hitherto milder manners of the provincial Conservatives have given way to Klein's and Harris's unfeeling sightless policies, the kind that ignore impacts on the people, especially on the most vulnerable.

* (1600)

Let me make the point here that we endorse and practise sound financial management, but government spending has to consider the full range of implications. Reducing government spending by \$1 and increasing the cost to the public by \$2 is not a sound financial or economic way to manage the province. If the best and most efficient place to take action is by government, then government should take that action. For example, both Klein and Harris have produced policies that show disregard for the environment and, hence, for our children's future.

You, Madam Speaker, I am sure have heard members opposite express grave concerns about debt and deficit and their impact on future generations, and we share their concerns. Debt and deficit can be millstones around the neck. But my side of the House too knows that our children, our future generations cannot live in an atmosphere poisoned, cannot drink polluted water,

cannot farm impoverished soil, cannot enjoy deforested lands. We want a future where our children are not haunted by environmentally induced asthma or by environmentally induced birth defects. For some of us, perhaps especially for aboriginal people, nature is a manifestation of the spiritual life. My side of the House wants to be certain that we honour and preserve the natural world for the enjoyment of future generations.

Now, I was talking about shortsighted economic and financial policies, that short-term gain and long-term pain and destruction favoured by this Conservative government who appear to care more about getting re-elected and election ploys and their business cronies than making healthy, rational decisions. These kinds of decisions ignore or sweep under the carpet considerations like the equitable distribution of income and resources, the establishment of a two-tiered health care system, the establishment of a two-tiered educational system, selling out public education to support private education, the destruction of sound, humane social services, those our foremothers and forefathers struggled to establish, and I have not yet even mentioned social pain and agony, including child poverty.

You know, Madam Speaker, there was a time when I was younger when we saw the light before us and had a vision of a society which desired and would embrace economic and social justice, but the new-right agenda—Klein, Harris and now the Premier (Mr. Filmon)—has left most of our citizens floundering in the darkness without any cohesive vision. Living from day to day, mere survival is the lot of many.

Our province increasingly moves towards two classes, an economically advantaged elite and a social and economically disadvantaged underclass. We live in a time of tremendous change. The changes of our time might well make those of the industrial revolution pale by comparison.

The honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) is, of course, our resident historian, but I see us more and more resembling the worlds encapsulated in cyberpunk science fiction, worlds where an educated, affluent class holds sway and where an utterly

disenfranchised class is both utilized for services and labour and kept at bay.

I think of those communities springing up in parts of the U.S., for example, in Texas, California and Florida, where individuals band together, hire security guards and build walls and, of course, may well need to do these things because disparity has created some angry, hungry and lawless people.

Personally, I do not want to live in an armed camp, as I am sure nobody in this Chamber wishes to do. These are moves backwards in time, back to a medieval state before the rise of the middle class, the national state and the rise of humanism. The honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) has called this regression the race to the bottom, but it is as well a race into darkness and inhumanity, a race into social divisiveness and plain meanness.

Looking into the future, I do not like what I see. We need vision and leadership and instead get ominous throne speeches which spend more time bashing the federal government and formulating plans for social dislocation than in generating new ideas and offering hope to the people of Manitoba. I would say there are good ideas, bad ideas and no ideas, and that this throne speech scores two out of three.

Now, just to make a couple of quick points about the implications of this throne speech as they impinge on the general drift of our times, first, we all know that the best climate for business and economic growth and development is one where education, health care and social services are strong and universal, where the intelligence, the talents and creativity of huge segments of the population do not wither and die because of poverty, ill health or inopportunity.

Hitherto, Manitoba businesses have been fortunate. A healthy, educated and well-serviced working force has been available, but this may not always be the case. Indeed, judging from this throne speech, it will not always be the case.

My point is that this government must remember that financial cuts can be a two-edged sword and must consider the impacts of their decisions. This

government must remember that a disenfranchised, diseased population cannot contribute to a healthy economy. The government must be careful not to create a disrupted, dislocated and diseased population which will drive business out of the province in search of better socioeconomic climates.

The truth is that elitism, as history has shown us, usually destroys itself, taking with it a society that it has already ravaged. Let this government be mindful that poverty and social dislocation mean angry and hungry people who, in turn, mean increased lawlessness and civil disruption.

Now, the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) can build as many boot camps as she wants and can build even bigger and better jails, but we all know that the cost of the justice system and the cost of incarceration are staggering. Who wants a society based on punitive measure or coerced civility? Not members of this side nor, I think, members of the opposite side.

I have talked about the total and conceptual banality of the throne speech and its extremely frightening implications, both for the present and the future. Just to turn to some specifics, first the promise of open government and increased financial accountability of public sector institutions and organizations, my side of the House, it has been said loud and clear, welcomes the extension of accountability and would certainly support the government in further accountability. Indeed, we embrace accountability as a general principle; however, the government's commitment coming as it does, hot on the heels of the Ombudsman's annual report for 1995, is really a bit cheeky, I might say.

The Ombudsman's report tells us, one and sundry, and I quote: It was a tough year for our office in carrying out the responsibilities mandated under the Freedom of Information Act.

Then the report goes on to explain seven major difficulties in obtaining government information which should be easily available. Then, to add insult to injury—and I know this information was available in the Winnipeg Free Press on Sunday, but some hypocrisies deserve to be mentioned twice—there is the matter of

the Minister of Family Services' (Mrs. Mitchelson's) restaurant bill. Not only did the minister dine to the tune of \$4,172, but her department charged the Free Press, under the Freedom of Information Act, \$160 to process their application for the information. It does not sound like accountability to me, but more like a progression in hypocrisy.

* (1610)

I might add, what are we to tell our constituents who are being asked to tighten their belts, who are being reminded that we must decrease our deficit, as I agree we must?

I know what the Premier (Mr. Filmon) says. He says, and I quote: I think she—that is, the Minister of Family Services—does a good job of staying in touch and listening to the people.

Personally, I think the people she needs to listen to have never seen the inside of Hy's Steak Loft, the Charter House, the Westin and, of course, the notorious Beaujolais.

But the hypocrisies when it comes to claims of open government, getting clear information to the people of Manitoba and discussing their assets, the rumours of selling MTS and the general fiasco of the Premier's prevarication and the performance of the Minister for MTS on Friday, December 8, in this House—you will recall that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) and the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) attempted repeatedly to obtain information, to get straight answers on restructuring and the possibility of privatization of a publicly owned Crown corporation which has been with the province for 75 years.

The Premier and the minister met these attempts with semantic games, disdain and of course no answers. Their stonewalling certainly violates the spirit of the intentions put forth in the throne speech.

Why are we not surprised? Well, even in my short time in the House I have learned that this government makes many public declarations that it later transgresses. I think for example of the phantasmagoria surrounding the Minister of Justice's

(Mrs. Vodrey's) initiatives and committees. But I am sure the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) will address that.

To return to the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister for MTS (Mr. Findlay), they, of course, deftly sidestepped the real issue of the sale of MTS and the implications of this sale of what was once an integrated billion-dollar public asset. Tom Stefanson, MTS Chairman, was vacationing outside the country and could not be reached for comment, but certainly it is going to be sold.

I think the Premier's and minister's performances on Friday, December 8, may well have been superseded by some of those turned in by the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae). I have come to understand that the Minister of Health is a consummate actor and, while he may not yet want to give up his day job, he could have a theatrical future. One problem about his performance is, whether he is breaking promises, that is, closing emergency rooms, or whether he is busily attempting to reverse his broken promises, that is, planning to open emergency rooms, the Minister of Health likes to operate in secrecy.

I for one am convinced that, if the Minister of Health were to put as much energy and creativity into caring for health as he does in keeping secrets from the opposition, the citizens of Manitoba would benefit enormously. He may not have so much fun but the government's commitment to accountability and openness would certainly prevail.

Speaking of health and open government, I think of the regional health boards. My understanding is that the minister will be appointing members to these boards, and I heard that subsequently members will be elected. Still, this seems to me that in an era of open government the Minister of Health is getting off to a very bad start. Why not start with elected members? It may take a little longer but it would certainly be more in keeping with the spirit of open government.

I want briefly to comment on this government's braggadocio when it comes to tax increases. We have heard time after time the boast that there have been no major tax increases. This is coupled with a new and

mistaken bit of hubris that they are the first government in Canada to balance the budget and institute balanced budget legislation.

So let us be clear on the fact that we have experienced several forms of regressive tax increases in Manitoba: the reduction of the property tax credit; increases in fees in just about all government licences and services; the spread of sales taxes to include children's clothing and certain medical supplies; offloading costs to other jurisdictions and so in effect increasing municipal property tax credits.

I think the member for Brandon (Mr. Leonard Evans) talked about provincial roads suddenly becoming municipal roads, which means the municipalities are now responsible for caring for those roads. I would urge the Minister of Housing (Mr. Reimer) to ask the individuals living in social housing about increases in rent. Many of them do not have personal income tax, so that is not even an issue, but they know their rent went up, and they know that the tax credit is now considered income. Certainly, this is an issue that I would request that the Minister of Housing review.

I urge the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) to ask parents with children in daycare about changes in subsidized spaces or about parents who now have only a two-week period to find a job before their daycare subsidy ends. These parents are usually young, single women who cannot find a job in two weeks and, hence, are forced onto social services and then are criticized for draining the government's coffers, and, of course, there is that short-sighted myopia again. Well, I urge the Minister of Family Services to ask these parents about the increased costs in daycare.

All of this has been dealt with by other members. I merely want to register again that this government has increased costs and taxes and that they have been regressive and, I hate to say it, sneaky about it. Yes, they may not have increased personal income tax, but they have done a lot to ensure that many people have no personal income tax. There are 5,000 fewer people working in Manitoba than there were one year ago. I wonder what kind of Christmas these workers and their families will have. I wonder when and where these

people will find new employment. This balanced budget business, let us get it straight. Janice MacKinnon introduced balanced budget legislation in Saskatchewan and balanced the budget last year.

Madam Speaker, during the break between the close of the last Legislative session and the opening of this one, I spent time speaking with my constituents, and I know that the concerns of my constituents are not addressed in this throne speech. As I implied at the beginning, you judge a government by what it ignores just as much as by what it does say. This throne speech does not speak to the people of Osborne. Consequently, as their elected representative, I will take this opportunity to bring some of their concerns before the House. But, in the interests of making sure all my fellow caucus members have the opportunity to speak, I will be brief, and my list will be selective rather than inclusive.

First of all, seniors in Osborne continue to be concerned about health and safety. Last week, at a coffee party, one senior constituent said to me, and I quote her—she was extremely articulate. She said: Most of us have worked our entire lives believing that in senior years, when we most needed health care, a full range of services, including emergency services, would be available to us.

Everyone at the party endorsed her comments and added their own. They talked about their fears of heart attacks and strokes. They felt that they may require emergency services and that they may be shuffled over hill and dale and God knows where else. I know that the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) has spoken with one of my constituents whose mother did die, and the constituent tells me that he will always believe that Manitoba Health's inadequate services and irregular delivery was partly responsible. This lady presented at St. Boniface, was sent to Grace, from Grace was sent to General, and then was sent back to Grace, where she died. This was over a period of a few days, I might add.

The other major concern of seniors, again, at the same party was, naturally enough, the concept of the five-year checkup for people between the ages of 15 and 74. Seniors believe that they need better protection

and preventative health care than this policy would allow. These people have heard of and have experienced the ravages of high blood pressure. These people take the directives of the Canadian Cancer Society and other health organizations very seriously, and these organizations, of course, call for medical checkups more frequently than every five years. Of course, the ages 16 to 74 includes seniors.

But other New Democrats have addressed these issues, so I will leave them and ask only these questions: What ever happened to the Canada Health Act? What ever happened to universality? What ever happened to our respect for life?

Seniors in Osborne, like I am sure seniors everywhere, are concerned about public safety. One of the women at this party told me that she had her purse stolen three times and had suffered serious personal injury. She now sews pockets inside her garments and keeps her money there. Well, good. She has found a creative solution to purse snatching, and more power to her. I know that women are inventive people, but the real and the rhetorical question is this: Have we come to such a sorry state that people need to design hidden secret pockets?

* (1620)

Here is another rhetorical question: Have we come to the sorry state where seniors will not go out after dark, where they feel themselves at risk and in danger in their own communities? In the community just south of this Legislature, in Osborne Village, well, we have come to this state. Just across the street from where I live in south Osborne about a year ago young David Frey was brutally beaten, and I think that we have all heard of David Frey in this Legislative Assembly.

I ask the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey), instead of hectoring everyone who does not know and love her ideas and policies, to hold few bogus press conferences and actually do something about the irresponsibility and violence that threaten people in our communities. It is time for action, and we have even supplied the minister with an action plan that is in one sector of her work, and I refer to our task report on violence against

women released on December 6. It would be a good place to start.

The next issue I want to bring up is daycare. People in my community worry about daycare, and here I hope I have the ear of the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson), because my Osborne constituents are hearing frightening rumours and would like to have them squelched. They hear that the daycare office will close. They hear rumours that the per-child operating grant will be grossly cut or will be eliminated and that parents will be left to pick up the difference. They know that for many parents this simply will not be possible.

They tell me that they have always more requests for subsidized spaces than they have spaces and they wonder who cares for these children and what kind of care these children receive. They tell me that their general revenues have not increased and yet their expenditures have and that even with charging the maximum rate of \$18.40 per day—it might be \$18.50, I am not absolutely certain about that—they are having tough times at the daycare.

What happens, of course, is, as in so many not-for-profit organizations, the staff takes the hit and does not have a wage commensurate with increases in the cost of living. They tell me that daycare workers are an aging population, that daycare workers are burning out, that daycare workers are dealing with more and more high-needs children without proper supports and services.

Workers say that young people are not training as daycare workers, because they have no faith that government will not bail out, taking jobs with them. Daycare workers talked about the quality of daycare and complimented the NDP standards passed in 1983 and wonder how well these are being implemented. Daycare people tell me that they simply cannot take cuts, that there is absolutely no flexibility left in their budgets, and they know daycares can close. The University of Winnipeg daycare closed just over a year ago.

Most of all, daycare workers wonder what is going to happen to children if more daycares are forced to shut.

Some will become latchkey kids left alone to supervise themselves in often unsafe situations because parents cannot afford care. Some will probably end up in unlicensed situations where a harried worker has far too many children to care for and too little time. Some will probably be left to run the streets, to join youth gangs and to break the law and then to be carted off to the Minister of Justice's (Mrs. Vodrey's) boot camps.

All of the above are possible scenarios, or else we can provide our children with safe, stimulating, quality programming delivered by trained and dedicated workers. I implore the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) to make the rational and humane decision and to adhere to the principle that all our children are valuable, not only those whose parents can pay. Furthermore, I need to say this, as I stand here and speak as a feminist committed to the rights of women, I am staggered to realize that it is 1995, and we are still haggling about daycare. You know, I think it is time to grab a life, open daycares and take care of our children.

The final issue I want to talk about is AIDS, and I want to particularly talk about the issue of an HIV-AIDS strategy. I do this for several reasons. First, we in Osborne know that there are several persons in our community living with HIV-AIDS, and we are committed to a full range of service for these people which they at present certainly do not have.

On Sunday evening, I attended the memorial service to honour the lives of people who have died from AIDS and those who are living with AIDS. Every year, the number of candles grows. This year, more candles were lit for women than ever before, which means that soon more candles will be lit for children because when mothers have AIDS, so do their children. All the survivors were present, children, parents, grandparents, other relatives, friends, lovers, service providers, volunteers, all people of compassion and enlightenment.

I wish the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) could have been present and experienced first-hand the grief and devastation of these people. Then I wonder if he would have had the nerve to tell them what he implied in this House on Friday, December 8, that the proposed

AIDS strategy was going on the shelf, that Village Clinic was closing and that all services would be moved to Misericordia Hospital, that all decisions were being made by Manitoba Health without the community, because the community—and here is the rub, the real hit to the solar plexus of this community—had been a disappointment as far as input and in the level of consultation.

Madam Speaker, I participated in the first round of consultations, and I know what it cost some people to be there, both in terms of physical and emotional pain and grief, people who are HIV positive, people who had full-blown cases of AIDS, bereaved widows and partners. I know that many people had no faith in this enterprise. They thought it was merely an exercise in damage control as a result of Manitoba's shameful exposure before the Krever inquiry, but they came out and they gave what they could. Indeed, they came out several times, often at short notice and often when times were unexpectedly changed.

Now if the minister does not have enough feedback from the community in order to incorporate community responses and recommendations into his strategy, then I do respectfully submit that instead of blaming sick and dying people, disenchanted and grieving survivors, harried health care workers, stressed-out service providers, instead of this insulting victim bashing, I suggest that he take a few lessons in community development and find out why people have not responded to his initiative, if indeed they have not responded. I can unequivocally promise the minister that the answer to this mystery is not lack of caring, commitment, initiative or interest, and I offer the minister my complete and full co-operation in this matter if he should wish it.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, we cannot support this throne speech, because it lacks vision and compassion, because it is laden with rhetoric and ideology, because it is, to quote W.H. Auden, an empty mouth fighting at the wind, just when what Manitobans require is wisdom, creativity and leadership. Thank you.

* (1630)

Mr. Ben Sveinson (La Verendrye): Madam Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to rise today in this Legislature to respond to the throne speech but, before I do that, I wish to make a few introductory comments.

Firstly, Madam Speaker, it is nice to see you back in your place, keeping the decorum within the Assembly at a very high level. I would like to extend my personal welcome to the new Pages that have joined us. As Pages for this Legislature you have the unique opportunity to witness our democracy in action. What you may have noticed already is that the members of this Legislature do not always agree on everything, and that is something that we should be rather excited about. We should be excited about this because we live in the greatest country in this world.

It was only about a month and a half or so ago that I made a trip to a Commonwealth parliamentary conference in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka is a Third World country. When I arrived in Sri Lanka, I was greeted by a very large contingent of soldiers, and I think everybody had a submachine gun in his hand. It gives you a rather eerie feeling.

They took us from the jet to a building which in fact again was surrounded by armed guards, soldiers and in this building they said first of all that we did not have to worry about our luggage. They would bring the luggage. They did bring the luggage. One of my suitcases was missing and arrived three days later. That was not their fault as such, but the part that was so, how would you call it, that hit me, if you will, was that everywhere we went, from the jet to this building, from the building to the hotel, along that whole route there were soldiers.

Now, Sri Lanka, it is known in the papers that it was at war and they were taking safeguards for our safety, and we were very gratified for that, but looking around and just talking about our country and living in the greatest country in the world never hit me so much as when I took that trip.

I went for a walk away from the hotel or I tried to get out of the hotel actually without my nametag on and was met by a few guards who asked where I was going

and where my tag was and so I put it back on and then proceeded out for a little walk.

The guards, by the way, were not too far behind. In walking down these streets, I had some change in my pockets, and you meet with some children, dirty faces, dirty hands and with a little tin can like a piggybank with a hole in the top and they are begging for money and they look up at you and they say, please. A lump hits you in the throat, and your heart goes out to them. So I gave them some change. In a sense it was kind of a mistake, because all of a sudden I had some 50 or 60 kids and grown people following me down the street wanting money.

Now, knowing and seeing the kind of poverty and the kind of conditions that they live in, it was quite an awakening thing. It was an education to visit a Third World country. I could go on—and the different things that I saw there, be it the filth on the streets and seniors sitting on the side of the street and just making a noise like oy-oy-oy. They wanted money or something, maybe food. I am not sure, but I did give them some change that I had. Those people on the sides of the street, most of them I am told, never move from there. It is some 75 or 80 degrees above and the filth along the streets, the stench, is just incredible. The smog from old vehicles that are driven there, most are older vehicles and go down the street smoking like—it is incredible.

Having seen all these things and then coming back to Canada, and hearing in the past people who would say, well, they went to a certain country and when they got back to Canada and they got off the plane they felt like kissing the ground. Well, to some degree I understood it before, but I had never been overseas or to a Third World country, so I really did not understand exactly what they were talking about. But I will tell you, I understand what they were talking about now when they got off that jet and they felt like kissing the ground, because, undoubtedly, without any doubt, Canada is the greatest country in the world.

Therefore, I say to the Pages in welcoming them—it will take me a second, but I will get it—in welcoming them I say to them, look, listen and learn while you are here and enjoy the freedom that this great country and

our province have to offer. Madam Speaker, I also welcome back all the members of the Legislature for this final sitting of the House before the Christmas break.

Finally, Madam Speaker, I also want to thank the friends and family who have been so supportive in my role as MLA for La Verendrye. While my role as MLA for La Verendrye has required more of me than I ever thought possible, it has been a pleasure to work for my constituents who have placed great faith in me and in my government. I was elected to this House by the people of La Verendrye. We are a rural people, and even though I sit in this House in the city of Winnipeg, I look at life through the eyes of a rural Manitoban.

Having said that, Madam Speaker, I am comforted as the elected representative of rural Manitoba with the policies that my government has introduced and promoted. These policies by no means leave rural Manitobans out in the cold, but instead these policies recognize the important contributions that my constituents make to the province of Manitoba. As a result, the policies of this government toward rural Manitobans encourage the pieces of the whole to work together.

It is therefore my pleasure to respond to a throne speech which reflects upon what our government has done and that which this government has yet to do.

More importantly, the throne speech reflects the desires of Manitobans whether they live in the city of Winnipeg or in rural areas. By electing this government into office for its third term, the people of Manitoba have sent a clear message that our government is and has been taking the right approach.

Madam Speaker, I was intrigued by comments made by the Leader of the Opposition just a few days ago. To be exact, the date was December 6, and the member for Concordia was giving his response to the throne speech. His comments were with regard to the economic policies of this government.

The Leader of the official opposition said this: There is no energy in the members opposite. They will show up for a press conference, but they will not get out and

do the hard work ahead of time and start creating the economy.

It appears that the member for Concordia has not been reading the praise that my government is receiving because of its position on creation of the economy.

Consider the following from Wood Gundy economics, March 10, 1995: A high emphasis on expenditure control has permitted the province to enhance its fiscal credentials without increasing the tax burden.

From Nesbitt Burns, March 10, 1995: Manitoba has made remarkable progress in getting its fiscal house in order.

From Standard and Poor's, March 10, 1995: I think, for investors, the government's commitment to reducing deficits without relying on tax increases is a very positive signal.

More recently, two more comments from the associate director of Standard and Poor's, September 29, 1995: The Manitoba Conservative government consistently has practised careful expenditure management, and Standard and Poor's believes that the Manitoba government is on the right track with respect to its deficit and debt reduction plan.

* (1640)

From Solomon Brothers of New York, April 6, 1995: We believe that Manitoba's significantly improved fiscal situation will lead to more positive credit reception.

Madam Speaker, these strong words of support from the major financial institutions in North America convinced me that my government is working hard to create an atmosphere where people can invest with a confidence of a secure future.

There is more. The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, October 24, 1995: The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce commends the government for recognizing the paralyzing nature of debt and

addressing it in a concrete way through balanced budget legislation.

The local praise from the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce is very significant. I wonder if the Leader of the official opposition is aware of the fact that the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce represents almost all business in Winnipeg. The membership of the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce is made up of more than 2,500 members.

In addition to this, the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce is not controlled by big business as the member for Concordia would have us believe. Oh, no. In fact, almost two-thirds of the membership in the Chamber of Commerce consists of those companies which have 10 or fewer employees, and they are taking their hats off to this government's economic policies.

Perhaps the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) could benefit from discussions with those small businesses that form the backbone of our economy. Having served as chairman of the Manitoba Legislature's Committee of the Whole House, which is responsible for considering all financial bills put before the House, I am doubly proud to be a member of this government whose budget has received such high praise.

I would like to speak to another related matter, Madam Speaker, as the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) stated that Winnipeg and Manitoba were not attracting business.

We can read about this in Hansard, December 6, 1995, on page 41. The Leader of the official opposition said, and I quote, I do not quote The Globe and Mail very often. Well, of course he does not. Were he to read The Globe and Mail more frequently he would read about the successes of Winnipeg and Manitoba in attracting business.

Let me be specific. The member for Concordia claimed that my government was to blame for our province not being able to secure first-time investors.

Why, the member for Concordia asked, was my government not able to draw the first into this province?

Had the member for Concordia been reading *The Globe and Mail* only five days before making his speech he would have read about our success in attracting exactly such a first in business. Moscow—now, I am not sure of this pronunciation—but Moscow Narodny Bank Limited, one of the world's leading Russian-owned banks based in London, chose Winnipeg as a site for its office. Was this its first office? Yes, it was. Was it the first in Winnipeg? Yes, but it gets better. Was it the first in Manitoba? Yes, but it gets better. Was it the first in Canada? Yes, but it gets better. Was it the first in North America? Yes, it was. Yes, Madam Speaker, I draw the member for Concordia's attention to this first in North America investment.

Manitoba's role in the production and exporting of grain is well known. We stand to profit substantially from this, Madam Speaker, in that Winnipeg now becomes a major gateway to Russia and northern Europe. Furthermore, Winnipeg will now be providing service to any North American individual or company that wishes to do business with this company.

What else of firsts for Manitoba? Well, Madam Speaker, I would like to remind the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) that Schneider corporation has announced plans to build a \$40-million plant in Manitoba. That province again? Manitoba. Again, this plant is the first in that it will be the largest hog slaughtering operation in Canada as well as being one of the most modern. In addition, this plant will employ up to 500 people, and this plant will further our trade opportunities with Japan and other parts of Asia. Is this good for the people of Manitoba? Without question, it is. Is this the kind of business that our city and rural areas wish to attract? It is black and white.

Yes, and speaking of black and white, were the member for Concordia to read the newspaper more frequently, he would see how this government is attracting business. While the member for Concordia may not be aware of our ability to attract business, members of my constituency certainly are. My constituency appreciates the agricultural initiatives and rural development that this government so actively generates. My government is working hard to ensure

that the farmers in Manitoba are looked after, not just for here and now, but for the future as well.

We have specific programs for this. However, and yet again, the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) in his response to the throne speech asked the following question on agriculture: Where is the long-term plan from members opposite in terms of the transition in the agricultural economy?

Permit me to describe a few of the policies, both old and new, that my government has provided for the agricultural community in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, the family farm is a concept that I and my constituents are very familiar with. Imagine then the great pleasure that I have living in this province as we celebrate its 125th birthday and I write letters to a number of my constituents congratulating them on maintaining a family farm in Manitoba for the past 100 years.

Many of these family farms can be traced back to the pioneers who settled in our province. My government recognizes the family farm is a vital part of Manitoba's agricultural industry. Furthermore, because preparing for the transfer of family farms is one of the most critical issues in the life of farm business, my government is assisting the process through Manitoba Agriculture.

Manitoba Agriculture has developed the Manitoba farm transfer initiative, which ensures that participating farm families are equipped to succeed in the transfer of a family farm.

Madam Speaker, the government thanks families on these farms for the contributions they have made to our province. More importantly, we are also caring for the future of family farms in Manitoba through the Manitoba farm transfer initiative. This decade we will witness an increased amount of such transfers among families because almost half of the farmers are approaching retirement age. My government is prepared to help them when that time comes, because we are committed to helping rural Manitobans.

That my government is committed to rural Manitobans is also demonstrated in other initiatives.

This government was first elected in 1988 and from that year on the government has proven its commitment to Manitoba and indeed to rural Manitoba.

My constituents have benefited from this and they are thankful for a government which values the input, their input and the input of all Manitobans. This is not a recent development in our approach to policy. Instead, from the outset in 1988, this government has had cabinet meetings outside the city of Winnipeg in varying rural communities.

On average there are six such cabinet meetings outside the city of Winnipeg every year. During these meetings our government takes the time to meet with local officials and leaders from all levels of rural government such as municipal governments, school boards, hospital boards and in general the people of the area.

* (1650)

My government is keen to learn what Manitobans want and as an MLA from a rural constituency this government has done itself proud with the many rural visits that it has already made and with the many rural visits that it will indeed make in the future.

No doubt, Madam Speaker, it is this attitude which has resulted in programs that make a difference in rural Manitoba. Take for example the Rural Economic Development Initiative, REDL. This program has two overriding benefits. The first is that it provides a boost to the economy in rural Manitoba. The second benefit is that a foundation for sustainable growth is laid. These are two very important benefits in that they look after both short- and long-term financial planning.

But how does this government intend to assist rural economic development from this House which is physically removed from the rural area? Certainly, some decisions will be made here in this building that affect communities in rural Manitoba, but, Madam Speaker, my point is this. Can the members of this House make every decision for those who live in rural Manitoba? No, they cannot, and in keeping with this policy that my government has had since 1988 when we came into office, we recognize that it is rural

Manitobans who are in the best position to evaluate and assess what their communities need.

Madam Speaker, you can only imagine how pleased my rural constituents are to have a government that gives them self-determination with regard to business ventures. I draw your attention to the Community Works Loan Program which is one of the initiatives spearheaded by this government through the Rural Economic Development Initiative. The Community Works Loan Program, for example, states openly that it is a program based on the principle that local leaders and people in the community are best suited to decide where business loans should go.

Madam Speaker, over \$12 million is being invested, and the Community Works Loan Program will create over 3,500 new jobs throughout rural Manitoba. This is exactly the kind of forward thinking that Manitobans want to see.

This is a government which realizes the fact that farms and communities are diversifying. As a result, new opportunities must be created for a market that is constantly changing. The Community Works Loan Program places the decision-making process entirely in the hands of local communities who themselves best know what the economic needs of their communities are.

My government has seen fit to empower communities with taking a direct role in developing their economic future. Among the benefits of such initiatives is the promotion of families, since young family members will not necessarily have to leave their rural communities in search of employment; to summarize, the promotion of family, the promotion of local investment, the promotion of local input into what kinds of investment are required, and finally, the financial input of this government with no strings attached, and what I mean by that is that my government leaves the local communities to determine for themselves what they need.

Some additional words on rural development, Madam Speaker, since we have been in office, inflation has been about 28 percent. Our funding to our provincial departments has increased by approximately

27 percent. Notice, however, that transfers to municipalities increased by approximately 50 percent. While the federal government continues its cuts in transfer payments to our province, we have not responded in like fashion. In point of fact, we have been far more generous to other levels of government than we have been to our own departments.

I can point to several examples where my government has made financial contributions to rural areas in spite of cutbacks from the federal government. We have been distributing monies to many locales throughout rural Manitoba. In so doing, Madam Speaker, we encourage these communities to enhance their community life as they see fit.

For example, in Rennie we have provided monies to improve the Rennie community club; in Whitemouth, contributions toward the Whitemouth municipal museum society; in St. Anne, monies to improve their library; a new concrete base, puck boards and mercury vapour lighting for a skating rink in Giroux; and improvements to the facilities at the St. Adolphe recreation centre also comes to mind.

Madam Speaker, my government is committed to investing in and supporting development in rural Manitoba. I know from talking to my constituents that they are noticing these efforts, be it that they are large or small.

Finally, Madam Speaker, this government's commitment to rural Manitoba is evident in our fight with the federal government over the proposed closure of the AECL facility in Pinawa. This facility in Pinawa provides economic spin-offs in more than \$30 million to eastern Manitoba. Can we in any way begin to understand why the federal government would consider closing the Pinawa site and moving those facilities to Chalk River for the people and expanding Chalk River?

Surely, Madam Speaker, there is no connection between the Chalk River site and its proximity to Ottawa. Surely there is no connection between the strong Liberal presence out East and the proposed move of the Pinawa site from the West, out even farther east. Surely there are sound reasons for relocating in Chalk River, even though Chalk River is

older and requires much upgrading to say the least. Surely the federal government sees the hypocrisy of moving the only research and development facility in western Canada even farther east.

Accordingly, because I was elected to represent the cause and concerns of eastern Manitobans, I am pleased to have been part of a committee which earlier this week met with officials in Ottawa. We insisted that Chalk River was not in the best interest of Manitobans and Canadians as far as moving those facilities and people to Chalk River.

How effective were we? I quote from yesterday's *Globe and Mail*: Succumbing to heavy lobbying from Manitoba, the federal government has handed a 12-month reprieve to Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, Whiteshell Laboratories in Pinawa, Manitoba, which had been threatened with closing because of cuts planned in forthcoming federal budgets.

Madam Speaker, the extension is only I believe at this point a reprieve. We will have to continue to lobby, to continue to work with the federal government to try to make sure that Pinawa and the facility stays in Pinawa and that the money continues to flow in some lessened form possibly. But the minister in fact did promise us this much, that there would be a way to put forward a plan that we would have input into.

The one thing that was stopping a considerable amount of conversation between the federal government and us was that the federal budget will be coming down in the early part of next year. In fact, there did not seem to be a way to carry on those discussions too much further simply because they did not know what the cuts would entail. But they did say that there would be a way, a plan, put together and that we could have input into that plan.

* (1700)

Madam Speaker, I know that this is only the beginning of our battle for the facility in Pinawa, but I am committed, together with my government, to do all that we can do to preserve this important site in Manitoba. My government believes that the federal government does have an obligation to continue to

have the research and development monies put into our Pinawa site.

Madam Speaker, these are the realities that my government is facing, and they are reflected in the throne speech, a throne speech which was made clear that our financial plans are affected by cuts in transfers from Ottawa. In spite of cuts from the federal government, this government has enacted the toughest balanced budget legislation in Canada.

However, Madam Speaker, the Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer) would have the members of the House believe that any reference to cuts and transfer payments from Ottawa is a red herring. I decided to do a little fishing on this topic, more specifically, on a topic that affects my constituents on a daily basis. Living in rural Manitoba means that my constituents rely on highways a great deal. Let me begin by going on record for the commitment my government has made towards highways. My government has directed approximately \$100 million a year towards improving Manitoba highways. [interjection] Considerably more than Saskatchewan.

This initiative, I might add, will create 465 direct and indirect jobs throughout Manitoba. That, Madam Speaker, is good news. That is government working for those who elected it. More to the concerns of my constituents, I am proud to be a part of a government that is working on improving the highways in Manitoba, and we are earmarking some \$7 million for the constituency of La Verendrye. Are these monies available because of an act of generosity from the federal government? No, they are not. In fact, the federal government is to blame, in a large measure, for the lack of highway funding.

The federal government takes approximately \$180 million out of Manitoba in fuel and related taxes, but in return contributes only about \$3 million back into the province for highways. Madam Speaker, these figures are not a red herring. Instead, these figures put the federal government into the red when it comes to returning Manitoba-generated tax dollars back to our province. Again, the federal government takes \$180 million and returns \$3 million. Our province desperately needs more money for highway repairs,

and especially so because of the federal government's decision to terminate the Crow benefit rail subsidy. What we will now witness is an increase in hauling of grain by trucks on Manitoba highways. It is Manitoba farmers who are hit the hardest with the removal of the Crow rate as Manitoba farmers have the farthest to transfer their crops. Is the federal government responding with additional monies for highway development? No, they are not.

Madam Speaker, the importance for highways in Manitoba goes far beyond commuter usage. In fact, our highways are the welcome carpet that we lay out for tourists. Local needs for the highway are very important, but, if we seek to establish Manitoba as a North America transportation hub, and we do, we cannot rely on assistance from the federal government regardless of what the member for Concordia may think. The stark reality is that my government is being abandoned by the federal government to deal with critical issues such as highway development, and that is not a red herring. I trust that my fishing expedition has demonstrated just that.

Now a related topic, that being tourism, my government has repeatedly made efforts to improve tourism for the province of Manitoba. Madam Speaker, we have been successful in that our province has had increased tourism in recent years. Manitoba's tourism industry employs more than 50,000 people and contributes more than \$1 billion to our provincial economy.

For the constituency that I represent so proudly, my government has provided various levels of funding. My government is helping both the Caddy Lake Resort and the Jessica Lake Lodge in the Whiteshell Provincial Park to expand their facilities for year-round use.

More importantly, my government is working to develop the existing base of tourism in this province by working together with the tourism industry. Evidence of this can be seen in the provincial government's publication of a new trade journal entitled *The Tourism Journal of Manitoba*. This journal demonstrates the co-operation between my government and the tourism industry with the goal of increasing the numbers of visitors to Manitoba.

Now, Madam Speaker, as someone who lives in an area that relies on tourism dollars for part of its income, I take exception with accusations made by the Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer). In his response to the throne speech on December 6, he threw out the following barb: "Will you allow for something more than a South Dakota vision for Manitoba in terms of a tourism strategy?" How do I best respond to this? With cold reality, of course. The member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) may be surprised to learn that my government is looking well beyond South Dakota, whose inhabitants are nevertheless very welcome here in Manitoba.

I mentioned earlier our publication of *The Tourism Journal of Manitoba*. This journal will be circulated. In addition to being available at many trade shows, it will be available throughout many other parts of the United States.

Secondly, Madam Speaker, witness the formation of the Manitoba Tourism Marketing Council and the Manitoba Tourism Education Council which will train Manitobans, hospitality industry employees, for the Canada Games in Brandon in 1997 and the Pan Am Games in Winnipeg in 1999. If I am not mistaken, this goes beyond a South Dakota vision for Manitoba in terms of tourism strategy.

There is more. Thirdly, my government is helping to promote its various tourism opportunities through promotional brochures, videos and advertising and trade shows.

Fourthly, improved signs to those provinces and states that border Manitoba. New signs are being designed and will be placed at the border crossings in Saskatchewan and Ontario, and our American neighbours to the south.

Fifthly, my government announced this past summer the creation of a 1-800 number that Canadians and Americans will be able to use to give people information about hunting, fishing, parks, camping, cottage facilities and winter recreational opportunities. A 1-800 number for Canadians and Americans does not, in my mind, constitute a South Dakota vision for tourism.

One last example: Manitoba is participating in two new marketing partnerships. The first is the Canadian tourism Commission and the second is the Tourism Alliance for Western and Northern Canada.

Madam Speaker, I know my time is just about up, but I would just like to say in closing, or reminding our Pages, that we have a bright future in this province because of the decisions and policies made by this government. Thank you.

* (1710)

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today and join the debate on the throne speech for the Second Session of the Thirty-sixth Legislature for the Province of Manitoba.

I want to take the opportunity to once again acknowledge the honour that we share here in representing a constituency for the province, and I appreciate very much the ongoing relationship that I have had the chance to develop with many members of the Radisson constituency, many residents that live in the East Kildonan-Transcona area, and as well to have the chance to work with so many concerned citizens of the province of Manitoba who work to make our provincial community here a better place to live.

I am going to take a different approach, I think, in some ways to the throne speech, because I want to first of all respond briefly to some of the statements made in the speech itself tabled by the government, and then I want to take a critical look at some of the initiatives that the government is taking and respond to the direction that the government is going. I hope I will have some time to talk about the way I think that they are missing the boat and tell some of the stories of how this is being shown specifically in my own constituency in terms of how this government is dismantling services in the province.

Although they may try and say in the speech or try to say to Manitobans that they are reforming public services, that they are reforming health care, that they are reforming education, that they have initiatives and task forces going about the province, what they are doing is, they are dismantling the system of

government. There are serious consequences to that, and that is what I am going to talk about as well.

To start off with, when I read the first couple of paragraphs of the throne speech and it says that the government is going to continue to fulfill the commitments they made to the people of Manitoba this spring, referring to the past election, I have to say, not. This government, right off the hop, right after the election, it became clear when they went about the election knocking on doors and saying a couple of things like, they were going to be able to save the Jets with \$10 million, and then it became clear right after the election that that was not the case, and the question was raised, did they know?

The question, I think, has been answered in debates in the House and information that has become public. I think that it is pretty safe to say that they had a pretty good idea that that was not really going to happen. You have to wonder when they go around at election and then so soon after the election that information becomes public. You really have to question, Madam Speaker, that they did in fact know.

We can look at health care and the assertions that were made hither and yon that this government could be trusted on health care. Oh, they were going to defend the Concordia Hospital, which is the hospital in Radisson, there were going to be no cuts there, and after the election, what do we see? We see a doctors' strike in the emergency wards and then, lo and behold, right after the doctors' strike the axe falls and they cut emergency service at night in community hospitals. [interjection] The Minister of Agriculture is saying they did not promise a doctors' strike, but I would suggest to the members opposite that those doctors were forced out. The doctors were indeed forced out, and that served the agenda very well. You could see after the strike there was not a day passed and they closed those very same hospital emergency wards at night, Madam Speaker.

So there was another promise that was broken. I could go into many more commitments and promises that were made during the election that have not been fulfilled, but, in fact, history has shown that the exact opposite is what happened.

When I go on reading the same paragraph in the throne speech presented by this government, they say they are going to have prudent financial management, and, again, I would say not. This is the government that has had the biggest debt and deficit in the history of Manitoba.

The way that they are going to deal with that is on the spending side, being the Tories that they are. They are going to cut public services. They are going to try and force wages down. They are going to try and force layoffs, and they are now going to start selling off Crown assets and the assets of the public of Manitoba, hand over fist. They are going to try and decrease services provided in our health care and education systems.

Now, if this, Madam Speaker, is fiscal prudence, I think that you have to take a look very seriously at the sense of this government. I have a number of documents here that show clearly, very clearly, that investment into health and education and other social programs are good economic investments, that they are not some kind of drain on the finances of the Province of Manitoba, and I am going to get into that a little bit more.

The other thing, though, that this first section of the throne speech talks about is an innovated approach to economic development and job creation. Well, Madam Speaker, we are seeing the same old approach to economic development which has been proven not to work over and over and over in every part of the planet where it has been attempted. It is an approach which relies more and more on the private economy. It relies on a system that is going to take away regulations, take away taxation on private corporations with some hope that they are going to invest here and create jobs and that is becoming more and more unbalanced with the role of the public sector.

This approach to trickle-down economics, that we are going to see ongoing growth, disregards the quality of life. It does not measure health and safety, the effect on the environment. It takes none of these things into account. The members opposite have put out lots of paper on sustainable development, but they have yet to apply it here in the province of Manitoba.

I have a list here of a number of examples where that is true, in every example from what is happening with Louisiana-Pacific and the forest industry to what they are doing in the hog industry, the unsustainability, the size of some of these operations, and how that is going to impact on the local communities, how it is going to affect small family farmers.

So I do not think that there is anything innovative about their approach to economic development. It is the same old failed approach from which our children and grandchildren are going to be paying the cost.

The other thing that I think of when I look at the focus of the government is their right-wing fanaticism and approach to dealing with the finances of the province. I guess if I could put a theme on the debate that I am making here today, it is that they are taking the approach of balancing the budget on the backs of those least able to pay. They are balancing the budget at the expense of services like health and education systems and services that create more fairness and equity in our communities.

I want to talk a little bit more about the problems with the approach that they are taking and moving more and more to user-pay, fee-for-service approach to government. I think that one of the most problematic things about the way that this government, the Mike Harris government, the Ralph Klein government, Preston Manning's approach nationally, is it really appeals to the worst in people and the Liberals are falling into this same trap as well. It appeals to the sense of insecurity that people have. It appeals to the biases and the prejudices that people have, and it appeals to their self-interest.

The government and others who share their view try and make people feel that they have no responsibility to their community, and this is the argument. I could not believe hearing the debate opposite with members trying to defend bank profits of more than \$5 billion in one year, trying to defend that and saying that there should not be an increased tax so that those profits are going to be reinvested into community services. I cannot believe that they would try to encourage people that they would not want to pay taxes, particularly corporations, thinking that corporations should not want to pay their fair share of taxes.

* (1720)

They benefit from having healthy employees. They benefit from having well-trained and well-educated employees and any investment that they make through their taxes into environmental protection, into natural resource management, into health and education and all the other services the government provide, they benefit through their employees. That is the kind of attitude or approach to government that this particular political party in power does not seem to understand. I call it free trade economics that they continue to try to practise.

They want to decrease government regulation, decrease the rules, lay it open for capital and free market to set the rules. The market is not fair. The market does not care about people.

An Honourable Member: Life is not fair, Marianne.

Ms. Cerilli: The Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) is talking about how life is not fair. I could not believe that a Minister of Labour would take an attack on organized labour as this minister has had.

I can tell you, I grew up in a family that was led by one of the so-called union bosses that the member for Rossmere was talking about. I can tell you stories about the work that Al Cerilli did on behalf of the members that he represented. I remember hearing him on the telephone at two and three in the morning. I remember him working on behalf of those members who worked in the trucking companies, in hotels, in the railway, assisting them with the problems that they were having and that is what labour has done for our country and for Manitoba. It has brought in labour legislation that has ensured that there are decent wages, there are pensions, there is workplace safety legislation. All of that would not be there if it was not for organized labour. We would certainly not have governments like this one in power here bringing in legislation that is going to protect working people and their families.

When I look at what they are proposing now, I remember the former Minister of Labour in the province who increased the requirements for

membership to endorse the organization of a union to 65 percent, putting in more provisions, trying to make it more difficult to organize unions, and we have to ask ourselves, why would a government do that? Why would a government make it more difficult for labour to organize?

I would like them to answer that question at some point. I would like to get an answer, perhaps from the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) of why it is. I have my own ideas about it. [interjection] Oh, the Minister of Labour is trying to tell us he is for the workers. Well, I would like to have an answer, why it is they are so interested in making it more difficult for unions to organize in this province, and that is what they have done with the provisions they have brought in in the past, and I think with the provisions that they are bringing in now, they want to make it more difficult for labour to organize so they can get a piece of those kinds of bank profits that we have heard announced recently.

I would like to see there be some system that ensures that when banks, for example, make profits in the order of \$5 billion, that some of that is going to go to those tellers and other workers who work to make those companies and those banks have that kind of profit.

So I think that this side of the House, we do have a different vision for economic development, and in that vision there is a sense that it is not just about the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few, that it is about considering the effects that it is going to have on people's lives, considering safety and quality of life, education, health care, that development is about safety, that development is also about quality of life and also that we have in a democratic society where we elect democratic governments a sense of shared responsibility.

I guess a goal for a government that I think is truly democratic and interested in the welfare of all of society would have to have a goal, particularly in Manitoba, about doing something about poverty and acknowledging that the approach they have taken to the economy is creating more poverty. It is, in fact, creating more poverty, and we see that in spades. The other thing that is going to create increased poverty is

the approach they are taking to dismantle the public health care system and a public education system which is there to ensure more equity.

In this province and in this country, we have tried to ensure that all children, no matter where they live, no matter what the income of their family is, are going to have equal access to a quality education, and we have done that by creating a public school system paid for collectively through taxation.

Fair taxation is based on ability to pay, and that is a very simple principle, a democratic principle, that this government is abandoning, and other governments across the country, our federal government in particular, as well, in the approach they are taking.

The other thing that concerns me greatly is the partisan nature that this government has used when they approached certain issues. I look at what they have done in their trips to Ottawa. When you look at when this government has chosen to go to Ottawa, it is on gun registration and it is on AECL and the nuclear facility. Did they go to Ottawa to protest the fact that we are seeing cuts and an attack on our medicare system and our health care? No. Did they go to Ottawa to protest the attack on the post-secondary education system by the reduction in transfer payments and the changes to the student loan program? No. Did they go to Ottawa to protest on behalf of CN Rail and the fact that we have lost 3,000 jobs in Manitoba in the rail industry? No, they did not go to Ottawa for that. So these all point to me to a very partisan way of dealing with issues in our province, and I wonder if in fact they have the interests of all Manitobans.

I would suggest that the jobs being lost in the rail industry in Manitoba are not going to have a greater impact on the economy as a whole than some of the other initiatives that have sent the members opposite to Ottawa.

I see that the hour is just about 5:30 p.m., Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Pursuant to Rule 35(2), I am interrupting the proceedings in order to put the question on the motion of the honourable member

for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that is, the subamendment to the motion for an address and reply to the Speech from the Throne. Do members wish to have the motion read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: No.

* (1730)

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Yeas and Nays.

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable member for Inkster have support?

An Honourable Member: No.

Madam Speaker: No. The subamendment is accordingly defeated.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I just want it to be known that the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) and the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) did in fact want to have a recorded vote.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: No? Okay.

Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Urban Affairs): Madam Speaker, indeed, this is a great pleasure to stand here and talk on the throne speech that was just delivered by our government.

It is a time to reflect and to put some words on record as to the impressions and the directions that this government has taken, not only because of what was brought forth in the throne speech recently, but also what has transpired over the last number of years since actually 1988 when this party and this government took office.

It is a direction that has helped Manitoba in a sense of coming through some very difficult times. It was a process that was set up with an effort that was always involved with consultation with the people. In fact, I refer to the throne speech itself in the statement, and I quote: "The input of Manitobans has been invaluable as government focused on those issues of most importance to the people of our province. . . . This co-operative partnership will continue to provide Manitobans with a government which listens and responds."

This was made evident when we look back to some of the initiatives that have taken place over the last few years, and in particular, like I mentioned, since 1988 when this government took office, and the fact that we have been able to institute a policy of no tax increases and no major tax increases over the last years, which has brought forth not only a stability of attitudes in investment in Manitoba, but it has also brought forth an attitude of growth and expansion for the people who do business in Manitoba and the people who want to come to do business here in Manitoba, because the initiative is to create jobs. Jobs are what this government is involved with. Jobs are what we try to establish in the sense of making the right environment for this type of growth.

As Minister of Urban Affairs, Housing, and Seniors, I would like to just sort of do a little talking in regard to the departments. But before I get into that, I would just like to welcome the Pages back to the Legislature. I would like to welcome the members back in the sense that this is a very close season to Christmas, when we spend a lot of times and a lot of reflection back on

family and some of the bountiful things that we are blessed with not only here in Manitoba but in this great country of Canada.

The times are before us when we consider what we went through very recently regarding the referendum and the closeness of the vote, but the fact that the people did speak in Quebec for Canada, and the rest of Canada was just as optimistic and pleased that was the turn of the events that transpired. So it was indeed a very exciting time of the year here in Canada and particularly in Manitoba.

As we approach the festive season, I do want to wish all members and all people, the Pages and Madam Speaker, a joyous and a fruitful and a bountiful new year as we approach the millennium.

I would like to spend a few moments, as I mentioned, talking about some of the programs that have come about in the various aspects of the Department of Urban Affairs. Urban Affairs is an exciting portfolio, because it deals primarily and almost exclusively with the City of Winnipeg and their dealings and their directions.

Manitoba is a unique province in the fact that well over half of the population of this province is located in one central area which is in the city of Winnipeg. The government recognizes that there is a strong relationship as to what Winnipeg does in its handling of its affairs and how it affects the surrounding areas of indeed all of Manitoba and how the fact that what happens in Manitoba, it does have an almost and indirect effect on Winnipeg so that there is a close recognition and a realization of the responsibilities of what the City of Winnipeg is initiating and what the initiations of various programs and directions within the province of Manitoba are.

One of the programs that I was quite excited about and quite involved with with the Department of Urban Affairs was the Urban Green Team program which was initiated this past year. This was a very, very successful program around here in Winnipeg, and what it was geared towards was employment of youth through the summer months to undertake community and sustainable development focused programs. So it

was something that was utilized by all areas in the city of Winnipeg. In fact, all constituents and all MLAs, in all aspects of the House, were encouraged to make known the program to the various volunteer groups and nonprofit groups, to come forth with programs in Green Team applications.

In total, there were just over 340 applications that were approved, I mean, that were placed before. There were almost 300 that were approved. In total, there were well over 740 youths that were employed, and they were all in various aspects of cleaning up. There was riverbank clean-up; there was event—[interjection] These were programs to employ the youth, to get them involved with the recognition of the value of the environment and to put back into the community.

There was wildlife habitat conservation and some research also that was performed under this program. In fact, I had the opportunity to go to a few of the sites on a first-hand basis to see what was happening. I recall going to one of the Save our Seine group projects where they were cleaning up the Seine River, and I must commend the Save our Seine group because they have initiated programs along the Seine River which are almost to a point now where the Seine River is very close to being totally navigable throughout the city of Winnipeg, and this is all within the last three to four years.

* (1740)

This was a program that was initiated—and I can remember one of the first meetings which was called by the member for St. Vital. The member was approached by the group to try to get some formal approach to what we can do with the Seine River, and the member for St. Vital initiated that meeting, along with the member for Seine River, myself and the member for Riel, as board of Seine River, to see how we could try to help through this type of initiative. Like I said, they did become part of the Urban Green Team program in 1995 and were very successful in further cleaning up the river. Also, I believe they were involved with trying to eliminate a lot of purple loosestrife that grows along the riverbanks.

So they were also involved with another program that I got to see. It was at the Omand's Creek, where they

did some riverbank cleanup there and riverbank enhancement and planting of trees. Very innovative and very aggressive young people were quite involved and quite proud of their initiatives that they accomplished.

So there were a fair amount of programs that were initiated through the Urban Green Team. In fact, just recently I had the opportunity, and it was quite unexpected that the Urban Green Team was recognized by an International Coalition for Land/Water Stewardship in the Red River basin, had their annual meeting down in Fargo, and the department was presented with an award for our stewardship and sustainable development activities initiated through the Urban Green Team. So it is quite an honour and quite a pleasure to have this type of recognition on an international scale as to the input that happened. I was quite pleased that this is not only a reflection on the department but a reflection on the people and the youth that got involved when they decided that they wanted to help and tried to make the environment a little bit more friendly here in this great city of Winnipeg. So the Urban Green Team was one initiative, like I say, under the Urban Affairs department that was quite successful.

Other initiatives under the Urban portfolio was the beginning of the Winnipeg Development Agreement. Initiatives under various programs there have come into being because the Winnipeg Development Agreement gives us an opportunity. It is a tripartite agreement in which there is the partnership between the province, the city and the federal government for \$75 million over five years, with a \$25-million contribution by the three levels of government. It is initiated through various components. There is the community development and security component, a labour force development, strategic and sectoral investments and also the administrative component of the Winnipeg Development Agreement.

A few of the initiatives have started to be implemented. Urban safety has been announced by the Manitoba government which was for \$3.5 million. This can be noted by the downtown patrol which was the hiring of 12 people that were trained in community response in a sense of being the eyes and ears of the

neighbourhood. They are there to help people that are lost in certain areas. They have the ability to give emergency first aid, and they are equipped with radios and walkie-talkies, if you want to call it, that they can communicate with the police in case there is a problem. They do not have the authority for arrest or for the formalization of police work, but they do have the ability to communicate for the safety of particular areas.

So it is an initiative that is well received by the community. The initiative's objective is to be self-sustainable by the Downtown BIZ Association. The initial funding is to help set it up with the diminishing amounts of monies that would go into the program over the five-year program until at the end of five years it is totally sustained by the Downtown BIZ Association. They are quite positive in their attitudes towards maintaining and in fact may be expanding upon it. So this is an initiative through the Winnipeg Development Agreement, which will help in the safety and the betterment of the downtown area and the areas in and around here in Winnipeg.

There is a neighbourhood infrastructure program that was announced through the WDA, the Winnipeg Development Agreement, which is also for revitalizing older and predominantly residential neighbourhoods. It will target declining neighbourhoods that have pockets of deterioration and emphasize citizen involvement.

This is another example where we are asking citizens to be involved with the program, to take charge, to take hold of their community, to have the stewardship of their own community, and we will act as a catalyst of funding, in a sense, to get these programs and to get some of this emphasis going in the neighbourhood communities.

It is an area where I feel there is room for some very strong and positive growth, not only in the neighbourhood improvement I am talking about but also in the Housing portfolio that I am involved with, and I would like to, maybe later, just spend a few moments talking about how neighbourhood involvement is such a benefit in the Housing department.

There are many other areas in the Winnipeg Development Agreement that I feel are going to be very positive initiatives for growth within the city of Winnipeg. The city of Winnipeg has the ability to attract and to retain exciting businesses, and I think that the more there is an awareness and a co-operation between the province and the City of Winnipeg and also the federal government in recognizing the importance and the value of Winnipeg and its ability to expand not only as an economic growth but also as a city where people want to be involved and people want to be part of this great city, it gives an excellent opportunity and a vehicle to realize some of these goals.

So Urban Affairs and the directions that we are taking are in recognition of some of the goals that the City of Winnipeg has set for itself. It is exciting working with the City of Winnipeg. Just recently with the election we have some new councillors. We have a mayor who is very active and outgoing and vibrant in her directions of what she wants to do with the city, so I enjoy working with the city.

The councillors and the EPC, the Executive Policy Committee, has had some changes, and there are councillors on there who have the ability to be involved with a lot of decisions, and we meet on a regular basis. I believe it is important that there is a strong line of communication between the mayor and EPC and also the councillors and the province and the Department of Urban Affairs so that there is an understanding of directions and we are sort of playing the same tune as to what we feel is best for the Department of Urban Affairs and the City of Winnipeg.

I mentioned briefly about involvement, and I would like to just move on to the Housing portfolio and talk about some of the things that are happening there. One of the things I would like to just point out is, one of the things that we have talked about, and I think it has been referred to in almost every speech that all members have come forth with, not only on our side but from members on the other side, the members from the New Democratic Party, and that is the word "change" and how we have used this word "change."

I am reminded of the Chinese symbol for change. The Chinese symbol for change is actually two symbols. One symbol is the symbol of danger and the other symbol is the symbol for opportunity. When you put them together you have the word "change" in Chinese.

I am reminded of that when I say that, just as we talk about change and we use that word in a variety of words, we are talking not only about the recognition of the danger of change but we are also looking for the symbol for opportunity, because with change there is the opportunity to make things better and to make things different and things that are different are not necessarily on the dark side of the ledger.

There are a lot of opportunities right now and things are happening and moving in a very rapid transitional stage, that we have to recognize what we are doing and what we are involved with are fleeting moments. It is like a moving river. You cannot take a snapshot of a moving river because it is always in a transitional stage.

It is ironic, because I can relate, and I seem to be moving through the various portfolios, but I can relate to my Seniors portfolio, whereas I have been to events where I have seen people and talked to people that are in their late 90s and even have turned 100. Some of those people have been around, they were there before there were even airplanes, and they talk in the contexts that they were born, and they were children before there were even airplanes.

Now, when you talk about airplanes you are talking about people that have not only progressed from airplanes to rockets to men on the moon to the satellites that are circling the Earth right now. You have the space shuttle that goes up and down. When you read it in the paper, it rotates around the Earth and it comes back and you read about it on page 46 in the newspaper. It is no longer news anymore. In fact, sometimes the space shuttle will go up and it will be up there for months. It will come back and it does not even make news anymore.

Everything is so common that we take these things just as a matter of fact, but in relating back to what I was talking about with Housing, which I was trying to get back to, with Housing I have to relate back to one of the commitments we made, and that was to improve

and to enhance customer service. One of the ways of doing this is to do that through consultation, and this is one of the things that this government has always tried to initiate, customer service and customer recognition, Madam speaker.

We are all really customers, because we are here to serve people that have elected us, and in a sense we are here to give them the service that they feel that we should be doing.

One of the ways of doing that, and I have mentioned it before, is through the setting up of tenant associations. I know that some of my colleagues on the other side of the House are quite actively involved with this, and I compliment them. I feel that any type of tenant association and the encouragement of it is something that we would all feel is a very positive growth, because it gets the association involved. I know just recently, in fact even last night, my colleague for Riel (Mr. Newman) had formed a tenants association meeting in and around the Beliveau area in some of the public housing to get this type of initiative going and to get a lot of this input going.

I know that the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) has approached my department in trying to get a tenant association formed in one of the housing complexes in the constituency of Radisson, and I encourage all members to do this if they have public housing, to get the people involved to take responsibility, to take hold of their own development. There are initiatives that the department will supplement with funding in the tenant association on an ongoing basis for the association, for the set-up of the association, the administration of the association. There are individuals that will help with setting up some of the guidelines.

So anything like this where there is a community involvement, whether it is through the housing development, it is giving the people the empowerment to make their own decisions. These are some of the things that I think all governments want to try to get the government out of all decision making and let the tenants make the decisions and get them involved with directing their own way.

I have worked very closely through the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux)—he got me involved or took

me to the meeting with the Gilbert Park Tenants Association, and I know that he is very involved with it, and he keeps me posted as to what is happening there—with the Gilbert Park Tenants Association. They have really taken hold and taken responsibility for that residence area and have become a very recognized association in the budgeting of their monies that is allocated to that association. I have made the offer, and will continue to work with them, in trying to delegate more authority to them in taking over some of the Gilbert Park and give them the authority so that the minister is not always involved with all the things that have to come forth. [interjection] It is nice, Madam Speaker, to have your own side being your critics. You know, you have critics from all sides here.

These are some of the initiatives that I think are very positive and I think should have the encouragement of governments, whether it is on this side or on the opposition, because I feel that everybody wants people to have the ability to take hold of their own lives and their own directions. The less government involvement, the better type of scenario and empowerment that we want to put back into the people. It is better that way.

I would like to spend a few moments talking about the other area of—before I leave the Housing portfolio, I would like to point out a very positive initiative that was also undertaken this year. In fact, it was done through a funding arrangement with the Manitoba Metis association in which we got involved with some funding for the northern and native housing. We levered almost \$3.2 million into the upgrading of homes and residences mainly in the North and native housing. What this did was it brought forth the co-operation of funding provincially and federally for 340 communities, upgrading of homes in 340 communities here in Manitoba, like I said, mostly in northern Manitoba.

It also initiated the opening of—I believe, it was close to 160 homes that were closed and because of the funding, these homes were available. These were in the northern and native housing areas, in a couple of towns that we went to. We were all north in and around The Pas, some of the towns there. These were all initiatives that have the ability for improved native

housing and improved access for sewage and water in some places. This is just another area where we have been able to try to help with housing and the initiative in the area. I had the opportunity to visit about six or eight communities in the North and see first hand where the monies—for units in the areas—were being targeted for need. All these things we were able to enjoy.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Minister of Urban Affairs and Housing will have 13 minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, December 12, 1995

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