



Third Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
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	Steinbach	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
ERNST, Jim	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.
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McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	P.C.
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McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	P.C.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn	St. James	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	P.C.
NEWMAN, David, Hon.	Riel	P.C.
PALLISTER, Brian	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank, Hon.	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
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REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
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SALE, Tim	Crescentwood	N.D.P.
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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, March 4, 1997

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 1—An Act Respecting the Administration of Oaths of Office

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey), that leave be given to introduce Bill 1, An Act Respecting the Administration of Oaths of Office; Loi sur la prestation des serments d'entrée en fonction, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery, where we have this afternoon twenty-eight Grade 9 students from the Garden City Collegiate under the direction of Mr. Bruce Sallee. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak).

Also seated in the public gallery, we have six Grade 11 students from the 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).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Personal Care Homes Safety Standards

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

In the 1990 Speech from the Throne, the government promised in dealing with personal care homes that they would strengthen the enforcement of personal care homes and strengthen the safety standards in personal care homes in the province of Manitoba. In spite of questions, inquiries, reports and other matters that have been brought to the Premier's attention through three different ministers of Health, we see nothing in the Speech from the Throne yesterday and no action taken on the various reports and recommendations and their own words in the Speech from the Throne. Three deaths, unfortunate deaths, have been reported at the Holiday Haven Nursing Home, a matter that was raised in this Chamber last year.

I would like to ask the Premier, why was he silent on the tragedies in our personal care homes, and why was there not any action taken or initiated in the Speech from the Throne yesterday?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, first of all, I think whenever we are dealing with very serious matters such as this, it is important we be accurate. The member for Concordia has repeated a number of allegations about three deaths. The number which he refers to has not proven to have been the case, so I do not want it to go on the record of the House that by his saying in this Chamber today that there have been three deaths at the Holiday Haven Home as a result of inadequate care is in fact a fact. Saying it in this Assembly does not make it a fact, and from the information that has been provided to me by those who investigate this, including the coroner—the member may be aware that all deaths in personal care homes are automatically reported to the coroner—that information at this point in time does not prove to be correct, so I think that must be corrected.

Secondly, Madam Speaker, the Department of Health has worked over a number of years to improve standards and to develop a consistency in standards. A great deal of effort has taken place. There is still some work that is ongoing, and I think the member may agree that the number of complaints we all get about personal care homes and the service—and one should remember that residents of those facilities are regularly visited by

the relatives—is very minimal. The one that stands out, of course, was Holiday Haven, as the member for Kildonan knows, and he and I have discussed.

* (1335)

Holiday Haven Nursing Home Public Inquiry

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, we have had inquests prior to the unfortunate reports at the Holiday Haven Nursing Home. We have had reports; we have had all kinds of questions in this Chamber. I would like to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon), in the interest of the public and considering the concerns that have been articulated by members of the public, including the Manitoba seniors organization just recently to the Minister of Health, would the Premier allow for a public inquiry and order a public inquiry here in the province of Manitoba? Surely the protection and safety of our elderly and vulnerable citizens in our personal care homes should be of the utmost priority to this provincial government. The Premier has had questions raised in this House last year. He chose to do nothing.

Will he order a public inquiry, on behalf of all Manitobans, into these tragedies?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): I do not think there is a member of this Assembly who would disagree with the Leader of the Opposition in that the safety and level of care of any residents of personal care homes in Manitoba is not of great importance.

Madam Speaker, there is no doubt, when this particular incident at Holiday Haven, given the history of complaint—and a great deal of effort, I would add, on the part of the department to work at improvements—the member for Kildonan, I know, had provided information to the former Minister of Health. We have spoken about that; it is a concern we have all shared.

When this latest incident which was a very serious one happened, we took very immediate action to have the management of that facility voluntarily give up management. We have negotiated a contract with Extencicare to ensure that the 150 or so residents there do have proper care, but I am sure the member for

Concordia would agree, just from the level of complaints that come from personal care homes across the province, that there is not another facility that I am aware of, or I believe his critic would be aware of—or if there is they have not shared them with me—that has resulted in the same level of concern and complaint. There are complaints from time to time but nowhere near this level, and members should always be cognizant of the fact that people in those facilities are visited by their relatives. That is why we had complaints about Holiday Haven.

Safety Standards

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Yes, Madam Speaker, unfortunately the complaints that we raised about the Holiday Haven Nursing Home were met by deaf ears by members opposite last year in the session. In fact, the Premier, I believe, and I heard him say on the radio the NDP and the member for Kildonan were fearmongering.

I would like to ask the Premier, did his former Minister of Health mislead him on the nature and safety concerns at the Holiday Haven Nursing Home? Did he investigate those concerns? Did he have any heart at all to look into the issues of the elderly patients and vulnerable patients of that home, or did he just go on with his political rhetoric on the radio and not care at all about those patients when we raised that in the Chamber last year?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): First of all, let us remember that every time we put inaccuracies on the record, as the member did with respect to three deaths, we raise in the public's mind a level of concern that may not be warranted. We put fear into people that is not warranted nor should be there. So I must caution the member for Concordia to be a little bit careful in what he says.

Yes, there has been an ongoing history of difficulties in that particular facility. I am advised, and I have no reason to doubt it, that every complaint that was brought to the attention of the ministry from the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak)—and I know he did that on a number of occasions that have come to members of this caucus or to the minister directly—has been investigated. The result was last fall that the

department asked the care home to initiate an independent review of their operation which was done by I believe the Manitoba nursing home association. That was completed. The department was in the middle of working on a plan with that facility when the latest incident occurred, and it was the advice I received and my decision that the time had come to put in a new management team which I believe was part of that recommendation.

So let it not be said that action has not been taken. It has been taken I think in a reasonable manner.

* (1340)

Holiday Haven Nursing Home Public Inquiry

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): What the Minister of Health fails to recognize is the Ministry of Health and this government failed the citizens and people of Holiday Haven and failed Manitobans with respect to personal care homes by not adequately enforcing their own regulations and their own standards and by not following up.

I will table a letter from 1994 from the Department of Health to a family whose mother had unexplained injuries at Holiday Haven in which the ministry said that a number of actions would take place. In fact, these actions did not take place. In fact, the ministry promised a social worker would be hired who was subsequently let go by that nursing home, and we had more difficulty.

Will the minister not admit that it is a failure of the Department of Health and that we need a public inquiry into the Department of Health, as well as the actions at Holiday Haven, to get to the bottom of this mess?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): I think it is important to note from the questions of both the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) and from the member for Kildonan that the concerns around personal care homes are limited to one. We have not had, to my knowledge at least, another care home that has warranted such interest or inquiry. So, first of all, let us appreciate we are dealing with one particular facility of

which we are aware today. I have no reason to believe that there are others.

Secondly, let us appreciate as well that the department on a regular basis does receive from time to time complaints from people who have family in a variety of homes. They are investigated; they are checked out. From time to time there are problems with management in a variety of facilities.

We try to work, the ministry tries to work with improving those situations. Holiday Haven was the exception in that it was regular and continual, and the result I understand of the report that was done by the independent assessment by the Nursing Home Association of Manitoba, I believe, recommended a change of management in that facility. Whether you argue that should have happened last October or it should have happened in January is a debatable point, I imagine, but it has happened, and we have taken the steps to protect residents in that facility.

Mr. Chomiak: A supplementary, Madam Speaker. Will the minister not understand and will he not give assurances to Manitobans that an incident of this kind will never be allowed to happen again in Manitoba and can that not only be solved through the structuring of a public inquiry into what happened at Holiday Haven between the department and Holiday Haven and between inaction by this government and Holiday Haven?

Mr. Praznik: Repeating something not true does not make it true. There was a great deal of work put in on behalf of the ministry, including requesting an independent review of the management of that facility by the Nursing Home Association of Manitoba, which was done. The type of work that is done by the department from time to time in other personal care homes is important for maintaining as high a standard as we can.

Can any minister of the Crown guarantee that a particular incident or event will never happen again in Manitoba? There are things that happen in personal care homes from time to time, I do not think on a large basis, but they will because it is a human system with people working in it. I think what we and Manitobans expect that we are able to do is ensure that it is

absolutely minimal, and if there is a problem with management or any other matter, that we work to try to correct it and take appropriate measures to do so. That is what we have done in the case of Holiday Haven.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, can the minister explain how the government failed to follow up on their own recommendations of their own task force that studied nursing homes that was established three years ago and reported two years ago; how they failed to report back by November regarding Holiday Haven that the minister promised in this House regarding management changes; how they failed to acknowledge three letters from members on this side of this House saying change management at Holiday Haven prior to the death occurring; and how they failed now their duty to Manitobans to ensure that this issue of Holiday Haven and the department's interaction is investigated to ensure that it never happens again in the province of Manitoba?

How does the minister explain that, Madam Speaker?

* (1345)

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, as I have been advised by those who have been working on this particular issue, departmental staff did raise these issues with the management of Holiday Haven. It was agreed, at our suggestion, that they have an independent review done, which was done by the Nursing Home Association of Manitoba. That report was provided to the management of Holiday Haven who prepared a plan with which to make their changes. The department was in the process of reviewing that plan and wanting to see the independent report. There was a fair bit of back and forth and discussion going on when I arrived in this ministry, and given the events that took place, I felt that it was time to move in and replace the management, and that was done.

But surely to goodness the member for Kildonan is not suggesting that every time there is a particular complaint in a facility of Manitoba we move in and remove the management. There has to be some attempt to make things work right, and if a management cannot do that, we have the power to revoke the licence or to use that threat to replace management, and that is what we have done, Madam Speaker.

Health Care System Privatization

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): One of the biggest problems this government has is it does not realize the consequences of its fascination with the ideology of privatization. If there is one concern Manitobans are increasingly having, whether they look at Holiday Haven, what was happening to our personal care system and other aspects of the health care system, it is a fact that this government is continuing to push ahead to a system that is based on profit rather than needs of Manitobans.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health if he will not only call an inquiry to look at the specific circumstances of Holiday Haven but also look at the impact of the increasing degree of privatization on our health care system.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): That is a very sweeping statement by the member for Thompson. I would suggest if he look at the way we are in the process of regionalizing health care in this province, and we can get into the debate at some point in time about the merits of that particular issue and I invite that debate, but I think, if anything, in building the centralized authorities where we will have virtually all our facilities managed by 13 regional health boards, that is certainly not a privatization of the system; that is a centralization of a public health care system. I think the general trend is somewhat in the opposite to that that the member suggests.

Mr. Ashton: I am wondering if the minister will explain how moving to the regional system is anything but privatization when one of the aspects of the regionalization is the ability of the regions to contract-out services. When we have so many problems already with privatization in our health care system, why would we be embarking on major new privatizations through regionalization?

Mr. Praznik: I think if the member examines the big picture, and I look forward to that kind of discussion that we will no doubt have in the Estimates debate and perhaps the Throne Speech Debate, the fact of the matter is the vast majority of services provided in the health care system will still, and I would predict well

into the future, be provided through those regional health associations directly. In fact, many of the steps that we are taking in helping to implement that I think further underline that fact. If an RHA tends to contract-out some services such as laundry or commissary or some of the delivery, I do not think that undermines public health, if in fact it results in a saving to the system that allows us to spend more dollars on health care. I think it is very important to appreciate that big picture.

Mr. Ashton: My final supplementary, Madam Speaker. I want to ask the new Minister of Health if he will not take the opportunity to put a stop to the privatization and review the increasing degree of privatization in our health care system, whether it be home care or oxygen services or laboratory services and including our personal care homes. When will this government put a freeze on the degree of privatization in our system and deal with the very real root problems of moving towards a system of health care that is based on profit and not people?

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, I have been in this Assembly for a number of years now and I can tell the member I see the level of expenditure on health care from \$1.3 billion on the first budget I stood here to vote on to over \$1.8 billion today. This government has been very much committed to ensuring that Manitobans have a very good health care system and the vast majority of that has been and, I would predict, will continue to be within the public realm because it makes sense to be there for a host of reasons. But when we talk about seeing some privatization in a variety of areas that serve that, if in fact it provides a saving to the taxpayer that allows us to have more money for direct patient care, how does the member face the public of Manitoba to argue differently? We have to be ensuring that we are getting the best value for our dollar. The vast majority of patient care delivery has been and will continue to be in the realm of the public sector.

* (1350)

Seven Oaks Hospital Patient Transfers

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): My question is to the Minister of Health.

Last month the Boychuk family of West Kildonan told me that Mr. Boychuk Sr., who is now at Seven Oaks General Hospital, would be sent out of the community and out of the community hospital that we fought so hard for to Concordia Hospital while he awaits a personal care home bed at great stress to the family, particularly Mrs. Boychuk who is 85. Given Mr. Boychuk's health and given that all the family lives in the area, my question to the minister is, can he possibly explain his department's policy which sends family members out of the community or threatens a charge of \$800 a day—and I will table that threat, Madam Speaker—while at the same time unit after unit is being closed in the hospital?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Well, Madam Speaker, I do not know what this unit after unit being closed is, and I am not going to get into that issue. I am sure the facts would prove otherwise. I think the member would agree that what is very important within the system is that people be in appropriate beds.

I do not know the exact details in front of me today of the case the member raises and I would invite him to provide them to me to look into, but I would suggest—or I would suppose, and maybe the member could add in his question—but I would suppose that the issue has to do with being an acute care bed as opposed to a long-term care bed. As the member may be aware, Concordia Hospital, one of their changes in configuration of bed use in which they added I believe 2,700 bed days a year—they say 27 beds they will keep open now on weekends that they were not able to—was to put a long-term care unit in that facility, and that might in fact be the reason why that transfer was made. I am only speculating, Madam Speaker.

Acute Care Bed Costs

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Would the minister explain why it is the practice and the policy of his department and hospitals, at least Seven Oaks Hospital, to threaten families with a charge of \$800 a day—and he will see that in the letter—and has the minister considered the impact on families in stress receiving that kind of a threat?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I fully appreciate as an MLA as well, from time to time there are exceptions to general rules that are created given circumstance, and that is certainly a place for an MLA to advocate on behalf of constituents. I have had them too where you have very elderly people, a room becomes available in Pine Falls and their base is in Beausejour and there are difficulties associated with that. Of course we want to ensure or work towards ensuring those things are taken into account in the system.

But in the general answer to the member's question, Madam Speaker, an acute care bed costing some \$800 a day is not the appropriate place to house someone who requires long-term care. The member may talk about change of community, but Winnipeg is a relatively small city in world terms. We have seven facilities, two long-term care facilities and surely to goodness we have enough beds, we believe, to accommodate the needs of our population. It requires some flexibility in moving people around. I agree with the member, there are going to be exceptions to that rule and I would hope the system does react to that.

Community Hospitals Interim Care Beds

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Given the minister's response, would he tell Manitobans why the system cannot accommodate interim care beds in community hospitals so that they can indeed serve the community that they are to serve, and why is the department failing to deal with the basic problem, which is the shortage of personal care homes in Manitoba? Suffering seniors are waiting one to two years for placement in a personal care home.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, first of all, if my recollection serves me well, and I look to the former Minister of Health, Seven Oaks is a hospital that does have a long-care waiting area for just such purpose. I would assume that the reason this individual could not be accommodated, and I am guessing at this point, is because there was not room or there was space being made available at Concordia.

The member has flagged an issue that has plagued governments of both political stripes over the years, the

need for more personal care home beds. We have added many, many personal care home beds in the province during our tenure. The need is still great. I acknowledge this and we are working towards adding another round of those as we move to consideration of our capital budget. But it is certainly a point that I fully recognize, that is where there is a great need today and it will require a lot of work on all of our parts to fill it.

* (1355)

Education System Special Needs Review

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education. In the past this government has talked a lot about special needs students or special needs funding. This year in fact they finally incorporated it into the throne speech. But every year they talk about reviews, and this government has now been administrating the affairs for over eight and a half and finally we see some sort of indication that they are going to be doing it.

Madam Speaker, to compound what we perceive as a problem, we have a government now that is relying on the expertise of people in the private sector in order to rectify a problem that they perceive and which is real today.

My question to the Minister of Education is, why do we have to contract out the need to have a private firm to do consulting with respect to special needs funding or special education funding?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I am pleased the member recognizes the significance of this 18- to 24-month review. It is a review that has been long needed in Manitoba and is finally underway and has been underway since this fall.

The steering committee that is heading up the review are not private sector people. It is comprised of people very highly knowledgeable about the whole area of special needs. They in turn have hired a researcher consultant to do their research work for them. The proposals were put out. The steering committee themselves, independent of government, government

did not select the researcher consultant, the steering committee did. The steering committee is composed of people such as Dr. James Newton, head of the Manitoba Adolescent Treatment Centre, Mrs. Agnes Collins, a teacher chosen by the Manitoba Teachers' Society, free choice, not chosen by government, a parent of a special needs student who is very knowledgeable in the area, and people of that stature.

Madam Speaker, I see you giving me the wind-down signal, but it was a committee of people very knowledgeable, very, very committed. They in turn have selected a researcher, not government. Government will pay for it, however.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, then will the Minister of Education confirm that she does not have the faith in her own staff's ability to provide a valuable report that is in fact needed today, that what she in fact did was send out a proposal back in September requesting individuals to come forward who want to be able to do the investigating because her department, because of downsizing, does not have the ability any longer to be able to do the job that she is requesting?

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, indeed, my department has a tremendous amount of ability and expertise, and we do have one representative through the Children and Youth Secretariat on the special needs steering committee. However, the member has identified something completely correct, and that is that the amount of time required to conduct a study of this intensity, this in-depth review, would require more people than the department currently has. Now I suppose we could hire someone for a term contract to do that because it is a concentrated area that will be complete within 18 to 24 months. If we did that, of course, then we would have accusations about not being impartial enough, that we were doing it without going to outside experts. It does not matter whether we do it internally or externally, as far as the opposition is concerned they will always find a way to be critical of the process.

This process is one that has been well thought through, discussed with a wide variety of people very intense on the issue, and we believe it will see very good results for the children and the taxpayers of Manitoba.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, we would ultimately argue that the Department of Education should have the resources available in which they can conduct such a study, as has been pointed out in their throne speech.

My question to the Minister of Education is, why does she feel that it is necessary to go beyond the Department of Education when it is the Department of Education's responsibility to ensure that we have adequate funding and programming for special needs students? Why do the taxpayers of Manitoba have to pay additional money in order to be able to get this particular job done when she should be able to do it within that department?

Mrs. McIntosh: I would point out to the honourable member that when we took office in 1988, funding for special needs students in Manitoba was \$20 million. It is now \$84 million and was that last year and is that this year. We have not cut in that area; we have continued to build tremendously in the amount of money given to special needs.

I might also point out to the member that when departments take on in-depth projects that are going to be concentrated efforts for short periods of time, it is a very good use of money to go and seek people. In this case, we have used a third party to do the seeking so it is completely impartial and free from what the member I am sure would call the taint of our ideology. It makes good economic sense to bring people in for those special projects rather than add to the size and cost of the bureaucracy to hire full-time people in permanent positions that then have no specific tasks once the review is complete. But that is the difference between the way they manage and the way we do.

* (1400)

Education System Breakfast/Nursery Programs

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, there has always been two faces to the Filmon government and for yet another year we have seen in the throne speech promises to deal about, quote, special problems of child poverty. Yet, the other face of this government, in fact, the real face of this government is

the Minister of Education who believes that breakfast programs and nursery programs are, and I quote, costly enhancements.

I would like to ask the Minister of Education to tell the House today, to confirm that she does, in fact, believe—as she indicated to the Free Press—that nursery programs and breakfast programs are costly enhancements which do not provide an educational benefit to the students.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I believe the member is taking two quotes and combining them in one.

Indeed, yes, the dollars for education are to be given for the acquisition of literacy, numerical computation, et cetera. Anything we do to enhance that is an enhancement, some very good enhancements. Breakfast programs, nursery school programs are excellent enhancements, but they should be funded from sources other than those dollars that were designated to teach reading, literacy, et cetera.

Indeed, Madam Speaker, we are working to see other ways to ensure with early intervention and early identification meeting early needs that we can through other vehicles achieve the same ends that are currently being met with the diversion of dollars that have been targeted to the teaching of academics, literacy, et cetera. The member is making reference in addition—and that is that they provide a very definite educational benefit, a very definite educational benefit, and I never said they did not. What I said, I prefer the fundraising done by Winnipeg No. 1 to be done in a way that is actually educational, not the end result for what is intended.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister, who is the Minister of Education, tell us which educational programs have a greater impact on children in poverty, under-attendance, their attention span, their classroom behaviour, their language skills, their long-term prospects, than early childhood education? How can she consider that to be a costly enhancement?

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, perhaps it would help if I clarified for the viewing audience what the member is trying to imply. [interjection]

The member opposite suggested I turn, as he does, and face the cameras, so I will do that, Madam Speaker.

I would begin my answer now, Madam Speaker, if this is being timed. I now will begin the answer to the question, having been interrupted. I was asked if it was a good idea for Winnipeg No. 1 to raise money by applying for a lottery licence. I said they can raise money however they wish provided they get permission from Lotteries or whatever, because they were legally elected to make those decisions. However, I would prefer to see them have fundraising activities that actually had educational components, such as the one being done by Fort Garry where they raise money by providing an educational opportunity to their students, which is the interaction with foreign students, rather than some other way. That had nothing to do with the merits of the preschool program which are numerous and plenty and have dramatic and excellent effect on the educational opportunities for students.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Speaker, would the minister, who clearly believes that there is real education and costly enhancements, tell us whether in fact early childhood education and breakfast programs will not now form a part of any antipoverty initiative that may in the fullness of time emerge from yet another throne speech?

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, perhaps this would help the member understand. We have four departments—five departments actually, because we have come together now with a fifth department. We have five departments that are working together and—[interjection]

Madam Speaker, we have five departments that have come together. They are Education, Justice, Health, Family Services and Native Affairs. We have come together to co-ordinate our activities to do the best we can for children at risk, children in need and we have formed what we call the Children and Youth Secretariat. They did some initiatives and a lot of planning, and this year you will begin to see specific initiatives coming out of all our planning that will co-ordinate our activities.

In order to identify where our activities are, we have to first identify our mandate. The mandate in Education and Training is to make sure that the dollars

we have go to ensuring that students come out literate, able to compute, et cetera. We need to work, however, with other things that impact upon Education through Family Services and Health, to ensure they are well prepared for school. That would involve the programs the member mentions which we do not intend to ignore, as she implied.

Highways Maintenance

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): My questions are for the Minister of Highways.

Over the past six years this government has cut nearly 600 Highways department jobs and is now poised to cut another 150 next month with the offloading of highway maintenance work. Last month this minister stated that he was serious about improving highways in rural and northern Manitoba. Why is he now offloading maintenance of the very roads that most need upgrading?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Madam Speaker, in the process of being sure that we have adequate funds for the capital and maintenance of highways, we have to be sure that we maximize the efficiency of the maintenance of those roads. The member is clearly aware that for the course of a year now we have been dealing with the municipalities to establish contracts for maintenance of roads that they feel they could maintain. Subsequent to that we will look at other ways and means by which we can maintain those roads as cost efficiently as possible for the good of all Manitoba citizens.

Mr. Jennissen: How can this minister talk about maintaining standards when he knows that the amount of equipment and condition of equipment will vary widely, depending on the financial condition of individual municipalities?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Speaker, fundamentally in the area of efficiency, we know that every municipality has equipment that they use for grading gravel roads. Clearly, we have a duplication of equipment when we are in those municipalities doing gravel road maintenance, whether it is summer or winter. Also, there is a construction industry out there that has like

equipment that can do the work. So our owning equipment is really, in many cases, a duplication of equipment that is already in those areas, either in municipal hands or in the hands of contractors.

Mr. Jennissen: How does this latest round of privatization fit with the so-called decentralization of services to rural communities?

Mr. Findlay: The number of kilometres of road in rural Manitoba and the number of maintenance activities needed to be done in rural Manitoba will not change one iota. There will still be the same amount of work out there to be conducted by the same number of people, whether in the employ of the government of Manitoba or in the employ of a municipality. Nothing changes in terms of the hours of work necessary or the degree to which the roads are maintained.

* (1410)

Regional Health Authorities Postponement

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, this government has talked about the regional health authorities taking over the delivery of health care, but in fact plans are not ready and in the throne speech the government says health authorities are being developed.

Since needs assessments are not done and will not be done for some time and people in rural Manitoba are concerned about losing services, will the Minister of Health today agree to put the plan to move the regional health authorities on hold until needs assessments are done and all these issues are addressed?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I would certainly agree with the member for Swan River if we were expecting rural health authorities to take over on April 1 and have in place a host of changes. That would be certainly totally unrealistic, and I would agree with her if that is the premise of her question. Consequently, in working through the takeover for April 1, we have done a number of things, including adjusting the budget targets to allow the RHAs to take over the authorities at the

same level of funding and to achieve their economies later in the fiscal year.

We are working on some agreements now with respect to the unions involved to ensure that there is a period of transition of up to a year that no one's pay cheque goes for naught because of a transition. We are working almost on a daily basis with the RHAs, as they prepare to take over, to make sure that the issues that need to be dealt with are, and they will—and I can assure the member—over the next year be working on the changes that they want to make to improve health care in their regions.

Level of Service

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, the minister just said that none will be laid off for one year.

Can the minister give us his assurances that we will not have layoffs in the following year, that we will continue to have the level of service in rural Manitoba that we have now, and they will not suffer because of budget cutbacks from this government?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, what I did say was that the staff from the province, for example, will be transferring under the control of the RHA. We wanted to make sure that there was a transition in terms of their pay and benefits as that transferred over so that there would not be a rush to change payroll systems, et cetera. We want RHAs to have enough time to do that. There will no doubt be changes.

The member for Swan River said we want rural Manitobans to continue to enjoy the quality they receive. I do not know if the member is aware that bed occupancy in rural Manitoba across the system is 58 percent. Two-thirds of our acute care beds of that 58 percent are being used for nonacute care purposes. There are many services that rural Manitobans do not enjoy today because there is not a large enough pool of people to allow those services to happen. I would suggest to her that the level of service in rural Manitoba today is not what we want to have. We want to have better service, and that is what regionalization is about, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Speaker, I also want better care in rural Manitoba.

I want to ask the minister if what we are going to see in rural Manitoba is similar to what we see in Winnipeg where we have long lineups and difficulties that patients are facing unable to receive care. Is that the plan he has for rural Manitoba as well?

Mr. Praznik: I have no doubt that the member for Swan River shares with us the need to improve our delivery mechanisms in health care. I do not doubt her sincerity at all. She flags issues of lineups and, believe me, as the new Health minister, I had to deal with those in the first few weeks, but if there ever is a reason to move ahead to regionalization of our governance structures, it is to be able to put in place the mechanisms that will allow services and resources to be able to move and patients to be moved ultimately to where they can receive the care they need.

I can point out to the member many instances where we currently are not doing things well because of our governance structure, and that has to change, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

(continued)

Resignation of Speaker

Madam Speaker: To resume debate on the matter of privilege, the honourable member for Crescentwood who has 15 minutes remaining.

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, last night the member for Riel (Mr. Newman) and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) seemed transfixed with the idea that the memorandum of agreement somehow supersedes the formal rules adopted by a unanimous vote of all members of this House. The reason for this, of course, is that if the rules as ratified by the House did indeed provide one or more mechanisms to resolve the issue of the MTS legislation, then they would have to admit what is obvious to all Manitobans, namely that you the Speaker broke not only the most precious rules

protecting the rights and privileges of all members, but that you did not have to do so.

The member for Riel even appealed to us to think about what a judge would do if faced with the question the former House leader posed to you as Speaker. Well, first, of course, the judge would look to the law, the rules of the House. I would be the first to admit that I did not absorb all of those new rules quickly when I first saw them, and perhaps there are some members opposite, indeed I suspect there are, who have not had the time or perhaps even the inclination to read carefully the new rules and to see whether the words of their Premier and the words of their House leader are indeed true or whether they are just taking those words on faith hoping that the ministers are speaking truth. I appeal to them to spend a little more time and review those provisional rules. They are in fact very comprehensive. They provide for most exigencies, and we should commend the people who drafted them, including members of all parties in the House.

So what do they say? Well, Madam Speaker, first the rules clearly, very clearly, anticipate that circumstances might require either earlier or later sittings than were normally agreed upon, and the word "normally" is in three sections, Rules 2.(1), 2.(2) and 102.(1). They all use "normally."

I want to quote Rule 102 because I think it is particularly important to have in front of us. Rule 102 reads: "Notwithstanding Rule 73," which is about the passage of budget, "and subject to sub-rules (2) and (3), all government Bills will normally receive a vote on Third Reading not later than the last day of the fall sitting . . ."

Again, notice the word "normally" which is of course the subject of the exceptions which are set out very clearly in subrule (4), and the rules do anticipate exceptions. Subrule (4) is even called "Extraordinary Circumstances." Well, if there was ever a bill that was extraordinary, it was the MTS bill. It provides a very clear mechanism to extend the sitting of the House not with any great effort on the part of the government. All they had to do was get up and move a motion with two days notice to say that the sittings of the House will be extended. They could say the date to which they would

be extended or they could not even say a date, they just could say they would be continued.

So there was no problem in extending the sittings of the House, and by so doing—and I call the member for Riel's (Mr. Newman) attention to this in particular—the last sitting day would not be the last day of November, it would be whatever day was specified in the motion that I am sure would have passed because you had a majority government to pass such a motion.

So the first and main defence offered by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the member for Riel falls like a house of cards. Where there is unfinished business or where circumstances require, sittings could be extended by a simple motion of the House as the government wished, and as the Premier took the trouble, bouncing on his feet to say out in the hallways of this Legislature: We will go till Christmas; we will go till New Year's. Well, you could have done so. All you had to do was move a motion, and it would have happened very easily.

Well, why then might there be a change between what the memorandum of agreement does say and the final rules as passed unanimously by every member of this House? The reason, of course, is that after the memorandum was initiated, there was a passage of time, and parties sat down with counsel and with legislative staff and they drafted the new rules. In the process of drafting, they realized that there were things that needed to be added than were in the memorandum of understanding. And each time there were changes every one of those rules, as the member of Riel (Mr. Newman) knows, came back to caucus and were approved in caucus as changes, and all of the new rules were approved before they were brought here before the House. So the issue of normally, the issue of extending the session, the issue of early sessions, earlier than contemplated by the rules, normally, was all understood and all approved by all members of this House. So that is, I think, a very important correction to the words that the Premier and the member from Riel and the government House leader put on the record yesterday.

But it is only the first of many defences to fall. What would happen if, as indeed, I think, did take place, the public and the opposition were so opposed to a bill,

such as the MTS bill, that the government was facing what it considered an intolerable delay in passing its legislation, no matter how odious that legislation was to Manitobans, well, Madam Speaker, if you had read, you would have found that the rules were very clear here as well. Every single parliamentary device available to the government under the old rules continues under the new provisional rules. Every single one. Rule 75.(4) provides for extended sittings, Monday to Saturday, morning, noon and night and through the night if you want. Can you imagine how difficult it would be for even a determined opposition to sustain debate through night after night after night and into the next morning? If you were serious about getting this bill passed, you could have extended sittings.

* (1420)

If you wanted simply to push amendments through more quickly, you could have used the motion called "the previous question." You could have forced consideration and adoption of motions, of amendments, of whatever you wished to have pushed by simply moving the previous question, Rule 69.(1) and (2).

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

But the granddaddy of all tools for getting business concluded is closure, Rule 43, and Rule 43 is exactly the same in the provisional rules as it is in our traditional rules. Not a thing is changed in that rule. All that Rule 43 needed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was that some minister with sufficient courage and sufficient honesty would rise and give notice of the intent to use closure the following day, and then in the following day all he had to do or she had to do was rise and say, debate will not be adjourned on this particular motion and the motion would have then passed sometime before or after 2 a.m. that sitting day, in the morning of that sitting day.

So every single one of the defences put forward by the member for Riel (Mr. Newman), the government House leader (Mr. McCrae), the Premier (Mr. Filmon), the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik), who was the deputy House leader in the old government, and all the other government speakers, all of those defences fall. You had the tools to get your legislation passed. You

did not have the courage of your convictions to use them, so you hid under the skirts of a supine Speaker.

What really happened? What really happened was that the Premier, facing growing and overwhelmingly negative public response, growing uneasiness in his own ranks—and those on the opposite side know about the growing uneasiness there was, particularly among the rural members of your caucus. What did he do? He told his House leader to get this bill passed without using closure, and the die was cast and a weak and partisan Speaker fell into the trap. What really happened in those chaotic days when the MTS workers' pension issues were not resolved? What happened when amendments were not put forward in time and were not completed even by the 7th of November, had to be done the day after the government first claimed was the last day, on the 8th? What happened when prospectuses were leaked and brokers with visions of Mercedes Benz and BMWs and Jaguars were dancing in their Christmas heads? What happened was the Premier was told by Bay Street to get this bill passed; get the \$35 million in commissions flowing; get the big fees to those glitzy marketers who sat very impatiently in the Trizec Building for two and a half weeks while the bill was debated here, running up the tab for this government. They said, get on with it, Mr. Premier, because Christmas is coming and our goose is not getting fat quick enough, and if we do not get this bill out and passed and the stocks on the market, it is going to be Christmas. We will not be able to sell them. So that is what happened, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

What happened was that orders were given and orders were taken and democracy was suspended because the courage was lacking to use the readily available and well-known procedures in the rules. Bay Street had its way in this Legislative Assembly. We were all treated like a board of impatient directors representing wealthy stockholders, not like elected members representing all Manitobans. The sad consequences, the very sad consequences, are before us in a soiled Speaker and silenced members, and these consequences will remain in this House as long as this Speaker remains. Madam, for the sake of this House, go, and let us have an elected Speaker now.

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): I rise today with, I suppose, a little bit of

frustration and also a bit of disgust with some of the language and attitude and comments that have taken place on the debate on this resolution, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I think is a resolution, in my mind, that should never have been introduced into this House yesterday at the start of a new session by an honourable member and the Leader of the official opposition who, I honestly believe, was coerced by dissident members of his caucus into introducing that, perhaps in order to maintain his leadership and some control over there, because we do know that at the end of last session there was absolutely no control and no leadership in the New Democratic caucus. I stand here today in order to support our Speaker and the good job that she has done on behalf of Manitobans and on behalf of all members, all honourable members of this Legislature.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to also include the fact that some of the comments that were made yesterday by members of the official opposition certainly did not portray the fact that we are all honourable members, because the language and the tone and the words that they used were not speaking to an honourable member. No matter what the official opposition has done, I still do consider all of them honourable members of this Legislature, as do I include our Speaker as an honourable member and all members of this Legislative Assembly.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to go back to November 28, 1996, and there were some very sad and some very happy times, and I am not sure today whether I would call a birthday a happy time, but nonetheless it was my birthday back on November 28. It was also a morning where we buried a very dear friend of mine. I was at the funeral of a very dear friend and as we went through the morning and the ceremonies and the activity, it put my mind into perspective and looked at what the really important things were in this world and in these lives that we lead. He was a very honourable man, and what I came back to, as a result of the bells ringing, was a mob mentality in this Legislature. I do not know who the leader of the gang was or who incited that hatred among members of the opposition. I know that it was not the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) because I know from experience and from having known him for many years that he would not be the gang leader, the mob leader. But there must have been at least one person over there and

maybe it was more than one or two of my honourable friends who were a part of feeding the frenzy that I saw and the activity that I saw take place that afternoon of November 28.

I want to refer to my honourable friend the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) whom I believe to be a very caring and considerate person, and I have had lots of activity with him. When I saw the way he behaved—and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know he was not the leader of the gang or the leader of the mob because I know him better than that, but the state of frenzy that he was in when I looked into his eyes, I almost believed he was demon possessed as he tore across the floor of the Legislature literally chasing the Speaker of the Assembly with his face all red in a fit of rage. I thought to myself, this is not the member for Burrows that I know. Obviously, somebody has placed that frenzy, that curse, that fear in my honourable friend, and I honestly felt very sorry for the member for Burrows. I was really glad to see that when he ran into a barricade at the door, he sort of shook his head and looked like he came out of the trance, and I honestly believe that he was embarrassed for his actions and his activities on that day.

What I saw in this House was something that I have never seen before not only in this Legislature but outside of this Legislature in public life. I have never before seen a group of adults act in such a disrespectful and such an uncontrolled fashion as I saw in this Legislature. It reminded me somewhat of the schoolyard bully who has no self-confidence, no self-esteem, no idea on what to do and would like to pick on because they do not have the ability to generate for themselves any creative ideas, would like to pick on someone specific, and they did pick on a specific person, a woman who sits in the chair that you are sitting in right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

* (1430)

I have no problem whatsoever in accepting criticism and constructive criticism from the opposition. That is the role in the Legislature. I know from having sat in opposition for two years that it is an extremely frustrating position in which to sit because no matter what you do you know that ultimately the government of the day is going to make the final decisions on what

laws are passed and what policy will be implemented. I only had to sit there for two years, and I was extremely frustrated. I know how my honourable friends in opposition must be feeling after nine years of that kind of frustration, but I honestly believe that they thought they were government and that ultimately, because they opposed a piece of legislation, they would have the decision-making power to kill that legislation. That is not reality. It has never been reality in the parliamentary process, and the people of Manitoba did not elect the radicals across the way that behaved in that unruly manner last fall to government. They are in the opposition, and it is time that they came to understand in opposition that, yes, they can oppose, they can constructively criticize, and I do not mind accepting responsibility for my actions or criticism for our policy direction or legislation that we bring into this Legislature. That is fair ball and that is fair process.

But what I saw here last November, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the continuation of that into the beginning of this session is something that I would never want to hold any pride in, in saying that I am an elected member of the Legislature because I do not believe that I have ever seen a collective group of individuals act in such an unbecoming way. It is not an example that I would like to set for my children, and, God knows, I think a lot of us in this House have children. We want to be positive role models. We want to instill in them a sense of right and wrong, and to see grown adults act in a manner in a moblike way like we saw across the way last November was very unbecoming. I will not and would never condone that kind of activity, and I would have been extremely embarrassed if my children had seen the way grown adults presented themselves last November 28.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have seen an official opposition party who has brought forward a plan of action against gangs, and I wonder if one of the points in their plan would be to invite gang members into the Legislature last November 28 to show what positive role models they would be in trying to eliminate gang activity. It was a shameful sight, and I really would love to be able to disassociate myself from any of the activity that was seen last November. [interjection]

I have to say that I listened very intently to members of the opposition as they spoke yesterday, and I

certainly would appreciate that kind of consideration from those members opposite as I speak because there were many things. I know there are many things I am saying today that my honourable friends may not agree with or may not like, as there were many things said yesterday that I may not have agreed with or I may not have liked, but I sat and listened anyway. The honourable member for Wellington has to be one of the worst because I have to indicate that the catcalls and the language that she used in addressing the Speaker in November of last year were shameful. They are not words that are even in my vocabulary, and she should be ashamed.

Point of Order

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Wellington, on a point of order.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I take personal umbrage at what the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) is stating about my comments in late November. I do not object to her being upset about them, but I do not think she has any business saying anything about what any member of this side of the House has said in November or yesterday when she said about the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) that she thought he was psychotic.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member did not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mrs. Mitchelson: I understand my honourable friend's frustration again, but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I indicate again that some of the language that she used towards the Speaker back in November was language that I would never speak or language that would not be in my vocabulary. She knows and she has to live—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I hate to interrupt the honourable minister, but at this time I am having difficulty hearing. Maybe it is my age that is creeping up on me, but could I ask honourable members who want to carry on their conversations to do so in the loge? We will all have an opportunity to

put our voices to the record. The honourable minister has the floor at this time.

The honourable minister, to carry on.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I do want to speak to the rules that were put in place last year. I have sat in this Legislature now for 11 years. Last year was the first time ever that we had the kind of spirit of co-operation that I thought could lead to reasonable debate, differences of opinion, opposition questions and criticism, but, ultimately, we would have a better set of rules that would govern this legislative process in a very significant and major way that would be positive for the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, under those rules there was a sense of closure imposed on both the government and the opposition. Government was under closure to bring in all of its legislative agenda, unprecedented, before the end of the spring session in exchange for a closure date to end the session, and that was an agreement that all members of this Legislature agreed to, and it was the first time ever that I saw the kind of co-operation that I saw throughout the last session up until the end.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we all know that the MTS legislation was introduced according to those rules before the end of the spring session. In fact, if we had had the old rules in place and were not operating under the new rules, our government House leader could have called that MTS bill every day in the fall, and the opposition would have either had to stand it which would admit that they did not want to debate it, or at least there would be a record on whether they stalled the bill and did not debate it, but we do not have that record because there was a co-operative approach between the government House leader and the opposition House leader, and our government House leader only called that bill when it was agreed to by the opposition.

* (1440)

If we had been operating under the old rules last session, we could have denied leave to let that bill stand, and the opposition would have had to debate it or vote on it, but in the spirit of co-operation that was there throughout all of the session, we did not impose

or did not place expectations on members of the opposition to vote on that bill because we believed their word when they said we would end the session on November 7. We can never again trust their word, and that is an unfortunate situation in this Legislature because I have lost all faith and all trust in members of the opposition to live up to their word.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my word is my bond, and I will indicate to you very clearly that we have a Speaker in this Legislature who has done a very reasonable job of providing support and criticism when necessary to all members of this Legislature, including members on this side of the House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, just before I close, I want to comment on a few things that were said by my honourable friend the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) yesterday and put on the record how disappointed I am, quite frankly, in his comment. I want to quote from Hansard from yesterday, and this is the member for Dauphin speaking: "I also want to say to the member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) is that what you did is you denied seniors in my town of Dauphin their ability through me as their representative to ask questions about cuts to Pharmacare, an issue that they are very concerned about."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we sat here for how many months in this Legislature, and never once did the member for Dauphin get up and ask a question on Pharmacare. He had the whole session and that whole opportunity, and then in the eleventh hour on November 28, he says he was going to stand up and defend his constituents on Pharmacare. That is balderdash, and he should feel ashamed for those comments in sending the message out to his constituents that he cared about their concerns.

Then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I cannot believe the next comments he made. It obviously was something that the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) felt very important to put on the record. Then he goes on to say that "if the member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) had allowed me the opportunity back in November, I could have maybe brought a constituent's concern forward who came into my office last week to complain to me." How on earth could he have asked a question in November on her behalf if she just came to him last

week and then complained and raised the issue with him? He really has not done a service to his constituents by not telling the truth in this Legislature in his comments yesterday.

I want to close by saying I am disappointed that the rules that were put in place last year did not work out, because I think it is to the detriment of all Manitobans and to all members of this Legislative Assembly. I do also want to indicate quite clearly that I have lost my faith and my trust in members of the official opposition. I do want to indicate that I know that the next few sessions—two or three or however many it may be that lead up to the next election—are probably not going to be the most pleasant. I think we have missed a great opportunity—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Could I ask the minister to retract the one statement she made about the truth? That would have been unparliamentary. [interjection] I thank the honourable minister to return to debate.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and absolutely I will withdraw any comments that might have been derogatory to any honourable friend in this Legislature.

I want to indicate that I think it is a sad day for Manitobans and that, in fact, we probably will never have another opportunity as long as we have the same players in the House to develop the landmark kind of co-operation that there could have been as a result of the rules and the co-operation that was displayed before November of last year.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): I would like to add a few words to the debate on this matter of privilege and accompanying motion. I take this matter as a very serious matter. It is not like many other debates that we have where we take different sides of an issue, argue about an idea, argue about a policy or debate a policy. No, we are talking about an individual's performance. This is very personal in nature, this motion, so I take it very seriously. I remember that some day all of us will no longer be MLAs. We will be people out on the street. Maybe we

will all be sharing the same ward in the same nursing home. Who knows? We are going to have to face each other, and I want to be able to face every member of this House. Maybe every member of this House may not agree with me, but I will be able to look them straight in the eye and have no shame for anything that I have done in this Chamber—and including the Speaker.

In the past, we in our caucus and myself have supported the Speaker on a number of occasions. The reason for that quite often is that the Speaker has made sure that we as a third party in this Chamber have received our rights as individual members on a number of occasions. We have appreciated that, and we have supported her on more than one occasion. Even in caucus at times I have supported the Speaker and had to argue quite strenuously for that position. But what did the Speaker do on that final day? I am not talking about the ruling that was brought down because I have already spoken on that and the way the session was brought down, but I have a deep concern at the failure of the Speaker to recognize members of this Chamber who sit on this side of the House.

Once again, as usual, I go back to my police background, and I watched the Speaker very closely. I watched the Speaker's body language. I watched her eye contact, and I saw the Speaker's shoulders and body turn to face the government House leader all during the process. I watched the Speaker's eyes fixed to the government House leader's eyes, and I do not think they were looks of love. I think that there was nonverbal communication between the Speaker and the government House leader to the point where members of the opposition, including my colleague from the constituency of Inkster and other members of the opposition, were not recognized, and that troubles me greatly. So to vote against this motion would be condoning those actions, and I cannot condone the Speaker ignoring the individual rights of individual members in this Chamber.

But the punishment given here for this person and the position of Speaker for making a mistake is like the capital punishment resignation. It is extreme and it falls short in being constructive, because what does this motion really accomplish by having the Speaker resign and having another Speaker appointed by the Premier?

What does that accomplish? Possibly it could be someone who would be very partisan. We have heard a number of member statements from the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed), and we know what a strong party member he is. Maybe he will be the next Speaker then, and what will we have accomplished? So really does this motion accomplish anything? I feel a little bit more comfortable about voting for this motion the fact that we are not naive enough to believe that this motion is going to pass. It does send a message to the Speaker that her actions on that day—at least by me—were not appreciated in not recognizing members on this side of the House.

As I said, this is a matter that I take very seriously, and we must have good order in this House because there is important business coming forward. We are looking towards one of the worst floods that this province will ever see. There are many issues that are coming forward that the people of Manitoba expect this Chamber to conduct the business of government. So the Speaker, whoever the Speaker is, needs the co-operation of this Chamber, needs the co-operation of all members. As I said, I separate the person from the position. Regardless of how you feel about the person or the mistakes they made, you have to respect the position of Speaker because other than that we are nothing more than anarchists, nothing more than a rabble. That is what makes us a parliamentary system is the rule of the Speaker. So the Speaker needs to receive a mandate from the other members of this Chamber.

* (1450)

So I am going to be presenting an amendment to the motion, and the amendment will allow for there to be an elected Speaker and will allow the present Speaker to vacate her position, to possibly receive a mandate from the members of this Chamber that, yes, maybe some of us will recognize that there was a mistake made, but as my colleague from Inkster said, we do not blame her as much as pressures put on to her by others. So can she be forgiven and carry on as Speaker so that we could conduct the business of this Chamber? So whether or not my amendment is in order, whether or not the vote is taken, we will continue to recognize the position of Speaker as a position that is due respect and is necessary to carry on the business of this Chamber with decorum.

I therefore move, seconded by the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux),

THAT the motion be amended by striking out the words “be removed from” and substituting the word “vacate”; and by adding to it after “immediately” the following words “and, that this House move immediately to the election of a new Speaker by secret ballot, following the current Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia regarding the election of a Speaker.”

Motion presented.

Mr. Kowalski: Is it in order?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The motion is in order.

An Honourable Member: Now he speaks to the motion, to the amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has spoken to the motion and to the amendment.

Mr. Kowalski: I have not spoken to the amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: You did mention the amendment within your previous debate.

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Mr. Deputy Speaker, do I speak on the amendment or on the main motion?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The amendment. The honourable member for Broadway speaking to the amendment at this time, but I am sure he will be referring to the main motion at the same time.

Mr. Santos: The amendment from the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) changed to the word “vacate,” substituting the word instead of “removed from.” The only difference is that it allows the Speaker to remove herself voluntarily from the office rather than be removed by the House.

Also the amendment said that this House immediately proceed to the election of the Speaker by secret ballot. I recognize that the member for The Maples (Mr.

Kowalski) wanted to make the situation a little bit more palatable for the Speaker so that the Speaker can save face. The member for The Maples I suppose would like to forgive the Speaker, although in conscience he said that he cannot allow this to happen. That is why he spoke on the main motion. I agree with the member for The Maples that all of us will not always be MLAs because we simply occupy certain offices institutionalized in our system as members of the Legislative Assembly.

Let me digress a little bit how this office emerged. In the nature of things, all human beings live in any social group or society or organization, large or small, and by human necessity, if we are to carry out our human affairs, we have to interact with one another. That human interaction in the course of time gets repeated again and again until there is a pattern in the system of human interaction and that pattern becomes recognizable, and we now label the pattern of human interaction as a social role that we play in society. In the course of time each of the social roles will evolve its own set of normative rules of behaviour. Such normative rules shape the social role more solidly than before until it becomes institutionalized in the ways and social structure of any social system. That is what we call the institutionalization of the structure of society. It is one of this institutionalization of social roles and human interactions that society had evolved, in old England, what we call the parliamentary system.

According to the great darling of the Conservative ideology, Edmund Burke, this structuralization of society is something like a mystery. It is the organic theory of the evolution of the social order. Let me quote from Edmund Burke. He said the state ought . . . to be looked upon with . . . reverence . . . It is a partnership in all science; a partnership in all art; a partnership in all perfection . . . between those who are living, those who are dead and those who are to be born . . . Each contract is but a clause in the great primeval contract of eternal society, linking the lower with the higher natures, connecting the visible with the invisible world, according to a fixed compact sanctioned by the inviolable oath which holds all physical and moral natures, each in their appointed place.

In other words, Edmund Burke is saying that our social ordering in our human society is a product of historical tradition of the collection of past knowledge and past wisdom that evolved so mysteriously until we reach the present stage of our social order. It is in this context that we find ourselves occupying certain social roles and formal positions in the structure of governance of a political society. Each role relates to other roles, and some roles are higher than other roles because of the hierarchial nature of the organizational setup, and our behaviour is shaped by the role that we occupy. If we happen to be in the government benches, we will be behaving in a manner quite different than when we were occupying the opposition benches because these are different kinds of roles. The nature of the arrangement of these institutionalized offices is that it is an adversarial system. We are supposed to debate every issue on the basis of perception, on the basis of values, on the basis of our understanding in quite an opposite adversarial way, not unlike the court system. In fact most of the institutions of modern society are set up that way in an adversarial and competitive way rather than the better system, I would say, in a co-operative way which we neglected. I do not know how it happened that way, but there is a philosopher, Reinhold Niebuhr, who said—

An Honourable Member: A theologian.

Mr. Santos: A theologian, even, according to the member for Burrows—that men, and I would add women, are born as moral beings and yet when they are born into society, the society itself is an immoral structuring of the system. In other words, some of us, although good by nature, become corrupted by the system in which we happen to be occupying, and that is the danger of occupying a position or role or office with power and privileges attached to it. We are so corruptible as human nature endowed us with that sometimes we become drunk with power and forget that every position that we hold is just temporary. It is simply a matter of public trust of stewardship, temporarily for the time being, so that we can carry out the decision of a system that inures to the benefit of the society in which we are apart.

The office of the Speaker, by the nature of things, has evolved with a tradition of impartiality. That tradition is the basis of the legitimacy of the authority of the

Speaker. Without impartiality, no human being has any right to sit in the chair which had been evolved, as I have said, historically throughout the ages by the collective wisdom of the past according to the darling of conservative philosopher, Edmund Burke. It should not be taken lightly because the source of the authority is the collective wisdom of all of history in the past, connecting the living with the dead according to Edmund Burke. Why should anyone have any right to breach that kind of set of expectations unless, of course, it is perceived to be of immediate benefit to some interest, imagined or real, other than the interests of the entire society?

That is why some of us, when we occupy positions of authority or positions of power and positions of influence, sometimes we forget, and we forget what we are there for, and we become politicians in the unsavoury terminology that the public understood rather than through a statesperson acting in the best interest of all. The difference is that while a politician would like to distort the facts, a statesperson will present and face the facts as they are. A politician thinks of the next election, but a statesperson thinks of the welfare of the next generation. The politician look to the success of his political party, but a statesperson looks for the success of his country. The politician oftentimes not knowing where to go is satisfied with just drifting along rather than provide the steer and the guidance that leadership needed to be implemented for the proper direction of society. While a politician pursues some form of limited or constricted self-interest or group interest of his own, a statesperson pursues the interests of everyone, forgetting sometimes his own narrow interests.

The choice is in our hands. Which one shall we believe? How shall history judge us? It all depends on our choice. We are endowed by nature with a choice when we are born. We were born free according to Jean Jacques Rousseau, but because we are in society we are chained everywhere by all the rules that we find ourselves in. All I am saying is that it is to our benefit that we should behave ourselves according to the rule that is implanted in our nature and be recognizant of the fact that we are acting for the benefit and interests of everyone, not only of ourselves, not only of our group, but of everyone in society. That is the high calling in

which we are called in our role as MLA in this Chamber. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to add a few comments on the motion before us and the amendment, indicate to you and to the House that neither the motion nor the amendment is deserving of support and will not receive any from me.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, honourable members in this Chamber, both sides of this Chamber from time to time do acknowledge my status as the dean of the House as having been the longest serving member in the House, and I accept that acknowledgment with due humility. I take it as a matter of privilege. However, my tenure of service does not make me a rules expert, and I have never presented myself in this Chamber as a rules expert. The fact that I was privileged to be a House leader for my party for a short period of time also did not make me a rules expert, but over those past 30, going on to 31 years that I have watched the actions of this Chamber, it has made me at least a relatively knowledgeable observer, if you like, of how we have conducted ourselves in this Chamber.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to simply cite the very simple premise based on personal experience that I had working under the provisional rules and one that the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) would be well aware of and can attest to the accuracy of what I am going to put on the record.

I want to acknowledge the tremendous effort that my former House leader, other members, the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), the member from the Liberal Party, that worked together for five years to bring to this Chamber—the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale)—a set of provisional rules that, I remind you and everybody, were accepted without a dissenting vote, without a dissenting vote by all 57 members in this Chamber.

* (1510)

It was not the government of the day using its majority to impose these provisional rules on everybody. We all accepted the labour of five years on

behalf of some of our members on all sides of the House to try something a little different, to try to conduct our affairs in a different way.

I can appreciate that all of us are well aware of the tradition that we do not talk about what goes on in our individual caucuses, but I am going to do that anyway because I do not always play by the rules. I know and it was alluded to that the Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer), the member for Thompson in the discussions with our House leaders, would say, gee, that is going to be a tough sell in my caucus. I will never get that approved. I will never get that sold in my caucus. I can tell you that when the member for Emerson or the member of the former House leader brought proposals as these discussions progressed the same thing occurred in our caucus. I for one took objection to some of the provisions that were being put into those new provisional rules.

The particular one that I want to cite is the unprecedented restriction that prevented me as a minister from introducing legislation in this House unless I got the permission from the opposition. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is unheard of. There is no parliament in the country, nobody in the parliamentary system works that way. I said that to my House leader when he said, well, this is a provision that the opposition is insisting on, that we can only introduce legislation in the spring session, that we would not introduce any legislation at all in the fall session unless we had the permission of the opposition.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, having been minister of different portfolios and different administrations, that is a very serious restriction. I take a different oath as an executive councillor than do all of us as MLAs. I take an oath that I will do my very best for the agricultural industry that I happen to represent in Executive Council. I have to make a judgment call from time to time whether or not a specific demand out there requires me to bring legislation into this Chamber. But I was committing myself under these new rules that I could not do that unless I had the permission of my opposition members opposite.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, precisely that happened to me last year in working under the provisional rules. The member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) will be well

aware that late in the day in August after the spring session had adjourned and I had under the new provisional rules no opportunity for introducing new legislation, the 1,200-odd dairy farmers came to me and said they needed a relatively minor amendment to The Natural Products and Marketing Act that was extremely important to the 1,200 dairy farmers of Manitoba. It meant upwards to close to \$2 million of pooling money that would come to the dairy farmers.

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I played by the rules. I did not even introduce that to my caucus. I said the only way that can be dealt with under the new provisional rules is if my opposition agrees to it. I referred the dairy farmers' representatives to meet with my Agriculture critic, the member for Swan River, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer), likewise with the members of the Liberal Party. They did that. Then the members of the opposition informed my House leader that there is an important little piece of agricultural legislation that needs to be passed. My House leader asked me, Harry, you never told me that you had another act to pass; I would not even approve that.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

Well, under those circumstances, that legislation was passed. The dairy farmers got what they were looking for, and, Madam Speaker, it was a learning experience for me as well. There is nothing wrong with that. If it was worthwhile legislation, if it was legislation that won the approval of all members of this House, we are masters of this House, we passed that legislation, and the dairy farmers appreciated that.

Madam Speaker, just a little sidebar on that. Although I am the Minister of Agriculture, I am also a politician. I would also like to think that from time to time when I acknowledge and do something for a group of citizens, in this case it is dairy farmers, I would like to take a fair measure of the credit for seeing the need for it and introducing it and doing it. I was robbed of that by our new rules. The dairy farmers know full well that it took the co-operation of the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), it took the co-operation of all opposition members in this House for me to be able to pass that, and, again, there is nothing wrong with that. It was sound, it was good legislation, beneficial to the parties that were seeking it. Although my ego suffered

a little bit because I could not stand up in front of the 1,200 dairy farmers and say, I got you this legislation—as we politicians sometimes like to do—but I had to share that reward. I did not mind doing that with honourable members opposite.

I cite this only because, Madam Speaker, that was in parliamentary tradition a tremendous giving up on the part of government, the right to introduce legislation. It assured members opposite, because I have spent 14 years in opposition, that it would not occur what all too often occurred, that governments would in the closing days of a session introduce important and controversial legislation that needed time. That is what you accomplished as opposition to the drafting or the formulation of our provisional rules.

Now, what did the opposition give up? The opposition gave up an equally unprecedented measure in my opinion. It is unheard of, quite frankly, that an opposition will agree under the British parliamentary system to ensure that all matters that the government brought before their Legislative Assembly will be dealt with on a prescribed and fixed date. That was a very big giving up on the part of any opposition, and I think the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) acknowledged that that was going to be a hard sell in his caucus, but, Madam Speaker, they did agree to it. We all agreed to it. We brought the provisional rules into this Chamber and, as I said earlier, approved unanimously without a dissenting voice, without a dissenting voice.

So what is at issue here is that the government played and abided by the rules. The opposition chose not to, and it is unfair—well, I better not because that would date me too far, and I have to be careful about my two colleagues here sitting in front of me. I was going to say it is unchivalrous to lay that at your feet, Madam Speaker, in the manner in which they are when you were doing what all Speakers have been bound to do, to live up to the rules of any Legislative Assembly, any parliament that from time to time honours them with their position of trust and stewardship, that you conduct the affairs of this Chamber according to the rules as we determine them from time to time, as we amend them from time to time, as we change them from time to time, and that is all you did.

So, Madam Speaker, I want to assure you of my continued confidence in your stewardship of this

House, and I will be voting against both the main motion and the amendment.

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to the amendment which would allow the Speaker to resign and follow her resignation immediately by the election of a Speaker, an election to be by secret ballot.

I certainly support this amendment. In fact, it almost mirrors the suggestion made yesterday by the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) who urged you, Madam Speaker, to do the honourable thing and resign your position with the full knowledge that you did not enjoy support from this side of the House.

As far as the Speaker being elected, my side of the House has been demanding for some time that we have an elected Speaker. We would like to follow the five provinces and the federal Parliament which have an elected Speaker, so we do urge the Speaker to resign. We urge her to resign as soon as possible and to resign so that the process outlined by the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) in his amendment could take place. We also think it is important to recognize that the current Speaker's position is untenable, and therefore she should not be a candidate for Speaker when the Speaker is elected.

* (1520)

As I rise today, Madam Speaker, it is with a great deal of sadness and with a great deal of anger, but most of all it is with a great deal of anxiety as I remember November 28, 1996, and wonder when that usurpation of democratic principles and the democratic rights of the members of this Legislature could come about again.

We have heard from both sides of the House on this matter. I just wanted to make some response to some of the comments. I know that my colleagues have reminded me of the sense of humiliation and the sense of impotence I felt when the Speaker turned off my microphone, turned off the microphones of all my colleagues and failed to even look at this side of the House.

On the other side, the member for Riel (Mr. Newman), I would like to suggest to the member for Riel and assure him that the contentious issues in this House are not about etiquette or about manners. I distinguish one from the other, although I am not sure that he did. I want to assure the member for Riel that the workings of this House should not be viewed as a game, that the debates and the questions and the issues discussed in this House are not a game. It is not a sport. That whole metaphor is inappropriate at the very least and, in fact, insulting to some.

I would like to assure the member for Riel, as the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) did yesterday, that this House is not about the expeditious passage of legislation. We are not a corporate board. I think the member for Riel sees us as a cross between Conrad Black and Emily Post, and it is not a role that I or members of this side of the House aspire to.

I want to assure the member for Riel that the issues at stake in this House are issues about democratic proceedings and particularly about the usurpation of democratic rights. Last night we heard from the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of the Province of Manitoba, certainly a Premier in high dudgeon and by his own admission in bad temper. The Premier of this House talked about rebellious, young Turks and the rebellious, young Turks elected in the last election, and I for one, Madam Speaker, do not know whether to be insulted or complimented since I apparently must be one of those rebellious, young Turks, having been elected in the last election. I suppose 50 might be young on that side of the House, but I do not think it is here.

But it is a jaunty epithet and I would not mind wearing it if it were not for the fact that the Premier also indicated that in this garden of New Democrats who would otherwise be supportive of the Premier, the workings of this House and all Tory decisions, who would otherwise be supportive if it were not for a certain couple of snakes. Of course, the Premier's analysis is totally wrong, and I think I prefer the rebellious, young Turks, Madam Speaker, except the rebellious, young Turks were not those elected in the last election. Indeed, every member of this side of the House is a rebellious, young Turk, and our rebellion is against the usurpation of democratic proceedings in this House and against the creation of the underclass that

the other side of the House seems to be practising and the creation of more and more poor families in the province of Manitoba.

So yes, we are rebellious, but we are united in our rebellion, and we see our enemy very clearly across the Legislature.

The government House leader (Mr. McCrae) also spoke yesterday. He spoke about MTS. The member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) spoke yesterday, too. He first conflated catatonia with hysteria and by what I suppose one might call a Radcliffian jeté jumped into biblical criticism and there conflated Sodom and Gomorrah, Saul and Lot. You know, I have great admiration for his taste in literature. I enjoy reading the Bible and find it inspirational, but his literary and biblical criticism is weighed in the balance and found wanting.

I hear that the former Minister of Natural Resources had some interesting things to say today, but I suppose we should let those go, because I am not quite sure about all the details.

Now, I heard today from the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson), who also, I suppose, is part of what one might call the conspiracy theory, and that was very interesting, a little dramatic nonetheless.

Madam Speaker, since the member for River Heights was allowed to allude to the Bible, I would like to allude to a Greek myth, the tale of Philomela and Tereus. Philomela was a beautiful young woman, as they all seem to be in Greek myths, and Tereus was a king who lusted after her, and he raped her and then ripped out her tongue, but Philomela was very clever and she embroidered the story in her needlework, showed it to her sister, and the two of them killed Tereus.

Myths are stories that have truth, and there are many tellings of myth, and today I want to tell the story one more time, because what the story suggests is, there is a violence behind violence, and that is what I think happened in this Legislature on November 28.

First of all, Madam Speaker, the government in concert with you eschewed democratic principles in

favour of a kind of cowardly closure. The second act of violence was to shut off the microphones when it is the Speaker's duty to be the servant of both sides of the House.

If I can return to the myth for a minute, the story of the myth is the story of silencing. What you did in the House that day, Madam Speaker, was to silence this side of the House. In silencing this side of the House for the personal is most certainly political. What you did was silence the voices of all our constituents.

I felt this particularly, Madam Speaker, because a great number of my constituents are immigrant people, refugee families, people from El Salvador, from Chile, from Cambodia, who have suffered silencing in some very nasty and ugly ways and who have come to this province because they believed in the possibility of a better life here, because they believed that they would find a democratic province in moving to Manitoba. I do not really want to demean their sufferings by comparing Manitoba to some of their countries of origin, but it is true that on November 28 in this House we became, temporarily at least, a one-party state, and I wonder when we are going to become a one-party state again.

Madam Speaker, my colleague from Dauphin has alluded to our experiences in Halifax together so I will not protract them, but I think you might remember the talk entitled Democracy or Dictatorship when Paul MacEwen, the then Speaker of the Assembly in Nova Scotia, was taken to task. I remember your passionate declarations, your determination, your assurances to the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) and myself, to anyone who wanted to listen, how you would not let that happen in the Legislature of Manitoba.

* (1530)

Subsequently to that event, in my caucus, I frequently defended you, and I was proud to defend you because I believed in you, and when you shut this House down on November 28, I felt a deep sense of personal betrayal and continue to feel that. Madam Speaker, the Speaker in Ontario has recently set an example, an example that I wished you had followed on November 28. The Speaker in Ontario had the moral gumption to stand up with certain MLAs, to vote with these MLAs

and with six backbenchers in order to pass a private members' resolution which would stop the closure of hospitals in Ontario.

This Speaker in Ontario stood up to his government and stood up for the people in Ontario, and you, Madam Speaker, did not have the moral gumption on November 28 to even stand up for the people whom it is your solemn duty to serve. Therefore, I hope you take the advice given yesterday by the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) and immediately submit your resignation so that we may proceed to elect a Speaker by secret ballot.

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): I, too, have mixed emotions about standing and speaking to this issue that we have before us. I, too, have been here for only seven years compared to my honourable colleague from Lakeside. It is very small in comparison to the amount of experience that this honourable member has, so I, too, will not try to make any interpretation of the rules because I feel that there are other people in this House that are probably more capable of doing that and I will leave that to them.

As a member that has only been here for seven years, although I do not hold myself out as an authority on the rules, Madam Speaker, I do hold myself out as some authority when it comes to dealing in a business manner and holding myself out in terms of sound judgment and common sense. If I was going to speak briefly to this motion and this amendment, I think that one might say that let us get on with life, let us try and find some maturity here as adults and as elected members of this Legislature and really get on with life, get on with the issues. I think this is really a serious waste of time on the part of this Chamber with these motions, and I think the people of Manitoba are the losers for this.

In saying that, I think that I do want to make some comments with regard to what has taken place over the last few months. It takes us back to the rules and my interpretation of what I saw as far as the rules were concerned in the introduction of the legislation. I, too, am sorry, as many members in here regret, that we cannot follow through with the rules that were agreed, were worked on for five years and then lost because of the sorriness or the inadequacies of certain members of this Chamber that could not meet their requirements

and meet the standards as far as their electorate was concerned in the eyes of their own.

I think it has to be said that, on the 28th of November last, I, too, was very disappointed and had some embarrassment in terms of what I saw, and I guess I was probably brought into that same fold. Although I listened and I observed what some of the members across the way were carrying out—and the honourable member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) is of the same view and probably saw the same things that I did, but maybe was not as directly involved in some of the things that did go on that day. I, too, was a victim, and the physical abuse, and the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale)—I mean, I could hardly believe that a man with his stature and his background and his upbringing, a member of the clergy, would stoop to the level that he did and tear across this Chamber in a fit of anger. Tell me, Madam Speaker, is that a man that we would consider as a man of maturity, a man that should be an honourable member in this House, that demonstrated to all Manitobans what his mission was? I lost a great deal of respect for that individual as a result of that.

To me, that was a long way from home in terms of what we are to be doing here as honourable members of this Legislature in representing and having the privilege of representing the people of Manitoba. That is the honour. The abuse that is placed in this House on you as an honourable member trying to carry out your faithful service as a member and the Speaker of this House, to me, as an innocent observer, and I have watched the goings on with considerable interest, this is merely a smoke screen, because they do not appear to have an agenda on any issues over there.

We have a throne speech that was presented yesterday, and they took the opportunity to raise their issues because the throne speech was not their agenda. They are not serving the people of Manitoba. They are not concerned about serving the people of Manitoba, and that has been demonstrated. It was demonstrated yesterday, and it was demonstrated on the 28th of November, 1996, by the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) who gives the Nazi salute. Now, are those the actions of an honourable member?

The public, when they look at that, they look at this Chamber with 57 members and the actions of one member is a reflection on every member in this House. That is the way I interpret it. So I am extremely disappointed when I am tarred with that same brush, because I thought I learned better than that when I left junior high or high school. Is that the message we want to give to our children? I was in school the last couple of weeks reading to children, Grade 5, and Grades 2 and 3. I was worried when I went into that classroom that that issue was going to be raised because I would have to account for something that I had a part in. What they saw, what they read in the papers, and what they were told were not the actions of this member, nor would they ever be the actions of this member.

* (1540)

They talk about being elected, Madam Speaker—elected Speaker of the House. Prior to 1988, I know that members who sat in this House long before I did and long before 1988 had the frustrations of the Speaker of the day. We have heard stories about the Speakers. But did they give this House the Nazi salute or race across the Chamber, knocking members down in their path? I do not think so because I would not be in this House today if I heard of any member that I was a part of, as far as this government was concerned, being part of an action like that. That, to me, is a complete embarrassment. I guess the only thing that we can say, the good thing about that, is that these people, these honourable members, are no longer members of their professions. They are not preaching from the pulpits, or they are not teaching our children in the schools. They are in this Chamber, so we can watch over them and we can account for their actions. I think that that is the only saving grace that I can provide to that, when we look at this and we try to analyze and interpret the actions.

On the 28th of November, we saw the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) and the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) standing in front of the Premier (Mr. Filmon)—a total embarrassment of this whole Chamber, not even giving consideration to the fact that every member has to be in their seat to be recognized. There was no consideration given to that. They have not even learned that. So, as honourable members, Madam Speaker, I would hope that we in this Chamber

can forget about what the issue is in terms of this smoke screen, in terms of addressing your ability to do your job as the Speaker of this House.

Madam Speaker, the motion that has been put forward by the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) and the amendment that was made by the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) I see as nothing more than smoke screens, and I am not about to support either one of those, as my honourable colleague from Lakeside. I join all the members here who have spoken against that motion. I, too, will be voting against both the amendment and the motion, and I will give my support to you, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Quite often when we stand to rise to speak a debate, we say it is a pleasure to take part in this debate. However, today I am also one of those people who express sadness about having to reflect on the actions of the Chair because it is a very unusual thing to be doing, and it is not something that I do easily or that we do easily.

As you know, I have gone to three seminars or conferences of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. I cannot remember whether you were at the one in, I think it was October 1990, but I do recall going to Ottawa and attending a regional seminar in Winnipeg at which you were the hostess, and I have always gotten along well with you on a personal basis. So I do not take any pleasure at all in having to say some of the things that I am saying about your role. I hope that I can separate you as a person from some of your rulings and that you will do the same thing.

It seems to me that government members are basically making two arguments, one having to do with an agreement on the rules, particularly the memorandum of understanding, and I will talk about that, and also about the government House leader seeking a ruling from the Chair, and implying that you as Speaker had no choice as to what kind of ruling you made. I will show that the government did have options and that you as Speaker had options, that you had a choice and you could have made a different ruling than you made.

I would like to begin by talking about the purpose of parliament. I found a very interesting article in a recent

issue of *The Parliamentarian*, the Journal of the Parliaments of the Commonwealth for October 1996. It is an article called "Rights and Liberties, The Role of Parliament." It is by Mr. N.M. Chibesakunda in Lusaka. He begins by talking about the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights which proclaimed the right of all persons to life, liberty and security of person, to freedom from arbitrary arrest, the freedom of movement and residence, of speech and expression, assembly and worship and to other legal rights commonly protected by democratic constitutions. The declaration also proclaims the rights of people to political, economic, social and cultural rights as well, such as the right to work, the right to earn equal pay for equal work and the right to education.

In the second column, he talks about the role of parliament and says, and I quote: "The role of Parliament in this respect is two-fold: Parliaments must secure fundamental rights and freedoms, as well as the responsibilities of the individual, by passing laws which are in line with the international covenants, and they must see that these rights are respected by the government administration through the proper parliamentary censure."

I believe that one of our fundamental rights as a society which is guaranteed under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in Canada is freedom of speech. I disagree with the member for Riel (Mr. Newman) who talked about decorum in the Legislature and quite clearly said that manners and decorum are more important than freedom of speech. Well, I cannot think of anything frankly that is more important than freedom of speech and what signifies what this Legislature is all about than freedom of speech. After all, we are supposed to have an uninhibited forum here when it comes to freedom of speech.

There are very few restraints on our freedom of speech. For example, we can say things in this Chamber that we cannot say in public. I remember once when I was Housing critic accusing the Minister of Housing of something, and he said step outside and say that—a former Minister of Housing who is no longer here. I did not go outside the Chamber and repeat what I said, because I might have been sued for liable or slander. So that is one of the privileges that we enjoy in the House is freedom of speech because we are, as I

understand it, immune from lawsuits because of what we say in the Chamber. We are an exception. We are the only 57 people in Manitoba that claim that right.

So I think that this place is fundamentally about freedom of speech and about representing our constituents. One of the things that upset us so much last November was that even though we are elected by our constituents to come here and represent them and to speak on their behalf because they cannot speak here, we were not allowed to speak. I think that is one of the fundamental problems and disagreements that we have in this debate.

I have done some reading and research about a continuing Speaker or an elected Speaker. I found some very interesting things. In fact, I inherited a file from a previous NDP government House leader that contained a variety of materials including Hansard from February 3, 1967, in which Mr. Campbell, a former Premier of Manitoba, D.L. Campbell, had proposed a resolution and spoke on the resolution calling for a continuing Speaker and gave a very good speech.

I would like to briefly quote one paragraph in which he talks about one of his whereases. He says "whereas it is essential that the Speaker, in the discharge of the duties of that high office, should be completely independent, nonpartisan and impartial," that there was a certain redundancy or repetition in using those terms. I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that all of them are necessary and that each has a meaning that is important here. I would define 'independence' in this connection as free, not subject to control by others; I define 'non-partisan' as not adhering to a Party or group or faction, and I would define 'impartial' as not favouring one more than another, or treating all alike. I think that most people would agree with those definitions and that they are proper and necessary qualifications for the high office of Speaker."

* (1550)

I could read much more from this speech by D.L. Campbell. He goes into some of the history of the role of Speakers. We are reminded of that history every time a new Speaker is appointed by the government when the Speaker is taken to the Chair by the Premier and the Speaker feigns that he or she does not want to

take the Chair. This tradition goes back a number of centuries to the time when Speakers, because they stood up for the rights of the House of Commons, paid a very dear price for that and several of them were beheaded. So this tradition continues to this day.

At one time the Speaker was the spokesperson for the Commons to the King, and there were times when the King controlled the Speaker and tried to get the King's point of view put across to the Commons. But over a number of decades and even centuries, the Speaker became more and more independent from the Crown, from the King or Queen of the day.

I believe, and we believe, that tradition should continue today so that the Speaker is independent of government. There are many, many examples of Speakers, some of whom were independent and some of whom were less so.

Now, I empathize with the position of the Chair. Perhaps someday she will write a book and tell her side of the story, and maybe because she cannot participate in this debate and cannot speak through the media and tell us why she made the decision that she did, maybe someday she will record that for us and posterity, but that is the position, that is the same feeling that we had, so I hope that you can empathize with us. Our microphones were not turned on, our House leader was not recognized to speak, our future Premier, our Leader, was not recognized to speak, our member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) was not recognized to speak. That is why we were so indignant. That is why we were so upset. That is why we lost our cool on November 27.

Members opposite keep talking about November 28. Everybody kept decorum on this side on the last day except me, and I have apologized on the record in the Free Press for my actions. A number of members have commented on it, so I might as well rebut some of the things that they said and point out that I was not threatening the personal safety of the Speaker. I was leaving the Chamber to see where she was going because I assumed that she might have been going to the Conservative caucus room, and I wanted to see if that is where she was going. It was a foolish action on my part because, first of all, she probably was not. Secondly, I did not get there, because two members blocked my way. I think they should apply for the

position of Sergeant-at-Arms. It was like running into a brick wall when I ran into the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) and the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson) and, also, the Speaker did not need to go to the Conservative caucus room. There are telephones. There are other ways of communicating, and it was not really up to me to do that kind of homework.

But we believed and I think the reason the Free Press used that incident was because we believed that there was collusion between the Speaker and the government. That is a very serious accusation. The media believed that that was true. Many people who were watching the debate, many people who were in the public gallery thought that that was true because of the way the government House leader and the Speaker appeared to be co-operating and colluding in the House.

Now, to continue with some of my comments about the role of the Speaker, I have some very interesting correspondence between Speaker Walding and the government. Speaker Walding, in his remarks on Tuesday, the 30th of April, 1985, talked about the role of the Speaker, very interesting observations. This is what Speaker Walding said in a Speaker's Statement, and I quote: "The more a Speaker strives for a position of impartiality, the more he becomes separated from the constituency and the party which endorsed him in the previous election. There is an inherent unfairness in the Legislature which places one of its members, and one only, in the position of being expected to support the initiatives of the Government of the Day while at the same time being required to act with fairness and impartiality."

So this is a position that all Speakers are in. The government of the day wants the Speaker to do their will. The Speaker has an historic obligation and a moral obligation in keeping with their role of impartiality to not do what the government of the day wants but to represent all members and to protect the rights of all members, including the minority or minorities in the Legislature, and that is a very important role and a very difficult one. Since it is ancient history now, I think we can say on the record that the Pawley government was quite unhappy with Speaker Walding because he stood up to the government and allowed the Conservatives to ring the

bells for three weeks. Now, if there was ever an abuse of parliamentary democracy, that was it, ringing the bells for three weeks and not even coming in and talking.

I have a real problem with almost everything that the government members are saying, because they know that if they were in opposition, they would have been doing the same things that we were doing. They would have been using the rules to their full advantage to try and stop the legislation that they disagreed with, and we used the rules.

I am going to have to go to my conclusion very quickly here and point out that this memorandum of understanding that all of the government members are referring to includes things that did not make it into the provisional rule book, and these were things that we had consensus on in caucus, but we went to the formal Rules committee, and one of our members objected to the way that private members' bills and resolutions would be chosen and, as a result, it was dropped at the formal Rules committee. So, even though it is in the memorandum of understanding, it is not in the provisional rules, and you can find that in Hansard for March 12, page 42, in the remarks of the government House leader. So we were using all the rules.

The government had a number of choices of ways that they could get their legislation through that the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) has referred to, and they chose not to use any of them. I am a little reluctant to use things that are normally off the record, but you know we had a very co-operative former government House leader. We had a lot of respect for him because he was able to make deals and he was a co-operative individual to work with. As deputy House leader, I worked with him quite a bit. I have the list of things that he asked for on what I believe was November 7, and he asked for leave for third reading on all outstanding bills except Bill 67. Why could he not ask for leave for Bill 67? Because it was still in the committee. There are five items on the list of things that he asked for. He got every single one of them except Bill 67. We could not give him Bill 67 because it was in the committee, still being amended.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I support the amendment of the member for The Maples (Mr.

Kowalski), and I suspect that after we have a caucus meeting or consultation that our caucus will support the amendment of the member for The Maples because we were the ones that introduced a private member's bill to have an elected Speaker. I believe that an elected Speaker will have a number of advantages. First of all, an elected Speaker would enjoy the support of a majority of members not just on the government side but a majority on all sides, and the elected Speaker would be much more independent of government and therefore could be more impartial.

My final remark has to do with the provisional rules. You know when we devised them and we brought them in for a one-session trial, we said that after that session was over, we would review them and we would keep the things that were good and we would revise the things that were a problem. I think all of us thought that it was good not to be sitting here on Monday nights, not to be sitting here on Fridays and be in our constituency instead, to have a spring session, to have a fall session, to be able to plan. It was much better for the public. We could send out bills for people so they could study them and make presentations. Many, many more people came before committees than in the past because people found out about bills and their implications and all of those were good things. Why does the government want to throw the baby out with the bathwater? Why are we throwing out all the rules when only one of them was problematic? I would encourage the government to have an informal Rules committee meet again and consider the provisional rules and see what works that we can keep and what did not work we will revise.

I encourage all honourable members to support the amendment and the resolution to have an elected Speaker, which I believe will be a great improvement to the way this House operates. Thank you.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Madam Speaker, I am going to speak. Thank you for the opportunity. Seeing as you are such a great Speaker and allow us all the opportunity to speak, I thank you very much.

The proposal, Madam Speaker, that was presented yesterday by the Leader of the opposition party (Mr.

Doer), quite frankly, I guess one would expect it, but for the people that were here for what I would say is a long-honoured tradition of the opening of the Legislature, for the actions, for the political maneuvering of the opposition, I do not think did a whole lot for—

* (1600)

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for The Maples, on a point of order?

Mr. Kowalski: Yes, for the honourable Deputy Premier. I think the Speaker should call him to order that we are speaking to the amendment and not to the original motion and that his comments should be directed to the amendment and not the original motion.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for The Maples does have a point of order. The honourable minister should be speaking to the amendment.

* * *

Mr. Downey: Madam Speaker, I certainly appreciate being brought to order. I had not even got a chance to get into any part of my speech yet. I guess he is a man of great anticipation because I actually was going to compliment him as well on the comments that he made about the House, but I am speaking to the amendment.

I think the whole issue, the whole issue of what we saw yesterday was one which I think the people of Manitoba find amusing. I think they find that as it has been presented, amendment and the resolution, to have you step aside, because what did we see yesterday? You, Madam Speaker, allowed, you allowed setting aside a longstanding tradition in this Legislature of the process of introducing the throne speech and the opening of a legislative session.

A lot, Madam Speaker, in the British parliamentary system that we follow follows tradition, precedent and the whole business. So, yesterday, although the strict rule allowed for the introduction of a matter of

privilege, quite frankly it was not the norm for the opening of a legislative session. We normally do not have debate. I cannot remember and I do not know whether you can find anywhere where that kind of activity would take place, where you set aside the longstanding tradition.

Having done that, here is what the viewers would see yesterday who came to this legislative session to be guests of all the members here, to see what happened; you, Madam Speaker, allowing the members of the opposition full and open freedom of speech. Yes, here is what she was doing. The Speaker yesterday allowed all members of the opposition full and clear opportunity to have freedom of speech, not one restriction. Talk about contradiction of what really they are making their argument about.

What were you doing, Madam Speaker, last fall? What were you doing last fall? You, as many times as we have to say it and we will say it again, you were carrying out the rules, the rules that this Assembly all agreed to and signed unanimously. That is what you were doing. There is no question. The member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski), and I compliment him again, and I would hope that he supports you, because what did he say? He said that if a person's word is not good, then where are we at, and you go all the way back to all the information that was available that helped to make that decision.

I think it was the intent of all members of this Legislature to put a time frame on the closing of the session of which you carried out that activity as you were instructed to do. I think it is, quite frankly, unfair. I think it is irresponsible. I think it lacks the kind of honour that should be presented to you in this House. In fact, I think it was absolutely despicable and uncalled for, some of the actions of the members last year when we saw the hand waving, the fist shaking, and the whole business towards you, Madam Speaker, in manners of violence, really it was. That is the way I read it. It was right here in front of me.

I think there should not be a resolution and an amendment to have you step aside. I think the opposition party should have a resolution apologizing to you for the manner in which they carried out their activities. Equally, Madam Speaker, I think there

should be an apology to the Lieutenant Governor. When the Lieutenant Governor walks into this place to carry out the responsibilities that he is charged with under the Constitution of this country, to have the members of the opposition stand in a row, as if they were some kind of, what should we call them—well, I would call them less than honourable actions by people who are elected to represent their people, to stand here in this Assembly and responsibly represent their communities. I do not know where you would ever see it in this country other than from the New Democratic Party and in this Legislature—absolutely and totally irresponsible.

But what is the deep-down problem? It is not that they were denied the opportunity to speak. Goodness sakes, we know that the bill was introduced in lots of time. They could have debated it until the cows came home. The issue is that philosophically they were opposed to what we were doing, and they demonstrated that they would go to any lengths to stop that from taking place.

What is more troubling for the NDP, the opposition in this House, is that they make reference to the bell ringing, the constitutional change that when they were government the opposition were able to effectively stop them from proceeding. Not only were they defeated when they were in government and backed off, they have not been able to accomplish the same thing when they are in opposition, and the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) remembers that. He remembers the bells ringing in this place, the bells ringing for weeks on end.

Madam Speaker, I know that one former member of the New Democratic Party said that he would not have had any problem with that issue, because he would have stood in his place and he would have told the Speaker to turn off the bells because they were the governing party. There was no question in his mind what he would have told the Speaker to do, and he would have expected it to have been done. Whether it was right or whether it was wrong, there was a gap. There was not an ability for the Speaker of the day to pick up a rule and say, the bells shall stop ringing. That rule was not there. But that government member of the former governing party said he would not have had any hesitation but to give direction in the House, not skulking down the halls like Howard Pawley did to see

Mr. Walding and try and encourage him to do it in the dark of the evening. That is how that happened. No, he said he would have stood in the House and told the Speaker that he wanted the bells to stop.

So, Madam Speaker, we have a situation that it is deeply, deeply engrained in the NDP party, that they do not want to see what is in the best public interest as it relates to privatization. They have made their position clear, that if they were to ever get back into power, what did they say they would do? That they would reinvest or they would take over or they would confiscate or whatever you want to call it the Manitoba Telephone System so that they could have their desires lived up to. Nationalize, that is the word.

So, Madam Speaker, based on what the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) has said in support of the agreement that was in place, based on the fact that you, Madam Speaker, did the responsible thing in interpreting what this House wanted last fall, based on the actions of the New Democratic Party and how they conducted themselves both in your presence and before the Lieutenant Governor, I think that the resolution and the amendment should be withdrawn and they should replace it with an apology to you and the office of the Speaker. The member for wherever it is said, I said it already.

You know, I found in this House that the more times that you say something the more there is an opportunity for the members to hear and to listen. Well, I will say it again. I believe they should have a resolution apologizing to you and to this House and to the people of Manitoba.

So yesterday, Madam Speaker, you set aside, and I will conclude on this, you set aside long-standing tradition that has probably never been done in the House anywhere in the country, to allow the members of the New Democratic Party and the Liberal Party to have freedom of speech, and they spoke freely. They spoke so freely and so, I would call it, irresponsibly, but so much on a resolution that absolutely should not have been in this Chamber—[interjection] The member refers to losing the debate with Steve. I have never been afraid of the member for Thompson. He has never been a threat to anybody other than himself and his own

party. That is the only person that he has ever been a threat to, himself and his own party.

* (1610)

So I will conclude my remarks, Madam Speaker, by just saying I have full confidence in your ability to administrate this House fairly and equitably, and I quite frankly will conclude by saying—[interjection] Now, there it is, there is an admission from the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). There was a philosophical debate and the NDP lost. Those are his words. Those are his words. [interjection] Well, now he is motivating me to speak a little longer. You know, he tells us that 78 percent of the people were opposed—he further makes my argument that 78 percent of the people were opposed to our privatizing the Manitoba Telephone System. First of all, he cannot substantiate that. He can not substantiate that for one minute.

So they may have governed by polls. We govern in the interests of the people of Manitoba, and that is really what our job is. That is what our objective is, to govern in the best interests of the province of Manitoba. That is what we did with the telephone system. That is what we are doing with introducing the throne speech, to deal with the issues the people of Manitoba want to deal with, not the fact that they lost a philosophical debate and, quite frankly, cannot handle the fact that they lost the debate and they lost the issue. Quite frankly, it is a nice setup for them to lose the next election as well. Thank you very much for this opportunity.

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): I have listened to some of the comments made by different members of the government on this motion. It never fails to amaze me, the longer we are here, the more desperate, the more outlandish the spin becomes on this issue and on many other issues, but the spin on this issue coming from the Premier and the members opposite really takes it.

It was interesting yesterday. Obviously, there has been a message sent to the government. It is not business as usual, and unfortunately they had to miss or be late for some of their parties yesterday. It is ironic and symbolic that when we are debating something as fundamental as our right to speak here, they get more

upset about having to be late for some of their parties than dealing with the rights and privileges of members in the House. It has come to the point where this government seems to have total disrespect and contempt even for the rights of the opposition.

When I was listening to the new House leader for the government side, he completely missed the point when he went on to say that why do we not just get on with our work. Without realizing it, Madam Speaker, maybe he does realize it, but the point is that with the orchestrated events of last November 27 and 28, the point was that we were prevented from doing our work on this side of the House. Our job is to speak on behalf of those 58 percent of Manitobans that did not vote for this government, to bring that alternative point of view, that divergent point of view to this House. For two days we were prevented from doing that.

It is interesting when we listen to the spin coming from the other side of the House and from their arguments, if you can call them that, that they have refused to acknowledge even that we were not allowed to speak, and they focused on our decorum. Madam Speaker, when you did not recognize us and we lost our rights, were we supposed to sit here quietly?

It is interesting to think what would have happened if we had not objected in the way that we had, and if we did not, time after time, bring forward motions such as we are debating here today and bring forward points of privilege and points of order, what would have happened when this government decided to turn this House into a one-party House if we had just sat back without saying a word.

Here we are debating this motion when we would otherwise be debating this throne speech. It is obvious that it is not going to be business as usual, because we cannot conduct business as usual when we have this on-again, off-again democracy. It is interesting because yesterday when the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), got up on his point of privilege, I for just that moment, when you did not immediately recognize him, wondered if you would. It was real; it was not imaginary. For a split second, I was still wondering if he, the member for Concordia, was going to be recognized yesterday on his matter of privilege. I am telling you that that is not the way that

this House can operate, if we cannot be confident as members of the opposition that when we rise to speak on something as significant as a matter of privilege that we are going to be recognized. Can you have imagined it, Madam Speaker, if yesterday you had not recognized the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) when he rose on his matter of privilege? What would have happened? What would we have been able to do at that point? That is how it was on those two fateful days, now known as the two days without democracy in Manitoba, when this House was a one-party system.

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

It is interesting, Madam Speaker, that now again you are choosing to vacate the Chair, and I will have to continue making my address to the Deputy Speaker, because a lot of the comments that I want to make are specifically to be addressed to the Speaker, because my vantage point here in the second row in the end seat means I have very good contact, eye contact, and view of the Speaker. The Speaker also has very good view and the ability to make eye contact with me.

I wanted to talk about how this is not just about those two days in November but about a whole other collection of behaviour and events that led up to those two days in November. That was the culmination, I think, of the extent that the government has gone to politicize the Speaker's Chair in the Chamber here. I can imagine the kind of pressure that the First Minister of this province can exert. We have had articles in the paper recently about the way that power has been consolidated and is orchestrated in this government, and we have heard of a number of issues. The MTS issue, for example, that was decided without even having that resolution go to caucus, without even having that policy go to the board for MTS. When that is the way that this government exercises power and the way the First Minister exercises power, I guess it is just one more step for them to politicize the Chair of the Speaker.

No matter how much pressure was exerted from the cabinet or from the Premier to ignore the rules and the rule book, to ignore the Order Paper, to ignore the opposition, the decision ultimately rests with the Speaker. That decision ultimately was made by that

Speaker as an individual person, and we cannot forget that. That is why, as the opposition, we have to raise this matter of privilege and ask that the Speaker either do the honourable thing and resign so that we can have an elected Speaker or that the Premier would remove her. As others have said, I as well do not hold out much hope that the Premier will remove the Speaker, and I do think though that the Speaker on a matter like this should listen to what is being said. The fact that for the majority of these speeches the Speaker has not, and I find that rather disconcerting and also an indication of the fact that the Speaker does not want to feel any more pressure.

* (1620)

I want to talk a little bit about what led up to those days at the end of November the last session. I have already mentioned the fact that the position of my seat and the level that I am at when stand I can make fairly good eye contact with the Speaker, and I can tell you that the eye contact and body language can tell a lot about someone. The fact that the Speaker fairly often when this side of the House is addressing the Chair does not make eye contact speaks volumes for the kind of bias that has developed. It is one thing that some may say is a very small thing, but I think that it speaks volumes when on the other hand the members opposite are speaking, and they are rising on their matter of privilege or point of order or speaking to the matter of privilege, more often than not the Speaker will be looking at them. You can tell when someone looks at you that they are more likely to be listening. But from our side of the House it is very rare, particularly on those last days in the last session, that the Speaker would make eye contact with us. Even yesterday when the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) got up on his matter of privilege, when he was finally recognized, the Speaker did not make eye contact with the member for Concordia.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I hate to interrupt the honourable member, but could I have order, please. Could I ask the honourable members wanting to carry on their conversations to do so either in the loge or in the halls? It is not only for the member who is putting forward her statements, but at this time there is a microphone that is on and Hansard has got to interpret this for the next day. With all the chatter, it does make it rather difficult.

The honourable member, to continue.

Ms. Cerilli: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was just giving a few other examples of the evidence that the current Speaker has of treating each side of the House differently.

One of those is the lack of eye contact that is made by the Speaker and members on this side of the House. One of the other things is the way that this side of the House seems to get reprimanded when there is a disruption in the House, and the other side does not. Even if the disruption is often coming from that side of the House, the Speaker will turn and face this side of the House. When there is a reprimand being given by the Speaker, that is when there is eye contact. That is when the body language is there and leaning in towards the opposition side of the House, and there is a direction being given to bring the House to order. That is another way that this has been. There has been evidence that there is this confidence being lost on this side of the House for the Speaker to deal with the House fairly and to protect all of our rights.

This has been noticed on a number of occasions by members of the public present in the gallery, by the media, by those who watch Question Period on television. They can see the fact that when the House is being reprimanded, it is going to our side of the House more often than not, even if the disruption was caused on that side of the House.

One of the other things that has forced us to lose confidence with the Speaker—that is also perhaps a smaller thing when we compare it with what happened on November 28 and 27, but again from our point of view, when you see that there is this kind of unfairness and again the kind of tactics that are being used—and that is during Question Period being interrupted mid sentence when you are in the middle of asking questions that is a question that is one sentence, not only being interrupted, but then having the inane practice of having to wait for the Speaker to then say “will the honourable member put their question” even when you have stopped dead stop and you are waiting to complete your question. That does not occur with the ministers on the other side of the House. I do not know where the Speaker's timing system came from. I do not know if that is something that has ever been

done by any other Speaker. It certainly was not by the last Speaker in my experience in this House.

Again, it seems like another tactic to sort of put up barriers and limit the ability of the opposition to express ourselves freely. The answers, in particular in Question Period and speeches coming from the government side of the House, do not have the same kinds of limits and interruptions whether they are on topic, whether they are not on topic, whether there are personal attacks or whatever. Again, this is just one more small example when compared to what happened those last two days of the last session. But what I am trying to explain is that this all has accumulated to the situation we have now. I might suggest that if the events of November 27 and 28 had occurred without this other history, what I am not finished describing yet, with the Speaker and the opposition, things may have occurred after that somewhat differently.

But the stage was set, Mr. Deputy Speaker, from the outset when the Premier (Mr. Filmon) did not consult the opposition on the appointment of the current Speaker. Again, that was another long tradition that was overlooked or ignored, and I think that that was one more thing that set the stage for things to come.

There were other small things, as occurred yesterday when there were guests in the Speaker's Gallery who gave applause to a member from the government side of the House and the Speaker was silent. The Speaker even smiled. I did not see her smile, but the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) saw her smile. I do not know if the Speaker now can have her own cheering section in this House, but I know from past experience that if there are members in the gallery who applaud, particularly if they applaud something from the opposition's side, that they will be asked to leave or at least they will be silenced. They will be brought to order and they will be told that members of the gallery are not permitted to engage in debate or participate even through applause. Now, that was one other small example of how the practice in this House seems to be one way for the government side and the Speaker and another way for the opposition side.

Now, there have been a number of other issues that have been covered quite substantially by other members of the opposition, and I have a number of notes written

down here, but I am not going to get into a lot of detail about these, the issue of the ruling on racism that occurred in November '95, November 1. It was interesting that I attended a Parliamentary Association Conference with the Speaker soon after this occurred, and when this ruling that racism is no longer permitted to be used as a word to describe government policy was made and it was raised at that Parliamentary Association, I think that this Speaker in that forum with her peers was embarrassed.

That is what has happened in this House with this government and with this politicized Speaker, is now the truth is unparliamentary. Those are the conditions that are being forced upon us where we lose our freedom of speech, where we do not know from one day to the next if democracy is on or off and where issues like racism where we would speak the truth, especially coming from the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) from his own experience in his own community, is deemed to be unparliamentary.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is unacceptable. We cannot continue to operate and function in representing our constituents under this type of regime, and that is why I support the resolution and this softer amendment proposed by the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) that the Speaker would either resign or that she be removed and we immediately have an elected Speaker, so that we can once again have confidence in our ability to exercise our rights as members of this House.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

* (1630)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is the amendment by the honourable member for The Maples,

THAT the motion be amended by striking out the words "be removed from" and substituting the word "vacate"; and by adding to it after "immediately" the

following words “and, that this House move immediately to the election of a new speaker by secret ballot, following the current Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia regarding the election of a Speaker.”

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it. The amendment has been defeated.

Formal Vote

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Deputy Speaker, knowing that we do have support of both oppositions, we would call for Yeas and Nays.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Does the honourable member have the support of the opposition? Yes?

Yeas and Nays having been requested, call in the members.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The question before the House is the amendment moved by the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski)

THAT the motion be amended by striking out the words “be removed from” and substituting the word “vacate”; and by adding to it after “immediately” the following words “and, that this House move immediately to the election of a new Speaker by secret ballot, following the current Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia regarding the election of a Speaker.”

Division

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

Yeas

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

Nays

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

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Yeas 25, Nays 29.

Madam Speaker: The amendment is accordingly defeated.

Is the House ready for the question?

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, I will be very brief. I know there is other work that I want to be approved here today. But in regard to the original motion that was passed—I have been a very proud elected official in this Legislature. In the last two days of November 27, 28, I have said many a time since that time that I was ashamed to be in this Legislature, but I am proud to be back again here to represent the people of St. Boniface.

Madam Speaker, the fact that I have spoken to many constituents during the last three months since November 28, they have asked what had happened in the Legislature. I did not blame the Chair or the Speaker at that time, and I blamed the government and the official opposition in this Legislature for what went on. I was in the Legislature when all that kaffuffle went on and when there was another kaffuffle in the small chamber there, and I was ashamed to be in that, but this is all water under the bridge as far as I am concerned at this stage.

Politics are now at a turning point where public scrutiny is more demanding in terms of consultation, hope and process and integrity. People are calling for

reform of government and the way it operates. We had provisional rules; they have gone down the drain.

The opportunity to practise what we preach could not be a better timing. Why not start at the Manitoba Legislative Assembly when speaking about reforming the government and the way it operates by having the Speaker elected by all MLAs through a secret ballot? This will set the tone on many other different governmental areas that require more openness and fairness.

I understand the difficulties that you are having, because I can see all that you see from where I sit but completely upside down, because I have the NDP on my right and the Conservatives on my left. Demanding consistently the resignation of the present Speaker will not resolve the issue, for she does not have the authority nor the power to call for an elected Speaker. This is the responsibility of the present government; therefore, we should be careful not to have the wrong debate about an elected Speaker. While it is our democratic right to be in this agreement with a call made by a Speaker, it is also our duty as elected official to maintain decorum for the best interests of the electorate. Therefore, I would like to appeal to all members that we use common sense and do our duty by working together in the present situation. I would like to suggest that both sides accept to meet halfway, being that the NDP accept to respect the authority of the present Speaker for the duration of this present session, and that in turn the government commit to introduce in this session a bill for an elected Speaker. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is the motion moved by the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) that the Speaker be removed from her position and that the passage of this motion by the House would require that the Speaker resign immediately.

All those in favour of the motion, please rise. All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

* (1730)

Formal Vote

Mr. Ashton: Yeas and Nays, Madam Speaker.

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

Division

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

Yeas

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

Nays

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

Mr. Clerk: Yeas 25, Nays 29.

Madam Speaker: The motion is accordingly defeated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

House Business

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, may we proceed to Orders of the Day.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Cummings), that the Votes and Proceedings of the House be printed, having first been perused by the Speaker, and that the Speaker do appoint the printing thereof, and that no person but such as the Speaker shall appoint do presume to print the same.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Environment (Mr. McCrae), that the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor be taken into consideration today.

Motion agreed to.

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE (First Day of Debate)

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): I move, seconded by the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer), that an humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

We, Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, in session assembled, humbly thank Your Honour for the gracious speech which Your Honour has been pleased to address us at the opening of the present session.

Motion presented.

Mr. Tweed: Madam Speaker, as we begin the Third Session of the Thirty-sixth Legislature, I want to begin by acknowledging my confidence in your ability to perform your role as Speaker. Although there have been challenges to your impartiality by members opposite, I believe in the name of political opportunism. I have never had cause to question the integrity and wisdom of your office. I know that as we enter this session of the Legislature, you will continue to show patience and wisdom as you make your decisions.

As I go into the detail on my remarks in relation to the throne speech, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome and congratulate the three new ministers

now sitting in the government of Manitoba. I would also like to welcome back the pages, congratulate them, and express my confidence in their ability to continue to carry on their duties in these challenging and enlightening times.

It is certainly my pleasure and an honour to rise today and move the throne speech and an opportunity to reiterate aspects of the speech while expanding on others. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) has offered me a tremendous opportunity today, and I thank him for that privilege.

Madam Speaker, the Speech from the Throne that we and all Manitobans heard yesterday is one about potential. It is about qualities that can be developed, possibilities that can be achieved and capabilities to which we all aspire. In 1988, the people of Manitoba decided it was time for a new, responsible direction. They voiced their desire for a government that would assist Manitobans in realizing and accessing their potential. Manitobans at that time were weary of a government that linked almost all solutions with taxes.

Madam Speaker, this throne speech and our governmental policies remain steadfast in their goals. Fiscal responsibility has been achieved through the balanced budget and taxpayers protection legislation, legislation that protects not only today's taxpayer, but tomorrow's taxpayers as well. It has been achieved through nine years of no major tax increases, including personal income tax, corporate income tax, capital tax and the sales tax. It has been achieved through two consecutive balanced budgets, along with the \$156.5-million surplus for the '95-96 fiscal year and an anticipated \$22-million surplus for '96-97. With restored fiscal stability, we have set our economy on a solid and sustainable path, opening new opportunities for jobs and new opportunities for growth.

Our government's commitment to continued employment growth was a key feature of the throne speech. Over the past decade, we have seen dramatic shifts in economic conditions not only within our provincial boundaries but around the entire world. There was a time when an individual thought of their competition as the neighbour down the street. Later, that competition meant the nearest community; then it meant bordering provinces and states. Today, Madam

Speaker, our competition comes from around the world. It comes from Asia, Europe and South America. Competition is global and our response as a province and as a government to this competition has and must be global.

* (1740)

These shifts have brought with them challenges and opportunities for all Manitobans. Manitobans have shown themselves to welcome opportunity, the opportunity to show Canada and the world their potential when it comes to job creation. For example, the province ended 1996 with the largest workforce in our 126-year history. This workforce is comprised of 537,000 working Manitobans. As noted by Statistics Canada, our current job level represents a gain of 19,000 jobs since December 1995. That is an increase of 3.7 percent, more than twice Canada's 1.4 percent growth over the same period.

Manitoba's youth unemployment rate was the third lowest among the provinces and more than three percentage points lower than the national average. Manitoba's gross domestic product has been pegged to grow by 3 percent in 1997, up from 2 percent last year, and for two straight years, Madam Speaker, Manitoba has outperformed Canada with a GDP of 1.6 percent. Manitobans also have the second strongest showing of any province in retail sales last year. Consumer spending is growing and has grown by 6.4 percent.

Madam Speaker, the outlook for 1997 remains strong. The Conference Board of Canada expects our province to add another 10,000 jobs in 1997. According to Great-West Life Vice-President and Chief Economist Andrew Alleyne, Manitoba is the place to be, a place to grow. Through the creation of a vibrant and varied economic environment, our government has ensured that our youth have the opportunity to remain in Manitoba, whether that be in rural or urban Manitoba. Our government is committed to all of our youth, especially the youth in most need.

Our government has, with this speech, announced a partnership with the federal government and the private sector to commit to a number of entry level positions each year for unemployed aboriginal high school, college and university graduates, a tremendous step

forward for all involved. Our government, with this initiative, is ensuring that a significant segment of our population is offered equal opportunities to display their skills, their merits and their values to all Manitobans. Aboriginal youth in Manitoba possess tremendous potential, and our government acknowledges that potential and the need to foster its development.

Employment opportunities for our youth will be further enhanced through the revitalization of apprenticeship. The apprenticeship task force will soon recommend to our government the best means of ensuring that apprenticeship programs are relevant to today's needs, are cost-effective, are accessible, are efficient and are supported by enabling legislation and sustainable into the future. With more than 42,000 Manitobans employed in prenticeable occupations, providing quality products and services to Manitobans in the industrial, mechanical, construction and service sectors, the importance of revitalizing this program cannot be understated.

Rural Manitoba has always shown a great deal of potential when it comes to providing employment prospects for all Manitobans. As one of the co-chairs in the Working for Value Task Force I, along with the members for Morris (Mr. Pitura) and Emerson (Mr. Penner), travelled throughout Manitoba to listen to rural Manitobans. This initiative was launched by the departments of Rural Development, Agriculture, and Industry, Trade and Tourism to identify ways and means to adapt and diversify the rural economy for the future, leading to a \$1-billion increase in Manitoba exports within the next decade. We were there to listen to their ideas on enhancing and developing the rural economy even further. Individuals I met with shared with me their vision of Manitoba and I can assure you they are excited about the future.

This vision has been developed through programs such as the Rural Economic Development Initiative, which has funded over 230 business initiatives, generating a total leveraged investment of \$73.8 million and has led to the creation to 1,600 full-time jobs and 3,800 part-time jobs for youth in rural Manitoba.

Manitoba Grow Bonds has helped Manitobans invest approximately \$100 million in rural communities,

generating about \$28 million in new investment and, by extension, enabling the start-up or expansion of rural businesses to create almost 500 new jobs. The purpose of the program is to mobilize the local economy and the entrepreneurial energies to create jobs and economic diversity in rural Manitoba. The bonds program empowers communities and their members to take a direct role in their futures as Manitobans. The limited guarantee that the province offers on the principal creates a positive climate for investment and assists communities in defining and pursuing their own economic objectives. In Manitoba we have some 84 community round tables involving more than 140 municipalities that are setting visions, goals and action plans for community economic and social development. The process has been heralded as a way for communities to work co-operatively for the best interest of the community and therefore the best interest of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, the throne speech indicated that our government will continue to support the efforts of rural Manitobans, support needed in development and research in all sectors of the agricultural industry and will initiate sustainable development strategies for the province's fisheries and wildlife. Agriculture has always been a mainstay of our economy and will continue to do so in the future. Manitoba farmers are turning challenges like the loss of the Crow rate into opportunities, and we will all benefit, all Manitobans. In the constituency of Turtle Mountain we have had a recent construction of two multimillion-dollar hog barns. The combined value of these two facilities is expected to exceed \$6.5 million and create approximately 11 permanent full-time jobs. This, I would suggest, is just one of the many examples and opportunities that await all Manitobans. Manitoba is now one of the most dynamic sites in Canada for pork production. More than 12,000 Manitobans are employed in the production, processing, transportation and distribution of pork products to over 30 countries worldwide.

The speech noted Manitoba's success in export diversification and the capture of alternative markets, and I would suggest to you, Madam Speaker, that exports means jobs to all Manitobans. Our efforts have been driven by focusing on key sectors and emerging markets in Asia, Europe and North America, aggressive

marketing, trade missions with private sector companies and supporting freer trade. Major gains have occurred in value-added sectors, such as food products and wood products, and in the manufacturing and high-tech sectors, such as the information technology, health care products, transportation equipment and agricultural machinery. Manitoba exports to the United States are well into the sixth straight year of steady growth. In fact four consecutive years, between 1992 and '95, the value of our exports to the American market grew at double-digit rates. Total exports to all foreign destinations also look good, rising 10.8 percent to November '96 compared with the same period last year. This was the third best provincial performance and more than double Canada's total international export gain of 4.2 percent.

* (1750)

Madam Speaker, the speech also noted Manitoba's successful bid for the 1999 Pan American Games. These games hold great promise for increasing trade and tourism with Pan American countries. To capitalize on this opportunity our government has formed the Pan American Trade and Tourism initiative which will work to attract new trading opportunities for Manitoba and Manitobans. They will also co-ordinate trade missions, participate in trade and tourism events in the region and aggressively market Manitoba to our neighbours throughout North and South America.

As well, Madam Speaker, this summer Brandon hosts the 1997 Canada Games which brings with it thousands of athletes, coaches and families to the region. Not only has Brandon opened its doors to welcome the sporting events, but other neighbouring communities will do as well. Many events are to be held in the surrounding communities, giving those communities a chance to show off their region to the rest of Canada.

Without the effort of the dedicated Manitobans who volunteer their time and energy, these events could not happen. Volunteers are the lifeblood of any event, and Manitobans have consistently shown their willingness to play the role of great host.

I have had the experience of being a volunteer and also being in communities where the volunteers have looked after all my needs and wants. My hat certainly

goes off to the unsung heroes of these communities. As a province, I believe we owe them a tremendous debt of gratitude.

Provincial tourism was also highlighted in the throne speech. Manitoba offers a wide range of tourism products such as heritage, culture, outdoor and adventure touring, recreation and sport, ecotourism, and many seasonal events. The number of Americans visiting Manitoba has continued to climb. In 1996, almost half-a-million Americans came to Manitoba, a rise of almost 2 percent from the previous year. Conversely, the number of Manitobans travelling to the United States fell by almost 9 per cent from 1995. To me, Madam Speaker, it is evident that through these numbers, more Americans and more Manitobans are realizing the wonders that are available in our province.

Our government is committed to working with industry to double tourism revenues to \$2 billion by the year 2000. We expect to meet that goal by implementing strategies developed at the Exploring Manitoba forum, which was held in November 1995. We have established a tourism council to develop a strategic direction for the marketing and promotion of each of Manitoba's six tourism regions.

Madam Speaker, despite the unprecedented reduction in federal funding for health, education and social services, our government continues to spend a significant proportion of our budget on health care. These cuts, which began in 1995, have culminated in a loss of revenue in the amount of \$220 million. This has put a significant strain on all Manitobans.

We want to ensure our Health at any given time in the future is able to deliver the medically appropriate service people require as close to home, as practical and as efficiently as possible. We should never forget that every dollar we waste takes one dollar out of our health care services that we can spend on health care delivery. Our government believes that partnering with community-based service providers can serve as an effective alternative to costly government programming as we work to tap the potential of all Manitobans.

In the throne speech it was noted that our government will look at new approaches, including a mobile health clinic, diabetes prevention, expanded roles for nurses, midwifery and other health initiatives. Our government

will also ensure that certain services will be brought directly to the patient, including dialysis, an expanded intravenous program and mental health programs. The establishment of ten regional health authorities for rural and northern Manitoba, a Brandon regional health authority and two health authorities in Winnipeg will ensure decisions will be made closer to the communities they serve. We will ensure that health care delivery and service will be relevant to the people.

Madam Speaker, the throne speech also noted the importance of our education and the system and plays the future strength of Manitoba in the global economy. Education continues to be a priority in our spending department of this government, second only to Health in overall expenditures.

This year's funding for public schools in Manitoba was announced at a level of \$746.5 million, a slight increase over last year, but I think the one generous thing was that they were advised that this funding would not decrease the following year, which greatly assists the challenges that they face in the programming of education to meet the needs and challenges of the future.

Recognizing the need for change, our government has implemented standards in testing in core subject areas. Measuring outcomes in education will allow teachers, administrators and parents the opportunity to see where we need to develop new approaches. With the help of the Council of Learning Technologies and our Partners in Education we continue to focus attention on the effective integration of new technologies into the enterprise of education. This is a challenge for the education system at all levels, particularly in these times of fiscal restraint. However, we are committed to technology as a foundation skill in curriculum and providing professional development to educators in this area. Together with our education partners we are building a technological network that will provide better access to educational programs, facilitate collaboration, provide greater choice for students and generally provide exciting, cost-effective learning opportunities.

With over 70,000 Manitobans enrolled in Manitoba's four universities and three community colleges, the

throne speech indicated that the Council on Post-Secondary Education will begin operation shortly. The purpose of this council is to examine post-secondary education institutions in Manitoba as one system. It will provide guidance and leadership to further the pursuit of excellence at the post-secondary level while eliminating overlap and duplication. The council will also work to increase co-operation between institutions, for example, by increasing the ability for students to transfer credits between institutions.

There has been a need to assist some Manitobans in realizing their potential. In order to achieve this, our government has developed the Employment First Strategy and the welfare reform initiative which have helped a significant number of Manitobans realize their potential. The welfare reform initiative was implemented in May of '96. A key thrust of this initiative has been to refocus existing programs and services to provide an effective link between training and employment. New initiatives, including the development of employer and community partnerships and providing adult literacy training through community organizations, have been implemented. Manitoba Education and Training will continue to play a key role in facilitating employment for income assistance recipients in '97-98.

Only through co-operation and partnership can we achieve success. Much of the success to date has been

the result of partnerships with the private sector and community-based groups, such as the Mennonite Central Committee. The speech made reference to two specific programs that have led the way in addressing this issue, Youth NOW and Taking Charge!. Recognizing that all Manitobans—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The hour being 6 p.m., when this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) will have 16 minutes remaining.

This House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

Corrigendum

Standing Committee on Law Amendments Vol. XLVI No. 6 - 7 p.m., Tuesday, October 15, 1996, page 162, first column, fourth paragraph reads:

Mr. Chairperson: I appreciate that. I did have some . . .

Should read:

Mr. Chomiak: I appreciate that. I did have some . . .

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, March 4, 1997

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