



Fourth Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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Speaker*



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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.
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	N.D.P.
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	P.C.
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	P.C.
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane	Osborne	N.D.P.
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	P.C.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn	St. James	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	P.C.
NEWMAN, David, Hon.	Riel	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank, Hon.	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
RADCLIFFE, Mike, Hon.	River Heights	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack, Hon.	Niakwa	P.C.
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric	Rupert'sland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Gladstone	P.C.
SALE, Tim	Crescentwood	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin	N.D.P.
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	P.C.
TOEWS, Vic, Hon.	Rossmere	P.C.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.
Vacant	Charleswood	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, December 4, 1997

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Request for Member's Apology

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I must admit I rise on this matter with no great joy, because I have always valued very much my relationship with my critic the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak). It has been one in which we have I think over the last year attempted to share information with each other for the benefit of the people of Manitoba. We may from time to time disagree on particular views of facts or policy. Sometimes we may each be given information that is different, and that may be the basis of our disagreement or different points of view.

Madam Speaker, yesterday in this House the member for Kildonan—and I will follow up my comments with a substantive motion if that is a requirement—came forward with samples of food that he stated to this House were being served at the Health Sciences Centre as part of the Urban Shared Services initiative to consolidate food services.

Indeed, I believe he attempted during Question Period to have those food samples provided to me, and because of our rules with respect to props, et cetera, he was not allowed to do that. However, following Question Period I did ask him for those samples which he provided to me. Because, like him, I honestly believe when we come to this House we have an obligation to bring information, we have an obligation to do so with the best accuracy we possibly can, and I was concerned that if these rather awful-looking samples of food were in fact the products that the member said they were, it gave me great concern. So I took them. He did provide them to me freely after Question Period, and I forwarded them to the Health Sciences Centre.

Madam Speaker, in the course of Question Period the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) said very categorically, and I think if you check Hansard—and I was able to do that today as yesterday's Hansard is now available—the member for Kildonan did say that—and he said: “I will ask one of the pages to,” and I quote, “pass on to the minister some samples of frozen food that are now being distributed at Health Sciences Centre of which I cannot tell the difference whether it is porridge or vegetables, or whether this frozen food is in fact pineapple or whatever. I am going to ask the page to pass this on to the minister.” And I quote again: “It came from the Health Sciences Centre.” Further on, the member in the next question indicated that the food, and I quote, “is destined for the patients of Manitoba.”

Madam Speaker, when we do those types of things, particularly when we are talking about food that is destined for people who are sick and in hospital, who have enough other things to worry about, the accuracy of what we bring to this House becomes very, very important.

Madam Speaker, because I share with most members of this House an interest in having factual debate, and I say where I have been wrong or where I have been mistaken, I have apologized. The member for Kildonan on one occasion pointed out an inaccuracy of some information that I unknowingly brought to this House, and I apologized for it. So, in the interests of being accurate, I forwarded those samples to the Health Sciences Centre, the facility from which the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) clearly indicated the food had come from and was being distributed to patients. I received this morning a letter from Mr. Jim Rodger who is the assistant to the president and corporate secretary, and as a result of our inquiry I would like to share that with this House. I will table a copy of this letter for members to share. But I would like to quote this letter.

* (1335)

It is to myself, and it says, regarding frozen food items said to originate at the Health Sciences Centre: "Yesterday afternoon your office sent me three objects which, I am advised, were given to you with the suggestion that they (a) originated from the Health Sciences Centre and (b) had been supplied to the Health Sciences Centre by Urban Shared Services Corporation, (USSC). Your office has requested that we identify the objects by substance and source, if possible.

"I advise as follows:

"Object 1

Description: Frozen yellow substance contained in small plastic bowl.

Substance: Scrambled eggs.

Source: Unknown, but definitely not the Health Sciences Centre. The small plastic bowls are not containers we stock in our Department of Nutrition & Food Services nor is this packaging like any we have ever seen from USSC.

"Object 2

Description: Frozen grey substance contained in small plastic bowl.

Substance: Porridge made from rolled oats.

Source: Unknown, but definitely not the Health Sciences Centre."

See comments above on containers which apply to this object as well.

"Object 3

Description: Toast slice contained in plastic bag."

I know, Madam Speaker, this particular matter where toast is being made has had great public debate among some in the labour movement, with an impression trying to be made that toast is going to be brought in from Toronto. But what is very interesting is the comment on this matter. I know this may give jest to some, but it is a serious matter when one is bringing to this House and making allegations.

Substance description—a toast slice contained in a plastic bag, I quote again, Madam Speaker.

"Substance: One slice of rye bread, toasted and unbuttered."

Source—of course, it is impossible to determine. It certainly "could have come from any hospital (including this one), institution or personal residence with access to rye bread and a toaster. It is not toast provided to this hospital by USSC."

A very important point because that is what the member said it was.

"We do not provide toast to patients in plastic bags, in any case, so unless the toast was placed in the bag after it left its source we can definitively say it did not originate in this hospital."

What is also interesting is "This item less the plastic bag is, however, representative of the quality of toast we are able to provide patients with our present food production facilities. It is noteworthy that recent tests of the USSC production/distribution system at this hospital demonstrated the ability of that new system to provide toast to patients of a quality unquestionably better than our present antiquated production facilities enable us to do.

"I trust this information will be helpful to you."

Madam Speaker, I will table a copy of that letter; in fact, several copies of that letter for members opposite, including the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak).

I believe Erskine May, in his 21st edition, indicates very clearly that the facts on which a question is based may be set out as briefly as practicable within the framework of a question provided that the member asking it makes himself responsible for their accuracy.

Madam Speaker, from time to time, we, as members of this House, are given information that proves to be less than accurate. The member for Kildonan and I have always, I believed, had a relationship where we tried to be as accurate as possible. If the member has been misled by someone, if some individual or organization involved in this dispute provided that material to the member for Kildonan unsubstantiated, I will accept that. That happens to us all, but if the member for Kildonan, as would appear from his comments and from the facts of what he in fact did bring to this Assembly, attempted to leave the impression with members of this House that that very

poor-quality-looking food was what Manitoba patients could expect, that is unacceptable. That is unacceptable because it does not—because members of this House have an obligation to the best of their ability to debate the facts and bring factual information to this House. They have an obligation to debate issues on the facts, and if the member has brought that substance and made the claim, as he did in his comments, that it was being served at Health Sciences Centre and is part of what Manitoba patients will get under the new system, then, Madam Speaker, that is not factual. Not only is it not factual, but he is deliberately then trying to mislead this House by implying that it were so.

I would very much hope that is not the case, that the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) in fact may have been misled by someone who provided those samples to him. I would hope that is the case, and if it is, I will gladly accept that and withdraw my motion. But if the member opposite has brought samples to this House, claiming, as he did, as I quoted from Hansard, that they were being served at Health Sciences Centre, that they were destined for the patients of Manitoba when in fact they are not in any way part of that kitchen—in fact the toast that he brought to claim would be poor-quality toast is the quality that is being served today in the hospitals of our province—that would be, I believe, a gross misrepresentation, a deliberate one, and would not be worthy of a member of this House.

* (1340)

Consequently, and with great sadness, and I say very clearly—[interjection] Well, some members opposite like the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) appear to be saddened by this, but they forget that the patients of Manitoba who will be in that hospital rely on factual information in public debate. They rely on us debating the facts, and I will debate the facts with anyone. If I am wrong, then I will change my view. But what was brought to this House yesterday, when sent back to that facility, was in no way, as the letter indicates, from that facility. One can only assume from that that there was a deliberate attempt made to mislead members of this House and the people of Manitoba.

So, consequently, Madam Speaker, I would move, seconded by the honourable government House leader, that the honourable member for Kildonan apologize to

this House and the people of Manitoba for placing inaccurate and false information before the House which caused unnecessary concern and fear about the quality of health care food services in Manitoba.

Motion presented.

Madam Speaker: I will now recognize the honourable member for Thompson with relation to advice on this matter of privilege.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to begin, by the way, by suggesting that the prime reference for deciding whether there is a matter of privilege might be *Beauchesne*, and I look at the member for Riel (Mr. Newman) who seems to feel that *Beauchesne* is an outdated reference. I would suggest that perhaps now that the government is taking an opportunity of bringing up a matter of privilege, I will be interested to see if the member for Riel now gets up and suggests that this is not a matter of privilege under an irrelevant text like *Beauchesne*. I say that ironically because the key deciding point that we have to provide advice to you is indeed whether under *Beauchesne* there is a *prima facie* case of a matter of privilege.

Now, first of all, I want to say that it takes some gall on the part of this minister one day after the Question Period that we had yesterday when the issue of the—what is the term?—rethermalized food that is going to be served is currently being served in a number of medical institutions in this province. I find it interesting because the minister—and I did, I admit, indicate some sense of crocodile tears from this Minister of Health who expressed concern that somehow the member for Kildonan might create some fear about the quality of this to-be-served frozen, rethermalized food.

I find that interesting because the Minister of Health—I want to read to you what he said about the existing food. He said: “Yes, we want high-quality food, but who can stand here today and tell us that hospital food currently is wonderful and delightful food? When my daughter was in hospital, I can tell you it was not the most appetizing food that she received regularly.” Madam Speaker, I think the Minister of

Health should apologize for the people that work very hard to provide that food, nutritional food.

Madam Speaker, I tell you we have not got to the point yet where the major goal—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would remind the honourable member for Thompson this is not the opportunity to debate the motion, but you are to be providing the Chair with advice regarding whether the matter is indeed a matter of privilege and should be dealt with expeditiously.

Mr. Ashton: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was referencing a specific part of the motion of the matter of privilege.

I say to members opposite that the prime purpose I believe of hospital food—and by the way, there are echoes here of the former Leader of the Liberal Party. I remember the criticism that Sharon Carstairs received from government members when she, I think in the 1990 election campaign, said that we should be charging for nonessentials like hospital food.

* (1345)

I heard the minister yesterday stand up here and talk about this terrible situation where we are spending money on hospital food. Madam Speaker, hospital food is essential. It is an essential part of maintaining patients' health, and it is indeed an essential item. We are very concerned about this government's move—you know, I find it interesting that a letter from the Health Sciences referred to a frozen yellow substance and a frozen grey substance. They are bringing in—they are already serving rethermalized, frozen food. Just ask the residents of Riverview. If the government doubts that people have concern—there was a very interesting media story yesterday, and it asked: what of the patients? You know, let us put aside for a moment—I do not think the Minister of Health and even our Health critic should be the judge of this. Ask one of the elderly patients in Riverview what had happened to hospital food when they brought in this frozen, rethermalized material. He said the quality dropped. Now does that surprise anyone? The Minister of Health can criticize the hard

work of the many people who have worked for many years to provide nutritious hospital food, but I can tell you nobody in this province thinks that if you have rethermalized, frozen food, you are going to get better-quality food.

I realize there was some difficulty because the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) could not officially table this food, Madam Speaker, because we are not allowed to have exhibits tabled in this particular circumstance, but I do say to the Minister of Health—and indeed I know the member for Kildonan will indeed provide more examples of this, and I called it alleged food yesterday. But I think he should understand the point here. Whether indeed he is concerned—[interjection] Well, the minister talks about the truth. The truth is we are already having rethermalized, frozen food. If they eliminate the current system, not only of 300, 400 jobs, we are going to have no doubt the same thing that has happened in other provinces. It is going to happen here. We are going to have this frozen food brought in. Manitobans do not accept that.

The reason the member for Kildonan came here yesterday and tried to provide examples of this food to the Minister of Health is because we cannot believe that anyone on the government side has even seen this stuff yet, because if they have seen it, they will drop the plan and they will reinstate the jobs and the excellent work of the many people in the health care field who have been providing our institutions with very, I would say, nutritional food and certainly something that is better than this frozen whatever. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would remind all honourable members that, according to Beauchesne 501, “Speakers have consistently ruled that it is improper to produce exhibits of any sort in the Chamber.” I would ask for the co-operation of the member for Kildonan in removing those exhibits from his desk so he not be tempted to show them. I thank the honourable member for Kildonan.

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to deal with the issue that is raised by the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik). I have been on many, many occasions in this House on the other side of this issue. In fact, on many, many

occasions the previous minister and the previous, previous minister and now the current incumbent minister have made statements in this House that are totally inaccurate, and I have been on the other side of the issue, and I have yet to receive an acknowledgement or an apology from members on that side of the House on the obvious, with one exception.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. A matter of privilege is indeed a very serious matter. The honourable member for Kildonan is attempting to justify the matter of privilege that has been raised against him and deserves consideration in putting his remarks on the record.

* (1350)

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, I think it is incumbent upon all of us in this Chamber to in fact be as accurate in the information we portray as possible, and I would dare say in my experience in this Chamber we have done so without question.

Madam Speaker, in 1992-93, when we said in this House the government was cutting home care, the member for Pembina, the then Minister of Health stood up and said we were making it up. One week later, after the budget, after the government had cut home care, we determined that, in fact, despite being called naysayers, despite being called liars by members opposite, which we were in the hallway, we were right. When we said Connie Curran would be paid \$3.9 million plus expenses, tax-free U.S., they said we were making that up. When we tabled the contract, they did not apologize. When we submitted a Treasury Board submission that said this government was going to privatize home care, they said we were making it up, even though it was the minister from Brandon's Treasury Board submission and even though it had gone to cabinet and we tabled it. Did we hear a word of apology from members opposite? Did we hear a word of apology?

Madam Speaker, when the Minister of Health went in the hallway during the home care strike and misled Manitobans with respect to the emergency strike, and when his own deputy minister contradicted him, and

when the officials who were at a meeting contradicted him, did the Minister of Health, even though I raised a point of privilege, stand up and apologize? No, that went right into the great black hole of deniability and arrogance of these members opposite who have been government too long, who have seen us through nine years of cutbacks.

Madam Speaker, I was approached last week and provided with samples of food. I was told that these samples were part of a pilot project at Health Sciences Centre. I was told this, and subsequent to that I went back to my source and I said: can you vouch 100 percent that this material came from Health Sciences Centre pilot project? My source said: Yes; it was a pilot done at the Health Sciences Centre.

Now I know that Riverview is doing this. I know that Riverview, as part of the major project, is doing this. You know, if we are talking about misleading the House, perhaps the minister yesterday who, in reply to my question, gave the implication that the food was not going to come out of the country and out of the province—and I said to the minister: why do you not talk to your own head of USSC who said, and I quote, the food we processed in a variety of kitchens across Canada, that is your hand-picked, hand-appointed head of your central committee. He goes on further to quote, and I quote, it will be cooked elsewhere and then flown here. It will be chilled and transported here primarily by truck, I would think. That is your head of your committee—so if an apology is in order, perhaps the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) ought to consider his comments yesterday.

But, Madam Speaker, I value the foundations and the integrity of this House. The Minister of Health came forward with a letter from the Health Sciences Centre. God knows how much time and energy must have been placed by the Department of Health with the longest waiting lists in the country, with the longest waiting list for CAT scans, the longest waiting list for MRI, and for people who cannot get cardiac surgery, who have to wait eight months to get surgery—and the Minister of Health has to send staff people to the Health Sciences Centre to get letters of confirmation, and does that not say something about the state of health in Manitoba? But having said that—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Chomiak: We know that Manitobans are going to get rethermalized food in their institution. That is a fact. We know that Riverview hospital is rethermalizing food. I was told that that food was a pilot project at the Health Sciences Centre. I have before me a letter from Jim Rodger, the assistant to the president, and I do not know how much, again, time and energy was spent on this particular issue. You know, this actually is very frustrating. I do not know how many issues we raise in this Legislature about waiting lists. I do not know how many times we raise real health concerns about doctors who are not available in rural communities, about the closure of hospitals, about the closure of beds, about the lack of nurses. The minister spent an inordinate amount of executive time running over to the Health Sciences Centre in order to make a political point, and that, Madam Speaker, I think speaks volumes about why this government has mismanaged health care for nine years and will not get another opportunity to do so after the next election.

* (1355)

But I am faced with a letter from the Health Sciences Centre that denies that in fact this was the food. I am going to accept this letter. I will apologize for reference in yesterday's comments to the fact that the frozen food that is going to be instituted in the province of Manitoba, that is being instituted at Riverview Health Centre, according to this letter, did not come from Health Sciences Centre. So I will withdraw my reference to the Health Sciences Centre because of the letter that is on file, but I will not withdraw the obvious fact that Manitobans are going to be getting frozen food, and in references already indicated, rethermalized food, that it is presently happening in Riverview Centre.

But in the face of this letter, I do not think I have any choice but to acknowledge that this food did not come from the Health Sciences Centre, and I will apologize for that aspect of my comments.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, in a somewhat circuitous and

circumloquacious way, the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) has accepted responsibility for his error yesterday. I will leave it for the honourable Minister of Health to determine how he feels about that, but depending on what the honourable Minister of Health may say at this point, may have disposed of the matter raised.

As I say, both honourable members for Thompson and Kildonan took some time to come around to the actual apology that we did hear. I know it came from the honourable member for Kildonan because, in spite of everything else he does around here, he is an honourable member and brought forward his apology, and we may want to leave it at that.

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, I did not expect the member for Kildonan in any way to accept, as a matter of policy, changes that are helping in our food services system. We will debate that, and time will be the judge of it when that operates. The point that I wanted to make was that when we come to this House, information be as accurate as possible, and I understand that from time to time information is brought to us.

I would like to accept the member's apology and withdraw my motion because I believe that is all I wanted to be able to do, and that is acceptable.

Madam Speaker: I thank the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) and the honourable Minister of Health for resolving this issue.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Domestic Violence

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Suzanne Hrynyk, Mary Johnson, Roy Purvis and others, praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to consider preparing an action plan in consultation with the community for the timely implementation of meaningful changes outlined in the Lavoie inquiry, the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry and the Pedlar report.

* (1400)

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of D. Medwechuk, June Welsted, Drew Caldwell and others, praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to consider preparing an action plan in consultation with the community for the timely implementation of meaningful changes, as outlined in the Lavoie inquiry, the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry and the Pedlar report.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Urban Affairs): Madam Speaker, I would like to table the Annual Report for '96-97 of Urban Affairs; the Annual Report for '96-97 for Housing, Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation and Manitoba Housing Authority; and also the Annual Report for '96-97 for the Seniors Directorate.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the following reports for the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship: the Manitoba Women's Directorate; the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission, copies of which have previously been distributed; the 1996-97 Culture, Heritage and Citizenship Annual Report; the 1996-97 Centre Culturel Franco-Manitobain Annual Report; the 1996-97 Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation Annual Report; the 1996-97 Freedom of Information Act Annual Report; the 1996-97 Manitoba Arts Council Annual Report; the 1996-97 Status of Women Annual Report; the 1996-97 Manitoba Liquor Control Commission Annual Report.

Hon. David Newman (Minister of Energy and Mines): Madam Speaker, I would like to table the Energy and Mines 1996-97 Annual Report; the Manitoba Mineral Resources Ltd. Financial Statements 1996-97; the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board Forty-Sixth Annual Report for the year ended March 31, 1997; the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board Quarterly Report for the three months ended June 30, 1997; the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board Quarterly Report for the three months ended September 30, 1997.

The Northern Affairs 1996-1997 Annual Report; the Communities Economic Development Fund Twenty-Sixth Annual Report for the year ended March 31st, 1997, and the Communities Economic Development Fund Quarterly Financial Statements for the quarter ended June 30, 1997.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table some reports today. I would like to table the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism Annual Report for 1996-97; the Co-operative Loans and Loans Guarantee Board Annual Report for the same period; the Cooperative Promotion Board Annual Report for the same period; Manitoba Trade and Investment Corporation Annual Report for 1996-97; Industrial Technology Centre Annual Report for the same period; Manitoba Development Corporation Financial Statements to March 31st, 1997. I have copies for the House.

Hon. Mike Radcliffe (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to table a report today to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba pursuant to Section 13 of The Trade Practices Inquiry Act, being Chapter T110 of the Statutes of Manitoba, 1970. I have the honour to report that no inquiries were commenced subsequent to the last report.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 17—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Environment): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey), that leave be given to introduce Bill 17, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, having been advised of the contents of this bill, recommends it to the House. I would like to table the Lieutenant Governor's message.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 18—The Registry Amendment Act

Hon. Mike Radcliffe (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Newman), that leave be given to introduce Bill 18, The Registry Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'enregistrement foncier, 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 firstly to the loge to my right where we have with us this afternoon Mr. Sid Green, the former member for Inkster, and Mr. Gerry Ducharme, the former member for Riel. On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you this afternoon.

Additionally, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have this afternoon—I think they are still here—twenty-six Grades 9 to 12 students from Sandy Bay School under the direction of Mr. John Paramor and Mrs. Barb Woolford. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Cummings).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Workers Compensation Board Occupational Diseases—Medical Evidence

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Speaker, I want to start by reading the words from the mission statement of the Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba. In the mission statement it says: to provide superior compensation service to Manitoba workers and employers in a manner that is sensitive, responsive, and effective in order to minimize the impact of workplace injuries.

This month, after 12 years and at least 11 cancer-related deaths, some measures of justice occurred when

the families of two deceased workers received survivor WCB benefits. The ordeal has been a nightmare for the widows of these two deceased workers, and one of these widows now struggles from personal injuries sustained from having to find work to support her family after her husband died of occupational cancer caused by the workplace. The nightmare started when the WCB medical staff, without the benefit of research, encouraged WCB adjudication staff to reject the deceased workers' claims on numerous occasions. Over 138 deaths may be linked to the involvement with mineral oil and other workplace chemicals.

I want to ask the minister responsible for the Workers Compensation Board: why did WCB staff, without the basis of any medical research, reject the claims of the families of the deceased workers, leaving the families to their own devices to find a doctor and that the doctor would then have to agree to take on the case and would have to apply for a research grant and that this doctor would then have to, after receiving approval for the grant, conduct the necessary research to arrive at a conclusion that there was a link between workplace chemical exposure and the cancer deaths? Why did the claimants' families have to go through so many hoops to prove these cases?

* (1410)

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister charged with the administration of The Workers Compensation Act): Madam Speaker, certainly distressing circumstances, as the member indicates. Occupational disease is an area where there is still a lot of academic dispute and contrary information. The cases that the member references date back to 1984, 1985, 1986 and that period, and under a different board and different circumstances those cases were rejected, primarily because there was some thought that these were related to PCBs.

It was only in 1996 that it was determined by the board and by a medical review panel that probably the use of mineral oil, which occurred in that plant up until 1975, was really the cause of the cancer-related deaths related to pancreatic cancer. So in 1996, when that was determined, a medical review panel was called, and shortly after that they made a decision, and those decisions have been accepted by the board.

Mr. Reid: Then I want to ask the minister responsible for the Workers Compensation Board, because he says that there was only a recent study, when the Anna-Lee Yassi study that was done referenced back to a 1968 study, a 1976 study, and a 1980 study, so the minister knows that there is information that was available by way of research and yet the board decided to reject.

I want to ask this minister: why did the Workers Compensation Board medical staff in a 1996 briefing to the then chairperson and chief executive officer who should have been aware, these medical people should have been aware of the studies that I just referenced here, why did those medical people reject the claims of these deceased workers' families by indicating that the threshold was too low? Why was that advice given to the then CEO of the Compensation Board when these medical people on the compensation staff should have been aware of these studies relating back to 1968, '76, and '80, and including the one by Anna-Lee Yassi in 1996? Why was your medical staff not provided that information to the CEO as part of your advice?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Madam Speaker, the member is correct. There have been many studies. There has been conflicting information from scientists in the United States and across Canada on this particular issue, and for the many years—and I cannot speak for the decisions made in 1985 and 1986 by the administrators and the board and possibly the government of the day why these were not accepted at that time.

I am saying to the member that in 1996 it became evident that probably the cause was the use of mineral oil, which was quite liberally used in that plant and many other plants. As a result of that, a medical review panel was called. As a result, the appropriate actions have been taken.

Mr. Reid: Madam Speaker, my final supplementary to the same minister, and this minister knows full well that claimants have to develop a mountain of evidence to support their case before it is accepted by the Compensation Board.

I want to ask this minister—because he says now that it was old case history here and that there was not enough evidence. He had the ability, with his

government, on the legislation that they brought in in 1992. Will this Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik), included along with this Minister of Labour, confirm and explain why they refused to implement Recommendation No. 50 from the King commission report that indicated that you could and should establish an occupational disease panel here in the province of Manitoba that would set standards so that the claimants of these families of these diseased workers would not have to jump through all of these hoops in trying to receive fair and just treatment here in the province of Manitoba? Why did you not establish that occupational disease panel that could have helped these families?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Madam Speaker, I know the member already knows this, but I would remind him that the outcomes of these cases are determined on the basis of the legislation which existed at the time of the initial claim. So these claims are being adjudicated and evaluated based on the legislation that was in place in 1985 and 1986 and not current legislation.

I would remind my honourable friend that when we were in committee in April of last year, and I quote from Hansard, the member says “I have trust and confidence in the members of the board and in Mr. Fox-Decent.” I know that he still has that trust and confidence today, and I am sure that he knows that the right thing will be done.

I might point out that the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) I think reflects on the way the Workers Compensation Board was run while you were in government. It was run by ministers and by government. I am only responsible for the act. We have the administration of the Workers Compensation Board done by professionals at the board.

Home Care Program Privatization

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, Manitobans are learning the lesson of some of the costs of having governments, whether it be city governments with garbage pickup contracts or provincial governments with privatizations in terms of MTS and home care, the cost to Manitobans of moving ahead with ideological decisions that do not make sense in terms of public services. Today, there is a devastating

report, an analysis of this issue by Evelyn Shapiro, eminent professor of community health policy in this province who, and I quote, states in this report that this suggests—and this is the analysis—that the decision to privatize was made on ideological grounds and in response to political pressure from the business sector.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health: in light of the increasing evidence of the fact that privatization does not work in terms of health care, will he now admit he was wrong to proceed, and his predecessor was wrong to proceed with even the partial privatization of home care and make a commitment to public home care by withdrawing that portion, the privatized portion of home care?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, the ideological position in this House is with members opposite who from time to time are not prepared to look at alternative means of delivering services. We are very pragmatic on this side of the House, whether it be public or private. The best way to deliver a service is the way—it certainly should be considered and looked at.

Now I have to also wonder where the member for Thompson has been, because last spring when we discussed the home care initiative in this House, when we went through a tendering process to check our own system, we discovered that we had—I believe it was five companies that met the quality requirements, and only one was able to deliver the service more cost effectively than our own public service. We are in that one year to see what we can learn from it, but I think it was very clear at that time, as I indicated, that we learned from that process. We learned some things we can do better in our public system, but certainly the public system was demonstrated to be highly cost effective, given the alternatives were there, and that is certainly where we are. I wonder where the member was.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, I was talking to many Manitobans who do not agree with the privatization of home care.

As a supplementary, I want to ask the minister—and in light of, for example, the experience of the City of Winnipeg. Who can forget the 89 percent increase that

happened to them for the garbage pickup contract which, by the way, was somewhat lower in the first bid but has now increased dramatically? I want to ask the minister: given the fact that he has already reduced the 20 percent experiment down to 10 percent—because only one of the contractors had even a lower bid—will he now recognize that there is a real danger when you privatize, that the next step is, if they get that kind of contract and that kind of monopoly, they will not only give poorer service, they will jack up the price to Manitobans as well?

* (1420)

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, I am not going to discuss the city issue. I heard recently that their cost was still less, even with that increase, than before, but that is for them to defend. As I indicated very clearly in this House last spring, what we did learn from that process of testing our own services was that by and large our public home care system was a very cost-effective means of delivering the service compared to alternatives. That is what we learned in the system. We may learn a few other things out of this year-test about how we can deliver the service better.

But I said last spring—and the member has indicated he was out talking to Manitobans—in discussion with the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) in Estimates in here that if we have learned one thing is we have learned how to make a few improvements to our public system, but generally speaking, it was doing the job. So to imply that we are moving to privatization, I think the member is six months out of date.

Mr. Ashton: Well, Madam Speaker, when will this minister stop rewriting history? We had a five-week strike of home care workers that stopped the government from a wholesale privatization. It was only their courage that did that.

I want to ask why the minister will not recognize what is in this report, the Shapiro report, and I quote, the government has failed to produce evidence to support its privatization initiative. Why do they not recognize their ideology is not working? Why do they not just table it and commit to a public home care system like Manitobans want?

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, if I were a physician, I would recommend the member have a hearing test because that is what I said last April. That is what I am saying here today. That is what I said then. I do not know where the member for Thompson has been.

What we learned through that process is we learned that, generally speaking, our public home care system was a very cost-effective method of delivering home care in this province, and that is what we are committed to, an efficient, effective means of delivering home care. We have also learned a few other things about how to improve our system, and that is the course we are embarked on. The whole issue of privatization, I think, was very much a theoretical debate. We wanted to test our system. We did have the opportunity to test it, and as I said last spring in this House, the public home care system is one that appears to work very fine for Manitobans, and that is the course that we are on.

Home Care Program Privatization

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Health ought to know that there is a two-year waiting for audiology services, two years. It is a long wait, Mr. Minister.

When the Minister of Health announced the giving of the home care contract to Olsten health care services, he assured Manitobans that this was a Canadian company, but in fact he knew he was misleading Manitobans. Olsten is an American multinational corporation with over 500 subsidiary corporations, one of which is based in Ontario and works out of here. This company is now facing numerous counts of fraud and abuse of patients in several states, has already paid back to the American government over \$30 million in fraudulent billings.

Is the minister aware that the President of the United States has put a six-month hold on further developments of private home care because of the prevalence of charges of fraud, overbilling and unethical upselling of services? Is he aware of that?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, first of all, I know the preponderance of members opposite that any company that has any

relationship to anything American, they oppose, except if it is a union. If a union has American affiliates, then they are okay.

Madam Speaker, I am not aware of any case. If the members opposite can bring to my attention any circumstance where the current contract holder in Manitoba on this one-year trial has committed any problems or abused any patients, please bring it forward. We will investigate it.

I have indicated in this House we have learned through this experience about how well our own public system works. We have learned some things to improve it, and I see the course we are on is for a public home care system.

So the question the member really raises, once this experimental year is over and we have done the assessment, I think may just be totally redundant.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, a supplementary: will the minister, who appears to trivialize the vulnerability of older people who are receiving home care at the hands of fraudulent operators, confirm that one of the charges that Olsten is facing in the United States is that they manipulated the bid process in Florida in order to enter a market and are now recovering their losses through artificially high administration and other fees and that high-ranking American officials have said that as much as 40 percent of the billing of home care services in the United States is fraudulent?

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, we put out a tender process. That company, as to my knowledge, is meeting the requirements of their contract. My assessment today, although that year is not over yet and we have not completed the assessment, but my sense of it today very much is that with some of the changes and improvements, particularly with information systems, we are making in our own public home care system, that that is where the future is going to be in Manitoba. We have learned some things that we can apply to our own system. So, really, at the end of this year, this is really, I think, a debate of the past and not one of the future. If there is some concern about how in fact our current contracts are being administered, I will check with our staff to ensure that our contract is being lived up to to the full letter.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, will the minister, in the light of all of the evidence from the United States of America, from Dr. Shapiro, from the Centre for Policy Alternatives, finally accept that this was a misguided experiment in the first place, that it can only lead to bad practice, to more expensive services? Will he announce that it does not matter, it is not a good idea to deliver home care through private, for-profit companies and go back to the system that made Manitoba a leader and give patients the security of knowing that they are going to get high-quality services from public sector and not-for-profit agencies?

Mr. Praznik: You know, Madam Speaker, sometimes one wonders if we are in the same room as the honourable member, because what he is asking for I think I have basically said that what we have learned from this process is that our public home care system is the best choice for Manitobans. It delivers service in an efficient manner, and our course is to carry on on that basis.

I said that last April as well in this House. I have discussed it with the member for Kildonan in Estimates, so I am not quite sure where the member is coming from. I will say this to him, Madam Speaker: this government has embarked on its course in looking at different ways and different models of delivering services, and many of the things that we have done, like special operating agencies in a variety of areas, have worked tremendously better, deliver better service at a much better cost to the taxpayer, and every time you look at a new model and you test it out, you learn what is good, you learn what is bad. That is what we did. We learned a lot about our public home care system, and that is the course we are on. I am not quite sure if the member has heard me. I hope he has.

Continuing Care Advisory Committee Status

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, in the past several years, one of the few positive things the former Minister of Health could say that the government had done in home care, and the minister did it many times, including May 7 in this Chamber, April 17 in this Chamber, was that the government had set up an advisory committee on continuing care, represented by consumers and other people that could

obtain home care, to provide advice to the government, and I quote, on delivery issues, concerns of recipients of the program, advice on emerging trends and new models of service, delivery options, et cetera.

This agency did yeoman service during the home care strike, advocating against the privatization of home care, I might add. Can the current Minister of Health indicate precisely what the status is of the advisory committee on continuing care?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I understand that the current advisory committee felt that a good deal of their work was over. The individuals who were on that, I understand, have tendered their resignations, and so I will be appointing new members to a home care advisory panel.

* (1430)

Resignations

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, my supplementary to the minister: can the minister perhaps indicate to this House whether or not in fact this group tendered their resignations because their work was done or in fact tendered their resignations because this minister was trying to get this body to do something that was inappropriate, take away their ability to advocate on behalf of consumers and trying to make them a branch and agency of this government? Is that not in fact the reason that this body has tendered their resignations to this minister?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): They were a committee, and there will be a committee to advise on matters related to home care, and if the member is implying that somehow we were going to do away with the advisory committee, that we were going to blend it into another branch, that is absolutely news to me, because that is not my intention as minister.

Mr. Chomiak: Can the minister explain to me why two weeks and one day after the resignations of these committee members went to the minister, the committee was not contacted? Do we have to call a press conference to get the minister to meet with them, like we did with the MS patients, like we did with the kidney patients, because both of those organizations

could not get meetings until we called press conferences, and then the minister met with those groups? Is that how people get to talk to this government and receive information?

Mr. Praznik: First of all, I have had several meetings with the home care committee. I have had several meetings with the chair of the home care advisory committee. I would like to meet with them to hear their thoughts. I have not been able to arrange that meeting with them at the current time, but it is interesting the member references meetings and coming down with television cameras. I notice he is very apt at organizing that, and that is fine, that is part of the political process, but every time that happens and we try to have decisions made solely on what publicity can be garnered, that is not a way to make good, sound decisions.

If there is one thing that I cannot be accused of, that is not making decisions. I have made lots of decisions on policy issues in the last 11 months of my tenure. The member for Kildonan well knows the multiplicity of issues in health care that are there, and my time and effort have been spent on some very fundamental ones in the last while, and it is not always possible to meet with every group or organization when they particularly would like to meet. There are just not enough hours in the days or days in the week.

Gaming Facilities Expansion

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

It was just a few days ago when I asked the Minister of Finance about the whole issue of lotteries and the VLT machines. Then this morning, Madam Speaker, I read in one of our daily newspapers that in fact there is recommendation for yet another five casinos in the province of Manitoba. I am wondering if the Minister of Finance can indicate: is he aware of how many more casinos are being recommended, how many casinos are being considered in the province of Manitoba today?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act): Madam Speaker, the other day we

discussed the issue of VLTs, and I outlined for the member the Lottery Policy Review, a group report, chaired by one Mr. Larry Desjardins. It dealt with most of the issues related to gaming, but one area that it did not deal with was the whole issue of gaming for First Nations.

If he goes back to the press release at the time of dealing with the Desjardins committee report in June of 1996, he will see there is an element that deals with First Nations gaming suggesting that a working group will be established with representation from the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation, from First Nations communities, and so on. That group was established. That group just recently has provided their report within the last several weeks, and that report has now been referred to the independent Gaming Control Commission for further analysis and further consultation on that report, Madam Speaker.

The member for Inkster, if he has not seen the report, is certainly welcome to get a copy and to look at it in some detail.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I seek confirmation then from the minister, and that is that we will, in fact, be getting more additional gambling casinos in the province of Manitoba. Are there any others that are currently being considered or that the minister is aware of that are being talked about?

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, first of all, I would not jump to any conclusions. This is a report from a working group that has now been submitted to government, and all along it was outlined that that report would then go to the Gaming Commission for further review and for further more comprehensive, meaningful consultation. So I think we should wait for that process to unfold.

That is the only area of gaming that was basically not addressed by the Desjardins committee report, and I encourage the member to go back to the detailed information that was released at that time that outlined a series of recommendations reducing the other VLTs by some 650 machines and 15 percent, introducing and establishing the independent Gaming Commission and so on. The one element that was identified back then that was not addressed where there is still a moratorium

in place is the whole area of First Nations gaming, and a commitment was made to address that issue. This working group has provided its report. The next step in the process is for the Gaming Commission to have consultation and to report back to government. So I would encourage the member for Inkster to let that process unfold and let us wait for those recommendations.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I am wondering if the minister responsible will give a guarantee to Manitobans that in fact there will not be any additional VLT machines—that you can reallocate—but there will not be any additional machines. From what I understand today, Manitoba has the highest per capita of VLT machines than any other province. Will we get that assurance from the Minister of Finance today?

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, I find this whole discussion very interesting coming from a member who was a strong supporter of additional casinos, growth in VLTs, growth in gaming, expansion of gaming just a matter of many months ago. Now all of a sudden he is finally expressing some concern on the issue.

Madam Speaker, I would suggest to him that we have dealt with gaming probably in a most comprehensive fashion of any provincial government in Canada.

Point of Order

Mr. Lamoureux: Yes, Madam Speaker, as I tried to listen to the Minister of Finance give his wishy-washy response, I hear from members opposite talking about additional casinos and something about my wanting to have additional casinos. Contrary to the government, I did actually have a program, and that program was being suggested based on tourism, not based on revenue generation. I would appreciate the minister answer the very specific question: will he give the guarantee that there will not be an increase in VLTs in the province of Manitoba?

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Inkster did not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts. I would ask the honourable minister responsible to respond to the question asked.

* * *

Mr. Stefanson: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I am glad the member clarified the record in terms of his strong support for growth in casinos and gaming in Manitoba.

For all gaming activities in Manitoba outside of the First Nation issue, which was not addressed by the Desjardins report, when it comes to VLTs, there has been a reduction of 650 machines or 15 percent of VLTs in all commercial operations across the province. As was outlined when the Desjardins report was introduced, the issue of gaming on First Nations was not addressed. I think we all have a responsibility to address that issue. The First Nations communities are asking us to address it, and we are attempting to do that in a very comprehensive and responsible way.

There has been a working group with broad representation. Nine individuals have submitted a document that I encourage the member to read. The next part of the process is for the Gaming Commission to review that, to hold meaningful consultation and then to report back to the minister responsible for the Gaming Control Commission. So I think we should let that process unfold. I encourage the member to take an interest in it and to participate in that process.

Workers Compensation Board Occupational Diseases—Dominant Cause

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Speaker, in January of 1992, the now Minister of Health, then Minister of Labour and his government changed The Workers Compensation Act so that workers developing occupational diseases like pancreatic cancer must prove that the workplace was the dominant cause. A quote from the Federal Pioneer employee medical review panel, which I will read here, that it is extremely difficult to divide a causation pie in a cancer case to attribute X percent to a certain cause and Y percent to another cause.

I want to ask the Minister of Labour or the former Minister of Labour, now Minister of Health, to explain why you raised the bar, the burden of proof, to such an unachievable level by changing the standard of WCB claim acceptance from probable cause to dominant cause. Why did you make that change, now making it impossible for workers to achieve that level?

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister charged with the administration of The Workers Compensation Act): Madam Speaker, the change was made, as the member referenced, and I think he has to accept that the causes of cancer can be for many factoral reasons. It could be heredity, it could be diet, lifestyle, smoke—in the cases we referenced earlier—being around mineral oil. So these are very difficult cases.

I am sure, as I referenced earlier, the member's confidence in the chair of the board, and the CEO has confidence that these things will be dealt with. When this new evidence was brought forward in 1996 that mineral oil was the probable cause, the appropriate decisions were made.

* (1440)

Mr. Reid: Madam Speaker, the old legislation indicated that there could be a division of causes and that would be taken into consideration, but now it must be dominant cause before there would be any acceptance of the claim.

I want to ask this Minister of Labour or the former Minister of Labour, now Minister of Health, to confirm that under your legislation Federal Pioneer employee survivors will now be denied benefits since the dominant cause is medically unobtainable, as indicated by the MRP doctors' report, which I just read, and since neither the WCB or Workplace Safety and Health conduct any research on occupational diseases, and in fact you do not even have an occupational diseases panel here in Manitoba.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Madam Speaker, my honourable friend is factually incorrect. The cases that he referenced from Federal Pioneer will be adjudicated on the basis of the legislation that was in place during that period of time in the 1970s and 1980s.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would remind the honourable member for Transcona, before posing his next question, that one is to ask the minister who is responsible for the current portfolio the question.

The honourable member for Transcona, with a supplementary question.

Mr. Reid: Well, Madam Speaker, the minister should know that his own medical panel at the Compensation Board in a briefing note to the Compensation Board CEO did not use the current—[interjection] Yes, perhaps the Premier (Mr. Filmon) can answer this.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Reid: Will the Premier explain why his government changed the Workers Compensation legislation in this province so that workers now are part of a blacklist of employees that were affected in the workplace, and that the Compensation Board did not take any action to deal with the claims, the 10 outstanding claims that were there for people that have now died of pancreatic and stomach cancer—in fact you have denied some of those claims—and that we have several hundred other workers that are potentially impacted by these occupational diseases which have not been to this point in time adjudicated nor accepted by the Compensation Board and that fairness and justice have not prevailed in the treatment of these employees who have died as a result of their involvement with chemicals in the workplace and sustained workplace occupational diseases? Why have you not dealt fairly with these people?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Madam Speaker, I would point out again that the causes of cancer can be very difficult to determine, and I indicated in an earlier answer that it could be because of heredity, it could be because of diet, of lifestyle, of other circumstances. I would point out that there is no statute of limitations on these cases and that they can be appealed to the Workers Compensation Board, and if there are individuals out there with concerns, I would advise them to do so.

TeleSend Gateway Inc. Funding

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism. This minister has a sorry record in handing out grants under the Canada-Manitoba Communications Agreement. The minister lost more than \$900,000 in Iris Systems, more than \$500,000 in ManGlobe, but he really demonstrated his competence when he approved a \$200,000 grant to TeleSend Gateway when, at the time of application, the controlling mind of the firm

was serving 18 months in Milner Ridge on fraud charges.

I would like to ask the minister: what due diligence was done, and why did he approve this grant?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Madam Speaker, the members opposite may take it lightly that a young woman entering into business was not able to succeed after the support of the government in a program under communications; they may take it lightly. It was a very sincere young woman who wanted to start a business that was not able to succeed. I do not take it lightly. I, quite frankly, feel badly that she was not able to make a go of it.

Mr. Maloway: Madam Speaker, the minister is hiding again, evading the question.

Given the individual, the controlling mind of TeleSend Gateway Incorporated, had criminal convictions for fraud and a previous conviction for perjury and has a long history of lawsuits, could the minister tell this House when he found out that John Ishmael was in jail and when he learned of the previous convictions? Could he tell us when he found out about this?

Mr. Downey: Madam Speaker, I am having a hard time understanding what the member is referring to when he is referring to the "controlling mind." That is a new terminology to me. The individual that was dealt with under the communications program was a young businesswoman who received the support from the province.

Mr. Maloway: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the minister why did he authorize the second and third cheques, particularly the final \$90,000, when he knew about the outstanding lawsuits against Helen Ishmael, daughter Shalesa Charron, who he claims he was dealing with, and the fraud and perjury convictions and the bankruptcy and numerous lawsuits of John Ishmael. Why did he issue that final \$90,000 cheque once he knew about all this?

Mr. Downey: Madam Speaker, as I referred earlier, we were dealing with a young businesswoman of which I am disappointed that the project did not succeed. I am not aware of any charges or alleged charges against the individual who we were doing business with.

Water Levels Northern Manitoba

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Natural Resources.

Does the minister accept that the water flowing from the Red River flood flowed north to Hudson Bay causing high water levels in the North?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Natural Resources): Madam Speaker, unless I am being failed by my memory, I believe the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Newman) answered this question yesterday.

Mr. Jennissen: I did not feel he did answer it, Madam Speaker.

Manitoba Water Commission Hearings—Northern Manitoba

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Since the Water Commission believes that hearings in northern Manitoba are not part of their mandate, would the minister make the mandate flexible enough for a hearing in northern Manitoba?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Natural Resources): Madam Speaker, I answered that question yesterday as well.

Gurpreem Dhaliwal Sentence Appeal

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupert's Land): Madam Speaker, my question is for either the Premier (Mr. Filmon) or the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey).

I have been raising this issue for the last three days now regarding the death of Carol Hastings. We have

been asking these questions on behalf of the Okimow family very patiently and requesting some answers from the government, patiently I might add, as well, one of the virtues of aboriginal people.

This morning, I received a letter from Thomas and Ethel Okimow at Oxford House, the parents of the late Carol Hastings, and I want to quote briefly from that letter, Madam Speaker. They state in that letter that it has come to their attention that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews) stated in the Legislature that we the victims of this brutal and senseless murder were comfortable and receptive to the lenient sentence handed down by the court. This is totally false, and we resent the fact that anyone would use the word "comfortable" in describing their sorrow and pain, knowing they will never see their daughter again. The Crown attorney's office did not inform us nor consult us with any deal offered to our daughter's killer until one week before the sentencing date. Our question is: when was the deal made? They also resent the fact that anyone who would use the word "comfortable" and even think this vicious killer got what he deserved is just totally despicable and a slur against the memory of their daughter.

My question is simply this: I would like to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to request the Minister of Justice to apologize publicly to the Okimow family and also appeal this decision.

* (1450)

Hon. Darren Praznik (Acting Minister of Justice): Madam Speaker, the member for Rupertsland raises a question today in this House which is obviously a very important one. On behalf of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews), I would take it as notice, and I would ask perhaps the information that he obtained directly from the family would be of interest to the Attorney General and perhaps could be forwarded to him.

Mr. Robinson: Yes, Madam Speaker, I will table that letter I received from the family.

Madam Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Speaker's Rulings

Madam Speaker: I have four rulings for the House. Order, please. I am ruling on a point of order raised by the honourable First Minister (Mr. Filmon) on November 21, 1996, regarding words spoken by the opposition House leader during a matter of privilege. The words were "I guess the government threatened the Speaker, and she did listen."

I am ruling that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) did not have a point of order. As the appendix to the rule book states, this is a dispute between two members to allegations of facts. The opposition House leader made a statement, and the Premier disagreed.

I took under advisement on November 21, 1996, a point of order raised by the honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) concerning words he said were spoken by the Premier (Mr. Filmon). The honourable member for Flin Flon stated that the Premier called the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) a name that the member for Flin Flon would not repeat.

A review of the Hansard record relating to the matter does not show any words spoken by the Premier, nor is there anything on the audio tape to indicate words spoken by the First Minister (Mr. Filmon). Therefore, I am unable to rule on the point of order.

On November 25, 1996, the opposition House leader raised a point of order which I took under advisement. The point of order concerned an answer provided by the honourable First Minister (Mr. Filmon) to a question posed by the honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry). The question concerned the First Minister's response to a number of petitions which requested a bilingual version of the new Manitoba licence plate and which had been tabled by the honourable member for St. Boniface. In raising the point of order, the opposition House leader contended that the answer supplied by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) was not specific to the question asked.

Having reviewed Hansard, I find that the opposition House leader did indeed have a point of order. The honourable First Minister should, in replying to questions, deal with the matter raised in the question. His answer was essentially a general response about

French language services offered in the province and was not specific to the question posed by the honourable member for St. Boniface, that is, would the Premier personally re-examine the matter of bilingual automobile licence plates.

Order, please. I am ruling on a point of order raised on November 25, 1996, by the honourable member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) about the relevance of comments made by the then Minister of Government Services, the former member for Portage la Prairie, in his speech on report stage amendments to Bill 67.

Having reviewed Hansard, I find that indeed the honourable member for St. Johns did have a point of order. The minister was not being relevant to the motion which was before the House.

There had been some latitude, I believe, given in the overall debate of the report stage amendments, but the Minister of Government Services' comments had little to do with the bill or the amendment. He was speaking of the future leadership candidates for the NDP party.

I remind all honourable members when speaking to be relevant to the matter under debate.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

National Healthcare Manufacturing Corporation

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): It is a pleasure to rise this afternoon to inform the House about a growing Manitoba business located in the Sturgeon Creek constituency. National Healthcare Manufacturing Corporation held an open house and ribbon-cutting ceremony this morning to introduce the company's newly installed state-of-the-art robotic technology.

The National Healthcare Manufacturing facility produces prepackaged medical and surgical trays for hospitals, dental offices and clinics in North America. The use of this robotic packaging technology will allow the company to produce these trays in a cost-effective and efficient manner, establishing the company as a market leader.

Along with my colleagues the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik), the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey), the member for Gladstone (Mr. Rocan), and the member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), we had an opportunity to view this technology first-hand and to see the economic and employment benefits provided to Manitoba. This venture serves as an excellent example of how governments can work with local businesses to create jobs and use technology to expand businesses, making them more competitive in the global economy.

As I indicated this morning, Madam Speaker, at this event, it is indeed an honour and a privilege to work with a growing business in the constituency of Sturgeon Creek. National Healthcare is a company that offers integrity and unprecedented energy in their will to grow and prosper in our province.

We as a government have a role to ensure that we create an environment in this province to enable them to achieve that. As the MLA for the area, I commit to do everything in my power to help them achieve their success. I congratulate the staff at National Healthcare, in particular the president and CEO Mac Shamsavar for their continued efforts in keeping Manitoba strong. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

* (1500)

Elected Speaker

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): I rise on a member's statement to explain some of our concerns shared by many Manitobans about the current Speaker, where there are differences of opinion in this regard and why specifically we want an elected Speaker, which I believe everyone on all sides of the House agrees would be a good thing.

The move to an elected Speaker has been made by seven out of 10 provincial legislatures, by the House of Commons in Ottawa, and the House of Commons in Britain. That leaves only Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and Manitoba with the old method of appointing the Speaker. The NDP has been urging the Manitoba Legislature to catch up with the practices of other jurisdictions and move to an elected speakership.

We made this point most insistently two years ago following the replacement of the Speaker, and all parties of the House regarded this as fairminded. Then again last year we made this point after the government used the Speaker's rulings and authority to cut off debate on the MTS bill.

The Premier (Mr. Filmon) has not rebutted our arguments to modernize the practice of the Legislature and to restore the respect of all to the impartiality that should be attached to the office of the Speaker by making the position elected. The Premier has never argued, as has the member for Riel (Mr. Newman) yesterday, that the idea of an impartial, nonpartisan Speaker was conceived by people no longer living, and therefore out of date. What the Premier has said is that an elected Speaker will be granted to this Chamber, but not yet. Wait a couple of years. Wait until the next election and perhaps we will see an elected Speaker. If the MTS debate and more recent events in the House, including the last few days, have not shown anything, it is that there is an urgent need to renew the office of Speaker and restore the respect and reputation for impartiality to that which is necessary, as Beauchesne tells us, to the proper functioning of the Legislature.

This House and Manitobans need and deserve a Speaker who will spend more time making speedy, fair rulings and less time attending cabinet policy committees. We should not wait until we are the last Legislature in Canada to make that change. To make a fresh start, to move beyond the debates over events and decisions that have led to the situation, let us make the change now, let us elect a Speaker and in so doing revitalize our Legislature and bring Manitoba up to date. The Premier can be assured that all parties in the House would give support and grant swift passage to a bill that would provide for an elected Speaker.

Economic Growth

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Madam Speaker, our government continually seeks to create an environment that allows for expanded economic and employment opportunities for all Manitobans, and our success in this effort is clear. I would like to quote the Winnipeg Sun, dated January 16, 1997, which stated: The provincial outlook is positive. It is not just political hype. Manitoba is a place to be and a place to grow.

If you look at the list of some of the announcements occurring throughout Manitoba recently, one can see that our economy is growing and Manitobans have expanded job opportunities. For example, Simplot, the chemical fertilizer company in Brandon, which employs some 265 people, undertook a \$25-million expansion in July of 1993, and after the opening of that expansion in October of '94, they announced plans to invest \$150 million for another expansion that would triple the plant's capacity. The new Royal Bank call centre, opening in May of '98, will be hiring approximately 300 people, and as we heard on Tuesday, thanks to the tremendous efforts of many of my colleagues, there are well over 1,000 jobs coming to Brandon, an area with a new Maple Leaf Foods plant being built there.

Bristol Aerospace also was awarded a \$98.8-million contract from Boeing Canada Technology Ltd. This will involve an expansion to the Berry Street location and an additional 200 jobs in the next three years.

Madam Speaker, I have only touched on the tip of our economic iceberg as local companies expand their operations and new companies locate here. Manitobans continue to have the opportunity to live, work, invest and raise a family in the best place anywhere. Thank you.

Emergency Departments—Rural Hospitals

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): Madam Speaker, earlier this fall a great deal of attention was paid to the problems at the emergency department of the Portage la Prairie hospital by the provincial government. It was, no doubt, just a coincidence that at the time there was a by-election going on in Portage. Indeed, when I talked to residents of Portage la Prairie on visits, the crisis at the hospital was frequently raised. Sadly, many people told me they were very cynical as to whether the government had a long-term plan or just one to see it through the by-election. Now we learn that, like many of his other solutions to problems caused by this provincial government, the Health minister has simply announced a temporary plan that expired. It is part of a pattern repeated regularly by this minister. The government creates a funding crisis, says the RHA has the responsibility in the matter, and then

defers any action until the community is threatened with the loss of medical staff.

Communities like Snow Lake, Grandview, The Pas, Leaf Rapids and others know all too well how often this pattern is repeated. As the report today noted, hospital authorities in Portage la Prairie are once again scrambling to staff the emergency ward after an interim deal reached with local doctors earlier this year expired over the weekend.

Unfortunately for Portage, the province has no upcoming by-election in the community which could put pressure on this minister to deal with this latest crisis, so the community will have to live with uncertainty for some time. As always, the Health minister is relying on his tried-and-tested formula: if something is wrong, talk to the RHA; if there is an opportunity for a photo appearance, call my office and I will bring a camera. Health reform under this minister has become even more cynical than under his predecessor. Small wonder that there are so few opportunities for him to make photo appearances.

Gaming Facilities

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I thought maybe I would take this particular opportunity to give a bit better of a response in terms of when earlier I had asked the question about lotteries to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), expecting and hoping that the Minister of Finance would indicate to the House a little bit more detail in terms of what plan, if any, the government actually has.

To the very best I can tell, I still believe that they do not have any sort of a plan with respect to a gaming policy for the province of Manitoba. I would like very much to see something happen, some sort of indication from the government that in fact the government is committed to addressing the whole lotteries issue, even if it means having to give up on some of the revenue that has been generated in favour of our communities and getting rid of some of those negative social factors that are out there as a result.

With those few words, Madam Speaker, I will end it at that.

Hansard Correction

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I have a Hansard correction, Madam Speaker. Yesterday, Hansard, page 143, it states, "The Speaker is above sexual interests". I realize I have a cold, and Hansard may have misunderstood me, but I said "sectional," not "sexual."

Madam Speaker: I thank the honourable member for Thompson for that clarification.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE (Fifth Day of Debate)

Madam Speaker: To resume adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), and the proposed amendment by the honourable Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer), standing in the name of the honourable member for Turtle Mountain who has 15 minutes remaining.

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): Madam Speaker, I will pick up where I was yesterday just discussing some of the positive things that I have been hearing and seeing in the health care field. It was interesting today to listen to the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) talk about RHAs, and I would like to just put a few comments on the record in regard to the southwest RHA, who since their inception, I believe, have been functioning. I think one of the things that has struck me the most is the amount of work that these people have taken on and basically taken on as board members. I am sure they have been overwhelmed with the amount, and perhaps if they had a chance to rethink their positions, would probably put some stipulations in before they so graciously accepted.

The RHA in the southwest has been progressing. One of the current things that they are doing now is doing a needs assessment study of all the communities that the RHA represents, and that RHA takes in several government boundaries as far as constituency. I think the real thing I have seen from attending their meetings and talking to the members that I have met is the real sense of co-operation that is out there.

When we have communities from great distances over the years that have competed against each other on a daily basis for economic growth, for health growth, for health care in their communities basically on a day-to-day basis for as long as I can remember, and I think for as long as these communities have been around to today co-operating and communicating with each other, sharing ideas, sharing certain perspectives on their communities, I think that it has been a very positive step for the region and for the area particularly that I represent.

* (1510)

I know that a couple of the hospitals in my particular constituency now share emergency services with doctors between the two communities, and I would suggest to you that 10 years ago and perhaps even five years ago that probably would not have happened. I see it as a very positive situation. Not only does it allow both communities to provide the services that the people expect and ask for, but by sharing it we have eliminated some of the stress and some of the work overload that doctors sometimes experience in smaller rural communities.

One of the tasks that I have been asked to take forward on behalf of the Department of Health through the minister's office is in the recruitment of doctors. We recognize that there is a need for more doctors in rural and northern Manitoba, and we are working on putting policy in place to recruit doctors to solve the immediate shortage but also to deal with the College of Physicians and the universities to try to put in place some sort of a process that will encourage our Canadian-trained, Manitoba-trained doctors to spend some time in rural and northern Manitoba. We are hoping that if we can put some sort of process in place that will encourage that and it actually happens, that once people come out and see what we have to offer in rural Manitoba and experience some of the positive things that we see happening out there, they will want to stay and raise their families and become a bigger part of our community.

Certainly, doctors, I think, are considered to be a very integral and important part to the communities in which they serve and the larger community as a whole, and I think that we as communities have really recognized

that statement in the past few years. I think that new doctors who come out to rural Manitoba, be they from another country or from the province or from any part in Canada, are going to experience a real warm welcome, and it will be shown to them that they are appreciated in their communities.

Another group of people in our communities who, I think, at times feel somewhat neglected and that I want to address is the fact with our education system and the teachers in our communities. I have the pleasure of a good-working relationship, I would say, with all the schools in my communities, and I always look forward to attending events there and also just going in and spending some time with them. I just want to comment that the people I am meeting and particularly on the education side, the teachers, they have a very positive attitude about what they are doing. I think that they recognize and are concerned, as all Manitobans are, with what has happened in the past few years in regard to the direction of education.

I think that, like everyone, when things tighten up and the economy tightens up, they certainly feel the pinch, as everybody within that economic system does. I think that the comment I hear most often from them is the fact that they recognize it. They know that the people in their community and their neighbours, their friends have experienced and are experiencing more difficult times, particularly on the economic side. I think that is why they have been certainly agreeable and understanding as far as what some of the things that government is doing in trying to work this situation out.

I do want them to know publicly, and I put it on the record and when I am talking to them, that their work is definitely appreciated by the people who live in those communities. When I talk to parents, I think we certainly have a good rapport with them. One of the strengths that I see happening in the education system right now is with the development of the parent advisory councils, and in my particular communities they are becoming very active, probably more active than I presumed they would. They are taking a very important role in the communities in encouraging and offering direction and assistance to the management of the schools and the facilities that exist within the Turtle Mountain boundaries.

It is quite interesting that I do represent three school divisions in my particular constituency. I share them with other constituencies, but I think one of the interesting things that has taken place in the last little while is the introduction or the suggestion about perhaps the merger of some of the school divisions that I have—Tiger Hills being one of them and a piece of Pembina that I share on the other end—talking about getting together and looking for the economics of amalgamation and sharing a lot of the services.

A lot of them they have already done, and they have moved that way in the past few years, but to me it indicates a willingness again of communities prepared to drop the barriers that once divided them and once caused them great anguish when we were competing head to head and now recognizing that the situation has changed and that if we do not share and do not co-operate together, it will eventually lead to the diminishing of both sides' ability to function in the communities that they serve.

When I talk of amalgamation, I do also want to just suggest one of the areas again. The good things that I see happening in my constituency is that the town of Killarney in the R.M. of Turtle Mountain, an R.M. that surrounds one community—it has no other communities as far as smaller communities or anything; it is an R.M. and one town—are sitting at the table negotiating how they can amalgamate and put together a package where they will all work together as one council as opposed to two, how they will share office space, how they will share secretarial space and basically become one municipality.

I think that is a very forward-looking thing for councils to do in today's society. In my own mind, I think it is a necessity, but I think that for these two communities or areas to take the leadership role in this, I know there has certainly been lots of communication and lots of press done on it, and I think sometimes the council members and their leaders in council feel quite a bit of pressure from the outside, which is watching them very closely, because I think what happens in this particular situation will probably act as a catalyst to many of the things that will happen in the future in regards to municipalities and how they look and view each other in the sharing of services.

The communities that I represent are generally small communities, I guess, the largest one being approximately 2,500, but I have several smaller communities in the 400 or 500, 800 population. One of the pleasures I have had since being elected, I think, is being able to go into these communities, and when you first start campaigning you may not know people or may not feel comfortable walking into these communities but as time has passed and I have spent more and more time with these communities, learning about what they are doing and what is happening, I feel a real closeness that has developed between myself, and I know whenever we travel about the constituency with my family, it has always been a positive response. I think things are doing and going very well in rural Manitoba.

Some of the recent announcements that we have heard about and read about have certainly verified that things are good in Turtle Mountain, as they are in the rest of the province, as the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) announced today and the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer). When I sit and listen to the members' statements that announce some of the things that are going on in their communities, I feel the same pride that they do because it means that some of the things that government is doing to build the framework to allow this to happen is happening, and it is happening in a very positive way.

We see unemployment at a very low level in the province of Manitoba. I always look at it the other way. I like to say that employment is way up, as opposed to the other side. I think it all depends on what side of the fence you are sitting on, as to how you present the facts. I think that when it is positive news we have to acknowledge it as positive news and express that to the people, because I think it is that good, positive feeling that we take forward to all people, not just to the people in my constituency but to all Manitobans. I believe it is contagious and will rub off on people.

* (1520)

I think that one of the things I would like to put on the record in regards to the throne speech, and I believe it truly represents what the people of Turtle Mountain say to me, maybe not in the exact words, but what they say to me in their day-to-day life, how they operate

their life and how they live within their families and in their communities and in the larger communities of the province. The speech says that the government's vision for the future is based on a sound economy, balanced budgets and repaying the debt, and it is one of shared and growing economic prosperity and providing and protecting essential services of health, education and family support for Manitobans.

I think that the message that I hear most out there is once we do get our fiscal house in order, which many believe that the province has and will continue to manage it properly through balanced budgets, through balanced budget legislation, which is a leader among the provinces in Canada, I think that the message that I hear the most is once the fiscal responsibility gets in line everything else follows. I think when we can offer to the communities and to the people of Manitoba that we are responsible, that we are not forgetting what follows after that and with the responsibility to the people is the fact that now that we are able to listen and understand the concerns that they are putting forward, not only that, we are able to do something about it because we have worked diligently and hard to put the blocks in place to create what we have in Manitoba, and that is a future with a sound economy.

I would like to end just by thanking my constituents for all the support they have given me. I think that as I do, I think they feel comfortable calling me, day or night sometimes, but I think that when you are there and the phone rings you have to answer. I think that is how I have operated in my life in business and I have tried to continue that in politics. I thank the people from Turtle Mountain for giving me the opportunity to work with a great team of people, a diverse group of people, but everybody brings something good to the table, and I think it has helped me to grow as a person and in the learning that I have experienced in the short time I have been here. So with that, Madam Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity, and I wish you well.

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): I want to welcome to the Assembly the new member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurichou). I wish him well and I urge him to bring to this Chamber an expression of those voices that we and myself heard at the doors in Portage la Prairie when we were out helping our candidate in

the by-election. Those voices were so often directed at concern about this government's policies on education and on health care and home care and on support for vulnerable people, on public housing and on issues of public safety. So I urge you to bring to this Chamber more than simply the business interests, although we want to hear that as well from Portage la Prairie.

Mr. Ben Sveinson, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

As well, I urge the new member not to be corrupted by this government. I think it is a corrupting experience sitting with these people, and I urge him not to listen long to the member next to him, the member for Riel (Mr. Newman) who urged on your ears yesterday, fellow member, that you should disregard voices from the past if you have not heard those people yourself or seen or met them. This place is built on voices from the past, as we have tried to focus on over the last number of days, Mr. Acting Speaker.

I might also just comment that I think Portage la Prairie has become recognized now as the by-election capital of Manitoba, and I would not be surprised if the members here call for his resignation as well so that the members or his constituents will enjoy further disproportionate attention from this government as we saw in the days leading up to the by-election.

I notice that there is a new person sitting at the table, and I look forward and I urge the Chair to introduce that individual to the Chamber and to her challenges as she works with us here on a daily basis. [interjection] I heard from someone that that has already been done. Is that correct? I regret missing that. I will look for that in Hansard.

In addressing the throne speech, Mr. Acting Speaker, I want to pay particular attention to justice issues as the Justice minister did in his remarks. I think it is becoming quite clear to all Manitobans that there is a loss of confidence in our justice system in this province. Now I harken back to the election days in 1995 when this government ran on public safety as an important part of its campaign, and I look at a particular brochure that the government distributed and it says: The message is clear, Manitobans want law and order and public safety.

There is a picture of the Premier (Mr. Filmon), Mr. Acting Speaker, with some prison bars, and inside it says with an exclamation mark: Tough on crime! Of course, we all recall during the election campaign there were television ads with the Premier slamming shut the prison doors. Yes, that was an important part of their campaign, and now let us look and see how they are doing. I do not think we have to talk statistics. People in Manitoba feel less safe today than they did even before the last election campaign, I dare say. This city is not the same city in terms of its safety as it was even five, six years ago.

But the statistics justify our fear, our increasing fear for our safety. Of all the provinces in Canada, Mr. Acting Speaker, Manitoba has the highest rate of violent crime. This has been going on for several years, and I have in front of me the graph from the Centre for Justice Statistics in Ottawa that is not much different than several years previous. What is disturbing even more so is that these crime stats, it is reported, are faulty. Indeed, even with the highest violent crime rate in Canada, we understand that one in three crimes went unreported in the statistics that went to Ottawa. Some say in the police department that the true crime rate is actually 30 percent higher. In other words, the graph that I have showing how terrible our violent crime rate is in this province is much worse than it first appears.

Now we have a serious problem in this province, one that is disproportionately serious to Manitobans, and when you think of those statistics in terms of the number of victims, it becomes even more horrifying. In Manitoba last year there could have been as many as 17,000 victims of just violent crime. There could have been over 100,000 victims of all crime, Mr. Acting Speaker. We recognize that those statistics are hard to determine because many, many victims of crime do not ever report, and I think in particular of the 95 percent of those victims of sexual assault that Statistics Canada estimates never come forward.

Over the last few years alone in this province there have been new crime threats never experienced to the degree that we are facing, and I think, for example, of the home-invasion threat that we now have to deal with.

I recognize that home invasions are not unique to Manitoba. I mean, even the Prime Minister's residence had a home invasion, and there was a home with a security system, with police at the gates, video surveillance. In fact, a story that comes out of that, Mr. Acting Speaker, that Mrs. Chretien got Mr. Chretien up in the night and said: Jean, Jean, I think there is a thief in the house. He woke up and looked at her and said that I think there is more than one and a few in the Senate as well.

The other threat is the presence of street gangs, particularly in the city of Winnipeg, but now emanating out from the city throughout this province. This threat is coming to a community near you. We do not have to think long about some of the tragedies that have resulted to Manitobans because of this new threat of street gangs. It is once again shameful that this government never so much as even acknowledged the threat of street gangs in the throne speech. Hear no evil, see no evil. It does not exist.

There is a new concern now, what do you do with these street gang leaders? Do you put them in prisons? When you put them in there, they start recruiting, and the prisons in Manitoba become the major breeding grounds and major areas of gang recruitment and activity. We are concerned that the people that are coming out of the prisons in Manitoba are coming out as gang members. Of course, Mr. Acting Speaker, in Saskatchewan they are concerned about them coming out all Tories.

The other concern that has risen dramatically over the last year or so is the rise in the power and organization of biker gangs, and, of course, the rise in violent youth crime. Now what did the government promise in the last election campaign? First of all, I want to talk about victims. They promised new programs for victims. They promised that victims' rights would be given top priority by the judicial system. Well, what did they do to crime victims? Just last year they brought in a system whereby victims of auto theft had to pay a \$200 deductible. It did not matter whether you left your car running, with the doors open in the middle of the road, or whether you had your vehicle with a club on it, locked and in your garage, you still had to pay that deductible. That is the government's level of respect for victims.

Last December a report was presented to the government from Prairie Research Associates that we had to release because this government was so afraid of what was in it. In that report the government was criticized for almost every aspect of how it deals with victims in this province. The report said there was no unified vision on victims' assistance; there was no co-ordination in sharing of information. It bemoaned the lack of a victim impact statement, a statement of victims' rights. It is interesting in the throne speech, it says resources dedicated to victim services will be increased. You know, I have seen that time and time again. In the election campaign even, the Premier said there would be \$250,000 of new money given for Victims Assistance in the '95-96 fiscal year, a very strange election promise, an exact amount, an exact fiscal year. None of that ever came true. So we will wait and see once again.

Yesterday we raised in the House the pathetic record of this government on Victims Assistance and how it has turned its back and shut down the Victims Assistance Committee, which was the one organization that was dedicated to victims needs and had brought together victims with prosecutors and with the police, with defence lawyers, with judges. It had a good record. By 1992, it was evaluating victims projects throughout the province and provided a mechanism whereby ministers could be advised on the needs and rights of victims and how we can improve the justice system so that victims indeed are given a place.

But there, tabled on Monday, were the annual reports going back to 1994 reporting in each of two fiscal years that not once during those fiscal years was the Victims Assistance Committee ever called to meet. Particularly confounding, given that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) during the election in promising new Victims Assistance funding said that the Victims Assistance Committee would be the one that would put the money to work. The Premier's promise has not been fulfilled both because there has been no new funding and because there has been no Victims Assistance Committee.

Well, then, let us look at the election promise that the government made a big deal of in the campaign, and I look at a Free Press article from April 12 of 1995, big headlines, no wheels for johns, P.C.s say. Oh, these

were tough guys. They were going to take away and forfeit the vehicles of johns, of those who preyed on women and prostitutes in Manitoba. What happened? Last session we saw what happened to that promise. This government decided to have a one-day john seminar. Now, for some reason people call it a john school. I have never heard of a school that lasted a few hours, no more than a day.

The other big piece of course is this tough-on-crime talk that we saw in the election campaign, and I just want to spend a little while talking about what ever happened to that kind of commitment. What we do have are imaginary boot camps. We have unserved sentences, we have insecure prisons, and we have the undermining of our judges.

Let us spend a little while on Corrections. I do not think there is a Manitoban out there who when thinking about justice in Manitoba does not go back to those images that we see time and time again on television of the Headingley riot. Are we talking tough on crime when we look at what happened leading up to the Headingley riot? No, we are talking stupid on crime. We had a situation develop there where time after time after time the workers of that facility were complaining that they were in an unsafe environment, that the regulations governing the conduct of inmates was being loosened continually while at the same time the inmate population was becoming increasingly violent with gang activity. But this government turned a blind eye. It did not care.

Then we had the spectacle of the then Minister of Justice rallying herself in front of the riot location saying that the inmates were going to repair the institution, and Manitobans wondered, now this minister is going to give these inmates saws and hammers and crowbars, and they are going to go in there and they are going to repair this place. Not only that, but this Minister of Justice has already decided on who the culprits were and who precipitated the riot. No need for charges to be laid, no need for any court decisions on guilt or innocence. No, that was going to be decided.

Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, we have some dire need in this province for greater restitution, but that is not what that was about. What that was about was undermining

the authority of the justice system and the Justice minister in this province by saying something that cannot be backed up, by saying something that was not thought through. That was not tough. That was not tough on crime; that was stupid on crime.

Then we had the release of Mr. Rouire who, and it has now been proved beyond a reasonable doubt, within days of his premature release into the community without conditions, without special conditions, without any supervision, without, I understand, completing any required anger-management programming, murdered Mr. Futch at Inwood. Tough on crime, Mr. Acting Speaker. No, maybe tough on the bottom line, but stupid on crime.

* (1540)

Now it is an interesting question, and I wonder what is worse: the escape at Headingley of a maximum security prisoner facing a murder charge or the staff at the Remand Centre who were waving goodbye to Mr. Robert Guiboche as he was mistakenly released. Mr. Guiboche, by the way, was also facing a murder charge. Is this tough on crime? No, this is stupid on crime. Why are maximum security remanded inmates being held in a minimum security place at Headingley? Why is it that this government has turned a blind eye at recommendation after recommendation for a better communication system, information system to link courts and Corrections and Prosecutions?

Then let us look at some acquittals. Now what is worse, going to court as in the Lisa Drover case when no witnesses were being subpoenaed or not going to court because the department had the wrong date for the trial? To court or not to court. It is interesting that in the latter case the Crown failed to go to court because of a mixup in the trial date. The victim in that case, Mr. Zoldy, was never even notified until days later, and what was sad in the Drover case, one of the saddest circumstances that I have seen since elected, was that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews), the current minister, was so callous, so disregarded the needs of Ms. Drover, he did not have the courtesy to extend an apology to her, let alone look into how that terrible mixup could be prevented in the future.

Then we see the Kuchtey trial where days after the Crown made bold statements in the court that the

accused would indeed be found guilty had to fold the trial because the main witness was in Vancouver at the time of the incident, and this minister says that everything is okey-dokey, I do not have to look into anything here. As far as I am concerned, everything was handled just fine. It is self-evident that everything is not fine. That case and its failure put the administration of justice into disrepute in this province once again. Surely the Crown did not have the necessary resources to adequately investigate this matter, to follow up on the police investigation, to interview the key witness, particularly in light of information given to us by one of the defence lawyers that the Crown was made aware of the discrepancy in the key witness's whereabouts before the trial began.

That, Mr. Acting Speaker, was to be the trial of the year. It involved a very heinous murder. It involved allegedly very heinous perpetrators. That should have been a model prosecution. That should have been a prosecution where the evidence was gone over with a fine-tooth comb way in advance of the trial date, but this minister turns a blind eye.

We have been calling for an operational review of the resources that have been given to the Crown prosecutors by this government. Paralegal help was pulled away from those Crown prosecutors in the last several years. Last year there was a reduction of \$100,000 in the Prosecutions branch budget. At the same time the number of charges from the City of Winnipeg to the prosecutors has been increasing, and at the same time, as discovered by operational reviews in Saskatchewan and Alberta, the complexity of the cases that the Crown has to deal with has become more challenging, particularly with the advent of the Charter.

We do not believe that this minister is doing a credit to Manitobans and to their safety by refusing to heed our advice and order an operational review so that Manitobans can be assured that their safety will be protected by an adequately funded and supported Prosecutions branch in this province.

I want to talk about victims and the callousness of this government. It was Paul Samyn who said on CBC Radio one Friday morning, and I will quote. He said, nothing changes. This is a government that never does wrong. The minister's staff are loath to admit that they

have ever, not just done wrong—it is almost like they are loath to admit they did not do the best thing possible. We see time and time again—we had two things from the Justice minister, and it is interesting. One, a big campaign commitment from the Tories in 1995, a front-page story in the Winnipeg Free Press, Tories to get tough on johns; going to crack down on the sex trade; seizing the vehicles of johns who were using teenage prostitutes. Two years later the bill does not do that. It does not seize their vehicles; it does not sell them off. Does the minister admit that? No. The minister, in fact, does not come very close, I would say, to lying about it in the Chamber in terms of what the bill actually does. [interjection] I am quoting from Mr. Paul Samyn.

The government does not even admit that they have made a change on the legislation, and similarly when there are some questions being raised about the case of the 12-year-old who was sexually assaulted while babysitting, does not even seem to admit that maybe his Crown attorneys did not do as well as possible and then did not provide any empathy or sympathy, I would say, for the victim. It is kind of strange when they talk all about victims' rights, this, that and the other. They are not even admitting that things could have been better, end of quote.

The same thing with the Crown prosecutors. Despite this ugly parade of foulups that we have seen in prosecutions over the last number of months, this government has no concern, it appears, for Manitobans and their confidence in the justice system, let alone their safety. I do not think that could be any clearer than when we look at gangs.

When Eric Vargas was murdered, there was a message that this government should have heard loud and clear. The death of Eric Vargas gave a message to this government: Wake up, stop the denial of the threat of street gangs in this province and do something. Do something comprehensive.

Well, it was after, and in fact within weeks of the Vargas murder that we began researching, interviewing, testing ideas about how we can most effectively counter the rising threat of gang activity in this province. We spoke to people throughout this province. We spoke to everyone from attorneys general to street workers to

police officers and not just in Canada. We looked at projects that have been tried as far away as Missouri and Los Angeles, from projects from British Columbia and some that have been tried in Manitoba. We put together an 18-point action plan. We costed it, and we presented it to the public and to the government, and what was the response of the Minister of Justice? She said we are doing these things. Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, that pathetic response is not what Manitobans deserve.

* (1550)

This government had an opportunity in its throne speech to identify gang activity as an area of concern, an area of concern that is brought to the attention of members of all sides of this House, I am confident, Mr. Acting Speaker, on a regular basis, but this government is out of touch. It has isolated itself from the needs of people. It is bunkering in., it is defensive. It is tired and only becomes lively in its arrogance.

That arrogance I think came through loud and clear at yet another opportunity when the Lavoie report was released not many weeks ago. At that time the Justice minister said when you are a leader in this area, where do you go to for advice. An astounding statement, arrogance and smugness in the face of 91 recommendations. Those 91 recommendations said you have 91 improvements to make; you have 91 areas of failure. I would say to the Justice minister, where do you go to for advice? You do not have to go further than the boundaries of Saskatchewan or Minnesota to find better models than exist in this province.

When the member for Brandon West (Mr. McCrae) was Justice minister, I suspect the government at that time had more vigour than it does now certainly. At least he rallied himself to responding to the Pedlar report with several pages of promises, most of which by the way have never been fulfilled. But they had some vigour; they recognized that they had a long way to go. What we saw following the release of the Lavoie report paled in comparison. We will be dealing more with this government's record and promises on domestic violence in the near future.

We were also concerned that the throne speech at no time mentions any commitment to legislation following

on the release of the Lavoie report. It talks about increased funding, the need of which is self-evident. But Mr. Justice Schulman talked about much more than funding, Mr. Acting Speaker, and I regret the government has not seen fit to rally itself to the needs particularly of Manitoba women and children. They do not want to look at the issue of children itself and how well are we protecting our children in Manitoba.

The Bauder case is a dark cloud over this government. Yes, there were remarks made from the Court of Appeal which should not have been made, I believe, but, when you look beyond what the Court of Appeal said, you find that the prosecution of this case took over 18 months, 13 appearances, we are told. The case was shuffled among six different prosecutors. The presentence report went missing and over 18 months no one ever spoke to the victim. No one ever did an in-depth interview. In fact, even when the Bauder case went to the Supreme Court of Canada on a leave to appeal, there was wrong information put forward by the prosecution, information that should never have gone forward and would not have gone forward if the victim had been consulted, if there had been a victim impact statement. Never was the family ever consulted before a plea bargain was entered into.

Is this tough on crime, Mr. Acting Speaker? No. This is stupid on crime. This is uncaring and it is contrary to the interest of public safety and, in this case, our children.

Then it comes to crime prevention. This is the government that is worsening the conditions that breed crime in this province. This is the government that is cutting those investments in people, whether in education, whether in income security, whether even in health care, and I know the government this summer made a big to-do about the sports camp that it was helping to fund in the inner city, in and of itself an idea long overdue and a project that we support. But while it did that, a very few blocks from that site of the Urban Sports Camp was the boarded up building of the north Y, a facility that this province has turned its back on despite questions and letters to ministers opposite. Only blocks from that facility used to exist the Night Hoops program, a program funded by the Department of Justice itself as a crime prevention technique that this government killed.

Only blocks from the Urban Sports Camp, Mr. Acting Speaker, is the Winnipeg Friendship Centre, a facility that lost every nickel of its funding under this government that resulted in the layoff of several youth workers, what I would call crime-prevention workers that provided mentoring, role models, friends, and a place for inner city youth, aboriginal youth to go to and find positive alternatives.

No, it is one step forward, three steps back, but the despair, the pockets of despair that have been developing in this province under this administration are factors leading to the violent crime rate that I spoke of earlier. The government gives lip service to crime prevention. It gave lip service to the recommendation in the Hughes report that this government must have a role in dealing with the big picture, in providing employment opportunities, educational opportunities for marginalized Manitobans, but it does not do the job. Is this tough on crime? No, this is stupid on crime.

I even heard the minister go on about the virtues of youth justice committees in this province and how important it was that the communities be involved in dealing with crime. We on this side have been hammering away at this government to get serious with youth justice committees, expand their mandate, expand their number. We produced a paper on this one. We have gone around the province talking about this. I know from first-hand experience from the youth justice council in our community, what I understand now is a model because its members are elected and are comprised of youth, the importance of youth justice committees, so I was dismayed when I heard that at the Crime Prevention Awards in Portage la Prairie last month, as an honourable mention, the St. Johns Youth Justice Council was named.

I do not know who nominated the Youth Justice Council of which I am a member. We were never told about it, and when the people at the front said is someone here from the Youth Justice Council, of course no one was there because no one knew about it. Is that a respect for volunteerism, for community-based measures for dealing with crime? That was a slap in the face for all of those volunteers who worked so hard on that council, because we are also proud of the work that we are doing. We hope that it will be recognized, Mr. Acting Speaker, but for its name to show up at the

end of a ceremony without any knowledge is astounding.

* (1600)

Now, Mr. Acting Speaker, when they talk over on the other side about getting tough on crime, I say, okay, let us get tough on crime, if that means that the wrongdoers, the offenders, must be held accountable for what they have done. They must face up, change their behaviour before consequences are removed, but the real need is to get serious on crime. It is to get smart on crime. We have to rebuild the justice system in many ways, but the most important way we must rebuild the justice system is with the needs of victims in mind.

Whether it is through improvement to victim compensation and services, whether by way of a bill of rights, a victims' bill of rights that is enforceable, whether it is through youth justice committees that require young offenders to be accountable to the community and hopefully to the victim where the victim agrees, whether it is through sentencing circles, whether it is through family group conferencing, whether it is through mediation, we must bring the victim in, because, after all, it is the victim who is the most affected by the crime and yet under this government is the most left out of the system.

Finally, Mr. Acting Speaker, when is this government going to get serious about the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry report, because all I heard in the throne speech was a commitment, an important one albeit, to an alternative measures program for aboriginal youth in Winnipeg, but that is a three-year project only, a commitment of \$200,000 a year, and the bottom line there is the bottom line unfortunately. The government's test as to whether this will be successful will be whether it saves money without considering how it will improve the safety of Manitobans, how it will change for the better the behaviour of young aboriginal offenders.

In conclusion, I say I have talked about the victims of the justice system, that this is the government that has created victims across the spectrum, Mr. Acting Speaker. There are victims of the flood, there are victims in health care, victims in education, victims in

social services, victims in housing. This government has created more victims in this province of all kinds than any other government in the history of this province, and in so isolating itself from the needs of people, this government has failed and failed miserably. I will be supporting the amendment to the motion on the throne speech as proposed by my Leader.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Acting Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand and put a few words on the record. This is my 13th opportunity to speak to a throne speech. I am proud to say 11 of them have been from the government side of the House, so I have had a little experience over there but all I ever want to really have.

I would like to extend congratulations to the Speaker for convening this session and welcome to the six new pages to whom I would recommend do not listen to everything that happens in this House, because it would kind of maybe sour you on the role of politics, but I would really like to welcome our new member to the House, one David Fauschou from Portage la Prairie. I know his family, I know his father, and therefore I know he will be a good member, because he will be under control like you would not believe, but, David, welcome to the House, and I know you will be a long-term contributing member to the government side of the House.

I would also like to make a couple of comments about one of the retired members, Mr. Jim Ernst, the former member for Charleswood, who entered this House the same day that I did back in 1986, and commend him for 24 years of service to the public of Winnipeg and Manitoba, a very committed member who gave his all and is now in another form of employment which has him excited and I am sure will allow him an opportunity to contribute to the province even further.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I thought about what I would talk about, and then I thought, well, I have been around awhile, maybe I should talk about how I see things unfolding in this House. The last few days have been rather interesting, I guess, but from the standpoint of democracy fairly discouraging to see members across

the way just do not have the ability to debate the issues, maybe have nothing to offer and have decided in the long term maybe the government is on the right track and they realize they have always been on the wrong track, on the wrong side of issue after issue in the eyes of the public, so they have carried on a high level of character assassination of certain individuals, which I find deplorable, unacceptable and unwarranted absolutely. [interjection]

The member in front of me says another word maybe I will not put on the record, but it is an appropriate word.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I want to reflect in a more positive vein on things that have happened more recently across the province, and I will mention only a few, because it serves to highlight what I want to talk about to some extent here. The euphoric announcement in Brandon yesterday and Toronto the day before clearly is a symbol, to the member for Brandon West (Mr. McCrae), clearly a symbol, the most recent symbol of the success of what this government has done to make this the province to invest in. Maple Leaf Foods is a very big company, the largest food processor in all of Canada, some 1,150 jobs, which will, in the words of the mayor of Brandon, increase the population of Brandon by 25 percent. That is only the tip of the iceberg in terms of what it will do for Brandon and western Manitoba.

The very presence of Maple Leaf Foods is going to create unbelievable spin-off benefits for Brandon and area and I would say at least a hundred miles out of Brandon, definite spin-off benefits to the city of Winnipeg, directly in terms of the jobs, very directly in terms of all the services that need to be provided to that plant and particularly into rural Manitoba where the hogs will be produced.

I remember days ago, maybe going back two, two and a half years, when the debate in this House was about the Crow benefit. The opposition chastised us for even talking about changing the method of payment. [interjection]

Mr. Acting Speaker, if the member opposite wants to talk about something, I believe in the course of the Throne Speech Debate he will have his opportunity. If

he does not like what I am saying, maybe he would have the courtesy to allow me to speak, because, you know, what he has just done is so symbolic of the opposition. They have nothing to contribute. All they want to do is try to shout out anybody from this side of the House who wants to put something on the record. This is a democratic place where 57 members have the right to speak, but maybe I should say 56, because you know the Speaker cannot speak, so you attack her from your seat. That is it; 56 can speak but you attack the one who cannot. Yes, you are really a man of a lot of courage.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the benefits to Manitoba because of that announcement are far reaching. Yes, the fact that they are there is going to create jobs, and the workers, through their unions, have made a considerable amount of impact and will make impact out there. I heard the member opposite yesterday say something about, well, labour is a partner too. Yes, labour is a big partner, not only in the plant but throughout the production, transportation of the hogs in the hog industry.

I want to touch briefly on a few other things that have happened just to remind the members that this is not just a one-time event. Currently right now Isobord is building in Elie a \$160-million investment in the province of Manitoba. McCain in Portage has gone under considerable expansion; Midwest Food in Carberry, considerable expansion in the french fry industry, because they export world-class, high-quality french fries to the United States, to Japan and other locations. Simplot in Brandon I believe is investing \$200 million expanding their plant; Schneider's in Winnipeg investing some \$50 million to expand their plant. Canadian Agra is building in Ste. Agathe, multimillions of investment in the agripark. Great-West Life here has made a significant addition so that they are now the largest insurance company of all of Canada; Palliser Furniture, big expansion there; Buhler Industries, numerous expansions going on, and Mr. John Buhler was just named the entrepreneur of the year.

Broadband Networks, three years ago you did not hear of them, just sold their business for \$576 million, unbelievable story of success, happened right here in Manitoba, in Winnipeg, by a Manitoban. Clearly the

technology he developed is leading edge. It has brought to farm homes in Manitoba cable television which they never had the capacity to have by a digitalized microwave system. That industry, that expansion of that particular sector is going to be phenomenal. The sales in Japan, the sales in New York are going to be phenomenal. You do not have to put a hard wire now though. Send the message, send the signal on digitalized microwave systems.

We have seen billions of dollars of additional investment happening in the province of Manitoba by Manitobans, by people outside that have looked at Manitoba and said, you know, what is happening there? Why do we have such a low unemployment rate here? I ask, why has that investment increased by 25 percent in the last two years? It is because of activities that this government has undertaken over the last number of years that have generated the positive attitude in Manitobans, and Manitobans want to have a positive attitude, Mr. Acting Speaker.

* (1610)

I just reflect back now for a moment to 1988, since the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) is here. He was here before '88, sat way up here somewhere, maybe just not too far from Jim Walding, who turned the events of history in Manitoba fairly significantly. At that particular time, what the province of Manitoba saw was a government that had a tax-and-spend philosophy, a government that had the desire to control everything, the government that had many Crown corporations in desperate states and losing large volumes of money. Then we came into government, first as a minority government, followed by two successive additional re-elections.

I want to just review some of the aspects of the Filmon vision that we have played out over the course of the last nine years in this province, which has led to the long list of investments I have just recently mentioned, and they are only a few of all the positive activities that have—[interjection]

An Honourable Member: Tell us about the Jets. We want to hear about that. That was a good one. Save the Jets.

Mr. Findlay: Again we have got another member who does not like to hear what is said from this House, so how you deal with it is to try to shout everybody down. That is democracy at its best. I want to ask the member, if he wants to speak, he can wait his turn, because this is the freedom of speech—

Point of Order

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Sveinson): Order, please. The honourable member for Thompson, on a point of order.

Mr. Ashton: On a point of order, Mr. Acting Speaker, the speaker was addressing a number of comments directly at me. I, in a very, believe you me, for me, in a very low tone of voice—I have a cold too; it is actually hard to shout, period. I was just responding to some of the comments. I think that level of exchange is fairly standard in the House, and I would ask the minister to withdraw the suggestion that he was being shouted down. Having lost my ability on the freedom of speech last year on MTS, I can tell you—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Sveinson): Order, please. The honourable member for Thompson does not have a point of order, simply a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Acting Speaker, I want to go over some of the things that have happened by this government over the last nine years that led to the positive—[interjection] Well, in due course. I would refer to them in the broad sense of being astute fiscal management and prudence in the way every issue has been dealt with. Certainly, the first issue we got involved in was to control the cost of government to increase the efficiency of government, and I believe it is fairly common knowledge that we now have the lowest-cost government in all of Canada.

We brought in the 10-year and it will soon be 11-year tax freeze, which is the longest in North America. It certainly allows us to say that we live within our means as a province and the citizens respect that. We brought in the balanced budget and the one that is coming up in this particular session will be balanced budget No. 4.

We have passed legislation that sets in motion the process of debt paydown over the next 30 years.

We have put in place the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, which I certainly heard members opposite speak against on many occasions. They did not understand the reason for it, and when the flood of 1997 came along and we had the fiscal capability to deal with the flood cost both before, during and after out of that fund indicates the wisdom of having the fund there. Certainly, the fund has also led to the opportunity to deal with the fiscal reductions coming from Ottawa.

Over the course of time, we continue to invest in critical strategic infrastructure in the province of Manitoba, its sewer and water projects, its roads, its schools, its hospitals—those kinds of investments allow the economy to run. Naturally, we all know that more investments in those areas would be appreciated, but if you live within your means, you do what is right in the critical sense along the way.

Going back to what I talked about earlier in terms of the investments in the food processing industry, way back in '88-89, we were talking about promoting the concept of diversification in rural Manitoba and value-added industries. Now, as things have unfolded and I have read the long list of those investments that people have done, clearly the Province of Manitoba has responded to opportunities that exist.

I mentioned earlier the changing in the method of Crow payment, and there was tremendous opposition to that discussion. But it was kind of funny that as—and I will relate some discussion that I was involved in back about '92. There was such opposition to try to change the concept of growing a raw product and exporting it and therefore exporting the jobs of processing that raw product, particularly feed grains, as an example, or oilseeds. We were trying to change the method of payment so that you would start to keep some of that raw product, you promote processing which will create jobs—[interjection] I am coming to that—e.g., Maple Leaf Foods in Brandon. But along came a change of government federally, and they just took it away. All the people that objected—[interjection] Well, some. All the people that objected to it being changed now all of a sudden did not have any problem with it being taken

away, and this has turned out as expected. There has been tremendous benefits with that happening.

Mr. Gerry McAlpine, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

I remember we did a study in about 1991 and it said that there will be tremendous expansion to the livestock industry if the method of payment was changed, and there was opposition. I remember at that time the member for Dauphin railing away that it can never happen, never happen, never happen. So when the method of payment was taken away, boy, did we not have an expansion in the livestock industry? The Minister of Agriculture talks about 350,000 cows, and we are going to have 3.5 million hogs produced a year. I mean, we have done it in such a short period of time, and the opposition always object, always object, never had any confidence in Manitobans to do this sort of investment, take these sort of risks and respond to opportunities.

Because very clearly another issue that has unfolded that I remember the Liberals fighting against, but once they got into government federally, they endorsed and that was freer trade, opening up opportunities—[interjection] Yes, you have the right to change your mind. Freer trade has very clearly stimulated Manitobans' opportunity to access markets all over the world. It has been part of the concept that has allowed us to double our export sales to the United States over the last five years, and those increased sales will absolutely continue.

Another very critical element when all of those games went on, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), about a year or a little over a year ago was deeply involved in the discussion about dual marketing of hogs which turned out to be exactly the right thing. It was along that vein of giving people more freedom to do what they felt they could do by themselves, for themselves. Then we saw Alberta follow suit, and, bingo, Saskatchewan, off all people, also realized the obvious.

But I can remember the whine and the howl from the other side of how terrible this was because the opposition, the official opposition is always looking backwards and governments must look forward. Clearly, we have done that. We have worked on

making the right decisions. I would not guarantee every one is right, but, by and large, the vast, vast majority have been going in the right direction. Clearly, as you look at the concepts that people out in different parts of Manitoba have said about us over the last little while, although they did not agree with some of the decisions at the time we made them, by and large they see Manitoba as on exactly the right track of adapting to change that is happening in the world, accessing opportunity and moving forward, creating jobs and opportunity.

I can remember back five, six, seven years ago there was not a lot of optimism because people were overwhelmed by change, overwhelmed by the decisions that would be involved with change, but, clearly, now I feel quite confident in saying that people see the future much more positively. They know many of the risks that have always been there will continue to be there, but if they are astute in making their decisions, the opportunity of making a good living, the opportunity to contribute to society is very much there. If I can sum it up in two words that I like to think have some relevance here—because with all of these things that I have talked about we have heard nothing but negative comment from the other side of the House, opposition, opposition. Take us back to the '70s because that is when we were comfortable.

* (1620)

These issues that we have dealt with, the decisions we have made have led to the opportunity of allowing businesses and people throughout Manitoba to have a greater level of independence, independence in their decision making, independence as individuals in the process of how they carry out their lives.

The NDP, the opposition in this House, in the way they attack things, it is quite obvious they do not like to see people be independent and be able to make their own decisions. They like to see dependence on government, that government can do everything for them, and the era that we are in now is very positive in terms of government creating an environment for greater independence, and for our young people in terms of their education, in terms of their opportunities with that education on a continuing basis, I believe in

this world today it is never-ending because we are very much in the global community.

We are very much successful in terms of how we have been able to adapt to opportunities in the global community. Clearly, there are always going to be obstacles and challenges. When I see what the NDP did at their last convention and one of their resolutions of the 32-hour work week, my gosh, I cannot believe that in this day and age somebody would think that would be a policy that would get them elected. You know, it is unique that I have not heard any of them mention that in this House, and when the Leader of the Opposition was speaking the other day, I asked—maybe I violated my own principle by saying something across the House—I said what about the 32-hour work week, and he did not respond to the 32-hour work week. I find that unique.

I am a business person. I am a business person, and let us look at the simple dynamics—[interjection] No, I appreciate that. But as we live and work in this competitive world where you have to really be aggressive in order to sell a product and deliver it to a marketplace, you have to have quality, you have to have price, and when you look at how things are going, I dare say that most entrepreneurs—and this is what private business is all about—are working more today, more hours per week today than they did 10 years ago. That is an absolute necessity, but when you are doing it for yourself, it is not like there is any great sacrifice because you get the rewards at the end of the day, and we do that.

Now if you are running a business where you are employing people, as long as you know simple arithmetic, you currently have four employees today producing a widget that you have competitively sold, let us say to Hong Kong, and now the NDP comes into government and says you can only work 32 hours instead of 40 hours a week. Now you have to hire five employees to do the same amount of work. Well, my arithmetic says that is a 20-percent increase in total salary costs. Your margin is 5 percent, so it means you are minus 15 percent, you are out of business. So all four, all five, in this case, lose their job.

An Honourable Member: That is okay.

Mr. Findlay: Well, I am lost in the philosophy here of how that is going to work, because if you cannot sell that product to your market in competition with your competitors at a price that is attractive, you are out of business. It is just that simple, but anyway they will, I guess, rationalize over the course of the time why they think the 32-hour work week will make Manitoba economy strong. I think quite the opposite. We must allow the entrepreneurs and the people who have ideas to get out there, do their thing, produce the jobs, sell to the markets around the world and be successful in the future as they have been in the past.

Now I have also heard comments, and I have heard mention in some of the discussion that I have heard from across the way about children, focus on children. Yes, there are children that need significant support and help because of events that have unfolded, not of their doing, but of adults' doing. I say many families have some trouble because of lack of a job. Certainly that is something has to be addressed, but I do not hear any comment from the other side about the role of parents in dealing with raising of children. I come from a fundamental philosophy that children are your responsibility as parents who bring them into the world, and there is a responsibility on you to raise that child to the best of your ability, and where you need supports, you get those supports. But as I hear the comments opposite, it is all about government this, government that, government this, more money. It is never where do the parents fit into that model. I feel they are the key elements. I would be interested from the members opposite in the course of the time here why they do not mention parents in the process of children.

As we have moved through the process of making decisions in this government to be sure that this province can access the opportunities it is today, we have significant needs in the form of infrastructure, roads; it is the railroad industry, it is the airline industries. Clearly, the announcements that we hear in rural Manitoba over the last period of time in terms of investments puts an incredibly increased challenge on our transportation system, most particularly our road systems, because we are talking more trucks, bigger trucks, travelling greater distances as people carry out their businesses. We are certainly challenged as a province, as every province in this country is, to try to meet those needs. I think we have done a reasonable

job, but the job will never end in terms of trying to be sure that our roads carry the weights that we have in this province on our roads daily.

Mr. Ben Sveinson, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

Just for members opposite, an interesting statistic that I think is important to keep in mind is just to give you how much importance there is in terms of movement of goods towards the outer boundaries of our province. Our primary network as No. 1 is Highways 16, 75 and the Perimeter. Five percent of our network is in miles, but it carries 29 percent of our traffic so that main arteries are so critical. The north-south flow of goods, as I ventured earlier, in terms of export has accelerated so much that at the crossing at Pembina and Emerson, they run 600 trucks a day, clearing through customs there. It is the second busiest port in all of western Canada. The only one that is busier is Vancouver. So that is how important the network to allow goods to move north and south in Manitoba—[interjection] Pardon?

An Honourable Member: It will get busier yet with more pork.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Mr. Findlay: Yes, it will continue to get busier. I mean there is a lot of movement also internally in terms of as we have talked. The member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) mentions the pork business.

The movement of feed grains in Manitoba has been remarkable, and they used to be by rail; today, it is by road. Now two years ago, I spoke to a couple of the larger elevator companies here and I said, you know, the grain goes in your front door and I think everybody believes it goes out by rail—but I have seen changes in how things are happening.

So I said then how much of the grain that goes in the door in a farm truck comes out of the that elevator in another truck? Twenty-five percent. Instead of going by rail, it is going by road. It is going to feedmills; it is going to processing plants. Sometimes an elevator will assemble it from a smaller elevator in their own company chain to a bigger elevator in order to load unit trains, because the railway industry is evolving rapidly

in terms of less track, larger car spots for picking up grain, moving it in unit trains south or west or east, increased efficiency, increased opportunity to return a better price to the farm community.

In that context, in agriculture and transportation, we have pushed hard to have a review of how all the grain-handling processes going on in western Canada, and clearly the new federal Minister of Transport, Mr. Collenette, is much more likely to announce some decisions on that in the next few weeks than was the case two months ago where actually the federal government was not prepared to get on with a review which all the industry wanted so as to increase the efficiency of the industry so that the maximization of dollars back to the farmgate could happen.

So two months ago I was quite discouraged that this review would not happen for a long period of time. I am now quite encouraged that announcements will be coming shortly that will allow that review to get off the ground, and the provinces—Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and B.C.—are going to be involved in supporting on a research side that particular review that is important to the industry.

* (1630)

Another aspect that involves the federal government that maybe I do not have as good a confidence in is what has been identified in this House for many years as the issue of the national highway program, which, going way back to 1988, has been an issue on the table for every province, to invest in the road network of this country. All provinces have supported it; all transportation ministers, premiers across this country have supported the involvement of the federal government in helping to build and maintain our road system in all of Canada. At this stage in time, certainly the federal government has seen no willingness to contribute support in any fashion what the provinces are carrying on 100 percent of the time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the trucking industry, I want to make a few comments on it because there is nothing but positives in that industry at this stage in time. The large carriers are running more and more miles all over North America. They are competitively hauling product all over North America. We have thousands and

thousands of jobs in the trucking industry right here in Manitoba—not all in Winnipeg, throughout Manitoba. We see some different alliances happening between the trucking companies which, I think, is generally supportive of expanding that industry even further. We have seen in rural Manitoba, where there were not a lot of trucking jobs ten years ago, continued expansion of more and more trucking jobs in small communities. There are lots of examples where a company might have had a truck or two or up to five trucks five or six years ago, now run 10, 15, 20, 25 trucks because of all this change in activity in rural Manitoba, a lot of it related to agriculture but an awful lot related to Louisiana-Pacific, the lumber industry, the mining industry, tremendous volumes moved by truck. As rail lines close, a certain aggregate that used to go by rail is now going to go by truck.

Again, it creates jobs in trucking, but it also puts pressure on the infrastructure which is a challenge for us to keep up with in terms of being sure that the roads can carry the weights, that the bridges can carry the weights, and that the roads can be safely utilized by not only trucks but the rest of the commercial and small vehicle traffic that is out on the roads.

Another thing I touch on briefly, I mentioned volumes of trucks moving across the 49th Parallel. Clearly, as a government, along with the City of Winnipeg, we joined the north-south corridor alliance that has got many states involved all the way through to Mexico, and right today there is a meeting happening in Grand Forks, the third or fourth meeting in the last couple of years where different cities, provinces and states are promoting a north-south corridor, promoting the investment by the United States in that corridor so that our trucks can move efficiently and rapidly up and down that corridor to carry their products to their various markets.

Now, the other aspect of transportation that I think is a sleeping giant at this particular point is the airline industry, particularly the airline industry associated with cargo movement. The airline industry has primarily consisted of passenger movement over the years. I think the general figures are about 85 percent of commercial activity in the air industry is by passengers and about 15 percent is cargo movement. Cargo movement over the course of time has been in

the belly of planes, of passenger planes, where and when there is space, but as there is more and more movement of goods, particularly intercontinentally, there has been a development way down in the southern states of an all-cargo air freight movement. Winnport here in Manitoba which has been around for three or four years trying to develop the concept out of Winnipeg to other parts of the world initially discussed in terms of between here and Europe and between here and the South Pacific and is now really focussing on the new markets of China, Hong Kong, Malaysia as opportunities to move air cargo.

The business community has worked very hard to have this particular opportunity develop, have done their homework, have developed their business plan, and very recently as the Chinese president was in Canada, an agreement was reached for access of air cargo flight activity into different places in China. We are now putting pressure on the federal Minister of Transport for him to make a decision on the designation of who will carry that air cargo, and clearly Winnport has been working on an agreement with Kelowna Flightcraft to do that sort of cargo movement.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have a lot of confidence that all the hurdles that Winnport has dealt with so far and the hurdles that remain to be dealt with will be handled and dealt with such that we will ultimately see in a reasonable course of time the business of Winnport taking off in terms of creating jobs in Manitoba of air cargo movement. Just how relevant that is, it also ties into the Maple Leaf announcement of the last couple of days in that Maple Leaf is going to process a lot of pork for the Pacific Rim market, and the way to get it there in a fresh chilled form is certainly by air cargo, and Winnport will be the vehicle to achieve that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I mentioned earlier in my comments that I am very proud of the vision that the Filmon government has brought to the province of Manitoba. I am very pleased with the success we have seen in terms of the investments internally and externally into the province. I am very pleased with the degree to which Manitobans have responded to the opportunities that exist, and I take it right back to the basics that I mentioned earlier. We have made a conscious effort to create independence of people to make decisions and access opportunities.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

I think that is the only way to go. I am pleased to see other provinces have done much the same thing belatedly to achieve balances in their budgets provincially and create opportunities and access global markets where the jobs of the future will be. We all know that over a third of our jobs here are because of our access to those global markets, and we must continue to work hard as governments in our different departments to decrease the barriers, the protective barriers that used to exist at borders—and we had some of the worst barriers right here in Canada between our provinces—bring those barriers down, work to get freer trade even more so in the future across international borders. This has been so very apparent in the airline industry as it tried to access landing points in China and Japan, that freer market. Hopefully, it will contribute to opportunities to land there and to be able to move goods back and forth.

So, Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to see you back in the Chair again. It is a pleasure to contribute to the discussion here, and I look forward to the further discussion that will happen in this House subsequent to the Speech from the Throne. I really look forward to the fourth balanced budget that this government will bring in and create further opportunities for Manitobans to excel in the world market. Thank you very much.

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Madam Speaker, I first congratulate the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Fauschou) for his election victory in the recent by-election.

In various parts of the throne speech, the government mentioned concepts of democracy, basic rights we enjoy, protecting essential services of health, education, family support and of spending taxpayers' money wisely. Bearing in mind such ideas of democracy, provision for health, for education, for family support or spending the taxpayers' money, I shall proceed to speak about three organizing concepts: the concept of government, the concept of elites, and the concept of wealth. I shall use the Socratic method of asking questions and then attempting to answer questions.

On the first topic of government, how are we to think of government. We may think of government as an

organized structure of offices with authority and power to direct the political community to achieve desired objectives. Is government necessary? Is government a necessity? Yes. Thomas Paine stated that government, even in its best state, is a necessary evil; in its worst state is an intolerable one. That is one man's opinion, Thomas Paine.

* (1640)

An Honourable Member: But, you know, the member for Riel (Mr. Newman) would not like that because Thomas Paine is—

Mr. Santos: He is a revolutionary.

Why is the government necessary? Why is the government a necessity in modern life? Government is necessary in every community because government is needed to perform basic functions: first, to provide for the security and order and peace of individuals in the community; second, to protect and administer the property of property owners; and, third, to provide for public needs and for public wants so long as the provincial and the national economy can support.

To carry out these basic functions of government, every government exercises what they recognize as authority and power. They are craftily balanced by use of political skill in their exercise. Government authority is the formal right to make policies, to make laws and regulations, to settle disputes, to make decisions, to distribute benefits and disabilities among those who are governed in such a way that the governed voluntarily accept and obey by their engrained habits of obedience.

For example, as expected, the federal Government of Canada has just enacted in Ottawa a back-to-work legislation ordering the striking postal workers to resume their work, and if the leader and striking workers voluntarily obey, there is an example of an exercise of political authority.

In contrast, power is the might of government—[interjection] Might, strength. It is the might to enforce its will despite disobedience. This is achieved by the use of coercion or force, by whatever means the government is capable of. For example, if after passing

the back-to-work legislation in federal Parliament, should the leaders and strikers disobey, they will be prosecuted. They will be jailed. They will be fined until they comply and obey. This is an exercise of governmental power.

As I said, authorities delicately balance between the exercise of power and the exercise of authority. No government can exercise one or the other alone. Authority without power is right without might and government becomes anemic and ineffective. Power without authority is might without right and government becomes oppressive and intolerable.

Where do people who run the government get the right and power to govern other people? In most democratic societies, governments derived their just powers from the consent of the governed, the consent of the people. The authority and power of governments are the authority and power of the people as a whole. People's authority and power are temporarily vested in government simply as a commission of limited duration, or in the case of appointed officials and employees of government, an employment contract in which the political rulers are mere agents of the people who elected and re-elected them for a limited but renewable duration of their tenure of office under some written or unwritten constitution.

But a more interesting question to ask is this: can the people as a whole permanently surrender their collective authority and power to those who govern them? Can they abdicate? According to the respected French political philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau, the people, even if they foolishly want to do it, cannot do so because such authority and power is inalienable and any alienation of such authority and power of the people is incompatible with the nature of any social body of the nature of political association of the people. If the rulers in government have any authority and power, therefore, such authority and power are merely delegated to them by the people who can limit, modify or take back at their pleasure of the whole people whatever power and authority they have delegated to the rulers.

Now let me leave that topic and proceed to the second topic, the elites. In discussing elites, we rely

mostly on the writings of the three nondemocratic but realistic writers, the political scientist, Gaetano Mosca; the sociologist, Roberto Michels; and the economist, Vilfredo Pareto. According to Mosca, in all societies, from societies that are very meagrely developed and barely attain the dawnings of civilization down to the most advanced and powerful societies, two classes of people appear, the class that rules and the class that is ruled. The ruling class, always the less numerous, performs all political functions, monopolizes power and enjoys the advantages that power brings, whereas the class that is ruled, directed and controlled by the ruling class in a manner that is now more or less legal, more or less arbitrary and violent, supplies the ruler with the means of subsistence and with the instrumentalities necessary for the maintenance of the state.

The size of the ruling class in Mosca's theory of minority rule is variable. The number of the governing minority is inversely proportional to the number of the majority of the masses that they rule. In Manitoba, for example, I understand approximately 20 percent of Manitobans belong to the economic and powerful, influential group. We may call them the elites in Manitoba, the 80 percent of the rest of them; 80 percent are the masses, the people that they govern. However, membership in the ruling class is fluid. It is open. It is never permanent. Eventually the old ruling class would inexorably be deposed and replaced by the new ruling class which, in due time, will suffer the same fate as the ruling class it has replaced, a process known as the continuous circulation of elites.

A more intriguing question to ask is: what is the secret that makes the people accept and obey the wishes of the relatively few members of the ruling class? What secret do they have? Every ruling class tries to find a moral and legal basis for their rule. Such moral and legal basis for rule is in the form of what is known as the political formula. The political formula consists of doctrines and beliefs that the people recognize and accept because, as doctrines and beliefs satisfy the social need that everyone who should be governed should be governed on the basis of some moral principles, some fundamental value the people acknowledge as useful in unifying them and their institutions and preserving their civilizations and in promoting their common goals.

For example, the people in democratic societies like Canada and the rest of the western world accept the political formula which in Latin says: vox populi est vox Dei; the voice of the people is the voice of God. Because we have all accepted this formula, when an election outcome is given, we accept the result, because we believe that it is a moral, valid, fundamental principle that when the people have spoken, God has spoken. However, in other places, a monarchy like Saudi Arabia, they have a different political formula: vox regni est vox Dei; the voice of the king is the voice of God. So whatever the king says goes.

* (1650)

According to the sociologist Roberto Michels no modern industrial movement of workers or members of a political party can ever hope to succeed without pyramidal, hierarchical organization. No matter how democratically started, as the movement or the party grows in membership, more and more functions and powers of the rank and file are delegated to the inner circles of officers and staff. As less and less rank-and-file members are able to direct and monitor the chosen leaders, the chosen leaders and their staff acquire freedom of action and a vested interest in their own respective positions, holding on to their perquisites and privileges, and then enjoying the advantages of incumbency, they almost become irremovable from office.

The term "oligarchy" refers to any governing body in which a small group of persons exercises tight control for self-seeking and often corrupt practices. Thus, the iron law of oligarchy becomes the iron law of history. Even the most democratic societies are unable to escape. Every democratic association gravitates and eventually becomes an oligarchical organization according to this inevitable social tendency known as the iron law of oligarchy. Examples: self-perpetuating leaders of chief executive offices of corporations and self-perpetuating leaders of large unions of industrial workers.

According to the economist Pareto, elites are themselves grouped into two subgroups, the nongoverning elites and the governing elites. The nongoverning elites are those who rise to the top of their professions or occupations. For example, there

are elites among professional lawyers as there are elites among thieves who also call themselves professionals.

The second group, the governing elites, in turn are further subdivided into two groups, the inner elites and the outer elites. The inner elites are the political party bosses in modern democracies. The outer elites are those who possess formal authority such as elected politicians, some of whom may, in fact, be subservient to nonelected but powerful, influential political party bosses. A more salient example of this would be the governing Tory elites who decided to privatize home care, as we just heard, in order to carry out the wishes of the economically powerful business elites resulting in higher costs of home care for seniors and other citizens.

Pareto reasoned that since the vast majority of human beings are weak and depraved creatures who neither have the skills to govern themselves nor the wisdom to control the destinies of others, the consent of the masses will almost certainly be obtained by bribery, deceit or chicanery.

A most recent local example is the story of how the Manitoba provincial Tories won the 1995 provincial election by promising the citizens that they were going to keep the Winnipeg Jets in the city by means of a public injection of approximately \$36 million to keep the sporting team in Winnipeg but who eventually were allowed to leave the province after the election was won. Is this bribery of the voters using taxpayers' money? I believe so. Deceit of the electorate? Yes. Chicanery or trickery of the general public? Yes.

According to Adam Smith, the classical economist, in his book *The Wealth of Nations*, political economy has two distinct objectives: First, to provide plentiful revenue or subsistence to the people or more properly speaking to enable the people to provide such revenue or subsistence for themselves, and, secondly, to supply the commonwealth with sufficient revenue for the public service.

This Filmon government in the throne speech promised again in a recycled way to protect the essential services of health, education, family support. This is what they say. What do they do? What have they done? In the face of the promise to protect

essential services of health care, what have they done? The Tories cut approximately \$20 million from the Pharmacare program. They ended the child dental health program. They terminated the seniors' Life Saving Drug Program. They stopped the preventative eye care program for all Manitobans from ages 19 to 64. They downsized, they rationalized, they privatized the home care segment of health care and most recently even the auxiliary services of hospitals like food service by substituting rethermalized, recycled food for fresh, kitchen-prepared healthful foods, all in the name of saving some money.

The Tories promised to protect education as an essential service. That is what they said. What did they do? They have frozen school funding in Manitoba schools, and they have cut university post-secondary education funding by 2 percent successively.

This Filmon government also promised to spend the taxpayers' dollar wisely. That is what they said. What did they do? Is it wise to starve health, education and children's services in funding and at the same time give subsidies to business enterprises? Is that wise? Is it wise spending to tax baby foods and school supplies and at the same time give \$16 million to business establishments as subsidies?

Unlike Adam Smith, Karl Marx—and that name sometimes brought some fear to the hearts of some people—described how wealth is acquired and later multiplied by reproducing itself. But I will tell you a story about Karl Marx, Karl Marx's mother particularly who said if my son Karl instead of writing a lot about capital made a lot of capital, it would have been better for us and for him. But Karl Marx is not materialistic in the acquisition of possessions. He is more of a humanist and an historian who criticized people who got richer than what they should have been while others became poorer than what they should have been.

Adam Smith stated that the wealth of a nation increases as the owners of capital act from expedient self-interest—that is a polite word for greed—in a system of free enterprise, of open competition, which permits the possibility of profits to indemnify the owners of capital against the risks of losses and to reward capitalists for their thrift whereby they accumulate capital to invest in the economy productively.

Marx replied that the accumulation of capital presupposes capitalistic production where considerable amounts of capital and labour power are already under the control of the capitalists who as owners of the means of production are also the producers of goods. It was the previous and primitive accumulation of capital in the historic process of divorcing the producers from the means of production which changed the feudal guild members into industrial wage earners to become sellers of themselves after they had been deprived and robbed of all their previously owned means of production.

Marx insisted that the capitalists as owners of the means of production wittingly or unwittingly exploit labourers in order to make profits since the capitalist can derive profit only from the surplus value created by the wage-earning labourers who produce more than what is returned to them as wages, enough only for their subsistence. Thus profits for the non-Marxian economists are part of the natural price of commodities as the wages are paid to labourers and as rents are paid to landlords.

In contrast, Marxian economists traced the profit segment of entrepreneurs from the surplus product of unpaid labour time in the form of increments which the workers produce and to which the workers are morally entitled but are deprived thereof because the surplus values, although produced by labour, are appropriated by the capitalists for themselves as exploiting greedy owners of the means of production.

* (1700)

Karl Marx condemned the capitalist class, a condemnation reflected in the Biblical condemnation of Jeremiah's indignation when he cried: Woe unto him that builded his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour's services without paying wages, and giveth him not for his work. Everyone from the least of them even to the greatest of them is given to covetousness.

Or as the Psalmist put it: Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs like a sharp razor, working deceitfully . . . and lying rather than speaking righteousness.

Many of us have heard about the parable of the rich farmer whose farm brought forth plentifully, and he thought to himself, saying, what shall I do now? I have no room where to bestow my fruits, and he said, this is what I will do. I will pull down my barns, I will build greater and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods, and I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years. Take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry. But God said unto him, thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee. Then whose shall those things be which thou has provided? So is he that layeth up treasures for himself and is not rich toward God.

Are we to condemn all riches and wealth indiscriminately? Of course not. King Solomon said the profit of the earth is for everyone, for all. The king himself is served by the field. Every man to whom God hath given riches and wealth and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion and to rejoice in his labour, this is the gift of God. For he shall not much remember the days of his life because God answereth him in the joy of his heart. The wealth that accrues and accumulates because of one's labour is a gift from God because our labour, our life, our strength is a gift from him, but it should accumulate from the product of our labour, our efforts, our energy, our ingenuity.

So what shall be our stance? We have heard the teaching: Take heed and beware of all covetousness, for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things possessed. Why? For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And what did the Apostle Paul said? Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded nor trust in uncertain riches, but trust in the living God who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that we all do good, that we be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.

We have also heard this teaching: Lay not up for yourself treasures upon earth where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourself treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break in or steal. For where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also.

Concluding we say, first, that civilized social life cannot exist among individuals in society unless there is a government created or evolved as a necessity to provide for the security of persons, for the protection of property and the provision of human wants and needs.

Second, that governing elites occupy, run and either improve or debase the governing process as they make and enforce policies and programs, raising revenues and spending taxpayers' money other than their own, who justify their rule by the generally accepted moral and legal principle in the form of a political formula.

Third, that wealth has a dominant role either as a basis for getting political authority and power and also in many cases becoming the objective of participants in the governing process which often results in making the rich richer and the poor poorer because the governing elites have forgotten that they are promoting the general good, that they are promoting the interests of everyone, not their own narrow and selfish and greedy interests.

That is not their role. Their role is to act for the entire people, to do good and to be rich in good works while in a position of power and authority. Thank you.

Mr. Ben Sveinson (La Verendrye): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to rise this afternoon to speak on our government's throne speech.

First, however, I would like to welcome the six new pages that currently serve this House, and I thank them in advance on behalf of all honourable members for their assistance. Welcome also to the new interns who are serving both my caucus and that of the official opposition. They are a fine group, and I trust that their experience will have a positive, lasting impression on them.

Finally, a special welcome to our newest colleague the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Fauschou). I wish him all the best as he goes about representing his constituents. Madam Speaker, it is nice to see you. I would also like to welcome you back to your place in this Assembly. I would also like to wish all members a very smooth and fulfilling session.

Madam Speaker, a few words about the recent flood. It was called the flood of the century. This was an

unprecedented time in Manitoba's young history. Tens of thousands of people relocated, thousands of volunteers from across the country helping where they could and the creation of one of the largest fresh-water lakes in Canada. All Manitobans helped in one way or another, whether it was making sandbags or praying for the safety of those impacted. I have never been as proud of being a Manitoban as I was during the response to the flood. Even here in this Legislature we put aside our political differences and worked towards a common goal.

I speak about this flood because it affected my constituency probably more than most constituencies, and I dare to even say that it probably affected my constituency more than any other constituency in the province. You see, the flooding happened in the Grande Pointe area and stretched right up to Niverville and Ste. Agathe. It came very close to Ile des Chenes, a very short distance, maybe half a mile from Ile des Chenes. Also, the area of Lorette was flooded, not drastically because they did fight it and they won; however, there was a considerable area in there in some of the homes that were flooded. Also an area out east of Ross was also flooded. The east side of Richer was flooded and people had to be evacuated, then an area out around Hadashville. The Whitemouth River, Boggy Creek, and there is another one that offhand it just slips my mind, but around the Hadashville area it flooded very badly. In fact, it flooded so badly that it took the gravel and the base right from underneath the pavement on No. 11 Highway and just left it hanging there. It also did the same thing to the railroad tracks right at Hadashville.

* (1710)

I arrived there at the time that the water was coming up—this is in Hadashville—very strongly and crossing the highway, and it was just unbelievable to watch the power of water when it is moving as quickly as it was. It literally ripped it, ripped that gravel and the base right from underneath the road. We got in a big drott, two of them, and were literally holding the pavement up and pushing rocks and gravel underneath to hold it.

Also, though, there was more flooding between Hadashville and Whitemouth and then again between

Whitemouth and River Hills. So I guess you can see that indeed my constituency had flooding from one end to the other. My constituency has a considerable length and width to it, so I ran into many, many people who had an awful lot of damage, not just to their homes, to their cars, to their businesses, their farms, but also they suffered a lot just in the handling of the flood and the feelings that it caused them to have. So it was something also—I worked with many of them, and I was in the area with them when a house went under, when the water came up and we could not fight it anymore and had to get out. Watching people and working with them and seeing the water come over and see a home go under was something that is not a nice thing to see, but the look on people's faces is just incredible.

At any rate, Madam Speaker, the help that was offered and accepted by people right across Manitoba and across the country was indeed nice to have, and the people really appreciated it. Throughout that time the media reported on this, and reported actually very well throughout the flood. But then afterwards it seemed that—I guess it is the old thing of the reporting on what and on what will sell. What sells a newspaper or what sells TV time? I guess it tends to be the unfortunate ones that we tend to pick up on.

I would like to say that I have travelled throughout my constituency and offered to everybody that I spoke to wherever I went that if anybody knew of somebody that was having some trouble in getting back into their homes or in receiving funds from EMO, or MEMO as it is called, to give me a call. Madam Speaker, very honestly, the number of calls that I did receive were few and far between, but I did pick up some out on my travels. I would just turn in when I saw some garbage, if you will, piled in the yard. I would pull in and see how they were doing, and I did pick up a few like that. I did pick up some.

The amount that was reported in the newspapers and on TV was not really representative of the people that were in such dire needs out there. It was not representative of this. I do want to say, though, that the people out there were really, really happy with the help that they did receive and are still receiving. Our government continues to actively work with those affected by the flood.

We have implemented a number of unprecedented changes to the Disaster Financial Assistance plan, including increasing the maximum DFA assistance from \$30,000 to \$100,000, waiving the 20 percent deductible for those whose homes were unsalvageable as well as for property owners who participate in the Red River Valley diking and floodproofing program. We brought in 120 claim evaluators to assist people; as a result, award letters were sent out only two months after beginning inspections. In 1979 the process took some 10 months. We changed the depreciation policy to a policy of replacement or an average pricing policy. MEMO established three flood recovery information offices, including one in St. Adolphe. Our government continues to co-operate with our federal counterparts. However, I should note that Manitoba is still owed over \$13 million by the federal government for flooding that occurred in 1993.

Since 1990, Madam Speaker, I have had the privilege of representing the constituency of La Verendrye. Whether in coffee shops, at various functions or just on the streets, my constituents have told me that the road our government travels is the right road. It is the road that has led and continues to lead to economic prosperity. It is the road that has protected and enhanced our education, health and social assistance. Our course, since we took office, has not been without bumps. For example, we need only to look at the federal Liberal government's massive cuts in our transfer payments, some \$226 million less for programs like health care and education during 1996 to 1998. This was most definitely a nasty bump in the road. However, our government has not only balanced its own budget for three consecutive years; we have also assisted the federal government in getting their books in order by absorbing their cuts.

Another bump in the road was created by the past government. With its inability to acknowledge the finite resources of Manitoba's taxpayers, it proceeded to tax, spend and borrow to the point that we now spend approximately 10 percent or \$520 million of our budget on public debt costs. In spite of these significant obstacles, our government, through fiscal responsibility, has ensured that Manitoba tax dollars are spent wisely. In fact, over 65 percent of our budget is spent on priorities of health, education and family services.

Our government is a government of change, not change for the sake of change, but change for the betterment of all Manitobans, change to improve the quality of education, health and all services for Manitobans and their children. Change is never easy; it is often viewed with suspicion and mistrust. However, our government recognizes that there is a need sometimes for change, a need to move forward. That the way things have been done in the past is not the way they should necessarily be done in the future.

Today one of the hardest phrases a person can remove from their vocabulary in response to the question, why do you do it that way, is that this is how it has been always done in the past. Well, if we simply sat back and allowed our economy, our health care services and the education of our children to continue the way they have always been done, where would we be? The answer is that we would be back in the era of the NDP government—a government that, for example, raised the personal income tax in 1982 by 24 percent, a government that raised some 22 taxes in only a few short years, a government that managed to triple our provincial debt in just six short years. When the opposition talks of change, what they really mean is how much loose change they could squeeze out of the pockets of hardworking Manitobans; or, Madam Speaker, the opposition would leave things as they were, even though they know change had to happen.

* (1720)

Well, Madam Speaker, the opposition while in power squeezed and squeezed until the people finally said enough. They knew that there was a better way than passing on the buck to their children and grandchildren. They recognized that a government had to acknowledge it had its limits, that a government must balance its books, just as every Manitoba home must. Our government has more than just simply balanced its budget; we have begun the process of repaying our provincial debt. Our government's creation of a positive environment for investment and economic expansion continues to be cited by Canada's major banks, something that I do not remember happening when members opposite were in power.

The Winnipeg Free Press, on Friday, November 7, 1997, noted two of Canada's major banks paint a rosy picture for Manitoba heading into the turn of the

century. More jobs and more money in your pocket. The Conference Board of Canada in a recent forecast said: the Manitoba economy is running wild, and it is leading the nation in employment growth this year. We sure know that in the last few days now, do we not? By the end of 1998, the Conference Board expects Manitoba will have created 23,000 new jobs since 1996. The Canadian Bond Rating Service upgraded Manitoba's short-term and long-term rating to A-plus, A-minus-one-plus, from A and A-minus-one respectively. They cited the province's financial improvement, avoidance of increased taxes despite federal transfer reductions, and the third surplus budget as some of the province's many accomplishments.

The Globe and Mail's Report on Business Magazine in its annual survey of the best cities for business ranked Manitoba's capital in the top five. The theme this year was export attitude, which Manitoba has in abundance after five consecutive years of double-digit increases in U.S. exports. In fact, our exports now exceed \$6 billion annually.

So as I listened to the member for Concordia's (Mr. Doer) speech the other day, I wondered to myself if he purposely keeps his head in the sand or is just a by-product of being a member of the official opposition. I would therefore like to encourage the member for Concordia to go out and maybe talk to the 2,200 people in Brandon and area who have jobs at the \$112-million Maple Leaf hog processing plant. Or maybe he should talk to the University of Manitoba economist, John McCallum, who said in reference to Manitoba's 16-year-low unemployment rate, having an unemployment rate that low is terrific news. Or maybe he should talk to Larry McIntosh, chief executive officer of Peak of the Market, who noted that the last three years have been a period of strong growth for the 55-year-old consortium, with sales rising by 35 percent during that time. Or maybe he should talk to Ed Penhall and Ryan Guest, two entrepreneurs from Ste. Anne, who, with the help of the REDI program, are looking at the feasibility of setting up a pepper sauce manufacturing operation in the area. Or maybe he should speak with Barb Hamilton and her crew at Falcon Trails in Falcon Lake.

I would just like to take a moment on Falcon Trails, truly an environmentally friendly resort area. It is really

something to see, and come spring, I can only say that the area in which they are, which is of course around the Falcon ski hill, a beautiful place to be. Seeing what they will do, they will offer these trails for nature hikes. There is mountain biking; there are skiing trails—it is endless—also canoeing. Environmentally friendly surroundings, and motorized vehicles will only be allowed on certain things, maybe bringing in stuff and so on. So it is really something different, something different in Manitoba. They looked around, and there are a number of them in the United States and elsewhere that they have looked at. Indeed, these resorts are really, really very busy, and they have been too since they opened up. So I would just like to wish Barb and all her people the very best at Falcon Trails.

I could go far beyond the time allotted to me and give the members opposite the names of other companies and individuals who believe that Manitoba is indeed the land of opportunity. Where are these opportunities? Well, according to the Winnipeg Sun, dated September 2, 1997, the job opportunities are in manufacturing, bus and aerospace, telecommunications, call centres, computer services, software development and programming, food processing, engineering, pharmaceuticals, garment industry—it almost makes you tired talking about how many industries are really moving out there and the jobs that are being created. It is really something to behold.

When I talk about that, too, it just comes back to the announcement just the other day, and looking at the member for Brandon East's (Mr. Leonard Evans) face when he came into the Assembly here was one to behold. Of course he was very happy, as all of us were, of the jobs created in his area, be it with Maple Leaf.

Madam Speaker, agriculture has always been an important part of many rural constituencies, including the constituency of La Verendrye. Our government recognizes this fact and recognizes that this industry is a changing industry, a very quickly changing industry. Therefore, our government announced in this throne speech that we will participate in the federal government's review of the grain handling and transportation system. We will encourage crop diversification and value-added activities in the post-Crow era. We will support development and research in all sectors of the industry through the Agri-Food

Research and Development Initiative. We will set new regulations setting even higher standards for the management of livestock waste.

As new markets emerge for our agricultural commodities, Manitoba Agriculture continues to work with industry to develop and expand markets in the Asia-Pacific region, South America, and elsewhere around the globe. Our government is committed to enabling growth in the livestock sector.

As of July 1, 1997, the number of breeding cattle in the Manitoba herd reached record levels. The rapid expansion has been made possible in part through the Manitoba government's efforts to enhance producers' ability to finance the purchase of feeder cattle. The Stocker Loan Program and associated guaranteed loans to lenders through the Agricultural Credit Corporation is effectively encouraging further value-added through the feeding of Manitoba grains to cattle.

The Diversification Loan Guarantee Program has been instrumental in supporting some \$14 million in approved loans for initiatives in such industries as hog, dairy, potato, and bison.

Of course, when discussing livestock expansion in our province, the growth in hog production cannot go unmentioned. Manitoba's hog production will exceed five million hogs by the year 2000. This will translate into many additional economic benefits for our province, including expanded processing and affiliated job creation.

Our government remains committed to ensuring that the economic and regulatory environment is conducive for this expansion to continue and to happen. In addition to growth in conventional and established livestock production, our province is making considerable inroads into nontraditional and alternative livestock.

Due to Manitoba's capture and dispersal of elk, more than 50 commercial elk farms will be operational in the new year. In addition to the development of elk farming, our government will help facilitate expanded bison ranching to a feeder financing program similar to what is currently available for cattle.

* (1730)

In terms of legislative reforms, The Animal Husbandry Act will be repealed in part and replaced with an animal liability act, which will more clearly deal with issues surrounding responsibility for damages to property or person. The new legislation will deal with animals running at large and owners' rights to protect their livestock from attack by other animals.

Diversification in crop production is an enduring goal for our government. New and alternative cropping choices such as spices are presenting themselves to be viable opportunities for producers.

Our government will continue to encourage crop diversification as grain producers strive to adapt in a post-Crow era.

Although agriculture in Manitoba is heading into many new and promising directions, our government has extended its commitment to the stable primary agricultural sector. This is demonstrated through the continuation and extension of safety nets which include enhanced crop insurance and the Net Income Stabilization Account. These risk-management programs are integral to the Manitoba agricultural safety-net strategy providing needed security through this period of unprecedented change in the industry.

Madam Speaker, the rural economy is healthy. Our government's throne speech indicated that we will continue to explore new opportunities for growth in this area. The 1998 rural forum will set direction in the areas of youth entrepreneurship and youth leadership, rural information technology development and use, and an expanded role for local government in the economic renewal process.

A significant component of Manitoba's rural and indeed urban economy is that of tourism. Tourism generates over one billion annually to our province and employs over 20,000 full-time persons. If you include seasonal and part-time employment, then the figure jumps to over 50,000 people. The constituency of La Verendrye is no stranger to the benefits of tourism. Many thousands of visitors come to take part in the beauty and the magic of my constituency. A number of lodges in the Whiteshell such as Falcon Trails Resort

which I have mentioned and talked a little about, Jessica Lake Lodge, the Big Whiteshell Lodge and Caddy Lake Resort, to name a few, have winterized and expanded thanks to strong vision and government assistance. Bookings for these lodges are strong well into the next year and beyond.

Tourism outlets along Highway No. 1 East have expanded including Oakwood Golf Course which has gone to their second nine holes and is looking at expanding their camping facilities. Just last month, Dan Manaire of Lilac Resort Ltd. in Ste. Anne was nominated under the first Manitoba Travel Awards as a tourism ambassador. Earlier this year, the National Association for Interpretation awarded the Whiteshell Provincial Park Interpretive Trail as second place for excellence in the development of the Foresters Footsteps Self-guiding Trail in the Whiteshell Park.

I would just like to spend a minute or so on the Lilac Resort which is just past the No. 12 turnoff on No. 1 East. You do not have to go back too many years when Dan Manaire actually took over from his mother and father. He was such an energetic young entrepreneur that he went from just a campsite for something in the neighbourhood of maybe a hundred campers to something in the neighbourhood of well in excess of 300, I would say, to a huge swimming pool, a big slide. He has also got a fishing pond. I mean, there are fish in there, ducks and so on, geese, and he has these little paddle boats that you can rent as part of your space that you are renting there. You can rent these little paddle boats, and you can take your fishing rod and you go out there and fish for the trout and so on, but you have to throw them back. Now, at the end of the season, they allow you to fish and to keep them because the pond freezes right through, so they cannot possibly live, and so they are then allowed to fish them and take them home.

But all these little things—he has got a miniature golf course there. He has so many different things that people have come there—I have two brothers who have now taken spots at the Lilac Motel, and the part that is somewhat fascinating and I do talk it up for all of my tourist attractions and the people that have tourist attractions out there, but I was not the one that told my brothers about them. I just happened to pop into the Lilac Motel one day and who did I run into signing in

but my two brothers, and they indeed have now rented the space for next year already. So it was kind of nice to see and just to show you the draw and the word of mouth that passes on when something which is that good and stands out that much is passed on just by word of mouth.

This kind of recognition for some of the attractions in my constituency are appreciated and, I might add, well deserved. When we speak of tourism we often forget that tourists and indeed our residents require good roadways in order to travel to their destinations. In 1997 our government, as part of its 1997-98 highway construction program, will spend a number of million dollars in the La Verendrye constituency. Projects include a 13.6 kilometre section of the eastbound lanes of Trans Canada Highway, and we did some of that this last summer already, a 4.7 kilometre section of Provincial Trunk Highway 12 extending south from PTH 1, the continuation of the twinning project along PTH 59 from the south Perimeter Highway to Ile des Chenes. If I might just spend a minute there, one of those lanes in one of the projects, the diking projects, the eastern lane of PTH 59 will become part of a dike if that project is proceeded with and will be built accordingly, a 1.5 kilometre section of Provincial Road 210 east at 59 and a 16.6 kilometre section of PR 302 from PR road 501 to PTH 15.

While our government continues to spend approximately \$100 million annually on our highways, the federal government has failed in its responsibility to upgrade and maintain our national highway infrastructure. Our government continues to lead the province in efforts to convince the federal government to support such a program through some of the revenues it receives from Manitoba's fuel taxes.

* (1740)

Our government is also working on several other fronts to improve the transportation needs of Manitoba industries and its people including a three-year strategy to promote the Mid-Continent Trade and Transportation Corridor extending to Mexico. Under new management the Churchill rail line and the Port of Churchill are expected to demonstrate their value and potential, and our government will co-operate with the federal government in its promised review of all outstanding

issues affecting the grain handling in the transportation system.

Madam Speaker, our government's vision for the future is one of shared and growing economic prosperity, a vision providing and protecting essential services of health, education and family support. By continuing to work towards our goals, we will be providing an environment for our children that will equip them with skills, tools and resources they need to succeed in today's global economy. Our government's plan is to prepare our children for the future by providing them with a foundation for excellence that will lead them into the 21st Century with new opportunities for success. We will continue to work to ensure post-secondary education is more accessible and beneficial to all Manitobans through initiatives such as working with the federal government to address student funding and debt and building a stronger connection between students in community colleges and universities and prospective employers by undertaking a business mentorship program.

Healthy communities are a key part of our government's overall commitment to creating a positive environment for our children. We are committed to continued quality accessible health care, a commitment that is further highlighted in the throne speech through initiatives, such as additional resources to reduce waiting lists, upgrading neonatal intensive care services—I did not know what that was until the other day—enhanced adolescent prevention and treatment, and focusing capital projects on areas of highest priorities such as cancer care.

Just as Manitobans are working to keep our communities safe, I am confident that the additional measures announced in the throne speech that our government will be taking will help to further protect Manitobans and prevent crime in our communities. Among other things our government will increase resources for crime prevention. We will make new funding available to implement the recommendations of the report on domestic violence and support enhancements to the Winnipeg Police Services Curfew Registry.

Thanks to the united efforts of all Manitobans combined with our government's commitment to

spending smarter, increasing efficiencies and by choosing its priorities carefully, Manitoba has become the best place to live, work, invest and raise a family. In fact, our province is expected to lead the nation in job creation into the year 2000. In order to enhance this economic growth, our government will support the development of a new, long-term national infrastructure agreement based on the best features of the first program. The original agreement and the top-up program brought the total Canada-Manitoba infrastructure works investment in Manitoba to \$245 million and generated over 4,300 jobs.

Our government will implement the agreement on internal trade, remove the limit that capital co-operatives may raise in order to strengthen the value-added sector, maintain Manitoba Hydro's electricity rates as the lowest in North America with no increase in rates for 1998, and continue public-sector reform and renewal designed to improve and enhance government services for Manitobans.

We are a government of change, a government that implements policies and programs that will deal with issues today, tomorrow and with a view of the years ahead, a government that knows it does not have a monopoly on good ideas and that the people of Manitoba should be consulted.

We are currently completing the fifth year of prebudget consultations, and I am told by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) that Manitobans once again have presented him with a great deal of valuable insight and ideas. We are a government that continues to be accountable and accessible to the great people of Manitoba who have shown their support through three successive elections.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my constituents for their continued support. As well, I wish them and indeed all members of the Legislature the very best this holiday season and a most prosperous New Year. Thank you.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to join in this throne speech debate, 1997 Christmas session, and to say a few words and comment about the throne speech and

the government and problems facing the province of Manitoba.

I should have done this personally, but I will take the opportunity publicly in the House to congratulate the newest MLA for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurichou) and wish him well in his term as an MLA representing the good people of the city of Portage. I do not know whether he has formed any opinions yet of this particular austere body and how we operate. He may find it a bit frustrating as a lot of backbenchers do. Backbenchers often find being a member of the Legislature rather frustrating because there is nothing that you are more appreciated for than casting a vote to keep the government in office. Sometimes it can be a bit boring, I suppose, but the power does not rest with the backbenchers except they are expected to keep the government in power, and where is the power, the power of course is in the cabinet and I would even go so far as to say it is unequal within the cabinet. Some cabinet ministers have more power than other cabinet ministers, and that is an interesting exercise to ask yourself and try to discover just where does the power reside because we know certain decisions that have been made in the past that certain ministers probably had more involvement and more power than others.

I think, for example, of the privatization of the Manitoba Telephone System is a real good question. To what extent all members of cabinet, indeed, to what extent members of the caucus realized what was happening in terms of the privatization move that ultimately came about of the Manitoba Telephone System. I was going to say some pleasant things about the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey) which is unusual for me as it is perhaps unusual for the minister, but I wanted to say that he probably holds one of the most difficult portfolios in government. It is very, very challenging to have a responsibility to try to promote the economic development, the economic growth of Manitoba.

In some ways, I had experience in government for some years. I was Minister of Industry and Commerce in the Schreyer administration for eight years, Madam Speaker, and I know of what I speak. I also had the opportunity to have a portfolio in the Pawley administration in the areas of family services, community services, welfare, employment services and

so on, and I would suggest that it is far more difficult to be a minister of industry, a minister responsible for promoting and enhancing economic development than it is to be a minister of a program department where you spend money. One must be very careful in how one spends money, the taxpayers' dollars, but nevertheless in some ways those are easier decisions to make, easier challenges than to have the challenge of how you are going to create more jobs in the province, how you are going to bring about the necessary economic growth that we all want.

I look back on my term in office as Minister of Industry and all the things that we attempted to do. Members opposite seem to think that only their government is concerned with promoting industry and helping business. I want to remind them that the former NDP governments were very active in helping business, especially small business, in many, many ways. Programs to enhance exports from the province, R & D programs. I think back in the '70s, we were very instrumental in bringing the food markets—the Canadian Food Marketing Research Centre to Portage la Prairie. We did this jointly with the federal government of the day, and we felt it was a great move to bring about the commercialization, commercial sale and marketing of Manitoba food products.

* (1750)

There were many other things that we did, especially in helping small enterprise in many, many ways, but as I said, it is a very difficult task that as the minister I had to perform, and it is a difficult task for the present minister, because in reality we do not live as an economic island unto ourselves, we are part and parcel of the Canadian national economy. Indeed, we are part and parcel of the North American economy, and so much of what happens to the Manitoba economy depends on what is going on south of the border and it depends on what kind of economic policies that the federal government is pursuing.

It depends on the federal government's monetary policies, federal government trade policies, federal government policies on enhancing agriculture, federal policies on transportation, and you can think of a few examples: the Crowsnest Pass Rates Agreement, the policy that permitted subsidy to prairie farmers,

Manitoba farmers in exportation of grain. The Crow is gone. Well, this is a federal decision, whether you like it or not, and it has had a bearing, incidentally, on hog production and cattle production in this province, but there is an example of the influence of the federal government.

We talked about last year or so, we were concerned about the demise of the sugar industry. There too it was the policy of the federal government had a great bearing on the ability of Manitoba to sustain a sugar beet industry, a sugar production, a sugar manufacturing industry. Then of course you can think of all kinds of policies, trade policies, you can think of the monetary policies to the extent to which you have a tight money or an easy money policy, the extent to which you have interest rates that make it easy for business to borrow, that make it easy for people to get mortgages and finance residential construction, and so on.

So those are the realities. We also have to recognize that a great deal of what happens to our economy is dependent on the value of the Canadian dollar vis-a-vis other foreign currencies, particularly vis-a-vis the American dollar, our major trading partner. The vast bulk of Canadian exports go south of the border, and the fact that we do have a cheap dollar—it may not be very good for Canadians who want to go south for the winter, because it is very expensive as we discover. What is it, \$1.40, \$1.41, \$1.42? It varies from day to day, week to week. But that cheap dollar does enable Manitoba and Canadian manufacturers to ship more south of the border, and that has been a stimulus that we have been enjoying in this province. It is one of the reasons why we have had some job creation over the past couple of years, and the fact also that the American economy has been expanding.

The American economy has been in an expansion phase for some years now. If the Americans should, for whatever reason, begin to experience a major recession, we will soon feel it in this province. We will feel it in Canada because it will dampen the exports from Manitoba, from Canada to the U.S.

So there are all those factors. So is there a role for the provincial government to play in enhancing industry and industrial development? Well, there is a role, but

it is a limited role, and I have said that for years. I said that when I was a minister and I say it today, and we think back now to the recent development in Brandon, the Maple Leaf Foods investment which we all welcome and which I give credit to the present Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey) for a lot of hard work, he and his officials along with the City of Brandon, the City Council, city officials in Brandon and some others in the provincial system who worked very hard on bringing this deal about.

I was very pleased to play a small part in assisting this to come about, and I very much appreciate the fact that the Minister of Industry recognized this yesterday at the announcement there. I did not think I would ever live to see the day when the Minister of Industry, the present Minister of Industry would get up publicly and throw a few bouquets my way, because we have had our conflicts over the years and we had a bit of name calling in this House, and we have crossed swords many a time. So it was rather sweet music to my ears; it was rather pleasant to have this public acknowledgement and congratulation from the minister, and I thank him for it. But I want to, as I said, congratulate him for his work and for his staff's work in bringing this about, and it did take that work.

But having said all that, we have to recognize that the reason Maple Leaf Foods, Maple Leaf meat processing facility is expanding and fortunately expanding in Manitoba, fortunately expanding in Brandon—a massive development, very, very massive investment—is because of two basic sets of factors. On the one side there is the demand for pork that exists in the world, not only in North America, but well beyond North America's shores. In fact, I understand the output of this new plant in Brandon will pretty well all be shipped overseas. In fact I think they are going to be shipped overseas by air transport, by air cargo. So there is the demand. So you have to have the demand for the output of the plant, of any plant.

So there is that demand, and then on the other hand we have the agricultural base, the agricultural resources, and as Mr. McCain, the CEO of Maple Leaf Foods has stated publicly and as reported in the media, Brandon and Westman is the epicentre of this supply of food for hogs, that it is the epicentre and that he sees there is a great potential for hard production. So there

are some very basic reasons for that location, and there are basic reasons why Maple Leaf can expand its output, and of course there are many, many other factors.

I appreciate the fact that the plant in Edmonton is antiquated, time-expired, as they say, a need for new facilities, but basically there has to be the demand for their product, and of course on the other hand there has to be the agriculture base to supply the raw material. Well, that is a generalization, but that of course is at work, and I say that, coupled with the assistance and promotion by the minister, by the City of Brandon, this facility is about to become a reality and will have an enormous impact on Brandon, on Westman, and indeed on Manitoba. It will have a great impact even to the city of Winnipeg, as Mayor Thompson has recognized.

Many people have stated the impact of it in terms of the population increase in Brandon, which can be very significant, but everything from increased residential construction to additional hotel space to more business for restaurants, to suppliers, the fact that there are hundreds of trucks per week, per day, moving in and out of the area to bring product out, bring product in, raw material in and finished product out alone will give a stimulus to trucking in the area and all the companies that have to service trucks and the trucking industry.

There are all kinds of implications, there are all kinds of spin-off effects. There are so many I do not think anyone can realize and really truly appreciate the extent of the spin-off that will occur. The jobs are badly needed, and I know we have a lot of young people in particular but some not so young who are willing and able to work in this facility. We have people who are well educated, relatively speaking, and of course there are excellent educational facilities in the city and, therefore, Maple Leaf Foods can look forward to a good, stable, productive type of work force. I think they knew that at the time of making the decision or the time of exploring the possibility of Brandon vis-a-vis other locations.

We have lots of great people who are prepared to work in the plant, and I know beyond Brandon there will be other towns that will be supplying workers, I am sure, to the manufacturing facility. This is very good

news, and we look forward to the project being developed in the next year or two.

I appreciate I am just about out of time for this evening, but I would hope to have the opportunity to carry on tomorrow. I am not sure how much time I will have, but I will certainly do that.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) will have 26 minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Friday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, December 4, 1997

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