

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, 17 February, 1988.

Time — 1:30 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER by Madam Speaker.

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

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

HON. L. EVANS: Madam Speaker, it's my privilege to table the Annual Report of the Department of Employment Services and Economic Security for the fiscal year 1986-87.

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MADAM SPEAKER: Before moving to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery, where we have from Aberdeen School eight Grade 7 students under the direction of Mr. Jim Carruther-Shan and Mr. Richard Buss. The school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Burrows.

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

MPIC - divisional financial performance

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

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

Madam Speaker, we have been informed over the past month or more of the loss of \$63 million in the Auto Insurance Division of MPIC, although we haven't been given adequate explanation as to why the loss occurred and where the money went. Madam Speaker, I wonder if the Minister can indicate what was the financial position in the last fiscal year of the other divisions of MPIC, the Reinsurance and General Insurance Divisions.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister responsible for MPIC.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition alleges that he has not been

given adequate explanation of the losses sustained by MPIC in the Auto Division.

I wish to reiterate again, Madam Speaker, that the losses are a direct result of escalating claims costs in excess of \$300 million last year. Those 249,000 claims in fact, Madam Speaker, were the largest number in the corporation's history and, as well, the cost of claims increased from an average of just under \$900 a claim to the vicinity of \$1,100 per claim. That is, in essence, the loss in terms of the corporation paid to motorists as a result of either damages to autos, glass, bodily injuries, and all those areas dealing with the claims that were incurred by the corporation.

Madam Speaker, I want to as well tell my honourable friend, notwithstanding their protestations about the corporation, that the administrative costs of Autopac remain the lowest of any insurance corporation in the country at just under 4 cents of every premium dollar. So, Madam Speaker, I know what the agenda is . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please. Order please. I remind the Honourable Minister to keep answers to questions brief.

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, the Minister can tell the public, who are paying increases of between 24 percent and 109 percent, how well administered the corporation is. They won't believe him either.

Madam Speaker, I wonder if the Minister heard my question. The question is: Can he report on the financial performance of the other divisions of MPIC during the last fiscal year in Reinsurance and in General Insurance?

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, I wish to advise my honourable friend that the report on all aspects of the corporation will be dealt with in the committee. The annual report of the corporation should be tabled very shortly.

In terms of the audited financial statement, I'll take the specifics as notice but, if the report is ready, I will be tabling it in the House as soon as possible.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, is the Minister telling me that he doesn't know whether or not the other divisions lost any money, or what their financial performance was? We are now four months, more than four months, almost five months beyond the end of their last fiscal year. Is he so ill-informed that he's not getting information as to the financial performance of those other divisions of the corporation? Is that what he's telling me?

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, we know what the Leader of the Opposition is after. He just said last night that he intends to privatize MPIC. He intends to get rid of the publicly operated corporation in this province. His own people went to the legislative committee in Toronto and basically said that they did not stand with seniors, they did not stand with consumers on the demonstration . . .

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please. Order please.

HON. B. URUSKI: They were not protesting . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please!

Could the Honourable Minister please come to order. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition on a point of order.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, I know that the Minister would not want to leave on the record a lie. I did not place on the record anywhere any information that said that we would privatize the Public Insurance Corporation. I said we would privatize the General Insurance Division and the Reinsurance Division, and I said we would introduce competition into the auto insurance . . .

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please, order please. Order please!

One issue at a time. First of all, a dispute over the facts is not a point of order.

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, I have a further question, if the Minister is obviously not going to respond to my earlier question.

MADAM SPEAKER: Well, we haven't finished dealing with the Honourable Leader of the Opposition's accusation that the Honourable Minister was lying. First of all, it's unparliamentary to accuse another member of lying.

MR. G. FILMON: He can't have it both ways, Madam Speaker. Is he going to withdraw or admit that he's lying?

MADAM SPEAKER: May I remind the Honourable Leader of the Opposition that a dispute over the facts is not a point of order, and two members can have a dispute over their opinion of certain facts without one accusing the other one of lying. Accusing another member of lying is unparliamentary. Would the Honourable Leader of the Opposition please make it very clear that he is not making such an accusation.

The Honourable Minister responsible for MPIC.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, I want to indicate again to my honourable friend that I will be tabling the report and all the figures will be there, and they will be brought to committee, as I said earlier.

MADAM SPEAKER: That is not the matter that's in dispute at the moment. It's not all right for anyone to get back to the original question until the matter is resolved.

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: What are you suggesting, Madam Speaker?

MADAM SPEAKER: I'm asking that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition kindly withdraw his accusation that the Honourable Minister is lying, and then perhaps we can have the Honourable Minister clarify his statement that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition is objecting to.

MR. G. FILMON: Well, maybe we could have the Minister clarify it and there would no - that's fine. I'll be happy to have him clarify it.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

HON. J. COWAN: Madam Speaker, in an attempt to be helpful, I distinctly heard you ask the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw his comments. He knows full well that, when requested to do so in this House after having used unparliamentary language, he is obliged to do so. And he is not obliged to stand up and give you or any other person in this House direction. The job of maintaining order, decorum, and rules in the parliamentary procedures in this House is a job that falls rightly to the Speaker, and you have the full support of all members of the House, as you have always had in attempting to pursue — (Interjection) — Well, Madam Speaker, they have comments that they wish to put on the record, please let them have the courage to stand in their place and put them on the record.

If they wish to reflect upon any member of this House, or the authority of this House, Madam Speaker, they know that there are ways that they can do that, and the way to do that is not chirping from their seats. Well, Madam Speaker, the Member for Arthur says he doesn't need to be lectured by anyone in this House. He certainly needs to learn the rules somehow.

So, Madam Speaker, I would suggest that the Leader of the Opposition follow the time-honoured traditions and rules of this House and, as a gentleman in this House and as an honourable member in this House, take his feet and have the courage to withdraw those remarks that were obviously unparliamentary.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: I'm sorry.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, not only is the Member for Dauphin sorry, the whole lot over there is sorry. They're a sorry lot, I'll tell you.

Madam Speaker, in view of the fact that the Minister responsible for Autopac has neither the guts nor the integrity to withdraw what is clearly an incorrect statement . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

MR. G. FILMON: . . . I will withdraw my comments about lying, not because it isn't true, but because it's unparliamentary.

MADAM SPEAKER: May I also remind the honourable member that clearly in Beauséjour, using the phrase

"hasn't the guts" is also unparliamentary? Could the honourable member please withdraw that?

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, I'll change that to intestinal fortitude.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister responsible for MPIC.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, clearly I would ask my honourable friend, without reservation, to withdraw those comments. I would do the same thing.

MR. G. FILMON: I withdrew them because they were unparliamentary.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: That's right, and you're not getting anything more.

MADAM SPEAKER: May I ask all honourable members, whether asking questions or responding to questions and certainly in their comments from their seats, to maintain the proper parliamentary decorum and use only parliamentary language? That way, I think we can proceed in an orderly fashion, and each side of the house will be able to achieve their objectives and the objectives of question period.

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: With a question?

MADAM SPEAKER: I asked the Honourable Leader of the Opposition to withdraw the comment.

MR. G. FILMON: I did. I said I withdrew it because it's unparliamentary, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The one about . . .

MR. G. FILMON: Lying. Guts I changed to intestinal fortitude. I don't think that's in the list.

MADAM SPEAKER: Okay, thank you very much.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, would you like to go over my questions to see if there's anything else?

MADAM SPEAKER: It's a bit difficult when we go back and forth and back and forth. Now, does the Honourable Leader of the Opposition have a question?

MR. G. FILMON: Yes, I do, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Please place it.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, I implore the Minister responsible for MPIC - we've been through this before, where we've asked questions in the House about information that he clearly had under his jurisdiction, not to just this Minister but his predecessor, the Minister responsible for MPIC, the Member for Gimli, would not come clean and tell us when there were losses in other divisions at MPIC. That resulted, Madam Speaker, in him having to make acknowledgements outside of the House against the privileges of this side of the House.

Madam Speaker, they might as well learn, they're not going to keep things hidden. They didn't on MTX; they haven't on MPIC and the reinsurance losses.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. G. FILMON: Just come clean. Tell us, what are the results of the other divisions of MPIC, the Reinsurance and General Insurance Divisions, in their last fiscal year of operation?

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member has asked that question, the same question or substantially the same question twice before. It's repetitious.

WCB - rehabilitation injured workers

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie.

MR. E. CONNERY: Madam Speaker, yesterday in reply to the questions I posed to the Minister responsible for the Workers Compensation, he stated that their only concern was for the injured workers and that's why there were losses.

Madam Speaker, research has shown that, if injured workers don't get back to work within a year, their chances of ever going back to work are less than 10 percent. Madam Speaker, presently at the Manitoba Workers Compensation Board, there is a delay of anywhere from 12 to 18 months for workers getting into rehab. How can this Minister justify this inadequate and inhumane treatment of injured workers? Can this Minister now tell us if they are interested in the treatment of the injured worker? Are they really sincerely interested?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister responsible for Workers Compensation.

HON. H. HARAPIAK: Madam Speaker, it's very clear that the whole area of rehabilitation is the secret to the success of Workers Compensation. If we are ever going to be successful as Workers Compensation in getting injured workers back, the whole area of rehabilitation is one that's going to have to be working.

We realize there was no rehabilitation during the years that the former administration was in office, but then that's why the Rehabilitation Department was set up. We know it's not a perfect system. We have been making progress in that area, but we recognize there are further changes to be made.

We also recognize that there is going to have to be some goodwill on the part of the employers to take back injured workers. It is not enough just to retrain the injured workers. The injured workers have to go back to a job. That is the responsibility of the employers. We are having meetings with them at this time to see if they can accept the responsibility to a greater degree because, very clearly, the rehabilitation program has got to be working. There have been some gains made, but we've got to make more improvements if we're going to be making the Workers Compensation a more humane organization.

MR. E. CONNERY: It is a breath of fresh air to have this Minister admit for once that there are real severe problems at the Workers Compensation Board.

If this Minister really has an interest in putting injured workers back to work, he would ensure that they get to rehabilitation early. Will this Minister now commit himself to a program that will ensure early and adequate rehabilitation?

HON. H. HARAPIAK: Madam Speaker, very clearly that has been a commitment of ours for the last several years. Rehabilitation is a priority with the Workers Compensation. We recognize that there need to be some changes, some improvements made in rehabilitation that is going on there. We are committed to bringing the rehabilitation of injured workers and to get the injured workers back to work.

But as I said before, it takes a commitment from industry as well. We are having ongoing discussions with industry to see if there could be a greater commitment to taking the injured workers back. Very clearly, they've got a large, very critical role to play in this whole area of rehabilitation and bringing their injured workers back to work.

MR. E. CONNERY: Madam Speaker, my concern is to save the Workers Compensation system from being ruined by mismanagement.

Madam Speaker, there is a report on long-term claims disability, called the Cormack Report. Madam Speaker, that report not only showed the millions of dollars we are losing through inefficiencies, it also showed how to get injured workers back to work soon. Madam Speaker, this Minister has been sitting on the report for a year. Madam Speaker, will this Minister now table the report in this House, and see if it's hatched?

HON. H. HARAPIAK: Madam Speaker, any reports that have come under my responsibility have been tabled. The Cormack Report which he refers to and which he has a copy of, because his Leader quoted from it extensively during last year's Estimates, so if they want - it's the property of the Workers Compensation Board. If they have no problem making it public, I have no problem.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

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

MR. E. CONNERY: Yes, Madam Speaker.

The Minister is errantly saying that we have a copy of the report. Madam Speaker, we on this side of the House do not have a copy of that report and so, when he makes that statement, he is . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please. Order please.

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

The Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie, with a final supplementary.

MR. E. CONNERY: Madam Speaker, is the reason that this Minister is refusing to release the report the fact that it contradicts the direction in which this government

and this chairman of the board plan to go with Workers' Compensation? In other words, does efficiency in this operation not count?

HON. H. HARAPIAK: Madam Speaker, the Member for Portage la Prairie speaks about contradictions. I think he is the classic example of contradictions. He talks about rehabilitation, and yet he talks about reducing costs. You cannot have both.

Very clearly, that's why we had the implementation team who were dealing with the whole cost of the Legislative Review Committee. We are committed to implementing that review committee, but we want to know what our costs are going to be before we move ahead with the Legislative Review Committee. That legislation will be brought forward here during this Session, and we will be having the costs and we will have a plan of how we're going to be recovering from the unfunded liability as well.

MPIC - mailing costs

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister responsible for MPIC.

My office has had a number of inquiries about an unsolicited letter that individuals throughout the province have received from the Minister, signed by the Minister, outlining the benefits of Autopac. In a time when our honourable members have been told there's a limit on their mailing, how wide is the circulation of this particular letter and at what cost?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister responsible for MPIC.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, the honourable member should know that we have received calls from many Manitobans, received petitions and concerns raised as a result of the changes in the insurance rates that were announced in December.

The government did take those concerns to heart and, in fact, made a number of substantive changes to those rates. As well, we are responding to those people who have contacted us and a number of other people. In fact, Madam Speaker, I have no apologies at all for writing Manitobans who have voiced concerns, telling them that we have the best benefits in the country and amongst the lowest rates in the country and the most efficient insurance corporation anywhere in North America.

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

Why would this letter, this unsolicited letter, be sent to individuals living in a senior citizens' complex, many of whom do not even own cars and therefore have no complaints about Autopac?

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, there have been many Manitobans, some of whom have had cars or not, have signed petitions and have been on petitions, names whom we have responded to and we have sent

letters outlining the benefits of the publicly operated insurance system in this province.

Madam Speaker, let it be very clear that the liberals of this province voted against publicly operated auto insurance. The New Democratic Party stood in favour of it. Madam Speaker, we know that there are difficulties in the insurance industry right across North America, and we are working with Manitobans to make our insurance system better. It would be interesting to know where the Liberal Party now stands in auto insurance, Madam Speaker.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: A final supplementary, in an attempt to get a straight answer.

Madam Speaker, would the Honourable Minister responsible for MPIC tell the House this afternoon who is bearing the cost of this letter? Is it his department, a department in the government already running huge deficits, or is it MPIC which is also running huge deficits?

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, it will be the same people of this province who pay for her mailings.

WCB - Crown Inv. Act, exclusion

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Brandon West.

MR. J. McCRAE: Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for the Workers Compensation Board.

The Throne Speech places a new emphasis, Madam Speaker, on Crown accountability, an emphasis that never has been needed before the election of the New Democrats of this province. But in view of the fact, Madam Speaker, that employers in this province are being asked to shoulder huge and massive increases in Workers Compensation premiums, can the Minister tell us why it was that the Workers Compensation Board was excluded from the schedule of Crown corporations and boards and agencies which come under the umbrella of The Crown Corporations Accountability Act?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister responsible for Workers Compensation.

HON. H. HARAPIAK: Madam Speaker, the Workers Compensation Board has always been an autonomous corporation, and it remains autonomous in relations this time.

MR. J. McCRAE: Madam Speaker, to the First Minister, if I can get his attention.

Will the government be considering placing the Workers Compensation Board under that umbrella, and will it use the powers provided in Section II to include WCB in the schedule, which would allow for the scrutiny that's provided in the act?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Crown Investments.

HON. G. DOER: Well, Madam Speaker, I'm quite surprised at the honourable member. The schedule was

tabled last year in the committee dealing with the legislation. We made it very clear what groups were covered by the act in terms of the commercial Crowns, as opposed to the noncommercial Crowns. Madam Speaker, at that time, I don't recall any requests from the members opposite that the Workers Compensation Board be included.

Madam Speaker, we will have four Crown corporations under The Crown Accountability Act that will appear before the public in terms of the services they provide and, further to that, for the first time ever, all the Crown corporations under The Crown Accountability Act will appear before the Legislature. So the Crowns never before that appeared before the Legislature as separate entities will appear before this Manitoba Legislature, Madam Speaker.

MR. J. McCRAE: Madam Speaker, will the government include the Workers Compensation Board in the list of corporations, agencies and boards that are subject to the joint councils and the service committees as set out in sections 12 and 13? These things are needed, Madam Speaker, so that Manitobans and employers and employees across the province can understand where it is all their money is going.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Crown Investments.

HON. G. DOER: Madam Speaker, last year in the debate in this House on that bill, members across the way condemned the concept of employer/employee consultations from almost everyone that spoke against the bill. Now, Madam Speaker, they think it's such a good idea, they want us to expand the number of groups under joint councils. They better get their act together first, Madam Speaker.

Farm income relief

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Virden.

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

Manitoba farmers, Madam Speaker, are in the third year of a very serious economic situation.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, so the Honourable Member for Virden can ask his question.

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

I will repeat, Manitoba farmers are in the third year of a very serious economic situation. Because of serious neglect by this NDP Government, Madam Speaker, it has resulted in Manitoba farmers experiencing, on the average in 1987, the greatest percentage net decline in net realized income of any province in Canada. The projection by Ag. Canada for 1988 is a further decline of 19 percent, Madam Speaker. It's intolerable and unacceptable. Is this Minister of Agriculture going to do anything to offset that serious problem at the family farm level?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister for Agriculture.

HON. L. HARAPIAK: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm pleased to have the opportunity to address the very serious issue of farm incomes across Western Canada that the member refers to. To put it in the proper context, Madam Speaker, I think it's important to note where the average income of Manitoba farmers has been relative to our neighbors to the west. The average net income in the previous year for Manitoba was higher than Saskatchewan. It is higher than that in Alberta, Madam Speaker.

Given that there are some very serious issues to address, there are declines which we would rather not see, but I think the level at which Manitoba farm incomes are relative to our neighbors to the west indicate that things have been done well in Manitoba. The programs that we have put in place have addressed the issues and maintained the level of farm income in Manitoba at a higher level than Saskatchewan or Alberta.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Given that the Manitoba Government has spent, on average, about \$3,100 per farm in support, Saskatchewan, \$5,800, and Alberta, \$8,800, Madam Speaker, and Manitoba is falling behind the other two for those reasons, is the Minister going to address that situation?

HON. L. HARAPIAK: Madam Speaker, I thought it was the members from the opposite side who always claimed to be able to manage money well. It's not just a question of spending money, Madam Speaker, but getting some results for that.

What the member says with respect to the level of expenditure in Manitoba is true. It's in the range of \$3,000.00. It is higher though, Madam Speaker, than Saskatchewan, which is slightly below, except if you want to start taking into account, as some of the members opposite have, loans to farmers. We don't count loans to farmers as that money. Further to which, in Alberta where the level of expenditure is some \$4,500 per farmer, in excess of Manitoba's, in excess of Saskatchewan, the level of farm income in Alberta is lower than either Saskatchewan or Manitoba. So it's not only a question of spending, but it's spending wisely, Madam Speaker.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Farmers have spent wisely, Madam Speaker, and controlled their costs, but this Minister has allowed his government to increase Autopac substantially, hydro rates, telephone rates, has done nothing to help the farmers address the cost side.

I would like to ask the Minister if he considers that an average net farm income of \$14,599 on which a farm family must live and pay for all capital expenditures on land, equipment, buildings, if it is government policy that that is an adequate level of income for a farm family in Manitoba.

HON. L. HARAPIAK: Madam Speaker, clearly we on this side have never indicated that is an adequate level of income for a farm family. But it's important to note, Madam Speaker, that the question of farm price supports, the price for commodities is a responsibility

of the Federal Government. We have participated in some of those price support programs but, if there are the kinds of shortfalls that exist, I think the member opposite should be addressing that to some of his federal counterparts.

On the question of input costs, Madam Speaker, when he refers to the question of Autopac, I have done a comparison of farm vehicle costs on my farm compared with neighbouring jurisdictions, and those vehicles are less costly to insure in Manitoba than they would be in Saskatchewan, Alberta or Ontario.

Agreement re beans and feedlots

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

MR. G. FINDLAY: Thank you, Madam Speaker, a final supplementary.

I'm interested in hearing the Minister say that he is prepared to participate in cost-sharing stabilization programs with the Federal Government. I would like to ask him if that means that he's also prepared to sign an agreement for beans and for feedlot operators?

HON. L. HARAPIAK: Madam Speaker, as the Member for Virden points out, we are already participants in tripartite programs. We are participating in the hog program, which is a tripartite program. We are participants in the sugar beet program. It's interesting to note, Madam Speaker, having met with the sugar beet producers, I asked them why they did not ask to remain under The Agricultural Stabilization Act. They said that was our preference, but the Federal Government backed out of the program and we had no choice but to come to the province to save that industry.

On the other items that have been mentioned, Madam Speaker, on the question of stabilization for beans, we have indicated to the producers and to the Federal Government that we are prepared to participate in that program. We will provide the administration. They can share in the premiums. The producers have agreed to that. We have not yet had agreement from the Federal Government that they will agree to that.

On the question of beef that the member raises, we have indicated our commitment to a feedlot program but it is not a simple issue, as the Member for Virden would suggest, because, in meeting with beef producers throughout the province and in my office, clearly some of the producers themselves have said, we don't want to be part of tripartite on beef. We want to be within the provincial program. I can provide the information. People within the program have said there are benefits to be here.

If the members opposite want to know the name, I will say yes. The Manitoba Cattlefeeders' Association has indicated to me in my office they would prefer to be with the provincial plan, rather than with federal tripartite.

Remand Centre site

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Ellice.

MR. H. SMITH: My question is for the Minister of Community Services.

With today's news story about the new Remand Centre, has your department or yourself given consideration for alternative sites other than an urban site, other than having the Remand Centre built in Winnipeg, Headingley, or other sites, for cost factors?

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

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

Actually, Madam Speaker, we, like other jurisdictions that have recently built new remand centres out in British Columbia and in Edmonton, have made the decision to build the remand centre in the city next to the courts, adjacent to the courts. There are very good reasons for that, Madam Speaker.

The greatest reason for doing that is security. I want you to try to picture this, Madam Speaker. We process something like 100 to 150 inmates a day through the court system. Can you imagine us running a shuttle service from Headingley down to the court system?

Madam Speaker, there are a number of issues here, the cost of transporting and running buses from Headingley, but certainly the public would want the security of our having them adjacent to the court system.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

May I remind Honourable Ministers to keep answers to questions brief?

Youth - employment training

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Housing.

HON. M. SMITH: I apologize, Madam Speaker. — (Interjection) — I'm not wearing my hearing aid.

On February 15, I took as notice a question from the Member for River Heights having to do with apprenticeship. Madam Speaker, because it is a program of which we have been very proud, which has had an excellent record, I was really concerned to hear about the alleged difficulties that one Michael Allemeier had.

Now in investigating, Madam Speaker, the facts of the case are this: Michael was in a new trade, that of cook. In line with our new policy of allowing people to challenge for credit at Level I, he and four other young people were able to achieve their Level I status without taking the instructional courses.

Now, apprenticeship is a combination of work experience hours and instructional hours. The courses are set up when there is a sufficiently large class to justify it. In this case, because these young people, five of them, were a year ahead of the larger number of

people, the course was not available as frequently as is normally the case.

However, in the interim, he is able to accumulate his work experience hours, receive his pay and in fact is not losing any time. We now have a tentative commitment that Level II courses will be available in April of this year. So again, I think that his needs are being met with, and that is the background to that situation.

Freedom of Info. bill - proclamation date

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Norbert.

MR. G. MERCIER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Culture and Recreation.

The Minister responsible for MPIC has once again demonstrated the need for the proclamation of The Freedom of Information Act, Madam Speaker. I would ask the Minister, in view of the fact that the bill was promised in 1982, a draft was circulated in 1983 and it was passed in July 1985, and the then Minister promised to proclaim it within a couple of months, can the Minister now indicate when the bill will be proclaimed, or will it continue to be deferred, or have not sufficient records been destroyed?

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

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

HON. J. WASYLYCIA-LEIS: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The first thing that needs to be done in responding to that question is to categorically reject the premises of that question and the falsehoods that continue to be spread by members opposite about the shredding of any documents.

Let me say, Madam Speaker, that I sometimes wonder why members opposite keep pushing for proclamation of this legislation when they don't accept the facts as presented. I stated very clearly in the last Session that this government was working as quickly as possible to put in place the necessary mechanisms to ensure effective proclamation of the legislation. We have not gone back on that word. We are working frantically and as expeditiously as possible to do that, Madam Speaker, and I would hope that the Member for St. Norbert would, for once, listen to those words and accept them as fact.

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, a supplementary question to the Minister.

I believe the archivist has publicly stated that records have been destroyed. I wonder if she would speak to him and advise this House what records have been destroyed.

HON. J. WASYLYCIA-LEIS: Madam Speaker, at the outset of my remarks, I suggested that the premise of the member's question was false, in that he suggested that there was some sort of deliberate shredding of documents.

Madam Speaker, as addressed in the last Session of this House, the facts were presented, the situation described, the Auditor's Report clarified that matter, and I would hope that members opposite would read that report and ask questions on the basis of that report and not on the basis of unfounded allegations.

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, can the Minister give the House a definite date as to when the act will be proclaimed?

HON. J. WASYLICIA-LEIS: Madam Speaker, as I said in the last Session, we are committed to proclaiming that legislation. We are working quickly towards that goal, and as soon as all of the mechanisms are in place so that the proclamation of the Freedom of Information legislation is done on a meaningful basis, the legislation will be proclaimed.

Madam Speaker, the members opposite will realize, from their very short term in government, that the records of governments going back many, many decades had not been managed. Madam Speaker, we should take pride in the fact that we are moving as quickly as we are with respect to proclamation, given the fact that it was only in the latter part of 1981 that a process for record management was put in place. That compares with four decades of work that happened on the federal scene prior to their proclamation of Freedom of Information legislation and approximately 22 years in the Ontario case.

So, Madam Speaker, given the state of the records that all of us are responsible for, we are moving on course. We are sticking to our goal and we are as committed as ever to the proclamation of this legislation.

Compensation re lost elevator

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. C. BAKER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Highways.

Recently the farmers in Lac du Bonnet lost an elevator and they're forced to haul greater distances. The Senior Grain Transportation Committee recommended that these farmers be compensated for the extra haulage distance. Is there anything being done to implement that particular recommendation?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation.

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

The Senior Grain Transportation has in Manitoba held a number of meetings, specifically in the Riverton area and the Pine River-Cowan area, to inform the public of their recommendations. Basically, what they are recommending is that compensation be provided only to those farmers that are being inconvenienced. They are not taking into account at all the additional cost to the province of highways and to the municipalities for lost assessments or increased highway cost, nor are they looking at the impact on many of our smaller communities. Certainly, from the province's position, we are not at all supportive of the recommendations of the Senior Grain Transportation Committee.

MR. C. BAKER: Elementary, Madam Speaker. Both the two railroads are offering farmers discounts at certain locations. Can you tell this House what the effect of that will have on smaller points?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation, if that's in his jurisdiction.

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: That's a very timely question in view of the question raised by the Member for Virden.

In fact, we are so concerned, if we are concerned about the loss of income to our farming community, this is a good reason why farmers are having a lesser income. The Canadian National Railway and the Canadian Pacific Railway have proposed that certain elevators be designated so that, if a minimum number of carloads are delivered through, there be a discount. We are supportive of lower transportation costs, but we would want that to be available to all grain producers at all delivery points and for grain destined to all ports, whether it be Churchill, whether it be Thunder Bay, or whether it be the West Coast.

The fact is that the proposal from CN/CP would not assist Churchill because it does not apply to the old style car. It would apply only to the grain hoppers. It has the potential of steering most farmers towards larger communities and therefore there are additional highway costs, there are additional costs to the producers, and certainly there is a concern again about the viability of smaller elevators.

So with respect to the request to the Canadian Transport Commission by CN and CP, we do not support that. As a matter of fact, I have, as the Minister of Highways and Transportation, advised the CTC of our concerns, have written the Federal Minister of Transportation and regretfully have not heard back from the Minister.

MADAM SPEAKER: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

MADAM SPEAKER: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for St. Vital and the proposed amendment thereto by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, standing, by leave, in the name of the Honourable Member for St. Norbert.

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

I didn't have an opportunity to respond to the Throne Speech at the last Session of the Legislature, but I'm pleased to have the opportunity this time because my constituents are simply furious with this government, as are, I think, the majority of the population of this province, Madam Speaker.

I would like, in the few minutes allotted to me, to review the activities of most of the Ministers in this government, to show how incompetently this government has been run and is being run, and why my constituents are so furious with this government.

Let me begin, Madam Speaker, with the Honourable Attorney-General. Never in the history of this province,

I think, has the administration of justice been in such poor hands. I'm so hard-pressed that I might even congratulate the former Attorney-General on the way he handled the portfolio.

But, Madam Speaker, we have an Attorney-General who has virtually disbanded the Law Reform Commission, an independent body to review the laws of this province, and which has done an admirable job through the Schreyer administration, through the Lyon administration, and up to this point in time. He stands up in this House, Madam Speaker, and says the government has to make the tough decisions. You know, we've got to cut back money, and he cuts back \$22,000 in honorariums.

Meanwhile, he neglects to point out, Madam Speaker, that the former Attorney-General - and he is continuing it - have developed a research and planning department that spends \$400,000 a year under his political direction. That is supposed to be the independent body that's substituting for the Manitoba Law Reform Commission.

Well, that is not acceptable. That is not acceptable to many members of the New Democratic Party, the Liberal Party, or the Conservative Party, Madam Speaker, and that was only one of the first decisions that he made. He has subsequently said that he was going to consult with the Manitoba Bar Association on the appointment of judges, and he did consult. He submitted a list, and the Bar Association executive unanimously reject one of the persons who he subsequently appoints. Well, Madam Speaker, can you imagine the relationship that now exists between the Attorney-General and the Bar Association?

Madam Speaker, when a person consults, surely - and I agree with him that the Bar Association of the Law Society are not the people who are going to appoint the judges of this province. It will be the Attorney-General. But when you consult as to basic competence and fitness to serve in that position and the unanimous rejection of a person, then I think it's simply terrible for the system that he has appointed that person, whoever it is.

Madam Speaker, I wish he were here today. I was going to ask him some questions about the statements of his Deputy Attorney-General, who apparently speaks for his department most of the time, who said the court delays in the setting down of criminal trials in the Provincial Judges Court that now amount to 10 months is no cause for alarm. That's the policy of that department, apparently. That is absolutely horrendous to the system, as his own Crown Attorneys are saying, Madam Speaker.

When we assumed office in 1977, there was a six-month delay, and that was horrendous. We dealt with that as a priority. It was reduced to three months when the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge took over the office of the Attorney-General. He will recall the number of times that I raised that . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

I'm having difficulty hearing the honourable member. If members would like to have private conversations, could they do so elsewhere?

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, you will recall the number of times I raised that issue with him during

consideration of his Estimates. He unfortunately allowed that delay to get up to six months. Now it's 10 months, Madam Speaker, and for the Attorney-General to allow his Deputy Minister to say that is no cause for alarm in this province is totally unacceptable, and the system cannot allow that to continue. But this Attorney-General has accepted that. He's accepted, Madam Speaker, delays at the Land Titles Office. His department, either himself or through his Deputy Minister, are implementing a change in court reporting to an electronic system which is unacceptable to many people in the courts. Madam Speaker, there was consultation from us. That consultation has not taken place.

Madam Speaker, that is the first department that is in worse shape than it has ever been in the history of this province. Then, Madam Speaker, we have the Minister of Finance. The Minister of Finance, as an example of what is occurring in each and every department, introduced a land transfer tax at the last Session of this Legislature, which was to apply to the sale of shares, a controlling interest in shares when there was an interest in land involved. Madam Speaker, they're now going to have to withdraw that whole section. It was not well considered, well-thought-out, and it will have to be withdrawn.

But more importantly than that, Madam Speaker, this Minister of Finance, I think, initiated this whole chain of events which has culminated in the reaction to the MPIC premium increases. When he imposed that 2 percent tax on net income, when he increased the sales tax and expanded its base, when he increased the payroll tax, Madam Speaker, that was the start of the events that have led to the recent polling which has shown this government in such disarray, because people's pay cheques, starting in July of last year, were reduced even though many of them had pay raises supposed to be implemented as of July 1. But he started that whole reaction.

We have seen, Madam Speaker, the increase in the debt that has occurred under this government, a doubling of the debt of this province. Interest charges, which formerly in 1981 took up about \$97 million or \$98 million growing to \$500 million a year. We've seen the foreign exchange losses which this government has been warned about on a continual basis, and we have an absolutely noncompetitive taxation system in this province, Madam Speaker. I can tell members of this government that I am continually receiving calls from people in my constituency who are leaving this province because of the tax regime in this province.

We then have also under this Minister of Finance, Madam Speaker, he created a large uproar last summer when he told every department to go through a 5 percent cutback exercise over three years and what the effects of that would be. The departments all did that and were very upset about it. Then what happened? He enters into a three-year contract with MGEA for three percent increases in the first year, three percent increases in the second year, cost-of-living and no lay offs. Madam Speaker, what was the original exercise all about if you're going to enter into a contract of this nature?

Madam Speaker, one other point that again has to be mentioned is that this government did substantial damage to the Civil Service by the partisan political appointments that have been made throughout the Civil

Service, not just to the Order-in-Council appointments but to directorships and managers throughout the Civil Service. Career civil servants are extremely upset with what is happening.

Madam Speaker, we then get to the now Minister of Labour - thank God she's no longer the Minister of Community Services! - and one has to ask what is this woman doing still in the Cabinet? What is she doing still in the Cabinet? Madam Speaker, there is so much evidence that the mistakes that occurred in her department have been responsible for the deaths of infant children, the mutilation and maiming of infant children. It's not just me that's now saying this, Madam Speaker. The Sigurdson-Reid report said it; the report on the Northwest that was released last fall said it; and the new Minister of Community Services said it, Madam Speaker. She said it.

When the report on Northwest Community Services was released in October, the now Minister said: "Two babies who died of child abuse last year might have been saved if the child welfare system had been tightened up." She admitted the government had failed to provide adequate direction to child welfare agencies, leaving many workers unable to do their jobs properly. The report spells out that there should have been better procedures, better policies, better systems, better ways of evaluating and monitoring.

It's not just us who are saying it. It's not just some outside consultants who are saying it. It's another Minister in that Cabinet who is now saying that about her, Madam Speaker. That's not the only criticism that the new Minister of Community Services has confirmed, Madam Speaker.

Do you remember, Madam Speaker, when the now Minister of Labour sent her "Swat team" into the Windell Homes to revoke the licence and upset 24 elderly persons living in that home. She said: "We have substantiated reasons for this." What did the new Minister say? After investigation, she said, "It was a mistake." A mistake? The former Minister didn't follow proper procedures and lacked the necessary information to make a proper decision. So, Madam Speaker, it comes from another Minister within this government, condemning the former Minister of Community Services.

There's been another tragedy, Madam Speaker, the death of Russell Smith in a group home. The former Minister said everything was okay when the parents expressed concerns. What did the new Minister say? She issued a press release ordering immediate changes to residential care home operating procedures. Madam Speaker, the former Minister announced an increase in the grant in August to Child and Family Services agencies throughout the province. The new Minister, after it was seen that there was simply not enough money for the agencies to carry on, that they were spending more time trying to deal with budget cutbacks within their agencies than on the job they were supposed to do, had to call another press conference in November to increase the grant.

Well, Madam Speaker, we have said she's incompetent; outside people have said she's incompetent. Now another Minister in her own government has said that she's incompetent. Why don't they throw her out, Madam Speaker? But can you imagine her? She's now the Minister of Labour. At least,

to a certain degree, there are no longer human lives involved. We can change the legislation later on. We can establish a better climate, Madam Speaker, but one can only wonder at the leadership that she will give to that particular department.

Then we have the Premier, Madam Speaker, the so-called Premier, the puppet of the manipulators and image-makers and communicators on that side of the House and in the offices throughout this building. He doesn't make any decisions, Madam Speaker. They have avoided, in any way, him taking any accountability or responsibility for this government, Madam Speaker. But at this Session of the Legislature, he's going to have to because our Leader and our caucus have decided that, in the order of the Estimates that we choose where we pick the first two, the first one in the House and the first one outside the House, the first one we're going to pick in the House, Madam Speaker, is Executive Council, and this Premier is going to finally have to answer for the activities of this government. He may be there a very long time, Madam Speaker, because he certainly hasn't taken any responsibility so far. But he will this time, Madam Speaker. He'll have to take responsibility, Madam Speaker.

You know, what does a Cabinet Minister have to do in this government to get removed? Apparently, there's nothing. He's going to have to take responsibility, Madam Speaker, for this horrendous waste of money on communicators, 116 communicators. There are some 23 people employed in that capacity when they took office, and they're now up to 116. Can you imagine it? You see them hovering around the doors to this Chamber, Madam Speaker, pushing the press, manipulating the press, throwing in answers, standing there, listening to a critic from this side of the House. Taxpayers' money is being used for that purpose. It's unbelievable. While they're closing beds and doing everything else, Madam Speaker, and using taxpayers' money for polling, which when they were in Opposition before 1981, they didn't want to see and we didn't spend a cent on polling.

We move down the line to the Minister of Health who, in the Throne Speech, says our health care system's in great shape. Madam Speaker, if it's in such great shape, why is the Manitoba Medical Association spending \$500,000 in advertising to tell us it's in bad shape? This is the Minister who says to the doctors: "If you don't like it, leave." Well, that's terrific. That's a great attitude, Madam Speaker.

Then we move on to the Minister of Municipal Affairs responsible for MPIC. I want to say to him, as I said to him across the House, Madam Speaker, you know, I welcomed his appointment as Minister of Municipal Affairs because he was Minister of Municipal Affairs in 1977 when they lost the following election. So his appointment to this position bodes well, Madam Speaker. He's been working like heck to make sure they get defeated ever since he got appointed. He's giving \$90,000 or \$98,000 - which is it, \$90,000 or \$98,000.00? - but he's giving \$90,000 or \$98,000 per year to Mr. Silver. He doesn't have to. There's no minimum requirement as to what he has to do to earn that money, Madam Speaker. The people who are paying the increases in Autopac premiums, paying more for less coverage are not going to be very happy about that, Madam Speaker.

There's no question, Madam Speaker, that there should be political responsibility for what happens. The Ministers have been the chairmen of the boards. They can't avoid political responsibility by continually firing members of the Civil Service who work for them. When do they take responsibility, or do they ever take responsibility? The people of Manitoba are going to have to make them responsible in the next election, Madam Speaker, because they won't offer to take any responsibility.

We move on to the Minister of Education and one of his first pronouncements, increases in education financing. We're going to change the way municipalities have to the remit the money to the school boards. But did he talk to the city, or did he talk to the municipal associations? No, he didn't. He just announced it; that's it. That's this caring, listening, sharing government, Madam Speaker. He didn't even talk to them.

Then we move on, Madam Speaker, to the Minister responsible for the Workers Compensation Board, average assessment increases in premiums of 109 percent. That's what has occurred since they took office, 109 percent in six years, plus a \$4 million grant from the Treasury a few years ago. What is the deficit going to be, \$194 million now? No, but they are adding \$10 million, because they're not collecting enough this year. There's another \$10 million with a \$194 million deficit. It's not only illegal. What do you say to future people who want to invest and develop plans and employ people in Manitoba? Welcome to Manitoba. Here's a \$194 million deficit in Workers Compensation you're going to have to pay for when you come. So hurry up and come. Do you think they're anxious to come?

Now the irony of it all is, because of this mismanagement, they go to the hospitals and say you've got to pay an extra 37 percent per year. The Minister of Health says that has to come out of your fixed grant. So you reduce hospital services even more to pay for the incompetence at the Workers Compensation Board. If it wasn't so serious, it would be funny, Madam Speaker, but it's absolutely tragic what's happening.

Of course, what happened to the former chairperson of the board? Did she get fired, thrown out on her ear for this terrible record? No. She got a \$64,000 job in the Health Department. This government obviously thinks incompetence is so good that they pay you even more the more incompetent you are. It's phenomenal, Madam Speaker.

The Minister of Energy and Mines comes in the House and tells us we spent \$589,000.00. — (Interjection) — There are a lot of people in here who don't want to get in the question period for a few weeks, Madam Speaker. Then we have the Minister of Energy and Mines who tells us that he made a good investment spending \$589,000 - I believe it's higher than that, but let's settle for \$589,000 - in attempting to acquire a gas company that this side of the House and the public of Manitoba told them for months they were insane to attempt to proceed with. That's supposed to be a good investment.

What kind of a reputation does that set for this province, Madam Speaker, when we have the government moving to acquire or expropriate private business when it would do no good, when they have the Public Utilities Board in any event to regulate prices? So, Madam Speaker, they not only wasted money, they have done serious damage to the reputation of this province.

Now we have another story unfolding, Madam Speaker, under this Minister, the Manitoba Hydro and its rates. We all know how Limestone was advanced two years for political reasons, for some short-term economic and political gain. The NDP since they've assumed office have increased rates, according to my calculations - and I'm probably low - some 36 percent, with another 4.5 percent in 1988.

Where, Madam Speaker, is the Heritage Fund that we were suppose to have? Where is the money in the Heritage Fund? It appears now, Madam Speaker, that there have been slight changes in calculations. We're not really going to have a Heritage Fund. What we're going to have is a \$40-million loss from 1990 to 1992, which is going to be added on to further increases in the rates. We're going to have a real shocker of an increase in rates after the next election if this government's returned to office. That's going to be monstrous, Madam Speaker.

They have bungled again that whole area and, regretfully, the taxpayers and ratepayers of this province are going to pay heavily for that mistake in mismanagement, probably much greater than the Autopac increase that people are worried about right now, when those hydro rates have to go up as a result of the bungling of this government.

We move down the line a little bit to the Minister of Highways, the Member for Gimli. Will taxpayers ever be able to forgive this government for building that \$20-million bridge that goes to nowhere? Somebody's going to have to pay for the roads to the bridge. Madam Speaker, they talk about tough decisions on spending and it's tough to be in government. They keep making mistakes like this. Madam Speaker, it's going to cost millions of dollars to do that. We've seen, in any event, how partisan their spending is when they spend three times as much in NDP constituencies on rural road construction, even though we have by far the majority of the members, Madam Speaker.

I was astounded today to hear the answer from the Minister of Culture and Recreation. I'd wanted to ask the Attorney-General a question but, when he wasn't here, I thought I would ask the Minister of Culture a question about freedom of information because I thought she was really going to stand up and say we're ready to implement The Freedom of Information Act, it will be proclaimed April 1, we now have all the records in store. But she didn't even give a commitment, Madam Speaker. I don't think they're ever going to proclaim it now.

I'm convinced that they won't proclaim it, that they don't have the courage to proclaim it, that there's something they want to hide. What else can be the reason, Madam Speaker, when you promised it in 1982, when you circulated a draft act in 1983, which was passed in July of 1985? The Member for Fort Rouge then said, it will only be a matter of a few months before it's proclaimed. It's still not proclaimed, and there's no evidence it will ever be proclaimed. Madam Speaker, I think one can refer to the Federal Government, and I think one should look at the experience they had, because that legislation was passed and proclaimed relatively quickly.

The other astounding fact is that, when we consider this legislation, the then Attorney-General, the Member for Fort Rouge, he'll well remember the representations

that were made that said the time for complying with a request for information was too long, was 30 days, and people wanted it to be reduced to 14 days. He made the argument, which seemed rather sensible at the time. We agreed to it. We're going to bring the act in, people are going to be new to the situation. If we make it 30 days, it will give them time to comply with the requests for information. We said, sure, go ahead, we'll review it in three years and see how it develops and said, maybe then we can shorten the time.

Madam Speaker, we accommodated all of their requests. It seemed reasonable it should be brought in, 30 days to find a letter, a piece of information, respond to it. I think that destroys the argument that they're making if, in fact, it's correct the records are supposedly in this bad shape. Madam Speaker, I must admit I'm astounded that the Minister and this government would not give a commitment today, 33 years later, to saying that they would proclaim the act at some near date in the future without giving any indication that it will ever be proclaimed at all.

Madam Speaker, we have the Minister of Small Business and Tourism, and that tourism part is the most ironical. Where are we going to be looking to for tourists, Madam Speaker? From Russia, from China? Surely, I guess our whole program of attracting American tourists is out the window with this Minister. What were the geniuses over there thinking about when they made him Minister of Small Business and Tourism? The guy who stood in front of the U.S. Consulate when they burned the U.S. flag, the guy who goes to high school students in the City of Winnipeg and tells them that the Marines are going to invade Canada over the Free Trade Agreement, and he is our Tourism Minister. Again, Madam Speaker, if it wasn't so serious, it would be funny, but it's just absolutely amazing.

Of course, the Small Business part of it is just as bad. This left-wing socialist, against private enterprise, burns his Eaton's credit card, and he is going to help small business? This follows upon his final offer selection that every business organization in the province opposed and they make him Minister of Small Business and Tourism. What must have happened, Madam Speaker, would be something like, I guess, the redistribution that took place for 1981. They made all the decisions, they finally got down to one little area left on the map and it became the Gimli constituency, as my suggestion, because it didn't make any sense at all. That's just like the appointment of him as Minister of Small Business and Tourism. It doesn't make any sense at all.

Next, we have the new Minister of Agriculture, and I thought, Madam Speaker, that he might do some credit to that job. But after hearing him today when the serious questions are put to him about the level of bankruptcies in this province as a percentage of the farms and our high, high rating in that area, and the record we have had in bankruptcies and the decrease in net income in this province, to get pure political answers. They must have a script that the former Minister left because those were the kinds of answers he used to give to serious questions on agriculture from this side of the House.

I want to warn him. He'd better stop that and treat agriculture seriously, Madam Speaker, because those kinds of answers are not going to make any person

involved in agriculture very happy in this province. The least he could do, Madam Speaker, was to empathize with the province, at least be sympathetic to the province. To attack them in the way he did does not bode well for the operation of agriculture in this province, Madam Speaker.

We have of course the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Telephone System after he is finished with his responsibilities as the super Minister responsible for the Crown corporations in getting involved in these decisions and the president of the MPIC and all of these things, in consulting with 27 professional financial people in that department. That's a great big job he has over there, Madam Speaker, with a lot of responsibility. We're awfully worried about his health. We wish him well.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. G. MERCIER: But, Madam Speaker, he increased the telephone rates 11.5 percent last year to pay for this disaster in Saudi Arabia. The question is: What is he going to do for this year? When do we get the good news? — (Interjection) — Good question, he says. Is it 50 percent?

A MEMBER: Pardon?

MR. G. MERCIER: Is it 50 percent? Fifty.

A MEMBER: Fifteen.

MR. G. MERCIER: Fifteen.

Well, Madam Speaker, here it is again. That's why my constituents and our constituents and the majority of people in this province are extremely unhappy, because there's going to be another big increase to pay for their incompetency and mismanagement in Saudi Arabia.

Madam Speaker, what the people in this province want is an election. I have never seen the people in this province want an election more. They want it now and they want to get rid of this government. So in the public interest, Madam Speaker, of this province, if they have any feeling for this province and its well-being and its future, call an election. Then you'll be turfed out and we can turn it over to a government that has some common sense, because that's all that's required. Some proper decisions, some proper management, and this province can once again prosper.

Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. B. URUSKI: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I'm very pleased to participate in the debate on the Throne Speech and indicate my congratulations to you in assuming the high office of this Legislature to try and keep us members in some order. I know that you will continue to do that in the finest fashion and do the best job that you can.

I want to, as well, congratulate the Mover and the Seconder of the Speech from the Throne . . .

A MEMBER: Particularly the Mover.

HON. B. URUSKI: . . . Madam Speaker, particularly the Mover, who wants to indicate some of the feelings and has indicated some of the feelings of discontent and concern in people's minds about the various costs that they face and issues that he's raised. I certainly have no difficulty about that. He's expressing, certainly, concerns that people do have.

Madam Speaker, I participated in this debate to indicate that I am quickly losing patience with some of the antics of the members opposite over the last number of months and days, and particularly today with the Leader of the Opposition who indicated that somehow their party is not going to dismantle MPIC and then he qualified those words - we'll provide some competition.

The fact of the matter is the moment that you say we will allow competition into the basic insurance, you have sold public insurance down the drain, Madam Speaker. This is, in effect, what is being said.

Madam Speaker, just yesterday the Leader of the Opposition was quoted in the Free Press as saying we want to privatize. Filmon said his party would open Autopac to private competition, Madam Speaker. What does that mean? Does that not mean privatization?

Madam Speaker, the Member for Ste. Rose, the critic, on February 3, and I quote, "If Autopac is not saveable, that's the only alternative we have to get real profit-oriented or, if you will, low cost because of competition back to the insurance industry in Manitoba." Madam Speaker, if that isn't privatization, what is? What is with respect to public insurance, Madam Speaker? Madam Speaker, leopards don't lose their spots very easily. In 1979, dismantle Autopac, government told. Madam Speaker, they spent almost .75 million dollars . . .

A MEMBER: Nonsense, \$300,000.00.

HON. B. URUSKI: . . . in excess of \$600 thousand, Madam Speaker, to tell the government how to dismantle the insurance corporation. Madam Speaker, they did not have the political will to do it then. Madam Speaker, they will do it by the back door by doing exactly what they've been doing in the last number of weeks.

They talk about political interference in the corporation. Madam Speaker, the fact of the matter is, in 1977, rates didn't go up. In 1978, they were in office. If there was political interference in the '77 election, Madam Speaker, we lost the election. In 1978, they didn't raise the rates. Weren't the rates politically motivated in '77 and '78? Madam Speaker, one year we were in office, one year they were in office. We'll say no, no, Madam Speaker. They will say, no, they didn't politically motivate. Why did they hold the rates down to zero? Why did they hold the rates down to 0 percent for two years? — (Interjection) — Madam Speaker, that's what I said. Madam Speaker, I'll repeat for my honourable friend, that's what I said. We did not raise the rates in 1977 and, in 1978, you were in office, and what happened to the rates? Zero.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

Will the Honourable Minister please address his comments through the Chair, and the Honourable

Member for Lakeside will have his opportunity to participate in the debate at a later point?

The Honourable Minister, to continue his remarks on the motion before him.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, the Member for Lakeside, who in fact was the Minister responsible for a period of time, does not remember that there was no rate increase in the corporation, not for one year running but, for two years running, one when we were in office, the second year they were in office, Madam Speaker. They accused us of politically maneuvering and politically changing the rates, Madam Speaker. — (Interjection) — Oh, so you can hold the rates to zero when you don't call an election and it's okay and, when there's an election and you hold the rates to zero, it's not okay. Madam Speaker, that's the Tory logic of how you deal with insurance rates in this province. When there isn't an election, you can hold the rates to zero.

Madam Speaker, in 1986, we had \$72 million of reserves in the corporation. They said that we were overcharging motorists. They made auto insurance rates an issue in the election campaign. Madam Speaker, they came out and pledged that we would reduce the reserves by \$20 million, in effect a 10 percent decrease. Right? Talk about political opportunism, Madam Speaker — (Interjection) — Baloney!

Madam Speaker, if the Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek wants to make that statement outside of the House and say that someone cooked the books, go outside and make that statement. Let him say that to the Provincial Auditor; let him say that to the outside auditors; let him say that to Mr. Silver. Stand up and have some intestinal fortitude. Make those statements outside of the House and be liable for those statements. Let's see any one of you do it. You haven't got the guts, because you know that you're wrong. You know that the Provincial Auditor has, in fact, looked at the books, has audited the books and has agreed with the statements, Madam Speaker. In fact — (Interjection) — I want to relate to something that the Leader of the Opposition's special assistant just said. Madam Speaker, the Conservatives are now admitting that they made a mistake in offering motorists a 10 percent reduction in the premiums.

Madam Speaker, the fact of the matter is they had the same information as all members of the House. They had all the information. The information on the claims level, on the expense level has not changed one iota, not one iota. They have those claims and they have the claim numbers, and they used an outside actuary, they said, an experienced insurance consultant, to say look, a public company doesn't need those kind of reserves. Let's bring those reserves down. So Filmon said, let's cut those reserves. We're overcharging Manitoba motorists. — (Interjection) — I'm sorry, Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition. I apologize, Madam Speaker, for naming a member by his own name. It is the Leader of the Opposition.

Clearly, Madam Speaker, what really they are after is the privatization of the corporation. Madam Speaker, I want members opposite to go to every municipality, to every hospital board, to every school division that has debentures and loans with the corporation at the best rate anywhere, Madam Speaker, \$300 million

dollars of investment portfolio in hospitals and schools: Neepawa Hospital District, \$217,000; McCreary-Alonsa Health Centre, \$83,000; Dauphin-Ochre River School Division, \$1.6 million; the Town of Neepawa, \$342,000; the Rural Municipality of Ste. Rose, \$16,000, just to name a few in my critic's own constituency, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the rates that they are receiving, those debentures, they cannot receive anywhere if they went out on the open market. What the members opposite are saying to municipalities and school divisions is, go out on the world market and borrow from Tokyo, from New York, wherever you want, and get the best deal you can.

Well, Madam Speaker, I want to tell you that there is no better deal than the provincial borrowing rate of what the province borrows and passes on to municipalities. The whole issue of debentures over the last 15 years, Madam Speaker, has become nonexistent. Most municipalities are already well covered, Madam Speaker, and that provides in excess of \$30 million. That provides in excess of \$30 million of investment income back to motorists. Madam Speaker, if this was a private company, \$30 million - and \$300 million were the claims - is 10 percent, automatically, a 10 percent increase on rates because that investment income would not be available to motorists. That's what the Conservatives are advocating, Madam Speaker. That's what you call privatization, Madam Speaker. That's the issue in this debate.

Madam Speaker, there the Leader of the Opposition's own special assistant to the legislative committee in Ontario admitted that the demonstration was not protesting the high rates as far as the Conservatives were concerned. He even said, I'm saying that it was a seniors' group and the Consumers' Association that asked the government to defer, and I think they would be insulted if I said they were part of the Conservative group.

Madam Speaker, what he was really saying in further testimony — (Interjection) — No, Madam Speaker. Do you want me to read on? I will go back.

I want to say basically in support of the concepts in the absence of legislation, refusal to go to the PUB to use the public's influence, say hey, public wants to know where these losses went, given your last year's explanation of why you hit \$36 million before an election and revealed it afterwards. It is much a problem of faith as a problem of numbers and rate increases. So if you will not go of your own volition before the Public Utilities Board or before the standing committee of the Legislature where we can have an opportunity, as you have today, where the executors can answer detailed questions, we do not even get that opportunity. Perhaps with the public pressure, you can enhance some accountability into the province.

Madam Speaker, that was his statement before he made the statement that the seniors' group weren't on his side. Madam Speaker, what they are saying is that there is no accountability in the corporation, so let's have a demonstration to bring out — (Interjection) — Madam Speaker, the assistant of the Leader of the Opposition said that seniors and consumers have every right to demand a reduction in rates. We were not demanding it, and he was speaking on behalf of the Conservative Party to the Ontario Legislature, Madam

Speaker. He says to the seniors: "We're not standing with you." He's saying to the consumers: "We're not standing with you!"

Madam Speaker, we listened to those people. We did make changes, and I want to say that I'm proud of the changes that we made to the insurance rates. We recognize that Manitobans have said that they do not want the increases to be as high as we had announced them earlier, to level off those increases over a period of years. Madam Speaker, that's not what the Conservatives are saying. They're saying we're going to fool you. We're going to bring you to a demonstration and tell you - oh, you can yell about the high premiums, but we're not standing with you because we don't believe in what you're saying. All we want is political accountability.

Madam Speaker, there is political accountability. I take responsibility for the decisions that have been made on behalf of the government in that corporation. Not only that, we are not acting defensively on some of the procedures and policies of the corporation. That's why we have appointed an independent review of the corporation's activities, of the corporation's policies, all the areas on the cost side of insurance claims, Madam Speaker, which members opposite don't even want to acknowledge.

They want to hide their heads in the sand and say the losses are only as a result of political interference. Madam Speaker, when you have \$306 million worth of claims, which is in excess of the premiums, you have a loss. There is no magic to it. Is that Conservative hocus-pokery, Madam Speaker? Is that what they're saying?

Madam Speaker, I think members opposite, if they don't like my comments, they should listen to the comments of the president of the Insurance Bureau of Canada. Madam Speaker, when he came to that same committee, he said that the auto insurance, and I quote: "The auto insurance industry has not been profitable in Ontario in the last several years, mainly because the cost of settling claims has risen faster than premium income. Between 1982 and 1986, total premiums earned increased by more than 55 percent, while losses and loss adjustment expenses . . ."

A MEMBER: You were the guys that was going to keep them down in this province.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, I will deal with that question.

Madam Speaker, and I go on: ". . . expenses increased by almost 68 percent for the bodily injury side of the business. Under third-party liability coverage, premiums increased by roughly 63 percent, while losses increased by almost 84 percent." That isn't Robert Silver, that is not Bill Uruski or John Bucklaschuk, Madam Speaker, that is Jack Linden. What does he say is the solution, Madam Speaker, to some of these costs? I want to quote him earlier:

"In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I have said earlier that Bill No. 2 does not solve the problem of the present cost of operating auto insurance business. If Ontario consumers are to receive any real price benefit, the government must give priority to the introduction of a modified no-fault insurance program, along with tort

reform in order to contain costs within the system. I cannot emphasize too strongly that the real problem facing automobile insurers and consumers today is the cost of settling claims. Until those costs are reduced, there can be no significant control of the cost of auto insurance in this province." Madam Speaker, that's their buddies and they are right. I have to agree with them. I agree with Jack Linden. Do you agree with Jack Linden? No, you don't agree with Jack Linden. — (Interjection) —

Madam Speaker, that's what the Member for Sturgeon Creek is. We know where your friends are, Member for Sturgeon Creek. We know which companies give donations to the Conservative members. We know what buys in insurance they had prior to the last election when MPIC was ordered to give a reinsurance contract to Bison Reinsurance, which members of this House received hundreds and thousands of dollars of donations in their election campaign. We know who in fact are the friends of the Conservatives. We know they have friends in high places, Madam Speaker. It's very clear what the agenda of the Conservative Party is by whatever means, whether it's through the front door or whether it's through the back door. Let's get rid of it, Madam Speaker, because our friends want in. If we have to allow some creaming, if we have to allow other methods to get rid of it, we will do it, Madam Speaker, by whatever means. That's the agenda of the Conservative Party.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Would the Minister entertain a question?

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

The Honourable Member for Ste. Rose, on a point of order.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: I wonder if the Minister would entertain a question. I wonder if he would care to substantiate which company donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to Conservative campaigns. I missed my share.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, I did not say any company donated hundreds of thousands. I said there was hundreds and thousands of dollars to individual members. It's recorded in the House. I'll get the figures for my honourable friend. The Member for Lakeside got donations. The former Member for Riel, the former Leader of their party got a donation, about a half-a-dozen members got donations from the same company, Madam Speaker, just from one. I'll get it for you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

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

I will defer to the honourable member if he's prepared to speak. I hadn't seen him stand. Madam Speaker, if, by leave, I will not lose my position, I will allow the Member for Rhineland to speak - I did not see him stand - if that is agreed?

MADAM SPEAKER: I did not see him stand either.

The Honourable Member for Rhineland, if the Honourable Member for Kildonan doesn't lose his opportunity to speak. (Agreed)

MR. A. BROWN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the member for allowing me to speak at this time.

Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Ministers in their new portfolios and congratulate my fellow caucus members in their new responsibilities. Madam Speaker, I want to extend my best wishes to you, and may I say that you've never looked better.

I appreciate this opportunity to participate in the debate on the Speech from the Throne. As you know, the constituency that I represent, Rhineland, is primarily an agricultural community, but we do have a lot of diversification and have considerable industry, also. The farmers that we have in the Rhineland constituency have the same difficulties that all farm communities have, mainly that the prices of the commodities are low and the cost input is high. This is nothing new. This is what is experienced by everybody. But this leaves farmers with very little money to spend in their communities and this, of course, is reflected in the business community, as it is throughout the entire province, in rural Manitoba that is.

The farmers in Rhineland are very aggressive and they're always looking for alternate crops to grow. The entire farming community in Manitoba has benefited because crops such as corn and sunflowers certainly were pioneered in that particular area, and they have been grown quite extensively throughout the province. There has been a considerable contribution to the income of farmers through crops such as this.

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

Crops such as sugar beets, beans, peas and all special crops give an option to the farmer of growing other crops than grain, of which there is a world surplus and price is below the cost of production.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, many acres are diverted from grain production, and this means that areas not suitable for special crops do not have nearly the amount of grain to compete with as they would if these special crops were not there. One of those special crops is edible beans. There must be around 60,000 acres of beans grown in Manitoba at the present time, and there is room for expansion. I am sure that expansion is going to occur if we can get the cooperation from the Provincial Government, from this Minister of Agriculture. The market has been fairly good and the prices have been reasonable most of the time.

Now, every once in a while when prices slump and every once in a while they do get quite low, it's quite a fluctuating price and, as a result of this, the Federal Government decided to protect the grower from the slump in prices and put in a stabilization plan to be paid back by the producer when the prices are good. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Alberta have signed a tripartite stabilization agreement for beans with the Federal Government. The only one who has not signed is Manitoba. If this agreement is not signed, Manitoba growers will not be able to compete with other provinces, and this will eliminate a very important pulse crop and many dollars of revenue both to the producer and to the government in taxes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this makes no sense. We cannot continuously fight the Federal Government just because we do not like some of the programs which they are implementing. The Minister says that he does not like

tripartite agreements. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are a lot of things that I don't like about this government either. I don't like the 2 percent sales tax or a tax on salary, and I don't like the payroll tax but, in spite of the fact that I don't like these items, we still comply. We pay these taxes and we go along with whatever the Government of the Day decrees. We really have very little alternative.

This tripartite agreement is the only option there is and, whether he agrees with it or not, it is in the best interests of all Manitobans that the bean industry be retained. Saskatchewan not only signed this agreement but they committed themselves to a \$500,000 program of research in the bean industry to encourage farmers to produce beans in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's a far cry from the kind of cooperation which we are receiving in this province from this Minister of Agriculture. Rather than help farmers grow pulse crops, go into different areas, this Minister decides that he's going to stand in the way. I would like to say that this is not going to be appreciated, and I'm sure that the farmers are going to let him know about this in no uncertain terms.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Minister, when he is being asked questions, has been extremely arrogant so far during this Session. He's under the, I suppose, pretense somewhere along the line that he knows just a little bit more about farming than the fellows do on our side who are actually engaged in it. This is certainly the attitude which he seems to permeate (sic). Somewhere along the line, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he is just acting like a smart aleck. I hope that he is going to show a little bit more concern and compassion for the farming community. Mr. Deputy Speaker, his attitude so far puts forward an example, I'm sure, of a feeling of incompetence or an extreme case of naivete, because he would not act in that particular fashion if he knew what he was talking about.

I would like to direct my comments now to some other areas. The areas of responsibility that I am now working in mainly are concerns for the senior citizens of this province, concern for Crown Investments, and the Jobs Fund. Since I have not been in this for all that long, I am learning a great many things as we go along.

One of the things which we have to address ourselves to is that, by the year 2001, 20 percent of Manitobans will be over the age of 65. Now we already have a problem in housing. What are we going to do in the year 2001?

Institutionalized care at the present time is very limited and the private sector has to help. Private sector, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is doing an excellent job, by and large, and there are tremendous savings to be achieved. When you compare private sector care which gets no subsidization whatsoever and the same level of care provided in an institution, then you're talking of savings of up to \$60 a day per person. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this transmits into a saving of anywhere from between \$1,200 and \$1,600 per month from institutionalized care as to private care.

The private sector at the present time receives no subsidies. They could provide even more care and a higher level of care if they were to receive a small subsidy, let's say, a subsidy of \$10 a day. This would allow them to hire extra nursing staff, and they would

be able to look after higher-care persons. I already have demonstrated that they can do this at a much lesser cost than what we can through institutionalized care.

There is room for institutionalized care; there is no doubt about that. We do need personal care homes. But we found ourselves in Manitoba in the position where we no longer can afford to build personal care homes, so we are forced to look to another direction of care. With a little help from the government, many more seniors could be accommodated and the savings to the taxpayer would be very, very significant.

By private sector care, for instance, they provide their own buildings. You do not have to build a building in which to house these people. All that the government really would have to do is do the licensing, make sure that the premises were the type of premises which were suitable for looking after seniors and provide the inspections. These things of course are necessary in order for us to assure that they would be receiving the quality of care.

But I hope, I sincerely hope that the government is going to get away from their attitude, their paranoid attitude, towards private care and not be so concerned that somebody might make a dollar somewhere along the line by looking after seniors. Who cares if somebody makes a dollar if he can provide care per person per month for \$1,200 less than we can in institutions? There's nothing wrong with that.

The experience to date has been that really these people are only working for a wage, and one of the reasons that they can provide care at a much lesser cost is because the administration they do all of that themselves plus they do many, many jobs. In institutionalized care, your administrator will only look after administration. When you're running your own home, you will take care of patients, you'll look after administration and you'll do as much of the work as you possibly can. That is the reason why they've been able to operate to date, because they are willing to work.

So we should be giving seniors this option of private care. We have to give them the option of private care because institutionalized care just is not available. When I think of how some of these private care homes have been handled, when I think of Windell Homes, for instance, where all of a sudden we seemed to have a life-threatening situation, the Minister moved in and removed some of the people in spite of the fact that they wanted to remain there. Upon investigation, it was found out that the situation really was that they were really running a very good home and the people were returned. But this is the type of thing which this government is doing, making it tremendously difficult for people to give private care to seniors.

If ever you want to see a good set-up, a good private care home situation, then I would advise you all to go and take a look at the facilities that Herman Thorvaldson is providing for the seniors, but he is finding it very difficult to give the kind of service which he would like to give. The reason of course for that is that the seniors that he has had with him for a number of years, as they get older, they need a higher level of care. Yet, the government will not provide any subsidization whatsoever.

He assured me that, if he were to receive \$7 a day, not even \$10, but let's say \$10 a day, he could hire

the kind of nursing care which is required to look after these seniors who need a higher level of care. This is a very important area because this is the area where the province is going to run into the most difficulty, looking after seniors, and I hope that this government is going to address themselves to that situation.

I have been following Community Services and the apprehension of children through child abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, or whatever type of abuse, and we still see no change in spite of the fact that we've had very unfortunate circumstances. There is still a great deal of lack of professionalism when children are apprehended and, still in many cases, the parents are the last ones to know. To me, it is imperative that the parents be talked to, first of all, that they should know what is going to happen to their child if certain situations are not changed.

This is certainly what is being done in other provinces. There is always consultation with the parents, but over here we choose to ignore this. We go over in a heavy-handed sort of fashion, apprehend these children and let the parents look for them. This, to me, is intolerable. We still have a lack of direction within Community Services. There's a lack of consultation. There's a lack of knowledge of how to conclude or resolve a case.

All of these things, Mr. Deputy Speaker, cost the taxpayer a lot of money because of all the confusion, of all the running around needlessly, a lack of grouping, letting all social workers know that this is your responsibility, that is your responsibility. We have their money all over the place, and this is why we are having so many problems within Community Services.

I've told the Minister a number of times that there is an organization, the Child Welfare League of America, who specialized in problems within Community Services, and the Province of Manitoba is not the only one with problems. It is a difficult area to provide the type of care which you would like to provide and it's very difficult to get everybody working together and knowing where everybody's place of work is. But the Child Welfare League of America, they set themselves up to do this and they are the only organization which can give creditation to a department. They're the only organization which has the capability, the personnel, to see that these departments are run properly. I would urge this Minister to get in contact with them.

I know that this is going to cost quite a bit of money but, if we don't do this, the cost is going to be ever so much greater. We will not be able to provide the kind of care that we would like to provide for the unfortunate children who come under the care of this department. So I hope that the Minister is going to pay some attention, because other provinces are.

Alberta already has contacted these people, and I believe at the present time they are negotiating with them and hoping they're going to come and organize their Community Services. We know that Ontario is looking at them, and I've heard that British Columbia probably is going to follow suit because, like I say, this is an extremely difficult area to manage. Many, many millions of dollars can be spent needlessly and the care not given that ought to be given if you do not have the proper kind of management to see that all of these areas can be looked after.

I would just like to briefly spend some time on health. We are trying to save money at the present time by

shutting down some wards. This really saves very few dollars, because most of the staff, if not all of the staff, are still kept on at that particular hospital so there is no great savings, not really. The only way, if the government is intent on following that line by shutting down beds, the only saving that they can do is shutting down entire hospitals, because administration is a great part of your cost. From the experience that we've seen, from the shutting down of wards, the savings have not been all that great. All you do have is longer lines of elective surgery.

I would like to talk about elective surgery for a while. A case was brought to my attention two years ago by a young woman who needed an operation on her foot. She could not do her job anymore, and she was told that there was a waiting list of three months, but a doctor told her that it was going to be likely up to six months before he'd be able to find a bed for her.

Now what happened in the interval, this lady had to be put on unemployment insurance and, as a result of the long waiting period, they would not keep the job for her, so she lost the work that she was working in and was unemployed for a long period of time. Now why did this happen? Why were all these costs incurred? They were incurred because she couldn't have that operation. Now where is the saving making someone wait six months and having them not being able to work? Where is the saving? It's the taxpayer who still has to pay for that person, no matter what. And isn't it the taxpayer who we ought to be concerned about and take a look at every area from department to department and see what is happening? Some of these things which we are doing just do not make any sense whatsoever.

We have heard quite a great deal about preventive medicine and how this government is going to go into preventive medicine. Well, the best preventive medicine that I know of, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is early detection of mental disorders. When a child at an early age starts rebelling against society and, if it's been detected at an early age, treatment is relatively easy. This increases with more difficulty as the child increases with age until you arrive at such a time during adult life where it is almost impossible to treat these people. That's a grave area in which we could be preventive, and that could be practising preventive medicine.

But what is happening in this province? We have now had 16 psychiatrists leave. We already were short of psychiatrists, but we've had 16 psychiatrists leave and the stampede is about to leave. We have now, I understand, only a part-time practising psychiatrist in the Brandon Mental Hospital with inmates of over 200 people. We are not giving the kind of treatment - again, we are not resolving the situations so that people can again start working on their own. So that means, of course, that they have to keep on clinging on the system which is very expensive.

The government seems to be going about trying to make savings in health care in a very funny manner, as far as I'm concerned, because they're really not approaching the problem at all. They are not approaching the problem at all.

CAT scans are still a long waiting list. I had a case in my home town not long ago where a person was put on the waiting list for three months. He died after six weeks because he had a brain tumour. He could

not get into the CAT scan. This, of course, is the type of thing which happens because health care is not available.

I would like to, for a while, talk about Corrections and especially the item which is very topical at the present time, the Remand Centre. I welcome the Minister's announcement that the Remand Centre is going to be built this year. Hopefully, that is going to be the case. We had this announced four or five years ago and nothing ever happened. We didn't hear anything more about it until now. Recently again, this has come up, and I hope that this time the government is serious and that they are going to build the Remand Centre, because the conditions that we have in the present centre are absolutely atrocious and something has to be done.

I question, however, the fact that the government has not looked at any alternate site other than the one right beside the Law Courts Building. When you take a look at the value of that property, when you take a look at the cost of building an eight-storey building, then you have to weigh that against what the cost of construction would be in another area where you have a lot of space and where you need not put up such an expensive structure, where you could have a low structure which would be much less costly. Plus when you consider that some of the people in the Remand Centre stay there for up to 18 months, you will still not have any space over here which is going to be available for them for outside recreation. So all of these things must be taken into consideration.

We know what the pros are for building it in the downtown area. It can be connected with a tunnel to the Law Courts Building. Security problems are not going to be there. There is going to be less transportation. Although, from what I hear from the people who have talked to me from within the system, transportation really is not a problem. There is continuous transportation between Headingley and Winnipeg anyway, so this is really not all that much of a problem as what maybe the Minister would like us to believe.

If you take a look at some of the new technology which is going to be coming in shortly - well, it already is there. It's being used in some areas where you have closed television monitoring where a lawyer and the inmate could be in The Pas or Thompson, wherever, and the case could be heard in Winnipeg. This is coming and you're going to be eliminating an awful lot of transportation and it's going to be a big saving to government. That's a big pro. So transportation is not such a big factor as what we might believe.

All I'm really asking is, take a look. Is there an option? If there isn't, well fine, but at least let's take a look.

Some questions have to be asked into the John Bighetty case, the 17-year-old from Pukatawagan. I am very concerned and everybody in this province is very concerned. I've had a number of telephone calls on this. The chap's blood alcohol level was three times the legal driving limit. The Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba took him to The Pas to gain custody of him through the courts, but the case was put off. Why was that case put off? There probably are many reasons for this. But they took him back to Pukatawagan by cab. Presumably, they took him from Pukatawagan to The Pas by cab. It's a five-and-a-half hour drive. So

why, after we spend all that money, if we spend all that time, why then does that case have to be put off? That is a question that has to be asked. Obviously, there is mismanagement of the utmost around there someplace.

There are some more concerns about this. I suppose that they left The Pas around ten o'clock at night because they didn't reach Pukatawagan till two o'clock in the morning. The boy was found a couple of hours later. He was frozen to death. Did the taxi driver wait at the house to make certain that his parents were home, that he got inside the building safely? We don't know. It's a question that has to be asked.

Why was he taken home at that time of night in the first place, at ten o'clock at night, and getting there at two o'clock in the morning? These are ridiculous hours. Night driving, I am sure, is dangerous in the North when you're in these cold temperatures, and it would be much better to transport during daylight. Is there no other option but a taxi? All these things have to be asked in this particular case, and it's a most unfortunate case. I believe that members of the department administration have a lot of things to answer for.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, yesterday, I asked some questions of the Minister in charge of Crown Investments. He says, well, haven't you read the Auditor's Report? Yes, I have. I imagine that he was alluding to this particular paragraph that I am going to read, and I quote from page 6: "There has been a significant improvement in the Government's accounting policy for recognizing increases in the valuation allowance for losses of Crown entities and other loans and advances. When the new policy is implemented in the 1988 fiscal year, losses incurred which are not considered recoverable from operations will be incorporated into the Government's expenditures in the 1989 fiscal year."

Now that's good news that they are going to be incorporated in 1989. We really welcome that. But recently, the Minister has been going all over the place and saying, oh my gosh, you know the Crown corporations are really doing very well. We made \$142 million in the Liquor Commission and Hydro came up with a profit, and really we have been doing very well in the Crown corporations.

But what that story does not tell - and here's the Order-in-Council, No. 13 - is that Manfor received \$128,503,000; the Manitoba Developmental Corporation, \$37,163,213; the Manitoba Energy Authority, \$1,411,905; the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation, \$12,725,925; Leaf Rapids Town Properties Limited, \$595,199; Tantalum Mining Corporation of Canada Ltd., \$2,544,825; Venture Manitoba Tours Ltd., \$1,974,693; Winnipeg Bible College, \$150,000, for a total of \$185,068,760.00.

Now these figures, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have not been available to the Auditor, so the Auditor can only report on the figures that he receives, which was so evident when the Minister in charge of Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation chose not to divulge that there was a \$12-million loss. The Auditor can only report on the figures that he is given. So when the Auditor makes statements that everything seems to be okay, your accountants, I'm sure, are smart enough that they can make the figures presented to the Auditor look all right. But there is another side to the story, and we are pleased

that in 1989 this practice is going to be discontinued. We hope it is going to be discontinued. This is really an intolerable situation that has arisen, and I hope that the accounting practices of this government are going to improve.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

MR. M. DOLIN: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

It's nice to see you back in the Chair. It is also nice, when she is available, to see the Speaker looking well and impartial, and also able to handle the House in a manner that I think is statesmanlike, statespersonlike.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is my third Session in the House, and I'm now reaching a point where I'm almost beginning to enjoy seeing some of my friends when we come back in here, particularly the now-senior Member for Lakeside, who I have not heard speak yet, but I'm looking forward to his remarks because I always get a great deal of pleasure out of listening to the wisdom and experience of the Member for Lakeside, even the cheery demeanour of the Member for Sturgeon Creek. It brightens up my days constantly to just look across the House at the Member for Sturgeon Creek who can brighten up a room by just leaving it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Throne Speech that I wish to discuss, I sometimes, as I see some of the members opposite and some of our people, have a difficult time abstracting from the Throne Speech. This Throne Speech is about health care. This Throne Speech is about the continuation of progress in human services. This Throne Speech is about jobs, as it has been since this government was elected in 1981. This Throne Speech is about the Mulroney-Reagan deal, about Mr. Reagan's lap dog once again adhering to the whip from south of the border, saying, yes sir, no sir, three bags full, sir, as they did in Bill C-22, which gave away patent rights to drugs in this country. We won't talk about that in great detail, but the essence of this Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is fairness. It's fairness for consumers, it's fairness for workers.

I would like to talk about this in relation to the people who live in my constituency, individual problems that I see, that other members of this House see, that the Honourable Member for Rhineland who just spoke pointed out that he sees in his constituency, and how the individual problems faced by workers, consumers, people needing health care in this province are dealt with by the Throne Speech and how people respond and some of the unfinished business that we, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as legislators, have to do in this House, and I would hope that there is some cooperation.

Let me describe my constituency. I have the largest constituency in population in the Province of Manitoba

A MEMBER: Not in area.

MR. M. DOLIN: Not in area, that's true. At present, it would be approximately 25,000 voters. The constituency makes up Garden City, Old Kildonan, which is the North Main area, and The Maples, all of which are growing suburban, business communities. There are even a few

farms in the constituency, but city taxes are forcing them out of business. What you have is 1,500 new units built, according to the Post Office, in my constituency last year; 3,348 units have been approved for this year. Certainly, this is a boom area. If people have driven up the McPhillips strip to Leila Avenue, they'll see a business boom that you probably do not see in any other part of the city, including the Inkster Industrial Park where there is a boom. This government has had a lot to do with that boom. This government has had a lot of responsibility, but there are concerns.

Let me tell you some of the concerns that you have. Living in a suburban community like this, I'm sure the Member for Niakwa, the Member for River East, which are similar types of communities, have similar problems and similar concerns that they have to be careful about. One of them is, in order to purchase a house in the suburbs in this city now, you need two incomes in a family. You can no longer do it on a single income. The prices of houses do not allow that. We no longer have a society, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we had 15 or 20 years ago where somebody, even being facetious, could suggest that a wife was working to pick up pin money. The wives and husbands in my constituency who are working now are working to pay the mortgage, put food on the table, pay for clothing and pay for the basic expenses of life. There is no such thing as frivolous, secondary pin-money kind of second income thing. This is what is happening in the suburbs, and I'm sure it's happening in other parts of the city.

The other thing that is the problem when you have a boom community like this is the matter of schools and adequate schools to be able to serve the needs of the children of the families moving into new suburban areas. One of the problems that is interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that you would not have in a central city area is the major complaint I have gotten in the last three elections is the lack of trees. People do not have trees. In Garden City, which is the older part of the riding, people have trees. People in new suburbs do not have trees and you can see a difference. It makes it look bare; it makes it look stark. The city is planting trees. Certainly we're trying to keep what trees there are alive, but it does create a different kind of starkness than a community which creates some kind of mood.

We do have advantages though. We do not have the crime problems maybe because people don't hide behind the trees, but we do not have the kind of personal violence in the area that you would see maybe in some other parts of the city. We are having increased break and enters, and I'm sure the other suburbs are facing that. I think this is a problem we are all going to have to look at as members representing suburban areas.

I would like to give one problem. When I mentioned about the boom area, that relates on an individual basis to, I think, some of the pipe dreams, the idealism, the blind faith with which I hear members of the Opposition talk about the Mulroney trade deal, and that it will create "X" number of jobs. It will create "X" amount of investment. It will be the best thing that Canada has ever seen.

Well, let me tell the Honourable Member for Virden who was saying, oh, it's wonderful stuff, and what I've heard from the Honourable Leader of the Opposition,

sycophant that he is to the Prime Minister of this country who is being crassly political in pushing this deal for no other reason than to try and get himself and his colleagues re-elected in Ottawa, which is a pipe dream.

The fact of life is, I was at a dinner with Philippine teachers. This was the Philippine Teachers' Association. One would think teachers would have no concern. Well, as a matter of fact, the entire evening people were telling me, were telling the Minister of Community Services who was there with me, their concerns about their community - this is a very large community, as I'm sure you are aware, Mr. Deputy Speaker - and about their concerns about the garment industry.

The fact is that thousands of people in this city work in the garment plants in the Inkster Industrial Park. They're highly mechanized, very sophisticated garment plants there, as I'm sure people from the Young Presidents' Association have told the members opposite and have told my colleagues. These people are concerned in an open border situation about union jobs, about their families, their jobs, their ability to pay their mortgages with those plants moving direct towards states in the southern United States.

This is not something that we, either myself or the Minister of Community Services, brought up at the meeting. This is not something we told the people at the Philippine Teachers' Association. This is what they told us. They said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they are frightened. And what I have heard is the blind faith that I have heard from the Opposition and from the people on the other side of the House, because the Economic Council of Canada says there will be 350,000 jobs.

But where will they be? How many jobs will be lost? They also say - and I have not heard this mentioned on the other side - there will be jobs lost. There will be dislocations. You know that; we know that. The people who work in the garment plants know that and they are concerned that they do not want to be dislocated. They do not want to see their jobs go in favour of somebody else who might get a job, and that's understandable, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm sure you can understand it; I'm sure your constituents are expressing the same concerns.

A MEMBER: How would you feel about being dislocated, Marty, because that's what is going to happen to you soon?

MR. M. DOLIN: Well, I hear the comment that I will be dislocated. I think it's unfortunate that members opposite do not realize and do not take seriously the fact that there will be many of us in this society dislocated, not only members of this House in an election but people who work in the rail yards. What happens when the trains start moving in from Minnesota from the yards there? What happens when they start getting serviced in the United States instead of here? What happens to the rail yards here? That's a dislocation. Where will those people work?

Members opposite say, well, there will be other jobs created. I grant you, there will be other jobs created in this scenario, but where and for whom? I think the Federal Government and members of the Opposition have a responsibility to tell the people of this province

where they are going to be working, how they will be paying their mortgage, and how they will be putting food on the table if they have specific skills in one area and cannot transfer those skills.

Mr. Mulroney, the Prime Minister of this country, has set up Jean le Grandpré - Jean le Grandpré or whatever Grandpré means - Jean le Grandpré to look at industrial dislocation in this country. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not particularly concerned about industrial dislocation. I am concerned about worker dislocation. I don't give a hoot, to use a parliamentary term - I was going to use another one - for plants moving south. I do give a hoot about what happens to the workers, the Manitoba workers who were working in those plants, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I would also like to comment on another problem that I've seen from an individual constituent. A man was going out of his shop to a truck to get a sandwich - you know the sandwich trucks that pull up in front of various plants - and a coffee because there is not a coffee shop in that plant.

A MEMBER: Ham or cheese, Marty? Ham or cheese?

MR. M. DOLIN: Hmmmm? Ham or cheese, I was not aware. But let me tell you - the honourable member asked what kind of sandwich - what the man did not expect - he expected maybe a ham or cheese sandwich - what he did not expect is, standing under the door to get the sandwich, for the door to come off the hinges and crack him on the back of the head, permanently disabling him. The fact is I hear always the members of the Opposition talking about the cost that employers are paying for Workers Comp. and how terrible it is for 20 percent extra cost to the employers. Well, let me tell you about what happened with this man. This man is disabled for life. He is eligible for compensation because this was considered a workplace accident although he was just outside of his plant getting a sandwich from the sandwich truck.

I would like to read to members, in case they are not aware, section 10(1) of The Workers Compensation Act.

Section 10(1) says: "Compensation to be in lieu of other rights. 10(1) The right to compensation provided by this Part is in lieu of all rights and rights of action, statutory or otherwise, to which a workman, or his legal personal representative, or his dependents, are or may be entitled against the employer, for or by reason of personal injury to, or the death of, the workman occasioned by any accident which happens to him arising out of, and in the course of, his employment; and no action in any court of law against the employer in respect thereof thereafter lies."

In simple language, what that means to me and to this gentleman who is disabled for the rest of his life is that, in spite of the fact there were two bolts missing from that door, Mr. Deputy Speaker, two bolts missing which were fixed, and the owner and operator of that sandwich truck admitted to negligence, total gross negligence, this person has no recourse, not because he got compensation, but because he is even eligible for compensation. This is not a Workers Compensation Act with this clause. This is an employers protection act. What the employers of this province are paying -

and not bloody well enough as far as I'm concerned - is they are paying protection money so they are not sued for their own negligence.

I would suggest, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I would suggest members opposite consider this very carefully. When the employers of this province complain about how much they are paying, they should look at how much is being paid out to injured workers, then look at how much they are saving from being sued.

I would suggest, if the members remember - this happened about three or four years ago - there was an 18-year-old man working on a scaffold on Portage Avenue on a senior citizen building that was going up. They had been warned numerous times, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there should be a safety railing there. There was no safety railing there. This 18-year-old worker fell to his death. There was no ability of that family to take legal action to sue.

The fact is, if the man in question who was injured had a right to sue the employer for negligence - and I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we should at this Session in the House get rid of section 10.1 - you know what would happen, Mr. Deputy Speaker? I would suggest members on the other side, especially those who have legal background, you would see the employers of this province cleaning up their workplaces so fast it would make your head spin. They would be so terrified about \$5 million, \$10 million, \$15 million lawsuits for their negligence that the workplaces of this province would be cleaned up and Workers Compensation rates for all employers would go down. They would go down, down, down, like a stone.

I would suggest, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if there was really responsible criticism coming from the other side, you should be criticizing 10(1). There should be an amendment proposed from both sides of the House, by common consent, to get rid of 10(1), so employers in this province who are rotten employers, who do not take care of their workplaces, do not cause high costs for the good employers. They'll take care of their workplaces, put in the proper fences, the proper safety equipment. They allow people who are victims of negligence who serve lifetimes as quadriplegics and as people who are denied the ability to make a living, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the person who caused the pain pays the piper and pays what this person deserves.

This is what my constituents are facing; this is one of the problems that they're facing. There are some other problems.

At the university, we have in my constituency a high percentage of new immigrants. Some of the new immigrants are professional people who come from India, the Philippines, Brazil, Chile. A typical example I have is the universities saying we will recognize degrees from certain universities abroad. Arbitrarily, they will do that, certain universities and certain levels of education recognized. For example, medical schools are rated by the World Health Organization, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Let me give you an example of the kind of thing that is being faced. A woman from Brazil is a Masters graduate in Psychology, certified by the university in Brazil, wishes to get an education degree here. She recognizes that her courses are not exactly the same as they were in Brazil. She recognizes that her degree may not be the same degree, but she also says, I have

spent six years in university. By the way, this woman speaks absolutely perfect English and teaches English as a second language to other immigrants at Red River College as a volunteer. What she is saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the courses in that - Educational Psychology, for example, I should be allowed to take the exam to see whether or not I have to spend a year taking that course. It seems fair to me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that she could start in the second year or third year if she can test out of courses.

So, here is a skilled person who has come here from abroad, who is asking for recognition of her skills. The problem is the University of Manitoba has left it to individual departments to determine whether or not they will allow the Challenge Program to be in effect for new immigrants. I am sure you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have heard this problem from your constituents, and anybody who lives in a constituency or represents one that has new immigrants understands this problem.

Well, the Department of Education at the University of Manitoba says no, we will recognize degrees but we will not let anybody test out of courses. I find that grossly unfair. This woman finds it grossly unfair. I also think we as a society should find it grossly unfair as the fact is we have so many skilled people in our community who are being denied the right to use their skills. I think this is unfair. This is one of the problems we find.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair.)

We also find problems with employment. I've heard particularly the Member for Brandon West at every opportunity condemn the labour legislation in this province, condemn the relations we have with the labour movement, condemn by name individual executive members of the Federation of Labour, presidents and executive members of various unions. Well, I would like to remind the Member for Brandon West and members on that side of the House and members on this side of the House that the forefront of social progress of this country has not been the Chambers of Commerce and has not been the Canadian Manufacturers' Association but has been the labour movement of Canada. The working people have been in the forefront of all social progress in this country.

I would also like to give an example. I had a woman of great dissent come to me who worked for Victoria Leather. I have no qualms about naming this company because I have correspondence to show. After six years of working in this plant, she was told her salary was being rolled back to minimum wage, and she was being put on piecework. After six years, she went to the boss. I mean, you or I would do that. You would go and say, hey, I've been here six years. How can you do this to me?

He said, I will take that as notice. You have two weeks. We'll give you two weeks in lieu. Goodbye, if you don't like it. This is after six years. You take a roll back to minimum wage or you walk. Because why? There's no union in that plant. There is no labour legislation that can cover that kind of incident.

Now, I assure you from what you see in the Throne Speech, and what you have seen and been given notice of in the Throne Speech, we in this House will be dealing with that situation. I would expect the cooperation from

members opposite, because whatever you feel about the union movement - "you" being individuals or collectively, whatever you feel about unions, the good or bad of unions, the fact is there are individuals working in this province who are suffering because of lack of somebody to advocate for them, which is the main role of the union movement.

If the unions are not there to do that and if the unions have been prevented from organizing and allowing people to defend their rights, then we as elected members and we as a government have a responsibility to ensure that basic rights are protected.

I had another case of an older woman of Ukrainian background who asked me in the '86 election when I was canvassing and I stopped at her door, she said you should please pass a law that after 20 years a worker should get three weeks vacation. And I said, what? She has been working 20 years in a plant and gets two weeks' vacation, and she has asked for a third week's vacation and been told, no, you can't have it. Now I find this reprehensible. I'm sure members opposite would find this reprehensible. What is to be done with that?

I think we have some responsibility to take action, to protect people. This is what the Throne Speech is talking about. This is not legal technicalities. This is basic fairness, and I appeal to all members of the House when this legislation comes that we look at the issue based on a principle of fairness, not on any kind of nonsense about names of union leaders being linked with this one and who is on demonstrations and suggestions of promoting violence. We should be looking at fairness for the working people of this province.

I would suggest that members opposite when elections come - I hear members opposite constantly talk about fairness to workers. Well, I suggest to members opposite, put your money where your mouth is when this legislation comes down. It's been announced in the Throne Speech. Let's see some basic fairness.

I'd like to tell one more problem which is not a particular problem provincially, but I don't know whether the members opposite are hearing it but I think it should be brought up here. New immigrants, and I can name three individuals who have been to me recently, one from Poland, one from Chile, and one from the Philippines, trying to get relatives, brothers and sisters, into the country. I am sure many of you have heard this problem. What is happening now is since, I think, December of '86 - and some of the legal people who have had more contact with the legalities of - there's been some change since December of 1986 in the Federal Government.

As you now go to a travel agent, I understand, you buy a ticket or a promise for the relative to come into the country. You pay \$50 or \$55.00. You then send it to the relative in the foreign country, and that relative then goes to the Canadian Embassy in that country and applies for entry.

What has happened is the relatives here spend the \$50 or \$55.00. They get the letter of welcome which they send to brother or sister in Poland, Chile, the Philippines. They go to the Canadian Embassy there and they're told, no, you can't come to Canada. And they ask, why not. Madam Speaker, why can't we come to Canada? And they say, we won't tell you.

Now, in the Philippines, I understand there is an even worse problem and what I understand is, in front of the Canadian Embassy in the Philippines - and I've heard this on a number of occasions and I would hope that someone from the Federal Government will look into this - is there are Philippine soldiers standing in front of the Canadian Embassy who you have to bribe to even get into the embassy. To even see the Canadian Consul you have to bribe a local soldier.

This may be true in other jurisdictions, Madam Speaker. What concerns me is: Where is our Federal Government? These people have families they want to get in. Why are we frightened of allowing people who are sponsored to come into this country? We are overreacting, and I am appalled by the Federal Government's overreaction and the overreaction when the East Indians landed in Nova Scotia, that somehow all immigrants should be denied entry to Canada.

Well, Madam Speaker, I am an immigrant. You know, I came to Canada 23 years ago. I'm very proud of this country. One of the reasons I think that it is important to have immigrants here is that I think sometimes I appreciate this country more than people who were born here.

One of the things is I look at free trade, as it's so-called, at the Reagan-Mulroney deal, and I see our sovereignty, our nationality, our ability to be a nation, to stand up and say we are Canadians, being sold out for thirty pieces of silver. All I hear from the Opposition and from the Federal Government is how good this is for business, how much money it will make for business. I have not heard them talk about workers. I have not heard them talk about our nation, Canada.

You know, I see in the future the flag of Canada being 13 stripes, red and white, 50 stars with a bloody little maple leaf up in the corner and, as long as people who support this deal are saying as long as we make a buck, that's okay. Well, Madam Speaker, for me as a new immigrant, as a Canadian, that's not good enough. That is absolutely unsatisfactory.

They joke on the Opposition side about the Minister of Tourism, comment about the marines. Marines will come here if we somehow renege on the deal. Whether that's true or not - and I find it highly unlikely that it's true - are members opposite afraid of what might happen if we say no to the deal, or if we go back to the bargaining table and say there are certain weaknesses in this deal?

Now I have heard no mention of weaknesses in the free trade deal from any member opposite. I have heard members on this side say, yes, we recognize, Madam Speaker, there are good points to this deal. There are certain people, there are certain companies, there are certain industries that will benefit. We recognize that, but we do not know who will be hurt and we think that's important. We think we must know the weaknesses.

Members opposite don't seem to care. Everything is perfect. The Member for Virten, if he can sell an extra cow and make a few bucks, as long as he's making a few bucks, he's all right. It's the "I'm-all-right-Jack attitude" that worries me about this deal, because there is more to a free trade deal than a "Reagan-Mulroney singsong." There is a free trade deal which means you have to be free, you have to trade, you have to agree on how you do that sector by sector and protect your own people.

We have that responsibility for our people, the Americans have it for theirs. The problem is they take theirs, they are doing that. If anybody is following the debate in Congress now, they will see that the various sectors of the American economy represented by the lobby groups and the congressional group are sure trying to protect their people in all industries.

All I hear from the Opposition, all I hear from the Federal Conservatives, Madam Speaker, is it's good. Shut up and you'll see it'll be all right. Well you know, I'm sorry, I'm not an infant. There is nobody in the working class of this country who are as infantile as members opposite, just to say because daddy said so, it's going to be good and that we should go ahead and believe it. Well I'm sorry, daddy does nothing. Mulroney is not my daddy. I am not going to be a fawning sycophant to the federal Conservatives, as I hear the Leader of the Opposition and every bloody member from the other side of the House has done, fawning sycophancy to the federal Mulroney, and Mulroney in turn is a fawning sycophant to Ronnie Reagan. I find that absurd.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to represent my constituency. I am proud to take responsibility for the problems of my constituents in any way I possibly can to protect their interests. That's why they voted for me and, even those who didn't vote for me, I have a responsibility as an elected member. Madam Speaker, we as a government are going to fulfill our responsibility. We are going to take our responsibilities as representatives of the people of Manitoba, Madam Speaker, not representatives of the Mandarins or the banks of the Rideau.

Madam Speaker, it's been a pleasure to see you looking so well again in the Chair. It's been a pleasure to have this time to speak. Madam Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Virden.

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

After that last little speech, I think it's time to stand up and speak for the people who settled this country some 100-plus years ago. I was going to say some complimentary things to start off with about welcoming members back but, after that, when a member over there, who's been here just 23 years, has the audacity to stand up and say that I don't respect this country as much as he did, I'll tell him. I'm fourth generation and my grandson is sixth generation and we built this country and we know what makes it run right. I don't like somebody walking in and telling me I don't appreciate my country. That's intolerable.

This speech from the Throne tells us nothing about vision for the province, nothing about vision for the people in my constituency. It talks about a government that's tired and worn out, that's trying to protect itself and stay in power at all cost. If you believe what you're saying, I challenge you to call an election right now. Stand up and call an election, if you believe what you're saying.

There's no issue that's going to divide us better than free trade, because that's what this country is all about. If Manitoba didn't have export trade, where would we

be today? You wouldn't have your pay cheque if what you're worried about is your dollars in the pocket as a back bench there. It wouldn't be in your pocket, we wouldn't have a province. We'd have given up long ago. We're not the province of the weak-kneed and scared, I can assure you. You may be thinking we are, but we are not, and I'll speak for my constituents when I say that.

I know that the vast majority realize that we must be a country of export, a country of trade, and trade means good relations with many countries in the world. The largest consumer market has got to be very important to us. I'm going to touch that issue a little more later. — (Interjection) — Madam Speaker, is the Member for Concordia prepared to do away with marketing boards?

HON. G. DOER: I believe in free trade in Canada.

MR. G. FINDLAY: All right, remember that. It's on record, Madam Speaker. He's afraid of free trade in Canada.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. G. FINDLAY: Madam Speaker, I'm very proud of what a number of my constituents have done and very, very proud this week that one Lyndon Johnston from Hamiota is competing in the Olympics, in the pairs skating. Madam Speaker, I was somewhat appalled the other night when the coordinator, I guess the central desk moderator for CTV, introduced him as the person from Hamiota, Quebec. Madam Speaker, that is reprehensible that a national network wouldn't even have done their homework to know what province that member was from who's out there competing. Madam Speaker, we have 10 people competing in the Olympics, and one is from my constituency and I'm very proud of it.

Madam Speaker, a few weeks ago, the flame went through Virden constituency and we're talking free trade. It's certainly an issue that makes me feel proud to be a Canadian and, when I saw that flame go through, I was just amazed to see how people just rose up and demonstrated that "proud to be Canadian" spirit. They felt they were part of the procedure that put Canada on the world stage. Madam Speaker, we had ceremonies in Virden, Elkhorn and McAuley, and every time the young people were there with the middle-aged and the elderly. It was a very proud moment to think that we're part of a world stage event and, as we see it unfolding in Calgary, we can be very proud of that province, what it's doing for our country.

While I was there, Madam Speaker, the people made mention of how they had a successful period a year ago when Rick Hansen went through. I would like to again remind the house, Madam Speaker, the Member for Concordia was supposed to be there representing the province a year ago, and he failed to show up. Madam Speaker, they also made mention . . .

HON. G. DOER: A point of order. The plane was snowed out . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

A MEMBER: Well, you laughed when Bill's suitcase

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

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

MR. G. FINDLAY: Madam Speaker, he may call that a cheap shot, but the other representatives from the City of Winnipeg got in the plane and flew out to Elkhorn that morning.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

HON. G. DOER: A point of order, Madam Speaker. I arranged the plane for Peggy to get out there.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

The Honourable Member for Virden.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Madam Speaker, I wonder if he couldn't have got on the plane if he arranged it?

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

Would the Honourable Member for Virden please continue in the debate.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I heard a lot of chirping over there. I thought you deserved it.

Madam Speaker, my constituents in general are answering a questionnaire that we've sent and the general comment is: "We're sick and tired and we don't want to take it anymore." They've seen tax increases, fee increases in hydro, telephone, driver's licence, Autopac, 2 percent net income tax, increase in the sales tax, Workers Compensation premiums have gone up. Madam Speaker, everybody is telling me, no matter what kind of salary increase they've got as workers in the past two years, the government has taken it all away through taxes and fees. Madam Speaker, is that called a progressive government that's just grabbing and grabbing everything that everybody's produced.

They have a regulation over there that the rents can only increase 3 percent. Madam Speaker, that's a great increase. If everybody can live with 3 percent, wouldn't we be a lot further ahead in this province, instead of taking 10 percent and 12 percent and 20 percent and 40 percent increases like the government has to have to run their departments, Madam Speaker? That's a record that they should stand up and defend more often, instead of saying how great they are, how caring and sharing they are. They don't care and share; they like to grab and take home.

Madam Speaker, we have had examples of a number of Crown corporation losses that most members of my constituency are very unsatisfied with. They wonder why they can allow large losses like MTX, Manfor, Autopac, Flyer, Workers Compensation, several hundreds of millions of dollars. They're saying, well, why wasn't that money spent on agriculture? Why didn't some of that stay in the province and be put to good use? But, no, these people decided that they wanted to run the Crown corporations from the Cabinet room.

Crown corporations are supposed to be kept at arm's length, Madam Speaker, and we see more and more manipulation. When I see senior members resign, you wonder if they've got tired with that principle too, that it should be run from the Cabinet.

Madam Speaker, I've heard members over there saying how their handling of the natural gas situation lowered the cost of natural gas in this province. I doubt that it really did. If they could have done something for the industry of agriculture, I think we'd have been a lot further ahead.

Madam Speaker, I've said it before and I'll say it again. The industry is in severe difficulty. If everybody had to take 50 percent less in their gross income over the last three years, they'd know what we're talking about. This Provincial Government has not brought in very many initiatives and those that they have brought in were ones that we had promoted and pushed and worked hard to see in place in the province.

I'll mention the School Tax Rebate Program. We had it as one of our platform promises in the last election, that school taxes would be reduced on farm land in Manitoba. It took a long time but the Minister at that time finally recognized it; the Sugar Beet Tripartite Program, a recognition that diversified industries had to be supported in this province, a long and difficult battle last Session, Madam Speaker. They finally agreed to get into it.

Now I see feedlot stabilization being proposed in the Speech from the Throne. We've been after that for a long period of time because we believe that this industry needs some support in order to stay viable in this province. Madam Speaker, Quebec, Ontario, Alberta and Saskatchewan and other major beef producing provinces in this country have some degree of stop-loss stabilization to keep their farmers in business. The feedlot operators in Manitoba cannot compete without some degree of basic stop-loss support.

Madam Speaker, the Minister, earlier this afternoon, when I asked questions about level of support to agriculture, he tried to make light of the fact, and said we didn't understand the figures. Madam Speaker, if he would talk to any farmer in Saskatchewan, Alberta, about the amount of direct support they had from their Provincial Government, he might get a somewhat different view. Talk to the people who sell equipment and fertilizer, talk to them about how the farmers are in a better position to spend on the west side of the Manitoba border than on this side.

I have talked to those farmers, and they have quite a different outlook on the future than the Manitoba farmer who knows that the Provincial Government is not going to stand behind them. He's going to have to be pushed into it by a lot of lobbying. This province has decided that the Keystone Agriculture Producers, one of the major lobby organizations, is not going to be allowed to have their check-off fund. It wasn't in the Speech from the Throne, total negligence on the part of the Minister of Agriculture because he, for some philosophical reason, doesn't want to support it.

They're all in favour of allowing the man at the bottom, the worker, to organize and present his case to the higher authority, but why not allow farmers to do that? Do farmers have to remain disorganized and act as serfs in this province because this government doesn't see the same principles being applied at their level as

at the level of workers and other professional organizations?

Madam Speaker, I would like to remind the Minister of the figures I used today for the level of farm support in Saskatchewan and Alberta. Saskatchewan is around \$5,700; Alberta \$8,800; Manitoba, as the Minister acknowledges, is around \$3,100.00.

The Minister says we don't count the low money that comes from the Provincial Government in Saskatchewan to the farm level, \$19,000 a farmer on the average is the amount of money that's out there, at 6 percent to be repaid over 10 years. That's \$19,000 of operating money that Manitoba farmers don't have, Madam Speaker and, as he says, that's okay, that's okay. I'm talking about universally available to all farmers, Mr. Minister. It is quite a difference, then that's selectively available.

Madam Speaker, I think the Minister better pay a lot of attention to the statistics that are starting to appear with regard to net farm income in Manitoba, and the level of bankruptcies that are emerging, which are only the tip of the iceberg.

Madam Speaker, our province has always been a strong province, growing year after year because of our diversification, because of our climate, because of the entrepreneurship of our farmers but he, through his policies or lack of policies, is allowing our industry to be pulled away from this province. We've seen Saskatchewan and Alberta most recently, but Quebec and Ontario in earlier years, trying to put in place programs and attractive financial situations that will draw industry in their direction and, it has turned out over the years, has come primarily from Manitoba. We have seen a decline in the feedlot industry most particularly, a very major element in the Manitoba and, as the years go by, Madam Speaker, if this is allowed to continue - and I think maybe the path has already been determined so that it is maybe already impossible to reverse - this province will not be a province that can feed cattle.

The Free Trade Agreement, which I will get to in a minute, is going to allow more north-south trade in the packing industry, in the finished animals and in the meat trade. A packing plant that is being built in High River right now is going to have capacity to probably kill everything that's fattened on the three prairie provinces. That's where the packing industry is going to be because this province, at some point in time, had an option to attract that packing industry here, Madam Speaker, and it chose not to attract it here.

In fact, Madam Speaker, Burns - what? a year ago, a few months ago - made an announcement they were going to spend \$25 million here in the Province of Manitoba to modernize and update Brandon and Winnipeg plants. I have a newsletter here released from Burns in Brandon, who has said, and I will quote, Madam Speaker: "We continue to have concerns regarding the availability of cattle in Manitoba in both the short term and the long term. Our neighbouring provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta have stabilization and feed assistance programs." The Minister hasn't addressed that yet. "Respectively, while Manitoba continues to ignore the feeding segment of this business, we," meaning Burns, "are forced to reach into Saskatchewan to buy a larger and larger percentage of our animals to kill in Brandon."

"Until this province puts the feedlot on a level playing field," - the Minister's heard that word before - "with Saskatchewan and Alberta, they have decided to put their Brandon plant modernization program on hold as they look at their other opportunities." Madam Speaker, another company is starting to get weak-kneed and a little bit concerned about what this province is going to do for the feedlot industry.

What we see happening in the last year is about 180,000 calves left the province. We probably produce around 300,000, Madam Speaker. Over half our calves are leaving. The year before is maybe 150,000 to 160,000. Right now, if he watches the market reports, he will see large numbers of calves, yearlings, rising yearlings in the 800-pound, 900-pound, 950-pound range that are going to market and are leaving the province at a dollar a pound, and our producers are putting that money in their pocket. They're scared to take the risk of finishing those animals without a stop-loss program and maybe ending up with 75 cents to 80 cents.

Madam Speaker, wouldn't you sell something now for a dollar rather than hold it for three or four months and sell it for 80 cents? I think that's good economic sense. Our farmers are thinking out there, they are looking at what's going on. Most of these cattle, Madam Speaker, are moving into Saskatchewan, where there is a fairly lucrative plan in place, where those producers can be guaranteed \$1.64, \$1.60, \$1.67 a carcass pound or, in Manitoba here, you can get maybe \$1.45 this week, maybe up to \$1.50. We can't compete with that kind of program, Madam Speaker.

The Minister's got to recognize that and he must move soon because, now that he's made mention that his stabilization plan for feedlots will emerge, he has left farmers hanging out there. Will it be for the animals I've got in my lot now? Is it something down the road? What will the plan be? When will I know? Madam Speaker, he's announced around the meetings in the province. He has not told us who is going to conduct those meetings, Madam Speaker. That's a very crucial element in the decision-making process.

A letter has gone out recently from the Manitoba Beef Commission, announcing 13 meetings across Manitoba in March, no mention or discussion of feedlot stabilization program in the letter at all. I ask you, Madam Speaker, is that where the Minister is going to have his discussion, in these meetings? Madam Speaker, if that is true, if these are people who are going to run those meetings, I think he is making a great mistake. I think he should have his staff of the Department of Agriculture running these meetings. They are neutral in the issue.

Beef Commission people, as neutral as they may try to be, cannot be neutral because they are going to be talking about a provincial plan versus a federal plan. Those are the two options that exist unless the Minister's going to produce yet a third option. The Beef Commission is there to protect their interest, their plan and they're not likely to present the true facts on the comparison between the two plans. I think he's got economists in the Economics Branch who can do a good job of it. The meetings should be conducted by them, and the Beef Commission people could be there to present one case and somebody else from the federal level should be there to present the tripartite case.

Madam Speaker, I've had several phone calls already from producers laying that out, saying the meetings in the past three or four years have created certain antagonisms between staff and the Beef Commission and people who are in the feedlot business. Those animosities have been built up and we don't believe we can get good honest discussion, unless that part of agriculture staff are running those meetings, Madam Speaker. I think it's important that the Minister act immediately to correct that, if that's his intention to have the Beef Commission run those.

Madam Speaker, if the letter went out only to Beef Commission contract holders, what about all those other cattle producers who aren't contract holders? Are they not going to be part of the feedlot stabilization program? Is it going to be selective, Madam Speaker? He's got to answer those questions and let the public know. When this plan comes in place, Madam Speaker, will it be central desk selling, or can the producers sell at his place of choice, at the auction mart or direct sale to the packing industry? He's starting to nod his head up and down anyway.

Madam Speaker, when a company like Burns makes a decision to put on hold their expansion in modernization plans, that hurts the feedlot industry of Manitoba for the future. I think the Minister better get moving real quick and get this province back on its feet. The former Minister let it sag pretty badly and now he's into Autopac and that's sagging too. So I guess he's on the way out.

Madam Speaker, I made mention that, in Canada, we have a number of farms going bankrupt. It's an unfortunate thing but, for everyone who goes bankrupt, I'm sure there are 5, 10, maybe 12 who also go out of business. The Minister in the Speech from the Throne made mention that the action of the Manitoba Mediation Board when combined with special MACC programs and farm management assistance is proving to be a successful combination to minimize the loss of family farms.

Madam Speaker, I think he maybe should check with some of his field staff. Run that statement by them and see how cooperative things really are out there in terms of MACC dealing with the debt review board, both federally and provincially. They're both running into exactly the same problem. I heard it in their discussion one day, one person who is on the provincial board and one was on the federal board. They were talking about their problems, and they had exactly the same problems.

MACC wouldn't co-operate. MACC said, we don't have to listen to anything you say. Your recommendations, we don't have to take them for gospel truth. We are acting as an independent body and, if we don't like the board recommendation, we don't have to abide with it. They're finding that the MACC, as the Member for Ste. Rose mentioned yesterday, is very tardy in following up with action following discussions they have at these debt review panels. I think he better get on to MACC and see that they are being upstanding citizens in the financial field in terms of dealing with debt-ridden farmers.

Another issue, now that I'm talking about MACC, Madam Speaker, is a couple of letters I sent to the Minister this week or the end of last week and this week, dealing with what appears to be some

questionable tendering practices, and whether fairness and equity is being offered to all citizens of the province. Again, it's an issue that's probably a lot bigger than the one case I brought to his attention, but he needs to act on some of these things before they get out of proportion.

Madam Speaker, just to get back to the tripartite program for a moment, we had a long, difficult discussion on this a year ago to get the province into the sugar beet program. Right now, he's got on his desk requests for the last three months, approximately, from the bean growers to join the same plan. The Member from Rhineland mentioned earlier that now Saskatchewan and Alberta have signed, along with Ontario, to be in that plan. And Manitoba, where are we? Standing on the sidelines again, allowing another industry to potentially leave the province, Madam Speaker.

He needs to act, because producers out there are working very hard to save their farms and they shouldn't have to be constantly phoning and trying to have meetings with the Minister, who doesn't seem to want to follow up his previous meetings with action. He just says — (Interjection) — See? Blame the Federal Government. They're not responsible. If you're not responsible, just resign government and call an election. We'll show you a Provincial Government that will be responsible. Go ahead.

Madam Speaker, when we're talking tripartite, never lose sight of the fact that, in tripartite, there's federal money available to the producers and the Province of Manitoba, money that will snowball and multiply in this province to help the economy of the province. Why does he want to deny money coming into the Province of Manitoba, while it's going into other provinces across the country? They pay a third, they pick up half the deficit at the end. Mister Minister, you better answer that to the farmers of Manitoba because they wonder. If you live in Ontario or Saskatchewan or Alberta, you can get that kind of money. Why can't we have it here in Manitoba? It's there to be given to us. It's our money. We paid the taxes. It's time some of it started coming back here. But no, he says no, we don't want that. We want to keep it out of the province, because it's not going to help us.

Madam Speaker, my time is moving on and I'd like to spend some time talking about an issue that needs some discussion, and that's the free trade issue. As I said initially, I'm proud to be fourth generation in this province and proud to have a grandson who's sixth generation. The people who came to settle this country 100-plus years ago had a vision to make this a better place. They produced to feed themselves, and then they were into the export business, and they've been increasing the export of grains, livestock, and special crops over the years. It has been a very profitable operation for the economy of Manitoba and the economy of Canada, Madam Speaker.

I look at the Speech from the Throne and I see that the Premier, in writing this, makes mention that there will be negative effects on the processed foods, chicken, turkey, and egg industries in Manitoba, Madam Speaker. He makes no mention of any potential gains for any segment of the agricultural industry, only talking negatively.

Now, let's look at the amount of production that occurs in chicken, turkey and eggs, Madam Speaker.

There are 136 farmers producing broilers; there are 84 farmers producing turkeys; 240 egg-laying operations in the province; and 124 pullet operations, a total of 584 farmers who have some degree of negative impact. I won't deny that. It's there.

How many farms do we have in total in this province, Madam Speaker? If we go back to when the Minister of Agriculture last summer introduced a special school tax program, he was saying 32,000 farms in the Province of Manitoba, but we may have a slight negative impact on 584. That leaves about 31,500 farms that aren't negatively impacted. Madam Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture must know that there's some good there for those 31,500. They produce wheat, canola, beef and pork. They produce peas and lentils, they produce honey, and all those commodities are exportable and a lot of them go south, Madam Speaker.

Now, if we look at the 584 farms that have huge potential problems - I believe that's the word used in the Speech from the Throne - that huge negative impact is going to mean that the global quota in eggs, turkeys and chickens of approximately 1 percent more might be available to the U.S. market - 1 percent. Madam Speaker, 1 percent on 1.8 percent of the farms is a pretty negligible impact. Madam Speaker, it's not going to break anybody. In the broiler business, Manitoba broilers have a guaranteed 92.5 percent of the domestic market - 92.5 percent. That's a pretty good guarantee of the existence of your farm. If I had 92.5 percent of any business, I'd be pretty happy, and I wouldn't worry about having to compete with the United States for 1 percent of it.

Madam Speaker, as I look at the agricultural industry over the years, we have evolved very well in the competitive sense. Our researchers have done an excellent job of breeding meat and crop varieties that meet the needs of the consumer. They have developed disease resistance. They have high-quality products in terms of contaminants that have been there naturally and they've bred them out. Madam Speaker, this breeding has produced varieties that our farmers can grow large quantities of.

We export about 80 percent of the wheat that we grow here, 50 percent of our meat products. We produce high-quality products because, over the years, we've increased the leanness of our beef and our pork. We've reduced the cholesterol content there. We've bred canola that's removed erucic acid and glucosinolates in canola, Madam Speaker. That's a success story, if we've ever had one. That was a Cinderella crop 15, 20 years ago. Our breeders kept working on it. They got higher yields. They found out erucic acids and glucosinolates were a problem. They bred varieties that didn't contain them.

Then the American markets saw this high-quality vegetable oil. In 1987, if I'm not mistaken, it received from Food and Drug down there the Health Food of the Year Certificate - health food of the year! The best vegetable oil in North America, and you say we can't compete. We're weak-kneed and scared? Not a chance, Madam Speaker, not a chance!

In 1985, we exported some 4,000 tonnes of canola to the United States; this year, over 100,000, because Proctor and Gamble have a product called Puritan Oil, which they're selling in ever-increasing amounts to the United States, Madam Speaker. It's an opportunity for

Manitoba growers of canola to export that product into that market, which has given it Health Food of the Year certification, and that's something that we can be proud of.

Our high-protein wheat will continually go to the United States, Madam Speaker, because they have a demand for that high-quality wheat. Our grading standards guarantee that quality, in wheat particularly, and Canola also. Madam Speaker, Grain Commission statistics as to how much grain moved from Canada into the United States last year, over 900,000 tonnes. It's an important market, Madam Speaker, it's an important market.

Madam Speaker, of that, half of it is wheat, half of that 900,000 is wheat. We're doing a good job and we'll continue to do a good job. But if you get in the way to try and kill a deal that Canada gives us a guaranteed continuous access, and a dispute-settling mechanism so that we have some assurance that we can present our case - we're doing it now but your attitudes, burning of flags and saying, "the Marines are coming in" gives us a very negative impression when we get to the negotiating table, commodity after commodity. If you people saw the reality of what exists out there in the agriculture community - you've put the muzzle on some of your members over there.

Madam Speaker, the dispute-settling mechanism is very important to us. The Hog Producers Marketing Board had a very difficult process when the countervail was brought on hogs. They didn't have any medium to go to, to present their case. They had to go right down to Washington. Did this Provincial Government support them? Not a chance. They let them go on their own, said get what you can, get what you can. Now we'll have a dispute-settling mechanism and working parties at all times with 50-50 representation that can deal with the irritants that evolve in trade as time goes by, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, there have been claims made over there by the Minister of Energy yesterday that there wasn't one iota of opportunity for us, not one iota of opportunity. Madam Speaker, that's so far from the truth it makes me cry, because we have the ability to produce and sell into that market. I think that this government should give some recognition as to what the agriculture industry has done for this province and will continue to do if they just give us some support at this point in time in negotiating a fairly substantial trade deal.

Madam Speaker, this isn't the only free trade deal in the world. There's a deal between New Zealand and Australia; there's a deal between Israel and the United States; there's a deal in Great Britain - I think it's between Ireland and Great Britain or Ireland and England. It's proven to be successful - European community, very successful. Look what they've done in terms of production over the years with a free trade agreement. Madam Speaker, let's get our head out of the sands and start to look at the realities of the economics of farming in this province.

Madam Speaker, I think the Minister probably got the message as to what the farmers of Manitoba thought about him when he went to the breakfast meeting or early morning meeting with the Keystone Agricultural Producers. I wasn't there but I understand he had a pretty rough ride and there wasn't anything

complimentary said about what his province had done. These are people who sat back for some period of time, gave you a lot of rope to work with, and you can run that rope right to the end and now you better start to produce.

In the afternoon I was there when one Cabinet Minister and another M.P. were there and there was nothing but praise for what they've done for this province: praise because they recognized a reality, praise because they had the foresight to get involved in a free trade agreement that's going to help this province, rather than the fearmongering that I hear from the other side time and again about our agricultural industry.

Madam Speaker, before I close, I'd like to touch on a couple of more issues related to agriculture. They have in place, under Manitoba Crop Insurance Program, a Feed Security Program which the Minister has heard a lot about in the last two or three months. This Feed Security Program was set up initially in 1984 in five municipalities, expanded to 22 municipalities in 1985, and it's now covering all approximately 120 municipalities in the Province of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, in 1984, if I'm not mistaken, four or maybe all five got a payout. In 1985, 20 out of 22 municipalities got a payout under the program, and then they wanted every municipality in, in '86. Every municipality got in. Farmers signed up figuring, well, this is going to be feed security for us. If I come up short with feed, there's going to be a program there to pay me some money so I can go out and buy this feed that I'm short.

In 1986 there were some unhappy municipalities because of the way the program was run. I asked the Minister during Estimates last year for the figures from the monitors. He never did produce them, because there's certainly suspicion out there that those figures never were factually used in calculating the percentage production.

In 1987, there has been a continuous run of municipalities and farmers with a high level of dissatisfaction with the way the program was run, the way the Minister was trying to cover up for the way the program was run, and his lack of action in addressing the real problem that exists there. There is a decline in production year after year in the province in general because of drought, and the average that we're looking for - 70 percent of that average - is continually declining, so the opportunity of payout in the future becomes virtually nil and most farmers are starting to realize that.

A third opted out last spring and this coming year, by the end of March, is the deadline for opting out. I'll bet you a very significant percentage opt out again and, if the number gets down to less than a thousand, I think the Minister's got to look at terminating the program. It will be a very significant, negative move to make, but it's a result of the way they have manipulated the program.

They didn't follow the guidelines to the letter at all, the way it was advertised. It wasn't done on a per-municipality basis. He knows exactly what I'm talking about. I don't know if you had your meeting earlier this week with them or not but, if you haven't addressed their problems and the problems in the Interlake, the program will collapse - no question about it.

Madam Speaker, another program that has been announced is the Crown Land's policy for transferring a lease with a sale. There are a lot of unhappy farmers with that one because it means that the bureaucrats will have control on how a farmer is able to sell his livestock, his equipment and his land. It's got to be sold as a package, and it's done by appraisal. The farmer is denied the opportunity to go for the highest bidder for his livestock, for his equipment, for his land, simply in order to transfer that lease. They want to have control of what the farmer receives for the sale of his land, his equipment and his livestock.

It's guaranteeing that it's going to be below market value. That's what you call manipulating the farm economy, manipulating the farmer's ability to cash in on his insurance policy - control, control. I heard the Member for Concordia saying: "We want to have our hands on the levers of control." Boy, the Minister of Agriculture, he loves to have control.

I have seen control at MTX and MPIC, Manfor and Flyer Industries, and on it goes. That's called control. If you can't do something good for the industry, keep your hands off it and let it run. Madam Speaker, that's not over yet, and we'll have some more discussion during Estimates on it.

Another issue that's bothering farmers right now, as the end of February comes, is the cost of the Autopac premiums. Madam Speaker, many farmers have merit points, and I'm sure they'll qualify on their cars and their pick-up trucks for a reduction in the Autopac premium because of their merit points, but they will not qualify for their grain trucks. A farmer's grain truck doesn't qualify for merit point reduction in premiums. If a family farm is incorporated for business reasons, that vehicle will not qualify for a reduction in premiums based on his merit points. What has that got to do with a person's ability or a driver's good driving record - whether he's incorporated or not?

The Minister of Agriculture, he just let that go by. He didn't bother to address it and stand up for the farmers of Manitoba and give them a fair shake. Even the increases that we're receiving as farmers - I doubt if they can be substantiated by the fact that we have higher accident rates. Just to pick a few vehicles - and this particular operation has two cars, two grain trucks and a pick-up truck - the Autopac portion, the increases in the Autopac portion for the pick-up truck, 34 percent; for his grain truck, 28 percent; for his other grain truck, 51 percent; for his cars, 24 and 21 percent.

Now when a grain truck goes up from 51 percent and 28 percent, does that mean that we have had a high level of accidents in farm grain trucks? I doubt it. These grain trucks don't qualify for any discount basis merit points. Is that justified? Do we have higher accident rates that cause you to eliminate us from those premium reductions?

I think it's unfair. I think the Minister should act and speak to his own Cabinet about why we should be mistreated at the farm level. We can't afford additional costs right now, certainly if they're not merited. If he can prove to me that we have high accident rates in our pick-up trucks, higher than the average across the province, or higher accidents with our grain trucks, then there might be some justification.

But I doubt that he can prove it, and I doubt that he can prove that accidents are higher because farmers

have corporations owning their trucks as opposed to individual ownership. I doubt that he can prove that and, until he can justify it, the farmers are not going to be very happy.

Madam Speaker, I think . . .

A MEMBER: Watch your hydro, your telephone, and everything you've got has gone up.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Everything that we have just goes up and up. Madam Speaker, I see I've gone longer than I intended to talk, but anyway one last statement I would like to make on behalf of the citizens of my riding. It's an issue that's dear to the heart of many, and it's the abortion issue.

Madam Speaker, we do not believe in denying rights to women, but we do believe in protecting the rights of the unborn. I agree that therapeutic abortions must be available. There are a number of circumstances in which they're justified. I believe that Medicare should pay for those, but I do not believe that we should have an open-door policy for abortion on demand - absolutely not!

We have a number of people who want to adopt children. Those options are open, but I don't think that abortion should be another method of birth control and I don't think it should be at the public expense. I think we need to have some statement from the Minister of Health as to what level, to how far along in a pregnancy abortion can be allowed. Certainly, there has to be a cut-off point because when does life start? I believe it starts at conception. Life is a viable long before the term of pregnancy is up and, to allow abortion on demand, I think is opening the floodgates to an unacceptable principle in our society.

I think the law as it existed was adequate, and to take this opportunity now for the Minister of Health to say now that the law's not there, we can just throw the doors open and let abortion occur . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

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

I have touched the issues I want to touch, and I would think the Minister of Agriculture maybe should stand and support our amendment because of lack of initiatives of agriculture in this Throne Speech.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Thompson.

MR. S. ASHTON: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I am pleased once again to be able to participate in the debate on the Throne Speech. In the six years, going on seven now, that I have been a member of the Legislature, I have found that the Throne Speech Debate gives us a particular opportunity to address a wide range of topics, whether they be constituency-related, whether they be more general provincial issues. I intend to address issues in both categories during my comments today, Madam Speaker.

During my comments, I'm going to be talking about several basic points that I think we all have to be reminded of, important points: the need to listen, Madam Speaker; the need to act; the need for

consistency by the political parties in this province; and finally the need for vision.

But before beginning my comments, I would just like to make a couple of brief comments, first of all, welcoming you back, Madam Speaker. I do believe, after having witnessed the role of Speaker these past few years, that your position is one of the most difficult in this Assembly, and I commend you on your performance in that office and wish you all the best in the up-coming Session.

I would also like to mark the fact that the Member for St. Boniface finished a remarkable career of public service this year with his resignation in the Assembly. I had the privilege of being in caucus and being in this Legislature with that member over the past six years, which is only a very small part, obviously, of a very excellent career of public service, and I'm sure I speak for all members in wishing him all the best in his future endeavours.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair.)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to begin with some constituency matters and, by stressing that, for myself, the feedback I received from my constituents and the process of obtaining that feedback is probably the most important part of the job that I have as a member of the Legislature.

I want to say that over the last few months I have taken the opportunity to talk to my constituents. I visited many in their homes, I have talked to people at community events, I have talked to them in my office, and I want to outline some of the concerns that they've expressed to me because, once again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it's important to listen and listen carefully to what one's constituents are saying.

I want to deal with a couple of the important points. One issue that is of constant concern in Thompson is that of economic development, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's one question that often comes up in my discussions with people.

I am very pleased that there's been some significant development, particularly in Thompson, in that regard in recent years. Our population has been on the increase; our community has been diversifying. I am pleased also that the Provincial Government has been playing a role in helping achieve that. There were a couple of developments in 1987 that did that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, including funding for the Mystery country international tourism organizations through the Northern Development Agreement, which of course is funded partially by the Provincial Government; also funding from the Minister of Business Development's Department for the City of Thompson to work on the promotion of new industrial and economic ventures in Thompson. So there is a lot of work ongoing, and I think that's one concern that I would like to bring to the attention of people - the need for further economic development and diversification in our community.

Of course, this past year too, we've seen the peak levels of employment at Limestone, something once again that I'm quite proud to be associated with as part of this government. I was particularly pleased, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to see that more than 500 northerners were working at the peak level of employment. As a northerner, I guess I must confess that I feel perhaps

that even 500 is probably not enough in the ideal sense, but it's certainly a significant improvement over previous years, previous Hydro projects. I'm very proud of the role that this government has had in making sure that northerners do receive job opportunities at Limestone.

Another concern, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of my constituency is that of education, and I am very pleased, of course, that there have been significant developments in that regard in recent years. I think what people are saying, particularly in the North right now, is the need for further post-secondary educational opportunities. A northern polytechnic is one particular version of that which I personally think has a great deal of merit, and I think that it's something that certainly my constituents are talking about.

In terms of local concerns again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, my constituents see the need for facilities for seniors in our city. In fact, I was very pleased that we were able to receive \$75,000 in funding from the Community Places Program for the Rotary Club's proposed seniors facility. That's only part of the funding, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It will fund the drop-in centre of that facility. I'm hoping to see this year that we will also see funding made available for the housing portion that the Rotary Club has proposed. I would certainly indicate my full support as MLA. In fact, I've been working very closely with the Rotary Club in terms of that proposal and that, as I said, is something that my constituents have raised with me.

There have been other concerns in the area of health care. I've talked to many people who see the need for further improvements in regard to health care, and I'll certainly be raising those with the Minister of Health in the upcoming months.

There also have been other issues that perhaps have particular local impact that I would like to mention. One is the Northern Tax Allowance. Members may recall that last year I raised the issue in this House and indicated that I felt it was unfair that Thompson and Wabowden are the only two communities in Northern Manitoba that are not eligible for the Northern Tax Allowance. Forty-six other communities, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are eligible for that. I'm pleased that the provincial Minister of Finance has asked for a review of the criteria that were used to exclude Thompson and Wabowden, and I can tell you that people are receiving their tax forms right now and filling them out. It doesn't go down well in Thompson, the fact that we are excluded from eligibility for that tax allowance.

Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I talked to many people about their concerns about Autopac. I talked to many people who have expressed concerns, quite legitimately, about the recent increases in rates that have taken place. One concern I think that should particularly be dealt with that is a particular concern in Thompson is the zone structure. You may not be aware of this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but Thompson is in a zone that has the highest automobile insurance rates in the province. I think many of my constituents questioned whether we should be, for example, paying more for automobile insurance than The Pas and Flin Flon, two other northern communities.

In fact, I think it is quite ironic, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that Northern Tax Allowance I referred to just a couple of minutes ago applies to the communities of Flin Flon and The Pas. They get the Northern Tax Allowance and

Thompson doesn't, and they get cheaper automobile insurance rates than we do. Sometimes I am sure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you could forget my constituents if they feel that sometimes we can't win in Thompson, and I will be raising that. In fact, I have already raised it with the Minister and I will be raising it in the context of the review of Autopac that the Minister announced, and I really would like to see some answers and re-examination of that zone structure.

Similarly, I would also like to note that one other member, the Member for St. Vital, raised a consideration I think should be given, and that is for out-of-province drivers. I think it's quite legitimate to ask if a system can be developed that will recognize good driving records from people from out-of-province, and that is something that I also hope would be looked at in the review.

In regard to other feedback I've received, obviously one item that I receive a great deal of feedback on - and I did discuss this with this Minister - was the need to recognize merit points and good driving records in the calculation of both license fees and insurance. I am particularly pleased that the Minister did respond on that and it was not a token response, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It resulted in some significant recognition of good drivers in this province. Once again, that was some of the feedback I was receiving from constituents.

In some areas of my constituency, there are specific concerns. Residents of the Burntwood Trailer Court, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are particularly concerned right now that they've been told by the city that they're going to have to move their trailers. I will indicate I've spoken to many people in their homes and that I will be working with the trailer court residents to help them out in whatever way is possible in my role as an MLA. While it is a city matter, I do feel they have some legitimate concerns and I will be doing what I can as MLA to assist them.

I've received many other individual concerns, Mr. Deputy Speaker, similar in many ways to what the Member for Kildonan referred to, some of the particular cases. Sometimes those particular cases I think are the areas where, as an individual MLA, we could have helped people the most. There is one case in my constituency, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where a couple was forced to send their son to Ontario by air ambulance for a heart transplant operation, a life-saving operation that was not available here in Manitoba. Under the present system, they would be charged the full rate, I believe \$8,000, for that particular air ambulance cost. I've raised this with the Minister. I know that he is looking at that and I really think this is the kind of situation that we should be addressing, because this is the kind of cost that is really far too much for an individual family such as that to face, particularly when that operation was available only in Ontario. And I am pleased to report on the good side that their son is doing well. So at least on the medical side things have been working out well, but in terms of the financial impact, it's something that I feel has to be addressed.

I've raised many similar sorts of concerns and I will be doing that throughout this Session, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'll be speaking up for my constituents, be speaking up for Thompson as a whole, and that's something that I know my constituents have always looked to me to do, and that's something I will definitely

be doing in this upcoming Session. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just talked about my constituents, in talking to them and listening. I want to suggest to you that that's a lesson that many people in this Legislature could follow, the importance of listening to their constituents, because I feel that it is clear, particularly from some of the comments in this debate, that people haven't been listening. They haven't been listening to what people have been saying.

I want to deal with one particular issue that I think illustrates that, the Autopac issue. As I said, I've talked to people in my constituency about their concerns in regard to Autopac. I've talked to many people about that, and I felt that's important, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to talk to people, not just during elections but in between elections and, yes, when they do have concerns. People have expressed concerns, as I said, about the zone structure, the need to recognize good drivers. They've expressed concerns about the overall increases, but at no time has anybody said to me that they want to dismantle Autopac. At no time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has anyone said to me that they want to privatize Autopac. I raise that because I really feel that the Conservatives have missed the boat on this particular issue.

The Autopac critic was asked specifically on February 3, 1988, would the Conservatives consider selling Autopac. He said if Autopac was not saveable, that's the only alternative we have to get real profit-oriented or, if you will, low cost, because of competition, back into the insurance industry of Manitoba.

In the Winnipeg Free Press of February 17, the Leader of the Opposition is quoted as saying that his party would open Autopac to private competition. He said mismanagement at the Crown corporation may be cured by "farming out some of its business." He repeated that in the Legislature today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they've missed the point. People are concerned about the rates, but no one that I've talked to, and I'm sure if you were to talk to people in my constituency, they would say the same thing. No one has said that we should privatize or farm out Autopac. They're saying we've had a good deal in Manitoba for 17 years. It's a good concept and we want to keep it that way. In fact, the biggest concerns about rate increases have been from people that believe in the system the most, and I think that's the one thing that the Conservatives are missing. I've explained to people the problems we face and I've asked for their help in solving them. The fact that the average amount of a claim went from \$800 in one year to \$1,100 in the following year. That's between 1986 and 1987. I've explained to people the situation that we're seeing in other provinces.

I would quote from a Toronto Star editorial which is headlined "Auto Insurance could soar 20 percent, Company warns." This is from Ontario where they have private insurance, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Let's not forget that they're paying more to begin with than we are here in Manitoba. I've explained the problem and I've asked for their feedback in terms of how we should deal with it. I'm willing to talk in terms of any criticisms people have about the way it was dealt with. I think that's fair comment, but that is different from saying that we should farm out Autopac.

I am totally against that, Mr. Deputy Speaker and I am willing to debate with any of the Conservatives

now, during election, at any time, about how important Autopac is to this province, and how Autopac is still providing Manitobans and will continue to supply them with a good deal.

Let's move on to how the Conservatives are not listening in other areas, the trade deal, free trade if you like. Let's use whatever term people wish to use. You know, there was a public meeting held in Thompson this past fall, a public meeting held by the Provincial Government to outline our position and to hear the comments and questions of the people of Thompson in regard to this important agreement.

A MEMBER: Did you forget to advertise that, Steve?

MR. S. ASHTON: Well the member opposite talks if we're advertising it. It was advertised. There were members of the Chamber of Commerce there. There were members from City Council there. There were members from the business community there and from labour unions. There were people from the Norman Regional Development Corporation and many people who were concerned, as individual citizens, about the trade deal.

Now what was the Tory reaction? They sent three MLA's up, including the Deputy Leader. He had the nerve, after everyone pretty well had gotten up and spoken, in many cases from the heart, about their concerns about the agreement to call it a sham. He suggested that people were concerned about free trade or we'd be sissies to argue against the trade deal. That's the exact quote, "sissies." That didn't go down too well with my constituents, I can tell you that.

He explained how it was the sixth generation United Empire Loyalists background that he was entitled to talk about free trade. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't have sixth generation United Empire Loyalist background. I came with my parents to this country, but I'm proud of this country as a Canadian and I say that I've got as equal a right as anyone, including the Deputy Leader, to speak up about my concerns, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about this very poor trade agreement.

If they had listened to people at that meeting, they would have found that people were speaking from the heart about their concerns, about their country, and that it really was an insult to their intelligence to call that meeting a sham - another example of how the Conservatives just aren't listening.

Let's talk about the economy. We heard the Leader of the Opposition talk about the economy in his speech. I must wonder what planet he is living on sometimes, Mr. Deputy Speaker. He referred to the fact that this government must not be allowed to make Manitoba an economic wasteland. Well I'll tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have not talked to one of my constituents, not one has expressed concern about the performance of the economy in Manitoba, and I wonder why.

Well, let's look at the objective analysis at what's been going on. An article from the Toronto Star, headline, "Manitoba Drops Have-Not Tag, as Other Prairie Provinces Slump." You ought to look in Winnipeg at some of the economic indicators. A headline from a newspaper here, "Buoyant Real Estate Market Predicted to Continue in '88," "Strong Housing Demand Expected to Continue." "Report on Business,"

this is from the Globe and Mail, "Construction and small business are brightest spots in Manitoba." This is under the NDP Government. Another one from the Winnipeg Free Press, from the fall of '87, "Manitoba Growth Still the 'Best in the West'." I have copies of these articles available for the Leader of the Opposition. I hope he will take the time to read them because Manitoba is doing well economically. The problem is they're just not opening their eyes, they're just not listening to what is going on.

I've heard this time and time again from them in different areas. Health care is another example. Talk to people of this province and they will say that they do believe that the NDP Government does care about health care. It cares a lot more than the Conservatives do. Talk to my constituents and during the Budget Debate, I will outline exactly what has happened in Thompson and they know it. I'll outline the difference between hospital funding in the Tory years and hospital funding since 1981 in the Thompson General Hospital, and that's typical of what's taken place throughout this province. We have improved services in Thompson, in Northern Manitoba, and it's been approved throughout the province. We're working very hard to maintain health care services. — (Interjection) — As I said, they're just not listening.

I'm also beginning to wonder about their memory. The Leader of the Opposition, in the Throne Speech, talked about the Conservative record between 1977 and 1981, and I remember talking to one of my colleagues when he was getting into this, talking about the Roblin era, because I would acknowledge there were some significant developments in Manitoba then, and I said to my colleague that he's going to have to get pretty creative when he gets to the Sterling Lyon years. Well, he got very creative, a very brief passage in there about a few programs, but I just want to focus in on an era I know very well, Northern Manitoba, and note the fact he didn't say anything about what happened when they were in government between 1977 and 1981 in Northern Manitoba. I wonder why. Some of my colleagues here from the North - the Member for Churchill was in this Legislature. Would he remember the cutbacks that took place in programs, the cutbacks that took place in terms of employment in Northern Manitoba? Do they remember? Does he remember that? Mr. Deputy Speaker, he remembers that and so do many other northerners.

Well, let's consider the NDP record since 1981. I don't have time to run through all the positive things that have taken place but I want to run through just a few.

In terms of economic development, Limestone has been started up again and we've seen record levels of northern employment. The mining industry - we worked with the mining industry in recessions. We worked, in the case of the Ruttan Mine, to maintain that mine and keep it open and keep the employment through the Lynn Lake situation as well; the mineral development agreement where we're working with industry and with the Federal Government to keep the mining industry healthy in the long run.

A MEMBER: What about the Port of Churchill?

MR. S. ASHTON: What about the Port of Churchill? That's right. We put money where our mouth is on the

Port of Churchill. We put money where our mouth is and have developed that port. That's something the Conservatives never did.

Let's talk about education. We brought in the social work program, the nursing program, the civil technology program. There's an education centre in Thompson that houses these programs. That wasn't brought in by the Tories; that was brought in since 1981.

We brought in the Limestone Training Authority, which I feel has been a breakthrough in terms of training in many areas.

In my own constituency, after many years of talk during the Conservative period about the need for vocational education, we now have it. Who brought it in? The NDP Government again. This is Northern Manitoba.

Talk about health care. We have an air ambulance now. Who brought it in? The NDP Government. It's a major improvement in health care. We've seen, as I've said, improvement in health care generally in Northern Manitoba, including improved funding for hospitals such as the Thompson General Hospital.

Talk about child care. The number of spaces in Thompson alone has doubled since 1981. That's a major improvement for families and particularly for women who depend on that child care to be able to enter the labour force.

Look at the community improvements that have taken place in each and every northern community. I can point to literally dozens of projects in Thompson where the Provincial Government worked with the community to improve many, many needed community facilities. I could continue but I think the message is obvious, and that is that there was an excellent record between 1981 and up to this point in time. There will continue to be. I think for the Leader of the Opposition to gloss over that very glaring comparison is remembering conveniently on his part.

What do we expect? What do the people of Manitoba expect from their politicians? Well, one thing I think they need is consistency. They expect consistency. — (Interjection) — Listen, yes, but to be consistent as well.

Well, let's look at how consistent the Conservatives are. Autopac, does anyone remember in 1986 during the election when they said the reserves were too high? They proposed cutting the rates by 10 percent. Can anyone tell me what the rate increases would have been if they had been elected to government? Tack on that 10 percent over and above what has taken place and you will get the figures. That's not consistency, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Let's talk about hydro. I love this one. How many members opposite have gotten up and complained about hydro rates going up too much in this debate on the Throne Speech? I remember the Member for Arthur did. Are there any others who feel it's gone up too much?

MR. A. DRIEDGER: I do.

MR. S. ASHTON: The Member for Emerson. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have another split in the Tory ranks because the Leader of the Opposition, and this is quoted in the Winnipeg Free Press, January 5, 1988, said that the

NDP Government didn't raise hydro rates enough. He said that the government should have taken the responsible, the less popular route of raising rates by more than 4.5 percent. There were increases to the reserves. Remember the Autopac reserves were too high. Now the hydro reserves aren't high enough so we should increase rates. He's saying they're not high enough; some of his other members are saying that they're too high - inconsistency, particularly given the fact that the reason the reserves are low is because of the hydro freeze that they brought in the early 1980's. That's why they're low. Their actions lead to it being low. Are they suggesting now that Manitobans should pay through increased hydro rates for their mistakes in the past?

Let's go through more inconsistencies. The 2 percent tax on net income, I can quote you from December 14, 1986, the Leader of the Opposition once again saying that the proposed net income tax is a laudable goal that works towards getting those who benefit the most paying their share. Where is that in the Tory leaflets that are distributed in their constituency, the fact that their leader wants higher hydro rates and supports the 2 percent personal income tax? Well, of course, it's nowhere. Inconsistency seems to be the rule over there rather than the exception.

In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I was researching this speech, I was struck by the comments of someone, a great British statesman, Benjamin Disraeli, who more than a century ago - he was a Conservative by the way - said that a Conservative Government is an organized hypocrisy. I would suggest to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that if he was in Manitoba today viewing the Opposition, he would have made a similar observation. He would have made a similar observation only with one change, and that is that, when they're in Opposition, they're not even organized.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm having some difficulty speaking because the Conservatives are now defending their Leader, an impossible task, but I wish them all the best in doing it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let's talk, as I said, about those four basic themes in terms of concluding my remarks.

I talked about the need for listening. I think it's about time that all members of the Legislature started talking to people and actually listening to what they're saying on some of the issues.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please.

The Member for Thompson has the floor. If the member wants to converse, to engage in conversation

The Member for Thompson.

MR. S. ASHTON: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I would appreciate if members would listen to my comments. I have the exact quotes if they wish to find out what their Leader said in regard to the income tax. That is available if they would like it. I have researched to back up everything I've said in this speech.

But I said it's important to listen, it's important for political parties and for politicians to be consistent, and it's important, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to really talk about what we should be talking about in this Legislature probably the most. I've heard it referred to in terms

of vision. Perhaps that's the word; perhaps there are other words that could be used to express the same feeling, the sense that we should be working towards the future.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair.)

I think if anybody looking at this Throne Speech Debate, especially looking at the Leader of the Opposition's comments where he talked about vision and then spent 95 percent of his speech in the usual sort of political diatribe that we've seen in this debate all too often, what is missing is talking about where we want to be in the next few years - the year 2000. And throughout the Session, in my own small way, that is what I hope to be able to do perhaps in a small way, because it will be my constituency, the City of Thompson. I will be talking about some of my hopes for that city over the next couple of years and over the next decade. I would hope that other members will do so.

For the Member for Emerson, my view in terms of this position is that I fight for my constituency no matter what election results or poll results will say. I remember when I had a 72-vote margin and I fought the same way I will today, even with the massive amount of support that the people of Thompson honoured me with in the last election. The most important thing is to be working for the future. That's what I'm going to be doing for my constituents.

I would appreciate it, Madam Speaker, if that final point could be addressed. — (Interjection) — Yes, we need to listen; yes, we need to be consistent, but we need to address the future as well. I am going to be doing it and I would urge all members in this debate and other debates throughout the Session to do the same.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Niakwa.

MR. A. KOVNATS: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Again, I look around and, without counting staff, the gallery would be empty. I would just like to say at this time, Madam Speaker, that, even though there is nobody from the gallery who has come down to listen to me speak, I'm the only member who, when he gets up to speak, has at least two constituents who regularly come to listen to him speak.

Madam Speaker, I take particular offense to the Member for Thompson making some remarks about the "Little Jack Horner" syndrome, about putting in his thumb and pulling out a plum and saying, what a good boy am I. He's slapping himself on the back and saying how good he is and how good his New Democratic Party Government has performed. He takes credit for the Port of Churchill when he knows that he is speaking through his - I can't use some of the words.

You know, I was listening to you this afternoon, Madam Speaker, so I'm restricted in some of the comments. But how can he stand up and say that the Port of Churchill was ours, making reference to the New Democratic side of the government, it was our responsibility. It was because of us that we did it. Well, I'll tell you, he's had support from me particularly and

from the Conservatives on this side of the House for any of the development up in Churchill, because the future of the Province of Manitoba is the North, and we know that. You can't take the credit for it all by yourself because you need us, because we do believe. You're going to run into some problems when it comes to the Port of Churchill being able to take military submarines and when we look for a military presence. We'll be looking for a military presence up in Churchill to help develop the North, and then what are you going to do?

Anyway, Madam Speaker, I wanted to just say, thank you very much to all the people of the Province of Manitoba for allowing me to be here and to speak on behalf of my constituents. As you get little older, you get a little bit more mellow. I just want to reflect back on time and just state how proud my mother and father and my children have been and my wife particularly of me being able to come into the Legislature and speak on behalf of my constituents.

I go back a long way and, before I get into the meat of my discussion, Madam Speaker, I would just like to make a little comment and pay homage and reflect back on an old friend who is no longer in the Legislature, who chose to resign and take on another field of endeavour. I just want to say, thank you very much to Larry Desjardins, the Member for St. Boniface, who has been a long-time friend of mine. I go back to at least 1952, which is more than 35 years, where I've had some association with Larry through football and — (Interjection) — well, I just can't help that. Now that he's gone, you know, we speak well of them after they're dead or retired.

Madam Speaker, this is the year of the dragon. I attended a function where we were celebrating Chinese New Year last Saturday. The new Minister of Energy was there, and we had a very very nice time. I was told that being born under the year of the dragon means good luck. It means that you will be a leader of the community, and it means that we will be forming the next government in the Province of Manitoba. Well, it's not quite that way but — (Interjection) — yes okay.

Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate you on resuming your post as Madam Speaker. I would hope that we will be doing everything we can to see that you are no longer Madam Speaker, but only by defeating this New Democratic Party Government and forming our own government. At that point, we would have to replace you, Madam Speaker.

I want to congratulate the new Ministers. I wasn't very, very pleased with some of the changes that took place, inasmuch as the Minister of Energy, who is now the Minister of Health, had made a commitment on the expansion of energy when it comes to the expansion of hydrogen power. I can see now that his support of hydrogen power will be lost in the future, because I don't believe that the new Minister of Energy will be able to live up to the expectations that I would expect of him.

I want to congratulate the Member for St. Vital who was able to move the Throne Speech — (Interjection) — No, he was able to move the Throne Speech and there was a lot of what was made reference to as constructive criticism. But he was very critical of the New Democratic Party Government manipulating the administration to the point, in the Crown agencies, for

political purposes and, ultimately, financial gain. Anyway, I want to commend him on his remarks. He spoke from the heart.

He was very, very controversial as the Speaker during the French language debate, inasmuch as he wouldn't allow the bells to stop ringing. But you know, Madam Speaker, you can't blame the former Speaker for not stopping the bells because, when it really comes down to it, the Speaker is just a servant of the House. — (Interjection) — No, the Speaker is the servant of the House.

When it came right down to it, Madam Speaker, he didn't have the authority to do so. But when it really comes down to it, the group that has the most members can do almost anything that they want because they have the power to vote and even change the rules if they wish. We really can't blame the former Speaker for that mishmash that happened during the French language debate because, if the New Democratic Party Government really wanted to, they could have replaced him in the Chair and passed the bill. So they really can't put the blame on any person who was sitting in the Chair, Madam Speaker. It was their own responsibility when they withdrew their support on the French language Bill.

Madam Speaker, it's a darn-right shame that any government could sink to such levels that will allow innocent children to die because of improper and inadequate supervision. I'm not going to go into the details on it. We all know it's been discussed here in the House before, and I pray to God that it shan't happen again. But it had happened in the past, and we would hope that the supervision that was lacking before has been corrected and we won't have a problem of that nature again.

It's a darn-right shame that this government has mismanaged the MTX in Saudi Arabia by entering into an overseas contract that has cost the taxpayers somewhere in the area of \$28 million in losses. I feel pretty upset about it inasmuch as I had one lady who came to me, and she really, really at the time was upset. She was of Jewish background and being a female, she says, "You know, I don't have any opportunity of ever working in Saudi Arabia." I said, "Do you want to"? She said, "Well not really, but I would like the opportunity, just like anybody else." She says, "I'm as good a citizen as anybody else," and she was an employee of the Manitoba Telephone System and never had the opportunity. These things all should have been investigated prior to them entering into the type of agreements that did take place in Saudi Arabia.

Madam Speaker, it's an outright and a downright shame that this government has cut back on services to the medical field by closing hospital beds and providing inadequate funding to other services, such as staff, senior citizens' care, and nursing home care. I've been receiving calls that nursing homes are unavailable. People have been panelled and just can't get into nursing homes. It's just such a short supply.

What does an older person have to look forward to in their old age except the opportunity of living it out in comfort, possibly in a nursing home. I never had the problem with my dad. It was one of the greatest things that ever happened to us, because my dad's last years were spent with us. We didn't have to take advantage of nursing homes, but I would have thought that nursing

homes, as he was saying - I said, "Dad, would you prefer to go into a nursing home?" He says, "No thanks, Abe. Nursing homes are for old people, and I want to stay with the people who I love and love me." Madam Speaker, I feel badly that there isn't enough accommodation for people in their reclining (sic) years.

It's a downright shame, Madam Speaker, that this government has allowed the provincial deficit to reach such a fantastic amount that the future of the citizens of Manitoba are in financial jeopardy. It's a downright shame that the energy situation in Manitoba has deteriorated from a potential salvation to an increase in the cost to Manitoba users. I think it was - don't frown. You'll get an opportunity, honest.

It's a downright shame that the government has allowed an illegal deficit to continue at the Workers' Compensation over a five-year period. I brought that to attention after the Provincial Auditor had made some remarks. We've discussed in committee, and nothing's been done. I guess the only thing to do, when we say that it's an illegal deficit, that the Minister's responsible - we keep changing Ministers when it comes to Workers' Compensation. So I don't know which Minister to put in jail, but I think the current Minister is the one, unless he's going to correct the deficit or do something about it, who will have to go to jail — (Interjection) — not until after Saturday.

It's a downright shame that the government has allowed Autopac to be manipulated by the New Democratic Party for political gain and not have the best interests of Manitoba, first and foremost — (Interjection) — absolutely so, manipulated for political gain, Madam Speaker.

I appreciate the courtesy of the members. They always do give me the courtesy when I get up to speak. Sometimes they don't agree with me, but I always do receive the courtesy of members opposite. I do appreciate it, but I've just got to make one mention. A little while back, I guess I had sent out some Tory literature to my constituency and the First Minister. I've got to repeat it again because the First Minister got hold of one somehow. I didn't know that he was one of my constituents, or maybe one of my constituents had given him one of my pieces of literature, and he was making fun of it and, in a fit of rage, he sat there and he ripped it up in little pieces and he thought he was hurting me. Madam Speaker, I still find it was humorous that the Premier of the Province would do such a childish gesture, and I've remembered it. You've taken away everything I was going to criticize the First Minister on.

Madam Speaker, oh my goodness, in the time allowed me, I'm going to try and touch on some of the issues. You just can't touch on them all, Madam Speaker. I've made some remarks about it, but the Throne Speech, Madam Speaker. I listened as the Lieutenant-Governor was reading the Throne Speech. I don't want to impute anything but it seemed that he had trouble getting it out. There was just nothing there that could benefit the people of the Province of Manitoba. What it was the syndrome of "how good I am" and how good we've accomplished these things and in the end just bash the feds. There was just nothing constructive in the Throne Speech, Madam Speaker.

But let's get right down to the things that could help the Province of Manitoba. — (Interjection) — Madam

Speaker, I just finished saying how nice they were. I just finished saying it.

The NDP has miscalculated the effect of this Throne Speech and the impact on Manitobans, Madam Speaker. They have tried tactics to try and get Manitobans from thinking of the real problems. They're trying to deflect the attention off the real problems, Madam Speaker, and this is all right if you are in a football game or something of that nature.

Just visualize what's happened where a quarterback gets in behind the centre and he calls a huddle and he says, all right, we're going to fake into the line and we're going to fake and then run around the left side and then we're going to throw a forward pass. This is what you do; you try to get people thinking of something else so that you can really do the stuff that people aren't expecting. And what happens? Sure you can fake and try to confuse the Opposition, but it isn't going to work because they don't have anybody to carry out the faking, no quarterback. They've got a quarterback but he doesn't know how to throw a pass and, if he did, he doesn't have anybody who can catch the pass. He hasn't got anybody whom he can give direction to and he has nobody who will take direction from him.

Madam Speaker, this group is punishing the wrong people. You remember the story of the woman who takes her little boy to school and she says, you know, Johnny's very, very high strung. If he ever does anything wrong, she says, just slap the kid next to him and that'll scare Johnny and he'll behave. Well, this is what they're doing. They fired the general manager of Autopac when it should have been the Minister who was taken. They're punishing the wrong people, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, let's get down to the Autopac, the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation. This was considered the goose that laid the golden egg. This is what got Ed Schreyer elected, and the New Democratic Party Government, the first time that they got elected, was the promise of Autopac with the promise of cheaper insurance, Madam Speaker. This was a promise that they kept. There weren't too many promises that the New Democratic Party have kept, but this one they kept and it did get them elected.

Madam Speaker, when Autopac was first initiated, he appointed one of his members to oversee the commencement and they brought it into line and they brought in a competent general manager, a chap by the name of J.O. Dutton who I personally knew. He's no longer with us, a fine man with absolutely fantastic insurance background and ability. If you're going to run an insurance company, you've got to have an insurance man to do it. You don't take a civil servant - I'm not belittling civil servants - but you don't take a civil servant out of Crown corporations and put him in as a general manager of a large insurance company if he doesn't have the experience and then blame him for the mistakes.

Anyways, Madam Speaker, if I do recall correctly, the member of the Legislature, the member of the government who was the coordinator with the insurance company, I think, was the Member for Selkirk, who was the first coordinator and is now the Premier of Manitoba. So I would think that his background of being with Autopac, the goose that laid the golden egg, had something to do with him winning his nomination to be the leader and also had something to do with him winning the provincial election.

But now the story changes, Madam Speaker, because the Premier of the Province of Manitoba is like Nero in Rome. Everything is coming down around him, the place is burning, and he doesn't know. He's fiddling, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, he sat there and he said, or I guess he spoke out in the hall . . .

A MEMBER: Socialism is alive and well in Manitoba.

MR. A. KOVNATS: No. He was saying, in response to the criticism from the Member for St. Vital, that it was healthy criticism. He was saying it was healthy criticism, Madam Speaker. He got up and he made a statement. He says, "We're far from a perfect government." Why is he telling Manitobans that they're far from a perfect government? We know it. They are far from a perfect government. Translated, it's an incompetent government.

Autopac, which brought the New Democratic Party Government into power will also take them out of power, Madam Speaker. As sure as Moses is over there with his finger in the air, Autopac will be one of the main features why that group will not be government after the next election, whenever that may be. Madam Speaker, the people of the Province of Manitoba won't forget these outlandish increases in rates because we won't let them forget.

Madam Speaker, I've just got to reflect back a little bit on Autopac about the previous Minister who, due to a political decision, did not give the true facts when it came prior to the last election as to the financial standing of Autopac. When you hide the truth and cover up huge financial reinsurance losses, I would believe, Madam Speaker, that the people of Manitoba have been dumped on by the NDP, and the people of Manitoba, I believe, have been lied to. I think that's acceptable. — (Interjection) — No, I didn't; no I didn't.

Madam Speaker, do you remember when confidential documents from Autopac were destroyed in error? Well, I had a rubber stamp made up so that this error couldn't happen again. And on the rubber stamp, it says, "Do not Destroy," and I wanted to send it over and have them stamp every bit of confidential information "Do not Destroy," and to make sure - and I think I have somebody to verify it - it was in two languages - "ne détruiser pas" - which I believe means "Do not Destroy" also.

Madam Speaker, in the business section of the Winnipeg Free Press - I think I've lost the article - but there's a private operator who has started a mobile paper-shredding company. Now if the Minister wishes, he can have the mobile shredding unit come right to the door of the Legislature and they can destroy all of the documents as quickly as the bat of an eye. It's private enterprise and I know how they promote private enterprise, so I know that we would have . . .

A MEMBER: How about setting up the "Manitoba Public Shredding Corporation"?

MR. A. KOVNATS: That's right, we could make it into a Crown corporation.

But this is an entrepreneur who has started this business and she's doing very, very well. She has one truck; I think she's going into another. I'm not sure

whether the Government of Manitoba, in shredding these secret documents, was following the example of Oliver North down in the United States or whether Oliver North was following the example of the Provincial Government of the Province of Manitoba when all of these documents - he's shredding some; our Provincial Government is shredding some.

I'm not finished with Autopac, Madam Speaker. I want to make reference to the rally that was held on the front steps of the Legislature where . . .

A MEMBER: It's your biker friends again.

MR. A. KOVNATS: My biker friends were there, that's right, yes. They were there, and actually we had some people who believe in freedom of choice. We had a very nice young lady from the University of Manitoba who helped organize and came up with thousands of names on a petition. Her heart's in the right place, Madam Speaker, because she was there . . .

A MEMBER: And had it up to the teeth.

MR. A. KOVNATS: Well, Angela and all of the other people in the Province of Manitoba. But, Madam Speaker, I think that I will go with what I have here because these people who attended the rally for Autopac - and before I forget, I think that I've got to make mention that I've had a long day and I really wouldn't want to go past six o'clock tonight because . . .

A MEMBER: You don't want leave?

MR. A. KOVNATS: No. At six o'clock this morning, Madam Speaker, my wife and I got up early so that we could attend a pancake breakfast at École Lacerte and we had a very, very enjoyable time. We were there the day after the Minister of the Environment was there. The Minister of Environment also accepted the hospitality of École Lacerte and he ate pancakes the day before for breakfast. But, Madam Speaker, I've got to bring this to his attention. Madam Speaker, yesterday and today were nice days and that Minister, because he was the Minister of Environment, took credit for the good weather. Madam Speaker, that's a shame. When it's good weather, it's his responsibility; when it's bad weather, it belongs to the feds. — (Interjection) — That's right, you've got to be fair. You've got to take responsibility all the time.

Madam Speaker, I have some other stuff here that I wanted to continue with, but it's another part of it and I would hope that maybe we could call it six o'clock and I could continue starting a whole new part of my presentation at the next sitting, if that would be acceptable.

MADAM SPEAKER: Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock? Okay. The hour being 6:00 p.m., the honourable member will have 11 minutes remaining when this matter is again before the House.

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