



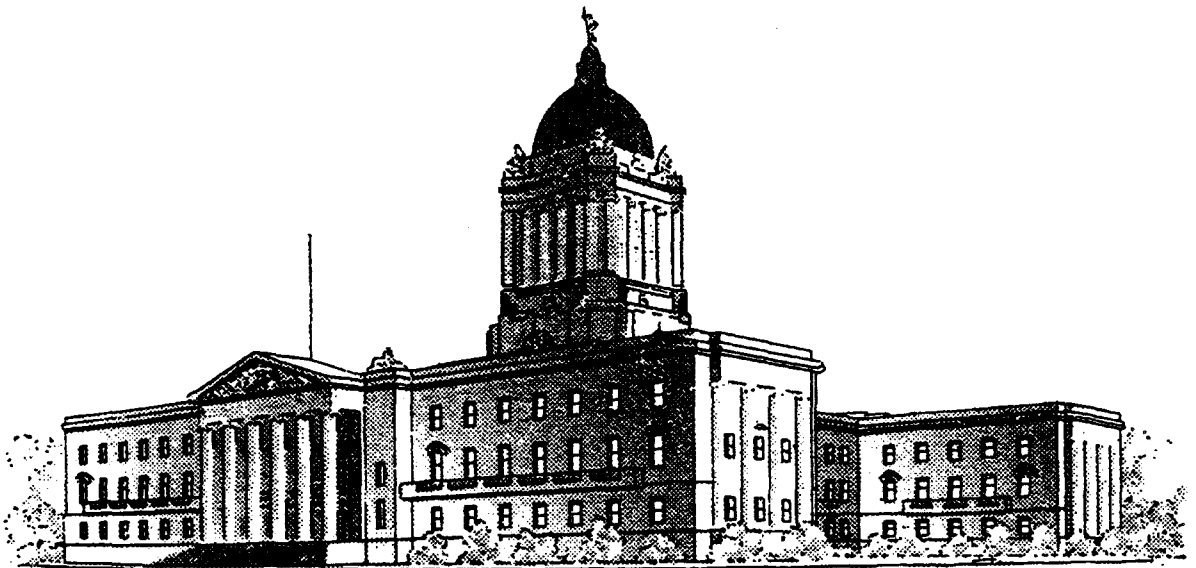
Second Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(Hansard)**

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, December 6, 1995

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Emergency Health Care Services— Community Hospitals

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Doug Simpson, Robert Simpson, S. Simpson and others urging the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) consider making a commitment to the people of Manitoba that emergency health care services in Winnipeg's five community hospitals remain open seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

National Day of Remembrance Respecting Violence Against Women

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Madam Speaker, I have a statement for the House.

Each year on this National Day of Remembrance Respecting Violence Against Women, we pause to remember the 14 young women killed in an act of mindless violence at École Polytechnique in Montreal. The shock and the horror does not subside over time. Once again, our hearts go out to the families and the friends of those young women who died in 1989.

Today, we also remember and honour the Manitoba women who have died as a result of violence and express our deepest sympathy to their families and friends.

All of us have a role to play in stopping the cycle of violence. It is our hope that by working together we can make Manitoba, our province, a safer place to live.

Our government has undertaken many initiatives to stem the tide of violence. We have adopted a stance of

zero tolerance for violence in Manitoba. The Family Violence Court, the first of its kind in Canada, has been expanded to Brandon and Thompson and deals sensitively and speedily with cases of family violence.

We have instituted an aggressive charging policy and police protocol, such that no reported incident of domestic violence goes unaddressed.

We have lobbied and continue to lobby the federal government to strengthen the antistalking legislation in the Criminal Code. However, we cannot do it alone. We are working with communities and individuals to provide supports for families in crisis. We fund wife abuse committees throughout the province, as well as crisis telephone lines province-wide, ones sensitive to aboriginal women's particular concerns. Our shelter funding model is one of the best in Canada, and we have added counselling support services for women and children.

We are continuing our work in trying to change attitudes and behaviours of young people so that they will learn better ways of dealing with anger and frustration through programs such as No Need to Argue. The Women's Directorate co-sponsored with Winnipeg School Division No. 1 the London Family Violence Court's A School-Based Anti-Violence Program, or ASAP, to train educators and community groups to initiate violence prevention programs in their communities.

* (1335)

In September of this year I had the pleasure of accepting on behalf of the people of Manitoba the Women's Grove Memorial Garden dedicated to Manitoba women who have been victims of violence. This beautiful garden and memorial is a wonderful way in which to honour and remember the Manitoba women who have died as a result of violence. While honouring those who have died, it is also a symbol of hope through its living commitment honouring women's lives.

This evening, at 7 p.m., a candlelight vigil will be held in the grove to honour the women who were killed in Montreal six years ago today.

December 6 has been declared A National Day of Remembrance and Action Respecting Violence Against Women. I would ask each of you to remember those Montreal students who were victims of violence, as well as the Manitoba women who have met their deaths by violent means.

Carved in the stone of the memorial garden is a pledge to end the violence against women. I urge all Manitobans to join in that pledge to end the violence, and I invite all members to attend tonight's vigil in this beautiful grove to honour and remember those who have died.

I would like to close by asking all of you, members of the Legislature, community and individuals, to continue to work together to build a Manitoba free from violence. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for her statement. I assure her that she can count on our side of the House to join communities, service providers and the women of Manitoba to work for a society which is free from violence. We certainly will, on our side of the House, be doing this work. A sign of our commitment is, of course, our Task Force Report on Violence Against Women which was released today replete with 90 recommendations for ending violence against women.

I thank the minister, too, for bringing to our attention the Women's memorial grove. I thank her personally as the former president of the December 6 Memorial Women's Committee and also as the current critic for the Status of Women. I, too, invite all members of the Legislature to join us at seven o'clock tonight for the vigil.

Since December 6, 1989, 600 Canadian women and 50 Manitoba women have been murdered in situations of intimacy, murdered by men whom they had once loved and trusted. Every week in Canada two women die this way. We on our side of the House join, I am sure, with all our colleagues in remembering,

December 6, 1989, the 14 young women murdered in Montreal and the 13 others who were seriously wounded and now will always live marked by sexism and misogyny.

As parents, grandparents, sisters and brothers, as elected representatives of the people and as ordinary Canadians, we offer family members, friends and other survivors our sincere condolences and our strong commitment to end violence against women. We will not forget your daughters and in honour of them name them here: Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Natalie Croteau, Barbara Daignault, Ann-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Barbara Marie Klueznick, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie Saint-Arneault and Annie Turcotte.

I would like to also mention today the names of the two Manitoba women who were murdered as a result of domestic violence this year: Rhonda Michelle Lavoie and Dawn Brunsel.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Health Care System Emergency Services

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the First Minister.

Madam Speaker, we are pleased to see the government will utilize public consultations for decisions affecting health care. It is unfortunate the government did not use public consultations before the Premier (Mr. Filmon) made the unilateral decision to close our community emergency wards in the evening at the five hospitals.

Madam Speaker, repeatedly on October the 6th, October the 10th, October the 16th and October the 19th, the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) has used the figure 4 percent as the justification for the Premier's decision to close the community-based emergency ward hospital wings in the evening.

I would like to ask the Premier, was that the rationale and the data used by him and cabinet when they

decided to unilaterally make the decision to close down these community-based emergency wards in the evening?

* (1340)

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): The honourable Leader of the Opposition is quite incorrect to refer to any decisions made as unilateral. This government, unlike the one that the honourable member was involved with, is much more consultative with stakeholders in the community, including health care providers and consumers, than they ever were. Thousands of Manitobans have been part of the consultative process in the development of any health reforms that have taken place and any health reforms that will take place in the future.

Madam Speaker, the numbers that the honourable member refers to—there are numbers that fluctuate from year to year. As a matter of fact, at this particular time, the usage of emergency rooms is down somewhat from what it was a year ago. So numbers do change from time to time. If it is 4 percent or 5 percent or 8 percent or 11 percent or whatever percent it is, it is a small amount of the—the percentage of emergent care delivered in our emergency services facilities in the city of Winnipeg is small compared to the total usage. But that percentage, no matter how small or large, is an extremely important number because those are potentially life-threatening situations. I recognize that.

Minister of Health Replacement

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I guess this new accountability does not start with the Premier who refuses to answer the question and take responsibility for the decisions that he and his government have made affecting the lives and livelihood and health care of citizens.

I would like to table a document today that talks about the fact that it is 11 percent that are emergent and 58 percent are urgent at our community-based emergency wards. The government has had documents indicating that his numbers have been off it by a

hundred percent ever since we have been raising this question in the House.

I would like to ask the Premier, will he give us a new minister of health care who will make decisions based on the facts, who will tell the people the truth and take responsibility for the effect it has on Manitobans? Will the Premier take responsibility for a terrible decision? Will he reverse the decision and give us a Minister of Health who can give us straight answers to straight questions in this Legislature?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I want to say to the Leader of the Opposition that while he attempts to play cheap politics with issues that are very important to the people of Manitoba, we have a minister who is working with all stakeholders in the health care system, who is listening, consulting and involving thousands and thousands of Manitobans in the process of working to provide better care and a cost-effective system of health care that will address the needs of the people of Manitoba.

It is that kind of attitude, Madam Speaker, that is needed and it is that kind of attitude that is being provided by the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), as opposed to the kind of cheap political rhetoric we get from the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Doer: Well, Madam Speaker, if the Premier is satisfied with numbers that are totally false being the rationale of his government making decisions, that may be his standards but those are not the standards of Manitobans in terms of their health care system.

Health Care System Emergency Services

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Dr. Ludwig, on December 5, was quoted as saying that he knows what the decision of government is, but he just cannot tell the public what the decision will be about the emergency wards situation at our community hospitals.

In light of the open, accountable new nature of this government, can the Premier please tell us today, if Dr. Ludwig knows what the decision is, what is the

decision? Will the Premier reverse the horrible decisions of his government and his Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) and reopen our community-based emergency wards, as they were intended to be, at midnight, Madam Speaker, or are we going to continue to play peekaboo politics with the Premier not telling us what is going on?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I heard Dr. Ludwig, on CJOB, responding to the Leader of the Opposition on that particular occasion, where he made a fool of the Leader of the Opposition by demonstrating—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Doer: A point of order, Madam Speaker, the Premier's facts, just as his answers, are all incorrect. I have never been on the radio with Dr. Ludwig. I have been on the radio with a paid consultant from the provincial government.

I would ask the Premier to apologize and withdraw his comments.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Leader of the official opposition does not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable First Minister, to complete his response.

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, I am quick to offer my sincere apologies to the Leader of the Opposition, and I should not in any way misrepresent Dr. Ludwig. It was Dr. Moe Lerner who made a fool of the Leader of the Opposition.

Madam Speaker, the very fact is that Dr. Lerner, who is an expert in emergency room procedures and who has run emergency rooms in the past and has extensive experience, of course, did take rightful exception to the misinformation that was being put forward by both the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) and the member

for Concordia, the Leader of the Opposition. That is why he made a fool of them.

* (1345)

Health Care System Emergency Services

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): My question is for the Premier. [interjection] If the Premier is trying to answer the previous question, perhaps he can get up again, but will he perhaps try to listen to my question, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker, my question for the Premier: Can the Premier explain why Dr. Ludwig said on CBC Radio yesterday that he knew, quote: Do you have any sense how many emergency rooms will be open at night? Yes, I do but I am not going to comment.

How is it that Dr. Ludwig knows, and this hiding government, this secretive government, this government that makes decisions in the backrooms will not tell Manitobans what they are going to do with the emergency wards? Can the Premier try to explain that, rather than taking shots at all the opposition critics?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, the member opposite would have to ask Dr. Ludwig that.

Minister of Health Resignation Request

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): My supplementary question is for the Premier.

Can the Premier explain why they have kept information secret, why this Minister of Health has misled the public of Manitoba with regard to information, why this government has been using figures that have been inaccurate—and it has clearly been tabled this morning that these figures were inaccurate—why this Premier has allowed this minister to go on? Will the Premier do the right thing and ask the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to resign because of incompetence?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, the only incompetence that has been demonstrated time

and time again is the false accusations and false information that have been laid on the table of this Chamber over and over again by the member for Kildonan. That is the kind of tactic that has no place in a debate about serious issues, and that is why the members opposite have been made to look like fools, because they continually come here and make false allegations and lay false information on the table.

* (1350)

Health Care System Emergency Services—Consultations

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, can the Premier, who could not answer the questions and could not explain those misused figures by his government, explain this tabled document that I am going to table which is the minutes of the Steering Committee on Emergency Wards, the committee set up by the government? It says the problem is there is no public consultation and no education regarding emergency wards, and that is part of the problem. Can the Premier explain why his government has a throne speech that says they are going to consult and at the same time their own emergency report says they are not consulting with the public and there has been no public input?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, over the years and certainly recently as well, there have been significant levels of consultation. The thing the honourable member, who was totally silent when it came to trying to get the doctors to return to work when they went on strike, what the honourable member clearly ignores is the fact that even though we pleaded with the doctors not to do that so that we could work with them to develop that integrated emergency system that we have been talking about, the doctors were out of the picture and the whole process was changed somewhat.

The honourable member chooses to ignore that when he asks his questions, but he cannot get around the fact that the people with whom we consult and the people of this province of Manitoba would very much prefer an open and consultative approach rather than an arrogant approach that says, we will do it our way or we will do it no way.

Dwayne Archie Johnston Parole

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Justice.

Yesterday, aboriginal people from Norway House achieved an historic victory for victims of crime, first, by appearing before the Pacific parole board; second, by making the point that victims and survivors count; third, by convincing the parole board to visit Norway House and participate in community healing; and, fourth, by winning the right for Justine Osborne and members of the Women's Wellness Circle to appear before the parole board when it meets in March to discuss full parole for Dwayne Archie Johnston, the convicted murderer of Helen Betty Osborne.

My first question to the minister is, what responses has the minister received from the parole board, and what actions has she taken in this matter?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, as the member opposite knows, I wrote directly to the parole board, as Minister of Justice, giving to them our opinion of what should be considered in terms of the parole of Dwayne Archie Johnston. To my knowledge, I have not yet received a written response, but I will check on that. One may have come and I have not yet received it at my desk.

Aboriginal Women Safety

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Especially in light of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, would the minister tell us what she is prepared to do to ensure aboriginal women's safety?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, certainly we want to work with the aboriginal community, as with all Manitobans, to deal with the issue of safety. Some of the safety requirements, though, come through changes to the Criminal Code because we have one criminal law across Canada. Some of the changes which I have asked the federal government to look at

implementing are reverse onus on bail and stalking, very specifically to look at making sure victims are notified if an offender is released or escapes from jail, particularly a stalker.

In order to make aboriginal women safe, as all Manitobans, there are certain changes which have to occur through the federal Criminal Code. However, we in Manitoba have adopted some policies which we believe are administrative that would be better if they were in the Criminal Code, but we in fact are doing those things, such as letting victims know if an accused and a convicted stalker is released or escapes from jail.

Dwayne Archie Johnston Parole

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, given the significance of yesterday's events for victims of crime across the country and given the minister's commitment to victims of crime, is she prepared to assist Justine Osborne and the Norway House Women's Wellness Circle to attend the parole board hearing when the board meets in March to consider parole for Dwayne Archie Johnston?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, perhaps the member would like to speak to me to let me know exactly what it is she is asking for or what this family may be asking for. At this moment I have not received any requests.

Domestic Violence Legislation

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

The NDP Caucus Task Force on Violence Against Women today presented 90 recommendations directed primarily at the provincial government so we can work toward an authentic zero tolerance policy. I just want to table three copies of that report specifically for the government so that we can work in a spirit of co-operation with the government for improvements. What the task force heard loud and clear was that we have a very, very long way to go to ensure even basic safety for abused women.

My question for the minister is: So there is immediate help to get the abuser rather than the victim out of the home and to help with such issues as access to property and victim compensation, has the minister reviewed the Victims of Domestic Violence Act of Saskatchewan with a view to bringing in that kind of legislation here in Manitoba?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, contained in the information the member has circulated now, I understand, are opinions of Manitobans which I will tell you we take very seriously. I will certainly be reviewing the document as it relates to the comments of Manitobans.

However, I am pleased that based on those comments the NDP party has in fact finally offered concrete written support to a number of the positions which this government has taken from the very beginning. This was the government that established the zero tolerance policy. This was the government that established the Domestic Violence Court, the only Domestic Violence Court in this country, a model across the country, one in which we have visitors consistently coming to view.

In addition, Madam Speaker, members across the way know that we have called an inquiry into the deaths, the murder-suicide in the Lavoie case, and we will be expecting following that that we may have some additional recommendations which may come to government. We will be looking forward to that.

But we have at the moment a very aggressive stand. We will always be looking to improve that, and we expect some additional information to come forward when we get the results of the inquiry.

* (1355)

Government Initiatives

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): If the government is looking to improve the status of women and the situation regarding violence against women of Manitoba, would she explain why new initiatives on this issue were not so much as mentioned in yesterday's throne speech?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Of course, the member was not listening because I guess he missed the whole part on victims. I guess he missed the whole section in the throne speech that spoke about this government's effort to continue to work with victims and in fact enhance services related to victims. He just missed it. He is wrong again.

Pedlar Report Recommendations

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Would the minister then explain to the women of Manitoba, if the government is so concerned about the opinions of Manitobans, whatever happened to all those outstanding recommendations from the Pedlar report that were released almost four and a half years ago?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I will be releasing before Christmas this government's record of accomplishments in relation to the Pedlar report. In addition to that, I think it will be very clear at that time that we have even gone beyond the recommendations of the Pedlar report.

By way of example, I reference stalking and the position that we have taken in relation to convicted persons who are stalkers, the changes that we have asked for in the area of bail conditions.

We have not yet ever seen anything concrete from the other side in support of that. Perhaps what is contained in their document now may in fact support this government's position to the federal government, and maybe the federal government will make changes.

Seven Oaks General Hospital Alternative Uses

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

Back in 1981, people in the north end were served with the opening of the Seven Oaks General Hospital. The community was gratefully pleased to see that particular hospital built.

We were disappointed when the then-New Democratic administration took out the obstetrics portion of that hospital, but over the last few days we have heard significant rumours that have been coming to both me and the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) talking about that this government is currently looking at alternative usage for the Seven Oaks Hospital.

My question to the Minister of Health is, is this government considering doing something with the Seven Oaks Hospital, in particular converting it into geriatric usage?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): The honourable member for Inkster may not have been listening to the throne speech either, because the throne speech speaks about an appropriate and integrated system of health care delivery here for the city of Winnipeg and Seven Oaks Hospital, and a whole lot of other hospitals in the city are engaged in doing that, but they are doing it in isolation one from the other, at least they have been.

There have been some significant improvements in the way that all of the medical directors and CEOs and board chairs and others involved with these hospitals—they have been working much more closely together in recent times, and as we develop an integrated plan not only for emergency services but all the other medical and clinical disciplines, the future of the services delivered by each of these facilities will become clearer.

Mr. Lamoureux: I would like the Minister of Health to be very clear. Is this government looking at turning the Seven Oaks Hospital into geriatric care? Is that what this government is currently doing with the Seven Oaks Hospital? Are they considering it?

Mr. McCrae: I would just repeat my previous answer, Madam Speaker, but I think the honourable member may have attended the forum, either yesterday or today, that is being conducted with the facilitation of the KPMG consulting group. I know the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) attended yesterday. The various stakeholders, including providers and consumers, have been taking part in

those discussions facilitated by KPMG to discuss the future of health care delivery in the city of Winnipeg of various types of clinical disciplines.

The honourable member is wise to raise the issue of geriatric care because many of our hospital beds are occupied by people who should be appropriately looked after in something other than an acute care bed, and that is very much the subject of discussion. So the specific role of Seven Oaks or Grace or Victoria in these areas in the future will become clear as these consultations wind up.

* (1400)

Mr. Lamoureux: Will the Minister of Health make a commitment to the people in the north end of the city of Winnipeg and those rural areas surrounding Seven Oaks Hospital that he will put a halt to any conversion of the Seven Oaks Hospital or the current purpose that it is there to serve, put a halt until there have been public discussions on the whole issue of the Seven Oaks Hospital?

Mr. McCrae: Like I say, the honourable member, I invited him to attend the discussions that are going on with respect to the future of these services in the city of Winnipeg. He and many others have been invited and many attend these discussions, and so I say to the honourable member, indeed, decisions will follow appropriate consultations.

Domestic Violence Shelters—Funding

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Madam Speaker, many participants to the NDP Caucus Task Force on Violence Against Women spoke very eloquently about the importance of ongoing stable funding for the shelter system in the province of Manitoba. Women desperately require shelters to escape domestic violence and abuse, to protect themselves and their children and at times to save their lives.

Unfortunately, changes that appear to be coming from the federal government through their federal transfer payments include the envelope which currently provides some funding for women's shelters.

I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services if she has met with the federal representatives in order to discuss the issue of funding for Manitoba shelters.

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): I thank my honourable friend for that question because it does raise the issue again of the reduction of \$147 million that will be facing Manitobans as a result of the 1996-97 federal budget reductions and also the \$220 million the following year.

Madam Speaker, it does present a real concern to us as a government in Manitoba as to how we are going to deal with all of the reductions that we will be receiving, and health, post-secondary education and family services in fact will be impacted in a very negative way.

I have had dialogue and discussion with my counterparts across the country. We have not had the opportunity to meet with the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy as ministers responsible for social services for two years now. I think that is unacceptable in the light of social security reform and what impact that is going to have on provinces.

I have indicated many times that in absence of federal leadership, provinces are trying to work together to see how we can develop a national vision for social services for all of the social programs that we provide, and national principals will continue to work on those issues as provinces. But it is not clear to us what the impacts will be, and we are not getting any straight answers from the federal government.

Ms. Barrett: I would like to ask the minister to provide a straight answer to the women and children and people of Manitoba and assure the people of Manitoba that funding a solid, ongoing core funding for programs and counselling for the women and children of Manitoba will be continued through the shelter system in the next budgets of this government.

Is she going to assure Manitobans that those services will be protected?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I can assure Manitobans that this government has placed a high priority on support for

women and children and victims of abuse in the past. We will continue to assure Manitobans that support will be there. We have one of the most comprehensive shelter systems right across the country. We take some pride in that, and I want to assure all Manitobans that, within the available resources that we have, we will continue to make services for women and children as victims of abuse a high priority.

Ms. Barrett: I would like to ask the minister if she could tell us in some detail how she plans to address the problems of potential cutbacks from the federal government to ensure, as we have asked, that those services are not reduced, they are maintained, and if possible, as a result of some of the recommendations in the task force, even enhanced.

What is she going to do to ensure that those services are maintained and strengthened?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Manitoba, unlike all other provinces right across the country, has indicated very clearly that we are not going to be able to backfill on the reductions that the federal government is making. [interjection]

Well, Madam Speaker, I hear some moans and groans from the opposite side of the House, but I want to assure you that governments of Liberal stripe across the country and New Democratic stripe across the country are facing the same circumstance and situation that Manitoba is facing. All of those governments have made the same statements, so it is not unique to Manitoba.

We have indicated that within the resources that we have available to us, we are going to maintain high priority for health, education and family services by spending smarter. That will be the focus of all the change and all the reform that will be undertaken through the next year.

Hog Industry Marketing System

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, in the throne speech yesterday we heard that a task force will be established to travel rural Manitoba to listen and consult with Manitobans regarding policy

and programs. If this task force is going to really listen to Manitobans, I want to ask the Minister of Agriculture if he will back off on his decision to move to dual marketing of hogs until rural consultation is complete, because he will hear that rural Manitobans are worried about this decision. They are concerned about the impact on producers and their communities.

Will he really listen to rural Manitobans through this task force?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, what I can advise the honourable member for Swan River is that a transition committee is being established while I speak. I have suggested that the first meeting with Manitoba Pork on the issue that she raises will take place on or about the 15th of this month, December. It is my hope that accommodations can be made to achieve a smooth transition to implement the decision by government that has been made for a more flexible marketing of Manitoba hogs in this province.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Speaker, so the minister is telling us that he is going to make an arbitrary decision on the marketing of hogs and then he is going to pretend that he is going to hold task force hearings across the province for Manitobans to be consulted. What is the point? Is this a PR program for rural Manitobans saying that they are going to listen when he is cutting their livelihood off by implementing dual marketing?

* (1410)

Mr. Enns: It was a decision that was recommended to me by, possibly, the dean of agricultural economics that we have at the University of Manitoba employed by Liberal governments in Ottawa, Progressive Conservative governments in Ottawa, New Democratic governments in the province of Manitoba and governments of all description. I am referring to the former Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, Professor Clay Gilson—a study that took seven or eight months to complete, which consulted every aspect and every player in the hog industry and very much so, producers and Manitoba Pork. It was their recommendation that, after contemplating that recommendation for a better

part of a year, this government chose to make its views known on the recommendation.

Madam Speaker, with respect to the question she asked about the need for a task force, agriculture is changing, I can inform you, and some of the icons of agriculture are changing. Two out of one Alberta wheat farmers voted for dual marketing in Alberta today. So let us understand that if the New Democrats –[interjection] Let me correct it. The results are two out of three, but that is simply an expression, as the federal minister has acknowledged, of the concern that is out there in western agriculture and the same concern, quite frankly, is abounding in Manitoba as well.

The proposal is to have an understanding of that concern, to move throughout rural Manitoba and to talk about all agriculture issues in this post-WGTA era, and that is what the proposed task force that was alluded to in the throne speech will do.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Speaker, since the minister says his decision was based on a study that he commissioned and producers are saying that they were not consulted in this study adequately, will the minister listen to producers and give them a say in this by giving them a vote, or is he paying off some of his friends on this?

Mr. Enns: I have so much confidence in the honourable member for Swan River that I know, upon reflection, she will wish to retract that comment all by herself.

But, Madam Speaker, this issue is an issue that has in the past, by previous administrations, including New Democratic Party administrations, been made when a position was arrived at by the government and leadership, in fact, was exercised, and that is precisely what I am doing with the current hog situation.

Manitoba Telephone System Salary Disclosures

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, my question is to the minister for the Manitoba Telephone System.

On November 14, 45 employees at MTS were laid off with no right for recall, and on November 24, MTS hired four new presidents at salaries which have yet to be disclosed. In the spirit of the throne speech, which I just had the opportunity to read right now, there was reference to a greater financial accountability by public institutions to the public, so I wonder if the minister could start by indicating how much are they paying the new presidents for the four new corporations at MTS.

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister responsible for the administration of The Manitoba Telephone Act): Madam Speaker, I think the member knows full well –we were in committee, we talked about this—that restructuring needed to be done at MTS.

Restructuring has taken place. He approved of the restructuring. He approved that we are in a different time frame now. We have a federal regulator, and we need to separate the monopoly component of the company from the business component of the company, and that is what the restructuring has done. I am very proud and pleased with the individuals who applied. I believe over a hundred people applied for the four positions at MTS.

Madam Speaker, as the minister responsible, I want MTS to run itself as a corporation at some arm's length from the Manitoba government. I do not ask that kind of question. I will inquire for the member what the salaries are. I will bring it to him. But I can assure the member, four very capable individuals from eastern Canada have come and taken those positions out of the approximately hundred that applied. They are very well qualified. They have worked for Bell Canada, for Northern Telecom, and for Unitel in their careers.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, I take it financial accountability of some public sector institutions does not necessarily include the Crown corporation, so I will ask a further question, which is a decision that is going to be made directly by the minister and by the Premier. I would like to ask, given the fact they have already increased the payment to existing board members and they are now going to be creating four new boards, if they can answer how much each person on the board is going to be paid and how these people for these new four boards are going to be selected.

Mr. Findlay: The four boards that the member is referring to will be advisory boards. The members, the number and the composition is still under discussion.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, I have a final question.

I would just like to ask how the minister can look the 45 employees, who were dismissed at MTS, in the face when they have absolutely no rights of recall, no labour adjustment strategy, and yet this government is proceeding with hiring four new CEOs and creating four new boards at the public expense while these people are out of work.

Mr. Findlay: Madam Speaker, if the member looks across the country he will see that 45 is a very small number compared to what has happened in Alberta in terms of Bell Canada. This is an industry of very high technology, new equipment, better equipment. You need less employees to operate the system.

Madam Speaker, I can very proudly say to the member the amount of activity in that system continues to increase. The system continues to offer lower-cost options, particularly in long distance, which the consumers of Manitoba benefit from. Our mission over there is to keep the cost down and improve the level of service. They have done it aggressively in the past and will in the future.

School Boundaries Status Report

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Madam Speaker, last Friday, the school division Boundaries Review Commission released its supplementary review and recommendations, this of course being a final report to the final report which was released last February.

My question to the Minister of Education: Can the minister tell the House and the taxpayers of Manitoba if this actually concludes the mission of the boundary commission, and what is the total bill to the taxpayers of Manitoba?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): I just want to, first of all, indicate in

response to some of the phraseology in the preamble that the opposition has just spent the entire Question Period demanding further consultation from various bodies on this side, and, yet, when we took a few months to have further consultation—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I would point out that it is very clear in Beauchesne that answers to questions should deal with the matter raised and they should not be editorial comment or opinion on previous questions or answers in Question Period. I would ask if, once again, you could ask the Minister of Education to address the question rather than providing extraneous editorial comments.

Madam Speaker: On the point of order, I would remind all honourable members that indeed we do have rules, and I would suggest to the honourable minister that she keep her comments relevant to the question that was posed.

* * *

Mrs. McIntosh: In the question that was posed, the member referred to the fact that the review had had a further consultation. In response to those points that the member mentioned, I would indicate that members opposite have spent the entire Question Period asking other members to consult.

Madam Speaker, we did that in this case at the request specifically of the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), other members on the other side of the House who asked if we could take further time to consult. So I would expect the member would be very pleased that second look was taken, as many of her members asked for it, and it was indeed, the members on that side of the House said it was not long enough a consultation.

So let us be consistent, Madam Speaker. I think it is terribly important in the interests of being fair. We are being consistent on this side in consulting, and I would hope that they could be consistent in their questioning on that.

The Boundaries Review report has now been received by the government a few days ago and that report, Madam Speaker, will now go to government for decision. There will be no more public hearings, in answer to her question, although members are still free to talk to us if they wish to.

* (1420)

Cost-Benefit Analysis

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Madam Speaker, again I am going to be talking about the serious question of cost analysis and cost-benefit of this report. Is the minister aware of the St. James Assiniboia School Division's cost-benefit analysis which conservatively estimated at least a \$7-million cost, additional cost, for the amalgamation of only one of the proposed 22 divisions?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, the member is referring to one of hundreds of reports that I have read, and she may wish to go through all of the reports that we have read. Certainly, if the member is trying to imply, am I concerned about costs and division of assets and liabilities to divisions, of course I am, as are all members on this side of the House.

Indeed, Madam Speaker, that was one of the items that we said we would be looking at in terms of a final decision, would be those divisions of assets and liabilities and costs to divisions, so, yes, I am aware and I have done a fair bit of study into it, as has my department.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The time for Oral Questions has expired.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the loge to my left where we have with us this afternoon Jim Carr, the former member for Crescentwood. On behalf of all honourable members I welcome you this afternoon.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE (First Day of Debate)

Madam Speaker: On the matter of the consideration of the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

Mr. Mike Radcliffe (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), that an humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

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

Motion presented.

Mr. Radcliffe: Madam Speaker, I begin my remarks today by saying how good it is to be back here in this Chamber. I look forward to another session in this Chamber and to be the beneficiary of your wisdom, your judgment, as you preside over the proceedings in this House. We know you will continue to demonstrate your skill, your patience, which is often required in the proceedings in this Chamber, in your role as the Speaker.

I would also like to acknowledge my friend, my colleague the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau), the Deputy Speaker. We will continue to look forward to receiving the benefit of his knowledge and his compassion on the proceedings in this Chamber.

Madam Speaker, I would also like to thank the Premier for giving me the opportunity to move the throne speech and put a few thoughtful, provocative remarks on the record.

Madam Speaker, the throne speech that we heard yesterday was a speech concerning values, and I want to talk about those human values, those essential integral values which relate to this government of how we are fulfilling our mandate in the province of

Manitoba. This speech and our policy and this government is talking about human dignity. We are talking about the trust that we have received from the people of Manitoba to govern. We are talking about the principle of accountability. We are talking about fearlessly, in the face of a changing economy, in the face of changing needs in our community, presenting innovation, vigorous innovation, to meet the changing needs of our world.

We are talking, Madam Speaker, about consequence of actions. We are talking about responsibility. We are also talking about tolerance in a multicultural society, a multicultural society in Manitoba which is representative of many different heritages from around the world that have found their place to the meeting of the rivers here in Winnipeg in the province of Manitoba which succeed in enriching our culture, in giving us contacts out into the global village which Manitoba appeals to and is trading into today.

One of the integral things that this speech and our government policies will be appealing to and showing leadership for is to create a spirit of self-reliance in the people of Manitoba. This is one of the values that made this great Canadian nation. This is one of the values that made this province the keystone of our union in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, we are now entering into, well into, tough times in Manitoba. We are entering into strange new times in our nation of Canada. When I think of this challenge that is facing us I am reminded of that well-known Chinese proverb which says may you live in interesting times. Well, indeed, these are going to be very interesting times.

Yesterday, our throne speech restated our commitment to strong economic growth. This speech referred to job creation. This is an essential need of every Manitoban in our province, and we, the government of Manitoba, have heard that need.

This speech refers to excellence in education while protecting vital social services, restoring safe communities.

We have made a further commitment, Madam Speaker, to accountability in government. We have

received the confidence of the majority of the citizens of Manitoba, and we have declared that we will be accountable to this constituency. We will tell them how their money is spent.

Madam Speaker, one of the key steps in our presentation of good governance in Manitoba has been our balanced budget legislation. This has been a key achievement that many other provinces and the federal government are now trying to emulate. This sense of frugality, this sense of moderation, which has imbued all the spending practices of this government, is now reflected and balanced by a keystone in our fiscal policy which has been this balanced budget legislation.

This speech made a further affirmation that we would be consistent and adhere to the principle of no new major taxes. This government over the course of the last eight years has not raised any significant tax in this province, namely, the income tax, the sales tax, even the payroll tax, Madam Speaker. We have in fact reduced the taxation level in this province in conformance with our commitments to the people of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, one of the roles of this government which was outlined in the edifying speech yesterday was that this Manitoba government will be an advocate for the province of Manitoba, for the people of Manitoba. In fact, if my learned friend would care to read the document, he might see that the Province of Manitoba is willing to sit in conciliation with our colleagues in Ottawa. We will bring vigorous representation to Ottawa.

We are faced with a rapacious federal government right now who is bent on righting its fiscal imbalance, and this may very well create social inequities in the province of Manitoba. It may create inequities in the unemployment insurance changes. It will certainly, it has, and we have all heard in this Chamber of the impact on the cutbacks to the agricultural industry and the supports to agriculture in this province.

* (1430)

I need not remind the members of this Chamber that agriculture forms the backbone of our province, and all

the industries in our fair cities in Manitoba can trace their roots to agriculture. That must never be forgotten, Madam Speaker. Therefore, our Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) has in the past and will continue to represent our best interests with our colleagues in Ottawa.

We now have been faced very recently with a potential threat of the closure of Atomic Energy at Pinawa. I know the honourable minister in charge of this area of the province will be vigorous and assiduous in his representation and advocacy to our colleagues.

We are facing in this next current fiscal year \$147 million in the transfers—[interjection] \$147 million. I beg your pardon, and I thank my learned friend, my honourable colleague. [interjection] No, maybe not learned, but we presume he is honourable.

Madam Speaker, a \$147-million diminishment in our income. The estimates for 1997-98 fiscal year are indicating there will be an additional \$220-million decrease in our income. Now that, as the speech yesterday referred to, is equal to the budget of the University of Manitoba for its operating expenses for a year. That is equal to the annual budgets for operating for the five Winnipeg community hospitals.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, you can see the significance and the import of this diminishment of revenue that we are facing in government in Manitoba this year. In spite of the federal government's differing priorities, our government has continued with its commitment to health, to education, and to family services.

Madam Speaker, we heard even today our honourable Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) saying that there will be consultation, that an integrated plan for delivery of medical services is on the cusp of being presented to the people of Manitoba. Regional health boards are being established. This is a compassionate government, a government that listens to the needs of its people. We are not hung up on bricks and mortar and magnificent institutions. What this government, in its health care, is more concerned about is delivery of programs and meeting needs of our people.

This is a changing world, and we must be ready to meet new initiatives, new demands on our ingenuity,

and this government has in the past demonstrated this ability. This speech, which we have before us, will do nothing but enhance that program and lead us to new thresholds of activity.

In order to help us identify the needs and priorities of communities being serviced, we have established regional and northern health boards, so there is a direct link to the communities being served.

Communication has to be one of the vital functions of government. Respect for human dignity, as I originally cited, gives rise to our need and our drive for communication with the people who sent us here to govern. We do not govern by referendum; we do not govern by expensive votes. We are put here to make decisions, and that is what this government is doing. It is a listening government, it is a caring government, but when it comes down to the final moments, this government will make decisions and take action. We have seen that in our track record to date, and that is what we anticipate in the future.

Madam Speaker, one of the innovations that we are looking at and considering and implementing in our health care program is the presentation of nurse resource centres. This will improve the delivery of care at the community-based level. Delivery of home care services will be enhanced and promoted.

Part of the respect of human dignity is that the best place for everyone, each one of us, is in our own home. When we are feeling vulnerable, when we are at odds with society, when we are beaten down, the best place to regain our strength is in our own home, when we are sick and old and disabled, and that is what this government has recognized, not slamming these people into expensive institutions, not so.

In the area of family services, our government is proposing to launch a comprehensive review of The Child and Family Services Act, and this obviously will of course include a period of public consultation. We are faced with many changing needs. We have changing demographics in the city of Winnipeg; we have changing educational needs; we have changing needs of care in the province of Manitoba, but the underlying role of this government will not be to hand

out more money. Part of that is driven of course by the fact of the reality we do not have that money to hand out, but part of it is again to respect basic human dignity that we will not be Band-Aiding problems; we will be helping people to help themselves. We are more concerned with what is going to happen to us in the future. We are not rushing out with a quick fix today, Madam Speaker.

A Child and Youth Secretariat has been set up, and this will anticipate problems in families to step in for early intervention with vulnerable children. Madam Speaker, another innovation that this government is addressing is to protect victims of crime. Our honourable colleague, the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey), has touched on this aspect briefly, but we have heard too often in this Chamber, in our media, on the streets, in our constituencies, that the criminal carries on pampered, consulted, redirected, but there is an element of our society that is languishing, forgotten and neglected, and that is the victim. It is high time that this government stands up and speaks for victims, the victims of crime, and we propose to introduce legislation into this Chamber which will address that want.

Some of the areas that we are also advocating with our colleagues, the honourable colleagues of Manitoba in Ottawa, are changes to the Young Offenders Act. We also want to protect victims. We want to bring new legislation to apprehend, to penalize and to label those who prey on youth. We have seen, Madam Speaker, all too vividly in our media over the last 24 hours, the demolition of a house in St. Catharines which related to the most heinous crime on those of our society who prey on youth.

Madam Speaker, this behaviour cannot be tolerated. Today you have seen a badge on the lapel of every individual in this Chamber representing the ultimate depredation on youth, the flower of our country, who were mowed down while they were sitting in an educational institution. This is intolerable, and this must change.

We also plan to introduce legislation requiring parents to make some civil restitution to victims of property crimes committed by juveniles. This speaks

to responsibility; this speaks to the family unit; this speaks to consequence of actions; this fits under the aegis of safer streets, better families and higher standards in our community. The family is the building block of the community, and it must be supported; it must be endorsed. Therefore, we in government will set standards and create policy by which this government, by which this society, will operate.

Education was also an area that was firmly and vigorously addressed in the speech that was so eloquently presented to us yesterday. We have addressed ourselves to creating centres of excellence in our education process. The blueprint in education which was introduced in our last session will be carried on, and we have made a further commitment to endorse that and to implement those changes.

* (1440)

Those changes touch upon creating standards in the education system, creating testing levels in the education system and greater parental involvement. I have been out in the community and been involved in youth action projects whereby I have heard many young people come and say that they are apprehensive. They are suffering significant angst because they think they are being educated for the wrong direction or that there will not be jobs when they graduate from whatever institution they are in.

We are addressing that, Madam Speaker, with some of the educational innovations which we are preparing and presenting to this Chamber and the people of Manitoba. We are making it accessible education. We are enabling students to move from one kind of institution to another. We are saying that each child must master the basics in education so that they can meet changing technology.

At the public school level we are endorsing this blueprint, and we look forward, as I say, to continued growing centres of excellence. Our Speech from the Throne yesterday outlines this, and this government endorses this direction.

We have a track record in fiscal management and in prudence in the management of the people's purse. Our

background and our record has shown that, and the job creation has been one of the pinnacles of our administration of which we are most proud. We can point to increase in job creation in Manitoba over this last year of administration.

The Speech from the Throne indicates that jobs and investments depend on a stable competitive economic climate. We believe that we will not create wealth by running out into the community and recirculating people's money by handing it back to them. We will create instead an economic climate where people will be self-reliant, where people will want to come to Manitoba to do business.

Madam Speaker, in the furtherance of the completion of our mandate and recognition of the trust which has been placed upon us, the Speech from the Throne yesterday said that we will give further information on how public money is being spent. We will introduce legislation to increase financial accountability of the public sector institutions. We will tell the people of Manitoba where their money is being spent in public organizations, in public institutions and further through government, all funded by the citizen's dollar. We will do this by requiring greater disclosure of how taxpayers' money is being spent. [interjection]

My learned friend across the way, Madam Speaker, is asking when, and I tell her to stay tuned. There will be innovative legislation coming forth, and I am glad that I have her attention because I want her riveted to our program. Then our honourable colleagues in this Chamber will perhaps have the benefit of real wisdom, and they will see how real opportunity is created for the people of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, it is important to remember that governance is a continuum. When this government sets out what we intend to accomplish, we also explain what we did yesterday, what we are doing now and what we will be doing tomorrow. We have made Manitoba one of the best places to live, to have a family, to do business and to invest. [interjection]

I am getting to that, Madam Speaker, because this government has great wealth, a great wealth of ideas, a great wealth of vigour and a great wealth of innovation,

and we bring that wealth of ability to the province of Manitoba, to the people in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, I want to speak very briefly about how we have handled the tax record in Manitoba. We passed the first balanced budget legislation in more than 20 years in this country. We did it without raising personal or corporate income taxes. We did it without raising sales tax. We did it without raising the payroll tax, and that was for eight consecutive budgets.

Madam Speaker, the balanced budget position attained by our government in partnership with all Manitobans was welcomed as the eagerly sought end to the debilitating legacy of debt and spiralling interests and irresponsibility that was rampant in this province, and I think that these following comments of third parties reflect what a marvellous outstanding achievement this appears to be.

The Globe and Mail lists Winnipeg as one of the most business friendly centres in Canada. In addition, Winnipeg ranks second least expensive of 45 metropolitan manufacturing cities in all of the United States and Canada.

Madam Speaker, all governments dance to the tune of the money lender. Our Dominion Bond Rating Service says Manitoba's fiscal performance since 1990 has been amongst the most favourable in Canada. This is an endorsement of which we are justifiably proud. Our fiscal rating has been upgraded from A negative to A stable. This is a contrast to the situation of our federal government.

In its latest economic outlook, the International Monetary Fund urged Ottawa to adopt policies that will bring the deficit below the government's target of 3 percent of gross domestic product in the '96-97 fiscal year. Madam Speaker, our federal government would do well to adopt the model and to adopt the policies that have been presented right here in the province of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, this government knows how to beat deficit. This government knows how to handle money. The benefits of our fiscal frugality, of our moderation, of our skill, were recently recognized by the Province

of Saskatchewan. I am willing to admit that our Saskatchewan colleagues are not of our persuasion, but when they praise our administration, that must be acknowledged.

The Saskatchewan budget presented intercity comparisons of taxes and household charges for 10 cities across Canada. The results for our capital are these. A single person earning \$25,000 total income, the cost of living including all nondiscretionary sources of spending, we were the second lowest in the nation. For a family of four at \$50,000, we were the second lowest. For a family of four at \$75,000, we were the fifth lowest.

Now, according to the table of the 1995 Manitoba budget, page 14 ranks Manitoba with annual personal costs and taxes as follows: a single person earning \$20,000, we are the second lowest; a family of four at \$40,000, we are the lowest; and a family of four at \$60,000, the third lowest cost. Madam Speaker, there is a message here. Manitoba is a wonderful place to do business in, to invest in, to live and raise a family.

* (1450)

Madam Speaker, in 1987, under a New Democratic Party government, Manitoba was the top marginal income tax rate in the country—the top. This disgrace has now been remedied, and we are now the fourth lowest. We have lowered the small business tax from 10 percent in '87 down a whole percentage point in '95 in spite of the horrendous fiscal recession that we have been working through.

Madam Speaker, you can see that we have not only kept our commitments to pass the strongest balanced budget law in North America, but we have the strength and the moral integrity and the fortitude to enforce it and to live up to it. This is going to be legislation which will not only benefit our children, but we in the next ensuing years will benefit from this legislation.

Winnipeg is one of the least expensive cities in Canada to live now because the millions of dollars that we are saving in interest payments by being responsible are staying in Manitoba instead of fleeing the province of Manitoba, and it has only just begun.

This AA, result-based government is a government that will find new and better ways to deliver services to Manitobans so that every tax dollar that we have under our administration is spent to its greatest effect. So, when you see a report like the one from the Dominion Bond Rating Service that rates Manitoba's fiscal performance as one of the most favourable in Canada, it is easy to understand that this means tax relief to businesses, that this means relief in order to help stimulate government, to help stimulate job creation. Lower taxes are essential to help attract new businesses.

Bear in mind, Madam Speaker, that every dollar that goes to servicing debt is a dollar that is not available for health, for family services, for education and for all the rest of the essential things on which government must spend.

Our government has taken initiatives in the rural areas of this province as well, and the honourable colleague from Pembina (Mr. Dyck) will expand on these issues further.

In summary, Madam Speaker, I would point out to this Assembly, to my honourable colleagues here, and I respond to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor yesterday, that Manitoba remains one of the best places in the nation to live, to work, to raise a family and to invest in a future with pride and confidence.

An Honourable Member: Too cold.

Mr. Radcliffe: We hear comments, Madam Speaker, that this place is cold. In fact, this government has a warm heart, and in fact there will be heat coming from this government to root out waste. There will be heat to change the future, to harness the forces of government. So that we will meet the commitments of today and tomorrow, we will manage the needs of the citizens of Manitoba.

We recognize that this positive goal is shared by all Manitobans, and our government will continue to use this vision as a guiding framework for all the legislation, all the initiatives and the programs that are introduced in this session. This legislation will respect and respond and reflect the values that we hold dear,

that of respect for human dignity, response to the public trust which has been vested in us, a drive to give accountability to the citizens of Manitoba of how we spend the public money. This legislation will show innovation in a hard and cruel reality of fiscal downsizing that we are all facing. It will show responsibility for the consequences of our actions, Madam Speaker.

We all know in nature that for every action there is a reaction. There are these immutable laws of nature to which we are all subject, and this government will show that there will be responsibilities. Underlying all of this we have an inane, an intense—I was looking at my honourable colleague across the Chamber when I let that term slip, perhaps. We have an underlying tolerance for the multicultural fabric of this province, and we fundamentally, first and foremost, want to transmit to the people of Manitoba that essential self-reliance which is so important for our survival and our prosperity in this province.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity to address these few words today.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Madam Speaker, it is with a great sense of pride and honour that I rise today to second my government's throne speech for the Second Session of the Thirty-sixth Legislature of the Province of Manitoba.

While it has been less than one year since the people of Pembina placed their trust in me by electing me as their representative to this Legislature, I feel that I have gained a lifetime of knowledge and experience in that short time. As each day passes I have a growing appreciation of the responsibilities that I have been given and a steadfast desire to provide the constituents of Pembina with the quality representation they deeply deserve.

When I have the opportunity to travel abroad, I am often asked by the many new people I come into contact with where I live. It is with great pride that I reply I am from Canada, the greatest country in the world. When I travel within Canada, my fellow Canadians will often ask me where it is that I have travelled from as well, and it is with an equal amount of

pride that I answer, from Manitoba, the greatest province in Canada. Madam Speaker, when I travel within the borders of Manitoba, it is with the utmost pride that I tell nearly everyone I meet that I represent the constituency of Pembina, the greatest area in all of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, what a privilege it is to stand here today representing the greatest area in the province and the greatest province in the country in the greatest country in the world.

When I reflect on the time that has passed since the April election, I become aware that I owe thanks to more people than even the time allowed for this speech would serve. Yet there are certain people to whom I owe a special debt, a debt I doubt I will ever be able to adequately repay. First and foremost is my family: my wife, Irene, and my children, Pat, Shannon, Ryan, Rob and Becky. They are the centre point of my life around which all other things revolve. They are the people I turn to for uncompromising understanding and love and from whom I draw strength. The dedication and support that they have given me is the reason that I am here today.

* (1500)

I would also like to thank my colleagues on this side of the House who have offered me many words of advice and direction as I continue to learn daily the many responsibilities of my position. Part of being a winning team is having players who are willing to lend a hand to their fellow teammates. I can say without hesitation that this is the most dedicated, committed and unselfish team I have ever been associated with.

Madam Speaker, I also extend my sincere thanks to the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and to his colleagues on the Executive Council for granting me the privilege of seconding the Speech from the Throne. I am sure that my colleagues in the House will agree with me when I say that there are many difficult decisions and times that all governments must face.

However, when you have the quality of leadership that we have as a government, you cannot help but have confidence that the hard decisions that need to be

made will be done so efficiently, effectively, and will be for the betterment of Manitoba.

Finally, I would like to thank our Pages who are returning to help in the legislative process for another session. Perhaps someday in the not too distant future, these young men and women will be occupying the seats we now fill. Whatever the future holds for them, I am sure that as the next generation of leaders for our province, they will serve Manitoba well.

Madam Speaker, I would like to spend some time today talking about the economic climate in the Pembina constituency. The balanced budget legislation that our government brought into law during the last session was seen by the people of Pembina as an awakening. It was an awakening by a government that they could no longer afford to spend more than they brought in.

Madam Speaker, to the entrepreneurial and business-minded people of my constituency, this was only common sense, and yet some levels of government and some members of this Legislature have not yet come to appreciate what the people of Pembina and Manitoba in general have realized. Governments, like individual households, need to be fiscally responsible. The people of Pembina have understood that by running annual deficits we were no longer borrowing on their credit but on the credit of their children.

Madam Speaker, I am not hesitant to say that there was a sense of fear in my constituency, fear about what the future held for Manitoba's young people, fear about what opportunities the children of today would find in rural Manitoba tomorrow. Yet, in the months since our government made its commitment to a balanced budget, there has been a change. There is a renewed confidence about the economic future of Manitoba. There is a new belief that our young people will be able to find employment not just in Manitoba but in rural Manitoba. There is nothing I find more disheartening than hearing that the young people of communities such as Winkler, Morden and Manitou feel that they need to move to an urban centre or another province to find employment. Having grown up in a rural community, I feel very deeply that it can offer special rewards and values that need to be maintained.

Recent developments in the agribusiness sector, developments that are directly linked to the economic initiatives that this government has put in place, have instilled a new energy in my constituency. Madam Speaker, this confidence is expressed in the conversations that I have had with my constituents on a daily basis; it is expressed in the interactions that they have with each other; and it is expressed in the interactions that they have with business and with other communities. There is an energy that is coming from rural Manitoba, an energy that we as a government have helped create and an energy that we as a government will help maintain.

Within my constituency I have witnessed growth and expansion at a rate that I have not seen equalled in my years to date. New endeavours in farm machinery manufacturing and chemical manufacturing have begun. New plants have opened that manufacture plastics as well as kitchen cabinets. Metal foundries have also become an important part of the economy of Pembina. Flax straw paper products are being produced by the Kimberly-Clark company and the Ecusta company. The Valley Rehab Centre, a centre that employs mentally challenged individuals to help recycle paper products, adds not only to our economy but also to the lifestyles of people with special needs. Pembina is also home to the largest recreational vehicle manufacturing plant in Manitoba and has several trailer and truck box manufacturing plants.

Yet, Madam Speaker, the individuals who establish and operate these businesses need more than a fresh idea and a will to succeed. While these are certainly qualities that will help any new business prosper, the reality is that a government with a solid and a proactive fiscal plan is also a major ingredient to any healthy economy. We in Manitoba are fortunate that we have had the leadership and foresight to begin getting our fiscal house in order sooner than many other governments and have thus avoided the unfortunate circumstances they currently find themselves in.

Equally as notable, we as a government have been able to arrive at this point without increasing major taxes for eight years, a record unmatched by any government this House has seen. While our tax freeze has been met with repeated opposition by the members

opposite in the House, we as a government understand that Manitobans are paying their fair share and that it falls on the government to make do with what it has.

What the business community in Pembina desires is for the government of Manitoba to create a climate for business to start, grow and succeed. Recent events show that we have created just such a climate. Business leaders have recognized that the government of Manitoba is fiscally responsible and have begun to invest heavily in Manitoba. In fact, more than half a billion dollars has been spent in our province over the past several months. By any standards, that is a ringing endorsement from businesses of the government's economic strategy.

Most importantly, our citizens have begun to reap the rewards that a well-managed economy brings. Indeed, members on this side of the House have recognized that business and government need to work together and that the gains of one side do not have to come at the expense of the other.

Madam Speaker, my constituents have seen the effects of business and government working together to achieve mutually common goals, and they have been the benefactors of this relationship. Of course, government often needs to take a leading role. That is why I feel, as do the constituents and businesses of Pembina, that the federal-provincial-municipal infrastructure program needs to be ongoing. This program has been met with overwhelming approval in Pembina, and I call on the federal government, on behalf of my constituency, to renew its commitment to this initiative. After all, if we are not willing to invest in our communities, why should we expect business to invest in them?

There is no denying that the heart of the economy in Pembina revolves around agriculture. One need only drive through my constituency to arrive at this conclusion. Endless miles of farmland surround highways and towns, and most of the businesses in some way service and derive their income from the greater farming community.

There is also little doubt that these are changing and uncertain times for Manitoba's farmers. The federal

elimination of the Crow rate is a prime example of this change and uncertainty, yet I know from personal experience that those people who choose to make their living on a farm face uncertainty each and every day. Every year our grain producers face the prospect that one day of poor weather could destroy months of work and preparation.

The very nature of farming dictates that you must be willing to adapt to change. Anyone who has farmed for a living knows that you do not do it for the secure and predictable lifestyle it affords you, so I am confident that the farmers of Pembina and Manitoba will not only survive in the face of change but will prosper in the opportunity that change creates, but it is also clear that our farmers cannot and should not face this challenge alone. That is why this government has created programs to help Manitoba's farmers through a period of transition and to develop a strong, value-added farming base.

Madam Speaker, programs such as rural Grow Bonds and Rural Economic Development Initiatives are important steps in creating a diversified farm economy. In my own constituency, I have seen the positive effects of the rural Grow Bonds Program as Pembina has been one of the province's leaders in the application. The Crocus Investment Fund has also been accessed to allow employees of a large business to buy into the company, reflecting the entrepreneurial and community spirit of my area. Other examples of how our government is helping Manitoba farmers adapt to change are seen in programs such as the Agricultural Diversification Loans Program and the community works program.

* (1510)

In particular, the community works program is one which shows how this provincial government responds to local needs in a locally focused manner. Through this initiative, municipal councils will work with local organizations such as the Chambers of Commerce and Community Round Tables to establish a community development corporation, a CDC. The CDC will work in conjunction with a local community development corporation and will establish a jointly funded pool of capital which can be accessed by new or expanding

local businesses. While it is certainly significant that the provincial government's contribution to this program will be \$7 million, I believe that the most important part of this initiative is that it will be the local community development corporation that makes the final decision as to the allocation of the accumulated funds.

Our government realizes that it is the local community leaders, those on the front lines of economic development, who are best equipped to access local proposals. The community works program is about an investment in the future of rural Manitoba and the young people of our province. It is an idea that is rooted in the value of common sense, a value that we have restored to government over the last eight years.

Madam Speaker, if any of the members of this House are wondering this afternoon when we may begin to see the benefits of these rural initiatives, I would ask them to come and visit Pembina and the surrounding area. They will see that we are already reaping the benefits. In recent years, Pembina has become the heart of potato farming in Manitoba. The recent announcement of McCain Foods expansion in Portage la Prairie was, as one would expect, met with a great deal of excitement in my constituency. There are also several processing plants in the Pembina region. Sunflower, bean and meat processing are only three examples of the type of value-added activity that is taking place. So the benefits of our government's initiatives are already being harvested in our agricultural industry.

As I stated earlier, this is part of the energy that is coming from rural Manitoba that cannot help but benefit all regions, urban and rural, in Manitoba. Despite the success that this government has had in its development of a value-added agricultural economy, initiatives that were announced in this throne speech promise even more positive results.

The task force that is to be established to consult with rural Manitobans in regard to future programs is a further recognition that our government is committed to working in co-operation with local communities to address their concerns and opportunities. Madam Speaker, these initiatives are a clear indication that our government is not only working for rural Manitobans but is indeed working with rural Manitobans.

For many years Manitobans living outside of the urban centres looked upon the future of their rural communities with a sense of pessimism. What a world of difference there is today in the attitude of rural Manitobans. Today, when I speak with my constituents, we do not talk about trying to hold onto what we have. We talk about how much more the future has to offer us and our children. However, this optimism does not come at the expense of our fellow Manitobans living within our urban centres. To the contrary, Madam Speaker, the economic renewal that is sweeping rural Manitoba can only help to ensure the future and prosperity of all Manitobans regardless of where they call home. Rural Manitoba is more than happy to blaze the trail for economic prosperity in Manitoba, but it is a trail that we expect all areas and regions of our great province to follow.

I would also like to take this opportunity to talk about the importance of tourism to the province of Manitoba and to the Pembina constituency as it closely relates to the subject of economic prosperity. There are three things that I believe people remember from the trips and vacations that they embark on. The first is the things that they do at a particular destination, the second is the things that they see at that destination, and the third is the people they meet at their destination.

In Pembina, as in all of Manitoba, there are a variety of activities that visitors and residents can participate in. Madam Speaker, in light of the amount of snow that we have received lately, Pembina's downhill ski facility, Holiday Mountain, quickly comes to mind. In addition, Pembina offers visitors an opportunity to ice fish, snowshoe and cross-country ski. During the summer months canoeing, fishing and swimming are popular activities. The beauty of the Pembina region is also notable with lakes and streams, hills and valleys. Our visitors are able to experience all that nature has to offer them. I can say with all sincerity that if there is a friendlier brand of person than those which reside in Pembina, I await the pleasure of meeting them.

I know from travelling this great province of ours that our regions of Manitoba warrant merit as travel destinations and that our government has implemented programs to show our many virtues to the national and

international communities. We will also have an excellent opportunity to show the world what a wonderful place Manitoba is to live and visit during the 1999 Pan Am Games. In light of this opportunity and that presented by the 1997 Canada Games in Brandon and the 1996 Manitoba Summer Games in Morden, our government has already taken steps to capitalize on the exposure our province will receive.

The establishment of the Tourism Marketing Council, which will work together with the Manitoba Tourism Education Council to train Manitoba's hospitality industry employees, will have benefits that last well beyond the 1997 and 1999 games, Madam Speaker.

I would also like to invite each member of this Assembly to visit the constituency of Pembina. If you have never had the opportunity, this is a good time to see the many things it has to offer, and if you have visited before, please come by and experience the many new facilities we have to enjoy.

As in most areas of Manitoba, education and the challenges that we face in education are of primary interest to the residents of Pembina. While the area of Pembina has always prided itself on the quality of education and training it provides its young people, they also look to the future with a degree of anxiety.

In a world that demands higher and higher levels of specialized training in order to succeed and with the dramatic reductions in transfer payments from the federal government for post-secondary education, it is clear that difficult decisions need to be made. Yet, arising from the challenges that we face in education, are opportunities, opportunities to improve on a quality education system and meet the demands of a changing world.

Today's students face a vastly different job market that demands vastly different skills from the time when I entered the workforce. This point is driven home to me each time I offer my youngest daughter help with her homework assignments. This reality means that change is inevitable. To stand still in today's environment would be to fall behind, an unacceptable alternative.

Fortunately, education is another example of where our government has seen the need to implement reform and has responded in a proactive rather than a reactive manner. With our blueprint for change in education we have established standardized testing to ensure that our students meet and exceed the established requirements and are able to compete on an international level. Parental involvement and consultation has been and will continue to be a vital part of the education renewal process as we strive to give the young people of this province every advantage as they enter the job market.

Education renewal is also taking place at the post-secondary levels. By expanding the capacity of our community colleges and increasing program specialization in our universities, we are promoting the development of a workforce that will find employment in a specialized work environment.

* (1520)

An important part of maintaining the economic surge Manitoba is experiencing is ensuring that there are suitably trained young Manitobans ready to step into the jobs that are being created. Our government has developed an economic climate that has created many types of employment opportunities for Manitobans. The initiatives we have taken in education and those that we have yet to take will ensure that Manitobans are able to capitalize on this increased opportunity.

Madam Speaker, the future of our province lies in the hands of Manitoba's young people, and it is incumbent upon our government to ensure that they have the necessary skills to meet that challenge. When I see students in the Winkler Bible Institute going out within the community and performing acts of charity, I feel certain that our young people have the necessary values to become worthy leaders.

Madam Speaker, this government has earned the trust of the people of Pembina and Manitoba. This trust has been earned not on the words that have been spoken but rather upon actions that have been taken, actions that have seen Manitoba prosper and grow. I have trust in this government, as do the residents of my constituency, that it will continue to take the necessary actions to ensure that the young people of Pembina and

Manitoba receive an education that will prepare them for the challenges they will face now and into the next century.

However, Madam Speaker, reductions in federal financial support have not only affected education programs but have also caused the government to look closely at how health care services are provided. The constituents of Pembina value affordable, accessible, quality health care, yet my constituents also realize that change to the health care system is necessary if those things that they value are to be maintained. Their willingness to change was demonstrated by the establishment of one of the first regional health districts with the amalgamation of the Morden and Winkler hospital boards.

Madam Speaker, there is a growing realization that institutionalized health care does not necessarily equal quality health care. While there is certainly a place in the health care system for this type of treatment, other community and preventative based alternatives need to be examined as well. Indeed, rural health boards are often better able to deal with the regionalized health needs and priorities of their communities.

Madam Speaker, this government recognizes that the best way to protect quality health care in light of cuts to the federal transfer payments is not to remain stagnant but rather to explore alternatives that will be fiscally responsible while still protecting the well-being of Manitobans. The ultimate goal of all Manitobans is to maintain a quality health care system that is affordable and accessible to all, and I am confident in our government's ability to achieve this goal.

Madam Speaker, it is apparent that we live in a time of change, and with that change comes natural uncertainty. Yet in this the year of Manitoba's 125th birthday we also see unequalled opportunity.

Rural Manitoba has, as I described, developed an energy and excitement about its future. Our government has achieved a level of fiscal responsibility that has attracted many eager investors, so the challenges we face as a government is to properly adapt in our changing environment while capitalizing on the many opportunities we have created.

Madam Speaker, this government's throne speech has given clear direction on achieving both of these goals and is a continuation of the mandate upon which the people of Manitoba elected us in April of this year.

Madam Speaker, when I was asked to second my government's throne speech, I was deeply honoured. It is with all my heart that I feel we are moving in the right direction as a province, a direction that will take us to new heights and achievements. I began my speech today by stating that I believe Manitoba is the greatest province in the greatest country in the world. While the past 125 years have served us well, I believe that this government's initiatives will ensure that the next 125 years are even greater than the last. Thank you very much.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, contrary to custom in the House, I am not going to take the adjournment right now. I think we have changed the dates of the Speech from the Throne, but I think it would be ineffective in terms of the amount of time available to other speakers, so I am going to choose to exercise my responsibility and option this afternoon.

I want to again say how much it is an honour to speak on the government Speech from the Throne, their second one in this mandate, and an honour it is to represent the people of Concordia. I want to start off with a few comments that I gleaned from a community meeting in the constituency of Concordia over the weekend at a community club at a pancake breakfast. Perhaps some of the comments and some of the advice and some of the questions I had posed to me reflect some of the intellectual and visionary challenges that we all have in this House and the kind of mixed messages we get sometimes from members opposite, sometimes from the federal government, sometimes from the society as a whole.

People are grappling, Madam Speaker, with the mantra, the kind of constant theme of we have to do more with less, and they look around them and ask themselves, what is really going on in our community? Why is the Bank of Nova Scotia announcing close to a billion dollars in profit on Wednesday, another bank on Thursday? Then we have the UI cuts on Friday, and

the apprenticeship programs are all wiped out by a national government with surpluses from an insurance program. Then, just to reflect on that, last night, when I was reading the brief speech from the government, I was watching the news at the same time, of course, and was quite interested to hear that the Royal Bank of Canada just announced a \$1.26 billion profit.

Now, Madam Speaker, some of these same people who were announcing these profits are the ones running around with members opposite saying, oh, we have to tighten our belts and blah, blah, blah and et cetera. People having pancakes and having coffee on Saturday morning where I was, a nurse, a CN worker, a worker who teaches telecommunications technology, a person in small business, kind of a variety of people, none of them rich, none of them poor, just trying to make ends meet, were asking themselves the question and asking me the question: How can a government, how can our society seem to have such overwhelming wealth on the one hand and people who are most vulnerable in our society are being cut and cut and cut? Is there not a more balanced and appropriate way to go in terms of the choices we have to make?

When we reflect on this—and this did not come up at the coffee conversation I had—we are now at Wall Street records, over 5,000 and climbing to 5,200, bigger increases on the TSE, not as great as the United States.

We have the federal Auditor General coming out and saying, you know, I have a major revenue problem in this country: people are not paying taxes in terms of the corporate sector, people are not paying them soon enough, deferred taxes. That sort of reflects and echoes onto past Auditors General that have identified some \$39 billion in deferred taxes, some of which are registered retirement savings plans, about \$19 billion.

* (1530)

Their Auditors General in the past have said maybe we should look at the revenue side of the equation and not just look at the spending side. Perhaps we need to have a more balanced approach to the revenues of medicare, post-secondary education, maybe we need to have a different vision than the Harris/Klein/Filmon vision of a race to the bottom.

The Premier said he is not those people and I will talk about that in a few moments. I noticed he expressed a little interest in that comment and I will come back to it. I am sure he—in fact, I will come back to it for a longer period of time because he was interested. I would not want to deny him that opportunity.

It is distressing to us when we read last week that the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) is blaming the federal minister. The headline is The Grinch that Stole Christmas. I do not know whether the Grinch is Lloyd and the Grinchette is somebody else, but it seems to me there is something wrong here, something does not add up when we are cutting back on money for food for kids on social assistance. At the same time we have just wealth and wealth in our society. Canada is the second richest country in the world, yet we read reports from the Fraser Institute, and members opposite perpetuate these myths, that we are a Third World country. Remember, the Fraser Institute the other day came out with a report: Canada is a Third World country.

What a shame in terms of some of the decisions that have to be made. When we look at the Speech from the Throne, this brief document from members opposite, there are two paths to go in terms of Manitoba, there are two approaches to deal with our futures of our families and the quality of our communities. There is the path that says we have to continue to race to the bottom, that is the only way to go, we Americanize this, we slash that, we do something else over here. Or it is the path that says Canada is a rich country, Manitoba is a prosperous place, a quality place, and we have to look at our challenges from both sides.

Yes, we have to modernize our services, absolutely, but we have to look at our capacity to share, our capacity to develop a consensus in our society. The burden of change should not always be on the most vulnerable in our society, but the burden of change should be on all of us in equal measures. In fact, some of us that may have a greater capacity to deal with these changes should carry a disproportionate burden—or a more significant portion rather, I change that word—than just having a race to the bottom and the people that are most vulnerable that are cut back.

Madam Speaker, when we look at child poverty statistics, when we look at food bank statistics—and this is happening in other provinces and it is not just unique to Manitoba in terms of this government and this Conservative philosophy—we see, I think, a real crying out for a national vision, for a national consensus, for national programs that allow us to use the strength of a national government to deal with our challenges rather than just running away from them and offloading from one jurisdiction which is going to offload to another jurisdiction.

I think a lot of the seven pages or eight pages that we have in this document, to my way of thinking, do not deal with the real challenges as we move into the 21st Century. It does not deal with any of the real challenges.

Oh, yes, we have seven or eight task forces. I think it is eight task forces in this document. For a government that has been in a number of years, it is quite surprising actually. It does not deal with a society where the rich are getting richer, the poor are getting poorer and the average family is feeling more and more squeezed. They are worried, they are scared, and maybe today they will want to cut back programs for the people that are most vulnerable, and maybe tomorrow they will want to do something about the people that are getting richer.

But we are not developing a consensus, a vision of how we can move into the 21st Century, and we do not see this in this document. We do not see a vision in this document that would start to address those problems. We do not see the kinds of challenges that we have in a society that is becoming more and more technological, more and more part of the electronic highway, the new technology that is coming into play. We do not see any vision here on these new changes. The kinds of challenges we saw with the agricultural changes that were made in the change of the century to an industrial society, we have those same challenges.

How are we going to pass on the productivity, the great creativity, the great knowledge we can use in our new knowledge machines? How are we going to pass that technology on and maintain a middle class or an average income group so we can maintain our standard

of living and improve our standard of living? We do not see that. All we are going to have is an information highway committee. Do not even have a minister responsible for it, like other provinces, New Brunswick, notably, has had for years, another committee.

Where is the issue of equity? Where is the issue of dealing with the I'm-okay-Jack kind of philosophy in North America and start to go from the me generation to the we generation, which has been more of the tradition of Manitoba, and I believe more of the tradition and values that make Canada a truly great, great country, the best country in the world to live in.

We have to look at these challenges as we move along, but this speech really is a couple of new gimmicks, eight task forces and lots of federal bashing. I thought there was even more federal provincial bashing than some of our questions of a couple of years ago may have had, and even the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) would reveal that. But that is what the Speech from the Throne really is.

Let us look at the first gimmick. Let us look at Mr. Honesty. Well, you have a new embassy in Ottawa now, Madam Speaker. We could not even get close to that. We have an ambassador to Ottawa now under this government with a budget of \$400,000. Perhaps he should start with his own accountability. Maybe we will ask questions about the salaries in that office. Maybe we will get more honesty and truth from the Premier on that question than how much he is paying Barry Shenkarow.

I have asked, how much are you paying Barry Shenkarow under the Premier's operating-loss agreement with the Winnipeg Jets? How much is this person getting from the operating-loss agreement that the Premier signed? Now, I am happy to read today that he is unveiling the secrecy, the veil of secrecy is coming off of government programs.

I was disappointed today but not surprised to hear minister after minister after minister keep things secret. How much are the new CEOs making? Oh, cannot tell you that—got to be arm's length. How much is the Norrie review going to be? Oh, cannot tell you that. I

do not know how much. Why did you not consider the data when you closed the emergency wards? We did not have data. If we did, we were not going to tell you because it makes us look like we made a mistake. We are not going to get that out to the public.

There is the gimmick that this Speech from the Throne deals with that only could come from the members opposite. This is the only government in Canada that the Ombudsman of that province has singled out for secrecy, has stated in the annual report under the Freedom of Information that they have to literally go back and back and back to get the most fundamental information from this government.

The NDP had to sue the provincial government to get information that the Ombudsman recommended that you release a year ago on gasoline prices.

The government, the Premier has admitted that he withheld all the information on lotteries until after the election, even though he had a community-by-community breakdown—Mr. Honesty, Mr. Accountability.

Well, it is going to be quite interesting as we go through Question Period.

I would like the Premier to stand up tomorrow and tell us what Barry Shenkarow is making. We are paying for it. You signed it—oh, I did not sign it. Who signed it? [interjection] Oh, no, no. Okay, so this is how it goes. We send the cheque to somebody who sends it to Mr. Shenkarow. We are paying for it, we sign it, we cover all the losses, the team has appreciated in value by 400 percent, but we are not paying for it. We send a cheque to the Winnipeg Jets for \$12.5 million and not one cent of that money this year is going to go for Mr. Shenkarow's salary.

I would suggest the Premier better have a consistent and honest position. I have no difficulty, we have no difficulty on this side of the House in supporting the extension of making salaries public that come from this Legislature. In fact, the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) has asked for the salaries of the university presidents for five years and all we have got is stonewall, stonewall, stonewall from the stonewalling

Premier across the way. We have asked that question—Mr. Shenkarow, the presidents of universities.

* (1540)

So the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh), two months ago when we asked the question during the dispute, said, well, you do not want the professors' salaries out. We said, yes, make it all public, Madam Speaker, and we say, good.

But we are going to start with the Premier. The leadership on making things public starts with him, and I am glad he has had a conversion on the road to Damascus. I am glad the sun is now shining on this Premier and this government. We find him the most secretive person—

An Honourable Member: I would not go that far. The sun is setting on this government.

Mr. Doer: Well, I hope the sun is setting. It is the twilight, but it is not quite the sunset of this government's regime.

But we are going to test this new policy of the Premier. He may have got his headline today, but we are going to ask him, the public has a right to know. I hope he sat down with the Minister of Telephones and said, oh, you are breaking my policies. This is a new dawn.

You signed the Orders-in-Council. These are Order-in-Council appointments signed by the Premier, recommended by the minister of Telephones, and this Premier has created contracts to hide the salaries, hide the benefits of all the Order-in-Council appointments. This Premier has devised a way to take the information that was formerly made public to everybody in Manitoba and kept it secret.

The 12 percent extra pension for Jules Benson—secret. The 12 percent pension—

An Honourable Member: How do you know about it if it is secret?

Mr. Doer: Because one of your senior staff that did not get the pension went public to one of the

newspapers. That is how it went public. I will not even tell you—no, I have to disclose. Maybe I will tell you some day who it was, because I want to be open and honest with the Premier.

So what absolute hypocrisy of this government now to wrap its bodies in this open and accountable government. But we will support it. We will support the proposal, but we are going to move an amendment for it.

We are going to move an amendment to start with the Premier to be honest and disclose everything right there. You know the person sitting there that should be Mr. Accountable, we are going to try to make them more accountable. Well, we will start with Barry Shenkarow's salary in the next few days. Forewarned is forearmed.

We will also go, the government is talking about any union. I do not know the exact words in the Speech from the Throne, it is also talking about organizations that get public money directly or indirectly from the government through dues. I personally have no problem with that. I think it is a good idea. I also think it is a good idea for business.

Any business that gets a Community Places grant—disclosure. Any business that gets a government contract—full disclosure. Any business that gets any business from the government—full disclosure. Let us have the financial statement of Foster Marks and find out how much money it has got from the provincial government.

KPMG—\$2 million. Make that public. Biggar Ideas—remember that company? Let us make their contracts public. Let us have a financial statement from Mr. Bob Kozminski. I think we should make his statement public. Oh, what about Arni Thorsteinson? I think his statement should be—he is getting money from the government, he is on the board of Manitoba Hydro—should be made public.

Mr. Honesty, Mr. Integrity, Mr. Accountability—we will see whether you have—

An Honourable Member: You know exactly how much he gets from Manitoba Hydro. It is in his O/C.

Mr. Doer: Oh, yes. We should have financial statements disclosed from organizations that get money from the provincial government. Shelter Corporation gets money from the provincial government for renting public housing—for public housing and people put in rent, right? In fact, I have been told that they get lots of people that are renters referred from the Department of Housing even when there are vacancies in houses that are owned by the public.

I have only heard that, I do not have any—[interjection] Yes, well, anybody who speaks out gets fired. Just ask the person from Swan River, the wildlife biologist, you know—there is Mr. Openness. A wildlife biologist talking about the trees and the wildlife, what happens to him under the Filmon regime, the Filmon team, the Conservative Party? They are suspended, they are suspended, they are suspended, and then they are transferred and then they are fired.

Mr. Sustainable Development, Mr. Honest Accountable, make it all public. So we will see whether this new-found conversion on the road to Damascus for honesty and integrity of information is going to really reflect itself in a consistent manner throughout its society, because we will support it.

Government spending, I have always believed that public accounts should be expanded to all government operations. If the government is going to extend that to employee organizations, I say that is fair. There should be nothing to hide. I say for all private and publicly traded corporations, we should have the same standard. You get money for Manitoba Housing, you get contracts in KPMG, you make your numbers public, your financial statement is made public. So we will await the government's legislation to make sure there is some integrity and honesty in the proposals of the Premier and whether he really means that he is going to do that or whether it is just going to be cherry-picking elements of society that he wants to pick on.

An Honourable Member: There is a principle here; you would not know much about that.

Mr. Doer: Well, the proof will be in your pudding, Madam Speaker. The Ombudsman has already spoken about your principles of openness and integrity, and I

hope you do not fire that person. We are getting tired of you firing people that are honest.

So we are pleased to see this conversion. Let us look at some other decisions the government has made in terms of honesty and integrity of information. Madam Speaker, we have seen the Lotteries Corporation. We had to bring in a private member's bill, The Lotteries Accountability Act. We had to bring in a bill to require the government to provide information to communities. It was supported by 25 councils across Manitoba. Did the government ever proceed with that legislation before the election? No, they did not.

Madam Speaker, we asked the government to make public their plans on the Winnipeg Jets. Did they make it public when the Winnipeg Jets and the new ownership of the Jets filed with the Securities Commission two weeks before the election? The Premier went around the province saying, I did not know what was going on, I am going to save the team for \$10 million.

When Mr. Mauro and Mr. Burns said you could not save the team unless you had a salary cap and revenue-sharing agreement, the Tories were taking people out to the polls saying, we are going to save the team for \$10 million.

Surprise, surprise, a couple of days later, what do we find—\$37 million, shares in the team, 18 percent of the team; private, secret infrastructure agreements that were signed with the provincial government? And we still do not have a full accounting of public money that has gone into that hockey team under an infrastructure program that never had a signed contract and never had a contract that has been made public.

When the members opposite talk about honesty, integrity and accountability, you will excuse us if we guffaw and say, we will wait and see because we have not seen it in the past.

Madam Speaker, when we deal with the new accountable government, I want to remind the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of questions I asked him about six weeks ago in the House on the emergency ward closures. Remember that display on a Friday morning? First of

all, it took us about a couple of provocations to get him to stand up because, you know, the political strategy is, make the decision, close the emergency wards down in the evening contrary to the minister's promise, which was made in July of 1994, and then to accept no responsibility for it and just find a way to saw off the limb for the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) and reverse the decision—hopefully, hopefully reverse the decision.

Madam Speaker, the Premier, on October 27, would not take responsibility. This person across the way is not Harry Truman. The buck does not stop there. The buck stops over here, it stops over there, it stops up there, it stops over there. I mean, I remember a couple of years ago he blamed God and nature for the decrease in the GDP. Now, when we ask the Premier about who made the decision, he said, those decisions have been made collectively. Those decisions were made by the various hospitals. I asked him a second question: Who made the decision? Did the chair of cabinet, the Premier, make the decision? "The member opposite said I ordered the closure of those. That is wrong. That is false, and that is not appropriate. . . ."

Then he goes on to say, I did not make the decisions. Those decisions were made "as a result of consensus flowing from all the various investigations"—none of the investigations he flowed. The fourth question, who made the decision? Did it go to cabinet? Did the Premier approve it? "The decisions that are made collectively by the government are made on the basis of a consensus arrived at by the government."

Not once did the Premier say, I chair cabinet. The Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), who closes emergency wards down in the evening, reports to me. I make the ultimate decision and I made it for X, Y and Z reasons because they were good for us or they were bad for us. Never once was the Premier accountable in questions in the Question Period. Never has he accepted responsibility for making decisions that affect the health of Manitobans.

* (1550)

Again, another example of this new, I hope this new value we will see in government where the Premier

actually is accountable himself, new accountability, accepted responsibility, and we will welcome this change if it is to manifest itself, because it has certainly been opposite to our experience and the experiences of Manitobans in the past period of time.

(Mr. Ben Sveinson, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Mr. Acting Speaker, we note that the government is making a lot to do about the federal government cuts and we agree to some extent that the cuts are serious. We did not support the cuts last spring. We do not support the cuts that will be introduced or implemented in the '96-97 fiscal year. But I also think the government, if it is going to be open and accountable under the new regime, this newfound value, should be honest with all the numbers with the people of Manitoba. You should put all the numbers on the table.

The member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) and the member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck) who just spoke on the Speech from the Throne have a responsibility to put all the numbers on the table. You cannot say we are going to be open and accountable with everybody in Manitoba and then choose to be one-sided or one coin on your numbers here in Manitoba.

In the middle of July last year the government released its fourth quarter report. Now I was always curious during the election campaign how the government could say that we did not incorporate the \$87 million in cuts in the second year projections, and we will not cut—the Premier's (Mr. Filmon's) words—any health care or education or vital services. I was always curious about how they were going to do that.

We said we would not eliminate the payroll tax. The government was also promising to eliminate the health and post-secondary tax, another \$200-million item. So they had \$220 million from the federal government, \$200 million for an election promise, and they were not going to touch any of these other programs.

What we found very curious, Mr. Acting Speaker, is in July, a matter that was not covered much by the media, and I guess that is why the government released it under—I guess the open accountability is going to take

place in the middle of July, you know, on a Friday afternoon. Here it is. Read it on your way to the barbecue. But what we noticed was there was \$145 million more than budgeted. You budgeted for an increase in equalization and on top of that it was \$145 million more in revenue from equalization. On top of that there was \$30 million more in EPF payments for a total of \$175 million.

I am giving the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) some speaking notes. [interjection] Well, someday I will explain to the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) how equalization works. Alberta and B.C. and Ontario pay in; they pay in for a reason. Other provinces receive money; they do so for a reason. Some provinces got increases in their equalization. We did, Newfoundland did. I can go on and on if the member for River Heights wants an explanation. Some provinces got a decrease, like Saskatchewan, in the amount of money it was going to get because the agricultural economy and the resource economy improved significantly in the year previous.

Having said that, the government got \$175 million more in revenue from the federal government. Now the governments also received, or generated themselves, \$224 million more in lotteries in the last three years. So, if you look at the 1993 budget, equalization was \$800 million. If you look at the 1995-96 budget, the budget number is \$1,080,000,000. If you look at what you received last year, it was \$145 million more. Now, I would suggest to members opposite that you should be critical about federal government cuts, but you should also point out to the people of Manitoba that with the tax increases on property taxes, a \$65-million revenue item when you reduce the property tax credits—that is not a tax increase, though, by the way. Your taxes go up \$75, but that is not a tax increase.

The spread of the sales tax two years ago, that is not a sales tax. Children's clothing—I had the privilege of having a child in 1990. We had to pay certain taxes for the one child. Then the second child came along, and there was only one government in between, and the taxes went up. In fact, you could not even get certain things in the hospitals like diapers that were supplied before. Having said that, the taxes were spread on

children's clothing, on diapers, on the rubber tip of nipples for babies' bottles, but those are not a tax increase.

The total of this, Mr. Acting Speaker, is some \$500 million. So, yes, you have a \$220-million challenge, but you know what the real challenge is for you across the way? I think you should be honest. In this new light of honesty and accountability, you should be honest about it. In last year's budget, before the election, you took the \$220 million in lottery revenue and you took that slush fund of \$140 million—you know that secret lottery slush fund that you collected up until the election? You took both of those numbers and you showed a revenue of \$370 million this year.

Next year, you will lose \$140 million of that because the lottery revenues will go down to the exorbitant amount of \$225 million to \$240 million, leaving you a shortfall of about \$110 million, and that is why the equalization numbers which more than offset the \$87 million that you have to deal with this year is really not—the federal government cuts are not the real problem you have. It is this secret slush fund that you put in this last year's budget that you have to make up for this year.

I suggest to the Premier opposite (Mr. Filmon) that he not have a one-sided coin out there with the public. If you want to have a debate with the public about finances and the challenges of the federal government, you have a responsibility to put the revenues on the table, all the revenues on the table, to go over the \$800 million you received two years ago and the \$1,080,000,000 you are receiving now, the improvements in EPF and the \$220-million cuts. Be fair, be honest, be accountable and stop playing these federal-provincial bashing games that are only half-sided arguments with half-sided information.

We can read your financial statements. The government opposite depends on the fact that the media does not read financial statements. It only reads budgets. One of the things I would recommend to the media is that they always read the Public Accounts and that they always read the financial statements, because the Public Accounts is totally different than the budgeted numbers that this government gives us, which

brings us to another point about honesty and integrity of numbers.

You will read in the Public Accounts that the largest deficit in the history of this province which was a little four-line article again in the middle of July or maybe —no, it was the beginning of September. The largest deficit in the history of this province was not under Ed Schreyer. It was not under Howard Pawley. It was under the member for Tuxedo in terms of \$819 million in the '92-93 budget.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the other thing you will read in the Public Accounts is that in 1988 and '89, there was a \$58-million surplus, so this is the only government in Canada—all governments in Canada are wrestling with finances, and some governments are wrestling with finances that they inherited, but this is the only government in Canada that took a surplus of \$58 million in the Public Accounts, wrestled it up to a \$819-million deficit and is now trying to take credit for bringing down a surplus budget with \$343 million in lottery revenue.

Hallelujah, you took a surplus, wrestled it into a record deficit, and with lottery money today, Mr. Acting Speaker, you have indeed, you may indeed, you should indeed balance the budget this year. So we just ask the government to provide a little honesty, a little integrity in terms of their numbers, a little honesty and integrity in terms of the revisionist history we saw in the Speech from the Throne. Oh, we wrestled down the deficit. You wrestled down your own deficit, so take responsibility for increasing the deficit and take responsibility and credit, if you will, for wrestling down the deficit, but do not give us one-sided, unaccountable numbers.

* (1600)

Read the Public Accounts. All members should read the Public Accounts. I think the Public Accounts is now the only accurate reflection of what this government is doing. We do not see accurate information in the budget, and we certainly do not see accurate information in the Speech from the Throne, with these one-sided arguments about how bad the federal government is without talking about some of the more positive items.

The Premier (Mr. Filmon), of course, now is breaking some of his election promises. During the election, the Premier said he would not allow anybody to cut back on health care services here in Manitoba—

An Honourable Member: Like Mike Harris in Ontario.

Mr. Doer: That is my next point. Now the Premier has said, I am not Mike Harris. You are not because you did not give us three-year projections like Mike Harris. You just sort of sneaked them out over here and over there and over hill and over dale. I am not like Mike Harris. Well, you have a lot in common with Mike Harris, I know, besides the fact that some of your staff worked for Mike Harris during the election campaign. You have a lot in common with Mike Harris because you both said, almost at the same time, that you would not cut health care services back in your province. If I am elected, we will not let it happen to you.

In fact, the Premier said, we have made all the tough decisions in health care. There will be no more cuts in health care if we are re-elected. We will not let it happen to you. In fact, they even both had ads out. The Liberal Party in Ontario had to replay the ad of Mike Harris. We have played the ad again of the Premier walking along the riverbank saying, I will not let anybody cut health care services to your family. That, of course, was four weeks before \$19 million was announced at the Health Sciences Centre, five weeks before the Seven Oaks Hospital got cut by one-third of its staff, six weeks before the Misericordia Hospital got cut, six weeks before St. Boniface got cut, Flin Flon got cut, Snow Lake got cut, Dauphin got cut, and on and on it goes.

Of course, the government promised before the election they were not going to close the emergency wards down. The Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), if we have a Minister of Health, lowered his voice and said: I will not close those emergency wards down. I use some of those myself, he said, and I will not let it happen. Well, it sure did not take very long after the election for that to take place, did it? It did not take very long for that to take place after the election, again, contrary to the Premier's promise.

We have had to bring cuts in drugs for kids who are on cancer to this House to get the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to fulfill his promise. On that one he did, and I thank him for it. They reversed their decision. But there are many more decisions going on in government that totally contradict the position of the Premier, and, for that reason alone, you are exactly the same as Mike Harris. You said you would not cut health care. You promised you would not cut it, and we have no plan, no transition, no policy in place in terms of health care after eight years. It is just trickled-down cuts to the institutions again, without any community-based health care. Oh, there is one nurse resource centre that was announced at an old NDP community clinic, but there is no strategy on labs, the four reports the government has on labs. There is no strategy on nurse practitioners, and on and on it goes.

The Premier also says that he is not Ralph Klein. That is the other line. I am not Ralph. Now, Mr. Acting Speaker, your policies on health care are like Ralph Klein. In fact, we just read the other day that the Department of Health is going to use the Alberta model of bed-to-patient ratio. Where did that come from? Did that come from Ralph Klein? I mean, even Ralph Klein admits he makes a mistake. We cannot even get the Premier to stand up in the House and say, the emergency wards closure at midnight was a mistake, and I am going to overrule the decision I made and overrule my Minister of Health and reopen them. I mean, even Ralph Klein the other day admitted he went too far.

You are like Ralph Klein. You are using the Alberta model now for your hospital decisions. That was not part of the election promise. That was not part of the platform. That was not in the so-called strategy for the provincial government. I guess a promise is a promise is a promise, and a Tory is a Tory is a Tory. With a Tory, a health care promise is a broken promise is a broken promise and a broken promise, and I find that very, very unfortunate.

Where is the strategy we were told that we would have on rural and northern doctors? Seven years later, Grandview is losing their doctors. Arborg is losing their doctors. Leaf Rapids is losing their doctors. Community after community are very worried, in rural

and northern Manitoba, on maintaining doctors. A lot of these doctors who are leaving those communities, when we meet with them, say one of the things they need is to make sure that they have maintained contact with their peers and their professional mentors so that they can keep up to date and keep learning and keep current with the changing technology in medicine.

So why do we not have a system where some of the experts that we have in our teaching hospitals for a week, a month go out to some of these places and provide that kind of contact and professional development so that people are not leaving these communities? Many doctors tell us it is not the salary, it is not income, it is not quality of life that really worries them. The people we have been listening to say it is really the fear that with a changing technology in medicine, they are going to fall behind in their profession. When we listen to doctors, that is their biggest fear. That is the biggest reason for locating from a community in northern Manitoba which they love or rural Manitoba which they enjoy and their family enjoys to locating to Winnipeg.

Why are we not using the new distance technology for many of our doctors to be hooked up with the teaching hospitals and some of our experts? Why are we not looking at some of these new and innovative ideas in terms of maintaining doctors in rural and northern Manitoba? One would think, with members opposite, that the talk would finally be met with walk in terms of action on this item. You keep talking about it and talking about it. I am sure we will have another committee to look at it. Do we have another task force on it—I cannot remember all the task forces—but no strategy in place at all?

We need innovation in health care. We need a planned innovation. If we have community-based clinics with doctors in them or if we have walk-in clinics with doctors, does it not make sense to put nurses in with the doctors so that some patients who need it can go to the nurses and some patients who need doctors can go to the doctors? Instead of having stand-alone nurse clinics and stand-alone doctor clinics, why do we not have community-based clinics and have doctors and nurses in the same community office? That is the model we see with Klinik. That is the

model we see with the Winkler health centre. That is the model we see in many other successful health clinics, the one in northwest Winnipeg. In terms of that centre, that makes sense. That can work.

We do not want one clinic across the street from another clinic. That does not make any sense at all. Oh yeah, it is a good press conference. Have five cabinet ministers out to announce something at a clinic that the NDP established 10 years ago and say, hallelujah, we have reform.

But it is not reform. It is not innovation. It does not make any common sense, because if you have a choice, if you are listening to the people at the pancake breakfast that I am listening to, they will go to a clinic that has a doctor and a nurse in it, but I do not know whom they will go to if they have to make a choice between one that is across the street from another.

There is no plan. There is a little gimmick, but there is no plan to have a good response in terms of reforms that are necessary and innovations that are necessary in health care.

Education. Now, what can we say about education? It is a good thing the media does not read last year's Speech from the Throne. It is one of the great advantages the government has, because last year's Speech from the Throne, I think, had one of the sort of recorded announcements we see from this government, sustainable development and distance education. Those are the sort of recorded announcements we see from this government in every Speech from the Throne that has been produced: By December 1995, a large majority of schools outside of Winnipeg will have access to distance education, placing Manitobans amongst the leaders nationally.

Well, it is December 1995, and there is no policy in place between the Manitoba Telephone System and Education. There is no strategy to implement the distance education report that was given to this government four years ago.

The only thing this government did was sell off cable vision, which could have aided us, for a fire sale price of \$11 million. There is no strategy of how we are

going to integrate voice, data, education on this information highway. The only strategy this government has is in the morning to sell off a public asset and in the afternoon put some vacuous statement in its Speech from the Throne about everybody having access to distance education.

Why did we not have a vision that used the increased revenue from cable vision and the increased technology, the new technology in cable, to put some of that money into distance education, so it would not be \$800 an hour? That is not access. Many of our schools are not tied up to the new information highway, and there is no strategy in place.

* (1610)

There is a committee and a press release, and there will be another press release and another press release, but when the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) asked the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) questions about this this fall, she did not have the foggiest idea. Earth to Minister of Education: Hello, are you there? Are you listening? Do you have a strategy?

It is very worrisome. With the greatest respect to the Minister of Education, it is very worrisome to get lectures about our questions instead of answers to questions on distance education because this is important. This Premier (Mr. Filmon) may not want to know it and may not want to admit it, but we are falling behind in Manitoba. We are not on the leading edge, and we should be because telecommunications has always been an area that we have had at a unique advantage because we have had the ability with the publicly owned telephone system to have a strategy between education and telecommunications.

We have had cable access to every home in Manitoba, and what does this government do? It sells off telemarketing data, it sells off cable. Even the cable operators are saying, we were shocked to see how little we had to pay for that network. Just gave it away, and that is why we have no strategy on distance education because the government has no strategy on telecommunications and distance education.

We proposed fibre optic lines and built fibre optic lines in 1987. This Premier only talks about it; he does

not do anything about it. We see hesitancy, we see comments about our questions in Question Period on education, but we do not see any direction to move ahead.

We proposed a very positive idea last year on how we can start using the new technology in our schools. We suggested an old-fashioned idea, that we pool the new ideas and the new technology so that one school would not have to reinvent the technological wheel on their own, and it would have to be out doing solo investigation work on new technology education, and that we would have a small amount of money available for school divisions to learn what other school divisions are doing, learn from our successes.

There is a tremendous amount of success in the public education system, but we do not share it enough. We just keep it in narrow places. It may be in the classroom, may be in the school, but we do not have any ability to share good ideas. A very positive idea, it would not cost very much money. It would save us money. It would move us ahead, it would move all education systems and schools ahead at the same time. We do not see that from this government.

Post-secondary education. The member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) quoted The Globe and Mail Report on Business in terms of Manitoba's capacity to attract new jobs. I am disappointed that the member for River Heights is a year out of date, or maybe the Premier's speech writers are a year and a half out of date, because in the summer of 1995 The Globe and Mail also produced a document talking about the new communities of economic growth, and do you know where they were? Saskatoon, Calgary, Victoria.

Do you know the reason The Globe and Mail business section used—and I do not quote The Globe and Mail very often, but the reason why The Globe and Mail cited those communities is because of the connection between post-secondary education, post-secondary education strategy, the new technologies and the new businesses that are emerging. Do we see any strategy from this Premier dealing in partnership with our universities and our community colleges? He would rather fight them than have it to plan with. He just loves to fight. Well, let us kick around a university

professor today, that is good press, I can get on the open line shows on that one.

Where is the economic strategy in that? Where is the consensus? Where is the strategy in our community colleges? Eighty-four percent of our kids do not go to universities. Where is the strategy on community colleges? A 10 percent cut two years ago, we are not even back to the cuts that were made from this provincial government. No strategy on post-secondary education again.

Is there a task force? Is it a committee or a task force?

An Honourable Member: It is an interim task force.

Mr. Doer: It is an interim task force. I am sorry, I do not know the difference between an interim task force. That worries me; that means there may be another task force, because we have had the Roblin task force report. You have not even implemented recommendation No. 1, and you have an interim committee for the distance education.

The world is passing you by. The world is changing and you are tackling the world with interim committees. Where is the get-up-and-go in this country club government? Where is the get-up-and-go in this government in terms of getting this thing going? Where is the energy level? Where is the zip? Where is the pizzazz? Where is the sizzle? There is none. It is an interim committee, a fed bash, an interim committee again.

It scares me in terms of where you are going because the world is changing, but you have old solutions, old task forces, old committees to review old committees. You have got stuff that is so far out of date you do not know whether you are coming or going.

Let us look at the standards in public education. I talk about what is going on in our schools. Talk to the people at the pancake breakfast that I listened to this weekend. You know our science books are 10 years old in some of our schools. You know some of our chemistry books and physics books are nine and 10 years old. Some of those books were around when the

member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) was still going to school years ago. I take that back because of course we changed that all under the Schreyer years, and of course Duff Roblin did a good job in changing public education as well.

But, Mr. Acting Speaker, you talk about standards. What are we going to test them on, 10-year-old chemistry, 10-year-old physics? This stuff is changing every year, every couple of years. You do not have teachers on your curriculum committees. You do not have parents on your curriculum committees. You do not have educators on your curriculum committees. You just have a few bureaucrats in the Department of Education doing a poll, doing a focus group, coming back with a few Conservative buzzwords.

Our education system is falling behind, and I do not like it. As a parent with a kid that is just going into school I want to build on our successes—and we have a lot of them out there—but I want you people to roll up your sleeves and in the next three or four years get our education system modern. Do not give us the Tory buzzwords. Do not give us this kind of Conservative rhetoric, this Klein-Harris rhetoric. Give us some standards on our textbooks and our curriculum and get some involvement with people so we can move ahead in this world.

Of course, when we talk about education, we should talk about some of the other issues of education you are not addressing. It comes back to capital planning. Now maybe the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) is aware of this. But you know we have said all along you have to have long-term planning between education and urban planning. If you have 2,300 new homes a year in Manitoba—way down from 6,000 a year that we used to have in '84, '85, '86, '87, we are down 300 percent—but you know we have economic growth according to the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the members opposite, 6,000 new homes down to 2,000 a year. That is not heading in the right direction as far as I am concerned, but that is good enough for the government. It is not good enough for us. But where is the plan?

You have zoned hundreds of homes outside of the city of Winnipeg for new expansion, new residential

property. You have zoned agricultural land to become residential land. And do you know what happens? People build houses. They build houses, and do you know what? Something funny happens. Those houses actually end up having kids in them. Do you know when they have kids in them they need schools?

So in northeast Winnipeg you have built up in the River East area, north of the Perimeter area, you have zoned this section of land and that section of land. Wherever a bulldozer wants to go, you will approve it. Instead of having a balance between zoning residential land in Winnipeg and outside of Winnipeg as we would propose, you go ahead and zone it.

So I cannot wait to hear how many schools you are going to need in those new areas. You know what? It is not in your plan. You will not include that in your plan. Obviously, you do not think that people have kids until after they enroll in school. We are going to have trailer after trailer, and I guarantee the Premier (Mr. Filmon) that he is going to have a submission to Treasury Board sometime in the spring of 1996 that talks about the need for more capital spending in schools, while we have other schools going empty, and we have other areas of the city that could be zoned for residential development. We are not saying take away the choice of people, but the provincial government has to have a balance in their planning.

If you are going to have absolute stagnant growth in the economy and only 2,300 new homes per year or 2,400, and last year it was 1,900, perhaps you should zone the 500 homes outside of Winnipeg capital region appropriately, Thompson and other growing areas, Winkler and Morden, and perhaps you should have a balance between the other homes that you zone inside Winnipeg to get the tax revenue up, because we already have some of those infrastructures and some other zoning of land outside of the city of Winnipeg. Not a very difficult idea. It is called common sense. You do not zone property from agricultural to residential without taking into account schools, hospitals, libraries, transportation, ambulance services.

* (1620)

You are going to have those proposals. The old saying is you can pay me now or pay me later, but, you

know, planning is more than just where the bulldozer heads. Planning is more for our green space than just stamping everything that comes along and, Mr. Acting Speaker, when we talk about urban planning, it includes education. It includes a long-term vision. What we do not want to see on this side of the House is capital expenditure that is half empty and new capital expenditure that has to be made.

Mr. Acting Speaker, talking about housing, I want to move to the economy. Obviously, the speeches from members opposite were written before last Friday's unemployment numbers. I have to say that I was pleased to see some economic growth over the last 14 months. There was positive economic growth. There was some positive activity in the economy in terms of people. In fact, 14 months ago, there were fewer people working than when the government came into office in 1988. There were actually fewer people working after six years than there were when they came into office. We went above that in the last 14 months, and I was very concerned, and members opposite should be very concerned.

There again, this Speech from the Throne makes no sense, I know, to the people having pancakes and coffee at the community club I was at on the weekend. Five thousand people lost their jobs from a year ago today, between November of '94 and November of '95. I am not talking about October going down 6,000 to this November, because that is an unfair comparison. Five thousand people lost employment. There were 5,000 fewer people working in Manitoba than 12 months ago, and everyday we hear another announcement. Labatts, CN, AECL potentially, and we certainly hope not, CP, a number at Versatile, Bristol, North American Life. Yesterday there was—

An Honourable Member: MTS.

Mr. Doer: MTS in the public service. We hear announcements every day on top of the decline of 5,000 jobs. It is interesting, in the early 1990s, the government said, we are not going to intervene in the economy. We are going to take a step-aside approach. We are not going to do anything to create jobs. In fact, they decreased their capital spending, something again they are doing now with health care spending after again their election promises.

The government said, we are not going to get involved in the economy, and again they became latter-day converts to the infrastructure program and I was pleased to see that. I think the national infrastructure program has made a difference. I believe the national infrastructure program has helped reduce the unemployment rate in Canada from about 11 percent to 9.4 percent.

I also believe it has made a difference here in Manitoba. I do not agree with all the projects that members opposite have proposed. The Kenaston underpass was a boondoggle in the Premier's riding. The Jets infrastructure program, the only infrastructure we got is lawyers' fees and accountants' fees. We got no building. I do not believe that was an appropriate designation, a secret designation without approval of a building.

But I think infrastructure has been a good proposal, and I want to ask, I would like to see the government restore the infrastructure program and I support the government in its efforts to have a national infrastructure program with the federal government. I hope the federal government does not walk away from this program as part of its new fiscal conservatism in Ottawa. I hope it maintains the national infrastructure, because I do think it improved the quality of our communities, and I do applaud the provincial government for joining in as a one-third partner, Mr. Acting Speaker.

But now we see serious situations, such as the decline in the economy here in Manitoba, and what really worries me and what really should worry members opposite is, decisions are being made to locate headquarters in Canada that are going right through Manitoba in the middle of the night. I do not know what the Premier did or did not do on Canadian Pacific relocating from Montreal to Calgary, but many members of the business community, who are not avid New Democrats, but their businesses were doing better under us but still will not make the next step, think that this Premier and this government were absolutely asleep at the switch when the CP headquarters was relocated from Montreal to Calgary in the middle of the night without a peep, without a bleat, without any action from this Premier.

Yes, we have had a few telemarketing jobs announced and, yes, we have had some good announcements in agribusiness and, yes, we support the strategy of the provincial government to have a transition strategy in terms of the agricultural economy, but we do not hear anything from this government in terms of standing up for Manitoba and being first in to try to get jobs and opportunities. I have been told by a number of people in the business community that Saskatchewan and New Brunswick are way ahead of this government when it comes to showing initiative.

I have been told by people time and time and time again that this government does not get in first. Oh, it is good at the press conferences. It can have a press conference on Apotex. It can have a press conference on Royal Trust. It can promise a \$1-billion investment in Repap. It can have all kinds of announcements on Conawapa. There is nobody better at having a press conference than members opposite, but when it comes to results, when it comes to bottom line, I am told this government spends more time on the message and less time on the substance of getting jobs, and I have been told by a number of people that the Deputy Premier, the Minister of Trade and Technology, and the Premier are last off the mark when it comes to showing initiative. There is no energy in the members opposite. They will show up for a press conference, but they will not get out and do the hard work ahead of time and start creating the economy.

I suggest to members opposite, we lost a lot in Manitoba when we lost Wilson Parasiuk, who was dealing with some of the economic challenges that we had. There were people that went out and got business. There were people out, ones that got out and sought business. There were people that went out and did something. They had energy and drive and a sense of enthusiasm, a sense of pride that went way beyond the kind of press releases and rhetoric we see from members opposite.

Again, when we look at the agricultural economy we see some improvements, but where is the long-term plan from members opposite in terms of the transition in the agricultural economy? What hypocrisy to have a government announce that it is going to take a position on hog marketing unilaterally and then

announce a rural task force in the Speech from the Throne.

It does not make any sense at all, Mr. Acting Speaker, it does not make any sense at all. If you were sincere about talking and listening to Manitobans, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) should overrule the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) and have a plebiscite or have public meetings on the dual marketing of hogs.

What about the Wheat Board? The Wheat Board is another silent item from members opposite in terms of its role. Hundreds of people work in the city of Winnipeg. Hundreds of producers rely on the Wheat Board internationally. Manitoba's reputation in terms of Asia and other countries is more positive because of the Wheat Board than any other institution in our community, including, dare I say it, a hockey team.

Where is the government on transportation strategies? So we go on and on and on. I sadly believe that this government has become a country club style of government in terms of what it is doing and what energy it is bringing to these various challenges.

The tourism council is a good idea, but will this council really consult on real issues or it will it be another token mechanism of the government? For example, will the government advertising be referred to the tourism council or will they continue to shovel these advertising contracts as paybacks—no, excuse me, I withdraw that statement. They will continue to coincidentally reward companies that were dealing in their political ad campaign with the same companies that get their tourism campaigns.

Will you allow for something more than a South Dakota vision for Manitoba in terms of a tourism strategy? Will we talk about the virtues of our community and the advantages of our low dollar, the same kind of honesty and integrity that deals with trade?

The fact that we do not include the trade deficits, we only include the increased trade again makes a mockery of the government's statement on the issue of trade and deficit payments. We should have both exports and imports whenever we quote a trade number, but again

that would be expecting honest and accountable information from the government, and I guess that was before they passed the law on being honest and accountable. I guess we are still under the old regime where they are not going to be honest and not going to be accountable about those numbers that should be made public.

* (1630)

Justice. People at the community club that I was at this weekend are still scared in their own communities. The government may think it is safer, but violent crime has gone up, youth crime has gone up and overall crime has gone up in this province. This is the only province in Canada where crime has indeed gone up two years in a row. You do not see that reality in this Speech from the Throne. You would think this is the safest community in Canada. I wish it were. I wish seniors were not calling me worried about what is happening in their community. I wish parents were not calling me worried about what will happen to their kids. I wish we did not have to bring questions to the House that the Justice critic brought on Mrs. Frey's child and the lack of accountability in the system.

All the government is going to come back with is gimmicks that are going to allow the courts to sue parents for accountability. Well, I would like the government to use our courts to stop the backlog. Justice delayed is justice denied. When you have trouble with your child, you do not send them to bed six months from now. Maybe these people opposite do. Maybe they set up a task force.

An Honourable Member: An interim task force.

Mr. Doer: An interim task force. Immediate consequences are very important in our justice system. The backlog in our justice system has to stop. This Premier should be demanding from the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) that all the priority of the justice system go to having a justice system for young offenders that is accountable to the young offenders first. I would like to see face to face—[interjection] That is right. We saw Filmon slamming the jail door. Unfortunately, the young offender was already out the door before he slammed it in terms of the opinion of Manitobans.

Where is the Crime Prevention Council? Where is the interagency surveillance team? Where is the Youth Advisory Council on youth crime? Where is the auto theft task force? Where is the provincial council for crime prevention? Where is the crime prevention registry? Where is the Domestic Violence Review Committee? Where is the No Need to Argue program? Where is the task force on courts reform? Where is the standard crime watch training program? Where is the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry? Where is the Community Advocacy Response Team? Where is the Queen's Bench Family Violence Court? Where is the first-time young offender counselling program? All these announcements by the Premier and government opposite—words, words, words. No deeds, no action, no commitment by the government.

We do not consider any of your justice promises to be sincere. We consider them phoney words until you put them into place. We will judge the government opposite by the amount of crimes that are committed in our communities. We will judge the members opposite by what they implement, and we will not judge this government and this Minister of Justice on press releases. As far as we are concerned, press releases from this Premier and this Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) mean nothing to us, because they mean nothing to the people of Manitoba who are so vitally concerned about these very important issues.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I noticed—and again we read last year's Speech from the Throne—that sustainable development, the second recorded announcement that is on every Speech from the Throne, has been left out of this document. Why are we not surprised? Remember that sustainable development act? My government will introduce a sustainable development act. Well, I guess they felt that even they could not be that cute or cynical to introduce a sustainable development act with what is going on with Louisiana-Pacific.

Sustainable development would have meant that the forest—the tree that goes into the plant and the plant—would have been evaluated at the same time, jobs, trees and the plant all together. But this government was too interested in trying to win a seat in Swan River rather than having sustainable development. The

government implemented new changes to The Environment Act to make it possible to have a joint federal-provincial review. At the time the government introduced that change to the act, they said, this will keep us out of court, and this will streamline the environmental process so the concerns of the federal government and the provincial government can be reviewed at the same time.

The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger) and the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) should look at the current proposal of Louisiana-Pacific. Trees, provincial jurisdiction; emissions, provincial jurisdiction; treaty land entitlement, federal jurisdiction; fisheries, federal jurisdiction; cross-boundary eco challenges, federal jurisdiction. Now, if you read back the Minister of Environment's words on The Environment Act, and I suggest the Minister of Natural Resources read it, federal jurisdiction over here, provincial jurisdiction over here, why are you not using a joint environmental review? You brought it in for Conawapa.

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Ask Sheila Copps.

Mr. Doer: Beg your pardon.

Mr. Driedger: Ask Sheila Copps.

Mr. Doer: Well, will the Minister of Natural Resources agree today that they will go with a joint federal-provincial review?

Mr. Driedger: We have a proposal before them right now. The Minister of Environment has a proposal there that they are trying to get off the mark.

Mr. Doer: So you are in favour of a joint federal-provincial review.

Mr. Driedger: We have a proposal before them.

Mr. Doer: I know you have got a proposal. Is it a joint federal-provincial review?

Mr. Driedger: We have a proposal before them—

Mr. Doer: I know you have lots of proposals. Is it a joint federal-provincial review?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Sveinson): Order, please. Would the honourable member for Concordia continue with his remarks.

Mr. Doer: Yes, I am. I am continuing, and I am on topic.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Sveinson): You are on topic. You are not in a debate as such. If you could continue your remarks without the argument—

Mr. Doer: Point of order, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Sveinson): Order, please. I will continue my remarks right now and then you can speak.

Mr. Doer: Well, you have to stand up to do that. Can you do that please so that I know what you are doing?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Sveinson): I asked, in fact, for order so that the member for Concordia could continue his remarks in the vein of his speech rather than the arguing back and forth across the way.

Mr. Doer: I will continue my remarks on Louisiana-Pacific, and I will continue my remarks on the Speech from the Throne which deleted sustainable development from its content. I will continue to pursue the provincial government on having a joint federal-provincial review as articulated in The Environment Act. The Minister of Natural Resources says he has a proposal. He has declined to say whether it is a federal-provincial review.

This new open accountable government, I just thought the Premier would be asking the Minister of Natural Resources to tell the public what they are going to do. Sounds like they have got something going on. Certainly we will applaud that, because, you know, when you read back Hansard, if you read back Hansard, it says in 1990 and 1991 that you are bringing it in when there are federal and provincial jurisdictions to keep things out of court.

Now we asked Sheila Copps whether she was going to have a federal review or a federal-provincial review, and she says yes. We asked the provincial government

if they are going to have a federal-provincial review, they got a proposal. So we are just going to keep working with you both to try to get you together. It really makes sense to us.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we believe that, of course, treaty land entitlement in this area is very important to us. We asked questions about this before the election, and people xeroxed our questions and thought it would be politically unpopular. They sent it to Swan River. We asked questions about a joint review before the election. People told us that we were against the jobs. We have maintained our position of integrity. It has some political risk, I agree, but we have maintained our position of integrity on this issue right throughout this proposal.

We want the jobs, but we want sustainable development. We want to make sure that there are not more trees going to that plant than can be sustained. We do not want this government to ship out wildlife biologists because they do not agree with their advice, Mr. Acting Speaker. We want federal jurisdiction to protect the integrity of the federal areas of jurisdiction, which we believe to be fisheries, aboriginal people and the ecosystem across the border.

We are saying the same thing in the House of Commons as we are saying here. We do not get many questions in the House of Commons. We get a little more than the federal Conservatives, but we get a lot less than other people. We have asked that question, and we are going to keep asking those questions in terms of the government.

You know, it does not surprise us in terms of L-P. We asked the Minister of Native Affairs (Mr. Praznik) to meet with the bands in that area, and he said it is the job of the company. We asked the company to meet with the bands in the area, and they say it is the job of the government. We asked the federal government to get involved with the bands in that area, and they say it is both the provincial government's job and the company's job. No wonder First Nations people are frustrated. They are Manitoba citizens; they are Canadian citizens; and nobody will meet with them to talk about their trees and their land in their area, Mr. Acting Speaker.

I think it is an absolute disgrace, and why should we not be surprised to see a policy on treaty land entitlement that is absolutely neglectful from the provincial government in terms of L-P? We saw the government in terms of aboriginal people, whether it is the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, whether it is the treaty land entitlement, the set-aside policy that overrode communities, four communities, by Order-in-Council, whether it is accusing—and this is something for the Premier (Mr. Filmon) just for his own edification—the aboriginal people of being responsible for the poverty rates. The poverty rates do not include people on reserves, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Perhaps the Premier would like to clarify his last Speech from the Throne, where he again pointed fingers at some other jurisdiction for this area, the cutback on Indian and Metis friendship centres, the cutback on New Careers, the cutback on Access programs, the AJI that sits on the shelf. Year after year we see no action from this government. If we want action from members of this Legislature to deal with Pukatawagan, we have to rely on the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen). If we want action to deal with the Osborne family, who is marching with the Osborne family for justice for that family and for the Norway House community? It is the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson), the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) and the member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford) who have been marching for justice, and that is why we are proud to stand with First Nations peoples, Mr. Acting Speaker.

* (1640)

Finally, I want to close with a few words about the Constitution and the proposal of the federal government. I joined the Premier (Mr. Filmon) at The Forks and was proud to see thousands of Canadians, thousands of Manitobans speak out at The Forks. I was scared stiff, as members were in this House, about the vote that could take place in Quebec after we were all told to stay out of the debate, after we were told that it was no sweat, that we were going to stomp the so-called separatists. In fact, some of the business community in Quebec were saying, we are not there to win this referendum; we are there to humiliate the other side. This kind of we are okay, stay out of the battle is unacceptable for Canadians.

I was really disappointed—and I have to say this, and I read the words in the Speech from the Throne—that after two weeks and no consultation with the Canadian public, no harnessing of the Canadian people, the Chretien government came forward with a half-baked proposal that looked to me as if it was intended more to trap Lucien Bouchard than it was to rebuild our country into the '97 changes.

The energy, the ideas, the passion that was there across this country, which I believe is for a strong national government—I mean, we heard the separatists using Conservative governments as one of the reasons why they had to break away from Canada. This kind of race to the bottom that was embraced by Paul Martin was used by the separatists of why they should separate. We cannot accept Klein. We cannot accept Conservatives in their philosophy because there will be nothing left of a federal government.

I think there is another vision in this country that talks about a strong national government with strong national programs that are worth fighting for: medicare from coast to coast to coast; post-secondary education from coast to coast to coast; income support programs that do not have the spectacle which we see now in our country of provinces fighting the federal government because the federal government is offloading.

We did not see reform of UI and income support, we saw offloading last Friday on top of offloading that we saw last year. I say enough is enough in terms of the kind of country we built, and I am disappointed.

The Premier (Mr. Filmon) referenced in his Speech from the Throne that this reflects the all-party task force. The position of the Chretien government does not reflect the task force report that we signed with the greatest of respect. I have joined the Premier before, and I will join him again because Canada means more to me than this Legislature, and it means more to our caucus.

But it is not the Canada clause that we proposed in the Meech Lake Task Force. It is not the Canada clause we proposed and signed off prior to Charlottetown that talked about First Nations people, that talked about the Quebec society and then talked

about the changing nature of our society that we see in western Canada where it was not the two nations. It was more than two nations that established our province of Manitoba. That is not the document that we signed. It is not the document I signed on Meech Lake as part of that task force report. It is not the document the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and I fought for with the former Premier of Quebec, a person who we tried to get some changes with in terms of the Canada clause. It does not reflect the Canada clause of this House.

So I respectfully disagree with you. I did not get out and you know—we want to keep this nonpolitical, but I do not think this does reflect the all-party task force reports that we signed. I support a Canada clause with all the elements and qualities and strengths of Canada. I also support a strong national government. I am not going to allow for just a one-sided elimination of federal programs to the provinces. When we have the federal government just move things and move things and move things, what are we going to be left with? Ten federal governments. Why would a province want to stay if you have 10 separate governments?

There are two ways to go in this debate. One is the offsale elimination of programs from the federal government. The other way to go is to say that Canada is a country that takes the strengths from all of our regions and our whole is stronger than our parts through the programs we run. That is my vision of Canada. That is the vision in the Meech Lake Task Force. That is the vision Manitobans presented to our committees.

Our vision includes our first peoples. When we were at The Forks talking about Canada, we were talking about Quebec, but we were also just down the riverbank from a society that established their first civilization here in this province 6,000 years ago at The Forks.

We came 300-400 years ago, and we had tents there because we could not get decent housing in one of the communities which are now in front of this Legislature. Why are they not part of the characteristics of Canada in a Canada clause that we proposed? I really do not like the change in this veto. I do not like it one bit. Do

not tell me it is just a resolution in the House of Parliament, it is in legislation. What federal government can go back to Quebec and Ontario with all the seats that they have in the House of Commons and say, oh, we have changed our mind now, we are going to change this thing?

In the '97 opening of the Constitution, we are going to see a change in that legislative veto. I want the federal government to have a veto. I want a strong federal government. We have an amending formula now. We have an amending formula that requires seven out of 10 provinces with over 50 percent of the population to make changes to modernize this country. Just because somebody wants to separate, we do not change our whole—weaken our national government. I think we strengthen our national government.

I am willing to compromise and whatever else, but not contrary to the vision here in this province. Once this thing is in federal legislation, I suggest to the Premier, and he knows this, what federal government is going to change it? The last time I counted it up, well over 50 percent of the members of the House of Commons come from Quebec and Ontario.

It totally neglects—it is the Victoria formula of 1971. That is 25 years ago. The west has changed. Massive increases in population, changing demographics, changes that are going to take place. I agree with the Trudeau formula, 7-50 and unanimous consent which everybody has the veto for with changes to the amending formula.

I think that is much fairer to western Canada. I do not agree for a moment, I am not naive enough to believe for a moment that once we pass it in federal Parliament, it will not become the starting point for Quebec and others, including the federalists in Quebec, and a starting point for Ontario in terms of the constitutional changes in '97. This is not just a one-shot deal before Christmas, pass it before December 15, get it over with, maybe Lucien Bouchard will vote against it, we can use it against him in Quebec.

Is this country going to be built on passing resolutions to trap a separatist leader of a party? I agree we have to deal with the federalists in Quebec. I agree

with that, and I am willing to go a long way and our party is willing to go a long way, but you do not change a country and modernize a country on trapping somebody with an ill-thought-out proposal that does not take into account the spirit, the unity, the ideas, the vision of Manitobans and Canadians. I disagree with the Premier (Mr. Filmon) in supporting this proposal. There are other people I respect a lot, whose comments I have read—I do not understand it.

I think the Chretien government has been too cute by half. It almost blew the referendum, and I did not want that to happen, nobody here. This is not a partisan issue. Then we have this proposal that is going to be voted on before December 15, and this will predicate everything for '97, 15 months away. Why did we not use this 15 months to work out a consensus for a stronger national government, for a stronger Canada? Why did we not have the other option on the table to make this country greater in terms of our country?

Why do we not have a Canada clause on the table? Manitoba authored the Canada clause. I was proud to work with members opposite on that clause. Our caucus—the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) and the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin)—were proud to work on the proposal in Charlottetown, and our caucus was proud to work in an all-party way. This is not it. This is not it. This is not just a cute resolution for Lucien Bouchard, because the Constitution is automatically open in the year '97, and this will be the starting point. Maybe I am wrong. Maybe we are wrong, but I am committed.

Our caucus is committed to working with the Premier and the government on—and the member for Rossmere (Mr. Toews) is the research author of the report. He perhaps cannot speak his mind, but he was part of the document, and he knows the Meech Lake Task Force is different than this proposal before Parliament today. I know it. He knows it. The Premier knows it. We also know that it is different than the Charlottetown proposal.

* (1650)

So we will work for a strong and united Canada. We are proud of the fact that we have sometimes not been

as politically smart as members opposite, but we have been principled. We did not promise to keep the Jets in Winnipeg for \$10 million when we knew there was no salary cap or revenue-sharing agreement. We promised to do everything we could to eliminate chlorine bleach even though we knew we were going to lose votes in The Pas because it was the right decision to make in terms of having the integrity of our environment on the Repap proposal. We are pleased now that that has come to be, we hope.

We are proud of the position we took on Louisiana-Pacific even though members opposite were mailing those questions into Swan River because we believe that that was sustainable development. You sort of look at the trees and the plant together. You know, it is an old-fashioned concept—jobs, trees, plant, how many trees go in the plant; how much forestry is needed to sustain the plant? So we are proud of the positions we take, and we are proud of the alternatives we have proposed to the government.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we find the document regrettable. We find the fact that the government has broken many of its promises on health care, education, notably, to be regrettable, and I therefore move, seconded by the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen),

THAT the motion be amended by adding to it, after the word "session," the following words:

But this House regrets that this government has failed to meet the goals of Manitobans by

- (a) breaking its election promise to keep community hospital emergency rooms open 24 hours a day, failing to come up with strategies to address the shortage of rural and northern doctors and refusing to implement a number of community-based cost-saving measures that would better serve the public interest; and
- (b) failing to implement a plan for post-secondary education in the 21st Century as it is promised in the recent election campaign, as well as failing to provide access to distance education to a majority of schools outside of Winnipeg; and

- (c) refusing to act while Manitoba lost 5,000 jobs last month, hundreds of other job losses were announced and future opportunities, like the relocation of CP headquarters, were ignored; and
- (d) showing contempt for their promised consultation on rural concerns by unilaterally introducing dual marketing in the hog industry despite the opposition of the farmers concerned; and
- (e) demonstrating its lack of respect for aboriginal people through the continuation of inaction on the AJI and the treaty land entitlement; and
- (f) failing to implement previous promises to improve the safety of Manitobans; and
- (g) government actions in the Louisiana-Pacific deal that make a mockery of sustainable development after two successive throne speeches promised to introduce an act to institutionalize sustainable development practices; and

that this government has thereby lost the trust and confidence of the people of Manitoba and this House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Sveinson): The amendment is in order.

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Mr. Acting Speaker, I too am pleased to rise today once again to speak to the government's Speech from the Throne. I have had this opportunity in the past and I am honoured once again to have the privilege to speak about our government's past accomplishments, our current initiatives and our vision for the future of Manitoba.

Before I get into my remarks in any detail, I would like to welcome everybody back to this session before Christmas and to also welcome the Pages. Hopefully, their experience in this Legislature will be a learning experience and one that they will also remember for many, many years as many of us are remembering our experiences here today and for many years to come as well.

I do want to congratulate the mover, the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe), and the seconder, the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), on their remarks in bringing some clarity to the vision of this government in terms of the direction we are proceeding. I congratulate them on their address and the remarks that they were able to share with us.

It has been some eight months now since this government was elected for another majority, and it is interesting to hear the honourable members talking about calling another election. You would think that they would have learned from the last experience, that they did get beat up eight months ago, and as some honourable members will suggest, they are somewhat gluttons for punishment. So saying that, I think we will leave that on that and get on with some more remarks that have maybe more bearing to the throne speech which we are here to address and to debate, Mr. Acting Speaker.

To me, this is an indication of several things, what we are talking about, and it indicates that Manitobans with the last election are pleased with this legislation and the past legislative record. It indicates that Manitobans have continued confidence and faith in our ability to govern this province. Most importantly, it indicates that Manitobans trust this administration and continue to work to implement our vision of the future of this province.

Our time in government has not always been easy and we have, individually and collectively, faced several difficult and challenging decisions, but, Mr. Acting Speaker, that is what all of the members of this Chamber are here to do, to make those decisions which we have been elected by the people to make. I believe we have been and will continue to make the right decisions.

In the recent provincial election, we outlined many of our future plans to the voters of Manitoba. This new legislative session gives us the opportunity to carry out and implement our election promises of safer communities, a proposed economy, an enhanced education system for our children and a social service system which provides our citizens with a hand up, not a handout.

This legislative session will see this government continue in this direction, and we will be focusing on those areas which Manitobans have said they would like to see legislation on. I am going to be speaking about these areas as I give my address on the remarks to the throne speech. The provincial economy and job creation, our justice, education and the social systems that are in place today and how we will maybe improve on them, while at first glance it would seem that these areas are quite distinct, nothing could be further from the truth. They are all closely entwined and interconnected and a change in one may bring about a change in another.

This is especially apparent when one looks at the provincial economy. A poor economy, for example, would inhibit our ability to provide valuable programs for the benefit of all Manitobans. Fortunately for Manitobans, during the last eight years of responsible government that has been demonstrated, we have seen substantial growth, stability and expansion in our provincial economy.

The results of a strong economy are apparent to everyone. A strong economy means that we, as a government, can continue to provide needed education, justice and social services for those who require them. I believe this government has the political leadership to continue our election mandate, the one the people of Manitoba elected us to carry out, to continue to effect change in these areas for the betterment of the people of Manitoba.

* (1700)

During our time in office, this government has already laid the foundation for change. Again one only needs to look at our economic record for an example. In the last session, we enacted the strongest balanced budget legislation to be found anywhere in North America. A key aspect of this legislative package is that it contains sanctions against any increase in income taxes, sales taxes and payroll taxes unless prior approval has been granted by the people of Manitoba through a province-wide referendum.

Manitobans have told us time and time again that we are both unwilling and unable to pay higher taxes.

However, they have also expressed a desire to preserve our justice, education and social service systems. By balancing the provincial budget, this government will be able to achieve both goals. Reduced provincial debt and more importantly, reduced interest costs, will provide our government with more financial resources to devote to continued social, health and justice services, areas which affect nearly every Manitoban. A balanced budget, while of extreme importance, is only one part of our overall economic strategy. We have also kept all major taxes frozen for eight years in a row, a Canadian record, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Our plan is to create a stable, long-term favourable economic climate, one which has worked to sustain job creation and job growth. We have designed our economic initiatives to concentrate on providing business, community and individuals with the needed tools and resources in order to create jobs and further economic opportunities for all Manitobans.

In the area of education, the education system has changed tremendously in recent years. I know it has changed significantly since I was a student and probably has changed for many of you here too. In today's global economy, change has intensified. This is why our children must be provided with the best education possible, one which teaches them the fundamentals of education, such as reading, writing and maths skills, but one which also teaches our children skills to enable them to be adaptive, creative and flexible and responsive to change.

Our world is evolving and the educational system in Manitoba must evolve with it. Education is a noble goal to pursue in and of itself, but it is also an integral component of our society in other ways. The knowledge, education and skills of our children are central in providing to them future economic opportunities, personal security and worth and the principles of responsible citizenship.

This government has it from children and parents, teachers and administrators, principals and school board members that our education system, while doing an adequate job, has much room for improvement. We are responding to these views. In the last session we introduced and passed significant legislative action in the area of education.

Our current education policy is designed to facilitate more parental involvement and choice. Our education system also must continue to stress standards and testing, two ways in which we as parents are able to judge how our children are learning and progressing. The changes we have made thus far in Manitoba's education system reflect extensive consultation with parents, students, educators and others with an active interest in education issues. We will continue this process of consultation with review to ensure that our education system provides the highest standard and quality of education to our children.

The post-secondary education system is also in a state of change and transition, and we are facing the situation where we will see reduced federal transfer payments. This will mean that we have fewer financial resources to direct our post-secondary education institutions.

This fiscal reality, coupled with declining enrollment levels at post-secondary institutions, means that we as a province have to examine ways to rationalize, integrate and co-ordinate programs. Our universities and our community colleges have, like our community or our secondary education system, provided learning opportunities for Manitobans for decades and form a cornerstone of our social, economic and education activities.

But like other areas, our post-secondary system is not immune to change, but change does not have to be viewed as negative. There are some, on both sides of this issue and on the other side of the Chamber, who feel that the post-secondary education should not be restructured. But change should be seen as an opportunity. It provides us with the opportunity to reassess and to re-evaluate, to look at where we have come from and to think about where we are going.

Post-secondary education institutions need to retain their essential roles as the primary place for our children to acquire skills, learning and knowledge, but they also need to expand their roles. One option is for universities and colleges to establish clearer and more practical linkages with business and industry, the economy and the career opportunities that go with them.

As with the economy, we have already established a process of change in our post-secondary education system. In 1993, we passed legislation which incorporated our three community colleges under their own board of governors. This legislation was enacted to allow community colleges the flexibility, the room to adapt and the ability to be responsive to industry in order to meet training requirements.

We have also established the University Education Review Commission under the Roblin report in order to address the many challenges which we face in our post-secondary education system. Some of these challenges include redefining the role and the purpose of universities and colleges, resetting program priorities, identifying areas of specialization, connecting research to Manitoba's social, cultural and economic interests, expanding the role and the number of graduates of community colleges, developing a provincial tuition policy, reducing duplication among institutions, greater program recognition and credit transfer among different institutions, more interprovincial co-operation, improved accessibility and developing an accountability framework, Mr. Acting Speaker.

These challenges are difficult and many and ones that will require significant effort and initiative on the part of all those involved in the post-secondary education system, but I am confident that the change will come and that the post-secondary institutions have the knowledge and they have the skills and they have the ability, the desire, to achieve change in order to benefit both Manitoban students and the larger provincial society.

Another area in which we have already achieved significant change is in our health care system, Mr. Acting Speaker, and the changes are occurring because people are demanding change. More and more people today are looking for alternatives in health care, and that alone is healthy. I would remind the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) that it is better to listen to what people have to say and what they have to offer than to be talking all the time, because you cannot talk and listen at the same time, just like I would ask the honourable member for Inkster to listen to what I have to say, as I will listen to what he has to say.

* (1710)

People are getting sick and tired of the medical professions treating disease instead of concentrating on creating health, and that is maybe what the honourable member for Inkster can learn from this. People are left with no choice but to search other alternatives out. It is also interesting that when people do explore other alternatives and options, they find out that they work, and Canadians and Manitobans could have one of the best health care systems found anywhere in the world if they would adopt the same philosophy as this government, that a pound of prevention goes a lot further than the cure.

This philosophy will contribute to the quality of our lives both on an individual and a collective basis. Just as our government has made improvements to this province's fiscal health, we have taken steps to ensure that the physical health of Manitobans is promoted and enhanced.

This government believes and Manitobans believe that affordable and accessible health care is a continuing priority. Manitobans need and deserve a cohesive and a holistic health care system which will meet today's and tomorrow's needs. As with our education system, we are facing fiscal challenges as a result of the federal government's reduction in transfer payments. As with other areas, reduced financial circumstances mean that we as a government have to be more flexible and we have to be more creative.

However, as the medical profession, like the medical doctors who rely only on drugs and drug companies to treat disease, government also cannot create health. Working in consultation with health care providers and workers and with local communities, we have implemented change to our health care system in order to continue to provide a standard of care which is unparalleled anywhere in Canada. This province devotes more than \$1.85 billion on health care.

This represents a 38 percent or in excess of \$500-million increase than when we took office. I am happy to say that more and more of this money is going into the hands of the local health care service providers. We believe that it is those at the local level who know best what their priorities are and what is best needed for

their communities. People at the local community level with assistance from this government can now better shape and implement health care which best meets local needs.

Health often is created when people in communities take responsibility for themselves instead of turning their health over to their doctor or look to government for solutions. Governments and doctors can only be providers to assist creating health. However, costs in this area continue to escalate, and we have to address that issue.

Our shift is very apparent in our move to community-based initiatives such as regionalization of health care. More and more, people are realizing that personal lifestyle, socioeconomic and environmental factors in health services all play a large and significant role in the health of individuals and communities.

We believe that movement towards a regionalization model will more easily allow the linkage of prevention programs with the alternative models of community-based care into a structure of service delivery than the current institution-physician oriented system. Through a regional governance model, communities will be able to use their regional health authority boards to analyze and to evaluate the health issues of their communities and to make decisions about the most appropriate services, programs and delivery models.

A regional structure will also allow communities and local decision makers greater control over capital planning. This will allow communities to use their available funds to rationalize and prioritize spending priorities as well as allow communities to share scarce resources and establish specialty services.

Further, Mr. Acting Speaker, a regional governing structure will enhance citizens' choice and involvement in health care by providing greater opportunities for more local input into health service planning and delivery.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

As one member of this House, I would like to see our government ensure greater flexibility to allow health

care alternatives rather than only the medical model of treating disease.

I would like to see the College of Physicians and Surgeons allow greater freedoms with the alternative therapies among their doctors. That may require some legislative changes, but if that is necessary, so be it, and in the interest of health for Manitobans.

I believe the more people taking responsibility for their own health, the better we as a government and society will be. As in the regional model that is proposed by our government, where residents of a community are looking for a broader range of services, services which will be based on unique regional characteristics, it would also promote a regional interest perspective and will allow health care services to be moved closer to home, where people work and live.

It will allow for alternative options in service delivery and will provide communities with a more rapid and flexible response to changing regional and local conditions and needs and will increase opportunities for communities to reduce duplication and overlap of health care services.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, regionalization will permit government to minimize its involvement in direct service delivery since our role would be confined mainly to setting standards or monitoring programs and conducting evaluations, audits and ensuring fiscal accountability measures.

We are also developing a new consolidated structure for Winnipeg health services and programs. This is needed to ensure that decisions regarding health services are not made in isolation. I will talk about isolation because I think isolation in this instance applies to all things that we talk about in life in terms of what isolation or dealing with health in isolation or dealing with our bodies in isolation, the same principles apply.

It is imperative, and I will clarify that throughout the remarks that I am going to make, that opportunities be created for the consolidation and enhancement of existing programs and services. We are pursuing our health care initiatives in isolation. They are a part of an

overarching strategy to allow citizens and communities greater control over their own health care services and ultimately their own health. This attitude is especially apparent in our plan to develop and promote the concept of preventative health.

Preventative health is an extremely important aspect of a good and effective health care system. Especially in this time of reduced financial resources brought on by reductions in federal government transfer payments, emphasis must be placed on the prevention of illness as opposed to the treatment of disease. New and creative methods must be found to reduce the financial strain on our health care services so that they can be directed to those most in need of assistance.

* (1720)

Citizens, health providers and this government have recognized that Manitobans need innovative preventative health measures in order to achieve and maintain healthy lifestyles. As a result, our government has initiated many preventative health care programs which are designed to promote health for all Manitobans. The ultimate goal of these programs is to assist in the prevention of disease and the onset of illness and to ensure that all Manitobans achieve a state of health and wellness. A healthy individual is a social benefit and a significant asset to all our communities.

Before leaving this area, Madam Speaker, I would like to say that the medical model as in the use of drugs alone is not the only answer to creating a healthy body. I believe a very famous individual who is familiar to all of us said it best during his life between 1847 and 1931, and I gave this quote before, but I believe it is worth repeating, and I quote: The doctor of the future will give no medicine but will interest his patients in the care of the human frame in diet, in the cause and the prevention of disease, unquote. Thomas Edison said this over 60 years ago.

This was a long time ago, but not nearly as long ago as what has captured my interest over the past 11 years. Over the past 11 years, I have looked at, studied and travelled, looking at a philosophy of regeneration of body systems, using different combinations of whole-food nutrition as a form of creating health. These

formulations of whole foods were created over 5,000 years ago. My wife, Jeanie, who has equal interest in this area and possibly more knowledge, and I spent time this past summer in Beijing, China, the place of origin of these formulations. We went there in search of knowledge and greater understanding of what we have learned and experienced with our own health in the past 11 years.

Not only have we found that the philosophy and the formulations of whole foods worked, they have helped us live more vibrant lives. They have helped us to teach others who have reached a dead end in the health challenges that they have faced. These people, as we as a government are promoting, are taking responsibility for their own health and they have realized the same benefits.

I want to get your attention on this philosophy of regeneration versus substitution. Regeneration or substitution—we look on this in today's society. The philosophy of regeneration is 5,000 years old. The substitution model in terms of health care is only maybe 125 or 130 years old. My experience over the past 11 years has been to study and to experience the benefits of regeneration through nourishing the body's systems with whole-food nutrition.

An example of this substitution is in the area of the treatment of cancer. We all know the three forms of treatment of cancer, and I have said this, and I have been challenged by the Manitoba College of Physicians. I have said this before in this Chamber. I have been challenged by the Manitoba College of Physicians and Surgeons and I have been challenged by the Canadian Cancer Society, but the three forms of therapies in treating cancer are radiation, chemotherapy and surgery.

I have read some years ago, and I still believe this, that those three forms of therapy in treating cancer of the average person, as I have read, lives an average of three and a half years. A person who elects not to use any one of those forms of therapy lives an average of twelve and half years. Now that is the difference between regeneration and substitution, because what do they do? They substitute for what the body is capable of doing and weakens the body in so doing that instead

of strengthening the body, and that is where we have to change our philosophy in trying to create health in society today.

I think this is something that is achievable, but it is achievable only by the fact that we are open to change. We are open to change and, as I indicated in my remarks, the medical profession, the medical doctors have to give more flexibility, more freedoms within their own professions to enable these doctors who are open to this form of study and interest and practice would allow them the freedom to practise that, practise what they believe in.

Certainly there should be no threat to the medical profession, because we all know in crisis situations we do need the medical model. We do need the intervention of drugs in the medical profession and in the administration of those, but we do not need that. We talk about the birthing of children, that today, when we talk about childbirth, midwifery, the medical profession in many ways, if you examine the techniques and how they function in terms of birthing, what they do is they treat that as a disease, and that is a natural process.

The philosophy that I come from and I believe in is that nature is perfection, and if we have nature flowing through us, then we can achieve perfection. It will be much easier for us to achieve our goals in terms of creating that perfection which we all strive to do in terms of our health care. But what do we do instead? Society has been trained and geared for 125 years under the medical model to run and give the responsibility of our health care to our medical doctors.

I think it is a matter of taking responsibility because, as soon as you go to the doctor, you have assigned that responsibility to that individual. People today are looking at alternatives, and I think that we have to be open and sensitive to what those people are asking for. I think that we can and I think that we can work together with the medical doctors because they are loving and caring individuals, just like we are in serving our constituents.

I think we have to look at that aspect. We cannot continue to go on and add \$500 million every five or

six years to the health care budget because the only way that we have access to getting that is by going to the taxpayer who tells us that we cannot increase our tax base. We cannot afford the taxes that governments are demanding. We need less government.

That philosophy or principle applies, the same thing, because the more people that depend on government to do the things that they are capable of doing for themselves, they are going to be weakened, the more they get from governments, the weaker they are. The same thing as substitution for our body systems, the more we substitute for what our bodies are doing, the sicker we will get. That is a realization. I mean, that is something that, as I say, I have learned and I believe in strongly because of the experience that I have had in my own health challenges and other people that I have seen who have travelled the same path as I have.

I learned a lot when I spent time in Beijing, China, this past year, the place of origin of the formulations. These go back 5,000 years, and these are true life experiences. I think those are important, and we should draw from those.

* (1730)

Another area, Madam Speaker, that I would like to address is our social service system. This is another concern of this province and one which we as a government are committed to strengthening. During the last session, we established the Children and Youth Secretariat, and this innovative program concentrates on bringing an integrated and holistic approach to meet the needs of children requiring treatment, prevention, safety and care services.

We have also recognized the need for reforms to our social security system. For far too long, individuals have relied on government, and I feel the responsibility for self-determination should lie with individuals and not government. Each of us possesses the capacity to achieve and attain our own personal success. The past does not equal the future. I have said that before in this Chamber. The past is not important, nor is the future. Individuals today must examine themselves and make the determination that they possess responsibility within themselves. We are here to help individuals in the self-assessment, and we believe that our social

security system should be in place to reward initiatives and enhance and strengthen individual dignity.

Our financial resources will be directed to those who are in greatest need of assistance: seniors, the disabled and the single parents. Other recipients, those who are able to work, will be encouraged to take part in work or job-training programs. We must get off this cycle of dependency that exists in society today. We, as a government, will move to put support in place and will continue to establish links with those sectors in industries involved in job training and creation in order to ensure that there are ample employment opportunities available for all who are employable, Madam Speaker.

We believe that the creative and innovative partnerships that we have already established with business and industry can work further to identify employment opportunities for any individual who is entering or re-entering the workforce. Our goal is to make every Manitoban self-reliant. I know and we believe that every person has this capacity and proud to be a part of a government which supports and enhances individual strength, dignity and self-determination. People have to create their own visions. They have to create their own dreams. Welfare cheques should not be the vision.

In yesterday's throne speech, this government made a commitment to launch a review of The Child and Family Services Act, and this will be undertaken in order to respond to today's families' changing needs. As with many of our other initiatives, public consultation will be an integral aspect of this review.

To assist those in need is not only the role of government; all citizens of Manitoba have a part to play in assisting their friends, family and neighbours who may be in need of assistance. There are many changes to be made in the social services system, and there will be those who will resist change or try to block the change. As I had said before, change does not have to be viewed as a negative factor. Change creates opportunities, and I am confident that Manitobans will be responsive and recognize that these developments mean greater dignity and self-esteem for the individuals involved.

The final area I would like to speak about is the justice system, Madam Speaker. I believe my time has pretty much elapsed, so I will have to reserve that for another time. Thank you very much for the opportunity to put these few remarks on the record.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, it is indeed an honour to be here once again to be able to comment yet on another throne speech. It is something that I have learned never to take for absolute granted but always welcome the opportunity to say a few words.

This is a fairly significantly different throne speech than I have had the opportunity to speak on in the past. A couple of things come to mind when I read through it. I was quoted or made reference to it in today's Free Press in fact. One of the biggest concerns that I have is this government's refusal to accept responsibilities that ultimately it needs to do in order to see the province of Manitoba move forward.

The line that I would really want to pick out in the throne speech is actually on page 4 where it says that the greatest threat to our health care system remains the dramatic reductions in federal financial support across the country.

Madam Speaker, I would argue and will articulate to a certain degree that that is a wrong statement, that in fact this government is attempting once again to mislead Manitobans. The greatest threat to our health care system, for example, is not the federal government, it is this government's whole approach to health care reform. Ultimately it is the government that administers health care, and the government of Manitoba is the body that can ultimately ensure that cutbacks that are offloaded from our federal counterparts are in fact minimized. Ultimately I do believe, if the political will of the minister was true to his comments about wanting genuine health care reform, that in fact we would see that.

The reason why I say that, Madam Speaker—and I do want to go into a bit of detail on it—is that I received and have read a great deal of information about the transfer payments. Let me say right from the onset I am disappointed. I would have not wanted to see

transfer payments decreased. I would like to see some sort of a commitment in terms of maintaining those transfer payments, and I hope that sometime in the not-too-distant future the federal government, whatever political stripe it might be, will be able to make that commitment on an annual basis.

* (1740)

What I find somewhat upsetting is that I hear figures that come from the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson), that come from the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), that come from the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) and from the Premier (Mr. Filmon), and they are talking about a \$147-million cutback in transfer payments. Well, I will welcome and will try to find out where they get the exact figure of \$147 million. The number that I am working, using their books, is somewhere around \$125 million, but let me assume that their number is in fact accurate.

The Minister of Health in particular will try to give Manitobans the impression that that \$147 million is in fact going to be applied to the Department of Health. Madam Speaker, we have seen the other day in our media the Minister of Family Services indicating the transfer payments are the reason that the Christmas bonuses for those people on social assistance are not going to be receiving. That is the reason why.

We hear from the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) that it is the transfer payments that are causing the hardships in post-secondary education. Well, Madam Speaker, there is no doubt in my mind that, yes, there will be hardships that will be encountered. As I indicated earlier, it would be nice to, in fact, have seen increases and failing that, at least maintain what has been there in the past, but it is not appropriate for the government to articulate and to say that it is the Department of Health that is being cut back by \$147 million or attempt to give that impression, because, Madam Speaker, it is this government ultimately that gets to decide where that cutback in transfer payments is going to be going.

The cutback is based, from what I understand, on the expenditures of the Department of Family Services on social payments, welfare, if you like, on health care and

post-secondary education. It is a 3.2 percent cut. If you apply that very same 3.2 percent cut, you will find that the ministers of Family Services, Health, and Education are off base when they try to give Manitobans the impression that their department is being cut back by \$147 million.

Madam Speaker, I, as I indicated, have done some research on the whole transfer payments and how they work. In 1977, there was, in fact, a transfer of tax points. The federal government takes into account that transfer of tax points as a cash transfer. For example, in 1985, when the then-federal government conceded the tax points, the province benefited by approximately \$258 million to 1995-96 where this government benefits to the degree of \$414 million. That is something which the federal government currently takes into account as a form of a transfer payment. It is something in which the province back then and the federal government entered into an agreement.

There is a lot of concern that comes out of that agreement in the sense that we do not want to see that bulk cash payment, if you like, that goes toward our social services ultimately disappearing. Madam Speaker, I would be greatly disappointed if, in fact, there was indication from this federal government or any federal government that they were going to do that. I would oppose that adamantly. I believe that the direct cash transfer that we see that is reported in the Manitoba revenue book, not necessarily the tax points, that that commitment will be maintained over the years.

Well, when we look at it, what I have seen directly, and I would refer individuals to page 6 on the budget document, Manitoba Estimates of Revenue, and if you add up the figures of the EPF and the Canada Assistance Plan, it comes to approximately \$728 million. Well, Madam Speaker, there is a cutback of \$125 million that I see, which brings it down to, for the '96-97 year, \$603 million. Yes, that will have, no doubt, an impact on our health care and our family services and our post-secondary education, but to try to imply that this amount is going to be applied equally, that that \$147 million is going to be applied to just the Department of Health is incorrect. In fact, if you look at the overall expenditure of the Department of Health, I would be very disappointed in this government if it amounted to more than a 3.2 percent cut.

Now, the purpose, of course, is to try to melt the three into one which will be known as the Canada Health and Social Transfer payment. Hopefully, Madam Speaker, we will see a solid commitment coming from the government in this whole area. Ultimately, we do want, as the Leader of the New Democratic Party has pointed out, the federal government to play a prominent role in what is happening in terms of standards across Canada on those vital and important issues.

When we talk in terms of the federal government's role versus the provincial government's role, ultimately, as I indicated, the federal government's role is to ensure that those five fundamental principles, for example, are in fact being adhered to. That is what Canadians want, that is what Canadians expect of their federal government, that the money is in fact there, that they do have the ability to ensure that the government adheres to them. The provincial responsibility is to ensure that what money is allocated out to health care is administered in such a fashion that Manitobans are receiving world-class health care.

Ultimately, that is, in fact, possible. This government, in the last seven years, has really done minimal work to try to save and at the same time provide a better quality of health care. I trust that the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) will make reference to some of the things, when he responds, to where he believes the government has made major strides in terms of improving the quality of health care while at the same time saving tax dollars.

A while back, I had written a letter to the Minister of Health pointing out five areas in which we believe in the Liberal Party that if the government wanted to, and it acted on these five points, that it would be able to deliver a better quality of health care, while at the same time, Madam Speaker, save dollars.

The provincial government is in a position to do that. The federal government ultimately, arguably, is not in that type of a position. That is why it is not acceptable, when we stand up and pose a question, for the Minister of Health to say, well, talk to your federal counterparts. What about the millions of dollars being cut? They make references to the \$220 million. I have absolutely

no idea. It is a figure that I have thrown to my federal counterparts in Ottawa, and they have no idea where they are getting the \$220 million from. They are completely out to lunch on the \$220 million.

But, Madam Speaker, if we take a look at some of the ideas which we have suggested this particular minister act on, we believe better quality of health care services could be delivered to Manitobans and the minister would be able to, in fact, save money.

I want to pick up on a few of those points, because the direction that we have seen of this minister since the election really causes a great deal of concern. An excellent example of that, of course, is the closing down of the community emergency health care through our hospitals which has a significant impact and, ultimately, I would argue is the wrong direction for this government to be moving.

Madam Speaker, equally, through concerns that were raised with me and my caucus colleague, the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski), regarding the Seven Oaks Hospital, and I provided the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) the opportunity to come straight out and level with Manitobans, in particular individuals that live in north Winnipeg, that Seven Oaks Hospital will be able to continue well into the future. Not only should it be able to continue, but it should also be allowed to reopen the emergency services, equally should the emergency services throughout the other four community hospitals.

The minister has a letter that I had sent him regarding these five points. I believe it was about a week ago or 10 days ago when I sent him the letter and to touch briefly on the five points. One of the things was that we believed that the 24-hour information Health Links line program that is being offered through the Misericordia Hospital be in fact expanded. The potential savings that could be garnered from the Department of Health by expanding this service, I think, are vastly underestimated, because this government has done nothing in essence to venture into that whole area of telecommunications or how individuals that might require some medical attention could simply pick up a telephone and call into a particular line.

I have had opportunity to talk to some of the individuals that have worked on that line and have been really impressed with the calibre of people that are there. Now what are some of the benefits if you were in fact to expand the Health Links line? Currently, individuals, if you live, and I will use my area, in Meadows West and you wake up and it is two o'clock in the morning, you want to be able to—maybe you have a sharp pain, whether it is in your arm or you are sweating, whatever the ailment might be, what is your choice?

Many people that are put in that situation will in fact go to emergency services, and we know that because the Minister of Health makes reference to that when he defends the closure of the night shift for emergency services. So the Minister of Health knows that, if individuals were aware that they could call this particular line, that there is a health care professional on the other end that can advise them as to what it is that they could do, what sort of medical treatment that they need to seek.

Madam Speaker, the one individual that I had talked to that is one of the operators of this line indicated that she has prevented individuals from attending emergency services, not only emergency services but also in terms of routine medical checkups by just allowing the individuals the opportunity to get a better understanding of exactly what their ailment is and if in fact it is serious enough that it warrants some sort of attention.

* (1750)

Obviously, we want to put some checks in place to ensure that the quality of that service and that individuals are not going to be misinformed over the telephone, but I do not believe that that is the case currently. It would not take much for this minister to act in a quick fashion to expand that particular program which would ultimately, I believe, lighten the load of our emergency services, other health care areas, whether it is the walk-in clinics or the general practitioner or whatever it might be out there. All it would take is political will from this Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to recognize a good idea, Madam Speaker.

I had read a while back, it was one of the Atlantic provinces that was looking at having a doctor on a telephone line and they were actually going to charge to call. I hope and I suggest to the Minister of Health that that is not the way to go, that you should not charge for individuals to call into a line. I believe by doing that out in Atlantic Canada or at this one particular province all you are doing is, you are providing the incentive for them not to make the call but rather to seek that alternative use.

We want to encourage people. The 911 is a very important number. All Manitobans recognize the importance of the 911 number. I do believe, not as much as an equal number to remember but another very important number to all Manitobans should be this Health Links line. As elected representatives of this Chamber, when we send out our emergency phone numbers lists, as many of us do, to include, to incorporate the Health Links line.

This is something that should not only apply to the city of Winnipeg. This is something that could apply to all Manitobans. There is absolutely no reason why this Minister of Health cannot bring in and enhance, I should say, not bring in, because it is there in a pilot form right now, why this minister cannot act and bring in this program, thereby improving the quality of service to health care recipients while at the same time be able to save money.

My second point, Madam Speaker, was regarding the expansion of the roles of our community health clinics. There has been a lot of talk, and, in essence, the health care reform package the former minister brought down a number of years ago and which initially the Liberal caucus supported talked about the decentralization, if you will, bringing health care delivery into the communities.

We are still waiting to see the government do just that. If in fact the government wanted to, once again, there are nonprofit public health care community facilities that are there, that are set up, that have a concentration on health care prevention, that could quite easily be expanded, Madam Speaker, and, in fact, alleviate a lot of other costs that might be out there.

You could canvass many areas, for example, in the city of Winnipeg, and the general awareness of

community health care clinics is not as high as it could be. If, in fact, it was higher, I believe what you would see is more members of the public choosing to go to the health clinics because of the services that are being offered there. I look at Nor'west which has an absolutely wonderful potential in services that it could be offering if, in fact, the government recognized that and started to promote that, but, rather, we see a government that is more inclined to promote walk-in clinics and the expansion of walk-in clinics.

Changes to the fee-for-service salary structure is another area in which we believe that the government should be able to move in a quicker fashion. There has been a lot of dialogue on that particular issue. I think that the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) knows where the Liberal Party is coming from. An expanded role for nurses in the new health care system, Madam Speaker, I was quite pleased with the Minister of Health when he told me that he would take it into consideration.

I would like to see the Minister of Health actually come forward with maybe a time frame, if you like, on ideas, on what he would like to see in terms of the future role of nurse practitioners, possibly even some form of a certification, whatever it might require in order to allow the backbone of our health care servers the opportunity to do that much more. A commitment to maintaining the public health labs, I believe that the Province of Quebec, in particular, Madam Speaker, has demonstrated that the public labs are, in fact, something that is quite feasible and can save considerably more money than private labs. These are the types of issues of health care reform that this government should be taking, but we do not see that.

Madam Speaker, there are other issues that I wanted to talk on in responding to the throne speech. Another one, of course, is education. The government talks again about change and the importance of change. We still have to question the action plan or the blueprint or whatever it is that you want to call it. There have been some modifications to it, like allowing teachers to participate on parent advisory councils. We applaud the government on its reversal. It took an election to do that, but there are other areas of concern.

The whole question of standard exams, yes, it could be legitimately argued and articulated, the benefits of

standard exams, the way in which this government has decided, for example, to have standard exams at the Grade 3 level. I am not entirely convinced that that is money well spent. There might be a better way, through the point of entry, when a child enters into our public educational system, of getting a better evaluation of that student. Maybe that might be a better way of spending the money as opposed to standard exams at the Grade 3 level.

Canadian history, if time allows, I am hoping to comment on the whole question of unity and the constitutional debates. Madam Speaker, there is a lot of Canadian history that needs to be talked about. In fact, it is somewhat sad that the government of the day, this government here, has decided that Canadian history does not have a role to play in Grade 11. We do have a new minister. Hopefully, that minister will, in fact, review that aspect of the action plan and work with teachers and parents and other interested groups that want to be able to contribute toward our public education.

Madam Speaker, when we talk about other federal-provincial relations, I am thinking in terms of issues such as the all-party task force, the Pinawa nuclear research station.

We have already indicated to the minister that we are quite prepared to go down to Ottawa as early as this Monday to be able to participate in it, to try to gain more information, so that we can, in fact, lobby on what is in Manitoba's best interest.

Equally, Madam Speaker, we were quite happy to be able to participate and will continue to be involved in the whole issue of the garment industry, because we recognize the importance of the garment industry to the province of Manitoba.

But there are many potential entrepreneurs and individuals who are out there who have a lot to contribute to Manitoba's economy, and I think it is time that we start giving more attention to those individuals as opposed to the larger corporations, because the greatest potential for jobs in the future is going to be small business.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Inkster will have 15 minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, December 6, 1995

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