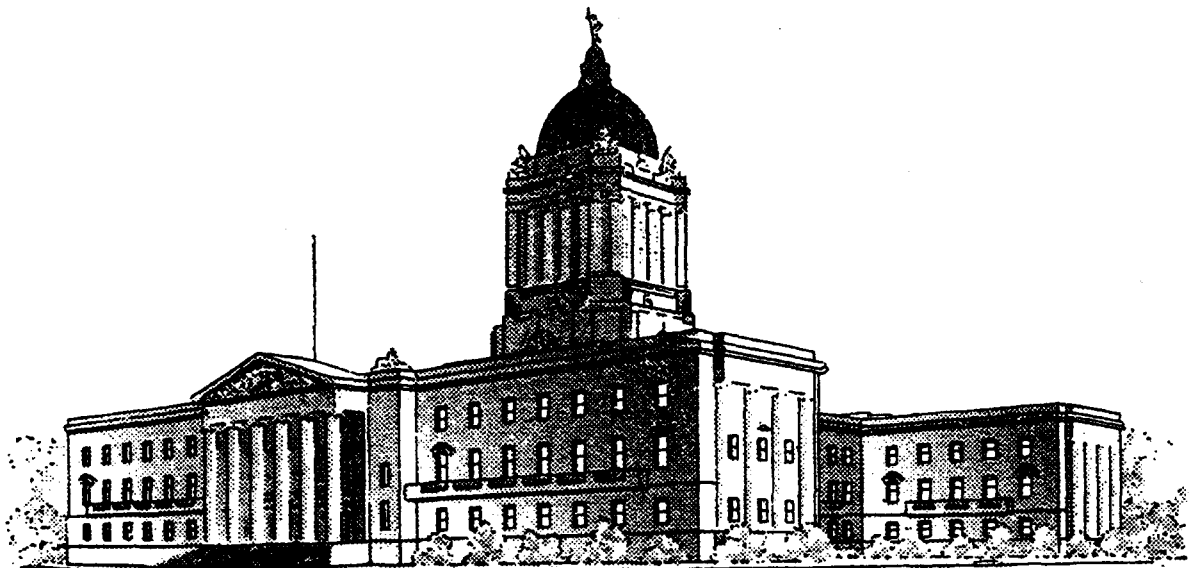




Second Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature  
of the  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**DEBATES**  
and  
**PROCEEDINGS**  
**(Hansard)**

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The Honourable Louise M. Dacquay  
Speaker*



**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Sixth Legislature**

**Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation**

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

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, December 11, 1995

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

## PRAYERS

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

## PRESENTING PETITIONS

**Emergency Health Care Services—  
Community Hospitals**

**Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson):** Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Robert Ritch, Carolyn Sawka, Susan Sawka and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care in community hospitals as was promised in the 1995 general election.

**Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway):** Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Roy Duma, Robert Glenn, Lillian Glenn and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care in community hospitals in Winnipeg as was promised in the 1995 general election.

**Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows):** Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Mike Smith, Edith Steele, Andrew Crate and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care at community hospitals as was promised in the 1995 general election.

**Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan):** Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of John Sinclair, Matthew Burgoyne, Peter Burgoyne and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care at community hospitals as was promised in the 1995 general election.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Flora McWhirter, Frances Lees, Kathryn Hofley and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care at community hospitals as was promised in the 1995 general election.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Doug Rosin, Neil McLanders, Cheryl Thomson 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 will remain open seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

## READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

**Emergency Health Care Services—  
Community Hospitals**

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

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense.

*The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:*

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

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

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

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

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

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

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense.

*The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:*

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

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

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

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

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

\* (1335)

#### **Retention of Hogs Single-Desk Selling**

**Madam Speaker:** I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk).

It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

**Some Honourable Members:** Yes.

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

WHEREAS the provincial government has made an arbitrary decision to move to a dual marketing system for hogs in Manitoba; and

WHEREAS Manitoba Pork is a democratically elected board, composed of producers who act in the best interests of all producers; and

WHEREAS a majority of hog producers have told the Minister of Agriculture that they support the single-desk selling function of Manitoba Pork, the marketing board; and

WHEREAS the government has failed to demonstrate that this decision will benefit either Manitoba's 2,200 independent producers or processors who have publicly stated support for single-desk selling; and

WHEREAS evidence from the United States indicates that open marketing has a negative effect upon smaller operations, where a majority of family farms have disappeared.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Minister of Agriculture reverse his decision and retain single-desk selling for hogs in Manitoba under Manitoba Pork.

#### **Emergency Health Care Services— Community Hospitals**

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense.

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

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

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

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

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

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table a statement as to fidelity bonds on deposit with the Minister of Finance prepared pursuant to Section 20 of The Public Offices Act.

**Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism):** Madam Speaker, I would like, on behalf of my colleague the minister of the Manitoba-Hydro Electric Board (Mr. Praznik), to table the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board Quarterly Report for the Six Months Ended September 30, 1995.

### ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

**Michael Bessey**  
**Tuition Fees/Cash Advance**

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

Mr. Bessey, a person known well to the Premier of the province, worked in a number of capacities, hired

by the Premier, at deputy minister levels: secretary to Treasury Board, secretary to economic committees of government, and generally hired at a deputy minister level to conduct a lot of negotiations on behalf of the people of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, it has been learned by the public that at the same time Mr. Bessey was working for the Premier in the government, he negotiated a tuition fee at Harvard, some \$20,000 U.S. and an undisclosed amount of money for a so-called book advance.

I would like to ask the Premier, was he aware that one of his senior public employees was negotiating these arrangements at the same time he was working for the Province of Manitoba? Can the Premier tell us today how much money is being advanced for the so-called book in this arrangement?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Madam Speaker, Mr. Bessey is a student at Harvard. He made his arrangements on his own. He submitted his resignation to the government of Manitoba, and Mr. Bessey has no further involvement with the Province of Manitoba. He is not on a leave of absence; he is not offered any opportunities for employment after he receives his Ph.D. His own arrangements with respect to his studies were ones that he made on his own.

\* (1340)

**Mr. Doer:** The Premier did not answer the question, and he did not answer whether the individual who worked for the Premier was making these arrangements at the same time he was working for the public of Manitoba.

On the one side of the street, Mr. Bessey was on the board of Faneuil ISG. Mr. Browne was involved with Faneuil as a vice-chair of economic development and a person that Mr. Bessey dealt with in terms of negotiations. Mr. Browne also owned a hundred percent of Stanton Corporation and he has a financial interest in Stanton Europa, a company that has now provided free tuition and a book advance to the same individual while he was still working for the province.

I would like to ask the Premier, has he investigated this matter, and did he make these arrangements as

reported at the same time he was supposed to be working for the people of Manitoba?

**Mr. Filmon:** Madam Speaker, the facts of the case, as I understand it and have certainly investigated to the extent of being made available of the facts of the case, are that Mr. Bessey has a scholarship arrangement, including a repayable loan from a corporation that has no relationship to Manitoba and no relationship to the Faneuil group. The only relationship that has been able to be established by those who have been investigating it is that there is one common director between the two companies. Under any circumstances that have been made available to me under any information, I have no information with respect to a conflict of interest or any potential conflict of interest.

What I would recommend to the Leader of the Opposition is, rather than deal in innuendo, deal in perception and all of those things, that he simply put forth the allegation to the Legislative Counsel, Shirley Strutt. That is her responsibility to make those interpretations on behalf of anyone who makes an allegation.

I have no evidence to suggest that there is any conflict of interest in the circumstances, and rather than us deal in innuendo and rather than us deal with an individual's reputation based on perception or political expediency, Madam Speaker, what I would—[interjection] The conflict of interest for all the information that has been provided for me does not exist.

If the Leader of the Opposition has information, then he should go directly to the Legislative Counsel with that information so that we can get to the bottom of it, rather than deal with innuendo and perception and rather than attempt to simply besmirch the reputation of an individual who has served the province well and who has served the province in good stead.

**Mr. Doer:** Madam Speaker, the Premier did not answer the question of whether he made these arrangements with the same individuals who were involved in Faneuil while he was on the board and while he was employed by the Premier. The Premier has not answered that question.

I would refer the Premier to the Oath of Office of public employees: I will not ask or receive any money, services, recompense or matter of anything whatsoever directly or indirectly in return for the services of discharge of my duties except my salary and wages.

Madam Speaker, this individual is reported to have negotiated tuition fees and a Newt Gingrich book advance while he was working for the Premier.

I would like to ask the Premier: In light of the fact that Legislative Counsel works for the Premier and cabinet, would the Premier agree to an independent investigation, an independent inquiry, bring in Ted Hughes or somebody independent from the government so we can investigate what was going on in the Premier's Office with somebody who seems to be working on both sides of the street? Will the Premier do that to clear the air?

**Mr. Filmon:** Madam Speaker, this is the most preposterous suggestion that has ever been made in this Legislature, and it shows why the members opposite have absolutely no credibility.

The fact is that we all deal in circumstances in which we have to make judgments each and every day, and when I make those judgments I go and ask the people who are responsible for the administration and the interpretation of the act to tell me what it is that is right and what it is that is wrong.

I have been given a set of information in which the only connection between a company that has provided a scholarship and the company that he has named, Faneuil, is that they have one common director. The company that is providing the scholarship has absolutely no business in Manitoba. Its business is economic consulting, primarily in Europe, and the work that is being done has to do with economic consulting and analysis to do with European economics in those countries that they deal with. That shows absolutely no evidence, as far as anything that I have been led to believe, that there is any potential for a conflict of interest.

I have asked for the interpretation from people who have to do with the administration of the act, and I am satisfied that there is not any conflict of interest.

If the member opposite has any evidence, rather than deal in innuendo, rather than trying to have a trial here by allegation, just go to the people who administer the act, present the facts and ask them to give you the legal interpretation. Please do not deal with people's lives in such a cheap political way for your own gain. That is all I ask.

\* (1345)

**Mr. Doer:** Madam Speaker, it has been confirmed and not denied that the individual negotiated his personal arrangements while he was working for the Province of Manitoba, for the people. It has been confirmed or not denied by the Premier that this individual negotiated on the one hand with the company in question and on the other hand negotiated his own tuition and an undisclosed amount of money for a so-called book advance—those facts have not been denied by the Premier—while this individual was working in his office.

This individual was on the board of Faneuil ISG that was negotiating with Mr. Browne. Mr. Browne is a hundred percent owner of Stanton, and he also has financial interests in Stanton Europa. Stanton Europa had entered into these financial arrangements with Mr. Bessey while he was still working for the people of Manitoba.

Does the Premier not want to clear the air over a senior staff member who travelled all over the world with the Premier? Does he not want to clear the air about this individual, have an independent inquiry, an inquiry that is independent of government, Madam Speaker, so the public can be assured of the facts of this matter?

**Mr. Filmon:** Madam Speaker, the air is cleared. Under any information that has been presented on this case, there is no conflict of interest. If the member opposite has information that should lead to an investigation of conflict of interest, please go to the Legislative Counsel, I implore you, rather than just simply try and come here and smear an individual for your own political purposes. Please go to the—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

### Point of Order

**Mr. Doer:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker, it is not members of this side who received a free tuition to Harvard and a book advance while we are working for the provincial public service. I wish the Premier would deal with the question about an independent inquiry, not engage in cheap politics as he is doing right now.

**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, the only cheap politics that are being played are by members opposite.

I implore them. We have a system of law here based on democracy, and democracy says that if you have evidence or information, please go to the Legislative Counsel, put it before her, ask her to evaluate it and ask her to give you a response.

I am satisfied that the information provided does not give any conflict of interest, and I have sought legal opinion on it which has confirmed that point of view.

Madam Speaker, I ask the member opposite, please do not just engage in McCarthyist tactics and smear tactics. Please go here and go to the Legislative Counsel.

### Point of Order

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker, Beauchesne is very clear in terms of Question Period. The Premier does not have to answer questions if he does not wish to do so, but it is the opposition's right to ask those questions.

Madam Speaker, it is not only unparliamentary but is offensive for that Premier now to be talking about McCarthy-type tactics. What we are asking for is for the Premier to be accounting for a question that is being

raised on this side which deals with some very serious concerns. We have phrased those questions very carefully. All we ask from the Premier is straight answers.

**Madam Speaker:** On the point of order, I would remind the honourable First Minister to indeed exercise caution with the choice of his words.

\* (1350)

**Michael Bessey**  
**Tuition Fees/Cash Advance**

**Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood):** Madam Speaker, Faneuil's offices are located in Boston—the same address, the same fax number, the same receptionist answers the phone calls for Stanton group. Stanton is in the same offices. Mr. Browne, who owns Stanton group and who owns a beneficial interest in Stanton Europa, is a senior vice-president, a vice-chair and occupies other roles in Faneuil. It is very clear that Stanton Europa, while it may legally be an arm's length corporation, nevertheless is very directly related to the beneficial interests of Mr. Browne in his role in Faneuil.

Can the First Minister then explain why it is not a potentially inappropriate use of influence for a senior officer of government who is sitting on several senior commissions and trying to broker deals with Faneuil corporation with Mr. Browne, why is that not an inappropriate use of his office when he receives and has admitted he has received a very distinct benefit in terms of—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. The question has been put.

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** If the member opposite would like to go and learn about The Conflict of Interest Act which was passed—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

**Point of Order**

**Mr. Sale:** Madam Speaker, I have never used the term, nor has the term been used by this side of the House

today, "conflict of interest." The term has never been used. The First Minister keeps using the term, accusing us of calling this a conflict of interest. We have not done so. The term has not been used.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Crescentwood does not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Filmon:** I would encourage the member opposite to investigate our conflict-of-interest legislation which was conceived and developed by the New Democratic government which preceded us. Under that conflict-of-interest legislation, a member who is covered by that legislation, in this case Mr. Bessey, could in fact go to work for the Faneuil corporation, the restriction being that he could not then work on any matters that dealt with Manitoba. He is working on a thesis that will deal with eastern European economics. How on earth would that be a conflict of interest?

Madam Speaker, I implore the member for Crescentwood, if he is a man of principle, if he is a man who has any integrity whatsoever, to go to the Legislative Counsel—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

**Point of Order**

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader):** Madam Speaker, Beauchesne's Citation 484 is very clear that members in this House should not either directly, or as the case of the Premier, by imputation reflect on the integrity of any member of this House. The Premier was very clearly doing that. If the Premier does not want to answer the question, he has that right, but he does not have the right to make those kinds of personal attacks once again against a member of the opposition who is simply asking questions in Question Period.

**Madam Speaker:** I will take the point of order under advisement and, if necessary, report back to the House.

\* \* \*



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

\* (1355)

**Mr. Filmon:** I implore the member for Crescentwood to simply go to the Legislative Counsel, Shirley Strutt, and place his allegations on the table and let that be investigated in the manner in which it ought to be by the people who are responsible to ensure that we, either us as members of this Legislature or senior civil servants, do not breach any of the oaths that we take or any of the matters that are covered under conflict-of-interest legislation. Make the allegation and get a response.

**Mr. Sale:** Can the First Minister tell us what exactly were the roles of Mr. Bessey and Mr. Browne, who is Mr. Bessey's new employer, in negotiating new and lower rates for Faneuil so that Faneuil could bring some of its Chicago original, research customer-management services operation to Winnipeg?

When were those negotiations? What were the roles?

**Mr. Filmon:** Madam Speaker, the negotiations with respect to the Faneuil company concluded more than a year ago. The Faneuil corporation agreements were all signed and the Faneuil corporation made its announcement in August of 1994 publicly. All of that was done more than a year ago.

In addition to that, I would say that the member opposite says that Mr. Bessey is an employee of the Stanton Europa group. He has, as I understand it—and I am only going by what I read in the newspaper—a scholarship and an agreement to produce research that will be of benefit to the corporation, for which he will be paid.

**Mr. Sale:** Did Mr. Bessey at any time withdraw from board meetings of Faneuil ISG during the last six months as a consequence of his negotiations for tuition and book advance with Mr. Browne?

**Mr. Filmon:** Mr. Bessey was not dealing with and not negotiating, as I understand it, with the Faneuil corporation. He was dealing with a group that is independent of the Faneuil corporation on matters that have nothing to do with Manitoba or with the Faneuil corporation.

### Seven Oaks General Hospital Nursing Supervisors

**Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan):** Madam Speaker, when we raised initially the concerns about the budget cuts to Seven Oaks Hospital in this Chamber, the Minister of Health denied that was taking place. When we talked about the LPNs being laid off, the minister talked about how he valued LPNs. Of course, the LPNs have now been laid off and, in addition, all the LPNs at Health Sciences Centre were told on Thursday they are being laid off.

Now the nursing supervisors at Seven Oaks are being laid off. They are the only backups available to the already tattered workforce at those hospitals as a result of this government's cutbacks.

Can the Premier explain to this House why, since they say they make the final decisions in this regard, they continue to cut and chip away at those hospitals and why they continue to eliminate nurses who provide the main level of care at the institution?

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** The plan set out is before the Health department for review to see what effect it will have on hospital service delivery as well as the overall health system in Winnipeg.

We are talking about the reduction of some management positions, and some of those reductions have already been accommodated through attrition. We expect, through attrition and the process involved, that there would be not very many people having to face layoff.

In any event, Madam Speaker, a meeting is scheduled for this week, at which the president of Seven Oaks Hospital will be meeting with senior Manitoba Health officials to discuss the plan in greater detail.

### Health Care System Emergency Services

**Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan):** Madam Speaker, can the minister explain then when he will be

announcing his decision with respect to the closure or the reopening of some or all emergency wards, and will he allow the public to have an input into those changes prior to the government implementing the changes to the emergency wards since, as I understand it, management have been told what those changes are already?

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** The honourable member understands that incorrectly. When we talk about consultations taking place, that is exactly what is happening. And when we talk about those consultations being meaningful, we mean that too.

#### **Seven Oaks General Hospital Closure**

**Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan):** Madam Speaker, my final supplementary to the Minister of Health: Will the minister also be consulting with the medical staff in the Department of Psychiatry at Seven Oaks Hospital who have written a letter of concern to the Minister of Health and to many of us in this Chamber about their concerns about the possible closure of Seven Oaks Hospital as a result of this government's cutbacks and the effect it will have on the already strained resources of mental health resources affecting psychiatric patients, not only in the north end of Winnipeg but the entire city of Winnipeg?

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** As I have said, Madam Speaker, this health care system is not my health care system, nor is it the honourable member's health care system. It is a system that belongs to all Manitobans.

I hope the honourable member would repudiate what his Leader once said, that he would be delighted to defend Ontario health policy back in the days of Bob Rae. They shut down 10,000 hospital beds in that province and very little news about the level of consultation held in that province, or in Saskatchewan where 52 rural hospitals were shut down, very little word about the level of consultation in that regard, Madam Speaker.

But that is something that happens here. We consult very widely before decisions are made.

#### **Manitoba Telephone System Brokerage Firms—Mandate**

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** Madam Speaker, on Friday, after repeated questioning, we finally learned from the government that they have indeed—and this was confirmed in more detail outside of the House, coincidentally, by the Premier—engaged three brokers that are currently looking at a number of aspects related to the privatization of MTS, something that they denied repeatedly in this House and denied repeatedly as recently as September in a committee of this House.

Now it has finally been confirmed by the Premier, I would like to ask if the Premier can indicate when these firms were retained and what their mandate exactly is in terms of MTS.

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Madam Speaker, I do not have an exact date, but my recollection is it is sometime within the last three weeks.

\* (1400)

**Mr. Ashton:** I would like to thank the Premier for that information.

I would like to then ask not only why this was not raised publicly by the government, not only during the election, but why the government, which is talking about openness in terms of Crown entities, did not even bother to reference this in the throne speech which was tabled in this House, read by the Lieutenant Governor last Tuesday.

**Mr. Filmon:** Because, Madam Speaker, at this point we do not have a particular plan in mind. We are undergoing investigations that will lead to decisions presumably down the road.

As I said in my speech to the Chamber of Commerce luncheon the other day, the fact of the matter is that our Crowns are now in situations in which many of them, particularly the Telephone System, are competing with private sector corporations in areas in which they get half of their revenue, and an increasing portion of their revenue will occur from those areas of competition in future.

It is therefore incumbent on us, in order to protect the interests of the taxpayer, to continue to evaluate whether or not they should be operating in the public sector when they are one of only two companies in Canada that do that as publicly owned corporations. Everyone else in the field is a private sector corporation and so therefore it is incumbent on us, in order to protect a huge investment, a billion-dollar investment that the taxpayer has, to investigate whether or not it is still wise for them to be in that certain situation.

### Privatization—Public Consultations

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** Madam Speaker, since the public of Manitoba is in effect the shareholders, if you want to put this in corporate terms, and since we have no information from the Premier as to exactly when this process will take place—the brokerage firms are indicating that it could be as soon as January or February—will the Premier, who has not given much information on this until we raised this in the House, at least say to Manitobans today that he will not sell off any part of MTS without fully involving the people of Manitoba, not just the Chamber of Commerce, but the people of Manitoba, in the process of debating whether indeed we should keep MTS as a public-owned asset?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Madam Speaker, we have been elected to office to exercise judgment, to make decisions in the best interests of the public and we continue to always ensure that we take that responsibility very seriously and that in every area of administration and every area of responsibility, we continue to evaluate what we are doing, how we are doing it and whether or not we could be doing it better, and that is part and parcel of the evaluation that is taking place with respect to the Manitoba Telephone System.

### Eye Examinations Deinsurance

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

There is a great deal of concern that Manitobans have with respect to the deinsurance or the potential

deinsurance of eye examinations. In fact, the Manitoba Medical Services Council is not able to achieve a consensus with the different interested groups.

My question to the Minister of Health is: Is this government prepared to make a statement on their position regarding the potential of having deinsurance of our eye examinations?

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** Madam Speaker, when word arrives that the Manitoba Medical Services Council is examining a particular tariff item, the concerns that arise arise not only in the mind of the honourable member or members of the public, they arise in the minds of honourable members on this side of the House too. We have legitimate questions that we want to ask of the Manitoba Medical Services Council. We ask those questions. Hopefully, at some point they will be able to respond to our concerns and if they make a report at that time, we would then look at that report and go from there.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, given that on October 19 and November 16 this committee actually met and I believe they have provided some information directly to the minister, can the minister give a government position on deinsuring eye examinations? Does this particular minister support that?

**Mr. McCrae:** Madam Speaker, the reason we have a Manitoba Medical Services Council is to assist government in arriving at the kinds of policy directions the honourable member is asking us to jump out with today. I think it is appropriate that we let the experts do their work and then go from there.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Just so that I can be somewhat clear for the Minister of Health, we in the Liberal Party believe that eye examinations should be insured under health care. Does this minister believe likewise?

**Mr. McCrae:** I do not know what data the honourable member and his colleagues are using to arrive at the decision. It may or may not be the same data being used by the Prime Minister of Canada, Madam Speaker, who takes a very narrow view of the insured aspect of our Canada Health Act.

I suggest the honourable member might want to touch bases with his federal counterparts on that point.

I think the Prime Minister referred to catastrophic events only. The honourable member has a different view, yet he will not pick up the phone when it comes to the very, very staggering reductions that are being imposed on us from Ottawa.

I hope the honourable member will raise his concerns with his colleagues in Ottawa as well as here.

### **Brandon General Hospital Budget Reduction**

**Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East):** Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Health.

Since 1990, the Brandon General Hospital has had its operating budget cut by \$5 million and is now being required to cut another \$2.2 million by the Minister of Health for the year 1996-97. In responding to these pending cuts, the hospital may be forced to eliminate 35 beds at the Assiniboine Centre plus 20 acute medical beds, involving a reduction of over 40 equivalent full-time positions.

Will the minister confirm that he is cutting the additional \$2.2 million at Brandon General Hospital and that it will further jeopardize the ability of that hospital to deliver top-quality health care in the Westman area?

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** Madam Speaker, rather than going back simply to 1990, I think the honourable member for Brandon East might be encouraged to go back to 1987, when he and his colleagues unilaterally ordered the closure of 43 hospital beds at Brandon General Hospital.

I remember well sitting over on the other side of the House when my colleagues were asking Larry Desjardins and the NDP at that time, what was the basis for these cuts at Brandon General Hospital. You know the answer, Madam Speaker? Health care reform. That was back in 1987, so the honourable member ought to keep that in mind.

He ought also to keep in mind that we very, very carefully monitor every proposal that comes forward from the hospital sector to ensure that patient care is the No. 1 priority with the hospitals as patient care is the No. 1 priority with us.

**Mr. Leonard Evans:** I would wish the Minister of Health not rewrite history, and talk to the—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable member for Brandon East, with a supplementary question.

**Mr. Leonard Evans:** Does the minister have a plan for the future of Brandon General Hospital? How many more millions of dollars will he cut? How many more beds will he close? How many more staff will he lay off? Where is it all going to end, and when is it all going to end?

\* (1410)

**Mr. McCrae:** Madam Speaker, the honourable member for Brandon East keeps an eye on Brandon General Hospital just like I do, as we both represent Brandon constituencies, so it is certainly appropriate that we have an opportunity to discuss the future of Brandon General Hospital from time to time.

No matter how you look at it, Madam Speaker, the city of Brandon is today and will remain for the foreseeable future, for as long as the honourable member and I can see forward, a major regional centre in the western part of the province of Manitoba. There is no way to look at it any other way but that Brandon General Hospital will be an extremely important facility for many, many years to come. So it would be incumbent upon any government to ensure that their planning is appropriate to the kind of future that we can expect in health reform.

The honourable member ought not to ignore the fact that technology has made very, very significant advances for us in health care which have resulted in major changes in the hospitals, which will continue to happen.

### **Centre for Health Policy Recommendations—Westman Area**

**Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East):** Madam Speaker, will the minister confirm that the Centre for Health Policy, which is a government-funded body, has prepared a report recommending that eight hospitals in

the Westman area will be closed, including Wawanesa, Glenboro, Boissevain, Treherne, Rivers, Rossburn, Shoal Lake and Birtle and that this will result in an exodus of doctors from these areas plus a large reduction of health care personnel and a consequential reduction in health care services in the Westman area?

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** Madam Speaker, I will not be confirming something like that. The honourable member knows that we are in the process of establishing regional health boards to run the health system in the various regions of the province of Manitoba. They have at their disposal the work and the capabilities of the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation which I think it was the NDP acknowledged was beyond reproach and an international leader in this sort of work.

So, no, I will not be confirming anything like that for the honourable member today, but all health care providers, all people involved in decision making for health care will indeed be addressing the issues in facilities and in the communities throughout Manitoba in the future.

#### **Department of Natural Resources Staff Biologist Firing**

**Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources.

The Department of Natural Resources is riddled with secrecy, gag orders and intimidation. Employees are threatened with transfers and indeed some of them have been transferred just for doing their jobs. Last Friday, this government fired Dan Soprovich for raising concerns regarding the Louisiana-Pacific forestry agreement signed by this minister.

In specific, was Mr. Soprovich fired because he recommended a more accurate formula for calculating the volume of wood in the annual allowable cut or was he fired because he recommended better ways to protect wildlife?

**Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources):** Madam Speaker, I am surprised and I am disappointed that the member would raise that issue

here in the House. [interjection] Let me clarify that. The issue was first raised when there was a transfer suggested for Mr. Soprovich, and the question was raised by the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) as to why this was happening. I normally do not involve myself with the administrative end of it, but in this particular case, because the question was raised, I did.

I can clarify why the transfer to Thompson at that time was suggested. We have had a position open there for almost two years where we have 40 outfitters out there, and it was felt instead of having a wildlife biologist in Swan, it would be advantageous to have a forestry individual in the Swan area because of the activities taking place there.

Madam Speaker, further to that, though, when I did a check into it—I want to caution the member that the individual who has been dismissed has the right to appeal and by having open discussion about that issue in this House here, I think we would jeopardize the opportunity for a proper appeal in that case.

**An Honourable Member:** Oh, great, you are such a generous soul. Fire him and now you are defending his right to appeal.

**Mr. Driedger:** Well, Madam Speaker, there was a further question asked. The member maybe was not on his feet, but I want to respond to his question as well.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Struthers:** How is it that one wildlife biologist can cause the whole department, including the minister, to be running scared? What are you hiding from?

**Mr. Driedger:** Madam Speaker, I do not want to get into the details of this at this point in time until the employee has had his chance for an appeal, but it would suggest the fact that the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) and the member for Dauphin were basically huddling with that individual during the whole course of the hearing.

If the members want the full details of it, because I have now acquainted myself with the full details of

what has happened with the dismissal, I will tell you something: I will make my statements after that individual has had his right for an appeal, and they should consider that very carefully.

#### **Louisiana-Pacific Federal-Provincial Review**

**Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin):** Since the Minister of Natural Resources is too busy firing his own people, I want to ask the Minister of Environment if he realizes there are gaps in federal information and gaps in provincial information, so why would he participate in the hearings that are proceeding in January? Why not call for a provincial-federal review of the Louisiana-Pacific project, or does he prefer Manitoba to be left holding the bag for millions of dollars in future liability and court costs?

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment):** Madam Speaker, I hope I misunderstood the member for Dauphin when he was implying that somehow the federal government is about to go into a great process of attempting to take our process to court. If that is his implication, I want to assure him that we have been working for years with the federal authorities to make sure that the process is clear, to make sure that any concerns that might be raised in the area of federal responsibility are appropriately answered.

Now if he has questions about whether or not there is information available, we have had a process that has been ongoing for the last number of months, and I think the very fact that the commission has extended for an additional day the opportunity to receive any further information would indicate that there is a pretty good working relationship between this province and the federal authorities on the delegation of responsibility. It could be better, but we have been working for years to make sure that it is at least cohesive, and I think he should rephrase his question.

#### **Real Estate Industry Fraud Investigation**

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** Madam Speaker, my question is to the minister responsible for the Manitoba Securities Commission.

On December 7 the minister said he had only become aware of the real estate flip ring after reading a week-

old article in the newspaper. Now, hopefully, the minister can tell the House why the commission was aware of the ring over a year ago and yet he knows nothing about this ring that has preyed on first-time homebuyers and this minister has done nothing.

**Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** The Manitoba Securities Commission is a quasi-judicial board that deals with regulations and overseeing the operations of a number of areas of our economy, Madam Speaker, one of which is the real estate industry. They do not regularly consult with me. I do not regularly consult with them. They have legislation under which they operate, and that is the charge given to them as a quasi-judicial board.

**Mr. Maloway:** Madam Speaker, we have an example of a house on Scotland Avenue that increased from \$21,000 to \$65,000 in one day. That is a \$44,000 increase.

I would like to know how this could happen and why the minister could sit back and see dozens of these sorts of deals happen over the last year, year and a half, two years, and still do nothing about it.

**Mr. Ernst:** Madam Speaker, it is not my responsibility to question the value of real estate property in the city of Winnipeg.

Madam Speaker, if there is an impropriety involved in any matter with respect to licensed people regulated by the Manitoba Securities Commission, then evidence should be filed with the Manitoba Securities Commission and the appropriate action will be taken.

**Madam Speaker:** Time for Oral Questions has expired.

\* (1420)

#### **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

#### **THRONE SPEECH DEBATE (Fourth Day of Debate)**

**Madam Speaker:** To resume debate on the proposed motion of the honourable member for River Heights

(Mr. Radcliffe) for an address to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor in answer to his speech at the opening of the session, and the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer) in amendment thereto, and the proposed motion of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) in further amendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington who has 19 minutes remaining.

**Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington):** Madam Speaker, I am going to conclude my remarks today, because I know that all of my caucus colleagues wish to put remarks on the record on this miserable piece of drivel masquerading as a Speech from the Throne. I am sure that government members will want to respond to our concerns.

So with those final few comments, I conclude my remarks on the Speech from the Throne.

**Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to have the opportunity today to rise in support of this Speech from the Throne.

The matters raised in this speech highlight the attention our government has paid and will continue to pay to the needs of all Manitobans and serve to reaffirm our commitment to making Manitoba a great place to invest, to live, to work and to raise our families.

Madam Speaker, before I begin, I would like to welcome all honourable members back to the House. Although it has not been that long since we were last here, I trust that all members have had the opportunity to spend some time in their constituencies with their families in anticipation of the busy holiday season that is almost upon us.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome back the five young people who were selected to work as legislative Pages during this session, and particularly I would like to recognize one of the young persons from my constituency of St. Norbert, and that is Jennifer Adolphe, who served the House admirably in the previous session and who I am sure will continue to serve with her fellow Pages in a commendable way in this session that we are about to enter.

Madam Speaker, I would also like to join all honourable members in welcoming you back. In my role as Deputy Speaker, I have had the opportunity to work closely with you and can honestly say that I have the highest respect for you and the dignity and decorum that you have shown this House. I look forward to the continued wisdom of your rulings and your patience which is called upon from time to time with all honourable members in your role as a Speaker. I know that I find it difficult at times when fulfilling my position as Deputy Speaker, but with the help of the Clerks and the Clerk, I have found it very interesting at times, and at times I find it—challenging is a soft word, Madam Speaker, when it comes to some of the rulings that have to be brought upon us within this House. I think it makes it very interesting.

Our government was rewarded this spring with something that is increasingly rare these days, a third consecutive mandate. In addition, every government member in this Chamber who sought re-election last April was returned by their constituents to this House. We are pleased that we have been joined by two new members representing constituencies that were not represented by the government party before the last election, namely, the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) and the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) whom I share an office with upstairs.

Manitobans have reaffirmed their support for the policies of our government that we have undertaken in the previous years, and they have asked our government to continue in our commitment to the policies of careful and prudent fiscal management, innovative approaches to the economic development and job creation, and continue to provide quality services to Manitobans at a reasonable cost.

Manitobans knew very well who they could count on when it came to balancing the budget. Our government was the first in 20 years to balance the books. Manitobans knew they could count on us to hold the line on taxes, for our government has not raised any major taxes in eight consecutive budgets, and Manitobans knew who they could count on to provide high quality, cost-effective services, as this has been one of the highest priorities of our government since we were first elected. This is what Manitobans told us

as we went door to door in April, and this is what my constituents tell me today.

As we went door to door in April it was interesting, because the people often asked what exactly is your job as an MLA? They seem to have a very low expectation of some of the elected officials. The question quite often came up, what exactly do you as an MLA do? I always said that my job as an MLA was to represent them first. [interjection] Madam Speaker, as the honourable member from across they way says, that is why they call you certain things. If those names are derived from what I do for my constituency, so be it, call me that, because I was elected to represent, and I will continue to represent my constituency within the Chamber and within government.

As an MLA and as a government member it is my job to go out to my constituency and explain the policies of government, and when my constituents bring forward concerns about some of the policies or a policy of government, it is my job to see that it is brought forward to my government, as I have always done since I was first elected.

I think it is important that we as elected officials at times set aside our political differences. At this time in Canada's history I think it is very important, because earlier this fall our country came face to face with the greatest threat to national unity we have ever experienced. As I joined with the Canadians from coast to coast in expressing my relief at the outcome of the referendum vote only a little over a month ago, we realized the results could not have been much closer. The vote was not the end of the subject but a new beginning as our country enters what could be its darkest hours.

I would encourage all honourable members to put aside those differences that we sometimes feel towards our political agendas and let us work towards protecting the unity of the greatest country in the world. It is our country, and it includes Quebec.

Let us work together, and let us continue with what we did at the unity rally which was held at The Forks, along with members of the opposition who were there. I was overwhelmed by the outpouring of support for

the people of Quebec from the thousands of Manitobans who had a desire to see our country remain together. It did my heart good to see the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) and the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) side by side on the podium that day, united in the desire to join in the enthusiasm expressed by Canadians from coast to coast in reaching out to Quebec to remain part of Canada.

The differences that are between us as citizens of Canada will always be there. I do not think we will all agree on one small portion of where we are going, but we do all have to believe in one thing, and that is that we are Canadians.

When we travel throughout the world and we see different parts of the nations, I think it really comes back to us to say, what is it about Canada that makes us distinct? We are distinct in all areas of Canada, Quebec for some of their own reasons within their language, within their civil law, but the rest of Canada with our ability to live united with a multicultural society that is beneficial not only to us here in Manitoba but throughout the world.

\* (1430)

As the world looks upon us as one of the best places in the world to live, we have the opportunity to work within the global economy in the languages of the world, because here within our own province, Madam Speaker, we can communicate with the Ukraine, with 50 Francophone nations, with Russia, with Germany, with Asia. That is what Canada has to offer. It has got to offer something to the entire world that a lot of countries have not got or have not got the ability to do. We have got the ability to set up partnerships throughout the world with education, partnerships throughout the world in economic benefits.

Madam Speaker, I was at a summit conference for the Francophonie just last week. It was interesting, one of the resolutions brought forward towards the African states was for more aid, and when you heard the African states stand up and say, we do not want to hear the word "foreign" aid, we want to hear partnerships, we want you to restructure your foreign aid in such a way that we have partnerships with other countries, I



was proud of the fact that they saw through this image that countries kept putting upon those Third World nations, that bring them to the trough and we shall feed thee, because they no longer want that. They do not want the concept of being brought to the trough; they want us to form partnerships with them so that they can retain their cultures, retain their languages and build upon what they have got within their countries and move into the global economy with everyone else.

Madam Speaker, throughout our government's term in office, Manitobans have consistently told us that creating jobs must be one of our top priorities, and our government has delivered. We have worked to remove barriers which have stood in the way of small business expanding and creating more jobs in Manitoba, and we have created a stable economic climate where employers feel comfortable in investing and staying to provide jobs for Manitobans.

The Globe and Mail has named Winnipeg as the second least-expensive metropolitan area in North America to do business in their recent survey of 45 such centres in North America. In fact, I would like to cite some examples of Manitoba advantage that is making Manitoba the destination of choice for a wide range of businesses.

Builders Furniture announced earlier this year they will expand their plant in Winnipeg, resulting in 45 more jobs. Laser West Fabrication in Winnipeg is expanding and upgrading their plant, creating 55 more jobs. Western Reman Limited of Winnipeg announced they will expand and upgrade their engine rebuilding facility, creating 42 new jobs for Manitobans, and the list goes on and on. This is all in addition to the recent announcements by McCain's of a \$56-million expansion in Portage, a \$40-million expansion by Schneiders, and these are but a small sample of the small, medium-sized and large businesses that have chosen to invest in Manitoba and take part in all the benefits of the Manitoba advantage.

Madam Speaker, at 7.7 percent, Manitoba has the second lowest unemployment rate in the country, far below the national unemployment rate of 9.4 percent. The unemployment rate amongst young people stands at 12.4 percent compared to the national rate of 15.6

percent. This is the largest year-to-date improvement in youth employment figures amongst all provinces.

While we agree that a zero-percent rate is preferable, we have made great strides in providing real jobs for Manitobans since taking power in 1988, jobs that pay well, are long term and sustainable well into the future. No longer must Manitoba taxpayers fund short-term make-work jobs that previous governments relied on to make the employment figures look better. Our government has shown that businesses will create even better jobs for Manitobans if they are given the opportunity. This is the legacy of our government. This is the legacy that our government has brought to Manitoba and is at least part of the reason our government received such a ringing endorsement from the people of Manitoba last spring.

Madam Speaker, our government understands the need on the part of the federal government to get their spending under control and to reduce the size of their deficit. This is something that every government across Canada has had to deal with in the 1990s, including not only our government but NDP governments in Saskatchewan, B.C. and formerly Ontario as well.

Our province will experience a \$147-million decrease in transfers from the federal government in the next fiscal year for health, education and social services, and we anticipate an additional \$220 million which will be cut in '97 and '98. This is a significant amount of money to be cut out of our province's budget and puts our government in a difficult position as we work to keep our budget balanced and to maintain our commitment to health, education and family services, but as I said before, our government is familiar with the pressure facing every government in Canada to balance their budget and get their fiscal house in order.

Governments of all political stripes, including those governments of the same political stripe as that of the opposition party in this Legislature, are coming to terms with the excess in some cases of wasteful spending in the '70s and '80s, confronted on one hand by the taxpayers who refused to pay any additional taxes and on the other by the lenders who will no longer buy bonds and securities of governments who run up huge deficits year after year.

Every government in the land has been forced to make difficult choices, and in the past few years our federal government is no exception. They have hit the debt wall and they are confronted with some difficult choices. As Manitobans, we are well aware of that. We can only encourage the federal government to be sensitive to the needs and concerns of Manitoba when bringing their spending under control. Whether in the area of federal transfers for health, education or social services or changes in the unemployment insurance program, our government must continue to be vigilant in protecting the vital interests of Manitobans as we have in the past with federal governments of all political persuasions. We must continue to work with the federal government, as well as other provincial and territorial governments, to ensure that the important services that our citizens depend upon are protected, made more efficient and perhaps changed, if necessary, but protected into the future.

Madam Speaker, our government was early to recognize the importance of maintaining a strategic infrastructure in attracting business to our province and to our communities. It is our position as a province that makes a good part of its income from exporting. It is that much more important that our business and citizens have a dependable infrastructure that they can count on to move product and supplies in and out of Manitoba. Only by making the intricate infrastructure available can we attract the types of long-term business investments we need to provide jobs for Manitobans.

In addition to the roads and railways that make up the traditional infrastructure, the business needs of the 1990s focuses increasingly on the electronic highway to move information in and out of our province. Telecommunication technology of all types plays a pivotal role in the future development of Manitoba, and our government has been attentive to the needs of business as we approach the 21st Century.

Madam Speaker, education is another very important part of where we are going as Manitoba, and consistent with our government's determination to guide Manitoba into the 21st Century in a competitive way, we have realized that our young people need to be able to read, write and compute at a high level for them to be a part of the economy in the next century. Manitobans in the next century will need to be competitive with young

people around the world to compete in the global economy, and our government's blueprint for change in education will strive to bring about the necessary changes in our education system to make Manitoba's young people competitive with the young people around the world.

\* (1440)

Madam Speaker, within Health, the province of Manitoba spends \$1.8 billion a year. That is 34 percent of our total budget. As in every other department in government, changes are needed in the health care sector to protect the services that we need within Manitoba.

Within the Victoria Hospital, which is the hospital in our riding, we have had the opportunity to move forward in a lot of the new technologies and moving out into the out-patient care area where we have taken operations that used to tie up the beds for 10, 15 days. We are now bringing the patient in and they are back on the streets within a day and a half, and in some cases hours, which has relieved some of the bed situation.

It is appropriate that within the health care institutions of Manitoba we do not have duplication of services or more of the duplications within units that have occurred in the past. What we are finding is some of the beds that are available are no longer in use. Madam Speaker, it only comes to bear that that is because of the new technologies that are available. I am very proud of the fact that within our hospital we have been making use of those new technologies and moving ahead and actually guiding some of the new directions that have been occurring here in the province of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, we live in a changing world. Those who cannot keep up with it will be left behind, and I am pleased to be part of a government that is taking the necessary steps to see that Manitoba is not left behind. We have balanced our province's budget, and we have taken measures to ensure that it stays balanced so that our children never have to deal with the fiscal crisis we had faced when we took office.

Through changes and reform to the education system, we are working to ensure that our young people have

the skills they need to be competitive in the 21st Century. By working closely with Manitobans to protect the high-quality essential services we expect, we will make sure that these services continue to be there when we need them.

Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and all honourable members this afternoon for the opportunity to put my comments on the record. I would also like to thank the people of St. Norbert constituency for their vote of confidence they gave me and our government earlier this year. I look forward to the continued opportunity to work on their behalf both inside and outside of this Chamber.

Madam Speaker, I only hope that we as elected officials have the opportunity to work together over the next four years and the next four years after that when this Conservative government leads us into the next millennium much further ahead than we would have been had it not been for our Leader (Mr. Filmon) who assisted us and guided us to be the government of the people. I think it is important that we speak of exactly that, and that is, what is the government of the people? Because as elected officials, I think that government members have to come from all areas of society.

We have some within our caucus from the legal area who are lawyers, and we have the teachers and we have the nurses and we have the farmers and we have the business people. It is interesting when you look across the House that we have an entire variety who are the building blocks for Manitoba. The honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), as he stands there, I even respect having the views of the NDP, because it is important that we have that critical touch once in a while to see that we are on the right track.

Madam Speaker, when I look across the House and I hear some of the concerns being brought forward, and I will call them concerns, I will not call it—

**An Honourable Member:** The naysayers.

**Mr. Laurendeau:** No, I would not call it that. I think we have to take into account that they were elected to represent the people of their constituencies and to represent the people of Manitoba.

**Some Honourable Members:** And to be in opposition.

**Mr. Laurendeau:** Well, they ended up in opposition, and I think Manitoba is prouder for that, or happier. I know they are further ahead for that. I am just happy that we were able to form government and that we will be able to guide Manitoba into the future. I know that St. Norbert is proud to have elected a Conservative member in government. I know that St. Norbert is proud that they were able to bring someone to the House who will represent their views and their concerns.

I have had the opportunity to stand on the podium with the Leader of the opposition and we do not always disagree. [interjection] That is right. I will not say that one.

**Some Honourable Members:** Your voice sounds familiar.

**Mr. Laurendeau:** Madam Speaker, as they said, the voice sounds familiar, but it is still the same inside. It just does not look the same on the outside.

**Some Honourable Members:** Marcel, you look like a Tory now.

**Mr. Laurendeau:** Well, I am glad I finally look like a Tory because for the first five years that is what I have been all along.

Madam Speaker, even though some members of the opposition and the media have labelled me as the rebel and a few other terminologies which I would rather not repeat in the House, I would like one thing very clearly understood and that is I support this government. I support the initiatives of this government and I support the direction that this government is taking Manitoba.

When we are done after this term and after the term after that, which the people of Manitoba will give us because of the direction that we are leading, I am sure, I am 100 percent positive that the history books will read that even the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) will have supported a lot of the initiative that this government has brought forward.

**An Honourable Member:** Where is your yellow ribbon?

**Mr. Laurendeau:** There goes the honourable member for St. Boniface as he asks where the yellow ribbon is. You know, Madam Speaker, it is interesting when they bring forward these issues and they say the yellow ribbon or supporting your constituents. Well, there is nothing wrong with bringing forward the concerns of your constituents. This is what we were elected to do. That does not mean I disagree with my government. It means that I am bringing forward the views and the concerns that are brought forward to me.

So let it not be said that I was taken to the woodshed. That is what they are referring to. Let it not be said because this government understands. This government understands the view of the Manitobans who elected us to be government, and we will listen. We will go out, and we will work with all Manitobans. Not like the NDP, we will not be abiding to the unions and the union rule. We will listen to all Manitobans.

We have been entrusted with the responsibilities of government. I look forward to the next four years, and I look forward to working as the Deputy Speaker. I will do my best to aid in the decorum of the House. I have also said I will try not to heckle because I know that has not helped. Now that the beard is gone, it is the new me, and I will work with the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) to see that the decorum is very well levelled.

So thank you very much for giving me this opportunity. I only wish we had more of the opportunity to get up and speak because I think there is a lot more that could be put on the record. But I do not want to take away from the time that some of the other members within the Chamber want to expound their virtues upon us.

I do want to listen to some of the statements made by the NDP because I think it is important that we bring those statements out to the public. That will guarantee us our next mandate. Thank you.

**Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows):** I would like to welcome back members to this new session, the second

session of the Thirty-sixth Legislature and also the Speaker and new Pages.

I believe it is a good idea to have a fall session. I think, since this is a very short session, the government can be flexible on when it is held. But I think there are a lot of reasons why getting into more regular legislative sessions is a good idea. That is, having a spring session and a fall session rather than sitting just once a year.

One of those reasons is that it is difficult for many members of the public to make presentations at the committee stage if we are in session in July. Secondly, many members of the public already believe that we sit twice a year, in the spring and the fall, and when we as members of the Legislature tell people that we in the past sat once a year starting in March or April and usually finishing in late June or even late July and we do not go back again until the following year in March or April, people are quite astounded when they hear that.

I think there are some—[interjection]

As the government House leader (Mr. Ernst) says, we can tell them we sat three times this year.

**An Honourable Member:** Four times.

**Mr. Martindale:** Well, four times. That is true. It seems like we have been here an awful lot this year, and in fact we have. Of course, we know that this government would really prefer to govern by Executive Council and not be in this Chamber at all, but, in any case, we are here, and we are using our opportunity to hold them accountable for their legislation and their policies.

\* (1450)

I am looking forward to rules changes which we hope will be introduced at the rules committee and then brought into this Chamber, and we are very close to getting a deal on rules changes. We believe it is going to happen this session, and I am pleased to see that because I was a representative of my party on an ad hoc rules committee—I am on the rules committee of my

caucus—but, more importantly, because I think there are improvements which we can make which will benefit the public and which will benefit us as members. It is a long time since we have had rules changes. I think it is long overdue, and I think all of us will be pleased with the changes that will be made.

There are some topics here which in the past have been taboo, which people did not raise for various reasons, and one of those was smoking in this building. However, I believe that Jerry Storie in his final speech did touch on this, and it is a sensitive topic, especially with members who smoke, including many members of my caucus, I must say. But I think it is time to raise it again, and if we cannot get agreement from the House leaders or from our caucus colleagues, then we should raise it in LAMC, and I think the chair of LAMC would be very receptive to having that discussion on her committee. So that is something that I will be raising, and if I cannot get it through my caucus, I intend to just go straight to LAMC.

This government in one of its major promises in this —[interjection] Well, the member for Steinbach (Mr. Driedger) says why would I want to provoke my friends. Well, I think when you believe in something strongly, you take a stand regardless of what even your colleagues believe, and I am sure that this minister does that in his caucus, in his cabinet, from time to time and provokes people by taking unpopular stands. [interjection] I thought you were talking about in general, people should not provoke their friends, but I think the minister would agree that when you feel strongly about something, you should speak up regardless of what your friends think. Is that not what we are elected to do?

I would like to use this opportunity to correct something I said on the record the last time which was inaccurate. I believe I said that I had 300 volunteers working on my election campaign, and I believe a more accurate figure would be 220. So I want to correct the record on that.

Also, I would like to take this opportunity to correct the record in that in Question Period I implied that the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) treated 125 people at La Beaujolais Restaurant, and I was actually referring to the seating capacity of the restaurant. While it is a matter of public knowledge

that the minister only treated 65 people, ministers and senior civil servants, at a cost of over \$6,000, the actual figure is the one that the minister gave of 65 people. So I take this opportunity to correct the record, and I am sure that the Minister of Family Services will appreciate that, even though it is an issue that is not going to go away for her; \$3,600 I am informed. Thank you for correcting me. I always believe that it is good to get the facts right. The political implications are for us to draw, but we should all get our facts right.

In this Speech from the Throne, I thought it was interesting to listen to what the government said are its priority areas, and for most Speeches from the Throne it has been the same. Usually, this government has said that health, education, family services and sometimes they throw in jobs or job creation are their priorities. There are several places in the throne speech that we are speaking on where they did identify health, education and family services, but there are other places where family services was left out, and things like safer streets was put in, so this is a new emphasis of this government.

But it did cause me to wonder why the government left out family services, and I think I should compliment them for their honesty because I do not think that family services is as high a priority as it has been in past Speeches from the Throne. It is also an acknowledgment that there are going to be significant cuts in the area of Family Services, so I think it is only honest of this government to not include it as a priority area, and it really indicates that their priorities are changing.

Now, there are many references in this Speech from the Throne to the federal government. Of course, it is always convenient for this government to blame the federal government for any cuts that are coming or may be in the works. On page 2, of course, they referred to the reduction in the federal transfers for social programs. This is one of the areas where the federal Liberal government made a major change in policy from that announced in their election campaign to the decisions that were made in their budgets.

I think all of us, well, probably not the Liberal caucus, but I think the other two caucuses would agree

that it is the Minister of Finance Paul Martin who is really calling the shots, and the person who has spoken so much about social policy reform, the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, has really taken a back seat to the financial decisions made by his cabinet and his government.

Well, they dumped some very unpopular decisions on Mr. Axworthy, and he is not looking too good for it. In spite of the fact that when he spoke on social policy reform in the House of Commons, he said that it was not about hacking and slashing, but now that we see that \$7 billion has been taken out of social policy spending, it is indeed hacking and slashing. We probably will not know until the next federal budget what the projections are for future years, but we are already starting to hear what the implications are for Manitoba and for individual agencies.

Just this morning, I met with a group who told me about one of the cuts that is going to come as a result of federal Liberal budget decisions which I did not know about. I had assumed that funding for organizations that worked with vulnerable persons was all shared on a 50-50 basis through the Canada Assistance Plan. I think we all know that social programs are in trouble because CAP is being repealed and this money is being put in an envelope with health and post-secondary education, but with less money. The amount of money that is being reduced has been calculated and is referred to many times in the throne speech and at every opportunity that the provincial cabinet speak on federal reductions, but what I learned was that there are organizations that receive money exclusively or almost exclusively from the federal government, with only a small provincial contribution. These organizations are now very concerned that they are going to lose their entire federal contribution.

Just to give an example, one would be Sturgeon Creek Enterprises, that the former Minister of Family Services would be familiar with, an excellent organization that provides employment opportunities for vulnerable people in the community. I have met their staff, I have been to their annual meeting, and they are doing a very good job. Now I hear that they and numerous other organizations throughout Manitoba are very concerned that they are going to lose their entire

federal budget. So what are the individuals that they work with going to do? Are they going to work unsupervised? Are they going to lose their employment opportunities? If so, will they be on social assistance? If they do end up on social assistance or some other form of provincial income, then —[interjection] Yes, I should be talking to the Liberal member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

That is another example of offloading from the federal government to the provincial government which we have seen in many, many areas, including unemployment insurance, whereby if the number of people who qualify for unemployment insurance dropped significantly, and I understand it has dropped from something like 90 percent of employees being covered to about 40 percent being covered, then those people end up on social assistance, or many of them end up on social assistance in Manitoba. The Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) in the past has given us the amount of money that this has cost our province, and I am sure that we will hear in the future other calculations of how much it cost.

The Minister of Family Services was quoted in a very interesting article in the Free Press of Friday, November 17. The headline says, Cash dangled to lure welfare recipients to garment jobs. Now this industry has received a great deal of publicity in Manitoba because they say there are a large number of vacancies, which is quite unusual. I believe one of the figures bandied about is about 1,500 vacancies, and so many people are saying, well, we need to change the federal immigration rules so that we can bring in garment workers from southeast Asia and other places, people who are already skilled in the garment industry.

But then there are people who say, well, look at the large number of unemployed people in Manitoba. Why do we not hire some of them? So it appears that the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) is trying to co-operate with the garment industry to hire, in fact, social assistance recipients. So she proposes a wage top-up, and it is a very interesting proposal because she uses the example of a single parent on welfare who makes \$800 a month and the provincial government, Family Services would top that up with \$200 a month for a total income of \$1000.

\* (1500)

Now, on the surface of it, it sounds like a good idea. I have no objections to it. However, I got out my calculator, and I figured out how much this individual would get on the existing work incentive program. For those who do not know what the work incentive program is, it is a program—like the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe). Madam Speaker, I really could forgive him because probably there is nobody in River Heights, or very few people who would qualify for the work incentive program. He probably gets very few calls about social assistance. I get lots, so I am quite familiar with this program. It allows individuals to keep either \$50 a month or, I believe, \$1.80 an hour, or 30 percent of gross wages over and above their social assistance.

Now it is actually a very, very tiny work incentive. In fact, it is almost a disincentive to work because anything over \$50 a month is deducted dollar for dollar. In fact, if you consider that to be a taxation rate, it is 100 percent tax back after \$50 a month, the highest category of taxation of any group of people in Canadian society, 100 percent. Anything you earn over \$50, you can keep it, but they deduct it dollar for dollar. [interjection] Well, the member for River Heights says, we are giving them \$200, but if you take out your calculator and you figure out, if they were making minimum wage, they would keep more money under the existing work incentive program than under this new program that the Minister of Family Services is announcing. Very strange.

You can be sure the minister will be hearing more questions about this during her Estimates. I would hope that, if they are going to employ unemployed social assistance recipients in the garment industry, they would at least give them the benefit of having the work incentive if it is more money than what is being offered now. Otherwise, we will simply accuse the minister of providing cheap labour to the garment industry.

In fact, that is one of the major reasons why there are vacancies because the wages are so low. I have talked to somebody who is knowledgeable about the garment industry, and I said, well, if they were paying \$9 or \$10 an hour, would all those jobs be full? They said, yes,

the jobs would all be full if they would pay decent wages. Well, my understanding is that they are making piecework, and they are making approximately \$7 an hour, and it is very difficult work. These workers are very vulnerable to repetitive strain injuries like carpal tunnel syndrome, for example, and all kinds of work-related injuries. I would be interested to know if there are a number of claims to the Workers Compensation Board from these.

Another thing that I want to mention about the Minister of Family Services trying to employ social assistance recipients, which, on the surface, is certainly a good idea to get them off social assistance, is that I have been told that they are expected to agree to shift work if they want these jobs, but there is no day care and they are expected to go to work at 7:30 in the morning. So is it realistic to expect a single parent to go to work at 7:30 if there is no before- and after-school child care or no child care if their children are under six years of age? It is not very realistic.

In the first round, 25 percent of the people were screened out. It would be very interesting to see if the garment industry is really willing to train these people and how many will actually get jobs. Hopefully, they will get some training through the Taking Charge! program, but I do not know.

The throne speech refers to calling on the federal government to continue its commitment to infrastructure investment. I think this is a good idea; we need good infrastructure in order to provide roads, sewers and many necessary services, not just for people but for business and for investment as well, but I certainly have some questions about how the federal government has invested this money. For example, in north Winnipeg, the largest contribution went to the Wellness Institute, approximately \$1.5 million—I am not sure of the exact amount—to what is basically a semi-private institution that has membership fees. It is going to cost \$400 a year to pay a membership for the Wellness Institute. I am getting their brochures in the mail now. Some of their courses are free, but many are \$25, \$40 registration fee.

I had lunch today with a business person who said that—for the record, I should say that I paid for this out

of my own pocket. He bid at a charity auction on me taking him out for lunch at the legislative dining room. So I paid for this lunch out of my own pocket, I can assure you. [interjection] As the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) says, now if we could only get some of the ministers to do that, we would be making progress, right? He said he is going to use the Wellness Institute, and that is good. I think people should use places like the Wellness Institute which are promoting good nutrition and exercise and healthy living. The problem is he can afford to, and many individuals of low income cannot afford or will not be able to afford to use the Wellness Institute.

I would be interested in knowing if this was one of the provincial government priorities for federal infrastructure money, the Wellness Institute. I presume the provincial government had a say in this. Where else did the money go in north Winnipeg? I think they put \$25,000 into Krupp Stadium. They put \$25,000 into north Centennial Pool renovations or repairs. At the same time, in the spring of this year, the north branch of the YM-YWCA of Winnipeg was closed; June 30, it was closed. That branch of the Y needs, according to the city of Winnipeg, about \$600,000 for upgrading.

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

So, on the one hand, we have millions of dollars going into a semiprivate Wellness Institute. The provincial government promised \$10 million for a new arena during the election, after the election did a major change, promised \$37 million to build an arena for multimillion-dollar hockey players to play hockey. Meanwhile, we have a recreation facility that serves thousands of people in north Winnipeg closed, and, if there are no suitable proposals—[interjection] Well, that is fine. The Minister of—well, I just promoted you. The member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) says it would be a recreation facility for all Manitobans. Well, that is not true, maybe for his constituents but certainly not for mine who could not afford to buy tickets to go to Winnipeg Jets hockey games.

We need this recreation facility. We need the North Y to be reopened, whether it is operated by North

Winnipeg CARE Incorporated or another group. One of the concerns that people are phoning me about is worry that with more kids on the street, there is going to be more crime, and there were some very good programs operating there. For example, the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey), I give her credit for funding through Probation, through her department, a program called Night Hoops, whereby the North Y was open Friday and Saturday nights till three o'clock in the morning, keeps kids off the streets, keeps them out of trouble, keeps them in a safe environment, and that is good.

What are people saying when they talk to me? I had two people, one on Boyd, one on Redwood, say that kids are playing in garbage bins in the back lane. Just last week, I was walking down Andrews Street, and I saw kids bumpershining, except that I saw a new version of it. When I was a kid, I used to do dangerous things, too, like bumpershining, but at least we hung on to the bumper. These kids were trying to hang onto the wheel well, which is even more dangerous.

So I talked to them. I said, please do not do that; you know, you might get hurt. They said, who are you, a cop? I said no. I said, I am concerned about you and your safety. They said, we do not care. They said, we do not care; we are just welfare bums. I said, no, you are not. You are good and valuable people. They said, we do not care if we die. These are kids who have no hope. These are kids who do not care about their personal safety because they have nothing to live for in their view, and they have almost no recreation facilities. So what do they do? They bumpershine. That is their recreation, and we know how dangerous it is because someone died last week, apparently from bumpershining.

So we need to get the North Y open, and I think an investment by the province would be quite suitable in addition to the city and the federal government. I would like to see the provincial government designate the North Y for infrastructure funds from the next round of federal-provincial infrastructure renewal monies.

The throne speech refers to the cutbacks from the federal government, but it does not talk about some of



the revenue that is received. For example, in 1994-95, this government got \$176 million more from the federal government than they budgeted. They also neglect to say in the throne speech that their gambling addiction will bring in almost \$250 million this year, when just a few short years ago it was bringing in only \$55 million. In 1995-96, this year, the province of Manitoba will receive \$249 million more in equalization than it did just two years ago.

So, although we do not minimize the problems of federal offloading, we think that the government should at least take into account or refer to the increases in revenue that they received in some areas as well.

The government talks repeatedly about health care. In fact, they brag in this throne speech that this is one of their priority areas and that they are going to protect health care, but in fact the truth is quite different. We have seen numerous cuts, and now people are very concerned about the closing of emergency rooms and in fact, in our area, very concerned that Seven Oaks Hospital emergency room is not going to be reopened. As we have heard through the media, there is speculation that it may be converted into a geriatric hospital.

\* (1510)

People are saying, why us? Is it because we live in north Winnipeg? It is very unfair. For 25 years north Winnipeg did not have a hospital and people campaigned and worked very hard to get a full-service hospital, and now they do not want to give it up. They do not want lose it.

People are saying, well, could it be that it is not located in a Conservative riding. There are only Liberal and NDP members in north Winnipeg—[interjection] I am talking about hospitals now.

We know that Grace Hospital is in a Conservative riding; we know that Victoria Hospital is in a Conservative riding. Concordia Hospital, I believe, is in an NDP riding, but it is very close to Rossmere, and I am quite sure that the Concordia Hospital emergency room will reopen. After all, they would not want to lose Rossmere back to us in the next provincial

election, which will probably happen anyway, as my colleague from Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) says.

We in north Winnipeg feel very vulnerable. We certainly hope that this government does the right thing, but there is no guarantee that they will. If they do not, you can be sure that the yellow ribbons will proliferate, that there will be many more of them, that we will do everything we can, first of all as MLAs, to support the public, and that the public will try to get their message through to this government to listen to them and do the right thing.

The throne speech refers to the Children and Youth Secretariat. I had occasion to listen to the director of this new branch of government. In fact, it was a very interesting speech. He said things that no elected person on the government side would probably ever say. I give him full credit for being truthful about some of the problems of children and youth in our society, and he talked about some of the solutions.

I believe they are adding a fifth government department, Sports, to Family Services, Health, Education, and I am not sure what the fourth one is, but I believe they are adding a fifth government department. They are trying to accumulate some money to do things in a co-operative way and an interdepartmental way.

Some of the initiatives in the Children and Youth Secretariat are quite good, and I commend the government for that if they actually go ahead and do them. Now there are some concerns that I have which I will probably raise later in the session.

They also have the healthy children report commissioned by the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), and it has many excellent recommendations. We have been referring to it frequently in Question Period and saying this is your report, it has good recommendations, now is the time to implement them. We hope that the Children and Youth Secretariat will influence the Minister of Health and other departments to implement those recommendations because they are good ones.

Now, this throne speech announces the Manitoba version of social security reform, or at least serves

notice that we are going to have social security reform in Manitoba. It talks about targeting resources to those in the greatest need. It is very significant. I mean, when you look at government announcements, we know, of course, that you do not get detail in a throne speech, but if you listen to what the minister is saying and you read the throne speech and you put it together with comments in the media—

**Some Honourable Members:** You get the big picture.

**Mr. Martindale:** Well, you do not get the big picture, because you have to read between the lines, and there is no big picture. I would be quite happy if there was a big picture, even if there were not any details to the big picture. [interjection] Well, if you read between the lines, the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) is saying that she is going to protect certain groups. She is going to protect seniors, the disabled and single parents, targeting resources to those in the greatest need; however, she says nothing about single employables, which is a very large category.

In the city of Winnipeg, which has approximately 89 percent of all the single employable caseload in the province of Manitoba, we are talking about over 16,000 cases. What is going to happen to the single employables? There is nothing in the minister's public statements. [interjection]

The minister from Steinbach says, they will get work. The Minister of Family Services is in favour of workfare. I predict that we are going to get a version of workfare in Manitoba. If it is employment and training, we agree. If it is people getting paid jobs, we agree. If it is people going from social assistance to paid employment, we are 100 percent in favour of that. If the government assists people in getting jobs, we are in favour of that as well.

It depends on what kind of top-out. We are opposed to millions of dollars going to subsidize private corporations, which is the workfare model of the Province of Quebec.

The Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) in fact is attending a meeting in Calgary of other provincial ministers and, I presume, federal

representatives as well to talk about social policy reform. Hopefully, they will put out a communiqué after it is over although I understand that sometimes communiqués are written before the actual gathering. But it will be very interesting to see if they say anything substantial.

Usually communiqués from federal-provincial gatherings are quite nebulous or lacking in substance. But this is one area where the provincial ministers should really unite and stand up to the federal government and say, we do not want you to offload. If you are going to we want you to consult us in advance rather than just announcing unemployment insurance with very little input. This is one area where I think the provincial governments are wrong in saying, we want more provincial autonomy. Why would you want more provincial autonomy when you have less money to do the things that you believe in. It is quite contradictory.

But this is an opportunity, and I hope we see the provinces unite when they put out their communiqué probably on Thursday of this week in saying what kind of social policy reform they want. I hope it is positive and I hope the federal government listens to it.

In Manitoba we know that there are implications for the federal government's decisions in the area of social policy reform, particularly with repealing the Canada Assistance Plan and repealing all the parts of it, at least that is my understanding, except the prohibition against residency requirement. So we hope that the province of Manitoba will continue some of the existing provisions, for example the right to appeal and the right to social assistance based on need. We will be watching the provincial minister to see if indeed those provisions stay in Manitoba.

The throne speech announces a comprehensive review of The Child and Family Services Act, and I look forward to that. I commend the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) for promising public consultation, and I hope to be at some of those public consultations.

I am interested in knowing why the minister wants to review The Child and Family Services Act. Who is asking for review of this legislation? I think legislation

should probably be reviewed once every 10 years in any case. It would be about 10 years since the act was originally passed, so I think it may be appropriate. But I would also be interested in knowing what pressures are on the government, who is asking to have it reviewed, and why.

At the same time the minister should look at the Children's Advocate, because the legislation, the amendment to The Child and Family Services Act that set up the Children's Advocate office, said that there would be review within the first three years. I would hope that the minister would not wait until the three years was up, because she can review the Children's Advocate at any time.

The government talks about efforts to maintain accessibility for post-secondary education. This is a rather disappointing statement from a government that has eliminated accessibility and has eliminated and downsized Access programs. For example, they have almost totally eliminated funding for students at the Winnipeg Education Centre.

This is the kind of program that the ministers who are heckling me should be in favour of, because it was getting people on social assistance an education and getting them off social assistance and into paid employment. I know many of them who are now employed as social workers and teachers, particularly in the inner city, and yet Winnipeg Education Centre, because of cutbacks, is forced to say to their students, we have no funding, if you attend here, you have to bring your own funding. The result is that many of their students are students whose funding comes from their First Nation.

\* (1520)

It is good to see many of their students there, perhaps many more of their students there, but the other categories of people on social assistance and immigrants and single parents and people who have been living in poverty are having an extremely difficult time getting a post-secondary education, which in most cases gets people off social assistance. So in spite of their rhetoric, in spite of this government talking about

maintaining accessibility, there have been many cuts in Access programs.

The throne speech talks about community crime prevention initiatives and this is something that my constituents who experience a very high level of crime were very interested in, and so am I personally. About a month ago, we had our house broken into for the second time in two years. Last year, we had two cars stolen, our garage has been broken into about five times, and we finally put a security alarm system in our house at some expense. When there is a lot of crime in our neighbourhood and in our society it does not just affect my constituents. It affects me because I live in the north end. I live in the neighbourhood of my constituency.

However, we think they could be doing a much better job. One area is an area that they actually touched on, and that is youth justice committees. We know that youth justice committees are very effective and therefore we have recommended, and this is one of the alternatives that we have been putting forward.

The government is always saying, what are your alternatives? Well, we have been saying over and over that every community in Manitoba needs a youth justice committee. There are many, many success stories.

I was talking to somebody who is on the youth justice committee out in Oakbank. She was telling me about individuals who were caught vandalizing the school and so they had to go and cover up the graffiti. They had to apologize to the principal and because it is a small community everybody knew about it. I think we can safely predict that these individuals will not be involved in something like that again in their community.

I was also told that in Niverville they have a youth justice committee and that they had some individuals referred to it and as a result there were no referrals to the youth justice committee because there was no petty crime or vandalism for seven months. The people there on the youth justice committee attributed this to the success of the youth justice committee.

So we believe there should be a youth justice committee not just in good Conservative constituencies, as the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) says, but in every community.

A successful one in north Winnipeg is called Wi Chi Whey Wen Justice Committee, the aboriginal youth justice committee. There was a very interesting story in our community newspaper about their committee and about some of the success stories. Almost none of the young people referred to them have come back a second time, which illustrates how effective they are.

The throne speech refers to 1995 as being the year in which we celebrated our 125th anniversary. Last year was the International Year of the Family. Next year is the United Nations' Year for the Eradication of Poverty. I would like to see this government proclaim 1996 as the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, but it is a hopeless cause. This government will not do that.

Why would they do something that would totally embarrass them since they have been the child poverty capital of Canada several years in a row? In spite of not being in first place anymore, child poverty and family poverty is amongst the highest of any province in Canada. It is a disgraceful record. They should work on it. They should put the kind of effort into eradicating poverty that they put into celebrating families and the 125th anniversary of Manitoba, but you can be quite sure that this government will not be doing that.

The throne speech has been amended, and I would like to wrap up by saying that we will be voting for our Leader's amendments which basically condemn this government in a number of important areas. For example, breaking its election promises about preserving people's health care and instead closing community hospital emergency rooms; failing to implement a plan for post-secondary education; refusing to act while Manitoba lost 5,000 jobs last month; showing contempt for their promised consultation on rural concerns by unilaterally introducing dual marketing to the hog industry, despite the opposition of farmers concerned; for demonstrating its lack of respect for aboriginal peoples through the

continued inaction on the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry and Treaty Land Entitlement; and, for the government actions in the Louisiana-Pacific deal that make a mockery of the practices of sustainable development.

Just today we learned that one of their own staff, we are not sure why, maybe for speaking out in public in a way that was critical to the government, maybe for speaking to MLAs, which seems to be a crime in the view of this government—I guess they do not believe in freedom of speech—and one of the staff in Natural Resources was sacked. It is really a disgraceful act which betrays all their fine rhetoric about sustainable development.

In conclusion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will be voting against the throne speech and supporting the amendments of our Leader (Mr. Doer).

**Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I too would like to add a few comments in regard to the throne speech, and I guess express some of my thank yous and concerns. Particularly, I guess, I would welcome back everyone to the House for the session before the New Year. I thank the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker for their guidance in my first go at politics. It certainly has been a very interesting and educational forum, and I certainly look forward to what the future may hold.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have sat here patiently, I guess, the last week or so listening to the responses to the throne speech from the members opposite, and in listening to the addresses. Although the names and the faces change, the message and the constant bantering seems to be the same. I often—as I sit and listen I hear the words from the opposite side, secrecy, poor economy and federal bashing. As I look back in the history of some of the Hansard and some of the newspaper clippings I would almost question the people opposite. Are they really commenting on our throne speech, or are they commenting on throne speeches that were made approximately a decade ago? I suspect that they are all engaging in selective memory and they have forgotten the dark days when they sat on the government benches, the confidence they have in our direction when they returned our government to the leader of the office.

Today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I plan to outline some of the past accomplishments of this government and that some of the future plans and goals clearly show the advancement that our province has made under this administration. The balanced budget legislation that our government brought into law last session was hailed as a triumph in my constituency of Turtle Mountain. I have not had one person come forward and say that it is not something that we as a government should not have done. To me, in my mind, it has been considered a triumph of common sense and of realistic government. The constituencies in Turtle Mountain, and I believe in Manitoba, understand that the way to protect the education system and the way to protect the health care system is to eliminate the deficit and reduce the debt.

The economic suggestions that come from across the floor, those which propose throwing money into a deep bottomless pit, are ones which led to poverty not prosperity. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was not an easy task to eliminate the annual deficit and create balanced budget legislation. I just point out, this legislation has been heralded throughout North America as one of the best efforts by government to be responsible to the public. I think that that certainly deserves the credit and the accreditation that goes with it.

The government has had to make tough decisions in an effort to regain the confidence of the business sector and has worked hard to exorcise the ghosts of an NDP administration. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitobans have not forgotten life under the NDP administration. I somehow suspect that they would like to, but they have been unable to. Just a few points—and again, as I hear the rhetoric coming back and forth—under the former administration, our province's public debt more than doubled. Now I ask you, who is to blame for this? The former NDP Finance minister stated that the increase was due to fundamentally immoral moves by Ottawa and that Ottawa would need to take the responsibility. It sounds a bit like federal bashing to me. That was back in 1985.

When the previous administration declared that it would raise taxes in December of 1986, the Premier stated that this was necessary due to the federal government's \$20-million cut in transfer payments.

Again, the numbers may be a little bit different, but it certainly sounds like the same thing happened at that time. [interjection] Pardon me?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am sure it is a misquote because I am certain, based on what the Leader of the Opposition, the comments that he made in the House last week, he would not have stood for his government bashing and blaming the federal counterpart in regard to their poor fiscal management.

\* (1530)

The government, in the face of over \$200 million of federal transfer cuts, has managed to freeze taxes, has managed to balance the budget and, yes, we do take the occasion to point out to our federal counterparts that what they are doing to us in these economic times is a hardship placed on all Manitobans. As well as pointing that out to you, I think we are taking the necessary steps and pursuing the end as opposed to just sitting on our seats and complaining.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) has suggested that our government is high on talk and low on action. I would like to suggest the facts, the raw facts, clearly show that our government has passed the test, while the NDP government in the past has simply passed the buck.

Until this government took office, major tax increases were an annual occurrence. There were only two things that Manitobans could be sure were coming, the cold of winter and more NDP tax increases. Our government has held the line on all major tax increases for eight years, and we have committed ourselves to public consultation before we would ask Manitobans to pay more.

By balancing the budget and freezing tax increases we have instilled in the people of Manitoba, and particularly the business people of Manitoba, a true sense of confidence and stability and the direction of where the province is going.

I know that certain members of this House feel that it is unimportant to balance the budget and frequently call for greater government spending. I would suggest

that these members are out of touch with what the people of Manitoba desire, what the people of Manitoba want and what the people of Manitoba can afford, and it does go a long way to explaining why they sit across the floor from us today, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I am reminded of a comment recorded where a former NDP MLA in 1990 suggested that Manitoba's debt was within reason when you look at the other provinces. Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I found myself in a leaky boat with no land in sight, I would take little comfort from knowing that there were nine other leaky boats beside me. However, the government of Manitoba, the current government of Manitoba, took action at that time to control its finances, and it is because of that reason that we are not facing the enormous cuts that other provinces are currently enduring. The Province of Manitoba, our government, took the necessary and difficult steps needed to ensure that future generations of Manitobans would have exactly that, a future.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the government recognizes that business is not the enemy of the people. Government and business need to work together to ensure that there is opportunity for Manitobans and a strong economy to support the social programs that Manitobans need. The members opposite call upon government to tax and regulate businesses to prevent them from, what they term, being greedy and irresponsible, but they fail to remember who employs and pays for the programs that we introduce into the province. The former premier of Manitoba in an NDP era has even conceded that the NDP sometimes suffers from not enough people that bring with them a business sense. I would suggest that the opposition is still suffering from that problem.

New and existing businesses know that they can trust our government to maintain a stable, fiscal environment and that their companies have a future in Manitoba. I suggest, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we need not look very far to see the results of those efforts. Rural Manitoba and the agribusiness sector are experiencing unprecedented growth. This government's economic policies have set the foundation for enormous growth and prosperity, not just to rural Manitobans, but to all Manitobans.

I would ask the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) to travel outside of the Perimeter and get a sense of the economic revival that is happening in our rural communities. What he would find are individuals who have renewed faith in the government's ability to run an effective and efficient economy. He would also find Manitobans who now feel that their children will find opportunities in the communities that they have been raised in, not exporting the jobs out of our communities.

Under the former NDP administration there was an uncertainty as to what the future held. Manitobans knew that governments could not go on spending more than they brought in forever. They knew that each dollar that was added to the deficit was a dollar that was added to their child's payback. Our government has restored optimism in the future of this province, and no amount of rhetoric from the opposite side of this House can change that fact.

Through consultation with rural Manitoba, through such initiatives as community works, the REDI program, the REA, and the rural task force that was just announced in our government's throne speech, we have created an economic climate that is certain to enhance the opportunities of all Manitobans, no matter where they live.

It is important to understand that our government is unique in its approach to the economy. We have enacted a balanced budget legislation that does not have an equal in North America. We have undertaken positive initiatives in the areas of education and health care that stand on their own merit for their foresight and quality. It would have been easy for this government to follow down the same beaten path that many other governments have travelled, many other governments in Canada, not just Manitoba. That path leaves in its wake enormous debt and deficits, unstable social services and an uncertain future.

This government, however, has chosen a different path, not an easy one, but one that will provide our province with a solid base on which to build its future. We have seen the results of governments that choose to take the politically easy alternative. The people of Ontario have learned the painful lesson that there is no

easy solution to difficult questions, something their former NDP government led them to believe.

While the opposition Leader of this House (Mr. Doer) is on record as saying that he supported the increased spending that led to record annual deficits and a record high debt in Ontario, we have seen the difficult position it leaves those who are elected to clean up the mess. In Manitoba, we are fortunate that we have had leadership that is proactive and that has had the foresight to avoid this situation.

\* (1540)

I have had the opportunity to sit on the regulatory review committee, and, basically, the committee is designed to reduce the amount of government red tape that business owners are forced to endure in their dealings with governments. As an owner of a small business, I understand how important it is that entrepreneurs reduce the amount of time that they spend doing menial paper tasks and increase the amount of time they spend building and growing their operations.

Our government, the government of Manitoba, has continually reviewed ways to make it easier for businesses to operate and reduce interference with free enterprise. I know that we have had a tremendous response from the business community at large and that they are pleased that we are taking action on this initiative. Under previous administrations bent on building the fortress of government bureaucracy, only lip service was paid to the idea of helping the development of the entrepreneurial spirit through such an endeavour. A task force created to deal with government regulations was established under the opposition's government in the months leading up to a provincial election. It was met by the Winnipeg business community with scepticism and proved to be richly deserving of that mistrust. Our government fortunately has picked up the ball where the opposition had fumbled it and are committed to seeing this process to its completion.

Part of the debate throughout the throne speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has been obviously on the health care system. We have been hearing repeatedly both in the

media and here in the Legislature that the direction we as a government have taken in our health care reform is irresponsible at best and downright reckless at worst. If one were to base their information solely on what members opposite have been telling the media and their constituents, one would receive an extremely distorted version of what this government has been achieving in terms of its health care policy.

Many of the comments I have heard about our health care policy started me thinking. When you sit here day after day and hear the rhetoric from the other side, you start to question some of your views and values, and rather than sit idly by, I decided to do a little bit of research to find out what health care was like in Manitoba under the former government.

Now, I know for anybody who was here, this may be a little boring, but what I am about to share I think is quite interesting. The members opposite are so critical of our policies, I thought, well, they must have some clever ideas during their time in office; for example, devoting as much in the way of financial resources to health care as this government of Manitoba now does. I was wrong. You only have to look at the financial resources the NDP directed to health care to see how far the rhetoric is from reality.

The previous administration had a definite inability to combine quality health care with sound financial management. Fortunately for Manitobans, this government does not have the same problem. We currently spend more of our budget, over one-third, on health care, which is higher than any other province in Canada. This year we will spend \$1.85 billion on our health care system. This is over \$500 million or 38 percent more than when we took office, so I ask, why are you always suggesting we do not devote enough financial resources to health care? Are you objecting to the fact that we are targeting our financial resources more effectively? Are you objecting to the fact that we are targeting our financial resources more efficiently? Your accusations are that this government is ruining the health care system in Manitoba, and it is just not based on any rational, objective look at reality.

I believe that the opposition is basing their statements on nothing more than political opportunism.

Manitobans, fearful of federal cutbacks and concerned with their families' health, are given much erroneous information. They do not know who or what to believe, and the opposition uses this government to whip up public sentiment for their suggestions.

The people of Manitoba have told us that we must do what we have been doing, and that is to live within our means. That is why we have introduced the toughest balanced budget legislation in the country. Manitobans are unwilling and unable to pay higher taxes. They want to maintain the social services which contribute to our high standard and quality of living, and we have achieved both objectives. We have delivered a budget which allows us to fund our health care system at a level which is higher than it has ever been, certainly higher than it was funded under the NDP administration.

The people of Manitoba have seen through the fearmongering and the scare tactics. I believe it was overwhelmingly shown during the last provincial election.

Yes, we are concerned about the high cost of health care, but so are all Manitobans. Yes, we believe we must make changes in order to make our health care system more rational and effective, and Manitobans agree with that as well. I am just sorry that the people opposite do not agree.

Throughout the papers and the studies that I took on to find a little history here, I do realize, and I have some records actually, where the opposition have supported many of our health care reforms, but by listening in this Chamber you would have to believe that most members opposite have nothing positive to say regarding anything this government does. I presume that is why it is called opposition and why they are on that side.

It was quoted by an opposition MLA that the government's health care plan was launched with a fair amount of credibility. The plan has credibility generally in the public for the general goals, and also on the same day the same member suggested that there were various members of this House lauding this plan as it was hard to be critical of the general overall

statements: We give full marks to the government for their mental health reform.

I do like hearing compliments as well as the next person, but I just wish the opposition would be a little more consistent in their views of our health care reform. It seems like every time I open the paper, turn on the radio, I hear a different position from the other side.

The opposition criticizes our health care record and then turns around and agrees with some of our initiatives. The official opposition when in power spent far less on health care than we do now, and then they accuse us of cutting back. The official opposition speaks about the need for change, but their main agenda seems to be the status quo, defend the status quo. I would say, in my entire life, defending the status quo, if you are standing still, you are going behind. So, if you are not looking forward and moving on, you are certainly going backwards.

As I mentioned before, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitobans are seeing through these tactics, and many are working together with us to achieve the change that benefits all Manitobans, not just specific interest groups which we hear about daily but all Manitobans.

The state of affairs under an NDP administration was not just confined to the area of health care. When I looked at the condition of the education system under the previous administration, it will not surprise many members of the House when I tell them that, like in the area of health, we are spending more than the previous administration ever did in education. We currently spend approximately \$1 billion a year on our education system, and this figure represents \$1 in every \$5 of provincial program expenditures.

It may be of further interest to the members of this House to know that since taking office we have increased funding for education dramatically. The budget of the Department of Education and Training increased from \$747.3 million in '87-88 to \$990.5 million in '94-95. The department's share of the provincial budget increased from 17.7 percent to 18.2 percent. This is a concrete example of our commitment to education as an investment in Manitoba's future.



The official opposition has not supported us when we passed budgets which contain increases for education. I ask you, why is that? Either you are serious about devoting more financial resources to education or you are not. We are constantly being criticized for not doing more in the field of education, and then we are not supported when we present a budget which offers just that.

As many of you are aware, we have been receiving a lot of criticism from the other side of the House for our approach to the elementary, secondary and post-secondary school systems. What is most interesting to me is who we have not been getting criticism from, students, parent and educators. This is probably due to the fact that there are fundamental differences between our approach to education and the opposition's approach.

We believe that an education system must provide for the involvement of parents. It must ensure a safe and disciplined learning environment, and it must be accountable to those who foot the bill. Perhaps, most importantly, it must ensure that students learn basic knowledge and other essential skills which will enable them to lead successful, fulfilling lives after the completion of their education. These principles are the basis for this government's education reform initiatives.

\* (1550)

To hear some members opposite speak in this House, one would get the impression that they support our reforms. In fact, the Leader of the official opposition is on the record as saying, kids need a healthy school system; they need a safe school system. There is a serious problem in our schools in terms of safety. Also on that date, the same member stated that they, the children, need structure, they need basics, they need benchmarks, but they also need a curriculum that is articulated and a curriculum that will take our children into the 21st Century. This is exactly what we are doing.

We have the potential to be one of the best education systems anywhere in North America, and we are implementing changes out of a desire and a need to strengthen and enhance our education system at the

elementary, secondary and post-secondary levels. We are in a period of rapid change, and we have to work now to ensure that our children are prepared for the future challenges. Now is not the time to rely on the old way of doing things or to be afraid to try something new.

Someone once said to me, they do not try to fail; they just fail to try. This is not an attitude members on this side of the House bring to government. We are here because we know there are difficult choices to be made, and we are here because we know that we have the leadership, the ability, the knowledge and most importantly the faith and trust of the people of Manitoba. Manitobans have told us that they want change, and we as a government have recognized change is needed. Only the opposition wants to maintain the status quo.

The occasion of a throne speech is a very personal time, and in the last while it has become more and more important to me as I become more involved with the dealings of government. It is a time I think for us all to re-examine and re-evaluate our feelings in our roles in government, obviously the roles of opposition. The more time I spend in this Chamber, the more time I spend with my colleagues in government, I am convinced that I am in the right place.

Listening to the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck) speak the other day, he talked about the country of Canada as being the best, the province as being the best province in the country, and he suggested that Pembina was the best area in the province. That part I might question a little bit, but I support what he is saying. We are very fortunate to live in the times that we do, and we should be happy with that.

I would also like to add to that to take it one step further, and that is the fact that we play on a team, and the team is probably the strongest that I have ever been on.

One only need to look to the past to a previous administration to see how far we have come and how much progress we have made. Our throne speech is a continuation of the positive direction that the people of

Manitoba have asked and have directed us to move in, a direction that will provide the future generations of Manitoba, a province which is filled with opportunity and prosperity. Thank you.

**Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to first start with the fact that I was not able to speak in May after the throne speech. I would like to congratulate Madam Speaker for election to the Chair and you as Deputy Speaker. I am sure that you will do a fine job. I would like also to congratulate the previous Speaker who was there for seven years. I think he did a fairly good job, and you will continue the same way.

My speech will be in French. Of course, I always like to speak French. It is the first language I spoke, and having the opportunity to do so in this Legislature is always a source of pride.

Also, I would like to congratulate the Pages that were named for the last session and this coming session. I am sure they will enjoy working in this Legislature for the time they will be here, and I wish them well.

Monsieur le vice-président,

Permettez-moi de vous faire part de mes meilleurs vœux à l'occasion de l'ouverture de cette deuxième session de la trente-sixième législature de la province du Manitoba. Je crois que pour vous, Monsieur le vice-président et pour, cette session sera remplie de nouveaux défis. Il est certain que vous serez appelés à prendre des décisions qui pourront avoir des répercussions profondes sur les travaux de cette législature. J'ai confiance que votre souci du devoir parlementaire préservera, au nom de la démocratie et de l'intérêt public, votre impartialité envers chaque membre de cette auguste Assemblée.

Le fait que le gouvernement dispose d'une majorité confortable ne devrait par ce fait même nous précipiter en situation dictatoriale. Comme députés nous avons comme devoir le rôle d'étudier soigneusement chaque projet de loi déposé en cette Chambre. Comme nous l'avons indiqué à maintes reprises, si le projet de loi est raisonnable et mérite d'être adopté, nous, les membres du Parti libéral, voterons en faveur. Par contre, si le

projet de loi n'est pas à notre avis dans l'intérêt public, nous n'aurions alors pas de choix que de voter contre. Nous sommes guidés par les mêmes principes qui vous guident, Monsieur la vice-présidente.

Pour nous, membres de l'opposition libérale, notre rôle n'est pas de prendre le pouvoir à tout prix. Notre rôle consiste à collaborer pour apporter des solutions concrètes aux problèmes qui inquiètent les Manitobains et les Manitobaines et d'assurer un meilleur avenir pour tous les résidents et toutes les résidentes de cette province.

Je suis de la ferme opinion que le gouvernement et l'opposition ont chacun un rôle bien spécifique, respectivement celui de gouverner et celui de critiquer, mais de critiquer de façon constructive, de manière positive en suggérant des solutions aux problèmes. Car il est très facile de critiquer. Une opposition responsable doit savoir démontrer au gouvernement la gravité de ses mauvaises décisions tout en offrant le correctif nécessaire à la situation. Une opposition doit être vue par le peuple comme le gouvernement en attente de remplacer celui au pouvoir.

Pour tous les députés de cette Chambre, la présente session est très importante. Nous avons des défis difficiles et importants à relever durant les prochains mois. Chaque secteur de notre société est en période de bouleversement et d'incertitude. Dans certains cas, cette incertitude et ces bouleversements sont reliés à des phénomènes sociaux et économiques sur lesquels nous avons peu ou aucun contrôle. Par contre, dans d'autres cas, ces bouleversements et ces incertitudes sont le résultat direct de l'inaction de la part du présent gouvernement face aux problèmes qui pourtant étaient évidents il y a quelques années, et en raison de cette inaction, se sont amplifiés et sont maintenant devenus encore plus difficiles à régler.

Monsieur la vice-présidente, certains des problèmes identifiés dans le Discours du Trône sont récents, d'autres ne se prêtent pas à des solutions faciles et immédiates. Par ailleurs, plusieurs autres problèmes auraient dû déjà être réglés ou devraient être sur le point d'être réglés. Pourtant, les voilà encore à nouveau apparaître dans un autre discours du Trône, comme c'est le cas avec la réforme du système de santé, l'éducation et j'en passe.

Monsieur la vice-présidente, le discours du Trône a peu de nouveau à offrir. Ce n'est à vrai dire principalement qu'un recyclage d'anciennes idées, de programmes impopulaires et de rhétorique politique. Ce qui m'a étonné dans le Discours du Trône est le fait que tout ce qui se rapportait à des nouvelles politiques et initiatives était inspiré par les politiques du gouvernement libéral de Jean Chrétien : - le programme d'infrastructure, l'entente sur l'aménagement de la Ville de Winnipeg, l'autoroute électronique, et d'autres. Au niveau des nouvelles idées, d'une nouvelle vision, le gouvernement a peu à offrir dans son Discours du Trône.

Pourtant, Monsieur la vice-présidente, les Manitobains et les Manitobaines comme tous les Canadiens et toutes les Canadiennes veulent de nouvelles idées, de nouveaux programmes, un nouveau regard sur l'avenir. Les Canadiens et les Canadiennes ont réagi positivement au Parti libéral fédéral principalement en raison du programme détaillé qui leur avait été offert et qui leur avait été si bien expliqué dans le "Livre rouge".

\* (1600)

Monsieur la vice-présidente, ce n'est pas nécessaire que les Canadiens et les Canadiennes soient d'accord avec tout ce que propose le "Livre rouge".

Evidemment, il y a matière à discussion et à réflexion. Cependant, ce qui est essentiel de reconnaître, c'est que le "Livre rouge" offre aux Canadiens et aux Canadiennes de nouvelles initiatives, des nouveaux programmes, une nouvelle philosophie de gouverner. Ce que nous avons devant nous dans ce Discours du Trône est un document peu inspirant, un document pondu par un gouvernement vide d'idées et de politiques, un gouvernement qui cherche à compléter son troisième mandat en espérant nous faire croire que des politiques recyclées peuvent passer inaperçues, que peut-être après 7 ans, certaines commenceront à produire des résultats.

Monsieur la vice-présidente, je n'ai pu éviter de me fixer longuement sur une déclaration qui se trouve au troisième paragraphe du discours de l'avant dernière session et je cite: "La tâche la plus difficile que notre

génération se doit d'exécuter—notre plus grande responsabilité à l'égard de nos enfants—c'est de faire naître dans nos vies et dans les leurs un sentiment de sécurité et d'avoir confiance en notre avenir."

Sans aucun doute, nous ne pouvons cheminer comme société si nos enfants perdent confiance en leur avenir. Un jeune sans espoir devient un fardeau pour la société, un fardeau pour chacun et chacune d'entre nous. D'autre part, un jeune rempli d'espoir contribue à sa société et fait progresser cette dernière.

Il faut éviter à tout prix de permettre à nos jeunes de perdre espoir. Cependant, Monsieur la vice-présidente, si on ne peut leur offrir des emplois concrets, c'est fort probable qu'ils perdront espoir éventuellement. Incapable d'avoir accès au marché du travail, le jeune chômeur devient non seulement une charge publique, devant survivre sur le bien-être social, mais dans certains cas se tourne contre la société et devient également enraciné dans le système pénal et le système correctionnel.

Madame la présidente, parmi les programmes de création d'emplois pour les jeunes, le Discours du Trône de la dernière session mentionnait les initiatives REDI et les programmes "Lancement de carrière et Partenaires des jeunes". Dans le Discours du Trône précédant celui de la dernière session législative, il était indiqué que ces programmes avaient profité à plus de 4 000 jeunes de la province. Ce que j'aimerais savoir, Madame la présidente, est combien de ces 4 000 jeunes ont aujourd'hui un emploi axé sur une véritable carrière.

Madame la présidente, ce qui me bouleverse, c'est la priorité qu'on semble donner, au fil des années, à l'importance d'assurer que les jeunes ont confiance en l'avenir. Quand j'ai entendu ce message de la part du gouvernement conservateur j'étais optimiste que parmi les programmes que le gouvernement annoncerait dans le Discours du Trône on retrouverait des initiatives concrètes de formation et de création d'emplois pour nos jeunes. A ma grande déception, il n'y avait rien de nouveau pour les jeunes.

L'absence de nouvelles initiatives de création d'emplois m'inquiète profondément. Déjà dans un

Discours du Trône précédant, le gouvernement se vantait du fait qu'en 1993 il y avait une augmentation nette de six mille emplois nouveaux dans le secteur privé par rapport à l'année précédente. Madame la présidente, je me demande quel est l'impact véritable de ces nouveaux emplois sur l'économie dans son ensemble, lorsque 6 à 7 milles personnes par année quittent notre province.

En d'autres mots, pour chaque nouvel emploi créé dans le secteur privé, une personne a quitté le Manitoba. Et, où dans les calculs peut-on situer les emplois perdus dans le secteur public et para-public? Comme le Parti libéral l'a mentionné auparavant, en fait, il y a 16 000 personnes de plus qui sont sans emploi depuis l'élection du gouvernement conservateur en 1990.

Madame la présidente, le Discours du Trône semble souligner l'importance et la contribution des petites entreprises à la croissance économique. Ma circonscription compte un bon nombre de petites entreprises, particulièrement le long des rues Goulet et Marion et sur le boulevard Provencher. J'ai souvent l'occasion de dialoguer avec ces petits commerçants et je puis vous assurer que pour la plupart être en affaires représente un défi quotidien. J'admire le courage et la ténacité de ces entrepreneurs, car sans eux et sans elles le chômage dans ma circonscription serait encore plus élevé.

En partageant avec moi les difficultés que certains ont à survivre au jour le jour, je dégage des parallèles d'un cas à l'autre: la TPS, le fardeau fiscal, une décroissance des marchés, les consommateurs réticents en raison d'un manque de confiance dans l'économie, et enfin des institutions financières inflexibles à un manque de financement qui enregistrent des profits dont l'énormité est grossièrement injuste. Néanmoins, Madame la présidente, la forte majorité de ces commerçants sont encore là aujourd'hui, et grâce à eux et à elles Saint-Boniface demeure une communauté où la petite entreprise est omniprésente.

Je suis heureux d'apprendre que le gouvernement propose d'entamer de nouvelles initiatives afin d'encourager l'expansion des petites entreprises. J'espère que ces initiatives offriront quelque chose de

concret aux petites entreprises car nous ne pouvons continuer de tolérer le taux élevé de faillite dans ce secteur.

Madame la présidente, nous devons également miser sur les industries de télécommunications et de traitement de l'information. Dans le domaine des industries de l'information et des télécommunications il n'y a pas de frontières. Pour ces industries il n'est plus nécessaire d'être établies à Toronto, à Montréal, à Vancouver ou à New York. Elles peuvent s'installer autant dans les petits centres que dans les grands centres. Elles peuvent aussi bien se trouver à Winnipeg, à Brandon ou à Steinbach qu'à Toronto ou à Montréal. De fait, il y a même des avantages à s'installer dans les plus petits centres, là où les coûts de la vie sont moins élevés et où la qualité de vie est généralement meilleure.

Madame la présidente, Winnipeg offre encore d'autres avantages que l'on ne retrouve pas dans certains grands centres; une main-d'oeuvre bilingue.

Madame la présidente, le succès que la ville de Moncton a connu dans sa récente croissance comme centre commercial et industriel aux plans national et régional, peut être attribué en partie au fait que les chefs d'entreprises étaient attirés par le caractère bilingue de la ville et le fait qu'on avait accès à une main-d'oeuvre bilingue. Il n'y a aucune raison pourquoi Winnipeg ne pourrait pas en faire autant à ce chapitre.

Madame la présidente, ce gouvernement doit promouvoir davantage la Ville de Winnipeg comme étant une véritable ville bilingue afin d'attirer de nouvelles entreprises au Manitoba.

Madame la présidente, au début de mon allocution j'ai mentionné le programme d'infrastructure. Bien que le programme d'infrastructure a vu le jour grâce au gouvernement libéral de Jean Chrétien, il s'agit d'une initiative où la collaboration des trois niveaux de gouvernement a jusqu'à présent été presque exemplaire. J'ai eu l'occasion de participer à des consultations avec des représentants et des représentantes des trois paliers de gouvernement ainsi qu'avec des représentants et des représentantes de la communauté.

Tout au long de ces consultations, ce qui m'a beaucoup impressionné est l'importance que chacun et chacune mettait sur le financement de projets concrets et durables. Il n'y était pas question de proposer ou d'appuyer un projet pour des raisons partisans ou pour obtenir des gains politiques. Au contraire, les intérêts de la communauté au sens large était la considération primordiale.

Madame la présidente, lorsqu'on examine la sélection de projets, l'on constate que les projets ont été choisis pour des motifs économiques et sociaux et non pas pour des motifs partisans. Il n'y a pas de déséquilibre dans la répartition des projets d'une circonscription à l'autre. Aucun député fédéral n'a été favorisé au détriment d'un autre pour des motifs partisans. Le processus de sélection des projets d'infrastructure démontre à quel point le Premier ministre Chrétien est décidé dans ses plans d'éliminer le favoritisme. Admettons qu'un programme d'infrastructure dirigé par le gouvernement conservateur de Brian Mulroney aurait été désastreux avec la totalité des projets allant à Baie Comeau et à d'autres comtés qui étaient autrefois des châteaux forts du Parti conservateur fédéral.

Madame la présidente, le Manitoba a reçu plus que sa part du budget fédéral pour la création de projets d'infrastructure, et reconnaissons-le de façon juste: ceci est grâce à une grande initiative du gouvernement libéral de Jean Chrétien.

\* (1610)

Madame la présidente, depuis qu'il est au pouvoir le gouvernement conservateur ne cesse de préconiser le développement rural. Je suis loin d'être convaincu que des progrès significatifs ont été accomplis dans ce domaine jusqu'à présent et cela en dépit de l'importance que le gouvernement semble y accorder. Le programme d'infrastructure donne à mon avis un meilleur sens à ce qu'est le développement rural.

L'extension des services d'alimentation en gaz naturel, et le nouveau système d'approvisionnement d'eau à Portage-la-Prairie ne sont que quelques exemples de projets durables pour les communautés rurales qui se traduiront non pas seulement par une amélioration nette de la qualité de vie des résidents et des résidentes, mais également par une croissance d'activités économiques en milieu rural.

Madame la présidente, j'étais également heureux d'apprendre que les trois niveaux de gouvernement ont signé une nouvelle Entente sur l'aménagement de la Ville de Winnipeg. Je m'en suis réjoui car dans ma circonscription il y a beaucoup de projets qui sont inachevés. Il est important que Saint-Boniface se retrouve dans cette nouvelle entente. La communauté de Saint-Boniface peut contribuer de façon encore plus significative au développement touristique, économique et commercial de la Ville de Winnipeg. Les résidents et les commerçants de Saint-Boniface ont déjà une vision de leur communauté dans le contexte de l'Entente sur l'aménagement de la Ville de Winnipeg.

J'espère que cette nouvelle entente leur permettra de réaliser pleinement leurs rêves. Je leur promets de faire tout mon possible pour que Saint-Boniface obtienne sa juste part.

Madame la présidente, je suis heureux d'apprendre que le gouvernement propose de renouveler son intérêt dans le projet d'initiatives de coopération entre les gouvernements de l'Ouest et les administrations territoriales. Lorsque nous y pensons plusieurs pays ont moins de barrières entre eux qu'ont les provinces du Canada entre elles.

De même, il existe des regroupements de pays, par exemple, les pays de la Communauté européenne, qui ont un plus grand nombre de programmes et d'ententes de collaboration entre eux qu'ont les provinces canadiennes entre elles. Nous ne pouvons plus tarder à mettre en oeuvre cette initiative, car toutes les provinces de l'Ouest et les territoires pourront en bénéficier.

Madame la présidente, je veux souligner mon appui aux projets de création d'emplois pour ceux et celles qui sont assistés par le bien-être social. Il est important toutefois d'assurer que ces personnes ne seront pas tout simplement des bouche-trous et que les postes dans lesquels ils seront placés leur permettront d'acquérir une formation professionnelle et une expérience de travail véritable et enrichissante.

Dans le domaine de l'éducation, la dernière année scolaire était la première pour la nouvelle division scolaire francophone. Je peux assurer les membres de

cette Chambre que la population franco-manitobaine compte jouer un rôle important dans le développement des politiques en matière d'éducation et je souhaite que le ministre convie les représentants de cette nouvelle division au même titre que les autres divisions scolaires dans le processus décisionnel provincial.

Madame la présidente, en matière d'éducation post-secondaire, bien que je reconnaisse le rôle important des collèges communautaires je m'oppose à ce que le gouvernement joue les collèges communautaires contre les universités. Le succès de nos collèges et de nos universités est critique pour l'avenir de notre province. Si nous permettons à nos universités de couper des programmes et des services de façon dramatique comme semble le proposer le gouvernement, toute la province en souffrira les conséquences à long terme.

J'ai le privilège d'avoir dans ma circonscription le Collège de Saint-Boniface, une institution universitaire qui comprend également un collège communautaire offrant un vaste choix de cours de secrétariat bilingue, de comptabilité et d'administration. Quant aux programmes universitaires, après avoir atteint un certain niveau, plusieurs étudiants et étudiantes doivent quitter la province pour poursuivre leurs études en français dans d'autres disciplines, tels que la médecine et le droit.

Ils sont obligés de quitter la province vers Ottawa, Moncton, Montréal ou Québec simplement parce que les programmes dans lesquels ils veulent s'inscrire ne sont pas disponibles au Manitoba. Pour certains, lorsqu'ils quittent pour poursuivre un programme d'études, ils ne reviennent plus au Manitoba. Nous perdons une personne dans laquelle, comme Manitobains, nous avons investi des milliers de dollars et cela à cause du fait qu'il ou elle ne pouvait poursuivre son programme d'études au Manitoba. Nous perdons quelqu'un qui aurait pu apporter une contribution précieuse à notre province.

Si le Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface est obligé d'effectuer d'autres coupures dans ses budgets nous allons perdre un plus grand nombre d'étudiants. Si nos autres universités sont obligées de couper dans leurs programmes et services, le même phénomène se répétera, les étudiants et les étudiantes iront poursuivre

leurs études dans d'autres provinces. Je ne propose point par mes commentaires que le gouvernement abandonne ses plans d'intensifier le rôle des collèges communautaires, car cette proposition est valable, mais ne le faisons pas au détriment de nos universités.

Madame la présidente, le Discours du Trône a traité d'une série de question et plusieurs promesses ont été faites. Bien que toutes les questions qui seront peut-être abordées dans cette session soient importantes, voire urgentes dans certains cas, aucune n'est plus importante que le dossier de la santé. Le ministre ne doit plus tarder à regagner la confiance de ceux et celles qui oeuvrent dans le domaine de la santé. La santé de l'ensemble de nos concitoyens et concitoyennes en dépend.

Madame la présidente, j'aimerais aussi souligner que je suis confiant que cette session sera des plus fructueuses. Nous avons des tâches difficiles à accomplir et nous devons travailler autant que possible ensemble dans un esprit de collaboration. Les membres de cette Chambre ont tous et toutes le bien-être et les intérêts des Manitobains et des Manitobaines à coeur, j'en suis convaincu. Évidemment, il y a des divergences d'opinion sur ce qui devrait être nos priorités et les moyens d'atteindre les buts que nous visons. C'est mon souhait qu'ensemble nous trouvions le compromis nécessaire pour nous permettre d'augmenter la qualité de vie pour tous nos concitoyens et toutes nos concitoyennes.

Madame la présidente, j'aimerais conclure en espérant que le budget qui sera présenté très prochainement devant cette Chambre par le gouvernement ne sera pas aussi vide d'idées et d'initiatives concrètes que le Discours du Trône. Le présent gouvernement conservateur se vante d'avoir doté le Manitoba de la loi la plus sévère au Canada pour obtenir un budget équilibré. Tout cela semble bien prometteur quoique bien inquiétant quant à son procédé d'application.

Madame la présidente, je défie aujourd'hui-même le gouvernement conservateur de démontrer sa sincérité en introduisant devant cette Chambre un amendement à la loi du budget équilibré qui remettrait dans les mains de la vérificatrice provinciale la pleine autorité

décisionnelle de déclarer à la fin de chaque exercice financier si oui ou non le budget a bel et bien été équilibré.

De plus, j'ajoute que la priorité du gouvernement devrait être concentrée plus sur la dette que sur le déficit. Le vérificateur général du Canada m'a enlevé les mots de la bouche quand il s'exprimait il y a quelques jours en disant que les contribuables et les différents gouvernements de notre pays devraient être plus inquiets de la dette que du déficit. Personnellement, je rajoute qu'il a entièrement raison et que le gouvernement provincial doit montrer l'exemple en initiant des mesures fiscales responsables et appropriées afin de réduire la dette.

J'aimerais également souligner de façon pertinente l'inquiétude que j'éprouve face au sentiment d'incertitude qui se dégage dans le Discours du Trône de cette présente session législative. Il est vrai qu'il est d'usage pour un gouvernement qui ne désire pas agir de consulter en long et en large, de créer des commissions législatives ou bien encore, de mandater de quelque façon vague un comité afin de sonder l'opinion publique sur un sujet ou un autre. Bref, quand un gouvernement ne veut pas gouverner, il consulte!

\* (1620)

Madame la présidente, il est donc annoncé dans le Discours du Trône qu'un groupe de travail sera créé et que ce dernier se rendra dans les régions rurales pour consulter la population au sujet des programmes et des politiques qui lui sont destinés. Ce qui m'inquiète, Madame la présidente, est la définition des régions rurales démontrée jusqu'à présent par le gouvernement conservateur. J'ose espérer que durant ce présent mandat de l'électorat, ce soi-disant groupe de travail se rendra également dans les régions du nord du Manitoba, et non pas seulement dans les circonscriptions dans lesquelles ont été élus des députés conservateurs.

Madame la présidente, j'aimerais rappeler au gouvernement que les régions rurales du Manitoba ne se trouvent pas seulement qu'au sud de Winnipeg mais sont bien aussi dans la partie nord de notre province.

Madame la présidente, tel que je l'ai dit déjà à maintes reprises, le rôle de l'opposition n'est pas

seulement de critiquer de façon systématique, mais c'est aussi de reconnaître les efforts du gouvernement quand effort il y a. Le gouvernement annonce une ouverture de l'information quant à l'affectation des crédits des fonds publics aux ministères et organismes gouvernementaux.

Le Discours du Trône dit ceci, et je cite: "Par ailleurs, mon gouvernement déposera un projet de loi pour accroître les obligations d'information des établissements et organismes du secteur public financés par les contribuables manitobains."

Madame la présidente, j'applaudis cette initiative du gouvernement car les Manitobains et les Manitobaines vont enfin savoir combien de millions de dollars passent entre les mains de la Société des loteries du Manitoba et surtout, combien il en a coûté aux contribuables pour construire à Winnipeg les deux super-palais de jeu de hasard situés sur les avenues Regent et McPhillips.

Madame la présidente, j'aimerais terminer mon intervention en citant une pensée de monsieur Stanley Knowles; une pensée qui à mon avis reflète assez bien la situation politique actuelle au Manitoba, et je cite: " Au Parlement, l'opposition devrait se comporter de façon à convaincre la population qu'elle pourrait faire mieux que le parti au pouvoir. Personne ne pourra nier que notre système fonctionne mieux lorsqu'il y a un changement de gouvernement à intervalles raisonnables".

Et, Madame la présidente, après avoir alterné pendant de nombreuses années entre les gouvernements conservateurs et les néo-démocrates, les Manitobains et les Manitobaines auront à la veille du troisième millénaire l'occasion de voter pour l'autre façon de gouverner, la façon libérale.

Madame la présidente, je tiens à dire à cette Assemblée législative de ne pas se fier à l'eau qui dort. Suite aux dernières élections, le Parti libéral fut réduit à trois députés, les meilleurs, bien qu'ayant reçu au-delà de 24 pour cent du vote exprimé. Alors que le Parti libéral aura régénéré ses forces avec de nouvelles idées et des visages frais, le Parti conservateur devra affronter l'électorat au terme d'une ère conservatrice à bout de souffle.

Madame la présidente, ce raisonnement est d'ailleurs confirmé par les propos mêmes du Discours du Trône. Le gouvernement conservateur demande au gouvernement libéral fédéral de Jean Chrétien de continuer à se concentrer sur l'équilibre économique et fiscal du Canada. Et le gouvernement dit et je cite:

"Grâce à huit années de gestion fiscale prudente, au cours desquelles il n'y a eu aucune augmentation des principaux impôts, et c'est là une performance inégalée, mon gouvernement a pu créer une situation financière saine et stable reconnue à l'échelle internationale.

"Malheureusement, d'autres administrations ne se sont pas montrées aussi résolues et font face aujourd'hui à de graves difficultés financières. Mon gouvernement respectera ses engagements et réitérera avec fierté qu'il n'augmentera pas les principales taxes."

Il est évident, Madame la présidente, que le gouvernement conservateur approuve l'approche libérale avec laquelle Jean Chrétien gouverne notre pays, c'est-à-dire de façon responsable financièrement tout en apportant les ajustements nécessaires à la stabilité économique et sociale de notre pays. De plus, le gouvernement conservateur non seulement fait référence au désastre financier que les néo-démocrates ont laissé en Ontario dont le système social va être anéanti par les politiques ultra-capitalistes des Conservateurs de Mike Harris. Et enfin, le gouvernement conservateur réfère directement aux années d'inaptitude de l'ère Mulroney en ce qui concerne la TPS et la dette nationale.

Enfin, il est clair que le gouvernement conservateur a la forte intention d'augmenter les taxes indirectes comme par exemple les coûts pour usage des services gouvernementaux. Mais le gouvernement doit se réveiller et constater que les contribuables n'ont plus d'argent à dépenser. Ce qu'il leur faut, ce sont des emplois.

Madame la présidente, même sans le statut officiel de parti politique au sein de cette Assemblée législative, nous les députés libéraux entendons bien défendre quotidiennement et avec vigueur l'intérêt public et parler avec pertinence au nom des contribuables manitobains.

**[Translation]**

Mr. Deputy Speaker, permit me to convey to you my best wishes at the beginning of this Second Session of the Thirty-sixth Legislature of the Province of Manitoba. I believe for you as Deputy Speaker and for Madam Speaker, this session will be filled with new challenges. It is certain that you will be called upon to make decisions that could have profound repercussions upon the work of this Legislature. I am confident that your concern for your parliamentary duties will preserve in the name of democracy and the public interest your impartiality toward each member of this Assembly.

The mere fact that the government has a comfortable majority should not precipitate us into a situation of dictatorship. As MLAs, our duty is to examine and review carefully each bill that is introduced in this House, and, as we have said on many occasions, if the bill is reasonable and deserves to be adopted, we, the members of the Liberal Party, will vote for it.

On the other hand, if the bill is not, in our opinion, in the public interest, then we would have no choice but to vote against it. We are guided by the same principles that guide you, Mr. Deputy Speaker and Madam Speaker.

For us, members of the Liberal opposition, our role is not to take power at any cost. Our role is to cooperate to bring concrete solutions to problems that concern Manitobans and to ensure a better future for all the residents of this province.

I am firmly of the opinion that the government and the opposition each have a very specific role to play, respectively that of governing and that of criticizing, but criticizing in a constructive way, in a positive way, by suggesting solutions to problems. For it is very easy to criticize. A responsible opposition must be able to demonstrate to the government the seriousness of its bad decisions, while offering the necessary correctives to the situation. An opposition should be seen by the population as the government-in-waiting, waiting to replace the one that is in power.

For all members of this Assembly, this session is very important. We have difficult and important



challenges to take up in the coming months. Each sector of our society is in a period of upheaval and uncertainty. In some cases, these are related to social and economic phenomena over which we have little or no control.

However, in other cases, this upheaval and uncertainty are the direct result of the inaction of this government in regard to the problems that were already evident some years ago, and because of this inaction, those problems have amplified and now have become still more difficult to resolve.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, some of the problems identified in the Speech from the Throne are recent; others do not lend themselves to quick and easy solutions. Moreover, many other problems should already have been solved or should be on the point of a solution, but here they are again appearing in a new Speech from the Throne as is the case with health care reform, education and others.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Speech from the Throne has little to offer that is new. In reality, it is principally just a recycling of old ideas, unpopular programs and political rhetoric. What surprised me in the Speech from the Throne is the fact that everything that had to do with new policies and initiatives was inspired by the policies of the Liberal government of Jean Chrétien: the infrastructure program, the City of Winnipeg Development Agreement, the electronic highway, and others. But in terms of new ideas, a new vision, this government has little to offer in its Speech from the Throne.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitobans, like all Canadians, want new ideas, new programs, a new vision for the future. Canadians reacted positively to the federal Liberal Party, mainly because of the detailed program that was offered and that was explained so well in the Red Book.

\* (1600)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not necessary that all Canadians agree with everything that is suggested in the Red Book. Obviously this is subject to discussion and reflection, but what must be recognized is that the

Red Book offers Canadians new initiatives, new programs and a new philosophy of government. What we have before us in this Speech from the Throne is a document that is not very inspiring, one produced by a government devoid of ideas and policies, a government that seeks to complete its third mandate while hoping to make us believe that recycled policies can pass unnoticed and that perhaps, after seven years, some of them will begin to produce results.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I could not help but focus at length on a statement found in the third paragraph of the Speech from the Throne of the session before last, and I quote, "The defining challenge for our generation, our most important responsibility to our own children, is to provide security in our lives and theirs, and to build confidence in our future." End of quote. Without a doubt, we cannot go on as a society if our children lose confidence in their future. A young person without hope becomes a burden for society, a burden for each and every one of us. On the other hand, a young person filled with hope contributes to his or her society and helps make the society progress.

We must, at all costs, avoid making our young people lose hope. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we cannot offer them concrete employment, it is most probable that they will lose hope eventually. Unable to join the workforce, the young unemployed person becomes, not only a public burden who has to survive on welfare, but, in some cases, he or she turns against society and also becomes enmeshed in the penal and the correctional system.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

Madam Speaker, amongst the job creation programs for young people, the throne speech of the last session included the REDI initiatives and the CareerStart and Partners with Youth programs. In the throne speech preceding that of the last session, it was indicated that those programs had benefitted over 4,000 young people in the province. What I would like to know is, how many of these 4,000 young people today have employment that is leading to a real job, a real career?

Madam Speaker, what distresses me is the priority that seems to have been given over the years to the

importance of ensuring that our young people have confidence in the future. When I heard this message from the Conservative government, I was optimistic that among the programs that the government would announce in the throne speech would be found concrete initiatives in job training and job creation for young people, but, to my disappointment, there was nothing new for them. The absence of new job creation initiatives troubles me profoundly. Already in a preceding throne speech, the government was boasting that in 1993 there was a net increase of 6,000 new jobs in the private sector in comparison with the preceding year, but I wonder what is the true impact of those new jobs on the economy as a whole when 6,000 to 7,000 people are leaving our province every year. In other words, for each new job created in the private sector, one person has left Manitoba. And where in the calculations can you find the jobs lost in the public and semi-public sectors? As the Liberal Party has mentioned before, there are 16,000 more people that have become unemployed since the election of the Conservative government in 1990.

Madam Speaker, the Speech from the Throne seems to emphasize the importance of the contribution made by small business to economic growth. My constituency includes a fair number of small businesses, especially around Goulet Street, Marion Street and Provencher Boulevard. I often have the opportunity to chat with those small-business people, and I can assure you that for most of them to be in a business is a daily challenge.

I admire the courage and the tenacity of those entrepreneurs because without them unemployment in my constituency would be even higher. By virtue of their sharing with me the difficulties that some of them have in surviving from day to day, I see parallels from one situation to the next: the GST, the tax burden, a shrinking of market, consumers who are reluctant because of lack of confidence in the economy, and, finally, financial establishments that are showing no flexibility toward those who require funding, but which still register profits, the enormity of which is grossly unjust. Nevertheless, Madam Speaker, the majority of those merchants are still there today, and, thanks to them, St. Boniface remains a community where small businesses are everywhere to be seen.

I am glad to learn that the government proposes to undertake new initiatives to encourage the expansion of small businesses. I hope that these initiatives will offer something concrete to small businesses because we cannot continue to tolerate the high level of bankruptcies in this sector.

Madam Speaker, we also must focus on the telecommunication and information processing industries. In the domain of the information and telecommunication industries there are no borders. For these industries, it is no longer necessary to locate in Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver or New York. They can set up in small centres as easily as in major centres. They can just as easily be found in Winnipeg, Brandon, or Steinbach, as in Toronto or Montreal. In fact, there even are advantages in locating in smaller centres where the cost of living is lower and where the quality of life is usually better.

Madam Speaker, Winnipeg offers still other advantages that cannot be found in some major centres: a bilingual workforce. The success that the city of Moncton has had in its recent growth as a commercial and industrial centre at the national and regional levels can be attributed in part to the fact that business leaders were attracted by the bilingual character of the city and the fact that they had access to a bilingual workforce. There is no reason why Winnipeg could not do the same thing.

Madam Speaker, this government must do more to promote the city of Winnipeg as a truly bilingual city in order to attract new businesses to Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, at the beginning of my speech, I mentioned the infrastructure program. Although the infrastructure program was created because of the Liberal government of Jean Chretien, it is an initiative where the collaboration of all three levels of government has been exemplary to date. I have had the occasion to participate in consultations with representatives of all three levels of government as well as with representatives of the community. Throughout these consultations, what impressed me greatly was the importance that everyone attached to funding concrete and lasting projects.

There was no question of proposing or supporting a project for partisan reasons or political gain. On the contrary, the interests of the community in the largest sense was the primary consideration.

Madam Speaker, when one examines the choice of projects one sees that the projects were chosen for economic and social reasons and not for partisan reasons. There is no imbalance in the distribution of projects from one constituency to another. No federal member has been favoured to the detriment of another for partisan reasons. The process of selection of the infrastructure projects shows how firm Prime Minister Chrétien is in his intention to eliminate favouritism. Let us acknowledge that an infrastructure program directed by the Conservative government of Brian Mulroney would have been a disaster with all projects going to Baie Comeau and other ridings that were once the strongholds of the federal Conservative Party.

Madam Speaker, Manitoba has received more than its share of the federal budget for the creation of infrastructure projects and let us recognize this in fairness: It is thanks to a major initiative of the Liberal government of Jean Chrétien.

\* (1610)

Madam Speaker, since it has been in power, the Conservative government has continually advocated rural development. I am far from convinced that any significant progress has been accomplished in this area to date, notwithstanding the importance that the government seems to attach to it. The infrastructure program, in my opinion, provides a better sense of what rural development is. The extension of services to provide natural gas and a new water supply system for Portage la Prairie are just a couple of examples of projects for rural communities that will translate not only into a distinct improvement of quality of life for the residents, but growth of economic activities in rural areas as well.

Madam Speaker, I was also pleased to learn that the three levels of government have signed a new Winnipeg Development Agreement. I rejoiced at this because in my constituency there are many unfinished projects. It is important that St. Boniface be part of this

new agreement. The community of St. Boniface can contribute in a still more significant way to tourist, economic and commercial development in the city of Winnipeg. The residents and merchants of St. Boniface already have a vision of their community in the context of the Winnipeg Development Agreement. I hope that this new agreement will permit them to fully realize their dreams. I promise them that I will do all that is in my power so that St. Boniface may can receive its fair share.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to learn that the government is proposing to renew its interest in co-operative initiatives between the western provinces and the territorial administrations. When we think about it, there are fewer barriers between many countries than between the provinces of Canada. Similarly, there are blocs of nations, for example, the countries of the European Union, which have a greater number of programs and agreements for co-operation among themselves than do our Canadian provinces. We must wait no longer to implement this initiative because all the western provinces and the territories can benefit from it.

Madam Speaker, I want to emphasize my support for job creation projects for those people who are receiving welfare. However, it is important to ensure that these persons will not simply be stopgaps and that the positions into which they are placed will permit to acquire true professional training and work experience that is genuine and enriching.

In the education sphere, the last academic year was the first year for the new Francophone School Division. I can assure the members of this House that the Franco-Manitobaine population intends to play a significant role in the development of policies in education. I would like the minister to invite representatives of this new division to participate on the same basis as the other school divisions in the provincial decision-making process.

Madam Speaker, in regard to post-secondary education, although I recognize the important role of community colleges I am against the idea of the government playing off community colleges against universities. The success of our colleges and of our

universities is critical to our province's future. If we allow our universities to cut programs and services dramatically as the government seems to be proposing, the entire province will suffer the consequences in the long run.

I have the privilege of having in my constituency St. Boniface College, a university institution that also includes a community college that offers a wide range of courses of bilingual secretarial courses, accounting and administration. As for university programs, once they have achieved a certain level many students have to leave the province to pursue their studies in French in other disciplines such as medicine or law. They are obliged to leave the province to go to Ottawa, Moncton, Montreal or Quebec simply because the programs in which they wish to enrol are not available in Manitoba. Some of them, when they leave the province to pursue a program of studies, do not return to Manitoba. We lose a person in whom we Manitobans have invested thousands of dollars because of the fact that this person could not pursue his or her program of studies in Manitoba. We lose someone who could have made a precious contribution to our province.

If St. Boniface College is obliged to carry out other budget cuts, we are going to lose a greater number of students. If our other universities are obliged to cut into their programs and services, the same phenomena is going to be repeated. Students will go on to pursue their studies in other provinces. By no means am I proposing that the government should abandon its plans to intensify the role of community colleges because that is a valid proposal, but we must not do it to the detriment of our universities.

Madam Speaker, the Speech from the Throne dealt with a series of questions and several promises were made. Although all the questions that may perhaps be broached during this session are important and even urgent in some cases, none is more important than the Health portfolio. The minister must lose no time in regaining the confidence of those who work in the health sector. The health of all of our citizens depends upon it.

Madam Speaker, I would also like to emphasize that I am confident that this session will be very fruitful.

We have difficult tasks to accomplish and we must work together as far as possible in a spirit of co-operation. The members of this House all have at heart the interests of Manitobans, I am convinced. Obviously, there are divergences of opinion as to what should be our priorities and the means by which we can achieve our goals. It is my wish that together we find the necessary compromises together to allow us to improve the quality of life of all our fellow citizens.

Madam Speaker, I would like to conclude in the hope that the budget that will be presented very shortly before this House by the government will not be as devoid of ideas and concrete initiatives as was the Speech From the Throne. The current Conservative government boasts that it has provided Manitoba with the toughest balanced budget balanced budget legislation in Canada. This seems very promising although worrisome in terms of the way it is being applied. I challenge the Conservative government today to demonstrate its sincerity by introducing before this House an amendment to the Balanced Budget Act which would place in the hands of the Provincial Auditor full decision-making authority so as to declare at the end of each financial exercise whether or not the budget truly has been balanced.

I would also like to add that the priority of the government should be focused more on the debt than on the deficit. The Auditor General of Canada took the words out of my mouth when he stated not long ago that the taxpayers and the various governments of our country should be more concerned with the debt than with the deficit. Personally, I would add that he is entirely right and that the provincial government must provide an example by initiating fiscal measures that are responsible and appropriate in order to reduce the debt.

I would also like to emphasize the concern that I feel faced with the sense of uncertainty that emanates from the Speech from the Throne for the current session. It is true that it is the usual practice for a government that does not want to act, to consult at great length and to create legislative commissions or even in some vague way to mandate a committee to sound out public opinion on some subject or other. In short, when a government does not want to govern, it consults.

Madam Speaker, it is therefore announced in the Speech from the Throne that a task force will be created and that it will visit various rural regions to consult the population in regard to programs and policies that are intended for that population.

\* (1620)

What concerns me, Madam Speaker, is the definition of rural regions, demonstrated up to now by the Conservative government. I dare hope that during the current mandate this so-called task force will also go into the northern regions of Manitoba and not only into the constituencies where the greatest number of Conservative members were elected. I would like to remind the government that Manitoba's rural regions not only are to be found south of Winnipeg but also are to be found in the northern part of our province.

Madam Speaker, as I have already said many times before, the role of the opposition is not only to systematically criticize but is also to acknowledge the efforts of the government when there is an effort. The government has announced increased access to information in regard to the expenditure of revenues and public funds in government departments and institutions. The Speech from the Throne states, and I quote: "Legislation will be introduced to increase the financial accountability of public sector institutions and organizations funded by Manitoba taxpayers."

Madam Speaker, I applaud this initiative of the government because Manitobans want finally to know how many millions of dollars pass through the hands of the Lotteries Corporation and, above all, how much it has cost taxpayers to construct in Winnipeg the two gambling palaces that are located on Regent and on McPhillips Avenue.

Madam Speaker, I would like to end my speech in citing a thought of Mr. Stanley Knowles, a thought that, in my opinion, quite aptly reflects the current political situation in Manitoba, and I quote: In Parliament the opposition should behave in such a way as to convince the population that it could do better than the party that is in power. No one can deny that our system functions better when there is a change of government at reasonable intervals.

Madam Speaker, after having alternated for many years between Conservative and New Democratic governments, Manitobans will, at the dawn of the third millennium, have the opportunity to vote for the other way of governing, the Liberal way.

Madam Speaker, I want to tell this Legislative Assembly that still waters run deep. After the last election, the Liberal Party was reduced to three members, the best ones, although it had received more than 24 per cent of the popular vote. While the Liberal Party will regenerate its strength with new ideas and fresh faces, the Conservative Party is going to have to face the electorate at the end of a Conservative era that is exhausted. This reasoning is also confirmed by the very words of the Speech from the Throne.

The Conservative government is asking the federal Liberal government of Jean Chrétien to continue to concentrate on economic and fiscal equilibrium in Canada. And the government says, and I quote: Through eight years of prudent fiscal management, with an unmatched record of no major tax increases, my government has been able to provide a sound and predictable fiscal base that is recognized internationally. Unfortunately, other governments have not been as committed and now find themselves in serious financial circumstances.

My government is pleased to reaffirm its commitment to Manitobans that it will not raise any major taxes.

It is clear, Madam Speaker, that the Conservative government approves of the Liberal approach with which Jean Chrétien is governing our country. That is to say, financially responsible while making the adjustments that are necessary for the social and economic stability of our country. Moreover, the Conservative government not only refers to the financial disaster that the New Democrats left in Ontario whose social system is going to be extinguished by the ultra-capitalist policies of Mike Harris's Conservatives. And finally the Conservative government refers directly to the years of ineptitude of the Mulroney era in regard to the GST and the national debt.

Lastly, it is clear that the Conservative government strongly intends to increase indirect taxes such as costs

for use of government services, but the government should wake up and realize that taxpayers have no more money to spend. What they need is jobs.

Madam Speaker, even without the official status of a political party within this Legislative Assembly, we Liberal members intend to vigorously defend the public interest on a daily basis and to speak relevantly on behalf of Manitoba's taxpayers.

[English]

With this, Madam Speaker, I wish to offer everyone, my colleagues in the Legislature, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

**Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise. Maybe, while I am up here, you will notice on your board who is here, but I want to wish everybody a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year before I start.

Nothing intended by that statement, but I would certainly also like to welcome the Pages here who are going to be introduced to a different way of talking and the way people interrelate. Sometimes the Pages might wonder why we do what we do. We do have differences of opinion, as the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) has just indicated, and I certainly want to spend a little time particularly talking about telecommunications and transportation in the course of time I am here. The member for St. Boniface, I think that I heard him say that he is glad that we were following what the federal Liberals are doing in Ottawa in terms of fiscal responsibility.

I want to remind him that he also mentioned that we had not increased taxes for eight budgets and that we have been on this agenda for seven years, so I think it is the other way around, to the member for St. Boniface. I think they are following our agenda. [interjection]

I want to remind the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), they have not done it yet. In fact, one of the ways they intend to balance their budget in Ottawa is by offloading onto the provinces on a regular basis,

but that, be as it may, there is no question that in the course of the last seven years it has become very clear to us that the public—I think as the member for St. Boniface referred to—has no more money in their jeans sort of process. They cannot afford to be paying more to government, and they have demanded very, very strongly that we and all governments, federally and provincially, in this country get our act together, and we start to live within our means. Our means is with no additional monies to be taken from them in the broad sense of increased.

Clearly, we have achieved that. It has taken a long time to get there in terms of the balanced budget, moving towards a process of ultimately paying that off over 30 years. It is fairly reassuring to see that five other provinces have also done that, balanced their budget in this particular fiscal year, and I guess Alberta you could say because of certain increased revenues—they did not table a balanced budget but probably will have a balanced budget, so that leads to seven provinces having achieved it, but the big ones have not done it yet.

Ontario and Quebec have not balanced their budgets. Ontario is trying to head in that direction with a lot of criticism. Quebec has not even started thinking about the process, and at the federal government level, the federal government is still expending way beyond what it is taking in. So it still affects the credit rating of all 10 provinces—[interjection] Well, I think if we look back in history, we will find that one Pierre Trudeau started the process of overspending in government, and the way he presented it to the country, he thought he had the magic answer, so everybody started doing it. [interjection]

**An Honourable Member:** Boy, they are really giving you a hard time.

\* (1630)

**Mr. Findlay:** Well, they know what I am going to say in a few minutes, so maybe that is why they want to get me off track, but, Madam Speaker, these are different times, very different times. To say they are difficult and challenging times would be an understatement, not only for government but for people out in the

workforce. As we work as hard as we can to help create an environment where it is attractive to create jobs, at the same time there are companies, governments, Crown corporations that in the process of trying to look after their books are reducing the number of employees. That is also a part of technology. As technology comes along, fewer people are needed to get the same job done.

So the mission has to consistently be to try to have new ways of doing things, try to make Manitoba an attractive place to bring jobs in the new technology, whatever that might be, bring it to the province of Manitoba.

But as I have sat here over the last number of years being in government, it is very hard for me to think of any particular time that we have done something or promoted something or supported something where particularly the NDP even thought there was a grain of reason to do it. The member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) says governments will change when somebody comes along from the opposition who has better ideas. I am waiting patiently for anybody to have better ideas, other than it has to be the way it was; nothing can change.

That is the constant thread of discussion in this House. It was the position in the election campaign, and as I went door to door, I heard statements like, at least you people are prepared to advance with the times and are not afraid to change. The opposition parties are talking about going back to the way it was and criticizing every attempt to change the thinking as to where the new economy is. All I will say to the members opposite, if people are looking for change, you are going to have to change the way you do business because you are not recognized as doing it.

Certainly, the big issues in this House are health, No. 1, and education. Health reform is something— [interjection] It is a big one, you stumbled on it, but health is an area where we all want to maximize our ability to deliver services, and I do not think that is different in any jurisdiction that is in government right across this country, but the reform process must go on because we cannot just constantly go into the taxpayers' pocket for 10 or 20 percent more each year to meet the

demands of the system. We have to be sure that the system is efficient and effective in service delivery, Madam Speaker.

Somebody gave me an example the other day and said, five years ago, 10 years ago, if you had a cataract operation, you may have been in the hospital for up to 10 days. Now it is an outpatient operation, so, obviously, you do not need those beds for that operation. If you are doing 6,000 operations a year times ten days per stay, that is 60,000 bed nights that are not needed in the system, so, obviously, you should shift those resources to something else. That is the kind of reform that is going on.

Madam Speaker, the health system as a whole, yes, they were reluctant to change in the early stages, but I say now the health industry is attempting to adapt to changing the way things are done so that the cost of running the system can be kept reasonably under control because it all comes back to, there is only one pot. It is only so big and has to be divided amongst all the different priorities of government.

Clearly, Health and Education and social insurance must take about two-thirds of that budget. I guess it would be fair to say Highways and Transportation takes fourth place if we forget paying the interest off. We are fourth place. It is a fairly large department. We could disappear in one year and be consumed by the other three departments and a year later they would be looking for another Highways department to consume \$225 million.

Madam Speaker, particularly in the area of telecom there is such dramatic change going on. I see dramatic opportunity not only within that sector but within all sectors in terms of being able to communicate, whether it is voice, data, image, whatever it is.

Over the course of time, it was not that long ago, I can remember dialing up going through an operator, thinking, boy, we are really advanced in this world. Then came along the automatic telephones, came along fibre optic cable, cellular came in about 1986, 1987, a very dramatic change in the way we do business. Now we talk about satellite communications. We talk about microwave communications.

The member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) the other day made the comment—I remember it very specifically because I was not necessarily listening, but I caught the comment that now everybody has cable television in Manitoba. He said everybody is on cable. That is absolutely not true. I want to remind him that the same citizens that we have gone to ILS with across rural Manitoba, the 47,000 people in the scattered farm homes who by next summer will have private lines in all their homes, still do not have cable television, still do not have an opportunity for that service. [interjection]

Gave it away. Give me a break. What we had was the cable system, was old technology. Let me tell you what is new and what is available and what we are supporting as government. That is particularly to get this new sector to those people in scattered locations across the province. You now understand cable television as the cities where it is on wire. There are applications in front of CRTC right now for direct-to-home satellite. There are applications for the microwave application, and there are also applications through personal communication services. But particularly the—[interjection]

I can tell the member opposite these are entrepreneurs in society who are putting this industry together. The member might be very interested in knowing that—I will pick just the one for the moment, the microwave technology—Craig broadcasting in Brandon have been making applications to CRTC since 1983. They are one of the applicants now along with a consortium of cable television operators. They are basically in competition with the same sort of MMDS. It is called multipoint media—whatever—distribution system. But it consists of microwave towers with about a 40-mile radius around each tower. You know, through the air from the microwave tower and a small receiving dish at the home.

I think it is a fantastic facility to allow people to have cable television in that form. So this time, which is the fourth application in this direction, hopefully CRTC does not say no. I would hope that this time they recognize the capability of this technology to reach homes, not only from the cable television point of view but from the distance education point of view because it allows everybody to be on the system.

The other area that we must remember is that if CRTC does not approve it this time, there is the gray market area out there where providers of satellite services from the United States are actually selling dishes, technically illegal, but selling dishes in Manitoba, and they have to communicate by telephone and a redialer through the United States to pay their bills.

We do not want to see cable television by satellite all supplied from the U.S., and CRTC has an opportunity to approve either both microwave providers; or, yet, another application that is there is the Express View people, who basically got authorization to start without a licence, but their competitor is PowerDirect TV. There is another one by Shaw Cable; but, again, that is Canadian satellite cable television provision.

So just to summarize, we have three different areas of activity that maybe our rural people, the member for Swan River, we can all get. There is the American source, because the satellites are up there anyway, there are the Canadian satellites, which there are three applications, and then there is the microwave system, which there are two major applications. I think there is one small one at Pine Falls.

So there is significant application, and I will be very frustrated if CRTC says no to all of this this time around. The hearing was held October 30, a fairly eventful day in Canada, in Hull, Quebec, of all places, and the Premier sent letters and I sent endorsements and support that they approve it this time around.

Now, I mentioned the issue of distance education. Clearly, when we were talking with the microwave distribution people, we got them both to commit that they would supply a channel or two for distance education.

\* (1640)

Then the cable television operators went even further than that and said that they were, as part of an activity right across Canada, prepared to supply, free of charge, cable television to schools, in other words, plow a wire to a school to provide them with cable television and supply them with programming that would be



commercial-free and copyright cleared so that the schools did not have to go through the process of clearing copyright on programs that they might use in the school.

There was an unveiling of that initiative about four months ago which was very, very positive. Certainly the schools could use it as an additional facility in their educational process, and I certainly applaud the cable companies in that particular initiative.

Then along comes yet another initiative that is going to help not only in Distance Education but in education in general, and that is the issue of the Internet, which now is the new craze that everybody with a computer wants to get on the system and communicate all over the world. I mentioned at the beginning the ability of modern communications to allow you that global communication. Well, the Internet just allowed that opportunity to explode big time. I am flabbergasted at the number of people who are on the Internet, and I should not use the word, but pretty much addicted to it as a thing to do in their spare time. It is expensive, as the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) says, for certain people.

Now, the Internet has actually been in existence for some time, but it usually was only used for research purposes. So the access provider in Manitoba was the university for a long period of time because it was basically research oriented. Then as the general citizen became aware of the opportunity here, they basically swamped the university's ability to carry on Internet access. They contacted the Telephone System and said, would you be an Internet access provider and take over the large volume of people who wanted to use the system?

At the same time, I believe there are around 15, 16, 17 private Internet access providers scattered throughout Manitoba who buy from MTS lines and then resell those lines to the Internet people.

Manitoba Telephone System has its locations. I think the brochure is out. It has 10 locations scattered across the province where it currently believes there are enough customers to pay the costs of the system. They are Steinbach and area, Winnipeg and area, Selkirk and

area, Portage and area, Thompson and area, The Pas and area, Dauphin and area, Brandon and area. The member, I am sure, wants to know about Swan River.

Well, MTS has said, we need a certain number of customers to make it viable. Communities that request like that, they go back and say, get a certain level of activity or application and then we will look at being able to supply you with that service. Clearly, this is the first phase which was rolled out I believe this summer, and other phases will happen as it is feasible and capable.

I think the member must also remember, one thing is the cost and the access to the lines, the other is that when people get on the Internet, they tie up those lines for long periods of time whereas a normal phone user is on and off the line. So what it does, surprisingly, is put an awful lot of pressure on our switches, and that is really the situation in south Winnipeg where people say they do not have very good Internet access because the lines are not available.

Well, I think the story is that they are using the Centrex lines, which are basically designed for voice, and those people should really be using the more business-type, the multiplex lines, which are priced for that particular purpose. There is a lot of adjustment going on in the system to be sure that, as these new opportunities are available, the maximum number of people can access these opportunities.

I want to remind the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) if a private-sector, Internet access provider wants to offer the services out of Swan River, he can, as there is somebody out of Neepawa and various other locations.

But the educational community is certainly one that has shown a high level of interest in this and seen it as a major means of expanding their knowledge base.

Another area that I just want to touch on briefly is 911. Ever since I was in government, I wanted to see 911 province-wide. Initially, I was told that it was—well, it was basically too expensive to provide with the switches and the lack of private lines in all homes. Now, as we approach 1996, we are 100 percent

digitalized in terms of our switches right across the province. We will have all homes on private lines by the end of '96, and clearly that technical aspect of providing that service is now taken care of.

Winnipeg and Brandon have had 911 supplied by those cities to their citizens and paid out of their tax base for some time. The City of Brandon has launched an initiative to offer the opportunity of 911 to all towns, villages and R.M.s right across Manitoba. They have had a number of meetings, gone to UMM district meetings and have sent letters to those municipalities requesting them to look at the option of signing up with Brandon as the 911 responder, I guess we will call it.

In order to make that work, all the municipalities have to do is put their phone numbers into the software so that the telephone receiver in Brandon has that information there if the call comes in from that particular area. Brandon is in the process of buying the necessary telephone switch equipment to accomplish this. The intention would be that Brandon would charge each municipality so much per capita for their operation of the centre, and that there would be a charge on the phone bill for the telephone use of the system.

That is an application that would have to go to CRTC. My expectation is that in '96 this will all come together and will happen, but it has taken a long, long time to get here. Other provinces are also trying to get into it. The odd one has started it, and I think it is very, very timely that we get to province-wide 911 and fully expect to achieve that in '96.

Another thing that we certainly promote strongly in the telecom area is attracting customer service centres and call centres to Winnipeg. I have visited the odd one, and I go back to what the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) said. He talked about Winnipeg having a good workforce, a bilingual workforce. Let me tell you, when I talk to the people who have set up these call centres or customer service centres here in Winnipeg, every one of them, when I do any kind of internal audit on the performance of their employees, particularly if they have other call centres in North America or Britain or Australia or wherever, Manitoba people rank very high. They rank high in terms of their

commitment to their job, their ability to communicate with people, the low turnover—

**An Honourable Member:** But Moncton is getting more call-centre jobs.

**Mr. Findlay:** Well, the member might want to check his statement. We have done well in terms of attracting them here. We do not use government subsidies to attract them here. New Brunswick does a lot of that. We attract them on the basis of merit. We are at a very attractive position being in the centre of the country, and I say, our workforce is a tremendous selling feature for us.

**An Honourable Member:** What did Faneuil get?

**Mr. Findlay:** Faneuil has a contract with the Manitoba Telephone System, and they have an interest-bearing, repayable loan from the government, an interest-bearing, repayable loan. Faneuil's operation is about 50 percent—[interjection] Manitoba Telephone System and their contract is a nucleus contract of that operation. It supplies about 50 percent of the work there. They have a number of other contracts from across Canada and outside of Canada which are done out of here.

Any call centre increases the network activity for the Manitoba Telephone System, so there is an automatic generation of activity there. The Manitoba Telephone System has a very good response in terms of the campaigns they have run. The member behind you there has acknowledged that they are basically doing a good job. All call centres are doing a good job. [interjection] Well, have we ever multiplied the figure fast now. Why do you not put another zero on? It may sound more astounding. [interjection]

Well, going back to what I said earlier, we as government are to do nothing but stand still and let the past run the future. Madam Speaker, that will not work. You have to be innovative, creative, and you have to get out and go after activity. Yes, we brought 3,000 call centre jobs to Manitoba and Winnipeg, and I am not going to apologize for that. I am not going to apologize to anybody.

\* (1650)

**An Honourable Member:** Where are these 3,000 jobs?

**Mr. Findlay:** Well, let us go through the list for the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid). He is so interested.

Air Canada, 198; Angus Reid, 70; AT&T Transtech who said a year ago they would have 400 jobs, they are now at 620; Canada Post, 125; Central Canadian Marketing at Russell, 30; CN Rail, 150 and probably higher now; CP Rail, 125; Faneuil, 340; Ford Credit; Great West Life; GWE Brandon; Integrated Messaging; Investors; North American Life; Prairie Research Associates; PR Response which just the other day opened a call centre which would supply about 70 jobs, 48 seats, all bringing contracts— [interjection]

That is a good example. If you want to step in government and run business and tax the devil out of people, the jobs will leave. They will leave real, real quick. It has taken a long time for us to develop an attitude here that this is the place to invest, and the announcements the members opposite have heard, not only in telecom but across rural Manitoba in the last few months, should make them very happy that they sit in opposition here. [interjection]

Any time, any time you are done I will start again. Madam Speaker, it is rather interesting to hear the members opposite. They are opposed to everything, as I said earlier, whereas on this side we try to promote activities that lead to jobs. Well, the members opposite maybe should just get out of their little closet and go out and have a look across rural Manitoba and in the city of Winnipeg.

I will tell the members opposite, there is no magic formula for the future. There is no guarantee that we can compete in the world unless you work hard at it. That applies to every individual, every company and every particular government that is in existence today. If you do not work at it, they will not happen and come to you. If you work at it, you may have success, but I tell you, you cannot stand still because the world will pass you by in a very, very big hurry.

Now, just a few moments on transportation which is another area of incredible activity and change and

opportunity. Madam Speaker, we talk transportation in Manitoba, we talk about air, we talk about rail, we talk about roads, we talk about the trucking industry, and in every one of those we have been a hub, we are a hub. We have the capabilities of developing even further in terms of opportunities associated with that hub. Certainly, the airline industry has gone through a lot of change in the last five or six years in terms of Air Canada and Canadian Airlines and all the regional airlines in trying to find that niche, that opportunity to deliver services that customers want.

I remember arguments in this House three or four years ago about how terrible open skies would be, how terrible it would be. When it finally came to pass, I happened to be going to a ministers' meeting in Victoria and I got on the plane and the stewardesses on that particular flight were ecstatic about the opportunity it created for them.

**An Honourable Member:** Flight attendants.

**Mr. Findlay:** Flight attendants, I am sorry. There were some nonfemale ones there too, I want to remind the member. So, yes, I have the right word now. Flight attendants, right. They were ecstatic about the opportunity of marketing themselves and having more flights, particularly going into the U.S.

A few months later I got on another flight. It was a different airline, and they came to me with their little book that said we have 31 new flights and this is one of them. This was an inaugural flight. It went from here to Vancouver to San Francisco, I think it was. I got to the meeting at the other end—it was a transport meeting—and one of the executives from Air Canada came up to me and said, well, we have these 31 new routes that we are going to be announcing shortly. He said, do you want to see the book? I pulled out the book and he said, where did you get that? I said, your flight attendants already have it and they are marketing it to their customers. So that is a good attitude. It is an attitude of trying to be aggressive and progressive in your industry. [interjection] It might have been, who knows? That is going to be an interesting one when it unfolds, I will tell you, for all concerned.

Madam Speaker, certainly one of the big initiatives going on in the air industry right now is the airport

authority, in an attempt by the local committee to be able to take over operations of that airport. It is a good news-bad news story on an ongoing basis. My feeling is the federal government initially came to the table saying, we have 26 airports, we wanted the best two airport authorities. Clearly, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver and Montreal were done, but they all want to renegotiate, of course. Winnipeg was in the beginning of the next group, and they have been in a very tough negotiation process.

I think along the way, at the federal end, another initiative came along and that was that they had to collect a certain amount of fees from each of these airports which meant the cost of operating these airports would go up. The people negotiating here find that very difficult to meet those requirements that they have to pay high fees at least in the start-up years, because if you pay high fees you become noncompetitive to attract other activities to your airport.

Clearly, in terms of this airport, one of the big new areas of activity is the WINNPORT NHDA initiative which would see air cargo coming in and through Winnipeg for dissemination on ground by rail and road. The 30-hour drive from here takes you to 80 million people. That is a substantial number of people or a number of consumers to market to. Again, the private sector has done a very good job of trying to develop that initiative, mature that initiative.

I have not heard anybody in opposition to that. Clearly the city is supportive of it. It would require a fair bit of infrastructure at the airport if it gets up and running, but I think initially it has to start on a small scale, a pilot project kind of process to prove itself and then grow from there.

Air cargo movement is the new activity in the airport industry. It is going to continue to expand and these kinds of custom-free zones for 747s to land and put it into ground transportation activities are going to happen somewhere. [interjection] Well, I think the member better remember that it is cost-effectiveness that will decide where it is going to be, and clearly Winnipeg has a lot of cost-effectiveness compared to any other location. I mean, Korea is a real developing

area as an example. We are closer to Korea and one fuel load a flight gets them all the way to here. If you are going into the Chicago and central midwestern U.S., this is the place to do it.

Madam Speaker, I would be very upset if Edmonton got into it, because I do not see how they have cost advantages to us. I mean, they are that much further from the U.S. market, and if you go straight south of Edmonton and Calgary you go into mountains. You go straight south of here in terms of the corridor to Mexico or the midwestern U.S. from a trucking or a rail point of view, that is the most efficient.

Over the course of the last year, my department, myself, the City of Winnipeg have made a lot of effort to try to make this happen. Clearly, WINNPORT, the people over there, Hubert Kleysen and Company are working at putting the material together—[interjection] Well, the member always likes to make a cheap shot. What is the point of the cheap shot? Your member for Wellington wants to know if there is an effort to try to succeed to do something in Winnipeg, but the member is more interested in a cheap shot. That is the kind of government that destroys initiative in the private sector, and if he thinks jobs will be created any other way in this society than in the private sector, he has really missed the boat. [interjection] I am referring to what the member for Wellington was asking me about.

\* (1700)

Another area of very dramatic change that is happening in Manitoba is in rural Manitoba. When it comes down to the business of transporting grain products there, I will tell you, the changes there are mind boggling right now. The elimination of the grain transportation subsidy has really made the farmer face the full cost of transporting his grain. He is looking at higher costs for things like feed barley and wheat and lower costs for things like durum and canola and he is looking at, where is my market? In many cases his market for the lower transportation cost ones like durum and malt barley is in the U.S., so what you see is farmers looking aggressively at pursuing those markets that are lower cost to get there and give them the best bottom line. Now, if they do that on a really continued basis, it means that the commodities that are

transported in the grain sector will go more south than west or east or north as they have in the past.

You add on to that the fact that many companies are looking at, this is the place to value-add process, whether it is french fries or whether it is canola or whether it is hogs or any other type of product that can be value-added here, as they build those processing plants here scattered around rural Manitoba, I almost guarantee you that there will be more pressure on our roads as they haul commodities to and from those locations. [interjection] Well, if they are hauled on the road the railway will not pay, and that is really where the rubber hits the road for me, because I just met two weeks ago with 35 different delegations from municipalities, and I did it the year before and they were very concerned about the impact on their roads of bigger and bigger trucks.

I am very concerned about the impact on our roads and our ability to keep up our infrastructure rebuilding. Whether it is roads or whether it is bridges, it is very expensive, and I cannot give you the map of 10 years from now of where the increased major routes are going to be. Yes, we know our 1, 75, 16, all that sort of thing, and initially when the truck weights went up to 135,000 pounds or 62,500 kilograms, the intention was, they would run on these major roads, and all our secondary, tertiary road network would not have the impact of these big trucks.

Well, where they pick their product up, where they drop it off, they are going on every road, or want to go on every road. The impact on the road, particularly when it is wet or in the summertime, the impact on the bridges in terms of the weights is a severe problem. The municipality has their road network they look after. We have our road network we look after. For both of us, we cannot generate enough revenue fast enough to meet the demand. Just as an example of costs, to build a bridge across the Red River, for example, at Letellier, 10 million bucks, just the bridge, not the approaches, just the bridge, 10 million bucks; 75, which we have just finished four-laning over eight years or something like that, pretty well \$100 million spent on those two lanes. That is talking big-time expenditure.

For the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), just to give her some idea of kind of how our costs occur in

a road system, I just asked the department to generate it a couple of months ago, so I understand where our costs go in terms of rebuilding a road. We will take the stretch from St. Jean to Morris, the last piece of 75 that was built. In terms of survey and design and acquisition of property, that is 13 percent of our cost. For grade and gravel of the two lanes, 22 percent of our cost. We still only have about 35 percent. Then the structures, bridges, 17 percent, and the surfacing, the pavement, 49 percent of the cost.

Now oftentimes, when I look at the breakdown of a particular project, structures and surfacing are the big, big cost. When you are dealing with our secondary and tertiary roads in rural Manitoba, what they need is structures and what they need is surfacing, not this thin pavement which keeps the dust under control. It is nice for a car. You need your six inches of pavement so it can carry those kind of loads, and that is where the costs are so high. We have 2,600 structures of bridges in our road system in Manitoba, and, of course, they are all being continually assessed as to whether they carry the weights that the roads are scheduled for. I can tell you, if we have any more structure failures or probable failures, our cost just continues to go up.

We built that stretch of road from Portage south, and there is a bridge involved to Southport, Highway 240. I think it is five kilometres. It was \$5 million for the bridge, \$5 million for the grading, \$5 million for the surfacing, \$15 million just gone right there. It is a nice road, good access for Southport to Portage, but a pretty good expense.

Another road, I will just give the member for Swan River an idea—[interjection] Yes, I know you are interested in a particular bridge. In the goodness of time. But another example, this is often what we do in rehabilitating a road. The road I will use is on Highway 16 from Strathclair to Newdale. [interjection] Is that all I have left? Okay. It is 60 percent for surfacing there and 34 percent for grade and gravel. So the point I am trying to make, Madam Speaker, to members opposite, although the demands are high with \$100 million in capital, we are limited in how far we can go and how fast we can go.

I am very concerned about the ability to meet the commercial industry need demands in the next five

years because I see more and more trucks going to different locations than ever before, and everybody wants to run the big, efficient cost-efficient, time-efficient trucking units. As we do more value-adding in agriculture and more processing in every sector, trucks are going to continue to grow. It creates a lot of jobs, both in terms of in the factories and at both ends of that trucking line, but also creates increased trucking jobs.

So, Madam Speaker, with those few comments, thank you for the opportunity. At the end, I will say Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you, not only at the beginning, because this is a good season, and I would recommend everybody spend as much time as they can in their constituency with their families and come back refreshed for 1996. It is only four more years till the end of the millennium. Thank you.

**Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona):** Well—[interjection] He is doing very well. For the member for Inkster's (Mr. Lamoureux) information, the M.P. for Winnipeg-Transcona is doing just fine. In fact, we are going to be expecting some very positive things in the very near future in his actions with the federal government.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to stand up to add my comments today to this government's latest throne speech for the Second Session of the Thirty-sixth Legislature for this province. I know the member for Inkster has referenced about people stepping down, but I know that perhaps he may have issues that are closer to his own mind on how certain members of his party have been stepping down lately.

Of course, they would be looking for new leaders for his particular party, and I am guessing here, although I do not for sure, but I suspect the member for Inkster may take on the challenge of once again running for the leadership of his party, although he has yet to announce that, but that may be an option that he is considering at this point in time. We look forward to his announcement in the coming days—[interjection] Well, it is going to take a lot of New Democratic hugging to convince any of them to vote for this member. That is for sure.

Madam Speaker, I listened to the comments of the members opposite relating to the throne speech itself.

I must say that, having read through this throne speech and having sat in this Chamber and listened to the Lieutenant Governor's address to the Chamber, I find that there is little, if anything, to applaud in this document. There is a lot of rehashing of old information that we already know. I have read through the two previous throne speech documents just to do a comparison, and I must say that I thought when the government was elected, as we just had a provincial general election, they would come up with some new initiatives or some new ideas, that there would be a regeneration or a rejuvenation of the government.

\* (1710)

The government always talks about change, and they have to do things differently. I thought that, if there was going to be change like they talk about, we would have some new changes or some new initiatives in this document. Well, I am disappointed to say that there are none, no new initiatives in here.

One of the things that strikes me about this document is in what it does not say to Manitobans. In past throne speech documents I know we have chastised the government opposite for this where they have omitted talking about transportation. Well, what do we see missing from this document again? Talk about transportation and what is happening with the transportation industry in this province.

The previous throne speech talked about how we are going to do these great and wonderful things with WINNPORT. Do we see WINNPORT mentioned in this document? No, not even one word about WINNPORT.

Do we see this document talk about rail transportation and what is happening with the industry? Not one word mentioned. Do we see this latest throne speech document talk about the trucking industry? Not one word. Do we see this throne speech document talk about air transportation? Not one word does this document talk about transportation, one of the biggest employers in the province of Manitoba, and yet there is not one word talking about it.

Now I find it very curious. Perhaps the government thinks that things are going along smoothly and there

are no problems in the industries. Perhaps the government is embarrassed by what has taken place in the transportation industry, that there is no progress. In fact, there is a degeneration of position in this province in the transportation industry. I think that is why the government has not mentioned transportation in their throne speech document; they are embarrassed by what has happened.

Let us take a look at the transportation industry. Let us take a look at employment in general in this province in some of the recent announcements that we have seen. The recent one that we have heard was dealing with CP Rail headquarters where CP Rail is transferring its headquarters from Montreal, flying right over Manitoba, transferring them to Calgary. At the same time, they are siphoning off 150 Manitoba jobs from the headquarters operations here and taking them to Calgary with it.

Now I thought and I remember the Premier's (Mr. Filmon) words in this House here when he talked about talking to the railways and getting a commitment from them to keep jobs in Manitoba. He said there were going to be no more jobs transferred out of Manitoba going to Alberta. He said he had a commitment from the railways that that would no longer happen, and what do we see? Another 150 jobs siphoned out of Manitoba by one particular railway going to the province of Alberta.

I listened to the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Findlay) talk here a few moments ago during his address to the throne speech. You would think a Minister of Highways and Transportation would talk about transportation-related issues. He touched on WINNPORT for a few moments, and then he went on to talk about Alberta. He did not talk about trucking. He did not talk about railways, talked a few moments about airports.

**An Honourable Member:** Not northern airports.

**Mr. Reid:** He did not talk about northern airports and what is going to happen to the communities that have to take over the airports that the federal government is offloading and also that the provincial government is offloading onto some of these communities. The

minister never talked about these issues or the impact upon the people living in those communities.

He did not talk about the 1,110 jobs that we have lost from the CN Transcona Shops complex this year.

He did not talk about the fact that in 1989, not long after he came into government with his colleagues, we had 2,700 jobs in the Transcona Shops complex and that today we have less than 300 jobs.

He did not talk about the fact that there is—and he says this in the House quite often, that he has constant communications with the railways. He knows what they are doing, although he does not like to pry too hard, he says. Perhaps he knows that the railways are planning to lay off the remainder of those 300 people. Maybe he has not said something in the House because he is embarrassed, the same way he was embarrassed to have transportation included in the throne speech document.

He did not talk about the 266 jobs that were lost in September and then a month later another 485 jobs that were lost at that complex.

He does not talk about, or the government does not talk about, the Labatt's plant that is closing its operations here in the city of Winnipeg, 120 jobs.

**An Honourable Member:** What do you suggest we do?

**Mr. Reid:** Well, all right, let me lay out this scenario for you. If you have a company that—[interjection] Well, it is interesting the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed), who was speaking here a few moments ago, who had the gall to stand up in this House and say that he is opposed to single-desk selling and he is opposed to the Wheat Board and every other marketing board that we have in the province of Manitoba—[interjection] That was the comment that you made. I am very disappointed that you would take that stand. I hope the members of your constituency have that same viewpoint.

#### **Point of Order**

**Mr. Tweed:** A point of order, Madam Speaker. I would challenge the honourable member to find

anywhere in Hansard where I had made those statements.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Turtle Mountain does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Reid:** Well, Madam Speaker, now I am somewhat confused here. The member stood up on a point of order a few moments ago and said he challenges me to find anywhere in the Hansard where he made those statements that he is opposed to single-desk selling, but, at the same time, he did not stand up and say that he favours single-desk selling. He did not say that he supports the Wheat Board, that he supports the Manitoba hog producers.

He does not tell us what he stands for. I am very disappointed that he would not say that he supports single-desk selling, that he supports the Wheat Board. I am very disappointed that he would not say that he supports those.

Now, perhaps a couple of seats over from him, the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister) has had some influence on him, and I know that the results of discussion—[interjection] Yes, very right-wing influence—that they are opposed to any single-desk selling. Perhaps some of that is rubbing off.

I want to get back, Madam Speaker, to the jobs that were being lost at Labatt's industry. Labatt's industry here in the city of Winnipeg was employing over 100 people.

**An Honourable Member:** Losing money.

**Mr. Reid:** They were making a profit—

**An Honourable Member:** Excuse me.

**Mr. Reid:** Well, I have the documentation downstairs, Madam Speaker, if the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) wants to come to my office and review the documentation. Labatt was making money. In fact, the Labatt's plant here, in addition to employing

Manitobans, was making a profit and they were able to ship their product to further destinations than any other of their producing plants in Canada. They were able to produce it more efficiently, something that members opposite are so strongly supportive of. This was with a more efficient operation here to produce the product cheaper and yet this plant is being closed down and its operations shifted west.

The question here I have to ask, what initiatives is this government taking—[interjection] We do not have to subsidize this company. We can facilitate a process to allow the employees of this operation to take—

**An Honourable Member:** It will not work.

**Mr. Reid:** Why will it not work? You have not even tried. Here is a member opposite, the member for Turtle Mountain, saying, cannot do. He does not follow the Royal Bank motto like the rest of his colleagues do. He says, you cannot do, even before you have had a chance to look at it and try it. Why will it not work? Do your ministers feel the same way? Is that the way your government feels?

You have already had opportunities to meet, it is my understanding, with members employed in that particular plant operation. Have you told them it is a no-go? Are you telling them it is a no-go, that you are not going to do this, you are not going to be involved in the process to try and save the jobs and the industry for this province? Is that what you are saying right now, because it sure sounds like it.

This was a profitable industry in the province of Manitoba here employing over a hundred people. Why are you not taking steps to facilitate or to assist the employees to purchase this particular business? They very much are interested in this. What steps are you taking to stop the outflow of the equipment, the state-of-the-art equipment, I might add, that is currently in production in this particular operation, to stop it from leaving the province of Manitoba?

As a government, have you asked the question of Labatts that if this plant is so inefficient and the equipment they are utilizing in there is of no value, why are they transferring that equipment to another one



of their facilities? Has anybody asked that question? There seems to be a silence over there, so I take it that no one has asked that question. Maybe they are not interested in the 120 jobs. Maybe they are not interested in the millions of dollars that were made by that particular industry in the province of Manitoba.

\* (1720)

What about the Versatile jobs? [interjection] There is a tax revenue that is going to be lost in addition to the jobs. What about the North American Life, and I know my colleague the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) has referenced this, North American Life transferring out of the province of Manitoba, 340 jobs lost. Is this a good sign for the province of Manitoba?

What about the Bristol Aerospace jobs that were just lost or just announced that they are going to be losing because of the CF-5 contract? Has anybody made communications with the federal government and said that the CF-18 project that should have come here would have probably saved those jobs? No? You have not asked that question of the federal government? Yet, Madam Speaker, I look at the thousands of jobs that have been lost, not only the 1,110 in my own community this year from CN Rail Transcona Shops complex, but what I read in the throne speech is that the government is setting up an all-party task force to go to Ottawa to try and save the very valuable 750 jobs at the AECL complex in Pinawa.

I had the opportunity last week to go to Lac du Bonnet in conjunction with the minister, the MLA for Lac du Bonnet, and my colleague the MLA for Crescentwood to speak to the people of that community and the people who were employed. It is a worthwhile task to go to Ottawa to take those steps to try and protect the employment and the industry for the province of Manitoba, but why did you not take those steps in dealing with the 1,110 jobs that were lost at the Transcona Shops complex this year? Three hundred more jobs.

Why did the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Findlay) not go to make a presentation to the parliamentary subcommittee dealing with the privatization of CN Rail to find out, to give

Manitoba's perspective on what was going to happen to the employment opportunities for Manitobans? Why did the government not make representation to the federal task force that came to the city of Winnipeg here a year and a half ago dealing with railways and rail transportation?

You go to make representation for jobs that are in your own constituencies as a government but you will not take the time or the initiative to represent jobs in any other communities in the province other than the ones you represent. That is an embarrassment for me as a Manitoban that my government here, because we are all part of the government here, will not take the steps to go and defend employment opportunities for Manitobans when they have the chance.

Are you so parochial that you do not care about people in other areas? I thought, maybe naively so, that when we were elected we were elected here to represent our constituents. When you were elected as a government or we are elected as a government, it is to represent all of the people, not the people that you want to represent because they voted for you, but all of the people. What ever happened to that? Is that not the principle you follow over there or do you not have principles in dealing with these matters?

Well, you seem to be very silent over there. This must be an embarrassment for you that you would take steps to defend your own constituents but you will not help other Manitobans that are having difficult times here.

The AECL jobs represent, I am told from the research that was done, some \$90 million directly into the Manitoba economy. Now, if you take the spin-off I am told there is \$170 million in additional. The Transcona Shops complex alone by itself was between \$60 million and \$100 million a year. That was its budget in addition to the 1,110 jobs that were lost this year.

**An Honourable Member:** Did you write letters?

**Mr. Reid:** Did I write letters? I have asked more questions and written more letters than you can ever imagine. What steps does your government take to

assist me? Has your government assisted me in this? How many times? Go back in Hansard and check how many times I have raised this in the House and in Estimates. I take it that the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) does not care about rail employment in the province of Manitoba. Perhaps rail workers do not live in his constituency. [interjection] I guess if you look over there you have to consider the source. I know the member opposite is never alone. I guess when you are a schizophrenic you are never alone.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. I would remind all honourable members that all 57 members in this Chamber are honourable members and nothing more or nothing less.

**Mr. Reid:** One of the things that bothers me the most is, not only are the families being affected by this, but in 1991 when I raised this issue not long after being elected, I asked the then Minister of Labour to undertake with his department, which had apprenticeship training and trade skills uptraining in his department at the time, to facilitate a process that would allow the employees of this plant to have their skills upgraded so they would have portable certification so that in the event they were laid off they could go and seek employment elsewhere within their trades. Nothing happened with that under the then Minister of Labour.

We tried two or three times to jog his memory to get the process going. Nothing happened. That is a disappointment for me, and it is a disappointment for those people who are now laid off and do not have that portable skills certificate.

One of the things that I would like to mention too is the impact the hospital emergency room closures have had upon my community. I know that I looked at the commercials that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and his spouse were involved in during the election campaign and how health care was a sacred trust and that they were going to preserve health care and, do not worry, we are not going to close those emergency rooms, it is safe with us. Don't worry, be happy, was the attitude.

Well, I have a couple of letters here that I have received from constituents dealing with how this

government has been rolling the dice with their health care. Madam Speaker, I would like to read this one letter from one of my constituents dealing with the very real concerns that this person has. It was addressed to the Premier and it was copied to me this year, just prior to the election:

I am writing to you—the Premier—regarding my very real concerns for the future of our health care system. Over the past few years I have listened with dismay to all of the cutbacks and serious consequences to the quality of health care, but it was not until now that I truly realized how dire these consequences can be to the average Manitoban.

At the end of January my father was diagnosed with prostate cancer. He has been told that his cancer is quite extensive. It has taken until now, the beginning of March, to have tests, X-rays, et cetera. On March 16 he goes to the cancer clinic for a CT scan and then he has a two-month wait before he can begin radiation treatments.

Because of a combination of his age and the fact that he also has had diabetes for the past 18 years, my dad is not a good candidate for surgery, so that rules out the possibility of removing his prostate. The bottom line is that he has to wait two months because of lack of machinery, personnel and in general the cutbacks to our health care service. This is on top of having such a long wait for his tests and X-rays. In short, all these wonderful things done to the health care system could indirectly cost my dad his life. During the two months he has to wait, there is a strong chance that the cancer will spread to other organs.

I realize that my dad is only one of thousands of nameless people who are in the same boat waiting for an opening so that maybe he can start his treatments and maybe he will have a chance to survive. In case you do not realize it, most of these nameless people do have names and a family. His chances of survival are not the greatest as it is, and the long wait only makes those chances slimmer. Maybe if some of the people who made the changes had one of their loved ones in the same position, they would not be so quick to make decisions that most Manitobans do not agree with.

I am sure that all of us who voted for you in the last election did not vote to cut our health care to such an

extent that people, with life-threatening diseases, are given a death sentence because our system is lacking. It is not right that our own are treated like second-class citizens and yet we can afford to spend millions on foreign aid. Charity begins at home and it is about darn time that we put care back into our health care system.

I do not imagine that this letter would rate a reply, but I feel that I have been silent long enough. Maybe if more of us speak up, the people we have elected to represent us will listen to what we have to say. Signed by Mrs. Suzanne Johnson. It was a letter addressed to the Premier.

Now this is not the only letter I have received. I listened to the comments that members opposite made during the election campaign. Our campaigns pick up what each other is saying throughout those campaigns. Do not worry, we are not going to close the hospital emergency. We are not going to cut back on health care services or on hospital beds—and just the reverse has happened. I have letters coming to me telling about the distress that families are having. If you are seriously concerned for the people of Manitoba in their interaction with health care and in particular for the city of Winnipeg, a community which I represent, one of the communities, you will recognize there has been a significant impact on those communities, and I ask you to open up those emergency rooms in the evening.

\* (1730)

I know the member for Springfield (Mr. Findlay) did not reference it in his discussion here today, but his community hospital is being impacted as well. It is the same one that serves my community. It makes it much more difficult for our people when they come in from the rural areas as well if they have to go another 10, 15 or 20 minutes to a hospital because the community hospital which is closest to them is closed. It is a serious issue. I do not think there has been any discussion here about what happens to shift workers, people that may be injured working the 4-to-12 or the 12-to-8 shift, if they happen to be injured during the time when the community hospital emergency rooms are closed.

I know when I was working at CN, on several occasions we had to have ambulance transport for

people to the closest community hospital which was Concordia, and yet Concordia Hospital is now closed in the evening hours, from 10 p.m. to 8 a.m. I ask the government to reconsider and to open up the five community hospital emergency rooms so that people no longer have to suffer, and to keep your commitment to the people that you made in March and April of this year that you would not close those community hospital emergency rooms. I ask you to keep that commitment.

Madam Speaker, there is one last issue that I want to reference here, and it is dealing with firefighting services and since we are in the Christmas season. We have seen in past years where there have been some very serious fires in remote and rural communities where there has been loss of life. Unfortunately, it has been families that have lost their lives.

I want to leave with the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews), since he is responsible for training of firefighting forces in the province of Manitoba through the fire college, to ask him to ascertain or to check into whether or not there are adequately trained volunteer firefighting forces in the province of Manitoba through the various rural and isolated communities. If he finds that there are not adequate firefighting forces, since we are in the Christmas season where traditionally there have been very serious tragedies take place, to initiate a process to train people to be actively involved in those volunteer forces so that we can protect the families from loss of life and loss of property, to take whatever steps are appropriate to ensure that those resources are in place.

Madam Speaker, my comments have been pointed, I know, but I do wish all honourable members opposite and all members of this House a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and to all members of the Chamber staff as well. We hope that you have a very joyous Christmas with family and friends, that all members of this Chamber come back safely to us in the New Year.

**Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture):** Madam Speaker, it is again a privilege to place a few comments on this year's throne speech on the record, and I have had this privilege for a number of times. On each occasion, it represents a different challenge. The few

comments that I would put on the record have to do with the word "change" and how difficult it is for all of us to come to terms with change. I certainly find it, you know, underlined time and time again that perhaps for the group that finds change just more than they can cope with, it is our friends opposite, the official opposition, the New Democratic Party. Be that as it may, change is about us, change is what we have to react to, and change is what we have to address our energies and our talents if we are to try to do our best to prepare, whether it is our farmers, whether it is our workers, society as a whole to the changes about us.

You know, Madam Speaker, I appreciate that, I suppose, every generation believes that it is facing a unique set of challenges and change, but that really is not the case. You know, man's society, evolution, has been a constant change. We think back, for those of us who have specific roots to agriculture, of our pioneers that first introduced agriculture to the western prairies.

There has hardly been a generation that has not seen massive change, from the original two decades of 1880s-90s through the turn of the century, where horses and oxen and pretty primitive steam-powered locomotion was used to break the prairie sod, then into the heady years immediately prior to the First World War and all the changes that that brought about, quite a different set of circumstances as we move through what a whole generation is scarred with that took up the better part of the decade of the '30s, the Great Depression, the great droughts that plagued western agriculture, that while these changes that I am referring to occurred—I am being specific about agriculture, of course—massive change took place in all other segments of society, in our cities, in our urban centres, in our workforces.

\* (1740)

But it is repeatedly underlined by spokespersons opposite that change is something that is just too difficult for members opposite to come to terms with. The honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) makes an emotional and I will acknowledge an eloquent speech, reads into the record, no doubt, a sincere and difficult situation that a person finds himself or a family finds themselves in with respect to

our health care system, referring to the letter that he read into the record addressed to the Premier (Mr. Filmon), but do we hear from members opposite any suggestion, any help, about how to respond to the change—and they know.

I do not have to repeat what the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) tells them virtually in every Question Period, that as a society, Manitobans, we pay more for our health care services than virtually any other jurisdiction in the country. You know that. The member for Transcona knows that.

Members opposite also know that Canada pays probably among the highest percentage of its net income to the health care system which we all share, higher than most European nations, certainly higher than the Americans, and, yet, there is no acknowledgment of that fact, no help, no constructive suggestions emanating from the benches opposite about how to come to terms with what by now is, as much as we like to dismiss it, the stark reality that all governments of all political stripes of all parts of this country are having to come to terms with, unacceptable mounting public debt and the result in waste, I call it, of monies spent to service that debt.

It really is mind-boggling when you think that in this modest province of ours we can sustain—not talk about closing any emergency care services in any municipal hospital. We can fund all municipal hospitals with the cheques that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) writes out every day before he starts his day to cover the interest charges on our debt, in excess of 650 millions of dollars.

Why do we not at least even in our quiet moments like at 5:30 or four o'clock in the afternoon when the television cameras are not on us at Question Period, at least be forthright enough with each other in this kind of a debate and seriously challenge how we can address that issue. If we come to a consensus that I believe most of us share, that health is the preeminent priority of our society, well, then, should we be taking away a bit more from our universities, from our education system. Again, let us not pick on the nickel-and-dime items, you know, ministers' luncheon expenses. That is not going to pay for any hospital ward. That is not going to pay for any university.

I appreciate that you have to look after the small amounts as you do the large amounts. You have to look at that in context with what, in fact, has been the norm and what is acceptable behaviour. If there are occasions where that line is transgressed, then the official opposition should do as they do from time to time, or the media or the public or the other people working in bringing things to light. That is all part and fair game in an open society, in a democratic society. That, of course, what keeps governments, should keep governments, on their toes and accountable at all times for how public dollars are spent, whether they are small amounts or large amounts.

But are we hearing any solid suggestions from our official opposition as we try to come to terms with the fiscal realities facing this government as they face a lot of other governments, all governments across this country, about reprioritizing, a rearranging of some of the debt? Are we hearing a clarion call for a 10-, 15-, 20-percent increase in taxes from honourable members opposite? At least, let them be honest about it. If they honestly feel that way, then let them say that. There is a case to be made for that. After all there are governments—although it is getting somewhat tattered and torn—but there are still governments that believe that the state should take everything we have, and the state only decides what services to bestow on us from time to time. That is loosely described as under the communist system of governments. I say it is somewhat tattered and somewhat shredded and torn these days.

But that is not a point of view that I ascribe to members opposite. What is the point of view that the honourable members opposite say? Are they suggesting significant increases? I know they railed mightily against a government, a prime minister when a new tax, the GST, was introduced onto the landscape of Canada. I did not see any cheering sections coming up from members opposite that suggested that those \$30 billion or \$40 billion that that new tax brings into the Treasury of Ottawa is probably right now at least helping a little bit in ameliorating the size of the cuts that Paul Martin is imposing on us, but—

**An Honourable Member:** I thought it was revenue neutral.

**Mr. Enns:** No, it is not revenue neutral. The economy has grown and the extension to it—it was revenue neutral on specific manufactured items that it replaced, the hidden manufacturers' tax. In the GST that has spread from beyond, and a great deal of additional services that the manufacturing, the hidden manufacturing tax never addressed, to that extent, it certainly is a gain for the national Treasury.

Honourable members opposite want it both ways, constantly. So if we are not hearing from honourable members opposite that they are the party that believe at this time Canadians, Manitobans, cannot stand another round of major and significant tax increases, then at least they have to start telling us, well, let us spend less on agriculture, let us spend less on roads, let us spend less on education. Let us spend it. Take all these savings and put it into their No. 1 priority item which anybody, any objective listener to our first 40 minutes of any session, would have to believe is health.

If we want to take all those monies away, take our monies for our parks maintenance away, and take away from the firefighters, take away from the police protection, take away from crime and justice departments to support that, that way at least we would have a legitimate debate. We would legitimately argue about where the priorities of the New Democrats are and where the priorities of the Conservatives are.

But it is not really fun in debating that way, because I do not wish to insult their intelligence. They know, because it is not a minister or a member of this side making that speech, because it is recorded in the factual documentation of revenues spent, that this government, that is daily under attack for health care cuts, is spending more than the immediate previous six years of New Democratic Party government in this province. They know that, and they can check it out.

They know that, when in office, they would be faced with exactly the same situations that this government faces. It is questionable. I think it is appropriate that we on this side can suggest that their management of a difficult situation, when managed by other New Democratic Party governments in other parts of Canada such as Saskatchewan or even in Premier Rae's Ontario, hardly escape some of the hard decisions that,

quite frankly, my government has to wrestle with on a daily basis.

Madam Speaker, I think there is one particular satisfaction that the members of the present government—and the people of Manitoba more importantly—can have, and that is simply that this administration under this Leader recognized from Day One that they took office in '88, that we were into difficult financial times, from their very first budgets, not evident on departments like Health, Education and Family Services, because quite frankly they were spared any of the cost-cutting measures that other departments had to live with.

\* (1750)

The honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) is well aware of that, because Agriculture was one of them; Natural Resources was another one. She remembers when I was Minister of Natural Resources and we took some very serious reductions in the budget of the Department of Natural Resources which, after all, looks after our forests, our lakes, our parks, our wildlife, but we did that so that we could hold off the day, that we could continue to allow Health and Education to expand by 4 and 5 and 6 percent in those first years. If there was ever a demonstration of the priorities of this government, it was evidenced in the actual monies this government kept putting into those high-priority items of all Manitobans.

Madam Speaker, we are now finding ourselves in a situation where we do not have to. At least in quiet moments, honourable members ought to acknowledge that. We are not imposing on Manitobans anywhere near the severe measures that other administrations of different political stripes are finding it necessary to impose, not because they like to, not because they want to, not because they are callous, not because they are not caring, because the hard fiscal reality of the situation they face impels them to do that.

Because we have done that over a period of eight successive budgets, we are much better positioned in Manitoba to live with these changes, and, hopefully, we are certainly seeing signs of it economically and particularly in the field that I am more specifically

attached to, agriculture, where there are some very exciting opportunities taking place on the landscape that will help in the generation of that wealth so that we can be positioned as we enter the new millennium, the year 2000, can find ourselves in a position where our debt is manageable, not erased.

We are not setting ourselves impossible targets even with that legislation that members opposite scoff at, the balanced budget legislation, which also makes references to retiring the debt, not in five years, not in 10 years, not in 15 years, not in 20 years, but in 30 years. Surely, we should at least set targets for ourselves, and if they are not achieved in 30 years, so it is 40 years or 50 years. But you have one political group in Manitoba that at least sets as a target the elimination of that depressing, debilitating debt that keeps resources away from those things that need attention.

That is now in place in this government. That is now in place in Manitoba. There will be New Democrats around 25 years from now that will have the opportunity of redirecting and saying—now instead of that 600, or by that time 800 or a billion dollars that is being paid on interest charges, they can at least have a targeted amount of money that they can say, those monies should be spent in this area or in that area without hesitating going to the taxpayer for additional taxes to do it.

**An Honourable Member:** Do you agree with that?

**Mr. Enns:** Well, I agree. I think that is the positioning that this government is trying to bring itself into. I am satisfied, Madam Speaker, that when history records the activities and the place in the sun, if you like, of the Filmon administration, the administration it has been my extreme privilege to be part of and for all of our group to be part of, that will probably be the most significant thing that is said about us. They will forget about the individual policies or programs or individual characters that made up the government, but I am satisfied it will be recorded, that repositioning the province on a sounder footing and setting it on track to a more responsible, accountable management and stewardship of the people's money. That will be, in my opinion, one of the highest accolades accorded to this

government. I take considerable satisfaction that I have been able to be part of that group as I share with all the colleagues that now sit in this group.

When you compare that to the legacy that the Parizeau government leaves for history to record, when you compare that to the legacy of the first and only New Democratic Party administration that our major province, the biggest province in the country, Ontario, achieved—what is the legacy that Bob Rae left for future historians to achieve? [interjection] Well, it is interesting what the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) indicates about Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan, much I am sure to the regret of the health workers that are constantly talked about in this Chamber, but Saskatchewan and Roy Romanow—and I am prepared to acknowledge that—likely will also enjoy that kind of acknowledgment by future historians as to putting that province's fiscal affairs, and recognizing the importance of doing that, into perspective. So, Madam Speaker, yes, first one, because they closed 50 hospitals; we did not.

Despite the fact that they have a road network just about three times the size of ours, they dedicate \$60 million to capital expenditures on their road program compared to our \$100 million. They have been far more restrictive in terms of government services than for instance has this government been in a very similar situation.

I encourage honourable members opposite. Change is upon us, if only the New Democrats could accept the word change, if only my colleague, the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), could understand that the Crow has gone and flown away. When she gets tired of asking me questions about hogs or the Canadian Wheat Board, I am sure there will be another question coming on about the Crow. It has gone, it has disappeared, and we now have to live with the change.

There are a number of other changes that we are going to have to cope with. The honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) concerns himself, as I know he would. He, after all, represents an area with a great number of railway workers. But there is going to be tremendous change in the transportation system, and you cannot expect the system to remain fixed at the

level of employment and the type of employment that was there 10 years ago, 15 years ago or even five years ago.

There is tremendous change taking place in the movement of agricultural goods east coast and west coast as a result of the Crow, among other things, that will affect that decision tremendously, grain being one of the major tonnages, goods and services, that railways haul. But all we hear from the honourable member is that the system has to maintain the jobs in their current vocations and as they were yesterday. Well, we await some recognition of the changes that are upon our society and some changes that will be good, some changes that will not be so good.

I am not suggesting that all change is good. Regrettably I think, particularly in our social areas, a lot of the changes that we see in our society beget some of the problems that we wrestle with as a government, as a society: breakdown in family values, breakdown in parental responsibility, our continuing inability from time to time to cope with some of the most severe social issues that we face as a society.

Some of those changes that technology has foisted on us are not always welcome, but for certain, change will not disappear from the nature of things. That just happens to be very much part of the nature of all of us. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River):** Madam Speaker, to begin with, I would like to welcome you back to the House and welcome the Pages. I hope that they find their time here an enjoyable time and take with a grain of salt some of the actions that take place in this Chamber many times. I would also like to show appreciation to all the staff that are here to support us as we do our work here in the Chamber.

It gives me pleasure, Madam Speaker, to have the opportunity to speak to the second throne speech of this mandate, and I want to say—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have 39 minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., I am leaving the Chair with the understanding that this House will reconvene at 8 p.m. this evening.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, December 11, 1995

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