



Third Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise, Hon.	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary	Concordia	N.D.P.
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
DRIEDGER, Albert	Steinbach	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
ERNST, Jim	Charleswood	P.C.
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	N.D.P.
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	P.C.
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	P.C.
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane	Osborne	N.D.P.
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	P.C.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn	St. James	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	P.C.
NEWMAN, David, Hon.	Riel	P.C.
PALLISTER, Brian	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank, Hon.	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
RADCLIFFE, Mike, Hon.	River Heights	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack, Hon.	Niakwa	P.C.
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric	Rupert's Island	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, March 10, 1997

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): I must inform the House of the unavoidable absence of Madam Speaker, and therefore, in accordance with the statutes, would call upon the Deputy Speaker to take the Chair.

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

PRAYERS

Messages

Commonwealth Day Message

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Today, the second Monday in March, is Commonwealth Day. Prior to going into Routine Proceedings, I have a message from Her Majesty the Queen, Head of the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth Day theme this year is "Talking to One Another." It is a fitting choice, because 1997 is a year when more people than ever before in the Commonwealth will have the opportunity to communicate with each other.

Modern travel has made it easy to meet and talk face to face. Many from throughout the Commonwealth will take advantage of this in 1997 for sports tours, youth exchanges, science conventions and other gatherings. Here in Britain, for instance, the city of Edinburgh will be the host to the biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting later this year. At the same time, Commonwealth nongovernmental organizations will be meeting there, so Commonwealth people will be getting together at all levels to exchange ideas.

But improved and easier travel is only one development. Recent advances in communications technology now enable us to talk to each other and to see each other without even needing to leave home. The Commonwealth uses this sort of technology for its distance education program, especially through the Commonwealth of Learning based in Vancouver.

Through communications like these, the barriers of distance can be removed and we can talk together, almost as if the whole Commonwealth was in one room.

Many years ago, my grandfather first spoke to the Commonwealth by radio. Today my message is speeding its way around the world by radio and for the first time on the Internet.

Of course, having more ways of communicating and faster ways of doing so does not necessarily mean that we understand each other better. Technical advances do not automatically bring improvements. "Talking to One Another" is not a one-way process: We can explain our own points of view, but we should also listen to the views of others. Commonwealth countries have an advantage in doing this because we have shared views of right and wrong and because we use the common language of English. This makes it all the easier to listen, to exchange knowledge and to share opinions and feelings with others whose daily lives may be very different from our own.

* (1335)

When we talk to one another, we can meet together in one place or we can use technology to hold discussions across the world. Whichever way we choose to communicate, the important point is that we keep talking and keep listening. By doing so, we ensure that the Commonwealth continues to grow as an informed and open-minded community of nations.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mobile Screening Unit for Mammograms

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to present the petition of M. Joshi, D. Joshi, Anne Nemez requesting that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) to consider immediately establishing a mobile screening unit for mammograms to help women across the province detect breast cancer at the earliest possible opportunity.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mobile Screening Unit for Mammograms

Mr. Deputy 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 (by leave). Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Yes. The Clerk will read.

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

WHEREAS medical authorities have stated that breast cancer in Manitoba has reached almost epidemic proportions; and

WHEREAS yearly mammograms are recommended for women over 50, and perhaps younger if a woman feels she is at risk; and

WHEREAS while improved surgical procedures and better post-operative care do improve a woman's chances if she is diagnosed, early detection plays a vital role; and

WHEREAS Manitoba currently has only three centres where mammograms can be performed, those being Winnipeg, Brandon and Thompson; and

WHEREAS a trip to and from these centres for a mammogram can cost a woman upwards of \$500 which is a prohibitive cost for some women; and

WHEREAS a number of other provinces have dealt with this problem by establishing mobile screening units; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has promised to take action on this serious issue.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Health (Mr.

Praznik) to consider immediately establishing a mobile screening unit for mammograms to help women across the province detect breast cancer at the earliest possible opportunity.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Before proceeding to Oral Question Period, may I draw the attention of the House to the galleries where we have seated with us today, 53 students from the H.S. Paul School, Grade 5, under the direction of Mrs. Brenda Mitchell, who are from Madam Speaker's (Mrs. Dacquay) riding.

We also have with us from the Faith Academy, twenty Grade 9 students under the direction of Mrs. Jodi Daly, from the constituency of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak).

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 200—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), that leave be given to introduce Bill 200, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative), and that the same now be received and read a first time.

Motion presented.

* (1340)

Mr. Ashton: The intent of this bill was very simple and that is to allow members of the Legislature to elect the Speaker of this Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to point out this is not the first time we have brought in this bill. We have brought it in before. I would point out that the House of Commons in Ottawa and the majority of Canadian provinces now have elected Speakers, as does the House of Commons in Great Britain.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we all need, not only in this Legislature but in this province, a Speaker that commands the respect and support of all members of

the Legislature. The way to ensure that that happens and that Speakers are not appointed strictly by Premiers and by sitting governments is to make sure that all members of the Legislature have the opportunity to elect the Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if ever there was a bill whose time has come, it is now, and I would urge all members of the Legislature to support it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I inadvertently skipped over a couple of areas. I am going to have to just backtrack a little bit.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees; Ministerial Statements and Tabling of Reports; Notices of Motion; Oral Question Period—oh, one second.

Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion of the honourable member for Thompson? [agreed]

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Education System Funding

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker or Mr. Speaker, Deputy Speaker. It is contagious, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

My question is a very serious one. Across the province we have been listening to students and teachers and parents advisory councils on the state of the finances and the cutbacks that have been initiated due to the Filmon government reduction in support for public education.

Today again in this Legislative Building parents advisory councils from across the province came here and talked about the lack of commitment by the provincial government to public education, in fact stated that the government of the day is starving the public education system, and this is having a very detrimental impact on the future for our kids and on the future of their education.

I would like to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon), will he initiate increases in funding to public education, and

will he listen to the parents advisory councils that have come forward to this Legislature today? Will he stop starving our children in terms of education funding and start investing in our future for decent funding in public education?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): I will check; my understanding was that we only had about 12 people here, but I will accept the opposition Leader's statement that it was parent councils of Manitoba. I was advised that about a dozen people had come. However, in regard to the concerns raised—two concerns I understand were raised. I was presented with a copy of the—watched as it came in.

First of all, regarding their first concern that the quality of education, that parent councils are being limited to talking about cuts, I would read what our role for parents advisory councils is, and no parent council should feel as stated in this release that they are limited to talking about cuts. Their role, according to the act, has many facets: to advise the principal about school policies, activities and organizations, including departmental and locally developed curricula, cultural and extracurricular activities, student discipline, behaviour management policies, community access to school facilities; advising the principal about fundraising, about the hiring process in hiring and assigning principals, to advise the school board of that; to advise the principal and the school board about annual budgets for the school; to participate in developing annual school plans involving the activities in the school and the learning that takes place in the school; to participate in any review of the school that the minister or school board has directed to be carried out and so on, so they are not confined at all. Their role is very extensive.

I should indicate in terms of funding that when we came into office the funding was \$631 million. It is now \$746 million, an increase of \$115 million.

* (1345)

Mr. Doer: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the minister's own advisory council on education and funding, a report that the minister and government received in November of 1996, stated that additional funding and support for public education should come from the general

revenues of the Province of Manitoba. The funding should not have to come again from the property taxpayers of Manitoba.

I would like to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon), why did the government ignore the advice of their own advisory committee? Why did they continue to either cut public education funding or freeze public education funding as they have done over the last five years? Why do they keep reducing the support for public education and continue to put that pressure on the local property taxpayer, contrary to the recommendation from their own advisory committee?

Mrs. McIntosh: As I have indicated earlier, funding increases to public education since we took office are \$115 million over the stretch of time from the time that we assumed office until today. I do acknowledge, as all members do, that when we began to have federal transfer cuts and a number of other things impact, we did have a few years of 2 percent cuts and a freeze. Even with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our total increase has been that \$115 million. By anybody's calculation, that is an increase over what the NDP used to fund public education in Manitoba, and a fairly substantial one, I might add.

In terms of the advice we have been given from the minister's Advisory Committee on Education Finance, I should point out a number of things that we have done, variations in the formula to address many concerns that have been identified. We have put in additional support for small elementary schools in sparsely populated areas; we have adjusted the funding formula so that the funding is not reduced due to reductions in operations and maintenance expenditures. Those could be redirected into the classroom where they should be. We have done a \$2,000 per wheelchair pupil provision for students and vehicles, and a number of other initiatives.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know you are asking me to sit because of time.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the minister did not answer the question of why she did not follow the recommendations from her own advisory council on public education funding where they called on the funding to come from the general revenues, not from

the local property taxpayers, something that is obviously going to be the opposite of what is happening.

I would like to ask the Premier himself, in light of the fact you have cut minus two, minus two, a freeze, minus two and zero over the last five years, at a time when revenues have grown, including the federal cuts by some 12 percent, including the money coming in from lottery revenues and other means, how can our kids compete in a changing world when courses are being cut, programs are being reduced, teacher-class ratios are changing, textbooks are becoming out of date? How can we compete in a changing world when we do not invest in our future by investing in our children in a public education system?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Deputy Speaker, as the minister has indicated, this government has increased its spending in the time that it has been in office to education by \$15 million a year, unlike the New Democrats, who, when they were in office—here is an example of their way of doing business. It is an article from the February 20, 1988, edition of the Winnipeg Free Press, and it says, quote, Education and some other social services are getting a dwindling share of provincial resources under the Howard Pawley regime.

It talks about how the greatest areas of increase in spending under that Pawley-Doer administration that was in office for almost seven years, the greatest increases went to departments such as the cabinet and its administration, 108 percent increase over that period of time; Government Services, 119 percent; Co-op Development, 219 percent; Agriculture, 101 percent. But all of the social areas, in fact, were dwindling. They were down from 62 percent of the budget for the three major areas: health, education and social services. They were down from 62 percent to 60 percent. They have gone up to over 64 percent of the budget since we have been in office.

It talks about the fact that the interest on the debt was increasing so dramatically that it was heading to be the second-largest department of government—second largest, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because of their priorities of spending on administration, on cabinet expenses and all those other things but not spending on education.

We have changed that. Interest on the debt is now the fourth department. It is slipping down in priority as it is slipping down in relation to all our other expenses, because we are able to live within our means for the first time in decades, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

* (1350)

Education System Parental Involvement

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Deputy Speaker, the last year that the NDP government was in office, there was a 4.5 percent increase to public schools, and I and every other parent across Manitoba would put that against the minus two, minus two and minus two of this government.

Last spring at the Yellowquill School in Portage, the government held one of its forums for parents. The Premier spoke; the Minister of Education spoke. In fact, every Tory minister with any connection to public education spoke, all of them glibly about the role of parents in education.

I would like the Minister of Education to confirm that what was in fact offered to parents and what is still offered to parents is not power, not the long list of activities that she wanted to enter into the record here, but in fact what has been offered is a poison chalice, the ability for those parents to cut and cut and cut to the bone their own children's education—because that is what they are telling the minister.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): I find it interesting in her preamble the member would indicate that the funding to education in the Pawley administration in their last year was only 4.5 percent. The following year when we came into office and for a few years after, the funding was considerably higher than that increase. School divisions were finding that they were raising their local levies very substantially year after year. I know, I was on a school board at that time, and school divisions were coping with what the member says they are still coping with, local levy. School divisions all around the province will indicate they value very much the ability to have taxing authority, because it does enable control for them. I think her comments are not quite on the target in that regard.

In regard to what parents are now obliged and able to do, I should indicate that we have about 150 school advisory councils now established, and the feedback I receive from them is far, far different from the feedback she has received from the people she says she has talked to. I receive a lot of feedback from parent advisory councils, both indirectly from department personnel and directly from parent councils themselves. That is not the message I am getting.

Ms. Friesen: Could the Minister of Education explain the duplicity of her government which claimed in 1994 when Clayton Manness was minister that we, quote, want advisory councils to have tremendous influence, but yet we have a Minister of Education who refused month after month to meet with the parent councils of Seven Oaks and who ignores the growing and extensive opposition to the cuts in public education across Manitoba?

Mrs. McIntosh: Again, not accepting any of the preamble—and I must indicate that I find the preamble in so many instances to be very, very off the mark and outrightly inaccurate in many instances. I meet regularly with parent councils, and they do not have to wait months and months to see me. The input and the advice that they are giving us is invaluable, the input they are making into their schools, the development of school plans. One only has to go to divisions, go to the former minister's division, Morris-MacDonald, talk about what the parent advisory councils are doing, the school advisory councils. It is astonishing. Some of the initiatives in community technologies for the whole community, not just the school, that are going on are outstanding, directly the result of parents who have taken a positive approach to work with the schools in developing those plans.

I can also indicate that on the minister's advisory committee on the implementation of educational change, the input from school advisory councils, parents on that very important committee have played a leading role in advising us on how they want educational change regarding examinations, curricula, roles of teachers, roles of principals, have been incredibly helpful. We thank them tremendously, and I do not see them not being involved, as the member implies.

* (1355)

Ms. Friesen: Would the minister, whose own publication, *Parents and Schools: Partners in Education*, argues that parental involvement is one of the most challenging practices, that educators need to build trust among parents—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Could I ask the honourable member to put her question. On her third question, I do not believe there is a need to put a preamble.

The honourable member for Wolseley, to continue.

Ms. Friesen: I would like to ask the minister how it is she intends to rebuild that trust with parents, the parents who are here today, for example, the parents in Seven Oaks, the parents who are telling us over and over again that confidence must be rebuilt in the public education system of Manitoba.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the member will have the parents that she has communicated with whom she quotes in the House, and I will get the overview. I have to indicate that what parents told us in the parent forums—we were the first government in Manitoba to hold parent forums. My predecessor held parent forums with sets of 500 parents—first come, first served; they were not preselected—who gave him indication they wanted several things: higher standards, measurable outcomes, examinations and assessment, improved quality of teacher training at the university in a number of things, better discipline in the schools.

Those foundations formed the blueprint which we are now implementing. Those requests came initially from parents. They wanted higher parental involvement in schools. We have set up guidelines for parental involvement through parent advisory councils. We have had 150 of them established. To my knowledge, from all I have heard from them from meeting with them, from talking with them, from visiting their schools, they are doing just what parents asked. It is too bad—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mrs. McIntosh: —they did not do that when they were in power.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Could I remind honourable members that under *Beauchesne's 417*, answers to questions should be as brief as possible and deal with the matters raised and should not provoke debate. It would help in keeping the decorum at this time.

Education System School Bus Capital Program

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Mr. Deputy Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education on the subject of the new capital school bus program.

I would like to remind the minister of May 16, 1996, not very long ago, when the minister told this House, “we have no intention of extending further beyond the 15 years the length of time that school divisions are allowed to own buses, because we feel that is probably the maximum length of time that a school division should be having a bus on the road.”

Will the minister admit now that the government has actually removed the 15-and-a-half-year limit for the use of school buses by the public school system, and, in effect, there is no limit by the province, not like her own ministerial car?

* (1400)

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): I find it ironic that one member of the opposition would on the one hand ask us to start listening to taxpayers, parents and school officials and on the other hand say that when we act upon what we have heard that we should not do it. It is the damned if you do, damned if you don't scenario that is easy to bring up in the House.

I should indicate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that what we have done is to act upon advice from the field, including parents to whom we do listen. We stopped purchasing buses for school divisions. Instead, what we have done is we have given school divisions the money that is required to purchase a bus should they so desire, based upon this premise that people were coming to us and saying: Sometimes buses at the age of eight are completely worn out depending upon the use they have had; others at the age of 17, if they have been well maintained and are not used a lot, are still

roadworthy. Some of us do not wish to purchase buses, some of us wish to contract out. Instead of purchasing buses for school divisions, why do you not do the common-sense thing, just provide the money and let us determine how our transportation will take place.

Of course, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they are subject to inspection and all of those items. They must be roadworthy and licensed, et cetera, but we are listening to the requests from parents and school officials that these decisions be left to school divisions with the money provided. We will continue listening to people and making adjustments to our decisions if we believe they have made a good case.

Ms. Mihychuk: Mr. Deputy Speaker, can the minister explain to this House how many buses the Winnipeg School Division will replace at a \$99,000 grant, given that 38 of their 60 buses need to be replaced? How old will those buses be by the time they get replaced?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I cannot speak for individual divisions' decision making. I know that a number of divisions have opted for contracting out in terms of how they transport students instead of owning their own buses. Of course, that is their own decision.

I have to indicate that we have provided an additional funding of \$0.4 million to the Winnipeg divisions for the purchase of buses should they desire to do that. We also are saying that we will be providing \$195 per pupil for Grade 7 to Senior 4 in cities, towns and villages who live more than a mile or 1.6 kilometres from their school or the transit bus stops. We are making accommodations to make transportation easier in the city and to lessen that burden on local school divisions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for St. James, with her final supplementary question.

Ms. Mihychuk: My final question to the Minister of Education: Is the minister finally prepared to admit that for those divisions that require replacement of significant buses—and we do have an aging fleet—over the next few years, that the only viable option for those divisions is to look at leasing for virtually double the cost at \$120,000 per unit rather than the \$60,000 to buy it outright, so the taxpayers of Manitoba will be responsible for picking up buses for twice the price?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Deputy Speaker, no, I will not accept the preamble. Again, the preamble is worded for whatever message is intended to be gained from that wording.

I have to indicate that we have done a number of things in addition to allowing the local divisions to make the decisions, which were the requests that were made of us. The response we gave to points raised to us, in listening and responding positively to suggestions we were given from the field, we have also done a number of other things to help offset costs. I started to mention earlier that we will now give \$2,000 per wheelchair pupil for pupils who are provided vehicles other than school buses, provided, of course, they are appropriately licensed. We have done a number of things like that.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, earlier, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you cited Beauchesne 417 which states that “Answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate.” We have now listened through nine rather painful so-called responses from the minister, many of which bear no resemblance to the question asked. The minister was just asked a very serious question about school buses, in particular whether school districts will have to lease rather than purchase because of the pressures they are under.

I would like to ask, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you would ask the Minister of Education to finally at least respond to one of the questions we are asking.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Thompson, he is quite right. Citation 417 does state that answers to questions should be as brief as possible and deal with the matters raised, but in listening to the minister's answer I was not sure if she was coming to that point or if it was coming further on, so I cannot rule it a point of order at this time.

Personal Care Homes Safety Standards

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Deputy Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health. We have now

had the announcement of an inquest into the death of Mr. Molnar at Holiday Haven, but there is still a huge gap, a huge hole in the Holiday Haven and the nursing home story.

I am asking the Minister of Health what steps the Minister of Health is going to take to answer the questions about previous difficulties at Holiday Haven, previous difficulties at other nursing homes and the huge lack in confidence that Manitobans have in the ability of this government to manage nursing homes as a result of the Holiday Haven affair.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we have discussed in this House before, we certainly wanted to see what decision the Chief Medical Officer would make with respect to an inquest. We understand that he has now ordered an inquest with, I think, a fairly broad mandate with respect to these circumstances. As I have indicated to the member before, we will wait to see the outcome and the recommendations that come from the coroner's inquest or the inquest of the Chief Medical Officer.

Holiday Haven Nursing Home Inquest-Mandate

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Can the Minister of Health and the Premier (Mr. Filmon), who seem to know something about this, inform the House whether or not issues such as the Morrissette case where they have been forced to go to the Human Rights Commission or the 19 cases that I wrote to the minister last fall, 19 cases of abuse at Holiday Haven, will be dealt with by this particular inquest?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Every time I seem—or on many occasions in which we get questions from members opposite, I think it is very important to remember that it is important to have our facts correct. The member talks about 19 cases of abuse as if every one has been proved. Many times there are inquiries made or allegations made that the facts do not bear it. It happens from time to time. We heard the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) make reference to three deaths of the same nature which were not the case.

My understanding from discussions my office has had with the Chief Medical Officer is within the mandate that he will be addressing his concerns regarding safety of elderly persons in personal care homes in our province, and that is part of the discussions or the inquiry that he will be having.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Deputy Speaker, my final supplementary to the minister. I spoke on the weekend with the daughter of Mrs. Sands, the other subject of an inquest at a personal care home four years ago that still is unresolved. What assurances will the minister give this House and the people of Manitoba, since this inquest is going to be into other nursing homes, that all of the cases, that all of the situations will be adequately investigated and followed up so that we are not in this House a couple of years later like we have been again talking about the failure of this government to follow up recommendations?

Mr. Praznik: I too have had occasion to speak to some of the relatives of that particular case that he referenced, and from the information that was provided to me—I have not spoken with the daughter but another family member—they are not quite as the member would lay out before us in the House. As I have indicated, the Chief Medical Officer will be holding an inquiry. Part of that mandate is to address concerns regarding safety of elderly persons in our personal care homes, and as minister I certainly want to have that kind of information. It is my responsibility as the minister who licenses personal care homes, both private and public in this province, to ensure that to the greatest degree possible we are protecting the safety and security of residents of those facilities.

Labour-Market Training Federal-Provincial Agreement

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for St. Boniface.

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Merci, Monsieur le vice-président, et bienvenue.

[Translation]

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and welcome.

[English]

My question is for the Minister of Education and Training. Your department is currently in negotiation with the federal government to assume more authority in the area of training. I am upset with the members of my constituency that are being frightened by reports that have been circulated in St. Boniface because of closed-door agreements, which I do not believe. Will the minister update this House on the current negotiations between the province and the federal government regarding a transfer of labour market services and dispel the rumour of closed-door negotiations?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Deputy Speaker, yes, the member is correct in that Canada and Manitoba are negotiating a labour market training agreement. We are in the final stages of that negotiating. The member makes reference to concerned employees, and I indicate that we, in negotiating, have every intention of ensuring that those who currently do work in providing training opportunities and labour market training for the people of Manitoba are all fairly and well treated as we conclude our negotiations.

* (1410)

Mr. Gaudry: Mr. Deputy Speaker, has the minister considered entering into a co-management agreement with the federal government similar to the one already existing between the federal government and the Province of Newfoundland?

Mrs. McIntosh: We have looked at all models that exist. We will be ending ultimately, I am sure, with an agreement that is made for Manitoba that may or may not reflect what is happening in other provinces but that will be well suited to the people who live and work here. Our goal is to achieve that in a co-operative venture with the federal government. We have had many discussions on that very topic and, rumours notwithstanding, I can assure you that both the federal minister and the provincial minister and those two respective governments want the very best solution for all involved.

Mr. Gaudry: Can the minister guarantee that Manitobans will continue to receive the same in

bilingual services and support as provided under the federal government?

Mrs. McIntosh: Our goal here is to provide the same or enhanced services in all areas in the most cost-effective way to avoid the overlap and duplication that currently exists and to ensure that we end up with a system as good if not better than what we had with costs that are contained and will not continue to grow because of duplication and overlap.

Our concern would be that as we have this devolution of power the funding that is required to sustain our system accompanies the agreement, and of that we have confidence of a successful conclusion.

Deputy Minister of Energy and Mines Expenditures

Hon. David Newman (Minister of Energy and Mines): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I had a response to a question asked last Friday, March 7, from the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), and I would like to put that on the record.

Of the total amount of \$74,734.77 included in the 1995-96 Public Accounts, there were two categories of expenses. The first one concerning relocation, \$69,985.31 relates to relocation expenditures incurred in the recruitment of the deputy minister, in relocating the deputy and his family from Ottawa to Winnipeg. The expenditures are consistent with the general manual of administration policies and Treasury Board guidelines, I am advised by the Clerk of the Executive Council. In their review of these expenditures, staff have confirmed that they relate specifically to the moving of household goods to Winnipeg, fees, commissions and disbursements related to the sale of the property in Ottawa and miscellaneous disbursements incurred during the relocation of the deputy minister and his family.

Out of the total relocation expenditures, only \$4,008.67 passed through the hands of the deputy minister in reimbursing him for relocation expenses; \$65,850.33 was paid direct to Royal LePage and \$126.31 was paid direct to American Express.

The second category was business-travel marketing; \$4,749.46 relates to travel and associated costs for the

deputy minister in the course of performing his regular duties. Of this total, only \$2,685.89 passed through the hands of the deputy minister in reimbursing him for his travel and related expenses.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Newman: Oh, I am sorry.

An Honourable Member: . . . been standing for five minutes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Just to inform the minister, we have been dealing with the rules which have been set forth by the House prior to my coming to the Chair, but we have been leading to the establishment of one-minute clear guidelines for the answers to questions and sometimes a little bit longer, but that was dragging on to two minutes.

Youth Gangs Reduction Strategy

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Mr. Deputy Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice. Last week when I asked why, despite the threat of gangs on everyone's mind, there was not one single word in the throne speech on the issue, the minister launched into a fit against Lloyd Axworthy.

Rather than turf wars, gang or political, can the minister possibly explain what I think Manitobans would be dismayed to learn, that the government has quietly buried a report by its own Youth Secretariat which made 34 recommendations for comprehensive action on gangs, a call to action done when? Ten months ago. What are they waiting for?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would certainly be more than happy to have one of my staff members sit down and speak with the member opposite to indicate exactly what we have been doing over the last number of months.

I want to indicate that, and I do not have the report here, but Mr. Justice Hughes's report indicates specifically—I think it is at page 56, it is in around page

56: difficult work, but the progress that has been made by many people in respect of this initiative.

I would refer the member back to those comments in order to give him some assurance that it is not simply the government standing up and saying that we have been doing a good job and a lot of work in that area, but an independent person as well.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the government was called on for a comprehensive response to gangs, but the government very—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. This is not a time for debate. I would ask the member to put his question now, please.

Mr. Mackintosh: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Did the government bury the Youth Secretariat's report because it was embarrassed by its comments on how Manitoba leads the nation in violent youth crime or how the problems of gangs is being ignored or describing, and I quote, inaction, noncommunication and potentially dangerous situations in programs?

Mr. Toews: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I categorically reject the accusations made by my colleague across the way. I want to state that in fact we have been working very aggressively in that respect, and given the limitations of time, might I indicate a couple of areas where I think we lead the nation in terms of assuring the public that we in fact are concerned about the youth gang issue. First of all, in Manitoba we, in spite of having one-thirtieth of the population, have about 50 percent of all the transfer applications. We take a very, very serious look at violent crime, and if there are no appropriate facilities in the youth system, we actively move on transfers in that respect.

I might indicate for my colleague's benefit that the Court of Appeal has examined that issue in three areas, three separate decisions, and have in fact supported the government's position on those transfer applications.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for St. Johns, with his final supplementary question.

Mr. Mackintosh: Will the government own up to the reports—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Could the honourable member place the question. It is not necessary to put a preamble.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Deputy Speaker, my question is as it was, would the government own up to the criticisms in the government's own report which said such things as reductions in social allowances and Child and Family Services are factors leading to the gang activity in Manitoba, allegations that probation is a joke, that the court system is taking too long, and will the government just get down to business to deal with gangs in this province?

Mr. Toews: I think my colleague has pointed out a very important issue, that as Mr. Justice Hughes has pointed out, the real solution extends beyond penal sanctions and criminal proceedings, but the real solution deals with social agencies and some of these social issues as opposed to the criminal issue. I want to say, in respect of my concern with the federal government's approach, that at the same time they put \$200,000 for a gang co-ordinator here, they take \$200 million out of this province, \$20 million on an annual basis that went directly to pay for services for our First Nations people off reserve. We feel that this is a tremendous shortcoming and a failure of the federal government, and I hope that my colleague across the way will work together with me on that issue to convince the federal government of the error of their ways.

Manitoba Telecom Services Inc. Board of Directors

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): My question is to the Premier. The board appointments for Manitoba Telecom systems were recently announced, and members of the multicultural community are very concerned about the composition of the board. Despite the throne speech rhetoric of the government's spirit of partnership, there was not one aboriginal person or any visible ethnics represented in these board appointments.

How can the Premier justify the throne speech rhetoric when not one of his own appointments to the MTS board are from the groups he says he wants to develop a spirit of partnership with?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): As the member knows, the Manitoba Telecom Services will be in, or is already in, the private domain as a privately held corporation. As such, it was very important to have names since the shares are publicly traded, names that were well known both nationally and certainly within the corporate community, because we expected to get the maximum value for the corporation and in fact received over \$900 million. It was very important to have people with business capability and a very strong business background in order to attract that kind of investment.

In the long term, all the people of Manitoba, including our aboriginal brothers and sisters, and others, will benefit by having that \$910 million come back to Manitoba to be invested in Manitoba.

* (1420)

Mr. Hickes: My question is to the Minister responsible for Multiculturalism. The Minister responsible for Multiculturalism must have been appalled by the lack of ethnic representation on the MTS board. Will she meet with the Premier to develop a strategy to ensure that this situation does not happen in the future and that all Manitobans are represented when the government is making patronage appointments?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister responsible for Multiculturalism): This government does have a very good record of involving the multicultural community and becoming continually involved with the community. It is a record, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I believe is a good one, and I am sure this government will continue its commitment in the way that it has already acted.

Boards and Commissions Ethnic Representation

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Point Douglas, with his final supplementary question.

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Since the Premier clearly did not consider aboriginal or visible ethnics in this series of

political appointments, will he now commit to legislation which would ensure a true representation of the population of Manitobans on boards and commissions? I would like to table the boards for the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission, the Manitoba Hydro board and the Manitoba Telecom Services which truly show the lack of appointments by this government for aboriginals and visible ethnic people.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Deputy Speaker, the member selects only those boards which he thinks make his argument. If we look at the hundreds of boards and commissions that are appointed by this government, we will find that this government's record is better than was ever achieved by the New Democrats with respect to appointment of women, with respect to appointment of visible minorities and with respect to the broadest range possible of people from all elements of the Manitoba community.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Time for Oral Question Period has expired.

NONPOLITICAL STATEMENT

St. Boniface Diocese

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): May I have leave for a nonpolitical statement?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there leave for the honourable member for St. Boniface to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Point of Order

Mr. Gaudry: On a point of order, if the Premier wants a briefing on the convention of the weekend, I will do that later on for him.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member did not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member now has leave to put his nonpolitical statement.

Mr. Gaudry: Monsieur le vice-président, il me fait grand plaisir cet après-midi de saluer le Diocèse de Saint-Boniface.

Le 8 décembre dernier marquait l'ouverture officielle d'une année de célébrations entourant le cent-cinquantième anniversaire de la fondation du Diocèse catholique de Saint-Boniface. Plusieurs milliers de Manitobains et Manitobaines auront, au cours de l'année, l'occasion de se joindre à ces fêtes et à mieux connaître sa belle et grande histoire.

Le 16 juillet 1818, trois missionnaires catholiques débarquaient devant le Fort Douglas, ici, à la Rivière-Rouge. Ils représentaient la première présence permanente chrétienne dans L'Ouest. Grâce à la vision et la générosité de Lord Selkirk, ils jetèrent les fondations d'une grande oeuvre qui a marqué non seulement notre province mais le Canada entier.

Vingt-neuf ans après l'arrivée des premiers missionnaires—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Could I ask the members wanting to carry on a conversation to do so either in the Loge or out in the halls. The honourable member for St. Boniface is attempting to put forward his statement at this time. The honourable member for St. Boniface to continue.

Mr. Gaudry: Merci. Vingt-neuf ans après l'arrivée des premiers missionnaires, le Saint-Boniface est érigé en diocèse le 4 juin 1847. Ce diocèse s'étend des Grands Lacs aux Rocheuses et de la frontière américaine au pôle Nord. C'est un vaste pays de mission qui ne compte que deux paroisses, Saint-Boniface et Saint-François-Xavier.

Au cours des 150 dernières années, le Diocèse de Saint-Boniface a joué un rôle significatif dans le développement de la nation métisse, l'éducation, les soins de santé, l'entrée du Manitoba dans la Confédération canadienne, les négociations de traités avec les Premières Nations et le mouvement de colonisation. Il assure la fondation de journaux, d'écoles, de collèges et de services sociaux. Son oeuvre a été grande et pleine de mérite.

Je suis certain que tous les Manitobains et Manitobaines se joignent à moi pour apporter nos meilleurs vœux en cet anniversaire.

Merci beaucoup.

[Translation]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very pleased this afternoon to honour the St. Boniface Diocese.

Last December 8 marked the official opening of a year of celebrations around the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Catholic Diocese of St. Boniface. Several thousand Manitobans will, in the course of the year, have the opportunity to join in these celebrations and to become better acquainted with its great and fine history.

On July 16, 1818, three Catholic missionaries landed before Fort Douglas here on the Red River. They represented the first permanent Christian presence in the west. Thanks to the vision and generosity of Lord Selkirk, they laid the foundations of a great undertaking which marked not only our province but all of Canada. Twenty-nine years after the arrival of the first missionaries—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Could I ask the members wanting to carry on a conversation to do so either in the loge or out in the halls. The honourable member for St. Boniface is attempting to put forward his statement at this time.

The honourable member for St. Boniface, to continue.

Mr. Gaudry: Thank you. Twenty-nine years after the arrival of the first missionaries, St. Boniface became a diocese on June 4, 1847. This diocese stretched from the Great Lakes to the Rockies and from the American border to the North Pole. It was a vast mission territory comprising only two parishes, St. Boniface and St. Francois Xavier.

In the course of the last 150 years, the St. Boniface Diocese has played a significant role in the development of the Metis nation, education, health care, the entry of Manitoba into the Canadian Confederation, treaty negotiations with First Nations and the colonisation movement. It undertook the

founding of newspapers, schools, colleges and social services. Its work has been great and filled with merit.

I am certain that all Manitobans will join with me in offering their best wishes on the occasion of this anniversary.

Thank you very much.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE (Fifth Day of Debate)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate on the proposed motion of the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne and the proposed amendment of the Leader of the official opposition and the proposed subamendment of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): I am pleased to rise today and join in the debate, or join in the responses to the throne speech, although I must admit at the onslaught, and I use the word "onslaught" correctly, I am more pleased to join in the debate than I was to hear the throne speech.

This is the third throne speech that I have heard, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The first one was in June 1995, December 1995, and now March 1997. So I have grown used to the self-congratulatory airs and graces, to the dense rhetoric and the glorious promises of a new heaven and a new earth right here in the province of Manitoba. But I must admit nothing quite prepared me for the arrogance and cynicism of this speech and the assumption that the people of Manitoba cannot or will not put two and two together and come up with four. This throne speech simply will not dupe the people of Manitoba no matter how hard the government tries.

I refer, of course, to the Premier's new pose and the implicit promises of a gentler, kinder Manitoba. It appears that this Premier and his ministers are now going to become friends of children and of aboriginal people. I would assume that the government has read the polls and this government understands that the people of Manitoba are appalled by child poverty, so

what they are going to do is cast a few bucks, I suppose, in the direction of children and of aboriginal people. Once again, after starving our Manitoba children and denying aboriginal people for nine years, the government is going to change its tune. I hope for the sake of children and for the sake of aboriginal people that this Tory relationship differs from that vis-a-vis Manitoba women, for this government has long posed, long marketed itself as a friend of Manitoba women, but I think they have put more energy into the marketing than they have into the friendship with Manitoba women. I will return to the subject of women—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I hate to interrupt the honourable member, but if we will just wait one minute, I think we might have some people who are leaving the Chamber and it might be a little quieter in just a minute. Could I ask the members who want to carry on their conversations to do so in the hall so that I can hear the honourable member's presentation. Thank you.

The honourable member for Osborne, to continue.

* (1430)

Ms. McGifford: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was speaking about the government's supposed change in attitude, their decision to provide services for the poor, their decision to give a little attention to aboriginal people, and I was hoping that this decision to suddenly be charitable was not like the charity they have extended to Manitoba women, since that charity is, as I said, more a marketing game than it is a reality.

It would seem to me that the people of Manitoba will have little faith in the Premier's (Mr. Filmon) throne speech, the architectonics or the structural design of which seems to me to be a rotting house which the owner, a kind of entrepreneur who has been around the block a few times, decides to doctor up in order to sell. We all know the tricks—add a coat of paint to cover unsightly flaws, slap up some cheap wallboard to cover decay, run up a few inexpensive window dressings, all of these things may help to sell. I think a slick entrepreneur might market a tarted-up residence of this kind but only to a woefully imperceptive and almost blind customer. Those who hold shares in the real

estate company that marketed such a residence would of course cheer, but the average customer would not be taken in. It would be absolutely no sale.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a way of saying that the Premier's tarted-up throne speech will not sell to the majority of Manitobans, and it will only add furthermore to the growing cynicism and distrust of politicians. We hear it everywhere, people weary of empty political rhetoric, people weary of promises made today and broken tomorrow, and this kind of throne speech seems to me absolute fodder for that kind of criticism.

I know the Premier was recently eulogized in the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce's publication *Focus* and that he was reputed to have been in great form when he was in Davos, Switzerland, this winter. Apparently the Premier made his fifth annual trip to Davos while the rest of us stayed at home and froze our you-know-whats. I know that, according to *Focus*, a certain British journalist, one Alan Ferguson, flew from England to Manitoba and was allegedly ecstatic over the wonders of our Premier's brilliance. In fact, this Mr. Ferguson came up this morning in the *Winnipeg Free Press* in an article by Frances Russell, and I want to refer to this article. Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The article is on Tory engineers at work on the University of Manitoba, and Alan Ferguson apparently wrote an article on Manitoba featuring our Premier. Our Premier had stellar billing in a publication called *WorldLink* which I assume means *WorldLink* is available internationally to people everywhere. Anyway, the author of *WorldLink* reported our Premier's views on our universities and I want to quote.

Alan Ferguson, the article's author, writes that the Premier (Mr. Filmon), and here is the quotation from Alan Ferguson: "... argues that the universities are not producing the right kind of graduates for the new economy. He has moved to centralize control," that is, the Premier has moved to centralize control, "over universities and community colleges to influence spending priorities. In this he has the support of many business leaders, some of whom speak with undisguised contempt at the failure of universities to change with the times to produce business-oriented graduates."

The article goes on to quote a person from Great-West Life Assurance Co., the president, Ray McFeetors, as saying, you should clean them; that is, the universities. "You should clean them out. You couldn't run a business like that."

And, of course, the author of this article points out that universities are not in business, but the point that I want to make is, here is the Premier of this province, presumably a defender of education, public education, but here is the Premier of this province who not only champions Philistinism within the province but does it internationally, appears in an international article telling people the world over that our universities are of an inferior quality or will be soon because they will be completely driven by business.

Anyway, this Mr. Alan Ferguson is apparently by all accounts a leftover legacy of Thatcherism, British Thatcherism, so he certainly is not an unbiased reporter. I suspect soon, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that he will have his 'right wings' clipped, especially this summer when Labour Leader Tony Blair tunes in John Major's mostly ailing Tories. So much for Alan Ferguson.

On the same subject, that is on focus, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say that I did enjoy the apotheosis of the Tory cabinet. I read all the profiles very carefully. I enjoyed, too, the letter written by my colleague for Crescentwood in which he spells out some home truths regarding the sale of MTS. I would like to quote from that letter, and I can table the letter if that is necessary.

Anyway, I want to quote from the letter. This is a letter by the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale), the NDP critic for Industry, Trade and Tourism, and I read from him: The government's impossible promise that Manitobans would own a strong majority of the shares in the new company, that is MTS, faded to zero only three days into the trading, when over 26 million installment receipts had been sold, mostly to institutional investors, bringing direct Manitoba ownership down to about 35 percent and falling fast. Sadly, a good public company which provided high quality services and modest profits to one point million Manitobans is now a private company which will try to serve its 30,000 mostly non-Manitoban shareholders by making maximum profits. If you doubt this, remember that the recently privatized CNR is now 65 percent

owned by American investors. And as I said, that is signed by the NDP critic for Industry, Trade and Tourism, my colleague the member for Crescentwood.

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

I want to quote from his letter because I think it is important to get the words of the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) on the public record where the public will have access to them, and I think it is important to make the point that this extremely egregious sale of a Crown corporation and, of course, Mr. Acting Speaker, the unprecedented usurpation of democratic rights which accompanied the sale, I think is important to get on the record and make the point that these two actions lie a shadow across both this Chamber and the Province of Manitoba.

Last and most important, the member for Crescentwood's letter reminds us all that this government cannot be trusted. The sale of MTS was arguably the worst in a long series of broken promises. This government might have served the interests of its corporate bosses and put a few million dollars into the hands of stockbroker friends, but the majority of Manitobans, 67 percent, were against the sale, and they wanted, at the very minimum, some consultation. Of course this was denied them, and Manitobans are not pleased.

The sale of MTS and this broken promise, broken promise after broken promise after broken promise, may well be the Trojan horse, the decision from within that will eventually destroy this Tory government, and good riddance, of course.

I want to turn my attention now from MTS and turn to the throne speech itself. The government claims to be contemplating changes in its attitudes and policies. It promises to begin the fight, to begin the war against child poverty in Manitoba. As I said earlier, after nine lean years, so the throne speech goes, after these nine lean years the government is now going to turn attention to poor children.

I want to take a look at the government's record regarding child poverty and put some of it on the record, the Filmon government's record on child poverty. Let me begin, Mr. Acting Speaker, by

pointing out that Manitoba has the third worst record of children under 18 living in poverty, as well, the worst record for poor children of single mothers. The rate for all children has risen to 23.2 percent, that is, children living in poverty, from 21.2 percent in 1988, reflecting an increase of 3,000 children living in poverty; 71 percent of children with single mothers are living in poverty.

* (1440)

Now, I will speak later and I am sure will speak a great deal over this forthcoming session about the institutionalization of female poverty. Have you ever known poor children with rich moms? No. The two do not go together. But the point we are making here is the huge numbers of poor children in the province of Manitoba and this government's failure to do anything about it. Perhaps now something will be done. I am not holding my breath. As my colleague from Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) has pointed out, what has happened under this government is that things have become worse. We have gone from 21.2 percent in 1988 to 23.2 percent and 3,000 extra children living in poverty, as I have already said.

As well, Winnipeg Harvest reports that it is assisting an average of 17,000 families a month through its food bank. This is an increase from last year's monthly average of 15,000 families.

A couple of weeks ago, Mr. David Northcott from Winnipeg Harvest visited our caucus, as I am sure he visited the caucus of members opposite. He spoke about the staggering numbers of children at Harvest. He told us that 5 percent of the population of Winnipeg eats food bank food. I suppose that would mean that 5 percent of the children in Winnipeg eat food bank food. He also told us that the growth in the users of food banks in rural Manitoba over this last year has been the greatest growth in the last 10 years. These are staggering pieces of information and do not bode well for the future of our children in Manitoba nor for the integrity of the members opposite.

Here are some of the things the government has done in recent years: forced the city to reduce food allowances for children due to the standardization of social assistance rates. I remember Bill 36. I remember

sitting well into the night. The member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) was there. Some members opposite were probably there as well. We heard citizen after citizen put their concerns on the record, and I do not think that even one amendment, one of the amendments of our critic, the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), was accepted. It was as though the public were completely blanked out and not listened to.

Let me get on. As well, this government has reduced provincial social assistance rates, including rates for families with children—or example, single parents with children over the age of six. But what I understand now, Mr. Acting Speaker, is that mothers with children under six are also being harassed and bullied and forced into the labour market and expected to find care for their children and leave their children. As well, the government has failed to implement the Health of Manitoba's Children, and I am speaking here of the Dr. Postl report, which also included some very fine recommendations on child poverty. I do not understand the commissioning of a report and then a blind wilfulness to pay any attention to that report. Reduced the budget for child care by \$4 million per year and reduced the number of subsidized—and I believe they are cases, not spaces. Yes, they would be cases.

According to the 1991 census, there were 82,135 children under the age of five in Manitoba, and, despite our high child poverty rate, the Filmon government has reduced the number of subsidized child daycare cases from 9,900 for 1995-96 to 8,600 for 1996-1997. Now, there is a terrible irony here because last week this very government had a distinguished visitor here who had participated—I believe he was part of the original Perry Preschool project—speaking about the benefits of early childhood education, of Headstart programs, and despite this, this is the very government, the same government that brought this gentleman to town, the same government is now reducing the number of subsidized cases that are available for daycares in Manitoba. I have certainly talked to parents who would be able to work if they were able to access daycare, and I know that I am not the only one.

Here is one that really, I think, is extremely serious. The government has failed to implement new strategies, as promised, to reduce the high rate of adolescent pregnancy. Statistics Canada figures show that the

province leads the country with a rate of 64.2 pregnancies per thousand girls aged 15 to 19. This information is from October 1996. Now I happen to know that the pregnancy rate is higher in some areas—this is the average—and lower in others and that in certain areas in our province teenage pregnancy is almost an epidemic. I think it is also important to make the point that when a young adolescent woman—I suppose all adolescent women are young—so when an adolescent woman has a child, there are two lost children, or nearly always two lost children, because most adolescent girls simply are not able to bring up a child. Birth control may be a dirty word, Mr. Acting Speaker, but certainly pain, poverty and abuse are even dirtier.

Members of the caucus opposite may wish to speak with Dr. Jack Armstrong. He is a representative from the Manitoba Action Committee for Children and Youth and he spoke to our caucus a few weeks ago, along with David Northcott. Maybe you heard from him. He spoke about the 20 percent cutback in nursery school in the city, certainly a direct result of cuts to education in this province, and of course let me reiterate again the importance of Headstart for children. He spoke about the Perry School project. He also apparently has a very serious interest and concern about teenage pregnancy.

This government has also failed to allocate \$10 million as promised to the Children and Youth Secretariat. I guess the best laid plans of mice and men sometimes come to naught because there is no funding. This Youth Secretariat does not appear to be—well, people tell me they phone and they get an answering machine.

The government has also failed to implement their recommendations of the 29 Children and Youth Secretariat reports which came in, in June 1996. The ones I have read make some excellent and remarkable suggestions and the government would do well to pay heed. As well, the government has eliminated the treatment portion of the Children's Dental Program. This was done in 1993. It formerly served 43,000 children in rural and remote areas. The total savings over three years, \$11 million, the long-term cost of dental work somewhere around twice that, \$22.5 million. It would seem to me that dental programs for

children whose parents cannot afford this service is a very important investment in the future of health and in the future of Manitoba.

* (1450)

In 1993, the government expanded the base of the provincial sales tax to include children's clothing and baby supplies. This seems to me petty mean spirited and certainly a regressive tax because it is borne equally by everybody, by haves and by have-nots. It is really a pernicious policy that seems to me to be very much akin to the kind of policy that Preston Manning would advocate.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I want to say a few words about children with special needs and the parents of children with special needs. This is another group of children and another group of parents who have indeed been badly served by this government. The throne speech mentioned a task force report on special needs and education. Now I know that this report has taken several years to get off the ground. I do not know whether the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) has been busy meditating and reflecting. Maybe she has been too busy cutting education and bullying teachers. Anyway it appears that this long-awaited special needs review is underway, but frankly, many parents are nervous. Many parents are nervous about this review. I attended a meeting of a group called the Coalition for Children. I mentioned this in the House before. I attended a meeting of the Coalition for Children living in the community. Last year the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) and the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) attended it.

The ministers of the Crown, I might add, were conspicuous at this meeting only by their absence and by their lack of support. The parents at this meeting spoke of their struggles to keep their children in their homes. They talked about dwindling respite workers. They talked about untrained respite workers. I talked to a young woman from my constituency who has a child with cerebral palsy. She was telling me that she gets two hours respite every week, and when I asked her how she could possibly do anything in two hours, she said her way is to take four hours every two weeks. Four hours every two weeks is what this woman gets, the only respite she gets from very, very stressful and

high-needs care for her child. This does not seem to me to be promoting the health of the child nor the health of this mother. But, to add fuel to the fire, she was telling me that on occasion the respite worker will turn up and the respite worker does not know what to do, so she will have to take time out of those few hours she gets to teach that respite worker. She does not get that time back. She loses it. Then maybe in another month a different worker will come, and she will then be required to train that worker. So this is one example of the kind of struggle these people face.

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

This coalition is very concerned about the special needs review. They fear, perhaps, a return to segregated classrooms. They are concerned about overburdened teachers. They are concerned about the labels that they are required to use to refer to their children, labels which they find humiliating and degrading. What they want, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a province and a vocabulary which treat all Manitobans, including their very special children, with dignity and with respect. The issues affecting special needs children require humane public policy responses, partnerships with community, with family, and with government. This coalition of parents is waiting, and they are ready to speak with government. I hope that those conversations and that work will be done soon.

I want to ask the Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. McIntosh) and the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) to recognize today that all children in Manitoba are special and to institute the support, the programs, and the resources for all Manitoba children. It seems to me that ignoring this group, as this government has done, is a kind of family bashing, and I know this government prides itself on its attitudes towards family. It claims to love families, to embody the virtues of the family, but I think the policies, the treatment of the poor children in Manitoba, the treatment of children with special needs, is little more than family bashing. I want to stick with that expression, family bashing. Let us move away from family bashing. Let us stop it. Instead, I ask the members opposite to do this: let us recognize the family as the cornerstone of our community. The

family is the basic building block in our social structure and let us start respecting the family.

I remember, too, and ask you to remember, ask members opposite to remember, that the measure of morality is not how we treat the strongest amongst us, but the measure of morality is how we treat the weakest amongst us. I point out to you that the Chamber of Commerce is thriving. They do not need your help, but the children of Manitoba, the women of Manitoba, the poor women in Manitoba, do need your help.

Following the example of the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer), quoting Shakespeare seems to be almost de rigueur these days, and so I want to take my text from Richard III: "Now is the winter of our discontent/Made glorious summer by this sun of York." Margaret Thatcher introduced a winter of discontent into Britain in 1979-1980. Our Premier (Mr. Filmon) has introduced a winter of discontent, and I ask this Premier today to listen to that quotation and to become, as the play would have him be, the sun, and make this winter of discontent glorious summer. The Premier, we know, has the power. The Premier has the money. People over there are forever bragging about their surpluses and about their very clever financial management. So I ask you today to use some of this. All it requires to make a glorious summer in this province is a little bit of human decency and political will and an election.

I want to change hats and move on to the women of Manitoba and ask the rhetorical question, what has this government done for the women of Manitoba? I know that on March 5 I reviewed what the government had done for the women of Manitoba when the Minister for the Status of Women did a puff piece on her government's work for Manitoba women.

Now, the minister's intentions, the intentions of the Minister for the Status of Women are no doubt noble but, as the saying goes, the primrose path to Hell is paved with good intentions. I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this Minister for the Status of Women simply does not get it. She simply does not understand that the quality of life for numbers of women since 1988 has plummeted and that the Minister of Finance's balanced budget is balanced on the backs of Manitoba's women and Manitoba's children.

This, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is once again an example of what I was referring to as family bashing. Now, I could go on for quite some time about this government's record on women, but suffice it to say that provincial government policies and cuts, augmented I must say by the pernicious federal policies, by the changes to the CHST, both provincial government and federal government are impoverishing Manitoba women. They are denying them services, economic security, respectful employment, denying them a full complement of health care.

* (1500)

Then of course there is the issue that I alluded to earlier and I am sure other members may speak at at greater length. There are problems with child care, family violence court. I think the waiting time is something like six months, and there are continuing problems with maintenance and cuts to family disputes, last year a 2 percent cut. Everybody in that community is on pins and needles waiting for the budget on Friday to see if they will have a further cut.

The community of women, the women who run shelters, resource centres, second stage housing simply cannot absorb another cut. They are already just, just squeaking by. I noticed in the throne speech that the government bragged about its shelter system and I think described its system as the best in the country, and I just do not quite understand how the government can arbitrarily declare its system the best in the country. I do not know how other provinces would feel about this declaration. But it also said that there were going to be increases to the shelter system, and I am very interested to know what these increases are and will certainly keep a close eye on them and monitor them very carefully.

I have been talking about some of the problems, some of the cuts that Manitoba women have suffered since 1988, and I must say finally what most sticks in my craw, what bothers me the most is the concerted effort on the part of this government—I am going to tell you right now what really bothers me the most finally is the government's concerted effort to violate the dignity of the most, of a very, very vulnerable group in our society, single parents on welfare. Not only are mothers with children over six being frogmarched out

of their homes and into mostly low-paying, no-benefit jobs, many of them live in fear of losing these positions and so being returned to the mercy of this government but, also, single parents with children under six, in clear violation of what we were told in the House, these single parents, as I said earlier, are being harassed and bullied and forced to seek employment, leaving their children at home. This is another example of the family bashing that I talked about earlier.

Now, I know this is happening, because I have had several cases in my own constituency where women are being harassed in smaller or larger ways, and it simply is a violation of what we were led to believe would exist.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government undermines youth with cuts to child care and education. Of course, we heard a lot of discussion about education today. We heard the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) argue with members opposite, blindly deny that there has been 2 percent cut, 2 percent cut, freeze, 2 percent cut, freeze, blindly deny this, or willfully deny this, I should say. She has not spoken or has not addressed the issues of large classrooms, a paucity of textbooks in the classrooms, cutting resource teachers.

The problems go on and on. I remember last year during the Education bill committee hearings, teacher after teacher, school after school talking about the difficulties of trying to run a classroom in this day and age.

My point here is that the government is undermining youth with its cuts to child care. With its cuts to education this government is undermining seniors by their threats last year to home care—the home care debate certainly is not finished yet—and by running a really slipshod personal care home system. As the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) has been pointing out day after day, this system needs some review and needs it right now. Now the government is undermining single parents on welfare by imposing inordinate restrictions on social assistance.

These are a few examples of family bashing. The government is really putting the squeeze on Manitoba's family, and our No. 1 priority, the No. 1 priority of an NDP government would be our determination to respect

families, to respect family life, to turn the heat off the family, to encourage family life and to put people first. Our priority and our commitment is clear in our leader's alternatives, the alternatives that he announced on February 27, 1997, just prior to the opening of the House.

Now, I understand my time is running out, so I will just quickly make a couple of points. I wanted to say that I am very pleased to hear the ballet is travelling to Edinburgh. I have been a long-time season ticket holder, and I certainly respect our Royal Winnipeg Ballet. I wish now if only our government, this government would utilize the arts groups and the artists in our city to promote tourism and so help scotch the urban decay that threatens Winnipeg.

This government is no friend to the city of Winnipeg, and I certainly ask the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer) to pay some attention and to chat with his Premier. The words from his Premier this morning were disillusioning, to say the least. I hope too that the Minister of Education has now read the polls and now considers breakfast and nursery programs to be educational benefits and not just community enhancements.

Finally, recently I had a tea with seniors in Osborne, and I asked them what Manitoba needed most, and their answer was immediate, unequivocal and unanimous: an election right now, please.

Hon. Mike Radcliffe (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise today with pleasure to speak to this throne speech, which has been put before this Chamber, has been put before the people of Manitoba. I would not be so timorous or—

An Honourable Member: Picayune.

Mr. Radcliffe: —picayune, yes, as to suggest to my erstwhile honourable colleague across the way that maybe the constituents of Osborne were suggesting an election for the purposes of re-electing another Filmon government to run this province. The people of Manitoba have consistently supported the Filmon government over the last eight years, nine years, and there has to be a reason for that. I would suggest that one of the reasons that the people of Manitoba have

opted to support the Filmon government as manifested from the values and the standards and goals that are presented in this throne speech is for one very significant reason, and my honourable colleague across the way touched on this issue and that is the issue of keeping your word.

She spoke of the dying days of the last session when we were debating in this very Chamber the MTS debate and the sale of shares. I would like to put on the record today, because I think that the people of Manitoba should know as to correct the misinformation or the misapprehension that might have been left by our honourable colleague across the way, that in fact I am told that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer), the honourable Leader of the Opposition, wrote to the Premier and made a commitment as to when this House would rise. He committed in writing as to when his party would agree to allow us to rise.

I am told in addition that there was a memorandum of understanding committing to writing this issue, and then we all agreed unanimously in this House to when we would rise and all bills and all issues that were before this House would be concluded and voted upon, and then what did the individuals across the way have the audacity to do? They did not respect their word, and you know what the people of Manitoba do with people who do not respect their word and hold to a bargain? They are dispensed with.

* (1510)

When my honourable colleague across the way starts talking about elections, perhaps the members of the opposition should perhaps review their activities and be a little more respectful of their commitments, respectful of their opinions of themselves.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what the Filmon government has brought before the people of Manitoba and what has been presented in this throne speech today is some of the intrinsic foundation of how this province is progressing into the new millennium. We have introduced balanced budget legislation. We have gone out to the people of Manitoba and we have asked them whether this is what they wanted, and you know what, people are continually coming back to us and saying, well done, keep it up, we admire, we respect your

balanced budget legislation. We respect your fiscal probity and, in fact, not the prevaricating mewling which we may hear floating around this Chamber from some unknown sources.

Rather, this government has introduced the toughest balanced budget legislation in the entire country. We are not faced in Manitoba with a situation where citizens are taking a Premier to court for misapplying or misinterpreting the facts of the province's finances, not how we see the issue faced with the individuals beyond the Rocky Mountains. We are not facing a management of a province which has been driven into bankruptcy by feckless, mindless spending which, if we listen to our honourable friends across the way, we would be induced with. Not so, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This government has introduced balanced budget legislation with teeth in it.

The second plank of our platform which is represented in this speech is that we have maintained a tax system in this province that is fair and competitive. We are one of the few jurisdictions in the country of Canada that has actually through our tenure reduced taxation. We have removed taxes from the people of Manitoba. The people of Manitoba had said to us, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they do not want any more taxes. We listen to the people of Manitoba. We do not dance to some arrogant academic prerogative or mandate which we hear in this Chamber being voiced by some of the other members of this Assembly. We listen to the real people in Manitoba. These are farmers; these are parents; these are small merchants; these are labourers; these are people who are talking to us and telling us what they need, and do you know what? They are sick and fed up with mindless, endless taxation, and that was what we were going to be faced with if you listened to the mandate and the agenda of our honourable colleagues across the way. We have changed the direction of this province and introduced a concept of prosperity and accountability.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government has consistently introduced an economic plan which is going to be building aggressively on our many strengths to bring Manitoba into the new century. My honourable colleague from the front bench here the

honourable minister of child and family services says the best form of support that we can give any citizen in Manitoba is—do you know what that is? That is a job. My honourable colleagues across the way are stuck for an answer when I ask that question because that is not something with which they are familiar.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on one hand, we are proceeding into the future and to a glorious future for the people of Manitoba with economic prosperity. We have one of the lowest levels of unemployment in this country. We are coming in well below the national level of unemployment, and there has to be a message there. Do you know what has happened in Manitoba? The Filmon government has put Manitobans back to work. What they have done is they have created an environment where capital wants to come to Manitoba. [interjection] My honourable colleague from Portage la Prairie says that they are actually flocking in here from Ontario to create jobs for Manitobans.

Now, one of the things which I would take great delight in explaining, and I should perhaps do this monosyllabically for the edification of our honourable colleagues across the way, is that the Filmon government has maintained its social programs to support some of our less fortunate individuals in Manitoba and to manifest and to illustrate this point—[interjection] Ah, the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) is making some allusions to the care and compassion of the Deputy Speaker, and I applaud him for that. But Mr. Deputy Speaker, before I get off track, I want to tell our honourable colleagues across the way, and this is just an illustrative statistic from the Child and Family Services, that in Manitoba for the age group of those children on assistance between the ages of 11 and 17, if one were to remove the rental or accommodation aspect of support, that which is something which varies from city to city, the actual numbers that are paid for rental housing, if you remove that component, Manitoba—guess what, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where do you think Manitoba rates in the country of Canada on the support of young children between the ages of 11 and 17?

I am pleased to stand here today and tell my honourable colleagues, although they may have problems grasping this fact, but I also want to tell the people of Manitoba that this Manitoba government, this

Filmon government, is No. 1 in the support of those less fortunate individuals who fall into that category, and that is taking into account the untold wealth that we see on either coast from the people of Ontario or the people of British Columbia. Little Manitoba steps forward to the mark. We are saying that we think so much of our youth that we are prepared to support them at the best rate in this entire country.

* (1520)

Now we heard about child poverty. We heard about all the individual cases that our honourable colleague across the way was citing, and I do not for a minute deprecate the integrity of the advocate over there nor some of the specifics which she may have been addressing, but a government, and especially the individuals in this Chamber, must look at our rating and our status in the entire nation. When I can say we are No. 1 in this significant attribute, and we have said that these people are so important to us, that has got—

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Even the NDP provinces.

Mr. Radcliffe: Even the NDP provinces, says my honourable colleague the Minister of Health. That displays a commitment. We do not hear about that from our erstwhile colleagues across the way. Do you know what? I was just writing down, while the honourable member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford) was talking, and I was picking out some of the character words that we were hearing. And do you know what she was saying? I heard “onslaught.” I was hearing “arrogance,” “distrust,” “slick entrepreneur,” “tarted-up.”

Another thing, I learned a lesson in biology today because my honourable colleague across the way was referring to her you-know-whats were getting frozen. I did not know that was an endowment which my honourable colleague enjoyed, but nonetheless I accept that. She is telling me that she was endowed with those. Nonetheless, what this Filmon government is doing and has been represented in this throne speech is we are entering into a creating and a participating in a sense of community. We are causing people in Manitoba to start to think differently about themselves,

about our province and about our place in this wonderful country of ours. Too long people in Manitoba under the regime of the individuals across the way had a chip on their shoulder, had thought it was a cannot do, that we were second best. I congratulate my colleagues on this side of the House that they have been able to spread a sense of optimism throughout this province. They have been able to tell the people of Canada and the people of North America that this is a place to do business. This is a place where you have a quality of life, a place where one wants to be.

In fact, in support of that contention, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can tell my honourable colleagues and the people of Manitoba that in this past year there have been 23,900 new jobs created in Manitoba. Now we are looking at the streets of Montreal where there are boarded-up stores. We hear the stories about the homeless people on the streets of Toronto. We hear about the NDP jurisdiction on the West Coast that insisted on a 90-day cooling-off period before people were entitled to welfare, and our federal government had to ride to their rescue and dump some fresh money into the province of British Columbia, which is presumably our wealthiest province or one of our wealthiest provinces, but we in Manitoba have created 23,900 new jobs and that there is repetition because the people of Manitoba hear too long and too often about the doom and the gloom that is emanating from the benches across the way.

(Mr. Gerry McAlpine, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Mr. Acting Speaker, we must make sure that an upbeat and positive message gets out to the citizens of Manitoba, to the people on Portage Avenue, that in fact you come to Manitoba because you have the chance to work. You have the chance to take pride in accounting for yourself, supplying your own needs, not being dependent on some sort of a handout or hand down or welfare. I have heard individuals tell me that the old welfare system was designed to create dependence. It was designed in order to build up a client base, and that was only to make a system fatter and fatter and fatter. With the greatest of respect to our honourable colleagues across the way, none of that money was going into creating an environment to make jobs for people.

Mr. Acting Speaker, our throne speech has indicated that we want to make a province where there is job creation for our children. Last weekend in the Winnipeg Free Press, there was a lead article which said that we had one of the highest rates of employment for our children in this country. Now I have heard about the deprecating remarks emanating from the different levels of benches across the way referring to McJobs. Well, you know what, when I was working my way through Arts at the University of Manitoba, I took a job pushing a broom for the CPR and I cleaned out toilets and I was a baggage master and I sold tickets. You know what, I was not ashamed of that job. I was proud of that job. I was working with colleagues in the CPR who did support families on those jobs. I was a relief—

Point of Order

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McAlpine): Order, please. The honourable member for Wellington, on a point of order?

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Yes, I was wondering if the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) would be open to a brief question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McAlpine): Are you rising on a point of order?

Ms. Barrett: I would like to rise on a point of order, and I would like to ask the member for River Heights if he supported a family on the jobs that he is talking about, as many of the single parents and individuals whom we are talking about have to do. Did he ever support a family on that job?

* * *

Mr. Radcliffe: Mr. Acting Speaker, in response to the implication or the inference of my honourable friend across the way and in response to her question, I would like to tell this House that, in fact, no, I did not support a job because I was working my way through school at that point, but I was summer relief for individuals who were working full time at the job that I was doing. These were individuals in the CPR who were proud of what they did. They went somewhere every morning, and they had a goal, and they had direction. They were

amply rewarded, and they did support their families. They did not throw up their hands in aimless disgust and say, oh, no, somebody else has to bail me out. They made their own way.

As I worked my way through university, I went to law school, and I went out and I was a substitute teacher. I did not have enough money to answer all my needs when I was in university, so therefore I had part-time jobs. We are told in that article in the newspaper today that, in fact, there is a plethora of jobs out there for our young people so they can be independent, so they can hold their heads up high, so they are not taking handouts.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we are facing a situation now in Manitoba with a health care situation where our government, the Filmon government, tries to deliver acute care, remedial care, wellness, home care, to the people of Manitoba. We have gone across this province, and we have tried to bring and we have brought health care into the 20th Century, into the 21st Century as it approaches.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we have a crisis with health care as we are an aging population. Technology is changing in health care. We presented to the people of Manitoba a stringent budget. It was a caring budget on health care last year. We in this government devote more wealth of this province, of the peoples' money in Manitoba per capita, to health than any other province in Canada. There again, Manitoba is No. 1. The Filmon government's support in social programming is better than any other in the country of Canada. That bears repetition because our honourable colleagues—

An Honourable Member: Say it again.

* (1530)

Mr. Radcliffe: We are No. 1 in the Filmon government in Manitoba in comparison to other governments across the country of Canada in support per capita of health care.

Now, Mr. Acting Speaker, even though we were producing at that level, we went the extra mile. Did you know—and I would ask my honourable colleagues across the way, and I think they would be

dumbfounded, if that were, in fact, possible, to hear this information—that we spent in addition another \$60 million over and above what was budgeted, \$60 million dollars more to answer the health care needs of the people of Manitoba? That shows that this government is compassionate, it is aware, it is caring, and it is there for the people of Manitoba, for the sick, for the disabled, for the marginalized and for the poor.

Our Pharmacare system that we introduced last year is working very well. It is supporting and paying for the drugs for all our underprivileged people. This health care support is in the face of a federal distribution of money from our federal friends. We face cuts in transfer, in health, in higher education across Canada of \$7 billion—\$7 billion dollars the federal government took out of the transfers to social welfare, to health and to education.

An Honourable Member: 40 percent.

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

Mr. Radcliffe: Forty percent says the honourable member for Portage la Prairie. Even in the face of these draconian cutbacks, the people of Manitoba have been supported by the Filmon government in excess of what we budgeted because of the needs that we perceived. We want to tell the people of Manitoba that this government will be there for you in your need.

We are being frugal. We are managing your money well, but when there is real need that is presented, we can say and hold our heads up high that we are not afraid of spending more when it is required.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Manitoba government is pleased to tell the people of Manitoba that we have now worked with our federal colleagues to rebalance the Canadian federation. We have taken charge of the whole field of immigration in Manitoba in order to recruit and solicit new individuals, new immigrants to come to Manitoba. You know why we have to do that and why that is imperative that the Manitoba government do that, because there are jobs here and there were jobs that were going unfilled. Entrepreneurs and business people and factory owners were coming to our government and pleading with us and saying,

find skilled workers for us, find people for our factories. You know what, our minister, our former Minister of Culture and Heritage who sits before me today went to our colleagues and was able to arm wrestle this area of our government over to the control of the province of Manitoba so that the people who were closest to the need were the individuals who were setting the pace for this issue.

The good economic news from Manitoba, which we are proud to set out in this throne speech, pervades every area of activity in the economy of Manitoba. Our manufacturing, the local newspaper indicates that manufacturing in Manitoba is booming. It is booming. Our capital investment growth is going to continue to grow. Our throne speech has pointed out that retail sales in Manitoba have grown at twice the national rate over the last two years and we look around us, and this is in a milieu where many provincial economies are faltering but little Manitoba is surging ahead.

An Honourable Member: Steamrolling.

Mr. Radcliffe: Steamrolling ahead.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitoba is described in our tourist information as the heart of the country, the heart of the continent. We are prepared and we are taking to the other people of this North American continent the exporting of our goods and services to the economies of Mexico and to the United States. We were able to do this through the good services of the NAFTA agreement, which was signed by the previous federal government—

An Honourable Member: Brian Mulroney.

Mr. Radcliffe: Ah, yes, and the honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and commerce refers to that farsighted individual, the Prime Minister that we had in the previous government. This was not our present Prime Minister, who, I might add, came into power implying or saying that he was going to rip up NAFTA, he was going to dissolve it, just as he said that he was going to remove the hated GST.

Now, I am the first one to admit that I do not like taxation either. Do you know what? I want to be taxed as little as possible. I want to be able to go out and earn

my daily bread, and I want to be able to take home as much of that as I can. Do you know what? The government in Saskatchewan very, very recently within the last several years indicated statistics that for the citizens of Manitoba, you had the best opportunity to keep your daily bread in Manitoba over all the other provinces in this federation. So there again, Manitoba is No. 1. Number one, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We are pleased to tell the people of Manitoba that our government is taking trade missions to Brazil. We are telling the people of Argentina about what is happening in Manitoba. We are taking our goods to Chile, to Ukraine, to Asia and to South Africa. Manitoba is becoming not just the engine of North America, but we are carrying our message to the world.

One of the issues which we are pleased to be able to show the continental neighbours of ours in North America is that we are going to be hosting the 1999 Pan American Games. We are going to be playing host to all our colleagues across North and South America. This will bring enhanced trade; this will bring enhanced investments. Tourist investment and development will burgeon ahead. Community development and cultural industry will expand as never before with this sort of a step.

* (1540)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our throne speech has also spoken to the fact that Winnipeg will become a global hub for multimodal transportation. Again, do you know what that does? That creates jobs, that creates industry, that creates wealth in Manitoba. This is not a government forcing money into a sterile, government-dominated, top-down, hierarchical environment. Not so, these are merchants and entrepreneurs. We heard them typified earlier as slick entrepreneurs. Well, I beg to differ. We know that the engine of Manitoba is driven by small business. The majority of people in Manitoba are employed in small business enterprises. These are not slick people. But this characterization which our honourable colleagues across the way persist in labelling the people of Manitoba will just ensure that they will be perpetuated in their ongoing critical role of finding fault, pejorative allegations—[interjection] Joe Spitspick, that is correct, says the honourable member for Portage la Prairie.

There are 34,000 small businesses functioning and functioning well in Manitoba. They employ 83,000 self-employed entrepreneurs. There are the majority of the people in Manitoba, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This accounts for over \$3 billion of income, and 28 percent of Manitoba's payroll is based in small business. The socialists who have an ideological bent seem to think that these people do not exist, that they are not worth listening to. The Filmon government goes out and listens to these people, and when I said that we were listening to real individuals, these are some of the people who we are listening to in Manitoba, and we continue to listen to them and we continue to give them the type of government that they are asking for.

There is so much in this throne speech which I am proud to tell you about this, about my honourable colleagues, about what is in this speech, and the people of Manitoba. I just want to highlight because I know my time is wasting. I just want to highlight some of the salient, the major points in this speech, in this throne speech. Potato production is surging ahead. Hog production is surging ahead. We are developing and researching new crops, nontraditional livestock. We in Manitoba in this government are creating an environment where mineral exploration assistance is causing people to flock to Manitoba to tap our mineral wealth. Petroleum exploration assistance is coming from this government. In order to show the people of Canada that there is real action, Manitoba is open to do business.

On the other side of the coin, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are sensitive to our parks, to our environment. We are building a network of protected spaces. We are also going to our less fortunate individuals in the—

An Honourable Member: NDP?

Mr. Radcliffe: Yes—in the aboriginal communities and saying that we want to bring educational services to unemployed aboriginal high school, college and university graduates to make sure that they want a job, because they are eager to work. They want to work for their future. Our government has proceeded with and signed and put in the can seven treaty land entitlement agreements, and we are working on new agreements with an additional 19 bands. In all the history of Manitoba from the 1930s when the transfer of land was

made to the provinces, it has fallen and devolved on the shoulders of this government to finally effect these arrangements with our First Nations colleagues.

Our education is surging ahead. We have listened to the parents in Manitoba who have told us that they want objective outcomes, they want standardization, they want curricula change, they want accountability. Do you know what? Our honourable colleagues across the way, I think—and I say this sonorously—I think they may be afraid of accountability, and I hesitate to say that in this Chamber, but that may well be the basis on which they criticize our educational policies. Now, I would say this very hesitantly, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We are creating a partnership with the individuals who are the key players in the Manitoba community. There is the Mennonite Central Committee, our Taking Charge! initiative that we have presented, Youth NOW. These are all opportunities for Manitobans to live, to work and to raise a family not only this year, not only next year but into the next century.

We can look back and say with gratitude, with undying gratitude, that it was because of the forethought, it was because of the wisdom, it was because of the vigour, and it was because of the good government that we get from the Filmon government. That is what is in this throne speech, and I thank you for the opportunity to put a few of these remarks on the record today.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): I am very pleased to have the opportunity today to put a few words on the record with respect to this throne speech, and I hope some comments that are a little bit more accurate than some of the things that we have been hearing.

But I want to begin by welcoming back the pages to this House who serve us so well and the new staff people who are joining us at the table. I also want to wish the new ministers well who have taken on new responsibilities and hope that they have the opportunity to really be in charge in their department and that they will not be controlled by the Premier's (Mr. Filmon) office as we have seen in an article just recently. In fact, it is not elected members but staff of the Premier who dictate what will happen in this province. I want

to also recognize the two ministers who were removed from cabinet and wish them well in their future plans.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, before I speak on the throne speech I want to speak a bit about what happened here in this House on November 27 and 28. The member who just spoke before me made comments about a memorandum of understanding that we as opposition did not live up to. The member should remember that it was his government that did not have their act together and did not have the amendments in place with the MTS bill, amendments dealing with pensions of the employees of Manitoba Telephone that this government tried to shaft when they were privatizing the Manitoba Telephone System. It was because members on this side of the House worked with the people who were involved that some of those issues were addressed, but it was the day after the House was supposed to end that the government was still bringing forward amendments.

So, in fact, it is the government who did not live up to their part of the agreement, but the government has options. That is why there were words such as “normally” in the rules. But the member also said that we did not live up to our word. I can tell you that this government is the one that has not lived up to their word. Who was it that said: No, we are not selling MTS, no, we will not be selling MTS? It was members of the government. It was the Premier (Mr. Filmon) who said during the campaign that they would not sell MTS.

* (1550)

On other issues, who was the government that said, no, we will not be moving away from single-desk selling of hogs? We heard that from members of the government, but they changed their word after the government. So we know that this government has a lot of responsibility, has to be held accountable for them not living up to their word.

But I have to tell you that when I ran for office I promised my constituents that I would be a strong voice for them, and our rights as opposition members were taken away from us on November 27 and 28 when we were not allowed to speak. That, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will be two black days in Manitoba history that will go

down as days when we were a one-party state and opposition had no role, or, perhaps, as my colleague says, it was a one-man state where one person was calling the shots and the rest of us who wanted to put on the record concerns that were raised by our constituents did not have that opportunity. The government can say what they like about the opposition, but they are the ones that will go down in history as putting a black mark on the history of Manitoba.

They had the opportunity to use closure, but they chose instead to abuse the Speaker and have her do the dirty work for them just as we have seen this government do in other cases. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that that is a disgrace, disgraceful the way this government abused the rules of this House. I have to say that I would hope that the government would recognize this and would support the bill that was put forward by my colleague the member for Thompson today which will lead us to an elected Speaker, and one that I have not heard anybody from the other side of the House speak about, but certainly the House of Commons has an elected Speaker, many provinces have an elected Speaker. There is not any reason why we should not have one here, and there is not any reason why we cannot go back and look at some of the rules that were in place and see how they can work again to have this House run in a more democratic fashion, but certainly we cannot have what we had before where the Premier orders the Speaker as to what should be done and the rights of the opposition should be ignored.

An Honourable Member: That is not true.

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey) says it is not true. The record speaks for itself, and we were denied our right to speak. The Leader of the Opposition stood up on a matter of privilege and he was not recognized. It was the government who broke the rules on that one and shamed Manitoba.

I want to take some time to raise a few comments about the throne speech. Before I do that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say that between the last session and before we came back to this House we spent a lot of time travelling in rural Manitoba and listening to people across the province. I can tell you that Manitobans do

not support this government's position on the sale of MTS. The government ignored them, and this government reminds me of some other governments who have been in power for too long, and they tend to isolate themselves inside their offices and ignore rural Manitobans and ignore Manitobans across the province, and that is what they are doing here. They are not listening to what Manitobans really want, and I encourage them to take the time and really go out there and listen to the people.

I have to say that when we were out at our meetings, there were many issues that were raised, and I would like to talk about a few of them. One of them in particular is what is happening to education and the cutbacks that we have seen by this government and the offload onto municipalities. You know the government likes to have people think that they have not raised taxes, but when you look at their record and the increases we have seen in municipal taxes, on education taxes, that is only one area where we have seen offloading and indirect taxes because of this government. The other issue that was raised on education when I met with people in my constituency is people are concerned with special needs students and the purpose of government's calling for a special needs review. I have to tell you that the public feels that this is just another—it will be another cutting measure. They will go out and listen to people and then they will cut, or they will pretend they listen to people and then they will cut.

I want to tell you that I feel that the government has to be very careful with what they are doing with special needs children, and by the cutting that they have done to education funding, they have put pressure on teachers and on parents, and it appears that they are moving to the extent where people will become frustrated because all children are not having the opportunity to get a good education, and we will end up moving towards a more segregated education system. The government must keep in mind that all children are special children and all children should be given the opportunity to learn to the best of their ability. Some have the skills to learn at a much higher ability than others, but those should not suffer because of government cutbacks and nor should those who have special needs and nor should the average child suffer because of government cutbacks.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say that we have in this province many children who are, unfortunately, hungry children, not by their own choice, but because of the circumstances that we live in. We know that hungry children cannot learn properly. It is disappointing that this government has chosen to cut back on nutrition programs in schools, and I think that is one thing they have to recognize, that we as a society have a responsibility to ensure that children are not hungry.

We heard the member from across the way just talk about how great things are in Manitoba, but he refuses to recognize that we have some of the poorest children in this province. We have a responsibility to ensure that they are fed and that they have the opportunity to get an education and some day play an important role in society. Perhaps some of those hungry children, if they are given the opportunity, might have the opportunity some day to sit in this Chamber as well and represent people of this province. We cannot ignore the fact that this is what is happening in this province, and I am afraid that, although this government wants to paint a wonderful picture of how good things are here in Manitoba, we do have poor children; we have children who are not getting a proper education.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to touch on another area that has been raised many times while we have been visiting in rural Manitoba, and that is the whole area of regionalization of our health care system. I have to say that the ongoing cuts to health care and the government's move to health privatization are one of the major concerns of Manitobans. The major initiative of this government is to establish regional health boards, and, as I say, there is a widespread concern that regionalization will lead to loss of control, of local control, over services as well as continued funding cuts. There was a meeting earlier this year in Dauphin, in March, where municipal people from across the province got together and raised their concern with the government's plan to regionalize and in fact asked the government to delay their plan and spend more time listening to the people. The Minister of Health came out to that meeting, but the government refuses to listen.

I would advise the government to look at what is happening in New Zealand, the model that this system is being built on. What is happening there? Dr. Evelyn Shapiro, who has renowned knowledge on health care, tells us that in New Zealand, where this model is in place, there are longer waiting lists in health care. Health care is more expensive to deliver than under the existing system, and people who are on the boards are very frustrated and walking away from them. So the government should look at the recommendations that have been put forward on regionalization, one of them being to put forward a pilot project. Why will this government not consider that recommendation, run a pilot project, see how it works and then go from there, rather than having regionalization implemented across the whole province and use it and then see that it could be disastrous?

I have to say that I believe that the government's plan here is really to use the regional health boards as an excuse for their cutbacks. We know that money for health care will be reduced by 4 percent, and now regional health boards are going to be expected to deliver the same services. They are going to have to cut services, and then the government will blame the regional health boards.

I believe this is just ideologically driven, and it is this government's way of moving towards the privatization of health care. That is this government's agenda. It is not a better health care system for people across the province, it is a way, just as they want to privatize home care, they are moving to privatize other aspects of health care. It is quite disappointing that a government would move in that direction. I have to say that this is an issue that is raised right across the province, and I have to wonder where the government is going when they say that plans are still being developed for regionalization, but the boards are expected to take over in April of this year and be in full control in April of 1999. This government has put forward a plan that is unsound and should be reconsidered.

The other issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I want to talk about is this government's sudden interest in aboriginal people. For years we have known that the Filmon government has made many cuts to aboriginal programs, and all of a sudden they want to put on this new face like they care, they care about aboriginal

people. Well, if they care, I challenge this government. If they care about aboriginal people, then let us see this government quit blaming the federal government for cutbacks and move forward. Let us see this government make a commitment to water and sewer for aboriginal people. Let us see this government commit to housing and proper health care. Let us see this government do that and then have the fight with the federal government later about where the money is going to come from. But this government is known to have always used the federal government as an excuse for what is happening to aboriginal people. These people are Manitobans, and the Manitoba government has a responsibility as well to ensure that there is quality of life for aboriginal people. But what has the government done?

I would like to share with you a few examples. The Access program has been cut repeatedly. In 1994 the Access program was cut by \$2 million, and in 1995 we saw a further cut of \$1.4 million. Students, who were in the middle of the program, were told that they would no longer receive funding. They took the provincial government to court, and the judge ruled that the provincial government had broken its contract with the students. However, the provincial government appealed, and this appeal was held up on March 14. We see that programs, such as BUNTEP and the Northern Nursing Program, which provided aboriginal students with the opportunity to become nurses and teachers, has also been cut. Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we heard the Premier (Mr. Filmon) say today, when he answered the question to my colleague from Point Douglas, that the reason that there was no multicultural ethnic people appointed to the board for the MTS was because there were not any people that had a business sense that could be included. Well, to get a business sense you have to get an education, you have to have role models.

You have to start someplace. The BUNTEP program, the Bachelor of Nursing program, was the opportunity for aboriginal people to get an education and work within the schools to give the aboriginal children a model. I look at the school of Camperville, which is in my constituency, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I see many teachers there who were trained under BUNTEP and are doing an excellent job and are a role model, but this government is taking that opportunity

away from aboriginal people and from aboriginal students.

Other programs, Mr. Deputy Speaker, New Careers, the most successful training program in this country with an 83 percent job-success rate, was eliminated. In 1993 the Conservatives ended funding for Manitoba's Indian & Metis friendship centres. In 1993 the government grant also eliminated the annual grant to MKO of \$78,000, and the annual grant to AMC of \$325,000.

So you see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is no doubt that people are cynical about this government when they say that they want to be—all of a sudden have an interest in aboriginal people. Their record speaks for itself, and this government has failed aboriginal people by taking away their opportunities to get an education and play an important role.

As I say, if this government is serious about helping aboriginal people, they will quit blaming the federal government, and they would put their money where their mouth is and ensure that there is a quality of life, that there is the opportunity, that there is heat in people's homes, that there is food on their table, there is water and sewer, that they can have healthy living standards and not use the excuse that it is the federal government's responsibility. So I think that the government's words are very hollow when they say that they want to work with aboriginal people, and their track record is exactly opposite to what it is they have actually done.

The government's record on poverty is no better. When you hear this government say that they care about children, and I heard the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) talking about how great it was to live in Manitoba and how Manitoba is the leader in so many things, there are other things that he did not talk about. He certainly did not talk about Manitoba's record on child poverty, and I would like to share a few details with you on that.

Manitoba has the third worst record for children under 18 living in poverty, as well as the worst record for poor children of single mothers. The rate of all children was raised to 23.2 percent from 21.2 percent in 1988, reflecting an increase of 3,000 children living

in poverty. Well, the government should be ashamed of that record, and they should be working to improve that record. Mr. Deputy Speaker, 71.5 percent of children with single mothers are living in poverty.

An Honourable Member: Rosann, what was your income when you were growing up as a child in rural Manitoba?

Ms. Wowchuk: The minister talks about my income, what we lived on when we were a family in rural Manitoba, and I have to tell the minister that what was in rural Manitoba when I was growing up is much different than what there is now because in rural Manitoba when I was growing up people were not dependent on food banks as we see under this government. One of the highest things we have seen increased in rural Manitoba under this government is food banks. Because people cannot eat, people have no food, they have been forced to go to food banks, so I do not think that is a record that you should be proud of or boast about—

An Honourable Member: Cut some firewood.

Ms. Wowchuk: The Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey) says they should cut some firewood. He should be ashamed of what he is saying. Many of these people who are poor are single mothers who have the responsibility of raising a child and cannot go out and cut firewood as the minister says.

An Honourable Member: No, I said you had to, and I had to, when we were growing up.

Ms. Wowchuk: The minister says we had to cut firewood. Well, maybe some people did, but that happens to be a few years back. Is the minister saying that we should go back to what we had in 1950, that that is the level of government support he wants to see for people in rural Manitoba and in all of Manitoba? Well, I think that the minister is way, way off track on what—we want a much better quality of life for people in rural Manitoba and in all of Manitoba than what this government is providing. Certainly, they should be ashamed of the fact that Winnipeg Harvest reports it is assisting an average of 17,000 families a month through food banks. This is an increase from last year's monthly average of 15,000 families.

* (1610)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the minister talked about rural Manitoba. I have to tell you rural Manitoba is probably one of the worst places to be on social assistance because when you live in a small town, everybody knows your problems, and people who are on social assistance, people who are having a difficult time are very proud. People in rural Manitoba are no different than urban people. So what happens? The pressure becomes so great in a small community that these people are forced to leave the only network of support that they have and move into the city where they will then become another statistic in the city, become another family that is in need of supports and, again, decrease the population of rural Manitoba, and that is certainly something that we are seeing.

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

So I think that this government has failed very badly. They talk about caring about the family, but, Mr. Acting Speaker, it is a very uncaring, uncaring government. A government that will reduce the budget for child care by \$4 million per year and reduce the number of subsidized spaces is not a caring government.

According to the 1991 census, there are 82,135 children under the age of five in Manitoba. Despite our high child poverty rate, the Filmon government has reduced the number of child care spaces from 9,900 down to 8,600. How do you expect these single mothers or single parents to go to work and take one of these jobs that the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) was talking about when they do not have any supports there? It is impossible to go to one of these part-time jobs or minimum wage jobs and pay for daycare at the same time, so they end up staying at home. So this government cannot say that they are supportive of the family. I am quite, quite disappointed in what this government has done.

But, Mr. Acting Speaker, there is another area that I would like to touch on, and that is with respect to agriculture. The government talks about—well, first of all, a couple of things. They talk about, in keeping with this continued commitment to sustainable development my government will initiate sustainable development

strategies for the province's fishing and wildlife resources. You talk about sustainable development. Part of sustainable development is a sustainable community.

Just briefly, a few minutes ago while I was speaking, I heard someone mention Louisiana-Pacific, and, certainly, there have been a lot of jobs created by Louisiana-Pacific. We will see how sustainable that project is. There are still many people who believe that the rate of cutting that has been allocated is not sustainable, and that is something that we will know in a few years time, I am sure.

But one of the issues that was raised when Louisiana-Pacific was announced was the small sawmill operators, and the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Cummings) knows that small sawmill operators are an important part of the community, and the way they operate is very sustainable and has been sustainable over the years. This government gave their commitment that they would not have to worry, that there would be wood for their sawmills.

Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, the results have not been what the government has promised. Sawmill operators are not operating. They are being forced out of work because they cannot get logs to run the small sawmills. There is a demand for their product here in Winnipeg. The lumberyards have a need for this pallet lumber, but the small sawmill operators who supplied this are not able to supply it. Small sawmill operators, who on the average employed three, four, sometimes five people, are out of business, and my understanding is that there are about eight of them that are not in operation now. That was sustainable. Those were sustainable jobs. This government has not fulfilled their commitment.

The government talks about sustainability of the fishing industry, and that is one that I look forward to seeing how the government will address, because what is happening in the fishing industry and the way the government is managing some of the lakes is not sustainable, and we have been calling for a long time, in particular I have been asking for a plan for Lake Winnipegosis, and although the government has put forward the plan, it has not worked.

The fishermen are not happy with the proposal. They are not happy with the level of stocking of that lake, and I would urge the Minister of Natural Resources to sit down with the people on Lake Winnipegosis, with the advisory committee, and put in place a plan that will see those people who make a living from fishing have the ability to continue in that. Shutting down the lake is not one of the answers, I believe, because then you are going to put people out of business, and what will happen to them?

Of course, Mr. Acting Speaker, I would be amiss if I did not talk briefly about agriculture, and it is an area, of course, that is very near and dear to my heart and one that I would like to see much more work done in a sustainable fashion. The one area that the government talks about, research to all aspects of the industry, and I look forward to the budget to see what kind of money this government is going to put in agriculture research because we have fallen way behind. The Saskatchewan government recognizes the importance of research and they have put in a tremendous amount of money. That has not happened here in Manitoba, and we are losing an awful lot. I would hope that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) would take seriously the recommendation that the surplus GRIP money that we have here in Manitoba and the federal GRIP money would be put into agriculture research. That would be a big help to our research here.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I am concerned about this government's lack of commitment in a couple of areas, and that is, we heard just before the federal announcement that the adaptation money from the Crow was going to go to other projects, that this government was against that. I have to support the government because I think that money should have gone to roads rather than being a pool of money for the Liberals to play politics with. But I think that the government fell behind on that one and should have done a lot more work to lobby Ottawa to ensure that money came here. Now, I do not know how Saskatchewan was able to get—and I have not talked to the people in Saskatchewan—their money to go into a pool of money to upgrade roads, and we were not here, because Manitoba is the one that has the most losses with the Crow and yet, that money, we were not able to get it for roads.

I guess I am very worried about what is going to happen with the privatization of CN, and we have seen the loss of many rail lines in my area. I have written to the Premier (Mr. Filmon), and I have written to members of the government asking to show some leadership in rural Manitoba just as they said they played a part in the sale of the railway in northern Manitoba, but they have neglected the people of rural Manitoba from the Parkland Region where we are having many rail lines abandoned. The government, I believe, has to do a lot more. The government has to be fighting for farmers a lot more with this transportation cost, but I guess that is a little bit difficult for them because, when I think about it, this government did not disagree with the abandonment of the Crow.

The other area, Mr. Acting Speaker, that I want to touch on is the nontraditional livestock. It says in the throne speech, nontraditional livestock are all experiencing phenomenal growth, and I guess I question that comment because I have talked to many people who are involved in some of the nontraditional livestock areas who are really suffering. They made major investments into buying ostriches and emu and wild boar, and now the markets for those products have not developed the way they had thought they would. In fact, one person told me that the ostriches that they invested in have really lost value. So that is a concern. I think that we have to realize that we have to look at diversifying, but we have to remember that there are traditional crops that will always be important here, and we will not change everybody away from the traditional crops.

* (1620)

Of course, the government is very excited about their new venture in elk ranching, and I want to say that I think the way the government is starting this industry is very disappointing when it looks like there is favouritism for friends. Everybody is not being treated equally. I believe the government has made a big mistake, and I would urge the government to reconsider what they are doing with this industry and go back to the drawing board and look at all the facts. Let the public know where each and every animal—show a paper trail of these animals, that there are not in fact illegal animals taken and some people have not been paid favouritism.

There is a lot to be addressed and I believe that the government should have—I would like to see a full inquiry. I would like to see everything addressed that puts a shadow on this industry before it gets off the ground, because if it does not there will always be doubt, and it is absolutely unfair that some should have favoritism, better treatment than others, and I use the example of one person taking an elk calf because it was orphaned and having that elk calf taken away from them and being threatened with a very heavy fine, I believe \$10,000. Yet other people who have elk that were without permits have the option of amnesty and being able to keep these elk and pay only \$1,000 for them. So these kinds of things are unfair.

Mr. Acting Speaker, there are many other things that we could talk about with this throne speech, but those are a few that I believe that this government has not addressed properly, and I do not believe what this government is putting forward is in the best interest of Manitobans. I do not believe that this budget will improve the economy of Manitobans, and I would advise the government to go out and listen to people with respect to health care, education, and go out and look at what is happening in northern Manitoba and look at the quality of life and come forward with something that will better meet the needs of Manitobans.

That is what we have done with our alternative throne speech, Mr. Acting Speaker. We met with Manitobans, we listened to them, and we have put forward proposals that we believe would enrich the quality of life in Manitoba, give better supports for families and enhance life across the province. But the throne speech put forward by this government is a bunch of fluff, government trying to improve their image after the harsh cuts that we have seen over the past several years from them.

Mrs. Shirley Render (St. Vital): It is my pleasure to speak on the throne speech today, and I would like to begin by reaffirming or affirming my confidence in the Speaker, the Honourable Louise Dacquay. I would also like to welcome back the pages, all of the staff and of course all of the colleagues here in the Legislature.

My usual practice in speaking to the throne speech has been to speak on the many areas outlined in the

throne speech. Today I would like to do something a little different and focus instead on the constituency of St. Vital. What has prompted this approach is one of the sections outlined in the throne speech. So I just want to refer back to the throne speech, Page 1, which states that we have established a framework for growth which has proved its value. The elements of that framework are clear: first, a balanced budget, to protect essential services; second, a tax system that is fair and competitive; third, an economic plan; fourth, social policy initiatives that are aimed at encouraging self-sufficiency; and, finally, a spirit of community and a quality of life based on mutual respect, good will, and our heritage of co-operation.

Now, I suspect that all of us here in the Legislature can talk about our communities and can talk about the spirit of community that all of us have. Well, I would just like to tell you some of the spirit of community that is exhibited in St. Vital, because we in old St. Vital are very pleased with the co-operation, the mutual respect, and the good will that the many groups that are operating in St. Vital exhibit. Now, some of those groups I think are common to all of us. Church groups, obviously, community clubs, parent councils, seniors, air cadets, the guides, the scouts—south family Y is in my riding of St. Vital, and some of the newer groups that have appeared in the last number of years. The St. Vital Historical Society, the Save Our Seine, group which is known as SOS, the revitalization community, revitalization committee are just some of the newer groups.

In fact, the spirit of community is so important in St. Vital that two years ago I wanted to recognize some of the outstanding volunteers who have helped pull together our community and make it into such a strong community. So two years ago, almost to the month, it was March that I held a St. Vital Heart of the Community Award and I would just like to read into the record, Mr. Acting Speaker, the recipients of the St. Vital Heart of the Community Award. They were Shirley Blaikie, Janet Davidson, Frank Enns, Ivy Fife, Norma Glenham, Audrey Graham, Roy Halstead, Noella Laurence, Billy Lucas, Joan MacDonald, Mary McIvor, Charlie Milton, Vera Remillard and Peg Venables. There were so many nominations for this award that the judges, and I should tell you about the judges, the four people that I asked to be judge and

select these people were St. Vital recipients of the Canada 125 Medal, and they were Ralph Bagley, Mary Dixon, Helen Granger Young and Brian Thorarinson.

Well, the four judges were so impressed with the wealth of information that came after the names of each of these volunteers that even though they only chose that small number of people to receive this reward, they felt that it was important to recognize the other people who were nominated for the award so I would like to read those names into the record: Carol Anderson, Jim Ashcroft, Victor Batzel, Brian Chalmers, Sharon Chalmers, Randine Chomyshen, Jean Dunmire, Dean Finlay, Wes Finnon, Pat Francis, Michele Georgi, Hank Haresign, Kathleen Henderson, Gerry Ilchyna and Jerry Ilchyna—that is a husband and wife team, Tom Johnson, Pauline Lafond, Anne Love, Harold Maisey, Terry Miller, Beverly Munn, Anndrea O'Connor, Wally Olensky, Leroy T. Simmons, David Taylor, Bob Town and John Tyler. These were people who received a certificate recognizing their nomination.

Now four years ago, our government gave approval, along with the City of Winnipeg, to inject a considerable amount of money into part of the area of St. Vital, the area known as the Glenwood-Varenes area. This was part of a program that is called the Manitoba-Winnipeg Community Revitalization Program and, needless to say, I was very pleased to see this amount of money come into the area. I have been a St. Vitaler for a little over 30 years and I have noticed, certainly in the last 10 to 15 years, well, I guess you could call it a slide, old St. Vital was definitely slipping.

St. Vital is an area of the city that has experienced growth, but the growth has been mostly in the south end of St. Vital. So as development moved south, the building of Bishop Grandin and, of course, Bishop Grandin bridge and then the St. Vital Shopping Centre, a lot of the business community began moving out of old St. Vital and into the newer areas. Consequently, all of the new homes were being built in the newer area. So storefronts along St. Mary's and along St. Anne's were becoming empty, and we all know that if you have a business community that leaves the area, that does not spell good news for the residential community. So as I say, Mr. Acting Speaker, I was really pleased that our

government recognized that this was an area that could use an injection of money, a revitalization.

* (1630)

I wanted to work with the residents of St. Vital and make sure that they understood the importance of coming together as a community, because this particular program is run by a residents committee that is elected by the residents themselves. So I held an information meeting four years ago to tell the residents about this very innovative program. St. Vitalers, being St. Vitalers, they rallied around and they elected a residents committee. This committee has been meeting definitely monthly, sometimes twice a month for the last four years and have spent a lot of time and energy and thought in how they are going about revitalizing old St. Vital. I would like to recognize these people who are on the revitalization committee because, as I say, certainly in the last six months sometimes they were meeting every two weeks. These meetings often take two and three hours, so it is not an insignificant amount of time that they are giving up for their community. The chairman is Doris Ames. Other community members are Joan McDonald, Bob Bruce, Don Wookey, Jim Fuller, Julia Ewanchuk, Carole Anderson, Beverly Munn, Bill Bell, Sig Lazar, Jeff Fawley, Shawn Love, Randy Ptashnik, Julie Thorpe, and Dave Gylywochuk who recently had to resign from the committee because he was moving out of the city.

Before I tell you about some of the revitalized plans, I would just like to tell you about some of the groups that made presentations to the revitalization committee. Now any of you who have had the revitalization program in your area, and I know the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) is definitely familiar with this program, knows that the community groups like to, well, I guess you could really say lobby the residents committee and try to put forth their ideas to make sure that money comes to them. As I say, old St. Vital has rallied, has worked hard to be coming forward with some very concrete plans. Some of the groups that have made very good presentations, and this is not all of the groups—the list is not the total list—are the Glenwood Community centre—the Glenwood Community Club, for any of you who know St. Vital, is a very old community club and is in dire need of

renovations. So Glenwood Community centre has certainly made representation. The seniors have made representation, the Save our Seine group, the Varennes school, the Fourth Scouts. Mr. Acting Speaker, the Fourth Scouts are very fortunate to be in the original building. It is one of the original scout homes in the province. To my understanding, it is one of three left in the province, so they are very hopeful that they will get some funding to make sure that this building does not crumble up, quite literally.

One of the groups that also presented was the old St. Vital BIZ group. Now I mentioned just a few minutes ago how in the past 10 to 15 years the business community had been leaving old St. Vital and sort of reorganizing itself in the newer area of St. Vital. Well, as I say, the spirit of community is strong in old St. Vital, and people realized that it was a good area to live in. We have got good churches and good community groups. So people began coming back into old St. Vital, and some of the businesses began coming back in, and they realized that it was very vital for them to organize themselves into a cohesive group. I have been working with the businesses and with our city councillor to ensure that this happens. In December 1995 the old St. Vital BIZ group was officially recognized by the city.

Now, the old St. Vital BIZ improvement zone, known as the BIZ group, encompasses an area along St. Mary's Road from Carriere south to Fermor and along St. Anne's from the junction at St. Mary's Road, again, south to Fermor. I think it is fair to say that this business district can be characterized as neighbourhood- and community-focused in that it primarily services the surrounding community, and many of the business owners live within the neighbourhood. In fact, some of the business owners live either behind their business or over top, and these businesses are primarily small businesses, usually owner-operated and housed in one- or two-storey buildings, some of which are converted residences.

Now, this business group is concerned, obviously, with revitalizing the business community but also with revitalizing the street on which they are, and the main streets in St. Vital are St. Mary's and St. Anne's. But that group did not look just at itself, it looked at the

larger picture of St. Vital and felt that it would be very worthwhile for them to make a presentation to the revitalization community because, as I say, they were looking at the larger plan. They were not just looking at themselves; they were looking at the total community.

So the old St. Vital BIZ group developed a revitalization concept plan, and that was based upon goals common to both the businesses and the residents of old St. Vital. They had three main goals: they were to improve the physical characteristics of the BIZ zone, to provide for a variety of recreational and commercial opportunities, and to enhance pedestrian activity within the business zone.

I think I would like to take this opportunity to just go into a little bit of detail on some of the plans that the old St. Vital business group presented to the revitalization committee, because, as I say, the business community, their plans encompass the whole community. So what is good for the business community is going to be good for the residences, for the churches, the community clubs, the scouts and the guides, the seniors groups, and all the other groups in the riding of St. Vital.

Now, we are very fortunate in St. Vital. We have two rivers. We have the Red River and the Seine River. So one of the things that the business community recognized was that the river provided a strong sense of—well, I guess you could call it a sense of place—and it is very historic, and they wanted to make sure that the view from St. Mary's was unimpeded. As you looked across the river, you could actually see the Winnipeg skyline. So they wanted to make sure that the development along St. Mary's enhanced the river, enhanced some of the walkways, which used to be there a long time ago, but which, unfortunately, have disappeared in the last 20, 30, 40 years.

The business community very quickly recognized that they did not have the expertise to put together this kind of a landscape plan on its own. So well over a year ago they hired a landscape architect, Hilderman, Witty, Crosby, Hanna, and Associates, to work with the group to develop a very cohesive and strong plan. I am just going to talk to you a little bit about some of the ideas that the architect brought out.

Now obviously there are things like the greening of St. Mary's and St. Anne's, some of the things that all of us recognize that have to be done in some of the older areas. Things like adding shrubbery, trees, and, of course, the obvious things, making sure you have got good pavement so that it is easy for anyone, including seniors who might be in wheelchairs, to be able to walk along. So you have got some of the more mundane kinds of treatments.—[interjection]

Beautiful flowers, as the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) is saying. I am just going to flip through my book here and see if I can zero in on some of the ideas put forward. One of the things that St. Vital had going for it was the fact that it was an agricultural community, an agricultural community really right within the confines of the city. Even though it was its own city up until about 25, 30 years ago, it was an agricultural community, and certainly there is a lot of evidence of the old market gardens that are left.

So the BIZ community and the landscape architect wanted to make sure that they brought out some of the history, some of the traditions of St. Vital. Now, two of the things that they recommended—one was to mark once more the entrance into St. Vital, and what they have proposed is to have an entrance arch to welcome people as they come over the bridge from downtown, pass through Norwood, and come onto St. Mary's and into St. Vital. So one of the proposals is to put up an entrance arch.

* (1640)

Now there is a historic precedent to this because when St. Vital was established many, many years ago, when the first streetcar—or I should not say streetcar. I guess you called them trolley cars back in those days—arrived in St. Vital, the St. Vitalers put up an archway that spanned St. Mary's at Carriere Avenue that said Welcome to St. Vital. So that was one of the first ideas that the landscape artists suggested.

One of the other focal points in St. Vital is the junction of St. Mary's and St. Anne's. Now at the junction right now is CKND, and CKND is part of the old St. Vital BIZ group and is very active in working with the BIZ group and with the revitalization committee. Now, when St. Vital was established—in

fact, I will go back even before that, away back in 1867, at the junction of St. Mary's and St. Anne's, this was a market site so again the landscape architects want to capitalize on the fact that it was an old market site and they want to revitalize that concept. Now, as I say, CKND owns this property so obviously we cannot tell CKND to leave, but CKND is working with us to develop part of the area as a meeting place, and the plans are that just across the road on the St. Mary's side all of this area in time will be developed into a meeting place.

Now as I say some of the goals are to develop the riverbank for neighbourhood activity, obviously with linkages to pedestrian paths to the north and bicycle routes to the north and south. We definitely want to have better access to the river, and, of course, we want to be able to see the river better. We have this beautiful river, but unfortunately we just are not able to get close enough to it. Something else that we want to be able to take advantage of, and they have certainly done this in the St. Boniface area, is to put up interpretative signs because St. Vital has a marvelous history, and the history of St. Vital is going to be told along the river walk and along where the market square is going to be established. That is going to be done by means of interpretative signs, signs that would display historic photographs and tell of the history of the various locations.

We have some very interesting historical areas in St. Vital. I do not think there is anybody in this Legislature that is old enough to remember some of the things that we have, some of the buildings that regretfully have long since disappeared. Certainly, there are some of the buildings that are still left, such as the old fire hall is still there and it is still in use. The seniors ham radio club meet there, the Citizens for Crime Awareness meet there, so this is an area that we want to make sure that we keep, we enhance and we protect and it is going to be part of the marketplace area.

We have some of the very original pioneer homes there. The Morier family is well known in St. Vital, and two of the very original Morier houses are still on St. Mary's, so we want to make sure that people know the importance of those houses along St. Mary's. We used to have a swim club on St. Mary's, so there is going to be a marker up by the swim club. There used

to be a dock and a marina at St. Mary's, and I can remember that when we moved into St. Mary's there was still a marina. So we hope to resurrect a docking facility; have a river taxi, have canoe and boat launching, again all tied in with walkways and bicycle ways. As I said earlier, we want to have an entrance arch as you come into St. Vital so that people realize that they are coming into this very historical area.

We have a number of little parks along the river. Again, I think they need to be better marked. There is Guay Park, that is after the Guay family, again, another very prominent early family. As I mentioned earlier, the four scouts have their hall right on the riverbank, and that is the original scout hall and one of the three remaining scout halls left in Manitoba. So it is a little piece of history in St. Vital that hopefully we can preserve.

One of the things that they want to do is, in an area between the old fire hall and the river, to make that into a recreational space, sort of with a multipurpose court for basketball in the summer and skating in the winter, and also put sort of a plaza area, provide it with shade so that all of us, be you seniors or moms with young children, will have a shaded seated area, and one of the ideas is to have a giant chess game for seniors, have it laid out on the ground.

Another thought is to turn the old fire hall into a local museum, and, of course, we have a very active St. Vital Historical Society, which just got up and running a couple of years ago. I should, before I forget, just mention some of the newer societies and organizations that have come into St. Vital just in the last five or six years. Again, I think it is important to recognize them because it just shows that this is a community that has revitalized itself and is prepared to work hard to make sure that it continues on the road to good health, I guess you could say.

Obviously, there is the revitalization community, the old St. Vital BIZ group, the St. Vital Historical Society, and now something else that is coming together is all of the leaders in the community are working with me to help come up with plans for keeping our community safe. I think it says a lot for people when they are prepared to take three and four and five hours out of their lives to work with other community groups, to

prioritize some of the concerns in the area as it has to do with crime, and to work to help develop action plans. Again, I would just like to recognize some of these people. These are church leaders, school leaders, principals of the schools, parent councils, community clubs, obviously the Citizens for Crime Awareness, which has a very active neighbourhood watch, youth justice committee, the south family Y. St. Vital Library has been part and parcel of this. Even the Save Our Seine group has expressed interest in working together to help develop plans to keep our community safe.

So the leaders of the community, as I say, gave up an evening a few weeks ago. We prioritized some of the issues, and we began developing action plans. They are going to be meeting again in another few weeks to finish developing the action plans, and then the whole community is going to come together so that we can hear about these action plans and then take them one step farther and put them into action.

Now, as I said, Mr. Acting Speaker, I do not think any of these things would be happening if we did not have a community that cared about the community. These are people who care about not just their own local group but about the wider community, and I think they have shown in all of the things that are happening that they have reached out beyond their particular organization to the larger community to make our community of St. Vital a better community to live in.

Once more, my congratulations to all of the people who have been working so hard to develop St. Vital into an active, viable community and, in particular, to the old St. Vital BIZ group because, as I say, St. Vital is a community of small business, and I think all of us recognize that small business continues to be a leader in job creation in Manitoba, and it is important that we have, each of us in our communities has, a strong small business community.

In fact, speaking of small business community, one of the small business owners who just started a shop four years ago has done so well that she and her partner came to see me about two weeks ago to tell me about another plan that they had to develop a couple more buildings that are empty close by to them. They want to develop that into another business, and, also, not just

a business but perhaps an area, a nonprofit area, that is going to help others in the community. So, I just want to reiterate that this is an area, this is a community that, yes, it does look after itself, but it looks after its neighbours and reaches out beyond itself. These things would not be happening if they did not feel good about Winnipeg, if they did not feel good about Manitoba. People do these things when they want to be in an area, when they want to stay there, when they want to put their roots down, and when they want their children to be there.

* (1650)

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, I will just conclude my thoughts on the throne speech by saying that I am very proud to be the representative at the provincial level of the St. Vitalers, and very pleased to be working with them on such a variety of issues, and, once again, very pleased to be part of an area that has such a strong community sense. Thank you.

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Mr. Acting Speaker, it is a pleasure to be able to speak to the throne speech since I did not take the opportunity on the previous debate that dominated the House as we opened just a week ago. The document, which is only my second throne speech, in my opinion, was an incredibly long and fluffy document full of political rhetoric, lacking true vision and planning and very few programs. If it was not for the offers by the federal Liberals, because it is an election year, there would be, indeed, very little in this document, and the people of Manitoba are probably happy there is an election because finally we are getting something from the federal Liberals, not only cutbacks and further offloading to the province and then the province, of course, offloads to municipalities and school boards.

So it is election year, and the federal Liberals are doing their bit to try and secure another term which, I believe, will come as a bit of a shock, as we see considerable change at the federal level, as people I am talking to in my riding of St. James are very disappointed with the federal Liberals when it comes to issues of pensions, health care and their support for education, needless to say, the broken promises on the creation of jobs and the GST.

But now to the provincial government. This document was an incredible lack of vision, and I am not one to go on the whole time criticizing because, indeed, our side has proven to have alternatives. I do wish to put on the record our vision for the future of Manitoba, and I will go through this document. It is incredibly long, but, as I say, it is very light, so it will not take me very long to hit the main points.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we can skip through to about page 4—

An Honourable Member: You are not going to refer to pages 1, 2 and 3?

Ms. Mihychuk: Indeed, pages 1, 2 and 3 are all political rhetoric and fluff, trying to trumpet their record, which is very difficult to do considering very little has actually been done by the government in a positive sense. We see the initiative of Winnport, which is a trigovernment agreement, and we hope that it will make a significant difference for Winnipeg. I cite it because, indeed, it impacts strongly on my riding, and, as we work together, we hope that it will be a successful venture.

Moving on, the government trumpets a program called the Manitoba oil and gas strategy, which is just totally, totally unbelievable. This is a program which rewards or subsidizes rich, large oil companies based in Alberta. It courts these Albertan oil companies to come to Manitoba, which has very limited oil and gas reserves, as we know, and pump out our oil reserves at unprecedented volumes. Manitoba, unfortunately, has only 10 years supply of oil and gas reserves in Manitoba. Ten years, a very limited supply.

We have a diversified economy and we can be proud when we travel through southwestern Manitoba. We go by, we see the pumpers and we can all say, well, we have our bit of oil reserves. Now we are seeing this government decide that it is a worthwhile venture, an economic decision by presumably the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Newman) that it is a wise investment to pump money into Albertan oil companies so that they can extract our reserves at unprecedented rates. Instead of 10 years supply, we will have much less.

The only thing that our future generations will see are derelict pumpers, Mr. Acting Speaker. Given that it is in your own riding, I am sure that you would not wish to see that as the legacy of this government, so I hope that you can use your significant influence to explain to the Minister of Energy and Mines that this program is actually a direct affront to the principles of sustainable development, to the principles that they so-called trumpet. The First Minister (Mr. Filmon) stands up, whenever he has an opportunity, declaring that this government believes in sustainable development. How in the world can this program be considered a sustainable program, very limited minute reserves that are being extracted at unprecedented rates?

I appeal to the government. We have a new Minister of Energy and Mines; he has just taken the portfolio, a man who has to become acquainted with the programs that are available. I urge him to look at the program, decide whether it is wise for Manitoba tax dollars to go to Alberta oil companies so that they can pump out Manitoba reserves. These reserves do not reward the Manitobans here; we do not see lower gas prices at the pumps. In fact, all of our reserves are exported and Manitoba actually relies on oil and gas from the western provinces.

So, indeed, this is a program that the province has highlighted in the throne speech and unless there is a total change to the minister's or the government's commitment to sustainable development, which is in question, we hear nothing in this document of sustainable development, a major initiative that the government was working on, but clearly one that was particularly flawed. The white paper was put out, and we had serious concerns both by business and environmentalists, and now we see that the throne speech actually has no reference to The Sustainable Development Act. We would hope that the government has pulled it back. It was neither sustainable or well thought out, as with the program called the oil and gas initiative in western Manitoba.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we also see in the throne speech reference to agriculture policy. We have seen considerable turmoil in the hog industry with several major layoff notices and concerns about the stability of that industry. Now we see a huge scandal when it comes to the new initiative of elk ranching, and we

would suggest that—although I am sure that Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) has a great deal of knowledge and apparently has many friends across the province—that type of program which rewards friends is not appropriate from a minister seasoned in government and in opposition and I am pleased that he is in fact cleaning up the elk herds, we would expect, and we are watching that program very closely.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we move along, and, in fact, we go on to a new program that the government talks about that targets aboriginal graduates. That in itself is commendable. However, you hear nothing from this government about the reality of the number or statistics of aboriginal graduates. Unfortunately, the statistics that I am aware of, which be a couple of years old, but the national average was fairly dismal. It is my understanding that 70 percent of First Nations people actually do not complete the high school curriculum and mandate and do not graduate. It is unfortunate that a program actually of this type is then very limited in scope and very limited for the people who will be able to access it.

* (1700)

In terms of health care, the throne speech says, investing in health and spending smarter. Mr. Acting Speaker, this government's record on health care and the provision of health care to Manitobans is dismal at best. Poor planning, poor administration, direct attacks on seniors are all a legacy of this government. We have just come out of a major labour dispute involving the workers of home care whose priority is actually service for those who need it versus privatization which is driven by the ideology of this government.

We are now looking at other major problems in the health care sector. Personal care homes which perhaps are not investigated or inspected regularly enough, or the standards lacking, but, indeed, the situation at Holiday Haven is tragic. My own father was a resident at Holiday Haven personal care home, and he passed away in '92, but even then the conditions at the personal care home were questionable, and we had numerous concerns as articulated by our Health critic passed on to the ministers and to this government who chose unfortunately to ignore them, and we see in this case a

terrible tragedy, and we see deplorable conditions in these institutions.

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, that is why we are calling for an inquiry into the whole spectre of personal care homes rather than focusing on one individual case and not only here in the city of Winnipeg but across the province. Apparently, the community of Thompson has been waiting for many, many years for this type of service to be provided. However, this government chooses to turn its back on the people of the North and the people of Thompson.

In the community of St. James is the Deer Lodge hospital or facility, a facility that was recently remodelled which we are very proud of. However, when you look at the conditions that are available for seniors, I would suggest that they are still overcrowded, and, unfortunately, when you look at long-term care, many of the rooms have three occupants, and people are undergoing medical care. It is a very confined space; there is no personal space. It is extremely unfortunate that this government does not invest in seniors and that is apparent.

In fact, on Saturday I had the opportunity to talk to some seniors from Ashbury Place. It is an apartment block that is in the riding of St. James, and there I heard many stories about or many examples of why seniors feel betrayed by this government.

One of the examples that they used was that they do not appreciate the government's initiatives in terms of Pharmacare, that actually medication is a form of health care, and for many seniors that is a major component of their lifestyle, unfortunately, and they rely on medication to keep them alive, to keep them healthy and keep them able to enjoy their senior years and able to enjoy life as much as possible. That is what we want and that is what they deserve, but do they deserve to have to pay in this one case \$600 in medical costs before being eligible for Pharmacare?

This is on top of other costs that have been levied on seniors. The other major area that affects seniors directly is the elimination of the school tax rebate, believed to be in the amount of \$175, and impacting directly on seniors, one that they were able to collect

for years and years, one that we were proud to support as government when we were in office.

Clearly, seniors have supported and built up a province that was caring and one that they indeed sacrificed so that we would be able to enjoy the benefits of Manitoba. They built our schools and they built our hospitals and they built our economy, and now when they are in need, we have decided that—unfortunately this government has decided that they do not deserve the type of support that they indeed wanted to build for the rest of us and for their children.

The other major point that they talked about was that no longer can this government or the Premier (Mr. Filmon) say that they have held the line on taxes, that really taxation was looked in a broader perspective, not only income tax but, indeed, Pharmacare, the additional fees that are incurred now, user fees in the health care system. I had a constituent who went to actually the Abbott Clinic and was charged \$50 for an ultrasound. He phoned me and said, MaryAnn, I thought we had a health care system that was covered by our taxes. Well, no longer, unfortunately.

In addition, we do not have coverage for eye examinations, and that is a major component of many seniors' lives. I have an aunt, actually, who has serious vision problems, and I know that having the ability to see is very important when you are a senior citizen. Many of them are on limited incomes, basically stagnant, not indexed to the rate of inflation, and it makes it more and more difficult for seniors to cope with the additional fees and levies that the government chooses to impose.

On the side, although quite insignificant in the amount, is the government's decision to levy a fishing licence fee for seniors. Although this may seem small, I would suggest that the seniors who enjoy our natural resources will never forget the legacy of that charge. That was one of the things that they enjoyed, and I think they deserved from the Province of Manitoba, and they do indeed consider that a tax. They enjoy going out to the lake, being able to appreciate Manitoba's beauty, but they will not forget the decision by this government to again levy another tax on them, even on the things that are so basic as going out to enjoy Manitoba's nature. [interjection]

Mr. Acting Speaker, I think that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) is referring to my mother-in-law, and I would suggest that he delve into the situation that our family is going through. Actually, my husband's grandmother is in the Stonewall hospital, and it is very unfortunate that she has pneumonia and will be coming home and will be on oxygen at home, and the prognosis does not look good.

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

* (1710)

But do you realize that for my mother-in-law to bring home her mother it is \$200 a month to rent the oxygen tank so that the family can be together during this very difficult time? So I would suggest to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), who represents that area, that indeed he should reflect on the burdens placed on his neighbours and, in this case, my family.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, going along in the throne speech, we get to the section on page 8 on education. As members of this House and I believe those that know me, I have a passion for public education because I believe that it is truly an investment in our children and an investment in our economy, that it should not be looked at as an avenue of cuts, that indeed we should look at providing the services to our children that are necessary. That is not something that this government has really reflected on.

The statement of the throne speech that increased efficiencies in the area of administration and operations have been found, it is an incredible statement. The government has decided that all the surplus funds that school divisions can find in administration and operations can now go into a surplus. Any person who has been involved, and I know members on the other side have been on school boards, will know that administration and operations is one of the first areas that we looked at—I am sorry, I used “we” because I still have fond memories of being involved in education—that school boards and administration will look at those services outside of the classroom first, and this government's record on education has been, unfortunately, one of cuts since it got into office. Every year that this government has been in office, school

divisions have not received sufficient funding, and there has been downsizing ever since this government got elected. So no matter how they wish to trump it, their record, the facts and most parents, and I would say all parents, realize that the services that were once available to their children are no longer there.

Today we saw parent councils coming forward saying that they recognize that the government is not providing sufficient funding, and they are calling on the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) to listen to parent councils. It seems a little ironic since much of this rhetoric coming from that other side of the House is that that is exactly whom they listen to. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the fact is that the government chooses to listen to whom they choose to listen to. They have an agenda on education, and they are pushing forward. Unfortunately, there have been dramatic changes in education. We are looking at the financial picture, and the government has made it clear their agenda is to economize, to downsize and to look at budgetary restraint. In this case, I would say that it was quite foolish.

We looked at a study recently by actually an American investigator who monitored, did a longitudinal study of those individuals who received preschool education, nursery school and those that did not over a period of 25 years, and I would ask the members on the other side, since they pride themselves in economics and budgetary matters, and I ask them quite blatantly, is an investment of \$1 with a payback of \$7 a wise investment? I think that anybody would say indeed, that is a wise investment, for every dollar put into nursery schools, the government will save \$7 in terms of supports that will be required in the long run. It is incredibly shortsighted that the government chooses to ignore these statistics, chooses to actually abandon young children, and although they, in the throne speech, talk about a child initiative, their record has been quite deplorable, with Manitoba having the worst child poverty record to now being third, not a number that we can be proud of, indeed, and you see that in the education system where they deal with ChildrenFirst.

In terms of efficiencies found in administration and operations, I am going to just cite the Winnipeg School

Division where, in 1990, five of the nine superintendents were eliminated and that is back in 1990. Now we are looking at 1997. I do not understand where this Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) assumes that additional savings can be found. In fact she should look at her own record. Her administrative costs in her Department of Education are approximately 10 percent when the average in school divisions is between 3 and 4 percent for administrative costs. So let the minister perhaps look in her own backyard when she is talking about administrative savings rather than looking at what seems to be, and I am quite confident, is a very streamlined and efficient education system which has minimal administrative costs.

The government is actually very, very foolish with their capital school bus program which they announced in January, a program which basically again downloads the cost of bus replacement onto property taxpayers. Mr. Deputy Speaker, today I showed that, for example, the school division of, again I use Winnipeg No.1, will receive \$99,000 this year as the capital grant formula; \$99,000 will only buy one and a-half buses. That is indeed insufficient. In fact, 50 of the 60 buses in that school division have to be replaced in the next three years. That is an enormous capital investment required, and in fact that is not the only school division that has an aged fleet. It is my assumption that the government knows full well how many aged buses are on the road and has decided that the way to get out of this problem without putting in the capital required is to so-called provide more flexibility. What it means is, instead of the government taking on its responsibility to ensure that the fleet is upgraded and safe and maintained, they have downloaded it onto school divisions.

In fact, the school divisions bus fleet used to be replaced every seven years. Mr. Deputy Speaker, seven years, and that is consistent with the lease programs that are available. A member who operates the bus program in a school division told me that the leasing program is for a period of between five to seven years. At the end of seven years, you buy out the bus, so when I asked how much a bus would cost at seven years, it ranged from \$10 to \$1,000. That would give you an indication that most leasing contracts would find a bus of seven or eight years to have come to the end of its viable life, and that, in fact, basically maintenance costs

make it so that is actually better to replace the vehicle rather than to continue operating it.

Now, given that that is not only a business recommendation but also one that was practicable and one that we had used for many years in Manitoba, the government decided to extend the life of school buses to 12 years. In 1991 it was 12 years that they remained on the road. Then in 1995 the minister decided that she was going to up the length of the life of a school bus to 15 and a half years, an incredibly long time to maintain a vehicle on the roads of Manitoba.

Now we hear that there is no limit on the age of buses at all, and, in fact, given that the grant is so minimal, we can expect—and I am sure that the department has calculated it—to see much older vehicles on the streets. I would suggest that that is extremely unfortunate as you see maintenance costs go up, and, hopefully, we will not see safety hazards in this case. In fact, if you calculated for the grant that Winnipeg receives, it would take 37 years before the bus was replaced. I would think that that bus would be available for antique plates which are actually much cheaper than a regular insurance rate. So actually at a grant of one and a half buses per year, it would take them 37 years to replace the 38 buses that need to be replaced right now.

The situation on the capital program is such that it is obviously underfunded, and it is forcing school divisions to look at options, what they call flexibility. What that actually means is contracting out and perhaps a reward for some of their friends. Here we see school divisions in this case looking at leasing school buses. The cost for leasing—and I am sure that the other side is very interested because they claim to be concerned about how taxpayer's money is spent.

* (1720)

Indeed, the cost of leasing a school bus is \$18,000 per year. Let me get that for sure. Yes, absolutely. It is \$1,500 a month for a bus, and so that works out to \$18,000 a year. For a seven-year term, which is the regular for a leasing contract, each bus will cost the taxpayers of Manitoba \$126,000 rather than the \$60,000 to go and buy a bus, as was always done by this government and by our government which is actually a much wiser investment, to put out the capital

and replace the buses, but, no, this government has decided to go to a leasing program.

So you are going to look at an extra \$65,000 per bus, and for whoever is going to be in the leasing business—I would actually suggest that perhaps the government would like to advertise this program because it seems to me that there would be a great growth in the number of companies in the bus-leasing business. Clearly, there is going to be a profitable component to this program, and it is not to the people of Manitoba. Do the people of Manitoba want to pay twice as much for a school bus? We do not think so on this side of the House. I guess the members on the other side do think they want to, or they want to maintain buses until they are 37 years old. Either way it does not work out very well. So the program should be reviewed, scrapped, and the government should assume their responsibility as they always have in the past and replace school buses, so our children have vehicles that are fairly modern and safe.

There are many examples that I can cite in the education system where government has wasted. Wasted tax dollars on programs that they have brought forward. There is a new program called vision for the future or vision to action, a program where members of the education community worked with the minister on a new initiative, and it was all going to be launched in March, when the partners of education said, Madam Minister, this is a terrible time to launch the program. It does not work out for school divisions. We cannot make it for the launching. We ask you to change the date for this major initiative.

What did the minister say? It is impossible to change the date. She did not listen to the partners of education and, in fact, is going ahead launching a program where the participants, the educational partners, are not participating. So this is, again, another example, and those who have been on boards in the past know several programs that have been launched that, indeed, had to be retracted, reworked and rethought. Again, we see the same thing in the case of school buses and this vision to action and indeed we just recently went through a math exam.

A math exam was conducted in the province of Manitoba where the math exam was held and the weather in many parts of the province was very

inclement. Many Grade 12 students were not able to actually write the Grade 12 exam. Unfortunately, the Grade 12 exam was this year particularly difficult. You saw in a letter to the editor in the weekend paper discussing how an honour roll student had looked at the exam, that in fact it was a different curriculum and particularly difficult.

What happened to the students that did not write the math exam? Well, the minister decided that for those students the individual teachers could average out their grades, so indeed they would have a much higher result on that exam. They did not write it, and their marks will be much higher. Now at the end of Grade 12 many students are going to be in a competitive environment, trying to get into faculties of engineering, into universities of all sorts, into community colleges, and who does this penalize? The very fact is that it penalizes those students who wrote the exam.

It is just incredible how poorly administered the exam program is and that the department has not thought out that program, which is, indeed, extremely expensive and, in this case, discriminates against some very hardworking students. So the minister—this is not the first time we have had that problem; in fact, you would think that she would have corrected it last year, but we saw it again this year. The minister needs to rethink her exam policy and how it is implemented because indeed in this case it is not a fair representation. What you have done is actually penalized students that wrote it and have given a free break to those that did not.

The document also goes on to talk about the Native Education branch, about initiatives for aboriginal peoples. I would remind the government it is their legacy of reducing the Native Education branch from 17 individuals to three. There is no curriculum that I am aware of being developed by this government. In fact, in the province of Manitoba, there are only school divisions that are developing native curriculum, and that is Frontier and the Winnipeg School Division 1, who chose to use their own funds for this very important initiative. So the government needs to look at its own record in terms of a commitment for aboriginal education, and it is dismal to say the least.

They then go on to trumpet their post-secondary education. I would like to quote our critic of

Education, who says it is heavy on business and light on educators, typical of many of the boards that the government has appointed. Again, we ask for balance. We ask for reason, and that is not what we are seeing in this case.

I do wish to commend the government on a new initiative that is included in the throne speech. I do not wish to be totally critical. There are some good ideas. One of them is the increased emphasis on adult literacy training through community organizations, and I congratulate you on that initiative and hope to work with the government on providing those basic skills for our adults in our community who wish to upgrade.

In addition, the department has also provided an incentive for adults to upgrade their high school diplomas, and that, too, must be commended. The criticism on that is all of these programs are coming from within the total Education budget, which means that there has to be reductions to classrooms or other services that were provided in the past.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, overall, it is a document that repeats Tory programs already initiated in other sectors. It rides on the coattails of the Liberal election platform, and, other than that, it is basically full of political rhetoric, which is a disappointment for the people of Manitoba.

Hon. Frank Pitura (Minister of Government Services): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity right now to address a few remarks to Madam Speaker if she had been in the Chair and to commend her on a job that is well done and give her my continued confidence.

I would like to welcome the pages, as well as all honourable members, back to this legislative session, although I would say that the Legislature in this session is probably a little less harmonious than we would like to see it as a result of certain events that happened last fall. I think that overall the majority of us here sitting in this Legislature would say that the provisional rules that we had put together last year and had adopted are good rules. I think that it would be a shame if those rules were never to be used again in this Legislature because they are worthwhile, I think. Everybody agreed that those rules were workable. Some of the

details of the individual rules, though, had to be ironed out as to what they actually meant, but I think overall as a Legislative Assembly if we do not get together and start pursuing and actively trying to get these rules back into this House that we will surely pay for it over the years to come.

I would like to spend a little bit of time just talking about the very positive aspects of my constituency. As you know, I represent the Morris constituency which is probably one of the greatest constituencies in this province. The constituency is graced with health care facilities spanning from the west to the east with hospitals in Carman, Morris, St. Pierre, nursing homes in St. Pierre, Morris, Rosenort and Carman. We have daycare facilities in Carman, Morris and St. Pierre. The area is graced with three school divisions.

* (1730)

Then we get down into the interesting part and that is the manufacturing part and the area that a lot of people do not pay much attention to when it comes to rural Manitoba, and that is the fact that we have a fairly growing grain vacuum manufacturing industry located in Carman. We have a welding industry located in Sperling which is in the process of trying to put together a plot combine for harvesting plots for research. Of course, one of the major impetuses at Carman is the establishment of the University of Manitoba field research station out there with facilities, which is bound to have a great impact on the agricultural industry in this province.

When you move further east and you get into the small community of Rosenort, you find out that there is probably more manufacturing in that small community per capita than anywhere else in the world. It is just manufacturing from one end of the community to the other. You get businesses like Friesen manufacturing, manufacturing of grain bins, Westfield Industries manufacturing augers. These augers are exported around the world—

An Honourable Member: \$31 million a year.

Mr. Pitura: You bet, \$31 million a year in sales, Midland industries, who manufacture truck boxes of all kinds and makes, and they are just a going concern.

There are many more examples that I could give you of manufacturing that takes place in the Morris constituency, but above all, it is an agriculturally based constituency, and agriculture is the backbone of the Morris constituency. Agriculture has flourished over the last number of years in the constituency, and as a result it has allowed a lot of people to achieve some of their dreams and aspirations in the constituency.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I remember the first time I came as a new candidate prior to the election in 1995 when I sat up in the gallery over there and watched the presentation of the budget in the spring of 1995 which was the first balanced budget in some 25 years in this province. It really was a good feeling to see that finally, finally, the Province of Manitoba had its fiscal house in order and said we were not going to spend any more than what we bring in.

Since April 1995, when we became government, and I was fortunate enough to be elected by the residents of Morris, we have a balanced budget and taxpayer protection which I think is probably the most important piece of legislation that has ever been passed in this province. Both in the history and for the future of this province, it is the most important piece of legislation because it will dictate to us that when times are good we can spend, but when times are tough we cannot spend. That is the reality of the whole issue of having a balanced budget. Of course under the balanced budget we have to plan for those needs that gives us the fluctuation in the economy as will undoubtedly happen.

We have also seen the passage of a new Municipal Act which has reduced the number of pages in The Municipal Act from something like 600-and-some pages down to about 240 pages which really makes it a lot easier for municipalities to carry out their day-to-day functions, and it also streamlines some of their operations so that they can function better.

Another major initiative that occurred since I have come into the House is that we have provided more dollars for policing both in the city and for the RCMP. We have allowed more police officers to be on the street to make the streets safer and to combat crime.

Another major initiative I think that this government has brought in which I think is very important to the

entire province is the regionalization of health care whereby we try to have the health care delivered to every region within the bounds of this province in such a way as that it is relevant to the local area. This is something that is a new initiative, and I think it will result in a greater quality health care and a much more efficient delivery of health care in the future.

Another area that we looked at, at first I guess maybe with a little bit of disgust and trepidation, was the demise of the WGTA because at that time when it was announced it was cut complete 100 percent. There was always the argument that it should be phased out over a period of time.

An Honourable Member: Who did that?

Mr. Pitura: The federal government eliminated the WGTA, the Chretien government. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as soon as that door was closed, many many doors opened for a lot of our producers in Manitoba that were able to take a look at their own farm business operations and say, well, because it is going to cost us more to ship grain out of Manitoba than anywhere else in this country, what can we do? And a lot of producers in Manitoba decided that what we have to do is add value to our product that we grow right here in Manitoba.

So many, many new initiatives have started as a result of the closing of the door on the WGTA. Hogs is just one example of an industry that is just taking off by leaps and bounds in this province. The production is going up at a rampant pace, and we are seeing a lot of new facilities being built, very high-tech facilities, and we expect that the numbers of hogs by the year 2000 is going to double and the number of impact in terms of new jobs in the industry is probably going to be around another 8,000 jobs. You add that to the already 12,000 working into the industry, and you are looking at a 20,000-job industry, a very major impact in this province.

Another major milestone is the sale of MTS, and that was, I think, a major positive impact on this province because of the fact that MTS was able to get rid of its horrendous debt load of some \$800 million, and that now allowed it to poise itself for entry into the highly

competitive field of telecommunications. At the same time, the amount of money in terms of the debt, which was a provincially held debt that was paid down, allowed the province now to be able to use those funds to pay off the long-term debt of this province.

So why is Manitoba so well poised to enter the new millennium? Why? Because there are a number of economic indicators that tell us that Manitoba is just ready to start running. We have, No. 1, balanced budgets. We are going to see the third balanced budget on Friday of this week, which indicates that we are still going to be spending only that which we take in. We have had no increase in major taxes in this province for nine years now, and I would expect that we will continue to see freezes in major taxes. The sales tax in Manitoba at one time was one of the highest in Canada, is now one of the lowest in Canada. So now we are enjoying a revenue tax percentage and a sales tax percentage among the lowest in Canada. I would have to say that probably when I was the first one taking a look at this initially, the first balanced budget, I would have liked to have seen a reduction in the sales tax or a reduction in the personal income tax, but now I realize that just holding them at that point brought us down very quickly to the point where we are the lowest in the country.

* (1740)

Another area that we have moved very quickly on and have done a great job at is removing the cumbersome regulations that interfere with business being able to conduct its affairs in Manitoba. I know that my honourable colleague from Turtle Mountain worked on that committee to streamline the regulations and, as a result of their hard work over the past year, they have eliminated hundreds of regulations that interfere with business operating in this province.

So what is happening in Manitoba as we speak? I want to share some of the recent developments in Manitoba as put together by I, T and T that I feel should be put on the record, just to kind of lay the base for the fact that Manitoba in terms of its economy is in such a strong position of growth, surging ahead, that allows the kind of throne speech that we had laid out before us at the beginning of last week.

Firstly, in agribusiness, McCain Foods. This project will be completed in two phases, with the first phase representing \$55.9 million of the total potential investment of \$75 million. The first phase project to be completed by the end of 1996 will double the physical size of the plant and add a minimum of 120 full-time production jobs to the existing 280 full-time jobs at the plant, and the Portage la Prairie facility will become the most modern plant in the McCain Foods worldwide operations. The Portage la Prairie location was selected because of its quality of raw potatoes, availability of irrigation and workforce.

Another one, Midwest Food in Carberry. This expansion was completed without any public sector involvement, involving a \$18.6 million expansion. Midwest Food Products produces a quality french fry product for McDonald's Restaurants in the U.S. Raw potato purchases will increase to approximately 6.7 million hundredweight annually over the next few years.

Then we move on to Archer Daniels Midland agri industries. On October 22 last fall they began construction of an oilseed terminal in Carberry, Manitoba. The capacity of this terminal will be 550,000 bushels, and this project is scheduled to be complete by early 1997 and will provide employment for five to 10 people.

There is also the Canadian Agra Corporation which just happens to be in the great constituency of Morris. This is a major infusion of capital by Canadian Agra Corporation of some \$215 million in an integrated food processing complex in Ste. Agathe, Manitoba. The construction commenced in October of 1996. The completion of the canola plant, which is estimated at \$55 million—this is a crushing plant—is scheduled for early 1997, and upon completion the canola plant will employ 45 people on a full-time basis. Future plans are for a grain terminal, feed mill, alfalfa processing plant and an ethanol plant, as well as attracting other related agriculture industries to the park.

Then if we take a look at Simplot in Brandon, Simplot, approximately 30 percent of its production of fertilizer is exported to the United States, and the plant employs approximately 265 people. A \$25-million plant expansion was announced in July 1993, and that

allowed it to produce additional nitric acid production. The expansion was officially opened in October of 1994. In 1995, Simplot announced plans to invest \$150 million for an expansion that would nearly triple the plant's ammonia capacity while significantly increasing its urea capacity. Another important note is that no government assistance has been provided.

Then we go to Isobord Enterprises in Elie that just made the announcement to go ahead with the building of the plant. This new plant will transform cereal straw into a composite board using a patented process. The particle board will be environmentally friendly and formaldehyde free. It is a \$142-million plant. They will produce 144 million square feet of board annually. The project will create 300 jobs and will employ 100 permanent staff. In addition, Isobord will contract 100 individuals for a massive straw collection operation each fall. So Isobord is another major initiative that is going to have a major impact into the agricultural industry in terms of value-added opportunities in the area of straw.

There is also J.M. Schneider which announced their intention to construct a \$40-million hog slaughtering and processing facility in Winnipeg. Their processing capacity will be increased to 48,000 hogs a week. Phase 1 to be completed in the spring of 1997 will include a \$17-million, 100,000 square foot cutting and processing plant. This phase will increase Schneider's overall employment from 100 to 425. Phase 2 represents a \$23-million, 120,000 square foot slaughter and chill operation which will be developed depending upon market growth. If feasible, this phase will increase capacity to 48,000 hogs per week or about 2.4 million annually. Schneider's will end up employing about 600 people at the plant, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

If we take a look at some new high throughput grain elevator facilities, we have one with N. M. Paterson & Sons with a capacity of 10,000 tonnes which just happens to be in the great constituency of Morris at Morris, Manitoba. They are looking for an annual throughput of approximately a hundred thousand tonnes on a 50-car spot, and the completion of the facility is slated for summer of 1997.

Pioneer Grain Company, construction has begun on a 16,000-tonne concrete high throughput facility in the

Brunkild-Sperling area which just happens to be in the constituency of Morris. This facility is planned to have an annual throughput of between a hundred thousand and 200,000 tonnes, but the throughput will be dependent upon competition and the production situation each year. They will have a 52-car spot and they will be ready for late 1997 or early 1998.

Then we get into electronics, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Vansco Electronics Limited, an \$11.3-million expansion expected to create 456 jobs. Vansco employs a higher proportion of knowledge-based workers than most manufacturing operations. Thirty percent of the staff are employed in engineering, 15 percent in administration and marketing, 55 percent in assembly and production. The company's sales are expected to increase five-fold to more than a hundred million annually by the year 2000. Vansco designs and manufactures innovative custom electronic components for offroad vehicles, and 75 percent of the company's manufacturing items is for agricultural equipment right now. The 500 products manufactured and developed at the plant each year include cutting edge technology such as satellite navigation systems that can automatically custom blend fertilizer for different soil conditions as the application equipment moves down the field. More than half the company's sales are to export markets.

Then we move into the aerospace and defence sector, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We take a look at Boeing Canada Technology Limited, and due to the significant order backlog at the parent company, growth to approximately 1,300 employees including a design team of about 60 for the newest version of the Boeing 747 is anticipated within the next 18 months. Then we move on to Standard Aero. In November 1995, the company won a million-dollar contract with the Mexican government for engine repair and overhaul.

(Mr. Peter Dyck, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

In February 1996, the United States air force issued a one-year \$15-million contract for maintenance of the Allison T-56 engine. In August 1996, the company signed a contract with NAPC airlines of Madras, India, making Standard Aero's entry into the Indian market. Current employment at the company is over 800 and is growing about by 200 per annum.

Let me move into Lockheed Martin Electronic Systems Canada. On this one, the Department of National Defence announced the award of a contract to the Winnipeg facility of Lockheed Martin Electronic Systems Canada to supply integrated targetry suites to the Canadian Forces. The Manitoba aerospace initiative paid a key role in lobbying the federal government to have this contract awarded to Lockheed Martin. The three-year contract which is valued at \$19.6 million will maintain 20 jobs and create an additional 13 in the Winnipeg plant.

* (1750)

Let me move on to Cormer Group Industries Inc. It is moving from an existing 14,000 square foot facility into a 60,000 square foot facility, and they are involved in the precision machining operation which produces components for a variety of sectors including aerospace. Last year, Cormer Group Industries was one of the three Manitoba companies to make the list of the 100 fastest growing companies in Canada.

Akjuit Aerospace Inc., they have the first completely commercial orbital launch facility in the world at Churchill. The province provided some financing in terms of capital and operating costs while the company arranges financing of \$90 million to fund the first phase of the launch facility construction at Churchill. In October 1996, Akjuit Aerospace and the STC Complex of Moscow jointly announced an agreement under which Russian rockets would be exported to Canada to launch commercial payloads into orbit from Churchill. The company forecasts the creation of 150 direct jobs and 400 new indirect jobs during the phase one development.

Then you take a look at Cadorath Aerospace Inc. They provided repair and overhaul service for engine components and accessories for fixed and rotary wing aircraft. Cadorath is investing \$2.2 million in a plant upgrade creating 23 new jobs at Cadorath Aerospace and nine new jobs at the parent company, Cadorath Plating Co. Ltd.

In terms of transportation, we take a look at some things that CP Rail industrial benefits. They made a large agreement with GE Canada Ltd. for the purchase of some locomotives and in return General Electric

purchased goods valued at some \$5.3 million from Manitoba companies.

If you take a look at Winnport Logistics Ltd., this is an exciting venture I think for all of Manitoba because it has the ability to create Winnipeg as a hub for transportation for the mid-west North American continent, and it has great potential for moving ahead on that.

Then we have many original equipment manufacturers, such as Winnipeg is now the largest bus manufacturing centre in Canada and the United States. In 1995, vehicles, parts and associated transportation equipment accounted for \$940 million in export for Manitoba driven by sales of buses, tractors and aircraft parts as well as truck bodies, cabs and parts and auto parts. In the last five years, exports of transportation vehicles and parts have nearly tripled, growing from \$330 million in 1990 to \$940 million in 1995, a 158 percent increase, Mr. Acting Speaker. This growth has been driven by large export gains in buses, tractors and truck bodies and cabs.

If you take a look at Motor Coach Industries Ltd. Motor Coach Industries new luxury bus prototype, the Renaissance, was in Winnipeg on Friday, November 22, 1996, for a one-day stopover during a North American tour. MCI is spending more than \$3.9 million in Manitoba on tooling parts and other initiatives related to the development of the new bus, and the company estimates that by the year 2000 based on full production rates, that local spending for the new line could reach in excess of \$39 million for these state-of-the-art coaches.

Winnipeg operations are Motor Coach Industries' sole manufacturing site in Canada and the U.S. and the focal point for new research and development work. At least 50 percent of Motor Coach's total transportation group development is taking place in Manitoba. Since 1989, employment at the Winnipeg plant has grown from 1,200 staff to more than 1,800, starting with 114 jobs that are the direct result of the new coach program.

New Flyer Industries Limited. New Flyer's sales have increased from \$75 million in 1992 to a level that is expected to exceed \$250 million in 1996. The

company currently employs 985 people in Winnipeg, and the company has more than doubled its workforce in just three years.

Then we move on to New Holland Canada Ltd. This Winnipeg plant covers 650,000 square feet and is the only tractor manufacturing plant in Canada and one of only five in North America. A new \$10.6 million assembly line was put in place for the production of the Genesis model tractor, a state-of-the-art two-wheel drive tractor product line. In 1994, New Holland Versatile Winnipeg was one of the only 12 Canadian exporters earning a Canada export award competing against a pool of 252 candidates. There are approximately 800 people employed at the Winnipeg tractor manufacturing facility.

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

Then we move on into the health care industry. A joint agreement between Health Canada and Manitoba in the Agriculture Canada Bureau of Microbiology has resulted in a \$143-million health lab complex, and that is nearing completion and expected to open in September of this year. The first of the 210 employees are in place, with a scientific staff arriving in August 1997.

Then we move on to Imperial Surgical, another aspiring business in Manitoba. Established in 1935, this plant has been here a long time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but Imperial Surgical is one of the oldest manufacturers of health care equipment in Canada. The company will be manufacturing core products for their operating room line. The project entails capital expenditures of some \$341,000 and is expected to create 16 new jobs over three years.

Then we move into the wood industry. We take a look at Repap Manitoba. Repap produces unbleached kraft paper and dimensional lumber. The company generates approximately \$150 million in annual revenues and has 625 direct employees.

Pine Falls Paper produces newsprint for the national and international markets. The company generates approximately \$130 million in annual revenues and has 425 direct employees.

Then you move on to Louisiana-Pacific. Constructed as an \$80 million plant, an oriented strandboard mill in Swan River, this mill was completed and test-run in late 1995. L-P's OSB mill in Swan River will use up to 900,000 cubic metres of mixed woods and generate 488 million square feet of lumber per year. The company will employ up to 300 direct and indirect employees.

Then we move into the area of call centres, just another major area that is just exploding in Manitoba. Examples of major call centres and their estimated jobs: if you take a look at AT&T Trantech Canada, they have 1,300 jobs in the call centre business; Faneuil ISG at 365; CN Rail at 337; CP Rail at 267; GWE, Brandon and Winnipeg, 285; Air Canada, 210; Canada Post, 125.

Then we move into the apparel industry. The apparel industry is another area in Manitoba which is just humming at the seams. It is the second largest manufacturing sector in Manitoba. It also was the third largest in Canada, accounting for some 8 percent of all Canadian garment production. This industry employs approximately 7,500 Manitobans. If you take a look at Global Fashions Corporation, Global Fashions Corporation is making Winnipeg the international hub for an import marketing and distribution operation that will create 98 new jobs.

The furniture industry: Manitoba's furniture companies are Palliser Furniture with 1,450 employees, Buhler Furniture with 80 employees, Acme Chrome Furniture with 75 employees, and 30 percent of Manitoba's furniture products are exported. If you take a look at the Business Resource Centre, this centre offers services and programs to encourage the development, growth and enhanced competitiveness of business which in turn promotes job creation. Certain

initiatives that I would like to just highlight for you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in aboriginal economic development: the aboriginal resource directory was compiled and 450 directories distributed; three cultural awareness workshops held; business counselling is ongoing with individuals and groups with up to 500 contacts per year.

We also have the Business Start program. A total of \$568,000 or 63 loans in loan guarantees was committed. Of the 63 loans, 13 were to women, 50 to men, 13 to rural businesses, 50 to Winnipeg businesses, and 188 jobs were created. Co-operative Development Services: 23 co-operatives of businesses were developed requiring an estimated investment of \$159 million servicing over 1,150 members, creating 647 new jobs. In addition, approximately 75 co-operatives and businesses were provided with support and consulting services. Of course, there is the Mobile Business Service Centre which travels with I, T and T throughout the province which I think is a very good place where people can obtain information on how to start a business.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these are some of the things that are happening in Manitoba which allows the type of throne speech that we have presented to happen. If we take a look at another initiative, another major initiative—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I hate to interrupt the honourable member just as he is getting wound up.

The hour being 6 p.m., I am leaving the Chair with the understanding that the House will reconvene at 8 p.m., at which time the honourable minister will have nine minutes remaining.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, March 10, 1997

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