

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, 18 May, 1982

Time — 2:00 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER by Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER, Hon. D. James Walding (St. Vital): The Honourable Government House Leader.

HON. ROLAND PENNER (Fort Rouge): Mr. Speaker, before we start routine proceedings, I think I speak for all members in the House in welcoming you back to the House. The applause indicates how glad we are to have you back with us. We are all aware of your recent illness; wished you a speedy recovery and I'm glad that our combined wishes have had some effect. Welcome back!

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Turtle Mountain.

MR. A. BRIAN RANSOM (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Speaker, may I add our good wishes too. Welcome back and good health to you, Sir!

MR. SPEAKER: I thank the honourable members and also the members of the Legislative Press Gallery for their good wishes and kind regards. I still have some tests and treatment to undertake, but I am improving and I expect to be here full time before very long.

I would just ask members not to presume too much on my patience and goodwill. Part of the treatment consists of being forbidden to smoke any further.

Presenting Petitions . . . Reading and Receiving Petitions . . . Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees . . .

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. A.R. (Pete) ADAM (Ste. Rose): Mr. Speaker, I have a statement to make and I have copies for the Opposition, Mr. Gourlay and the Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to announce the introduction of the Main Street Program. The Government of Manitoba believes that our rural communities and their lifestyle will continue to play an important role in the future economic and social development of the province. Working together, municipal councils and local business people can receive assistance to revitalize their Main Street business districts to everyone's benefit. This could include storefront renovations, decorative pavement, landscaping, benches and ornamental lighting, additional parking, boulevards and tree planting, etc. These Main Street improvements can make Manitoba's small cities, towns and villages better business, shopping and recreation areas, attractive to shoppers, new businesses and residents. My department will initiate a meeting with municipal officials to review our proposed guidelines for the program.

I am sure co-operation at the local level between

municipal government and private businesses will produce many effective and innovative projects through joint planning. The Province of Manitoba has allocated \$1.5 million to provide financial assistance for the Main Street Program to our rural communities with approved projects. Financial assistance to municipalities will take the form of a grant equivalent to two-thirds of the project cost up to a maximum determined by the guidelines.

The following general principles to the program: storefront renovation or improvements should be part of the proposal; costs of private storefront improvements will be cost-shared with the proprietor, one-third by the province up to a maximum of \$500.00. The cost of public improvements will be cost-shared two-thirds by the province, one-third by the municipality. There will be no deadline for project application. This is an ongoing program and those centres not participating this year will be eligible to apply for assistance in the future. Proposals will be assessed and funded in accordance with the established guidelines which will include the criteria of the community population, project cost and other relevant information.

This program will be operated by my department in co-operation with the Department of Economic Development and Tourism. The Minister of Economic Development and Tourism advises that her department will be pleased to extend community commercial planning and other assistance to the communities participating in Main Street Manitoba.

There are some towns that have budgeted for Main Street improvements in 1982. Those who have not, but wish to participate in the program may apply for approval of an operating deficit in 1982 in the amount of their municipal contribution. This deficit may be recovered by levy in future years or absorbed by existing surplus funds, depending on the financial position of the municipality.

I am confident that this program will enhance the quality of life for residents and small business in the rural communities of Manitoba and is in keeping with my government's commitment to assist in rural development.

Thank you, very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Swan River.

MR. D.M. (Doug) GOURLAY (Swan River): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs for making the statement today. We have been waiting for some time now for this announcement and I am sorry that it has taken the Minister this long to make this information available. I am sure that many of the towns and villages throughout Manitoba will be interested in the details of this program.

However, I do think that it is a little money and a little late. I am sure that there are going to be lots of applications from many of the towns and villages. However, I won't belabour this part of it. I do thank the Minister for making this information available and we will take it from here. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Northern Affairs.

HON. JAY COWAN (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to table the 1981 Annual Report of The Clean Environment Commission.

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MR. SPEAKER: Before we reach Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery where we have 35 students from the Ecole Lavallee School, who are host for a further 35 students of Grade 9 standing from Beaufort, Quebec. These students are under the direction of Mr. Marion. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Riel.

There are also 75 students of Grade 5 standing of the Hastings Elementary School under the direction of Mrs. Sigurdson. This school is also in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Riel.

There are 23 students of Grade 4 standing from Lac Brochet under the direction of Mr. Maxwell. These students are from the constituency of the Honourable Minister of Northern Affairs.

There are also 32 students of Grade 6 standing of the Ecole St. Joachin School under the direction of Mrs. Gagnon. This school is in the constituency of the Honourable Member for La Verendrye.

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Turtle Mountain.

MR. RANSOM: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the First Minister. Can the First Minister advise the House whether or not he was successful in convincing the Minister of Employment and Immigration, the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, that the payroll tax, which the First Minister's government imposed last Tuesday was in fact simply a means of raising revenue and not the means of retaliating against the Federal Government?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. HOWARD R. PAWLEY (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I think that question could be best asked to the Federal Minister of Immigration. We certainly had a very useful and fruitful discussion and I believe that to be the understanding of the Federal Minister, but in fairness to the Federal Minister, that question would be best answered by the Federal Minister himself.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Turtle Mountain.

MR. RANSOM: Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that the Provincial Government will be undertaking a study of preparing information to convince the Minis-

ter of Employment and Immigration, and for him to use in convincing his colleagues and businesses that Manitoba continues to be a good place to invest. Will the government be tabling that report in the House?

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Speaker, I certainly will be quite pleased to table that information because I think that information not only will be enlightening to Federal Government people, but certainly will be enlightening to members of the Opposition.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Minnedosa.

MR. DAVID R. (Dave) BLAKE (Minnedosa): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On April 22nd, I directed a question to the Minister of Agriculture. On April 22nd, some questions were taken as notice by the Honourable Member for Ste. Rose, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, in connection with the rebuilding of the livestock yards in Brandon. I asked if he had any information to give to the House and I wonder if he has that information now.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. BILL URUSKI (Interlake): Yes, Mr. Speaker. Those questions or questions related to that, to the rebuilding of the Brandon plant were answered by myself to the honourable member in this House. I indicated —(Interjection)— Mr. Speaker, either the honourable members don't want to hear the answer. I wanted to tell the honourable member that there have been meetings between staff, Manitoba Pool, and that we have indicated to them that we were encouraging them to rebuild the plant. It was their decision and their own decision to make, but in terms of the need for that facility, we saw the need for that facility in the western part of the province.

MR. BLAKE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for that answer. I wonder, could he tell me what the current position is. Has he met with them lately and what is the situation as far as a commencing date for the rebuilding of the yards?

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated, that decision is left to the Board of Directors. I will specifically take that portion of the question as notice to be briefed as to what may have happened in the last week or so.

MR. BLAKE: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the Minister could confirm that a portion of their final decision to rebuild the yards rests with the Beef Stabilization Plan proposed in the six-year marketing plan proposed in the Beef Stabilization proposition. It is my understanding that some of the decision hinges on whether they are going to be allowed to market the animals or whether they are going to be controlled under a government agency for six years.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, to answer that question specifically, that matter of length of period is under discussion by the committee. I want to inform the honourable member that I met with the Manitoba Farm Bureau and a director of Manitoba Pool was present. In fact, I believe one of the directors who is involved in this matter, and I did indicate to him at that time that we certainly felt a facility in the western part of the province was necessary and that our program should not play any part in terms of them not wishing to rebuild because we wanted to enhance the numbers of animals that would be slaughtered in the Province of Manitoba and that kind of a facility certainly would be necessary in that part of the province.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MR. JAMES E. DOWNEY (Arthur): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I should ask this question of the Minister of Highways and Transportation, but I will direct it to the Minister of Agriculture. Could the Minister of Agriculture indicate to the beef producers of the Province of Manitoba just what type of program the Federal Minister of Agriculture plans to introduce in view of the fact that he has had discussions with the Federal Minister last week, he indicated to the House? Is it a program that's more receptive to the beef producers than the one that the province has introduced?

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, what I did indicate when we announced our program and the developmental committee to our program, I have indicated that it was still our hope that there would be a federal program and that our program could be meshed with a national program and the farmers could, of course, make their choice as to what they wanted to do at that point in time.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, when did the Minister receive that information from the Federal Minister or when did that discussion take place?

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the discussions, there has been ongoing communication between my department, my office and the Minister's. In fact, there was a telex that I just received back yesterday dealing with the question of stabilization, some comments that the Minister of Agriculture made, and our request along with the Minister of Ontario that there should be an early meeting of Ministers to discuss some of the proposals that he has made. The reply and response to our telex was basically to the effect that while there were still ongoing discussions at his level, he had no specific program to announce at this point in time.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, could I take it from the Minister, and he can correct me if I am misunderstanding, that it is now his department that has had discussions with the Federal Government, not he personally. He, personally, has had no discussion with the Federal Minister of Agriculture, directly opposite to what he told this House yesterday. Is that correct? It is now his department and not him that have had discussions?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister

of Agriculture.

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, so the honourable member doesn't get himself confused any more, the telex that I spoke about to the honourable member was in response to a telex from myself.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister told the House that he had in fact phoned the Federal Minister last week and had not yet received a telephone call from the Minister. Did the Minister, Mr. Speaker, in any way get any indication from the Federal Minister the amount of money that may be paid out from the Federal Government to support the beef industry in this province? Did he get any commitment from the Federal Minister in any way, shape or form in amounts of money from the Federal Minister?

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, if there was any commitment made, I am sure that the Federal Minister of Agriculture would have wanted to make that announcement himself.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the agricultural community are not being represented in speaking for them on their behalf at the Federal Government level and the fact that the Minister of Agriculture is somewhat misleading the farm community and the House as far as his communications with that particular organization, has the Minister of Agriculture in the Province of Manitoba changed his position on the paying out of a direct \$50 per cow to the beef producers of this province following his meeting yesterday with the beef producers in the province? After his indication, Mr. Speaker, that he was listening to the beef producers and going to work with them in establishing a program, is he now prepared to pay out the \$50 directly to them?

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, I should mention to the honourable member that I met not only with members of the MCPA, but also the committee that we established. I should mention to the honourable member, if an announcement will be made he will be one of the first in this Legislature to know, but I should point out to the honourable member that our advice from the producer committee that has been established to work out the details of the plan, that there is not unanimity on that question.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, is the Minister saying that there is not unanimity among the cattle producers or that there is not agreement between him and the cattle producers?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Swan River.

MR. GOURLAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question to the Minister of Education. I would ask the Minister if she is contemplating giving assistance to vocational schools who are having to cut courses because of declining enrolment?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education. The Honourable Member for Swan River.

MR. GOURLAY: Mr. Speaker, apparently the Honourable Minister did not hear my question. My question to the Minister is, I am wondering if she is contemplating giving assistance to vocational schools who are having to cut courses because of declining enrolments.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

HON. MAUREEN HEMPHILL (Logan): Mr. Speaker, it is a little difficult for me to give a direct answer to the question, since I am not clear which vocational schools he is talking about and which courses are being cut. If he can provide me with that specific information, I will be glad to respond to him.

MR. GOURLAY: Mr. Speaker, I am specifically concerned about the secondary comprehensive school in Swan River where they have had to cut courses come September of this year because of declining enrolments in those vocational courses.

MRS. HEMPHILL: Mr. Speaker, I recognize some of the difficulties are the difficulties that many of the school divisions are facing in this current year and to that degree, we did as much as we could to give them additional support through additional direct provincial money. Swan River was one of the beneficiaries of the supplementary program, so the purpose of that money was to give them help to maintain existing programs and the judgments on the priorities and what choices would be made is entirely up to the school division.

I think that I was able to give the member opposite a fairly comprehensive piece of information about the things that were affecting both the mill rate and the expenditures in the programs in his division and to what degree the Provincial Government had provided support. The support was not unreasonable. It was quite good. The declining enrolment and other factors were creating problems and we will be reviewing the whole situation in our educational finance review.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Gladstone.

MRS. CHARLOTTE OLESON (Gladstone): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Finance. Will the new payroll tax be levied against public library payrolls on July 1st or will they be treated as municipal corporations of which they are a branch?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. VIC SCHROEDER (Rossmere): Mr. Speaker, any part of a municipality or a municipality's payroll is, as I had indicated previously, exempt until January 1st, 1983.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

MR. L.R. (Bud) SHERMAN (Fort Garry): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Honourable Minis-

ter of Health. I would ask him if he can advise the House how close we are to conclusion of negotiations between the province and the Department of Veterans' Affairs, including the Royal Canadian Legion for provincial takeover of Deer Lodge Hospital?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. LAURENT DESJARDINS (St. Boniface): Yes, Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government has been advised that we accept in principle the agreement that has been worked out between the staff and we are awaiting word from the Federal Minister responsible.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister advise the House as to whether the jobs of the present employees will be protected and does he have Federal Government assurance, in writing, that the jobs of the present employees will be protected?

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, we would not sign an agreement if this wasn't covered. This is something that will be covered right in the agreement that will be signed if and when it is signed by the two levels of government and also, I should have explained because the member talked about the Legion and the Veterans; I met with them. It is understood they will meet with the Federal Government and then we will insist to make sure that there is no misunderstanding, finally, there should be a meeting between the Veterans' organization. The Federal Government should be represented and also I would intend to be there.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister advise the House whether he is contemplating a change of name for Deer Lodge Hospital?

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, this is something that certainly will have to be looked into. I think that the member would remember that during the Estimates I had suggested that maybe a certain person should be recognized for the work that this person is doing rendering to humanity. It is something that would have to be discussed, I would think, with the different groups of the legions and volunteers. I think that we would like to — the veterans, I should say, to start looking at the system that we have in the province, to service them and to break away from Deer Lodge. But this is something that I'd like to hear from them and certainly would be discussed, because their lodge will not render that service any more. Their lodge would be a geriatric centre and the service for the veteran, as the members might know, will be provided in General Hospital, acute hospital.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

MR. SHERMAN: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that I assume and I feel confident that all members of this Assembly can assume that any change in administration of Deer Lodge Hospital will incorporate and accommodate the preservation of a certain number of beds for veterans, at least 150, can the Minister advise the House whether he has up to this point in time discussed with the Royal Cana-

dian Legion the idea of a change of name?

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, no, I think I've answered that; there has been no talk. There was just the thought that I shared with the members of the Committee, in fact, that was never discussed with the members of Cabinet or the members of that party. It was an observation that I offered. It is certainly not a decision and I just stated that nothing will be done until we discuss that with the veterans. But I want to repeat that, the veterans, there will be a guarantee of beds but the beds will not be all in one location. The beds will be in different hospitals. We are trying to, if we take over, we're not going to continue what was done before. We will continue guaranteeing services but the service will be done as Manitobans and this is what he is trying to do now that there is hospitalization and so on. But I repeat nothing will be signed; nothing will be finalized; in fact, nothing will be presented to my colleagues in Cabinet until we've had — first of all, there's a meeting between these groups and the Federal Government and a further meeting between the Federal Government, Provincial Government and these groups. So let's not jump to any conclusion. I don't know why my friends and neighbours are concerned; I wish I knew because there seemed to be some concern.

MR. SHERMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence, Sir, I would like to ask a further supplementary which results from the last answer from the Minister.

Is the Minister saying that there will not be a consolidated, identifiable block of 100 or 150 veterans' beds in the new Deer Lodge Hospital plan; that all those veterans' beds will be split up and disseminated through hospitals in the province because that represents a considerable piece of news and not necessarily a welcome one, Mr. Speaker? Is that what he is saying?

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, we're talking about two different things. I was talking about acute beds; my honourable friend might be talking about personal care beds, or that level of care.

At the acute beds, definitely, there will not be a set number, a block of beds. There will not be a veteran hospital, as such, at the acute beds. This service will be — it's too costly for one thing. This is exactly the reason why we would do this and the service will be rendered at the other hospitals around the province where the people are. Definitely, if you're talking about acute beds, it's not intended to have a block of acute beds and that was never intended in the first day of negotiation years ago.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Morris.

MR. CLAYTON MANNES (Morris): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to address my question to the Minister of Education. In view of the fact that the recently announced payroll tax will cause nearly a 2-mill increase to the ratepayers in the school division of Morris-Macdonald in 1983, I'm wondering if the Minister of Education could indicate whether the proposed grant in lieu of this payroll tax to the school divisions will be made basis a dollar versus a dollar, or in fact

will equalization come about and cause some school divisions to pay more than others.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

MRS. HEMPHILL: Mr. Speaker, I think that both the Minister of Finance and myself have indicated clearly that we have made an exemption for school divisions in municipalities in this Budget year. We have made a commitment to sit and meet with them and talk to them, look for and find ways to offset the costs for the coming years. We have not determined what will be done or how it will be done. That's the process that we'll be undertaking in the next few months.

MR. MANNES: Mr. Speaker, then is the Minister indicating that for 1983 possibly there will be some formula through equalization that could have some school divisions paying more on a pro-rated basis than other school divisions?

MRS. HEMPHILL: No I am not, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MANNES: I'm wondering if the Minister of Education could tell the House what are the basic criteria of eligibility when applying under the new program announced yesterday to help Manitoba's Small Schools.

MRS. HEMPHILL: Mr. Speaker, the basic criteria for support to Small Schools is, as might be imagined, size. The support is to go to those schools in the Province of Manitoba that are the smallest, Mr. Speaker, and the criteria is different for elementary schools and high schools. For elementary schools, it is those schools who have between four and six teachers; for high schools, it is schools that have an enrolment or a population less than 150.

MR. MANNES: Is the Minister indicating then that the criteria has nothing more to consider than just the number of teachers?

MRS. HEMPHILL: Mr. Speaker, it actually has to do with the number of students, because the number of teachers that are in any school are determined by the number of students. The reason that was selected as the criteria, Mr. Speaker, is that is the deficiency in the existing Educational Support Program and in the Old Foundation Program which gives money to school divisions who have the most bodies, who have the most children. It is understood and recognized that those that have very small enrolments do not have the same opportunity to get resources, materials and equipment as do the larger schools.

The purpose of this program is to give additional support of materials, equipment and personnel to help them provide a quality education for all of the children that are being educated in Manitoba's 251 small schools. They deserve a fair share and equal resources as do children in all the other schools.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Morris.

MR. MANNES: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Minister

if she could tell me in 10 words or less what is the maximum eligible grant per pupil that schools can apply under this program?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order please. The Honourable Member for Morris.

MR. MANNES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am asking the Minister if she can tell the House what the maximum per pupil grant will be under this program?

MRS. HEMPHILL: Mr. Speaker, since he only wants 10 words or less, I will tell him the maximum grant is \$15,000.00. The details of the program, I will give him in the Estimates discussion.

MR. MANNES: One final question, Mr. Speaker. I'm wondering by what date will the school divisions in this province have notice of this program.

MRS. HEMPHILL: Mr. Speaker, details of the program are going out to school divisions within the next week so that they can prepare their plans for the fall program.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Norbert.

MR. G.W.J. (Gerry) MERCIER (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Education on just a clarification yesterday in response to a question from the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

The Minister indicated in talking about financial assistance to independent schools that the increase is in the range of approximately 11 percent over last year's Budgetary figure. Could she just confirm that there has been no increase in the basic \$450 per student grant?

MRS. HEMPHILL: Mr. Speaker, I think I did confirm that the basic grant of \$435 has stayed the same.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Tuxedo.

MR. GARY FILMON (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Honourable Minister responsible for housing. I wonder if he could indicate to us what are the plans for the \$15 million additional Capital for housing that is included in the Budget that was recently announced.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

HON. AL MACKLING (St. James): Mr. Speaker, I will be making a formal statement on that matter giving detail in due course.

MR. FILMON: Mr. Speaker, we'll be looking forward to that announcement in due course. Can the Minister indicate at this time if any of the initiatives or programs that will be contained within that \$15 million program will have long-term subsidy requirements on behalf of the Manitoba taxpayer?

MR. MACKLING: Mr. Speaker, I will not speculate on the contents of the statement with the honourable member until the statement is made.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. HARRY ENNS (Lakeside): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I direct a question to the Honourable Minister of Natural Resources. I asked this question of his predecessor some time ago and we touched on it in his Estimates, but the season is getting on. Has he been able to sort out any of the problems or the new rules of how the wild rice will be harvested in this coming season?

MR. MACKLING: Mr. Speaker, let me indicate that I have been receiving a harvest of words, a great many submissions, a great many articulate spokesmen for Native people and for other people interested in the resource, have given me the benefit of their views. We are looking at all aspects of the wild rice industry and we will be making announcements of policy direction in due course.

MR. ENNS: Specifically, has the report on the report by one Harvey Bostrom been presented to the Minister and to the government as yet?

MR. MACKLING: Yes, Mr. Speaker, subsequent to the receipt of the Ross Report, a fine report, as suggested by the former Minister of the department, that report and many many more submissions that were being received by me and the department in respect to this issue were forwarded to another former Minister of Natural Resources whose family background involves the wild rice industry. Pursuant to the inquiries that we made to him, he did review the Ross Report and the numerous submissions that were received in addition to that and has made observations to us which we find very helpful in deciding our policy. I hope we will find it very helpful in respect to deciding the policy questions that have to be confirmed in our policy directives in this industry.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Turtle Mountain.

MR. RANSOM: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the First Minister. The First Minister during the election had indicated that he would be appointing an Indian Land Claims Commissioner. I wonder if the Minister can advise the House whether or not he has yet selected that person.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Speaker, this matter falls within the purview of the Minister of Northern Affairs.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Northern Affairs.

MR. COWAN: Yes, I can advise the Member for Turtle Mountain, Mr. Speaker, as I did during the Estimates procedure that we are now involved in a process of consultation in respect to the formation and the estab-

lishment of an Indian Land Claims Commission. We will continue that consultation and we will continue to listen to those individuals who wish to bring forward their concerns, their suggestions and their criticisms in this regard. Once we have been able to develop a picture of what that Land Claims Commission should be doing exactly, we will then be looking to the appointment of an Indian Land Claims Commissioner who will be entrusted with the purpose of establishing the commission, ensuring that it operates in an efficient way and ensuring that it operates in a way in which we intended it to, and that is to bring a speedy resolve to some longstanding questions in this province respecting the transfer of lands to Treaty Indian people.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Tuxedo.

MR. FILMON: Mr. Speaker, I realize I'm pressing my luck but I have a question for the Honourable Minister of the Environment. I was interested to read a story in the newspaper yesterday with respect to a discussion which the Minister had with the Manitoba Environmental Council and I did ascertain the veracity of the report, Mr. Speaker. It had to do with the fact that apparently there has been prepared for the province the socioeconomic impact statement and the environmental impact statement with respect to the aluminum smelter proposed for the Interlake area of Manitoba. The story indicated that the Minister would not make public those reports or the province's assessment of those studies. I wonder if the Minister would perhaps at least share that information with members of the House who I know are all very interested in that information at the present time.

MR. COWAN: Mr. Speaker, I don't have the actual newspaper article in front of me to refer to. However, I can indicate to the Honourable Member for Tuxedo exactly what it was I said to the Manitoba Environmental Council at their annual meeting of the other day. I indicated to them, as a result of a question from the Chairperson of the Environmental Council, that if we had in our possession certain environmental impact assessments or reports which were completed on the Balmoral site, that we would prefer not to release those particular reports at this time as there has been a change in the way in which negotiations are being undertaken as a result of the change in the administration.

You are aware, as is the member aware, that we have entered those negotiations with no preconditions. That means we have entered them with no preconceived notion nor no preconceived agreement on our side as to what would be a preferred and what would be a nonpreferred site. We are conducting the negotiations with agreement from Alcan on that basis. Therefore, I believe it would be imprudent and counterproductive for me to release those reports which specifically address themselves to one site.

I did indicate to the members of the Manitoba Environmental Council and I will do so through you to the Member for Tuxedo that if in fact that does become a site upon which we should take environmental impact assessment studies, then we will release those reports at that time. To do so previous to that would only

confuse the issue and would be of no value to those individuals or to the member opposite. So I have to regretfully decline to provide the House with that information for that reason for the time being, but I do want to indicate that it is only for the time being and based upon the conditions which I outlined in my answer to him.

MR. FILMON: Mr. Speaker, understanding the complexity of the reports and the impact statements that have been prepared, I would think that there would be considerable value to Manitobans who are interested in this project to have as much time as possible to review the information available. If it turned out at some later date that because of this government's action, the Balmoral site was not allowed to be proceeded with, then of course there would have to be addenda and additional information. So my question to the Minister is, on what basis can he assure us that there would be no value whatsoever to people to review such information?

MR. COWAN: Well, I am pleased to be able to respond to the member in a general way because it does impact upon some of the other statements which I made at that Manitoba Environmental Council Annual Meeting of last week. I, at that time, suggested that we as a government believed very strongly that the public have a vital role to play in the assessment of major economic projects which may, in fact, have an impact on the environment. We value their expertise which they have gained as a result of experience. We need their suggestions, we need their support, and we need their criticisms.

Consequently, as a government and within the Environmental Management Division specifically, we are now addressing the entire issue of environmental impact assessment procedures. We are addressing them from the perspective of combining environmental impact assessments along with socioeconomic impact assessments and providing environmental impact statements to the general public far previous to the Environmental Impact Assessment Public Hearings being held.

I can give that commitment to the Member for Tuxedo as I did to the members of the Manitoba Environmental Council the other day. We encourage that participation, we want that participation, and we will do all that is possible to make certain that we have that participation by way of support and encouragement of the public to come forward. In this specific instance, I think that when we have an opportunity to unfold that process, even the Member for Tuxedo will have to agree that it is a far better process than they had ad hocly and in a hurry put together for the so-called mega projects which they were embarking upon just previous to their defeat.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Economic Development.

HON. MURIEL SMITH (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, I undertook yesterday to keep the House updated on the level of pay out on the Interest Rate Relief Program for small business. I am happy to report the current pay out level for 16 projects is \$62,470.00.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for Oral Questions having expired, Orders of the Day.

COMMITTEE CHANGE

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

MR. PENNER: Mr. Speaker, just before we get to Orders of the Day, I would like to announce a committee change. Public Utilities is still not finished its consideration of Hydro and we are rescheduling so that Public Utilities will meet on this coming Thursday, May 20th, at 10:00 a.m. to, one hopes, finish its consideration of Hydro. Therefore, that will be a substitution for the previously announced committee meeting on that date which was Economic Development. The Economic Development Committee meeting which is now displaced, the date for that will be announced when we see where we are going after Thursday.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUDGET DEBATE (Cont'd)

MR. SPEAKER: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Finance, and the proposed amendment thereto by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

The Honourable Member for Dauphin.

MR. JOHN PLOHMAN (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, I want to say, first of all, how much I appreciate your presence back in this Chamber. Just to add to what the Attorney-General said and the Member for Turtle Mountain, I am very pleased to see you back here. I know we have missed your guidance in this Chamber and despite a very able job done by the Member for Flin Flon, we certainly have missed you here and I want to extend my wishes as well for a speedy recovery and know that our well wishes are with you, Mr. Speaker.

I appreciate, Mr. Speaker, the opportunity to speak once again in this Chamber on a matter of utmost importance to the people of Manitoba. That being, of course, the Budget that was brought down by my honourable friend, the Minister responsible for Finance. You know, Mr. Speaker, there are times when it is especially pleasurable to be a New Democrat and especially to be a member of a New Democratic Government as we are here in Manitoba. This past week has been one of those special times, Mr. Speaker. In these most difficult economic times, it has certainly been made more difficult by the Opposition when they were in government by the policies that they followed, Mr. Speaker. —(Interjection)— No, I am not. The Member for Pembina is saying I am reading my speech. Well, I'll tell you that as long as the briefcase is here, at least; the desks are made for short people like you and I am able to put this up here.

It is a pleasure to see some bright spots, Mr. Speaker, on the horizon here in Manitoba. A pleasure to see some bright spots despite the gloom and doom that we endured over the last extent of the former government. I think our government has shown; this Budget has shown that it is possible for the sun to

shine again in Manitoba. We have shown through our Budget, Mr. Speaker, that this government has the imagination, this government has the understanding, the capacity, certainly the ability and the compassion and the will to bring Manitoba through these difficult times once again.

So, I am especially proud to be a New Democrat and to stand in this House and support that Budget that was brought in by the Minister of Finance. It reaffirms my belief, my faith and my trust that I placed in this great party, Mr. Speaker, when I first made that decision to join with other New Democrats before me to make our communities, our province and our country a better place to live and to raise a family.

I am impressed, I have to say, with the arguments that are presented, and with the debate that has been put forward by the members on this side of the House, starting with the Honourable Minister of Finance, the Minister of Natural Resources, the Minister of Economic Development, the Honourable Attorney-General, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Community Services right through to the backbenchers who have spoken on this, the Honourable Member for St. Johns, the Honourable Member for Thompson who is indeed going to win by a landslide next time, the Honourable Member for Brandon West, the Honourable Member for River East, the Honourable Member for Inkster. They have put forward a devastating and decisive argument that has destroyed the Opposition here. We have seen it day after day and I would say, Mr. Speaker, as an impartial observer, half way through the fight I would say that the left has it here on a unanimous decision, nine rounds to nothing at this point, Mr. Speaker.

A MEMBER: We are sure as hell going to win this round though.

MR. PLOHMAN: Even if we tie or break even on this one, Mr. Speaker, we are still so far ahead on this one that we really don't have to worry about it. The battle has already been won.

I want to stress and to emphasize to my honourable friends opposite that this Budget shows that we do have a direction, that we have a plan, that we know where we are going here in Manitoba and we understand the implications of what we are doing. We do not take steps without knowing the consequences of those actions before we take them, Mr. Speaker. Contrary to what the Member for Turtle Mountain expressed on Saturday night in the Provincial Affairs Program when he said that we just stumbled onto certain tax measures, we did not know what they meant, and contrary to the Member for Morris who says that he believes we do not know what we are doing, we don't understand the consequences of what we are doing; I want to assure them that we know where we are going and we know what we are doing.

As long as they continue — listen to this — as long as they continue, Mr. Speaker, to believe that we are standing in this House, standing for something that we do not really believe in or that we do not really understand, they will be sitting there in Opposition for a long time to come. Let there be no mistake, Mr. Speaker. I will give the members opposite some generous advice and it is free advice, Mr. Speaker, and it

simply is this: Do not underestimate our commitment to the people of Manitoba.

One can readily see the stark difference in this Budget, the stark difference between our approach to government and the former government's approach to the problems that face Manitoba.

Let us look at the approach that the Opposition took when they came into government here four years ago, four long years ago, Mr. Speaker. They set the tone immediately. They set their motto, acute restraint, and it became as the years went by, acute protracted restraint, over a period of time naturally. What did it mean to the average Manitoban? Certainly, you don't like to hear this. You don't like to hear this because that is why you are over there now. That is why you didn't have a second term.

What did that mean to the average Manitoban? It meant that those with the least must tighten their belt the most for as long as they could do it. That is what it meant, Mr. Speaker. So, the previous government set about to prove their point that Manitoba needed less government. Manitoba needed less government and those with the least must tighten their belts the most. As Don Craik said in his Budget of 1978, and I quote from it, "Because of over regulation and interference in the market, the market system has not had a fair chance to operate efficiently in recent years." And he said it inferred, "that the forces of initiatives and competition were being stifled and choked off by the government."

So, government assistance, government initiative was conveniently termed, interference. The Tory Government immediately proceeded to remove this interference and they did it in many ways. The first thing they did was froze all public construction, hospitals, nursing homes, schools, public housing. All construction was frozen in the Province of Manitoba and with it went the jobs, Mr. Speaker.

The Health Care and Education Budget was cut back in real dollars, Mr. Speaker, in those first years of that Tory Government. It was cut back and so who was hardest hit during that time? Who was hit hardest by the Tories? They talked to us about hitting the children and the churches and things like that. Well, Mr. Speaker, they hit the sick, the elderly, and the children through the health care cutbacks and the school cutbacks, education cutbacks. The people that could fight back the least, that's the ones that they hit the hardest, Mr. Speaker.

Consistent with their goals to force the little guy to tighten his belt the most, they announced in that same Budget in the spring of 1978, they said, "We are asking that all those involved in public sector negotiations recognize that provincial revenues and, thus, our ability to pay for wage settlements will grow by 4 percent this year." What did that mean? That meant that the people in the public service, the wage earners were the ones that were supposed to cut back.

Of course, we all remember that political purge on the Civil Service, the bloodletting that was supposed to save dollars, under the guise of saving money. That is happening now in Saskatchewan. We only have to look there. You look there. Talk to Mr. Devine, your idol there.

Not only that, they taunted the Federal Government to join them in their acute protracted disregard for the

people of Manitoba. They taunted the Federal Government. They repeatedly called for the federal cutbacks. You don't believe that? You did not taunt them? Look at this in the Budget Address of 1978. This is Don Craik speaking. "Most disappointing of all was the Federal Government's inaction, its failure to match meaningful restraint with its rhetoric for a Federal Government whose spending continues to careen out of control. It is immediately incumbent on the present Federal Government to reduce the level of expenditures," and that's what they did. We all know what they did. But then the Tories screamed and they cried and they hollered when the feds cut back, when the feds cut back on equalization payments to this province. —(Interjection)— Yes, they cut back; they listened to you. They cut back in post-secondary education financing, they cut back in health care and we are suffering because of it now. They squealed and hollered and protested when the Federal Government held back on signing federal-provincial negotiations, agreements, because they wanted some credit for where their money was spent.

Well, now we're all suffering because of that, Mr. Speaker. If Trudeau listened to any argument that you put forward during the four years, Mr. Speaker, during their four years in government, he listened to their calls for restraint and we've got it now. We got it in health care and we got it in post-secondary education and I hope that this Opposition, Mr. Speaker, is proud of themselves because now they have led the way for Trudeau on these cutbacks. They can feel responsible for that; they can take credit for that.

They did not stop there, Mr. Speaker. No. Nothing exemplified their callous disregard for the little guy more than their freeze on the minimum wage. We all remember the freeze on the minimum wage. Stick it to the little guy again. Nothing, I assert, characterized their utter contempt for those who could least afford a cutback, with a cutback in the minimum wage. That shows where their priorities are, Mr. Speaker.

Of course, they cut back on public investment in our province. They sold off government industry at a loss under the guise that it was going to save money and the private sector could do it all by itself. The private sector was going to do it. Certainly after they had seen their growing steps, growing portions of their first years in companies, now, of course, they can benefit. They benefited from the investment that went into them at the beginning and they supported high interest rates, Mr. Speaker. What was the result? —(Interjection)— I'm sorry that I'm blowing you all away, Mr. Speaker. But we all know the results, Mr. Speaker, of their years in office, of these factors; fewer jobs in Manitoba, massive out-migration and we all know about massive out-migration and it wasn't all from the welfare rolls as the Leader of the Opposition said, it wasn't all from that.

As a matter of fact, I want the Honourable Leader of the Opposition to know that I had some very good friends and some family that left Manitoba and they weren't on welfare and maybe even some of them voted Tory one time and I'm certainly going to show that statement to them, that it was the welfare people that left the province. Well, I want you to know as well, his blanket statement is that the welfare rolls were reduced. He can go as far as Dauphin and he will find

out that they tripled during the last two years of your government. The welfare rolls tripled in Dauphin, the municipal welfare rolls and that is a fact.

We saw record bankruptcies and smaller investment in this province, smallest investment of any province in Canada, and we had a province that led the rest of Canada; we had the dubious distinction of leading the rest of Canada into a recession. That's what you can take credit for.

On top of that, Mr. Speaker, we had record deficits in this province. Deficits and record deficits as they saw that their restraint was not going to get them back into office, Mr. Speaker, and it was not working.

The record speaks for itself. We are hardly witnessing here in this Opposition, we are hardly witnessing in an Opposition that can give this government any advice on how to manage an economy, Mr. Speaker. They, Mr. Speaker, are in no position to scorn and chastise our efforts at this time. The last few years should have been a lesson in humility to any government, Mr. Speaker. They certainly should have been, but I failed to see that in the Opposition. I failed to see any indication that they have learned from that experience, Mr. Speaker, from that devastating experience here in Manitoba. I want to say it was devastating not only for the Opposition, it was also devastating for all of Manitobans and for Manitoba in general.

So, now they condemn our efforts, but where would they have gone, Mr. Speaker? Where would they have gone? What direction would they have gone had they been able to retain the confidence of the people of Manitoba on November 17th? Where would they have gone? We have seen during the Estimates their desire for more and greater spending. They were constantly harping during the Estimates that we should be spending more. Or do they believe what they speak? Yes. Just today, they want more in Main Street, Manitoba; they want more in education. Can they really legitimately criticize this government on every occasion when they turn on the other side and ask for more?

The beef producers, certainly there is another example where they want a no-strings-attached handout and they ask for more diking, for more drainage projects, for highways, for hospitals, for schools and every conceivable service that you could ask for, Mr. Speaker, they are asking for. Did they ever talk of cutting back when it affects their constituency? No. Their criticism is hollow, Mr. Speaker. Spend more, but then they complain about the deficit.

I want to look for a moment at Ontario, only for comparison, Mr. Speaker, where we see almost a virgin land of Tory rule over the years, where it's been untouched by the Opposition and we see that in Ontario. What are the Tories doing there where they have not been interrupted? I think that would give us a good idea of where they would have gone here in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. I think it is a valid comparison. What have they done?

Well, first of all, let's look at their deficit there and, of course, the Honourable Attorney-General referred to 124 percent increase in their deficit. I looked in the papers, the figure I got was 38 percent, but it was certainly much higher than ours was this past year in terms of an increase. In terms of the percentage of their total Budget, their deficit is very close to what

ours is in Manitoba, very comparable in percentage terms of their total Budget. So, so much for the cries from the Opposition about a deficit when their brothers in Ontario have a deficit that is higher than ours; certainly in percentage-wise it is very close.

Where are they getting their money? Well, they increased the health care premiums, the highest in Canada, a 17.4 percent increase this past year. Ontario health insurance plan premiums will be the highest in the country, \$648 a year for a family, \$54 a month, a 17.4 percent increase in health care premiums. That's what we would have had in Manitoba, that's what we'd have to look forward to, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we would have an uninterrupted Tory government here in Manitoba. They hit the little guy with the sales tax too. Let's take a look here. "Ontario sales tax even hits attacks Big Macs. This hits everyone including the poor," right out of the Ottawa Citizen. It hits and poor and listen to what the Treasurer for the Ontario Government said, "I doubt many people will even notice they're repaying more, since they probably didn't realize they weren't being taxed in the first place." That's typical Tory logic. They didn't realize and so now they're taxing baby products, candies, soft drinks, down to 20 cents. We don't tax candy — no. Listen to this, "While \$75 dinners at the Canadian Grill Room of the Chateau Laurier are going to be less expensive after Thursday's provincial Budget, the \$3 hamburger and chiliburger," for the Member for Sturgeon Creek, "fries and shakes at McDonalds is going to cost more." That is typical Tory priorities. Who is it helping the most? Who is it helping the most?

You know, here in Manitoba where our government has increased the exemption to \$6 from \$4, we have them slapping a 7 percent tax right down to 20 cents, a 7 percent down to 20 cents. Now that's what they have done there, but let's take a look though. It does have implications. We have the Member for Sturgeon Creek introduce a resolution saying that he would want the exemption raised from \$4 to \$5, but in Ontario they decreased it to 20 cents, so I would like to know where the real Tory policy is. What is the Tory's policy? Was that resolution just a smoke screen for the real Tory policy that has just been revealed in Ontario? I think so. I think that was just a smoke screen and the real Tory priorities are to tax right down to 20 cents on meals.

Listen to this, "We are condemned for our health and post-secondary education levy to compensate for Federal cutbacks in those areas. This levy referred to by the Opposition as a payroll tax is criticized as being a hidden tax and a regressive tax." But let's look to Ontario again, to the Treasurer there and see what he has to say about that. Frank Miller, the Ontario Treasurer says, he is considering a payroll tax to be levied on employers or shared equally among employees. It says right there, the Treasurer, he's considering a payroll tax. Now that says a lot for the genuineness of the scorn that the Opposition has heaped upon us on this tax that is put in place for health care and for post-secondary education.

I think that the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, would be well advised to troop off to Toronto and get a briefing on what the Tory policy is with regard to this tax and a number of other Budget items, so that they could eliminate this double talk that's going on and

speaking with some consistency on major Budget items. To top it off now, Trudeau and the Tories are back in bed together — yeah, they're back in bed together with wage control, with wage controls, wage controls on the public sector. Yes, here we go, "Wage restraints key to Miller Plan." He's going to hold the wage earners in the public sector to 6 percent, 6 percent this year. It's a nice target; it's a nice target to hit the wage earners there. They're going to set the example by holding the public sector down. That's what they're going to do and inflation runs at double that figure at this time. So there they have the targets again, it's Trudeau and the Tories back together again. Isn't that nice! This is typical of the Tory logic that wage increases are the root cause, that wage increases are the root cause of all the evils in our society. That's their logic, Mr. Speaker. Do they ever stop to look at prices, at ripoff profits? No, just wages. That's the cause.

But enough about Ontario, let us look here at Manitoba now. I think we've seen where the Tories would have gone in Manitoba had they been restored into government here and now we can look at what we are doing here in Manitoba, what we are planning to bring Manitoba, to move Manitoba ahead.

The Budget Address had two main goals. First of all, to help sustain and strengthen our economy during some of the most difficult economic times that we've had in many decades in Manitoba and Canada. That was the first, to help sustain and strengthen our economy, so that it is ready to take advantage of an upturn in our economic fortunes and secondly, to provide as much protection and assistance as we can to relieve Manitobans of the worst effects of national conditions and national policies, such as high interest rates, Mr. Speaker.

So we are attacking those two segments; those are our goals and they clearly differentiate, they differentiate our government from the previous government that was in power here in this province. Clearly we will not sit idly by; we will not sit idly by while people incur greater and greater difficulties during tough economic times and that is what differentiates us from the previous government here in this province. We are undertaking major initiatives.

In the area of housing \$50 million, the Budget announced, and I would like to refer to the Tory bible, to the Tory "good book," A Clear Choice for Manitobans, that they refer to so often here in this House and I'm very pleased I have to say that the members of the Conservative Party are looking to this book for advice and for wisdom. I want to say how pleased I am to see them partake of the reading of Howard Pawley, however selectively, and I would just ask them to continue to read of chapter and verse on a regular basis and to continue to ask questions; ask questions so that they will gain the wisdom that they need to function in this environment, Mr. Speaker. We will see, Mr. Speaker, if the Tories are fast learners, because you know, hopefully faster than the New Democrats. We've seen that the Leader of the Opposition's statement during the Budget Debate, he said that it takes a Liberal a lifetime to learn what a Tory knows intuitively and that a socialist hasn't even a chance of learning.

Well, I would say that we do not want to know; we do not want to know what a Tory knows intuitively

because that's where you made your first mistake. I would suggest that the Conservatives would have a great deal of difficulty learning in a lifetime what a New Democrat knows intuitively and that is really sad. That's right and I would like to take a look at this; if we look at the book of housing by Howard Pawley, Chapter 5, verses 3 to 6: "An NDP Government would institute a comprehensive Shelter Program that would include construction of new housing and rehabilitation of existing homes." We looked at the Budget and so it was. "This Program would provide an important stimulus to the local construction industry, which has been idle for four years." That's a fact. "As well, the government would take steps to help Manitobans in difficulty with both interest payments and rent." So said by the Honourable Howard Pawley.

We go on to Verses 3 to 6, the Critical Home Repair Program would be expanded and so it was. Rent controls would be reintroduced to ensure affordable rental housing and so it was. We would take steps to relieve interest burdens facing families buying a home or renewing a mortgage and so it is. That is only a small sampling of the readings from the book of Howard Pawley, "A Clear Choice for Manitobans" and I recommend this to all Conservatives, I recommend this to all Conservatives to read every day. Read it and ask questions on it, even more broadly than you have been reading it up to now. I recommend this for reading for you, it is excellent.

We have taken other initiatives. What about the construction program in health care, in hospitals, in nursing homes? Let us look what we are doing for this year. —(Interjection)— I wouldn't get into that. Who started the Dauphin Hospital? The Honourable Member for Arthur knows naught of what he speaks, Mr. Speaker. It was the Honourable Minister —(Interjection)— that's right, he has the documents. —(Interjections)— We've got a little debate going on, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but once it clears up, I am sure I have to agree with the side to my left here.

Let us take a look in some of the Tory ridings what this government is doing for its priorities in construction of nursing homes. Let us take a look. A 20-bed personal care home at Glenboro, a new 20-bed personal care home at Reston, a new 40-bed personal care home at Grunthal, a new 60-bed personal care home at Steinbach, a renovation and expansion of a program at Morden. What are we doing here? —(Interjection)— Do you want us to cut this out now, in restraint? Do you want us to cut these out like you did when you came into government? You want us to cut these back? Let us get our thoughts together here. Think straight, you people, think straight, Mr. Speaker, where are they going?

Now, we are going to go with 3.4 million for architectural planning for major hospital upgrading projects at Steinbach, Neepawa and Gladstone. —(Interjection)— Yes, excellent communities. Are you going to take credit for the architectural planning, too?

A MEMBER: You want the spending, eh?

MR. PLOHMAN: They want the spending and then they want to knock our policies and our programs. It is not consistent, Mr. Speaker. There is no level of rea-

soning over there; they are hollow criticisms.

We have provided the jobs and the stimulus through the construction program, through health care construction, through housing construction. We have also provided 10 million in job creation stimulus in this province, in the Student Internship Program, the Career Internship Program. We have introduced the Interest Rate Relief Program. We have a Beef Stabilization Plan that when it is in its final form, Mr. Speaker, will be the best beef stabilization program in the country and you can rest on that. —(Interjection)— He knows it. It is going to appear in Hansard next week. He knows it. It's has to be true.

We have expanded the Critical Home Repair that the Tories let die off. They let it die off by not upgrading, revising the income levels and the levels of grants and by not advertising the program, they let it die off to become a cosmetic program, a nothing program, but it is revitalized now under this government. It is going to be a major program for our rural communities and for the City of Winnipeg as well.

That is what we have done for the people of Manitoba and that shows our priorities, Mr. Speaker. We have increased the minimum wage to assist those who need assistance most. We have put in place rent controls. We have provided additional assistance to school divisions and we have just seen an example of that with the Small Schools Program that was just announced yesterday, \$1.7 million to assist those, something that was never thought of and was never done before by any Tory Government. You can be certain of that. We have, as well, provided additional assistance to municipalities and we have seen an example of that today in the Main Street Manitoba Program to assist rural communities and in per capita grants that we have expanded to rural communities.

The list goes on, Mr. Speaker. We could go on and on with these programs, but to provide Manitoba with the stimulus that it needs, we have invested \$700 million in this province. \$700 million — that is a 40-percent increase this year in Capital investment, a 40-percent increase in the faith that we place in Manitoba, 40 percent more than was placed in this province by the former government last year. That is our degree of confidence that we have.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that our deficit is there. Our deficit is there and it is large, but it is not unmanageable. Our province is in excellent shape, Mr. Speaker, and that is witnessed by a senior finance official and, of course, the Honourable Attorney-General said so eloquently and the Minister of Community Services yesterday, they related so well the relative position of Manitoba to the rest of Canada, to other provinces.

Let's look what the senior financial analyst says about Manitoba's deficit, "Manitoba's debt servicing cost as a percentage of its Budget are among the lowest in the nation and that figure is 4.5 percent. Manitoba has a long way to go before its debt becomes a problem for it." The senior official continued, "Credit rating institutions and the lenders look at our debt and see that more than half of it is self-sustaining for very valuable long-term investments in projects such as Hydro. They also look at our tax potential here and recognize that, again, we have considerable space left to move." What is he saying? That

appeared in Frances Russell's column in Saturday's paper. That is what he is saying —(Interjection)— that's right.

So our deficit is there, but we are in excellent shape here in Manitoba. The people of Manitoba need help now. In terms of our deficit, we are in excellent shape and the comparison that the Attorney-General made yesterday to an individual with a mortgage shows that our deficit is a very small percentage compared to something like that.

The people of Manitoba need help now. We promised them that help in November and we are delivering now. The sincerity and understanding of our government cannot be exemplified more than the recent move by our Minister and by our government to remove the tax on service stations along the border of Saskatchewan — moving quickly. This typifies our human approach to government and that is what government is all about, Mr. Speaker, to act, to lead and to respond in a reasonable fashion when people are in need. That is what we have done. That is our approach and I would hope that perhaps hoping against hope that eventually the members of the Opposition will learn, will be able to one day to join with us in working for Manitoba in a constructive fashion, working together in their role, in their eternal role as Opposition here in this province, and I would hope that they would endorse this Budget. My honourable friends I would ask you to endorse this budget, believe in it, it is certainly the best that we could do at this time, better than you could have done, better than you would have done, Mr. Speaker, endorse it, endorse this Budget, it is a good one.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER, Jerry T. Storie (Flin Flon): The Honourable Member for Rhineland.

MR. ARNOLD BROWN (Rhineland): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Sometimes I wonder whether if it's worth while getting up if the score now is nine rounds to nothing, you wonder whether it's worth it, but fortunately not all of us believe in the score keeping of the Honourable Member for Dauphin.

He said that he was proud to be an NDP. I wonder if he's been home lately, if he has talked to his people at home, whether he's really been in touch and to see how happy the people are with the NDP, or with any government as far as that's concerned. The people are unhappy.

He offered us some free advice, Mr. Speaker, and I would say that we are going to accept such for whatever it was worth. He was also mentioning the political purge which was occurring in Saskatchewan at the present time. I don't think that anybody really can walk away with clean hands when we're talking about political purges. Certainly the NDP Government in Manitoba have done their share of purging so they cannot claim that they walk away with clean hands.

The Member for Dauphin also mentioned that the former Conservative Governments had callous disregard for the little guy. I would just like to tell the member that in spite of the fact that we had disregard for the little guy, as he calls it, we did provide him with one thing and that was jobs. I wonder what they're providing him with at the present time. It certainly is

—(Interjection)— handouts, high taxes, and unemployment. So much for that, Mr. Speaker.

I was home during the weekend and I'm glad to report that the moisture conditions are good. The crops are getting off to a good start and indeed we should be looking forward to a good season ahead. Unfortunately, there is no optimism on behalf of the farmer though. The high cost of farming, the high cost of interest, will again take all the profits and government coffers will not be swelling because of the sale of agriculture commodities. More businesses are releasing employees because of lack of sales and there is no sign of increase of business activity anywhere. As a matter of fact, orders are decreasing and there will be more layoffs.

On the bright side of things, I talked to one chap during the weekend and he said that he knew that his boss was hurting and he had asked that the 1.5 per cent which his boss would have to pay on tax on his wages, he asked his boss to deduct it from his salary. Mr. Speaker, it's activities such as that that give us hope for the future of this country. It's too bad that more employees, unions don't see it that way. They will however, and the longer they wait the more of a cut in wages they will have to accept. That's what I think.

Many employees in the United States have accepted the fact that they will have to work for less money and that means only one thing in Canada, we will become less and less competitive. The employer is hurting more every day and if conditions don't improve by this fall many more bankruptcies will occur. Many more workers will be out of a job.

Members opposite think of employers only as the large companies. The oil conglomerates, the railway companies, the automobile industry, but they seem to forget, Mr. Speaker, that 60 per cent of the labour force is working for small business.

It's the small businessman, the farmer, the small manufacturer that is hurting the worst in spite of the fact that the large companies are also hurting. This Budget has increased the employer's cost of doing business and it is the employee in the long run that will be hurt because his employer is forced out of business. This Budget has attempted to give some assistance to small business and farmers and for this we are thankful. The corporation capital tax raise from \$750,000 to \$1 million is a helpful move. Reducing the income tax rate in small business from 11 per cent to 10 per cent is a positive move. Removal of provincial capital gains tax on the sale of family farms up to a maximum of \$200,000 is a positive move, but not enough to generate a lot of sales. What we need to do is eliminate all capital gains tax and I hope that the province is going to challenge the Federal Government to do the same as what they have. These measures on the Budgets are too small and will do little to alleviate the problems that business and the farming communities are coping with.

We have to build a larger tax base and this is most important. We have to do this right away. We can't keep on raising taxes to the taxpayers of this province. We have to increase our tax base. That means that we have to go along with Alcan. What does it matter if they want to purchase their own power plant as long as we have the jobs, as long as we get that large a tax

base? Why should we get hung up on an issue such as that? It's becoming less and less important.

What happened to the potash industry? You let that agreement lapse and with a different government in Saskatchewan now, I am afraid that you may have some difficult times getting the kind of agreement that we had arrived at as far as the potash industry was concerned.

What about the Power Grid? We seem to hear very little about the activities. The Power Grid that was just about ready for completion and we don't hear anything happening in that respect at all. Of course, all this development would have brought a lot ancillary industry as a result.

Mr. Speaker, what we need are some incentives and I would challenge the members opposite to look south. In North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Oregon and other states, you can now get 13 per cent long-term interest rates for first-time homeowners — (Interjection)— 13 per cent long-term. Now that certainly is incentive for people to build. This is in North Dakota just across the line from us. They also have low interest rates on small business available over there and members opposite should avail themselves of the programs that are available over there and take a look at them and see if they couldn't be doing the same thing in Manitoba. I am certain that a lot of these things could be implemented here.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes I am disturbed about some of the statements that are made by members opposite. I checked the list of candidates in the 1981 general election and how they were listed on the ballot paper. Mr. Speaker, members opposite are mainly school teachers and academics and I have nothing against school teachers or academics, but it seems to me that many of them are pretty far removed from the business world, from the farming operations and, indeed, from the real world. This becomes apparent in statements and speeches made by members opposite. It became especially apparent during the Crow Rate Debate, the Metric Resolution, where a statement was made that the going metric really had cost Canada very little and we were realizing only benefits.

Obviously, the person who spoke at that particular time did not have to buy any scales, did not have to buy a cash register, was not concerned about the education costs, the billion dollars that the Federal Government spent in order to bring in metric. When he was talking about benefits, there will be no benefits until such a time as when the United States, our largest trading partner, also changes to metric. I would challenge any of the members opposite to figure out the grain exchange market and how it relates to our own market or the price of sugar which is based on the London daily price plus a combination of the Chicago price, the Toronto price. This determines the price of sugar plus the freight rate from Toronto into Manitoba. You get some very complicated equations and when members opposite are saying that we have not been affected by metric and that it has only been beneficial, they really don't know what they are talking about and until such a time as when the United States turns metric, we will have to cope with these situations.

This Budget does not generate any business activity anywhere. As a matter of fact, more businesses in Manitoba will go under. The tax and diesel fuels will

have a disastrous effect on independent dealers, especially those living close to the American border. One dealer phoned me during the weekend and he said his diesel fuel sales already were down 40 percent from last year because of lower prices in the United States. This extra charge, Mr. Speaker, on diesel fuel will put him out of business. There is no doubt about that. He was wondering whether he would receive the same concession given to dealers along the Saskatchewan border. His problem is identical to the problem along the Saskatchewan border. Are you going to give him that same concession?

Low construction companies, who have bid on the roads and other contracts, bid on the former price of diesel fuel. Now, will they be given an allowance that will compensate them for the extra cost of diesel fuel? If not, many construction companies whose bids have been accepted will be in serious trouble. There are very few construction companies left in Manitoba and concessions will have to be made in order to keep them in business. I trust the government will give this immediate attention because some of these contractors are ready to begin operations.

Raising the price of diesel fuel will have a large impact on everyone in Manitoba. Freight rates already are high and this will increase the cost of groceries and everything the consumer purchases. Some businesses will be able to pass this increase on to the consumer but the farming community cannot pass on this cost and it will be just another added cost to the farming operation. Price of fertilizer, chemicals and the price of hauling diesel fuel will definitely be going up. My area will be affected more than other areas because potatoes are hauled to Alberta and Saskatchewan. The freight price on delivering sugar beets to Manitoba Sugar in Manitoba will increase substantially and the price of delivering corn to Gimli will go up, especially for those who have to hire people to haul their corn to Gimli. Southern Manitoba will bear the brunt of this price increase in diesel fuel because of all the special crops that we produce.

We cannot, however, blame all the problems on this government because, Mr. Speaker, many of our problems do come from the disastrous policy in Ottawa. However, Mr. Speaker, the NDP have advocated ownership of the oil industry in Canada for many years and unfortunately the Liberal Government adopted their policy and the result is a disastrous national energy policy. The collapse of the \$13 billion Al sands Project, the Coal Lake Project and the Alaska Pipeline can be attributed directly to our National Energy Program. American capital which is desperately needed to develop these projects is staying in the United States and as a result, the Americans are developing their own oil industry and doing it at a much lesser cost than what our super expensive multi-billion dollar projects would have cost.

As a result of this, the Americans now have much cheaper gas than we have and this spread in price will probably increase because among the other things, we have saddled ourselves with paying for Petrofina for many more years to come. This means we will be less competitive and our inflation rate will increase, while the Americans have their inflation rate under control, 4 percent this morning. That was the report on the radio. Private foreign capital is staying home

and this has always been the main source of much of Canada's development.

Meanwhile, in Manitoba, we are trying to spend our way out of trouble. This Budget will surely feed inflation and as a result, we can look forward to a continuation of high interest rates and a slowdown of the economy in Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, I have no choice but to support the amendment put forward by the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Northern Affairs.

MR. COWAN: Yes, I have to tell you right from the onset, Mr. Speaker, that I am pleased and honoured to have this opportunity to address this, the first Budget Debate of the new government. It is an honour to participate in the debate as a member of the Treasury Bench and it is a pleasure to participate in the debate, not because it is a Pollyanna Budget, but rather because it is a well thought out, well conceived Budget which addresses some of the serious economic problems which confront all of us as Manitobans.

There is no doubt in anyone's mind, either in this House or outside of these Chambers, that this is a tough Budget. It is a tough Budget because we need it at this time to develop an economic mechanism to sustain and strengthen the provincial economy during tough economic times. Let it be clear. These times are not of our liking, nor are they of our making. However, as a Provincial Government, we know that we have the responsibility to address international and national problems from the provincial perspective. So while it is not a Pollyanna Budget which attempts to gloss over very serious problems in the economy, it is a series of well thought out measures designed to build for our future.

For that reason, I wish to commend this Budget to the Legislature and through this opportunity, to speak to the people of the province. I wish to commend it to them as well. I do so, not out of partisan motivation, but out of a sense of loyalty to my government. I commend it to you on the basis that I believe it is the best possible Budget for these times.

As with any Budget, there are two sides of the equation which must be addressed when discussing that economic blueprint. There are the mechanisms which are designed to raise revenues and on the other side, there are the expenditures which a government is anticipating. If any Budget is to stand the test of time, then it must balance these two sides of the ledger with each other in a rational way, but as well, it must balance these two sides of the ledger within the context of the demands of the day. There are times when a balanced Budget, when expenditures and revenues equal each other, is the appropriate mechanism to meet and confront the circumstances which a government faces. There are times when a surplus Budget, where you have more revenues coming in than you have expenditures going out, is in order and those are times which are welcomed by almost any government.

The Member for Morris asked, when was the last time we had one in this House. Well, I will tell the Member for Morris that we have not had one in this House during the reign of his government when they

were in power. The Member for Tuxedo says, they were close, but the fact is in four years of Conservative Government in this province, there was not a balanced Budget and that government came to power on the promise to the people of this province that they would provide such a Budget and they unable to do so, but I don't want to be sidetracked from my remarks at this time. I want to address that issue more specifically a bit later.

Who's tried the hardest, the Member for Morris said. My goodness, Mr. Speaker, we are now basing our perceptions on the government as to who tries the hardest as if it's an Avis and a Hertz Rent-A-Car commercial. Let us be serious about the Budget that is before us and let us be serious about our analysis of the Budget that is before us.

So there are times when you want a surplus Budget, and let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, who has the surplus Budget before the people of their province at this time. It is the Government of Saskatchewan and it is not because of any measures of the new Government of Saskatchewan. That is the last balanced Budget they will have in a long, long time once that new government gets through with its shenanigans in that province, but under 11 years of a New Democratic Party administration in the Province of Saskatchewan, they were able to be, out of the eight provinces which have brought forward Budgets to date, the only province which was able to bring forward a surplus Budget and we will address that issue a bit later.

So there is a time when a deficit Budget is required. It is required to allow the government to provide the services and programs which it feels are necessary and warranted. It is necessary when a government knows that revenue increases cannot possibly match expenditure demands. There is no secret about it. This is such a time. This is a deficit Budget. It is a deficit Budget because the times demand such a Budget, not because we wanted a deficit Budget, not because we place any great faith and stock in a deficit Budget, not because we didn't want to be able to raise revenues in order to meet the expenditures, but because of the economic times which we confront as a new government following on the heels of four years of mismanagement of the economy of this province by the previous Conservative administration. That is one reason why it is a deficit Budget and they cannot deny that, nor should they attempt to deny that because it just won't wash. This is a deficit Budget because the times demand such a Budget.

There are things that we must do as a Provincial Government to assist the people of this province to meet head-on the economic problems which are created by international, national and provincial forces. It is interesting to note that Manitoba is not alone in this regard. As a matter of fact, if one were to take the time to compare the Budgets of the different provinces as they bring them forward this year and there are eight who have done so already, one will find that out of the eight provincial Budgets which have been tabled to date, there is only one that does not have a deficit Budget and that is the Budget of Saskatchewan which has a surplus Budget and was able to bring forward a surplus Budget because they had invested wisely as a government in the future of their province many years ago. They haven't suffered through the

last four years of mismanagement, the likes of which we have seen under the previous Conservative administration.

So when the Leader of the Opposition stands in this House the other day and says to us that other jurisdictions are not bringing forward these deficit Budgets, that other jurisdictions are attempting to go the opposite way than are we, I have to question the facts upon which he bases that assumption. As a matter of fact, if one looked at those eight Budgets, one will find that only Prince Edward Island's Budget calls for less of a deficit than does the Manitoba Budget. Let's look at the record. Alberta is calling for a \$2.45 billion deficit, B.C. is calling for a \$360 million deficit, New Brunswick is calling for a \$420 million deficit, Nova Scotia is calling for a \$390 million deficit, Ontario, the home of true blue Toryism is calling for a \$2.23 billion deficit Budget and so, with Prince Edward Island calling for a \$100,000 deficit, we have the second lowest deficit out of the eight Budgets which have been tabled to date. So don't try to paint this Budget, as they have done, as being out of line with what is happening in other jurisdictions and I will tell you that we have not chosen such a small deficit, which we have, because we value carte blanche a small deficit. We have chosen the deficit which we have because we know that it provides to us an opportunity to perform some of the programs and policies which we would like to have put into effect, not all of them but some of them and to do so in a reasonable way.

In other words, we have chosen to put those programs in place, to spend the money, at the same time to increase revenues to meet those expenditures and to increase those revenues as much as we felt was possible to keep the deficit to a workable amount and that, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to you is called fiscal responsibility and that is what this Budget is all about. It would be easy to bring forward a Budget that didn't have tax increases in it. It would be easy to bring forward a Budget that didn't have tax cuts in it, which we have provided so as to make the tax burden of the people of this province somewhat more equitable. It would have been easy to do those things but we did not choose the easy way out. We chose the responsible way out and we will continue to do so because this is a responsible government that knows full well government has a role to play, government must finance that role and government must do so with responsibility. So we have brought forward a Budget that we feel provides for that sort of a deficit, that sort of increased revenues and does so without inflicting undue harm on either individuals or the provincial economy.

It's interesting to listen over the past number of days and today as well to the Conservative Opposition rant and rave about the methods of taxation we have chosen or to rant and rave about the deficit which we know and they know, if they are to be honest, must be a part of this Budget. Over the past four years, I personally have grown used to listening to the their knee jerk, doctrinaire, ill-conceived and traditional opposition to any deficit and I have listened to that kneejerk, doctrinaire, ill-conceived and ideological response to any deficit even when four years running, they brought forward deficits as part of their Budgets and that, perhaps, is the greatest cause of their failure to win the recent election. It is perhaps the greatest reason

behind them being the first one-term government in the history of this province. You see, they were trapped in their ideology; they hated deficits. They thought they were despicable and yet at the same time, each and every instance, they brought forward a deficit. So what happens when you are as a government stuck in that sort of Draconian environment where you hate the very thing which you must do; you do it badly. That stands to reason. You do it badly. Their ideological opposition to deficit budgeting paralyzed them into becoming an ineffective government.

In spite of their acute protracted restraint, and I don't want to have to list the litany of destruction that imposed upon the people of this province once again; it's only too well known. But in spite of their acute protracted restraint and their numerous cutbacks, they brought forward that deficit Budget in each of the four years of their government and they did so because I watched them each and every time, Sir, with great shame and with increasing embarrassment. They did so, not because they wanted to use deficit financing as they created in a positive way to strengthen and sustain the provincial economy, they did so because they were unable to meet even their own self-stated goals of a balanced Budget; they were unable to make revenues meet expenditures.

I want to give them credit where credit is due. It must be said at this time that they faced the same international, national and provincial economic difficulties that confront us at the present time. The situation hasn't changed that much, except perhaps in the last couple of months it has gotten worse, but instead of using the budgetary process to confront those problems head-on, they chose to hide their head in the ideological caverns for the past four years. That was their choice. I would suggest to you that it was a choice they made, knowing full well the effect that lack of action on their part was going to have on this province, but they chose to do it and because they chose to do it, the people of this province suffered for their refusal to enter the 20th Century.

So we hear them time and time again throughout this particular Budget Debate talk about the ruination of the provincial economy that they foresee as a result of the deficit which we have before us today. I would suggest to them that if they want a clear illustration of ruination caused by a provincial budgetary deficit, they need only look to their four years of government in each and every Budget exercise, because they were unable to use a deficit Budget as a means to stimulate the economy and that's the type of deficit Budget you have in front of you today. That's the type of budgetary process we brought forward. They did it out of shame; they did it in an embarrassed way. We, Sir, do it because we know it is necessary and we know that given the economic circumstances of the day, we can make it work on behalf of the people of this province and we will make it work. —(Interjection)— Thank you, I needed that.

So for four years, they drove the province to the brink of economic collapse by their laissez-faire 19th Century approach to governing the affairs of this province. You know, I have done, Mr. Speaker, what I didn't want to do. I dwell on some of their mistakes of the past. I did not want to do it because it's not necessary. Those mistakes, in hindsight, are only too

apparent and obvious and I believe that the people of this province dwell on those mistakes and opted during the recent election campaign when on last November 17th, 1981, they unceremoniously kicked those persons out of their office. In a massive rejection of their record, they kicked them out of office because they were unable, in four years, to do what we have been able to accomplish in six short months.

They laugh, and it is easy to laugh on that side of the House, indeed it is. But that is where they are now and that is where they shall stay because what I say to you today, Mr. Speaker, is true and it will be proven out as we govern this province for a long, long time because we do so, not out of embarrassment and not out of shame and not out of a lack of will, but we do so because we know there are things that must be done and we know that we and the people of this province can do them. So, the New Democratic Party and the present administration rejects the Conservative approach to government which is both outmoded and outdated.

Since assuming office, let's look at what we have done. Since that assumption to office, we have acted quickly to stimulate the economy of the province. Just today, another election campaign was fulfilled as my seatmate, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, stood in his place and announced the Main Street Manitoba Program. I am pleased that he was not stampeded in the precipitous action by the members opposite, that he took his time and he brought forward a well-reasoned, a well-rationed, a well-thought out program which will benefit all of the municipalities who wish to take advantage of that unique economic opportunity to build a better rural Manitoba for all Manitoba.

So, we want to stimulate the economy of the province and, at the same time, we want to protect the quality and the level of services for Manitobans. The major initiatives that this government has brought forward in six months include — and let me list them off in short order for you because I don't have time to dwell on each and every one of them in the detail which they deserve, but I do want to put on the record, in a very concise and clear form those things which we have done to sustain and strengthen the economy of this province and to protect the quality of service for all Manitobans.

There is a \$23 million Emergency Interest Relief Program for homeowners, businesses, and farmers.

MR. FILMON: Which isn't helping anyone.

MR. COWAN: Well, the Member for Tuxedo says, it isn't helping anyone. Perhaps, it is not helping him because perhaps he does not find himself in the dire straits which many Manitobans find themselves in after four years of Conservative Government and who need that program; but for those who need it is a help and it is a welcome relief and it is something to which they are grateful to their Provincial Government for.

We have increased grants to municipal governments and school boards to ease the property tax burden. I might add, as a representative of a northern constituency and as the Minister of Northern Affairs, these increased grants in many instances have directly assisted northern communities who, after suffering four years of Conservative Government, were faced

with revenue reductions on the part of the Provincial Government because of lower population figures. So they have been of benefit and they have been of specific benefit to those who need that assistance the most.

We have developed improved property tax relief for pensioners; there is a \$17.5 million Beef Stabilization Program for beef producers which will be coming forward; there are rent controls measures which protect renters throughout the province and I am interested in hearing what the members opposite will have to say about that Rent Control Program because I remember the debates previous when they disbanded the Rent Control Program and put in place an ineffective and ineffectual mechanism which they said would protect renters in this province, but which the renters of the province told them was not true, during the recent election, when they voted for the New Democratic Party's program of rent control. So we brought that program forward, we have kept our faith with those individuals who have voted for this government for that reason.

We have also, and I give all due credit to the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Finance for this, brought forward a minimum wage increase that allows low wage earners a decent, livable increase in their wages which match inflation. I don't want to repeat the statistics which he provided when he announced that increase, but if in fact I were sitting on that side and I had heard what my government had done during four years to the low wage earners in this province, I would have been, not only shamed but I would have been pleased that the New Democratic Party Government has the guts to do something to correct that inequitable situation which they foisted upon the low wage earners of this province; so we did that.

You recall earlier that my own department, we implemented a temporary Emergency Winter Works Program for northern communities. It was not as much as I would have like it to have been, Mr. Speaker; it was not as much as perhaps it should have been, but it was a mechanism by which we could very 1 speedily and very quickly provide temporary, but needed, employment in almost all Northern Affairs communities who so desperately needed that sort of employment and the wages in their own communities which it brought forward.

So, impressive as that list may be, it is only a short list of things which we have already accomplished. Over the next number of years, and some of the issues are addressed in the Budget and some will be addressed as we continue throughout our deliberations and our debates in this House, we will be bringing forward long-term investments which will benefit the people of this province for years to come, and that is part of the Budget, too. The Budget is spending money as well as providing revenues.

So, we talk about a multi-million dollar program to construct new health care facilities and we know that is necessary and we know that is important. For that reason, we are pleased to inform those that we will be bringing that program forward. We talked about Critical Home Repair Program which has been revitalized and expanded and will provide needed employment to construction workers and, at the same time, will assist homeowners to improve their homes. We talked about

a new multi-million dollar program for the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation. I remember when that was mentioned in the debate, perhaps, the Minister of Finance will dwell back upon that. The Member for Sturgeon Creek kept mumbling, "more public housing, more public housing," he said. The fact is that there is a need sometimes for public involvement in construction programs. We know that the construction industry is ailing; we know that there is a need for public housing; we know that we can play a role and we are not afraid to accept the responsibility to do something about those economic conditions which exist today.

This will allow for a number of new initiatives to assist both home builders and homeowners who need affordable quality housing. There is also a multi-million dollar Job Creation Program which will directly assist unemployed Manitobans and help them find productive and meaningful work during difficult economic times.

Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, you could indicate how much time I would have left?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Approximately 15 minutes.

MR. COWAN: Some say too much; I say not enough, however, I am certain we will have numerous opportunities during the course of this and other sessions to discuss these in detail. But I do want to talk about the ways by which we're going to raise some of those revenues because we know that all these new initiatives and these innovative programs will have to be financed by the government, and as in administration who understands and appreciates the value of counter cyclical economic activities on the part of any provincial government, we have undertaken these programs, developed these policies, knowing full well that we would have to both increase the deficit to a reasonable amount, raise revenues to finance these programs and raise them in what I would suggest to you is a reasonable and a rational way.

So that brings us to the other side of the equation; that brings us to the revenue side of this present Budget. Now, one has to consider the revenue provisions of any budget to be twofold: the first is the ways by which we may gain new revenue; the second is the way by which a Provincial Government can make more equitable the payment of taxes by Manitobans and provide economic stimulus through selective and well thought out tax cuts. This Budget addresses both issues in that rational way which we know is necessary to deal with these tough difficult economic times.

There are special tax cuts and related assistance to help consumers and to stimulate small business. One feature which the Opposition does not mention all that often in their tirades against this Budget, they don't mention the freeze that we put on the automatic tax increases on gasoline which they brought forward and which would of this year rob Manitobans of \$7 million. We've frozen that; we have put \$7 million back in the pockets of Manitobans so that they can use that money to stimulate the economy, to provide the economic stimulus that we know is necessary for this province to get back on its feet after four years of their mismanagement and their ad valorem taxes which only sought to increase the revenue which they

needed, but were afraid to bring forward in this sort of open and honest way. So we've frozen those. Let's hear them talk about that, the next person who rises to speak. Let's hear him discuss that issue. I guess they may be too embarrassed to talk about this positive feature of the Budget among other positive features.

I recall listening to them during the Budget Addresses when they as a government took great delight in saying to us members of the Opposition, "Do you know what you're going to vote against when you vote against this Budget?" Do you recall that? —(Interjection)— The Minister of Finance recalls it. Now, I don't think that was the most honest way to conduct a Budget Debate. I think it was a bit of shammery, a bit of trickery, perhaps, a bit of a con or attempt at a con, but I do know that they did it time and time again. I would not impose that sort of illogical and somewhat deceitful debate style upon them now that the circumstances have changed.

However, if they were speaking to this Debate from this side, from our perspective, they would be taking great glee and delight in telling us how we would be voting against this freeze on the ad valorem gasoline tax. They would take great glee and delight in telling us how we would be voting against a reduction on several taxes on small businesses. They would be overjoyed being able to stand here and tell us how we'd be voting against a removal of the provincial capital gains tax on the sales of family farms.

The other day, this issue was brought forward. Today, I listened to this issue being discussed when one of their members was debating, and what did the member on that side say as he addressed this positive feature of the Budget? They said, "Too little, too late." Well, if it was too late, it was four years too late. It was four years too late because they had the chance, they had the opportunity, the only thing they lacked was either the insight on how to do it or the will power to provide that sort of benefit to small farmers in this province. So it's only too late because they insisted on dragging their feet. In our first Budget in this House, we, by the reduction, the elimination of that provincial capital gains tax on the sales of family farms have fulfilled another promise of the election campaign and have brought needed relief to small farmers. So don't tell us it's too little and it's too late without hanging your own heads in shame for your lack of will power to have done that when you had the opportunity and the power to do so.

They would tell us in great detail how we would be voting against the exemption for restaurant meals which has been increased not by the 25 percent which they suggested, but by 50 percent to a maximum of \$6.00. I'm not saying that they should do that. I didn't like it when they did do it and I certainly wouldn't do it them, but if they were in this place, they would be saying those very things and that, Sir, would not be the most honest way to approach this Budget Debate but it was their way.

Yes, they would have taken great glee in pointing out to us — if any of the new members should have any doubt about it, just read back through the Hansards of any Budget Debate during the past four years when members of their side stood to give their presentation during that Debate and they provided exactly that

type of illogical debate. But I want to talk about the positive features of this Budget.

You know, it's funny that we don't hear them offer support for those innovative and progressive measures which I have just outlined. Where do they stand on the freeze on ad valorem gasoline tax? Where do they stand on the reduction of taxes for small businesses? Where do they stand when they increased the exemption? Where do they stand on the provincial capital gains tax on the sale of family farms? They may suggest that they would approve of it, but they never did it when they had the opportunity. But these are all questions they must answer, not to this Legislature or to those assembled here, Mr. Speaker, but to their own constituents when they discussed this Budget in their constituencies.

I want to talk very briefly about the tax which they have directed most of their venom and their bile and their opposition against and that is the levy on health and post-secondary education. Why is it that the Conservatives are so opposed to this tax? One has to question what motivates them to such vile outbreaks against this tax, drawing up pictures of rabbis, priests and kids with candy bars paying this tax and at the same time knowing full well that a reasonable and a responsible government had to raise revenues at a time when expenditures were increasing.

The fact is that we take no pleasure in having to raise those revenues in that way, but we did it in a courageous and a responsible way. —(Interjection)— "In a forthright and upfront way," as one of the members from the backbench suggests should be on the record and it is now on the record. They agree that indeed it was a forthright and honest way to raise that revenue. We felt, as a province — and we discussed a number of ways of raising revenue — that we should bring forward the fairest and the most equitable way by which we could increase our revenue sources. I believe and my government believes that the levy on Health and Post-Secondary Education is just such a tax. Of course, the added aspect of this tax, which should endear the tax even to the Conservatives, is that part of that levy, part of the impact of that tax will be borne by the Federal Treasury. We know that large corporations will receive about 53 percent of that levy back from the Federal Treasury.

Now, we don't want to sock it to the Federal Government. That was their style of government; that is not our style of government. We do not want to impose unfairly on the Federal Government. That was their style of government; that is not our style of government. We want to work as much as is possible in an equitable way with the Federal Government, but when they reduce our revenues in the way in which they have reduced our revenues, then we feel it is our responsibility as well as our right to get those revenues back for the people of this province and we have done so in a fair and equitable and, as the member for the backbench of the Conservative Government said, an honest and a forthright way. We have done so through this tax. We have done so because we know full well the advantages of this tax.

What would they have us do? Would they have us increase the sales tax? Would they have us increase personal income tax? Would they have us increase the taxes on small businesses instead of reduce them

which we did in a responsible way? I can only guess that they would have us do so because they are so vehemently opposed to this fair and equitable tax, Sir, that they have not been able to distract their attention from it for the last week running. So given the recent cutbacks by the Federal Government in equalization payments for Manitoba, we decided that this tax was not only necessary but it was a reasonable and responsible approach.

Let me indulge in a bit of a prophecy. That is something that a member in this House should do only rarely and when they are certain that they are correct. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you as certain as I stand here today that while we are the first province outside of Quebec to impose this levy in this way, we are not the last province outside of Quebec to do so because it is the fair and equitable way in which to provide taxation revenues to the provincial economy. There will be other provinces who follow the innovative and the equitable way that we have proceeded in raising revenues as part of this budgetary process.

Well, the Member for Roblin says it taxes food, clothing and shelter. If I had another 20 minutes leave, I would run through their arguments about — let me see — if a person raises a chicken, there is a 1.5 percent increase on the wages of the person who raises the chicken, sells the chicken to the transporter. There is a 1.5 percent increase on the wages of the transportation company. The transportation company then takes it to the store. There is a 1.5 percent increase on the wages of the store owners and then by the time it gets to the consumer, it's a 350 percent increase in taxation. But let me tell you, this is the difference between the sales tax and that tax. The sales tax at the Safeway store on the chicken also includes the tax on the profits that company is making and the profits that the transportation company is making and the profits that the initial producer is making. So, in fact, if you had a choice between a 1.5 percent sales tax and a 1.5 percent levy for health and post-secondary education on gross payroll, one would have to choose the method which we have chosen because it is efficient, effective, honest and I use their words, Conservative words, which they provided to me during this debate — forthright and honest and an open way to ensure that the people of this province have, in fact, the programs which they need, the programs which are of benefit to them.

We, as a Provincial Government, through an innovative approach to the budgetary process, Sir, have provided the stimulus to the economy which is necessary and has been lacking for so many years as the Conservative Government of the Day drove this province to the brink of economic collapse. We have turned that around. We have begun the process and as I stand here today, Mr. Speaker, with both pleasure and honour to be able to address this Budgetary Debate, I know that given this opportunity one year from now when we are able to bring forward our second Budget, we will be able to talk about the positive impacts of this Budget on the provincial economy during the past 12 months. I look forward to that opportunity, Sir, with pleasure and with honour. Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER, Harry M. Harapiak (The

Pas): If I might just interrupt for a second, I would like to direct members' attention to the Gallery on my right where we have an honoured guest. The honourable guest is the Consul-General of the United States of America, Mrs. Lillian Mullin. On behalf of everyone, let me welcome you to the Chamber.

The Honourable Member for Tuxedo.

BUDGET DEBATE (Cont'd)

MR. FILMON: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am pleased to be able to participate in the Budget Debate. It is always an enjoyable opportunity because of the flexibility that one has in speaking to the Budget as well as the Throne Speech, to perhaps not be constrained as we are during the normal course of events by the rules of the House that confine us to a particular topic, confine us to the question and answer period that we have at the beginning of each afternoon where the Minister of the Environment gets an opportunity in response to questions from me to go on for 15 minutes or 12 minutes or whatever he chooses without any opportunity for a rebuttal because then when I stand up for a very slight rebuttal in my preamble, the Attorney-General in his capacity as the Government House Leader stands up and says that I am violating the rules of the House in some way.

So now, the opportunity is mine, the opportunity to follow the Minister of the Environment on the heels of his speech with very little limitation. I have almost 40 minutes in which to take apart everything that he has had to say. I must indicate, however, Mr. Speaker, that as my colleague, the Honourable Member for Roblin-Russell said, he didn't say much. He took 40 minutes to say it, but he didn't say a great deal. He is suffering from, I think, the great problem that most of the members opposite are in addressing this Budget and that is, that there isn't a great deal to recommend in this Budget. In fact, it is a difficult Budget to defend.

For a while there up until the last day or so, I thought that perhaps we weren't going to get any members of the Treasury Bench, other than the Minister of Finance himself and the Minister of Natural Resources who went on day two. We wouldn't get any other members attempting to defend it. It was just that difficult a Budget to defend, but fortunately they have realized that they have been having great difficulties, that not only the Opposition, but members of the media and indeed the public at large is very, very upset with this Budget. They have now to stand up and give us the rationale and the reasons behind all of these various moves they have made because it is, after all, an interesting Budget, Mr. Speaker.

The fact of the matter is, it is an interesting exercise in attempted manipulation of public opinion. I'd say there was a great deal of deception that led up to the overall announcements that were made. These trial balloons, these broad hints that were dropped for weeks ahead of time about a potential 2 percent increase in sales tax; broadening the base of services for which the sales tax was collected; the suggestion, in some areas of the media, that we might be back into gift taxes and succession duties. There was a very, very carefully orchestrated campaign to try and convince the public of Manitoba that this was going to be a tough Budget on people. Prepare people for the

worst - and it's not an unusual tactic, it's not a kind of move —(Interjection)— oh no we didn't do it in our term in government but the Federal Government has done it very, very capably. Last year the Minister of Finance, federally, was suggesting that he was going to de-index the personal deductions, and he was going to do all sorts of drastic things but then, when he didn't do all that, well people said it wasn't so bad. I remember on Federal Budget night watching coast-to-coast television interviews with the sort of average man on the street and, to a person, the reaction was it wasn't all that bad until people realized, within a few weeks, just how drastic that Budget was, how devastating it was for Canadians. Now it's looked upon as perhaps the worst Budget in history but because of the careful manipulation that Federal Budget on Budget night, to the average man on the street, the reaction was it wasn't so bad.

Well, I tell you the same thing is true of this Budget because of all of the chicanery, because of all of the exercise in preparing the public for the worst, the initial reaction has been well, maybe it wasn't so bad, until people really start to delve into it and find out just exactly how badly they've been hit. Unlike the reaction that the Member for Niakwa said last night where, you know, you beat your head against a wall and then when you stop it feels so good you think that it's been great. Well I think that people who have stopped beating their head against the wall are soon going to realize that this Budget is a disaster. Despite the cynical approach that this government has taken to manipulating public opinion, and to comparing and trading off between a number of different taxes, and pointing out all of the disadvantages that they avoided by not implementing certain taxes, as a justification for the implementation of some of the taxes that they've made, despite all of that kind of manipulation and chicanery, this Budget will not be well received as it sinks into the public I can assure you, Mr. Speaker.

At this point, before I get into the major thrust of the Budget, I wanted to respond to a number of the speeches that have been brought forward in recent times by members opposite. I'm sorry that there aren't very many members in the benches opposite to listen to this, especially some of the newer members, because there are I believe 19 or 20 members in the government benches who are brand new, and therefore, inexperienced with all of the goings on of the House. Therefore, they probably were very very receptive to the viewpoint that was put forward by the Minister of Health yesterday when he made a reference to the fact that he had heard recently one of the worst things he'd ever heard in this House, in reference to speeches being made and references to communists in the House, Communism and backgrounds of certain members, he said that was one of the worst things that he'd ever heard in his 23 years in the House. How soon they forget.

I was just looking up a speech made by the former First Minister, the former New Democratic Premier of this Legislature. Since there only was one former New Democratic Premier of this Legislature I don't have to elaborate on the description of who he was, but he said in this House, in reference to the former Member for Riel, "I puke on your head." That's the statement he made in this House. —(Interjection)— Yes. Now if you

can get any lower than that in any of your references; if you can bring the depth of the debate; if you can plumb the depths of understanding of this House any worse than that former New Democratic Premier did then, you know, I'll believe it when I hear it. But I assure you that anything that is being said by members on this side of the House today cannot ever reach the depths that have been reached in previous years, and in previous debates, by members of the New Democratic Party.

So let me just disabuse all of the newcomers of the thought that we on this side are somehow acting in an unparliamentary fashion, or somehow acting in a manner that is degrading to the House, because I think it's just dreadful what has happened before. This year, this government and this Opposition are certainly far above and beyond anything that has happened in the past.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Elmwood on a matter of privilege.

MR. RUSSELL DOERN (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, on a Matter of Privilege. I was here during that odious remark that the member referred to and my recollection is fairly clear that it was Mr. Don Craik, the Member for Riel, who said it first to the Premier and then after that the remark was made back, but that it originated with the former Member for Riel.

MR. FILMON: Mr. Speaker, I assume that you're not going to call that a point of privilege and I won't have to defend it so I'll carry on with it because the record is clear and the reference is there and the member at his leisure, after he's finished reading the manuscript for his new novel, can go on to reading Hansard and get that information for his liking.

Mr. Speaker, if we're talking about positive politics, if we're talking about positive thoughts by Opposition people, if we're talking about a positive approach to new governments and what they ought to be doing I just thought that I might want to make reference to some previous debates. Just because people on the government side have been indicating recently, and I realize that there aren't any members of the Treasury Bench here to listen to it but it's all right, I'll put it on the record, the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that there are many instances in Hansard that indicate just how positive the New Democratic Party was in Opposition during the past four years. Starting virtually from the first day that they arrived in here - I'll read you just a very brief clip from a speech that was made in this Legislature. It says "And to the First Minister, I'd like to ask him, if and when he returns to this Chamber, what will happen when the unemployment benefits run out?" The member is referring to layoffs up north in the mining industry, Mr. Speaker, layoffs that occurred. He says "We are not simply looking at 650 workers losing their jobs, we are watching a government blunder its way through its first crisis."

This is a test of this government, Mr. Speaker, and they are failing it miserably but although it is not an optimistic thought, Sir, I believe that they will suffer many more tests as this in the next few years to come and perhaps they will learn from their mistakes. That was made by the Member for Churchill. Now, the

Minister of the Environment talking about the layoff of 650 people by INCO up north. When was it made? That comment and that accusation was made exactly seven weeks after the former Conservative Government took office on December 1st, 1977, seven weeks after they had been elected, I should say, five weeks after they had taken office for 650 miners being laid off up north. The speech is very lengthy. He goes on for pages as he normally does lambasting the government for not being able to do anything to prevent these layoffs.

Mr. Speaker, this time around and we are now six months into this government's mandate, we found that over the past little while since they have taken office, there have been layoffs of 450 at Leaf Rapids, 400 at Lynn Lake, 200 at ManFor, projections for almost 1,000 more collectively in Snow Lake, Flin Flon, Thompson during the coming summer and this government feels that we have been treating them badly by criticizing them for the fact that all of this has been happening in spite of their promises prior to the election.

The difference between this year and 1977, Mr. Speaker, is that we did not promise people that they would never be laid off if they worked in Manitoba under our government, but this government did so, promised them that they wouldn't be laid off, told them that they would bring in legislation that would prevent layoffs, but where is it? They aren't able to produce it and I think that they are very lucky to be getting away with as little criticism from this side as they are. We are merely pointing out their promises to them, their ill-conceived promises and we certainly haven't been rubbing it in the way I think they ought to have it rubbed in because they deserve a fate far worse than they have been getting from this side of the House, Mr. Speaker.

I am spending too much time in refuting some of the things that have been going on and I am taking my own thrust away from the Budget. I know that is something that members opposite would like us to do because I am sure they wouldn't like us to concentrate on the Budget. They certainly haven't been concentrating on Manitoba's Budget; they've been speaking about Ontario, Saskatchewan, British Columbia and everywhere. They have been quoting all of the various other provincial situations, but they haven't been talking about their own Budget because I think it is an indefensible document. It is an indefensible document, Mr. Speaker.

Let us take a look at its major thrust, the 1.5 percent tax on all payrolls in the province because I think the other areas, the taxes on cigarettes, on alcohol, the surtax on upper income, the gasohol tax, the diesel fuel tax, all of those areas are minor and pale by comparison to the major thrust of this Budget, the 1.5 percent tax on all payrolls. It will raise just as much money as they say that a 2 percent increase in sales tax would have, but it has many advantages for the government, Mr. Speaker. It is hidden and therefore it is not directly felt by the vast majority of Manitobans. It is going to take a while for Manitobans to realize how it impacts on their lives and how it raises the costs of all the goods and services that they buy, but at the moment it is hidden.

It hits business and, of course, members of the gov-

ernment love this because it falls right in line with their philosophical approach, their anti-business traditional posture is just right in line, tailor made for this kind of a tax. It was applauded by labour leaders who are supporters and members of this party and it was applauded by social theorists, both within that government and outside that government and part of their advisory coterie. It was applauded because they love the fact that it is aimed at business.

They can argue, thirdly, that it really robs most from the Federal Government and, although they have been espousing the theory of co-operative federalism, they were more than gleeful to point out that the Federal Government is going to be the recipient of the lion's share of this particular tax in a variety of ways, through lost income tax, through tax on federal payrolls and through other things. They are skillful politicians. They recognize that fed bashing is a safe and a popular political stance today. Even though they criticized us for doing it, they are only too happy to jump on the bandwagon and start bashing the feds whenever they can. Oh, they cushion it and they couch it within all kinds of nice phrases that say, but we really are all one country and we really believe in co-operative federalism, but when they can get their kick in at the feds, they do it. They did it through this Budget and they say that they are getting even for the cutbacks in transfer payments and the EPF payments.

What are they going to do when the Canada-Manitoba Northlands Agreement comes up for signing? What are the feds going to say to them when they say, look you guys, you took something out of there that you didn't really have the right to. You got back at us in a kind of a backdoor manner. What is the Federal Government going to say to them when that comes up? Well, I can assure you that co-operative federalism as these people practise it is very very quickly coming off the rails, because they have learned very quickly that the way to gain a little more political popularity is to kick the feds whenever you can get the opportunity.

It will take longer, Mr. Speaker, for the taxpayer to realize that they are paying for it, but ultimately they will and they will know where the blame lies, it lies with this Provincial Government. Because more so than all of the other ill effects of sales tax and other things, in line with all their criticisms about the Ontario Budget, some of the very very unusual things that happen as a result of this 1.5 percent payroll tax are that it taxes and it falls upon goods and service areas that heretofore have never been taxable in this province. I am talking about food and clothing for children and all kinds of goods and services.

I believe the Member for Inkster talked about taxing the paper that the kids use in school. Well, the same thing is going to happen here, of course, because the fact of the matter is that the people who work in the stores, who sell the paper, their salaries are now taxable and that is going to be added on to the cost. The people, who work for Manpower and produce paper in the pulp and paper industry, the tax on their salaries will ultimately be added on to the cost of the product and it will go on to the paper that the kids in the schools are using, just as he says it does in Ontario. So they are not doing anything differently, no matter how you look at it, Mr. Speaker.

It will have some very anomalous and unusual effects on a wide variety of people in the public sector. We talked about earlier in the question period a few days ago the effect on universities whose budgets have been set, whose income has been frozen because they have only two sources of income, one from their tuition fees and two, from the Provincial Government. The government gave them a grant, supposedly larger than they normally would have, on the condition that they freeze tuition fees and then, later on, came up with a tax that took away the entire amount of the additional grant that they gave them for freezing tuition fees. So they got it back again in a backdoor approach, a very unusual way of doing business, I'd say, and one that doesn't smack of good faith with the people that you deal with as far as I'm concerned.

But further to that, it impacts on the public sector because the payrolls that'll be taxed will include payrolls of people working in health care institutions, philanthropic charitable organizations, churches and synagogues - we've mentioned them all here before but I think it bears repeating - people who work in hospitals, in personal care homes, the Children's Aid Society, the Salvation Army, the United Way, the Volunteer Bureau, you name it, it's going to be taxed now. All social service agencies funded in whole or in part by this government are now subject to this insidious payroll tax.

It casts a very wide net in the public sector, Mr. Speaker. Add to this the Crown corporations that are going to be taxed, the Hydro, the Telephone System, MPIC. Part of that will be offloaded onto rates so that people will pay higher rates as a result of it but it's a question of propriety. Is this a way to add a tax to people in a manner that offloads it a little bit off the public sector payroll and puts it a little bit more onto the rates that they are paying for services? I'm not sure. It's a bit of a devious approach I'd say, Mr. Speaker. School Divisions, municipal corporations, they're all going to be paying this tax and it's going to be a huge amount - the City of Winnipeg, it amounts to \$3.2 million for the city, 2 mills. That's what it costs the City of Winnipeg to add this payroll tax on and what are they going to have to do? This government is just going to have to take it out of one pocket and transfer it to another pocket and then they're going to say that they increased their grants because they've taken it on the one hand and given it away with the other.

Without being able to plumb all of the details, but looking at this wide net that's cast by the tax and all of the people who are in the public sector whose payrolls are going to be taxed in some way, I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that as much as 40 percent of this tax will be a transfer ultimately from one pocket to the other pocket in the Provincial Government. It's going to cost over \$1 million to collect it and it's going to deceive so many people in the doing that I don't understand the rationale and I can't see any way in which the public is going to be happy of this kind of transfer.

Next year in the public school sector, this public school portion of the education budget alone \$7 million will go into this tax and the Minister will increase her grant by an additional amount and she'll tell us that she's doing a wonderful thing for them because she's increased their grant.

Well, I can tell you that we know how this govern-

ment works in terms of a little bit of fiscal prestidigitation because we've seen it already. We've seen it in the Estimates of the Education Department, the slight of hand that they will pull. The Ministers said that they had given a huge increase to public school financing through the Education Support Program but later on we found that the increase really wasn't all that huge because over 20 million of it was a 4.2 mill additional tax on all the property in this province. Later on during her Estimates, we found out that they transferred \$1.3 million of expenditure that was outside the program last year for clinicians to do special work within school divisions and they transferred it into the expenses of the Educational Support Program. So, that's 1.3 million less that they're getting on last year's terms.

All this thing is going on and it's political fiscal slight of hand and I don't believe that it's going to be in the long-term interests of Manitobans to have a government who hides the manner in which it raises its tax and throws up the smoke screen to deceive them as to the manner in which their tax dollars are spent and distributed and redistributed because I think in the long run hidden taxes drive up prices without consumers knowing why. In the long run, it may be clever politically but it really doesn't do anything for the people who really need help in this province.

The members opposite really felt that they had pulled off a clever coup. As the Minister of Financing was comparing and contrasting all of his alternatives, as he made the case for the 2 percent increase in sales tax at great length - there's over a page of it in his speech - as he drew out the case for the 2 percent increase, members opposite were so excited I knew that something was going to happen because the Member for Springfield almost jumped out of his skin he was so excited at the fact that they had really pulled a fast one on him. Members on this side were sitting waiting very seriously and those people opposite were so excited because they knew they had come up with a big surprise for us, they weren't going to put through the 2 percent increase in sales tax.

Well, you know, it's a problem that's a long-term problem and I'll tell you why in many ways. The chickens will eventually come home to roost but right now the people who are going to suffer are the productive part of our economy. It's a direct attack on business in this province first thing, Mr. Speaker. Business has been buffeted with all sorts of problems in the last while, they're under siege. The Federal Budget is a disaster as far as business is concerned. Then they've got high interest rates to contend with and they've got a soft economy; they've got inflation; they've got demand that's slowing down and reducing for their goods and services and on top of that they've got a 1.5 percent payroll tax. Well, isn't that a dandy?

This government though, of course, who were they hitting? Not small business but they were hitting big business. But because it was so ill thought out, because it was such an ad hoc measure of finding new tax sources, they missed the mark once more. Just like a fledgling archer the arrow misses the big apple and hits big business in the forehead. I just can't believe what they're doing, Mr. Speaker and I'll just quote here what federal taxation experts say about how this particular measure has missed its mark and I

quote from a Free Press article, "Manitoba's NDP Government has, by accident or design, given small businesses a worse deal than big corporations with its new 1.5 percent employment payroll tax, senior federal officials said yesterday. The federal bureaucrats say the small businessmen Premier Howard Pawley is trying to help most are going to get the worst drubbing. Federal Income Tax law requires corporations earning more than 200,000 net a year to pay Ottawa at a rate of 36 percent, whereas small businesses only have to pay 15 percent. What it means is that for a big corporation each dollar of tax write-off is worth 36 cents, whereas for each small corporation it's only worth 15 cents, said a federal tax official. With less than half the businesses in Canada, about the same number in Manitoba, paying any income tax the officials see the effect as wider than it may seem apparent at first."

They've nailed small business; even though they say that they're after big business they've nailed small business again and 80 percent of Manitoba businesses are small business. 75 percent of the jobs that they provide in the private sector are provided by small business and they've hammered them again. As usual, what they say they believe and what they actually do are two entirely different things and, Mr. Speaker, this will come back to haunt them.

You know, there's a story going around today in Manitoba that says, do you know how you develop or acquire a small business in Manitoba? Well, first you start with the big business and then you elect an NDP Government, because this Budget and this 1.5-percent payroll tax adds to a long list, in a short time I might indicate, of anti-job creation, anti-business policies that this government has come up with. Because the payroll tax is, of course, not necessarily going to always be able to be passed along. Some people, because of a competitive environment, may not be able to pass along that increase in cost to their consumers; some of them because they work in other than the retail sector or the total free market sector; some of them may have very little choice in their options in which to pass this along and so what they will really do then is cut back on staff.

We've heard recently about people for whom this tax - and these are small businesses - will cost \$7,500, \$8,000 because virtually all of their costs in some of the service industries is based on salaries. Now that amounts to two-thirds of a staff person in some cases, or a half of a staff person and the only way they can solve that problem is to cut back on their staff hiring.

Another example, of course, of their anti-job creation attitude, their anti-business attitude is the new Provincial Employment Program. In their desire to, at all costs, not provide one nickel of help to people in business who might be making a profit on somebody's efforts, on some person's labour, they have made it almost impossible for businesses to participate in their new Summer Employment Program. Last year over 5,000 jobs were created under it; this year we've demonstrated through our questions and our debate with the Minister of Labour, that it will not be possible. He's admitted it; it will not be possible under the programming announced to do much more than 1,500; fewer than one-third of the jobs that were created last year; only because they are so bent on their desire not

to see one nickel of their government money perhaps in some way benefit a business, even though that business may in fact create jobs and benefit the entire Manitoba economy through that process, they don't want to help them in any way so they're prepared to let summer students go without jobs and let them sit on their hands and rot and get upset and concerned about their future in this province because they don't want to help.

Now they've added \$10 million in this program, but if their guidelines, their parameters are not any better than they were for the Student Summer Employment Program that they've already announced, then they aren't going to have the effect that they ought to have. So that \$10 million might as well not have been added if it didn't have the proper guidelines to allow people who should realistically expect government help; who should realistically look for the government to assist in creating their summer employment, then it won't happen, it just won't happen, Mr. Speaker.

What else have they done? Well, First Contract Legislation; that's a big promise - the Minister of Labour says they'll come through with it this time around. First Contract Legislation will be the second Provincial Government in this country to come up with it. It's regarded as an unfriendly approach to business; that's what most investors regard it as. Yes, they're nervous about it; yes, they may not understand it all that well; but yes, they don't regard it as being an incentive to come into this province. But this government is prepared to bring it in, despite its job-destroying effects because it's part of their doctrinaire, socialist theory and they don't care if it destroys jobs in this province.

You know there are people working in the service industry, serving liquor in beverage rooms and in other establishments throughout the province, many of whom are earning over \$1,000 a month in tips. I've spoken to people in the hospitality trade who run restaurants that may not even necessarily be considered to be top level restaurants in terms of their calibre and price and they say that they have university students come and work for them in the summer, who can earn easily anywhere from \$1,500 to \$3,000 a month in tips for serving in those establishments.

Yet this government insisted on bringing up their minimum wage to the same level as others, despite the fact that countless jurisdictions throughout North America recognize the effect of their tip income and utilize it in order to have a lower level of minimum wage so that more people will be employed, but this government doesn't care about more people being employed. They care about their doctrinaire, socialist philosophies that have to show up and be demonstrated in every single thing they do.

In addition to that, they have bureaucratically entrenched rent controls. Now I'm not opposed to rent controls; we had rent controls and good rent controls in this province. But they want to do it in a manner, Mr. Speaker, that is so firmly entrenched in a bureaucratic process, that it will destroy all of the building construction for rental accommodation in this province in the next few years and it will destroy building-trades jobs in this province. That is what they want to do in this province.

Everything that this government has done has been

to the effect of destroying the incentive for investment, for job creation, for business development and to make people who want to come here and invest and create jobs, feel unwelcome. The Minister of Economic Development remarks during her Estimates, told us things about how capitalism is dead - you know, it built this province, Mr. Speaker, this country. It attracted our parents, our forefathers, but she says capitalism is dead. She wants to limit the return on investment of companies operating in this province. She thinks that too many corporations are not doing their fair share towards achieving our social objectives in this province. She wants to transform the economic system under which we operate. She can't tell us into what, but she wants to transform it. She tells us about all the excesses of free enterprise, but why don't members opposite talk about the achievements of the free enterprise system; about people who start with nothing and through hard work, using their talent and their energy, go to work, take big risks and accomplish something with their lives. Why do they always ascribe it to good luck or good fortune? Why do they always ascribe it to the fact that government has to intercede in order for people to be successful in this environment?

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that what they are doing destroys any initiative; destroys any opportunity for people who want to get ahead because they are condemning them to a life in which they will, indeed, be dependent on the government, because if they believe that the government has to provide all of the goods and services, or the climate, or the incentive for which people will invest in this province, then I think that they're going to destroy incentive in so doing.

They always paint the picture of people in business as the greedy, heartless, mindless individuals who must be controlled by government programs and government regulations, not as the community leaders, the people who donate their time and talent and energy to things like the United Way, the Cancer Society, the Heart Fund, the Salvation Army, all of which on a per capita basis, are the most successful in North America, right here in Manitoba and that's because Manitobans are generous. They're generous with their time and their talent. We have one of the strongest healthiest volunteer sectors in all of North America right here in this province, because people know that their services are valued. They don't look to government to provide everything; they don't want government to provide everything. They want opportunities and a climate for incentive, but this government doesn't understand it. Again, as I say, like the fledgling archer with the arrow aimed at the big apple, they've missed the mark again with this Budget.

Mr. Speaker, I think that this government has drastically underestimated the spirit of people in Manitoba. I believe in the strength of the human spirit that we have here in this province. People are basically honest, desirous of helping others in doing good and this government is going to take away all of that attitude by its attitude that says that people in business who invest their time and energy are generally greedy and harmful to the economy.

This government takes every opportunity to slam free enterprise and it's confused. This Budget has no economic direction. It's misleading in so many differ-

ent ways and it's wrong for Manitoba and I think it's the old saying: "If you don't know where you're going any road will get you there." This government doesn't know where it's going and therefore, they can take any road, any tax scheme, any new system and expect to get there because they don't know where they're going, Mr. Speaker. All of those negative effects that we are pointing out will come home to roost and I believe that this government will eventually unlike what they've said on Budget night, they will not help the people that they set out to help because that's been their experience in the past. You know, it was John Kennedy who said: "A rising tide lifts all boats," but there is not a rising tide in this Budget, Mr. Speaker. In fact, it's quite the opposite and worst of all it will hurt those people who said they said they wanted to help when they stood for election last fall.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

POINT OF PRIVILEGE

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Turtle Mountain.

MR. RANSOM: A point of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: A point of privilege?

MR. RANSOM: Yes. I'm rising on a point of privilege, Sir, because of the contemptuous manner within the short period of six months in government that this government is treating the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Manitoba. There have been at least three occasions to my recollection, Sir, during this debate that there have not been any members of the Treasury Bench present to listen to the debate that is taking place on the Budget.

The Budget is the principle document of the government's plans, the way in which they intend to handle the economy of the province, Sir. It is the major document that the government presents during the year and to have a situation develop where there are no members of the Treasury Bench present, very often there are no more than two and one, sometimes two. The Minister of Finance is, I won't say rarely here, but he's certainly not here frequently to listen to the debate that's taken place. The same sort of attitude prevailed with respect to the debate on Interim Supply. The Minister of Finance was for the majority of the time, Sir, not present then as debate went on for several occasions with respect to Interim Supply.

Sir, we have had the situation during question period where questions are placed to this government and we get answers that skirt around the issue that go on interminably with the sort of baffle gab that we get from the Minister of Finance in particular, Sir. We have a government that speaks about the open government, Sir, and we have the situations in committee where people stand to address the Law Amendment —(Interjection)— I'm sorry, Sir, but I draw to your attention, Sir, that I'm speaking on a Point of Privilege and that the Minister of Health should know that he can't raise on a Point of Order and interrupt on a Point of Privilege.

Sir, we have situations where people address the Law Amendments Committee of this Legislature and

are told after speaking for only a short period of time that they have been going on for too long. This is the sort of attitude, Sir, that is not going to be tolerated lightly by the Opposition, that when this government presents their Budget or other items of government business to this Legislature and then don't even be present to listen to the debate, Sir, I think that is a contemptuous way for the government to treat this Legislature.

I therefore move, Sir, that the Rules Committee consider the advisability of requiring that a majority of the members of the Treasury Bench be present during the Budget Debate.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is there a seconder for that motion?

MR. RANSOM: Seconded by the Member for Lakeside.

MOTION presented.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable House Leader.

MR. PENNER: Speaking to the motion, Mr. Speaker, that is no more a point of privilege than any other of the so-called points of privilege which have been raised from time to time by members of the Opposition. First of all . . .

MR. RANSOM: On a point of order, Sir.

MR. PENNER: I am speaking on the point of privilege. —(Interjections)—

MR. RANSOM: I take it, Mr. Speaker, that you have accepted the point of privilege and the motion and the Government House Leader is now raising and reflecting on your ruling that this is indeed a point of privilege and he should withdraw that allegation.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have not made a ruling. I will be putting it to the House for a question, but the Honourable House Leader is speaking on a Point of Order.

MR. PENNER: It seems to me that once there is a motion, that's a debatable motion —(Interjection)— I'm speaking on the motion.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Springfield on a point of order.

MR. ANDY ANSTETT (Springfield): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The matter raised by the Honourable Opposition House Leader was a matter of privilege as alleged by him. He attached to it a substantive motion which is the proper way to raise a point of privilege. All the Speaker has done in recognizing the motion that has been made by the honourable member is that he has properly presented, that is all, a matter of privilege. He is now allowing other members to address that matter of privilege as is provided in both our rules and in Beauséne. He has read the substantive motion attached to the matter of privilege. That is what the rules provide. A matter of privilege and the

motion attached to it are in order at any time in terms of being heard in this House. As to whether or not they are a legitimate matter of privilege is a matter to be decided by the Speaker and that has not been done.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Virden.

MR. HARRY GRAHAM (Virden): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What the honourable member has said is partly true. The question of privilege was properly put to you by the Honourable Member for Turtle Mountain. You, having perused the thing and then having made your ruling, you made your ruling when you presented the motion to the floor of the House. That is the only way that motion could be put there was having once accepted the point of privilege, then you put the question to the floor. We are now talking on the question before the floor and that is the only subject matter that is open for debate at this time.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Government House Leader.

MR. PENNER: I certainly have no difficulty with the way in which it has been put by the Honourable Member for Virden. I just want to make it clear that the fact that I am rising in my place to oppose the motion should not be taken, as I understood it to have been taken by some of the members, that I have, to use words which I heard coming across the floor, accepted that it is a point of privilege. In fact, I am speaking to call for a defeat of the motion. Is that clear? And I understood. I don't have to be taken to task by the Honourable for Sturgeon Creek who is, I am sure, trying to be fatherly in his advice to me — it looks like he could be — for seeking clarification of what in fact seems to be a source of confusion on the other side.

Mr. Speaker, just two points and I think that is all it merits. It is understood that members of the Treasury Bench have an obligation to see that government is carried on, on a day to day basis and the fact that they are doing so — in fact, according to Beauséne — is not even the subject of comment in the House. The absence of a member from the House, to raise that, is a breach of the privilege of the House and to encompass it in a motion doesn't make it any better. I am surprised, to put it mildly, at the Honourable Member for Turtle Mountain even attempting to place that question in that form to, in a sense, grace what is not proper by encompassing it, crystalizing it in a Motion of Privilege. The suggestion that the members of the Treasury Bench are somehow chained to these desks because of the fact that it is a Budget Debate is ludicrous. —(Interjection)— Yes. Now, I will not comment because I am not supposed to on the absence of certain formerly indistinguishable members of the other side, indistinguishable from nonentities that is, who are not here noticeably now. I won't mention names, but who have not been here and when here, typically turn their back on the Treasury Bench in a gesture of contempt, not of the members of the House, but of the electorate who elected them to be the government of this House. I could say that this motion is an ill-tempered, ill-timed disgrace. That is all it is and allow it to be defeated summarily.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: On a point of order, the Member for Lakeside.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, I am more than pleased to have put my name to this motion in a seconding capacity. Firstly, because I do understand the obligations of the Treasury Bench. I have also had the opportunity of seeing how different Treasury Benches and different Ministers, different governments, have managed to cope with that problem, one of House attendance and one of their responsibilities, that I do not for one minute have any difficulty in acknowledging they all have.

Mr. Speaker, the Opposition has only several ways of bringing matters to the attention of this House and hopefully, through this means, to the general public. What we consider to be quite rightfully an appalling and a contemptuous situation that is developing by members opposite in their total lack of sensitivity with respect to listening to one of the most important procedural, set-form debates that takes place in the Manitoba Legislature. I think the position taken by the Government House Leader is entirely defensible. It was not entered into lightly, Mr. Speaker. It was only properly presented after several days had passed when the situation that the motion attempts to correct and address itself to was experienced in this Chamber.

You know, Sir, and you by the way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have happened to be one of the more faithful members in this Chamber, but very often, you were there with two or three other members and as the mover of the motion says, very often without a single Treasury Bencher in his place. Mr. Speaker, I think it is a legitimate form that the Opposition has used to bring to the attention of all members of this House, the attention of Manitobans, about the kind of really unexplicable behaviour on the part of a government that is presenting its first Budget in its first Session and only five, six months old in its tenure of government, to show that kind of contempt for this Chamber, Sir. I believe the motion is in order and we intend to support it.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: On a Point of Order, the Member for Inkster.

MR. DON SCOTT (Inkster): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I find it somewhat surprising in that the Member for Turtle Mountain would stand on such a resolution today when just this afternoon, the Opposition bench has had three members sitting. On Friday last when I stood up to speak, another flood of people left and I believe there were four left at that point in time and they talk about the House having — (Interjection) — yes, it tells me something; it tells me something that you don't have enough guts to sit in this Chamber and listen to some comments that have come through. You don't hear half the comments.

Mr. Speaker, for them to stand up this afternoon and make this motion, I think is more of a demonstration of their weakness in being able to attack the Budget and looking for some publicity out of a procedural motion, than it is of any other thing; there's no substance to it.

The members of the government's front benches, the Treasury Benches, they know full well they have the operations of government to concern themselves

with as well as attending the House. They do a pretty darn good job of sitting in the House for the number of hours that they do, each and every one of them, and then for the members, and that's part of our role in the Caucus as backbenchers is to make sure there are sufficient numbers in the House. But to come out with this kind of an allegation by the Opposition is nothing more than grandstanding and a clear indication of their clear inability to be able to fight what is a very good Budget.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Fort Garry on the motion.

MR. SHERMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Speaking to the motion, which I strenuously support, I must only comment, Sir, that the position taken by the Government House Leader is unacceptable and illogical on the simple grounds that this document, which is of so much importance to the people of Manitoba, is a document presented to this House by the government through the Minister of Finance and that the presence of only one or two members of the Treasury Bench for the examination of that document by the Opposition represents a considerable disregard, Sir, for the system and the process.

The Member for Inkster has commented that the record of attendance is perhaps no better on the Opposition side than on the government side, but that comment, Mr. Speaker, reflects a misunderstanding of the system and a misunderstanding of the process.

I'd remind the Honourable Member for Inkster that it is that government's Budget; they are the ones who developed the Budget, who designed the Budget, who brought it in, and who are trying to recommend it to the people of Manitoba — all the people of Manitoba — presumably they have recommended it to most, if not all, of the members of their own caucus representing some 34 constituencies in the province, but they have not recommended or sold it to the other 23 constituencies in the province represented on this side of the House.

I'm as aware as any member on that Treasury Bench of the hours of time and work required of a member of the Treasury Bench, of the hours of time and work required of a Minister and how difficult it is for a Minister to spend great periods of time in the House. However, Sir, there are periods when that is not a defensible excuse. There are certainly opportunities during the business of the House when Ministers can vacate themselves and repair to their offices and attend to the heavy ministerial responsibilities that they have, but there are one or two occasions when that kind of defense, the defense of the workload is not acceptable.

One of those occasions is the Budget Debate, when the Opposition representing a legitimate voice and a legitimate point of view in society, in the province, has the opportunity to evaluate that document of the government on behalf of its constituents and to point out to the government what it sees as the weaknesses and the flaws in the process and programs incorporated in that budgetary approach.

It is therefore a compelling responsibility of the First Minister and the Minister of Finance and their col-

leagues in the Treasury Benches to be present in substantial number through the Budget Debate, as my colleague, the Honourable Member for Turtle Mountain, has pointed out.

The most important thing to remember in this discussion and this debate on this motion, which has been accepted and presented to the House for a vote, Mr. Speaker, is that it is their Budget; it is the Budget of the Member for Rossmere, the Minister of Finance and it is the Budget of the Minister of Health and the Budget of the First Minister. If they're not interested in what the Opposition has to say, that does indeed represent a disdain, a scorn and a disregard for the system.

I have no quarrel with the departure from this Chamber of any of those Ministers during a great deal of the business of the Legislature. It has to be done; they have to get back to their departmental responsibilities. I do have a quarrel with their turning their back on the Opposition's evaluations and representations on the most important document in the Parliamentary year, in the Legislative year, a document that affects the lives and the welfare and the well-being of the entire province.

For that reason, Sir, the arguments raised by the Government House Leader and certainly the arguments raised by the Honourable Member for Inkster are not logical and have no bearing on the issue at hand. They represent a total misunderstanding of the process of what we are here for and what they are here for.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Thompson.

MR. STEVE ASHTON (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, I'm sometimes surprised at what goes on in this particular Assembly and I must say my surprise is at an all time high today. I remember not too long ago, when those members opposite were in government, there were continual complaints for the Opposition that members of the Treasury Bench were absent, not from a debate which occurs once a year but from question period which happens every day. Now those same members are attempting to come across as if they're somehow shocked or dismayed at the absence of members of the Treasury Bench. Well, when they were in office, Mr. Speaker, they were absent, not just from debates, they were absent from question period and of course they gave the argument, well it was on government business. But I must say it shows to rather a great degree the amount of inconsistency that exists.

I would also, in speaking to this motion, Mr. Speaker, like to mention the number of statements that the Member for Turtle Mountain made we're not, in fact, accurate; there were no members in the Treasury Bench on, I think he said three or four occasions. He perhaps didn't look around the Chamber; if he had, he would have noticed that there were members present, not in their own seats but in another area of the — (Interjection)— I'm talking about the Minister of Health who was sitting talking to the Member for Inkster. I'm rather surprised, given their great concern for parliamentary procedure, that in bringing up the motion they broke one of the rules once again, in terms of Beauchesne, that one does not refer to the absence of specific members, because the Member of Turtle

Mountain did refer to the absence of a specific member, that being the Minister of Finance who, I might add, has been here quite frequently and has taken in a good number of the speeches, which is something else that should be put on the record.

As the Member for Inkster stated before there were many occasions when members opposite, you know, walked out of the House, showed complete disregard for what members of this side of the House had to say about the Budget because that is indeed just as important in debate. There are 34 constituencies represented by the government and, as members of this Legislature, we have points to make on the Budget, on the situation faced with it, so I really think, Mr. Speaker, this is a "tempest in a teapot" and if the people of Manitoba could only see the ridiculous sort of thing that goes on in this House they would really be dismayed; I certainly am.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Arthur, on the same motion.

MR. JAMES E. DOWNEY (Arthur): Mr. Speaker, I would be very brief in my comments but I fully support the motion placed before you by the Member for Turtle Mountain as our House Leader. His commitment as a member of the Treasury Bench listening to quite a few of those members who were elected and sitting in Opposition in our term of office, I think, has to be looked at as well. There was a dedication on behalf of the government to do just that, to back the economic direction that we as a government gave the Province of Manitoba. We were quite prepared to stand behind it. Last week there wasn't one member of the Treasury Bench in this House. In fact, I believe with Mr. Speaker there were only two members of the caucus, the total caucus of the government, supporting that document, listening to what 44 percent of the people put us here as Opposition, 44 percent of the people put us here to tell the government what our constituents feel about the economic direction and they didn't have the common decency and respect to sit here and listen to what the Opposition say. So, Mr. Speaker, I full endorse this and would hope that the people of Manitoba can totally see the kind of misguided, misrepresented kind of government that they have that are representing them in this House and it's totally disorganized.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister of Natural Resources seconds the motion.

MR. MACKLING: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I'm concerned to hear the Honourable Member for Pembina and other members apparently accusing the members of the Treasury Bench not being here in this Chamber at all times. Now — (Interjection) — I'm speaking on the motion, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: A point of order?

MR. DONALD ORCHARD (Pembina): A point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Natural Resources has made an allegation that I indicated certain members of Treasury Bench were not here. I have not made that indication today.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: On the same point of order, the Minister of Health?

MR. DESJARDINS: On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker. Two seconds before that he yelled out to this member, "You weren't even there," and now he's saying that he never said it, and now he's saying yes. I wish he'd make up his mind. He's accused people of not being here, make up your mind, make up your mind.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister of Natural Resources to the motion.

MR. MACKLING: Mr. Speaker, speaking on the motion, the honourable members opposite know the demands that are made on members of the Treasury Bench. They in fact, Mr. Speaker, have been facilitated in respect to constituency matters that they have brought to the attention of the Executive Branch. We spend time not just in respect to matters for members of the government caucus; we have dealt with matters for the Opposition. During the time of this legislative sitting taken time away from this House to meet with representatives, for example, from the Member for Arthur, from the Member for Lakeside, and yet they want to criticize me as a Minister for taking time to deal with problems of government outside of this Chamber. —(Interjection)— That's the point, Mr. Speaker, that they're making this motion, and I think that is gall. I will have to think twice about ever leaving this Chamber then to deal with a constituent. —(Interjection)— It's not a threat. You're saying to me, Mr. Speaker, on this motion, you're indicating that if I leave this Chamber, for whatever reason, I'm subject to being disciplined for not being here and that is unkind and ridiculous.

I think, Mr. Speaker, the honourable members should reflect on their position. They know the demands that are made on members of the Treasury Bench; they know that they have to meet problems from day to day. Mr. Speaker, I'm one of those Ministers who was absent when this motion was put. Absent for what reason? For government business. I wasn't outside of this House, the honourable members know it and I think it galling for them to be accusing members on this side of the House in the Treasury Bench from avoiding the duties of this House. That is not the case at all, Mr. Speaker, and I am really indignant about having to dump a meeting, a very important meeting in my office, because some member opposite felt that it was undignified or improper for me to not be in this House. That's ridiculous, Mr. Speaker, and they should withdraw that motion.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Speaker, I can understand the frustration that honourable members of the Opposition I'm sure feel when members are not here that they feel ought to be here. But I want to comment, Mr. Speaker, that I can recall over the last number of years when we sat in Opposition and where honourable members across the way sat on this side, I can recall and we talked about question period a few moments ago. I can recall many many members being absent

during the question period, in fact, Mr. Speaker, and I say this not from a point of view of lacking understanding, but I think the record of this Treasury Board has been much better this Session than indeed was the record in the last number of Sessions. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I've been amazed that the record of the members of this Cabinet pertaining to be present during the question period as indeed in contrast to the situation over the last two or three years. Mr. Speaker, I know they'll be denied by members across the way, I expect them to be. I know that there were times indeed that we were tempted, not —(Interjection)— Mr. Speaker, I think there should be some order in this Chamber.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, the hour is 5:30, I am leaving the Chair. I shall return at 8:00 at which time we'll resume.