

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, 29 February, 1988.

Time — 8:00 p.m.

BUDGET DEBATE

MADAM SPEAKER, Hon. M. Phillips: The Honourable Member for Emerson.

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

I always enjoy the challenge involved with speaking, especially on the Throne Speech and on the Budget Debate. Just last week we all had our opportunity, or most of us had the opportunity, to make our speeches on the Throne Speech, expressed our views on that, and a week later we're into the Budget Debate, and we have that same opportunity.

Sometimes, Madam Speaker, I wonder whether it's easier when you speak at the tail end of the debate or at the beginning. I've always had a preference to speak at the beginning of the debate because that way you bring forward your views; and it's the one thing I find that is more difficult when somebody like our leader, as he spoke this afternoon, and he has unlimited time and did a tremendous job of going through the whole Budget Debate.

Madam Speaker, I thought that our leader today, the Leader of the Opposition, made one of his finest performances that he's done in this House today. Madam Speaker, it was constructive as well as destructive, in terms of what has happened with this government and with this Budget.

And then, Madam Speaker, as every member contributes, you listen to get new ideas, and you listen to the various views. Some of them I have very little regard for in terms of the contribution which is made, and that's understandable. I'm sure the same way applies when the members of the government side listen to our supposed criticism and contribution that we make.

I listened with interest to the Member for Thompson who spoke this afternoon, and I sort of chuckle, Madam Speaker, because I've always — (Interjection) — I chuckle to some degree when the Member for Thompson makes his contribution, regardless where it is because he's really getting into it. I suppose the first four years when he got elected, which was in '81, I believe . . .

MR. H. ENNS: That was when we called him "Landslide."

MR. A. DRIEDGER: We called him "Landslide" at that time, yes, Madam Speaker. I've said this before in this House, Madam Speaker, that the Member for Thompson, in his riding, obviously did a relatively commendable job in convincing people that he was the individual that was — (Interjection) — Well, I do that tongue-in-cheek, Madam Speaker. I find when the Member for Thompson makes his contribution on the Budget, I almost blush. I turned around when he was speaking and said: "What did the Member for Thompson do before he got into the Legislature?"

MR. E. CONNERY: Nothing.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Exactly, the Member for Portage says that he basically was a professional student. I might be wrong on that. Madam Speaker, I feel a little awkward because I did not necessarily check this out. I don't know what the member did, but for him to give his views on how the economy of this province should be run, with all due respect, he's a young energetic individual, but where would he have any experience to give this House, to lecture this House in terms of how they should run this province? I find that very interesting.

A MEMBER: He's a veteran backbencher.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Madam Speaker, somebody mentioned that he's a veteran backbencher and possibly that's where he'll be. He's always very energetic and we learn to sort of bounce off each other in terms of our contributions in this House, and we learn to understand each other a little bit. We know which members we sort of give credibility to in terms of their speeches.

For example, the Member for Concordia, who speaks with two tongues, because before he got into government he made one statement, and now he makes a different one. I thought, Madam Speaker, as I indicated before, that my leader did a very tremendous job this afternoon in terms of analyzing what has happened in this Budget Debate — what happened in the Budget Speech, basically.

Madam Speaker, we have a document here that, if you want to go through this and read this, and over the many years we've listened to these things. The fact that some of us have heard more than others in terms of Throne Speeches and Budget Debates does not necessarily mean . . .

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

A MEMBER: Throw him out.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Madam Speaker, the Member for Niakwa is in the gallery and he's sort of encouraging me on and I appreciate that, thank you.

Madam Speaker, the last speaker before adjournment was the Minister of Labour at the present time, and I have to compliment the lady. She has very flowery speech. She stands there and she speaks of motherhood and apple pie, you know, the dream — the ideal dream. This is how society should be.

Madam Speaker, cold hard facts of life are not that way. It's not that way. I want to basically get back to some of the grass-roots thing which is something that this government has forgotten over a period of time. They talk of consulting and talking to the people at the average level. I want to talk about my people in my constituency, and in case members forget, mine is a rural constituency which covers a big geographic area in the southeast.

HON. E. KOSTVRA: I've been there.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: You've been there. The Minister of Finance has been there and I welcomed him very warmly and I appreciate him being there.

There have been other members there as well. (Interjection) Yes, many of the members have been there and I always felt I was a gracious host. I always try to make them feel comfortable and I feel proud to introduce them to the people. I don't play the political game there at home when the Minister's up there. In this arena, we play a different game.

That is the context of what I'm trying to say today. We sit here, 57 elected members, Madam Speaker, and we exploit our politics and we try and score points on each other, that's the way the system is. It's nice, yes, it is.

We had the Throne Speech the other day. The government thought they came out with a very positive type of thing. We, as Opposition, felt it was fluff and wind and rabbit tracks, and that's where the arena takes place.

But what do the people back home in our constituencies feel about what's happening here? Do they realize what's happening here? Madam Speaker, in many cases, some of my people who are busy looking after trying to make a living in the rural areas don't even realize when we are in Session and when we're not.

Initially, that used to bother me to some degree. I felt everybody should know how important I was and how important the Legislature was, and the great things that happened here. Humbug, Madam Speaker, humbug. We all are here for a purpose, but, Madam Speaker, one thing I have learned after ten-and-one-half years is that the system here - the democratic system - I think is a good system. In spite of the many flaws in it, it is basically a good system. The government members are sitting there because they want more seats. I happen not to agree with that; I happen not to agree with what happened, but that is how our system is.

When we look at our political system compared to many others in the world, it is a good system. I don't agree with what's happening many times. I think the criticism of the public in many cases is fair because they do not realize what is happening. They look at this sometimes and it's referred to as the zoo, and I've sometimes referred to it as the zoo, because as we go through the debate procedures, members of my constituency, many of them don't understand the fact that we have a Throne Speech where every member can make his contribution, or that we have the Budget Debate and we all make our contribution, and then we get into Estimates.

I keep telling members that what you see on TV in question period is not really what happens here. That is 40 minutes of the arena because somebody felt that it was good to bring in television. Then we try in front of the television cameras to embarrass each other as best as we can. The members of the government, the Ministers, when a question gets asked, sometimes sincerely play games with it, make long speeches, and the Speaker, in her wisdom, sometimes does to some degree adjudicate.

A MEMBER: When a Minister can't answer it, they send the fixer out.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Yes. Anyway, Madam Speaker, the public perception of what happens even with this Budget Debate, like my people, when we sent the message out, when the government announced the Budget is coming down on Friday at eleven o'clock, most of my people don't realize. They looked at it in my area and the question was, are you going to bring it down on Friday? I said, no, we can't vote on Friday because the Minister is bringing down his Budget. We vote later on sometime.

The anticipation was very keen. Could you bring them down on the Throne Speech? They don't care about all the debate that took place and the pros and cons that were expressed. They basically were concerned: Could you bring them down on the vote? That was the big hype. One message had told me though was that I get that feeling in my area, and I think many members have that feeling, that this government had sort of run its course.

My leader mentioned this afternoon the disastrous performance and we have to repeat and repeat. Sometimes members say why do we repeat all these things? Like why do we repeat about the bad performance of this government with MTX and with the performance of the Member for St. James and all these things, why do we repeat?

Madam Speaker, when I was chairman of Committee of Supply from '77 to '81, I was so frustrated because we sat at that time until one, two and three o'clock at night and as chairman I had to sit there. The repetition of the members, they were then Opposition, was that they came and they repeated and repeated. I got so frustrated I wanted to go home and they kept repeating. So I talked to the Clerk of the House at that time, a Mr. Jack Reeves - I think a tremendous Clerk of the House. He said politics is a matter of repetition.

Another member, a great member of this House, Mr. Sid Green, with whom I had very little - I couldn't agree very much with him on many things - but he always had to repeat and repeat and repeat. He'd make a 40-minute speech, he'd start off, make a speech and he'd repeat that about three, four, five, six times. Madam Speaker, it was effective. Everybody thought he was a good orator, a good contributor to the political system. To this day actually, he'd make this House very exciting. He was that type of an individual. As I said before, I didn't agree with many of his views.

But, Madam Speaker, that is our arena here. But when we talk of the Budget, what effect does it have to the people in my area? They look at one thing - and I'm sure everybody's constituents look at it - what will it do to my income? What will it do to my lifestyle? Is it going to create more hardships? Are there going to be more taxes?

I'll tell you something, Madam Speaker, after last year's Budget, which we've repeated many times as the biggest tax grab in the history, the results of that tax grab are the things that the people of Manitoba are benefiting from now. Now the money is coming, 2 percent surcharge on our wages, all the taxes that were imposed. The Minister of Finance can sit back smugly and say now the money is coming in. He presents a

kind of a Budget that is sort of a soft type of approach in his mind. In the meantime, we're paying the price, Madam Speaker.

My people ask me like they're not concerned - how much more is it going to cost? The smokers are upset because it's going to cost them 25 cents a pack or whatever the case may be. That's a nice soft touch to take in tax. That's not a problem, but, Madam Speaker, the nine-tenths of a cent per litre on leaded fuel is a problem. I'm not talking of the big major tax grab last year; I'm talking about the impact of this Budget.

I have, Madam Speaker, bedroom communities: Ile des Chenes, St. Adolphe, Niverville, even as far away as my hometown of Grunthal, St. Pierre, St. Malo, people who drive to work every day. Many of these people are, Madam Speaker, people with marginal incomes who work in the city to supplement either a small business, a small farm or whatever the case may be. These are people that are poor people, Madam Speaker. The Member for Lakeside raised it today in question period to the Minister of Finance, saying you are taxing the poorest people who can afford to be taxed.

Madam Speaker, it's the older cars that use leaded gas. Myself, my wife, we have cars that drive on unleaded gas but my kids drive cars that use leaded gas. They are the ones that are being nailed. This is a government that has said to us, time and time again, we want to look after the poor. Madam Speaker, it's lip service. It is not working. Ultimately, what I want to say to this government is you are out of touch. This is the second term that you're government now. You are so involved with being government that you lose touch with what the feeling is out there, because the people out there, Madam Speaker, and I'll say this to the government as I said in the Throne Speech, they don't trust this government any more. They have no trust in this government. No matter what the Minister of Finance comes up with, or the Premier, they mistrust this government.

If anybody has any doubts, the challenge I would like to lay out to you is call an election. That's easy to say, Madam Speaker. When we go back to some of the debates that have taken place between this government and the Federal Government on free trade, for example, when the Premier of this province has said that the Federal Government has no right to enter into a Free Trade Agreement because they don't have the mandate for it, they should go to the people - I say the same thing to this government here.

When you're fighting free trade, you do not have the mandate to oppose the Federal Government; then call an election. If you feel that you want to oppose it, you call an election and see what happens when the majority of the people in Canada are supporting free trade and the ones that don't are playing politics with it.

Madam Speaker, I want to be relatively fair. We all do our little things. I sent out a questionnaire, a nice picture of the Member for Emerson on there. I sent out to all my constituents, under my franking piece privileges, I sent out one of these questionnaires. If the members of the government have any doubts as to what their people feel, do something. You're polling has indicated where you're at. Madam Speaker, the government members know that they are very unpopular at this stage of the game and that is why they have that look on their faces.

You can always see when the aggressiveness is there when they feel they've done well. They thought they did well with the Budget the other day; today the feeling isn't quite as strong. Because our leader very capably took and dissected what has happened in that Budget, there is that feeling of decimation.

How do you really get up and be enthusiastic about a Budget like this when you know what you've done to the people of Manitoba? And in my area, Madam Speaker, they haven't done a thing that is positive.

Madam Speaker, I was ready to speak the other day on the free trade issue and then the course of action took a change and we were debating Bill No. 2, The Health Trust Act; I was ready to speak on that. Madam Speaker, I didn't get involved in either one because the way the system works I just didn't get on. I had two speeches ready and, either one, I felt very positive in terms on what I was going to say.-(Interjection)- Madam Speaker, the little vibes that go back and forth here when somebody says that we were afraid to listen to the Minister of Industry and Commerce speak on free trade makes me chuckle.

But what has this Budget basically done for my area? Absolutely nothing. And then I take pride in the fact that when my questionnaires, about 300-400 of them, come back and they answered these questions in the way that I think - they support free trade, they feel that the government has been running the Crown corporations wrong - they answer the questions the way I would like to see them answered.

But, I'll tell you something -(Interjection)- Yes, they do, and I don't make any bones about it. But, Madam Speaker, there are people who replied to these questionnaires who are also critical and say, how would we do it better? This is fair because I don't fill these out for the people. When you have 300 or 400, they fill them out and they don't always agree with my views either, but the general message that comes out of there is that they don't trust this government any more.

When the Minister of Finance brought forward and indicated that he is going to put \$10 million into that Health Trust Fund and, the other day when I was going to speak on that, I asked what is the purpose of that trust fund? What is happening in that trust fund that couldn't happen under the Department of Health right now? I'd like to ask the Minister of Health, will this trust fund assure the building of a new hospital in Vita? Will this trust fund assure the building of a new hospital in St. Pierre, both of which have been committed? They were committed in the last election, Madam Speaker, because these things are not being - everybody plays games with it. My people start to have mistrust about the government - they do, when they see what happens to Autopac; when they see what's happened with Crown corporations.

Madam Speaker, I haven't compiled all my results of these, but I will within the next few weeks compile the results of my questionnaire, and I will have the opportunity to present this to this House as to how my people feel about the performance of this government. And that is an unbiased view because some of them also say that MLA's shouldn't get any pay, they should serve for free, that what we are doing in this House, Madam Speaker, is totally useless. So these people are not biased when they speak, they have their views and I am going to take and tabulate that and bring that forward.

But this government has done nothing except tax the people in my area. Madam Speaker, in terms of the Highways budget, in terms of Natural Resources, all we have to look at is what are the expenditures, continual cutbacks. I am not expounding the idea of more expenditures, but there should be fair treatment because the things that affect my people in terms of Highways, Municipal Affairs and Natural Resources are things that have been neglected.

These are the areas that are being cut down, and my suspicion, Madam Speaker, is because they have mostly urban members here. The rural members that they have are just hanging on by the seat of their pants in terms of their seats as well as their views, and they have very little influence as to what happens in Cabinet - this has been illustrated.

Madam Speaker, where does the average individual, as a constituent, base their judgment? What do they base it on? They base it on how it affects me as an individual. Every individual, whether it's a farmer, whether it's a businessman, whether it's a working man, how does the performance of the government affect me as an individual? And that is what they base their judgment on. And, Madam Speaker, after the last election in 1986, it was sort of a dicey thing. And that's what happens here in this House.

We had the Throne Speech, and it's surprising what you can do with words, with professional people. I'm an average layman, Madam Speaker. I lay it on the line; I speak my mind, and my people expect me to do that. We had a Throne Speech, Madam Speaker, that has flowery words commending the government when everybody knows the government had a deplorable performance in terms of the Crown corporations. Everything they have touched has turned to a disaster. There's been basically very little that has been positive. How can members opposite get up and say, "Boy, have we done a good job." They've taxed them to death, cutting back on services, and then when we look at what's happened - and, Madam Speaker, this government came into a windfall. This government came into a windfall of income because of the big tax grab last year plus, federally, they came into a windfall.

This government has been continually basing everything that happened, unfortunately for the last years since they got elected in 1981, on the federal government. Ever since the Tories got elected federally, the Federal Government has cut back, cut back, cut back.

A MEMBER: They like the Liberals though.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: And, Madam Speaker, then when it comes to municipal politics, they have put a limit on their cost-sharing on the projects with the municipalities, and accuse the Federal Government on cutting back on what they thought they should be receiving. They received a windfall in terms of cost-sharing money this year. And when all these things finally - those people that take time to find out what it's all about, they get disillusioned by this kind of thing. And that is why this government has lost their credibility, have lost their credibility.

Madam Speaker, when the Member for Brandon West was speaking this afternoon - and he had done the

research and I had not - but when we talk of the fact that just our borrowings alone in this province, the cost of servicing or the interest costs are over \$500 some-odd million. Like, our Member for Morris, the critic, indicates I think the government is talking of \$523 million, and the Member for Morris, the critic of Finance, says that there probably are things that are not even covered yet. When the Member for Brandon West says that the cost of paying the interest on our borrowings is more money than it would take to service 16 departments - 16 departments - I find that ludicrous, Madam Speaker.

So we talk of deficit, and I listened to the Minister of Labour say, "When times are tough we have to borrow, and then when times get better, we take and cover that up." Well, if the income picture isn't a time of riches right now, Madam Speaker, what is? Now is the time when we should have gotten the deficit under control because to service the debt - and it's going to be over \$500 million, maybe \$600 million, more than 16 departments that we'll spend on the government's side - then it's ludicrous. And that is why, Madam Speaker, there's always been an onus and pressure on government to bring your deficit down because the costs are too high of the money that you borrow.

Can you imagine if we could take that money that we use to service debt, Madam Speaker, and spend that on highways in one year? Can you imagine our Capital expenditure on highways is around \$88 million or \$89 million dollars, if we spent all that money on roads in one year that we pay for interest, or if we built hospitals for that kind of money, or any of the services that are so desperately needed? That is why their performance, the economic performance, of this government since '81 has been going downhill.

Finally, Madam Speaker, and the public is forgiving at many times, they've finally reached a point of no return. Now, the other question is, Madam Speaker, when can we get rid of these incompetents? And they know their term is limited. Now, are they going to hang on, as is their tendency, as long as possible, you know, so they can keep all their friends employed? When they ask, give us some constructive criticism, my leader today indicated many options that they could use in terms of getting things under control.

Madam Speaker, I would like to see more money spent on highways. I would like to see, in the Department of Natural Resources, more money spent. I would like to see municipalities have the benefit, Madam Speaker, of the one program that the Premier promised in the last election when he said we will set up a fund to make available to municipalities, in terms of building bridges to provide fire halls, to provide certain services. That still hasn't come.

But the Minister of Finance gets up and spends a lot of time reading that speech of his, making it sound like everything is fine. Madam Speaker, it is not fine; it is not fine. Madam Speaker, if I had my druthers, and the people of Manitoba had their druthers at this stage of the game, we would be having an election. It came close on Monday and I have some views as to what happened when we had that vote, but we'll leave that for the time being. We'll have the opportunity to debate that.

When we consider what could have happened should have happened. Members opposite know and I found

it interesting when we look back to '84 when this government was very unpopular, and they said we came back. It was virtually a tie at the time when the election took place, but this time you hurt the people in much more ways than just the one, just the language debate. You hurt them in the pocket; you've lost their trust, with all their scandals, and that's what, Madam Speaker, bothers me a little bit.

As an average individual, when Ministers are asked a question - and some of them, Madam Speaker, are forthright - they come forward and say -(Interjection)- I'm not complimenting, but the odd time you have somebody saying, listen, this is where it's at. But the majority of them, Madam Speaker, will not give straight answers; they fudge around.

The Member for St. James has been a typical example of disaster as a Minister, whatever department he's been in. Madam Speaker, it's not fun to pick at members of the government because of their inability, but it has to be illustrated to the people of Manitoba that there are members there, many of the Ministers, are totally incapable of what they're doing. A prime example is the Member for St. James.

Madam Speaker, in the Department of Natural Resources, when I was his critic and he was the Minister, I found it challenging to debate with him and be his critic. But since that time, Madam Speaker, that gentleman has gone downhill. From one department to the other, it's a fiasco, a disaster. I would hope that the Member for St. James, with his legal profession, can maybe look back and get into the legal profession because politics is not his game. I don't think it's his game. -(Interjection)- Well, there must some be people that would enjoy that.

Madam Speaker, when we look through the list of the Ministers, it reminds me of the time when Sterling Lyon, the ex-Premier, was sitting after he stepped down and we had a leadership review. I remember the ex-Premier then sat in that corner; he'd had his highlight and stuff. He'd get up and he'd make his speeches and he just devastated government. In fact, there wasn't a member opposite, there was no heckling because anybody - Madam Speaker, I think possibly yourself might even remember some of the shots that came from time to time, because the heckling surely - I found it enjoyable though. He was always a very dynamic speaker and very critical and the heckling was at a low key because he'd shoot anybody down. He was a very qualified individual.

Madam Speaker, what I was referring to was when he spoke about the changes in Cabinet. There'd been a shuffle and he said it was like rearranging the chairs on the Titanic as the ship was going down. When the present Premier made this big shuffle in his Cabinet and moved everybody around, it was like rearranging the chairs on the Titanic again, Madam Speaker, because each one of them had a big load on his shoulders and the problems in their department. Then they moved from theirs and took over the next one and it just mushroomed.

Madam Speaker, the people of Manitoba are not fooled by that. That kind of a shuffle doesn't do a thing because the past Minister of Natural Resources - and I'll have opportunity to talk about his performance - is now the Minister of Agriculture. I don't know what he's going to be wearing after we get through with this

Budget because the farmers are going to be very upset. He's always had a good style of speaking and making everything sound easy and smooth.

The farmers are not going to accept the fact that there hasn't been one dollar added to the disastrous situation in agriculture. He can speak whichever way he wants out of both sides of his mouth. The farmers are going to be very unhappy with this Budget at a time when they're in a crisis situation. He gets up and he says this is, Madam Speaker, what is wrong with the system. The Ministers who have the responsibility, instead of saying, yes, we have a problem, we can only do so-and-so much, they try and be glib. The now-Minister of Agriculture says, under the Grain Equalization Program, there's been a 500 percent increase. Why can't he just indicate -(Interjection)- No, the Minister of Agriculture said it. Why can't he just be honest and frank and say, hey, listen, these are the limitations?

We've heard flowery speeches -(Interjection)- yes, I want to talk about Autopac - the Minister of Energy is just a great help, Madam Speaker. I want to talk about Autopac. You know what's happened? You know why people are upset with Autopac? I can pay my Autopac, Madam Speaker, but how many of our poor people - I'm talking of the people with the marginal income - haven't got their car registered today? I'm talking of senior citizens, Madam Speaker. I'm talking of the people on social services and I'm talking of the young kids.

Madam Speaker, I have two young kids at home. One of my daughters bought a car for \$3,000.00. it's a 1979 Caprice Classic . . .

A MEMBER: Does it use leaded gas?

MR. A. DRIEDGER: No, it uses unleaded. Madam Speaker, she's making the payments on the car; she just started working a few months ago. She bought this car; she drives to Steinbach with the car. She can't afford to take and register it. I could, as a father, give her the money maybe to register the car, but she bought the car for \$3,000 and the registration is \$650.00. She's parking it now; she's trying to make arrangements to have a ride because she hasn't got enough money to pay for it.

I say to you how many people are in that position who can't afford to register their car right now? There are a lot.

We members here in this House shouldn't worry about us, but it's the poor people. It's another example of this government who talks all the time about caring for the low income people. These are the people who you're hitting with the various taxes that you do. You are.

Madam Speaker, it's hypocrisy, it's deception on this government's behalf and it is these things that may finally make the people in Manitoba realize that this is not a good government. This is not a good government. This is not a good government.

Madam Speaker, there are so many things that this government has done wrong. They've lost touch. I remember how they used to say, we consult with the people of Manitoba. Time and time again, in the last while, Madam Speaker, we have proved that they don't

consult. They make a decision and say we were consulted.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs hasn't consulted with the municipal people. The Minister of Finance hasn't consulted with the municipal people about this 3 percent limit on them. He says I will tell them afterwards it's happened. It's this kind of an attitude that has turned the people off, Madam Speaker. It is unfortunate.

You know, Madam Speaker, it would be a biased situation if I pleaded with this government to call an election. I would like to have that happen. Because if every member, the Ministers, if they were sincere, they would realize that they've got themselves into a mind set and into a bind that they can't get out of. They can't get out of it and they now have a dilemma. Now it's a matter of, never mind what's good for Manitoba, hanging on to power. They've surrounded themselves with all their cronies and friends and allies that are all employed at high cost. Madam Speaker, I nearly fell off my chair when I found out that Harvey Bostrom, an ex-member of the Legislature, was hired for \$55 or \$56,000, as secretary of the River Restoration Program or whatever the case may be.

Madam Speaker, it is these kinds of things, and there's a legacy of it, literally hundreds of them, and that is why this government . . . - (Interjection)-

If the Ministers were sincere, they would say to Premier Pawley, or Premier Pawley if he was concerned about Manitoba: We run the course. We have no options left. We don't know how to get out of this quagmire. In spite of the Minister of Finance's fine words and the Throne Speech, it is finished.

Why would you not do the honourable thing? The number game is close. You have to pass everything that you do in front of the Member for St. Vital. You've lost your credibility. Why won't we go to the public? Let's use free trade as an issue. Let's use the performance of this government. Let's use this Budget as an issue. Let's go and clear the air, and then we'll decide what's going to happen. They use that approach and tell the Federal Government to call an election on free trade, but they haven't got the guts to do it.

I'll tell you something, Madam Speaker, if we had that opportunity, the people of Manitoba know what they want right now in spite of this government not knowing what they want to do. They have no direction left - no plan. Where are we going? The Member for Morris has asked give us a financial plan for two years, three years, somewhere along the line. There's nothing. It's a day-to-day reaction. It's a disaster.

Madam Speaker, that is why I see that sickly look in the members' opposite faces because they know they cannot pull this thing out of the water. There is no way. In fact, I don't think that the Ministers basically are running the government any more. I think it's the bureaucrats behind the scenes and all the apple-polishers who are telling him what to say and what to do and that is the tragedy of it.

Madam Speaker, I always enjoy getting up here and stating my views . . .

A MEMBER: Oh, we always enjoy you, Albert.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Well, I don't really care whether they enjoy it or not, Madam Speaker, but I feel that it

is my prerogative and my responsibility to bring forward the views of my people, how I see the effect of things that happen to the people of my area, and the sooner . . .

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. A. DRIEDGER: I'm not finished yet. The sooner the people of Manitoba can speak again in a public election, I think it will be the better for everybody, including these members. If the people of Manitoba saw fit to re-elect these people, I'd accept that. It would be grudgingly, but I would accept that. - (Interjection)- For those remarks, I would say to the Minister of Finance, don't pluck your feathers and think that you've done such a tremendous job. You've been fortunate that there's been excessive income coming in, but you've taxed the people of Manitoba down to their knees.

Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

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

I always find it extremely entertaining to follow the Member for Emerson and I seem to do it a great deal. I don't know what it is that's happening here. The Member for Emerson is always entertaining; very often he is informative. However, he sort of missed something that he seems to have followed the speakers before him in missing this and basically what he missed in his Budget Debate was the Budget. Somehow this never got discussed in the remarks from the Member for Emerson, which doesn't surprise me because I think it's a very good Budget.

It's a Budget that does the kind of things that members opposite have been telling us that we should be doing. It exercises and continues to exercise control on the deficit and it does the things that some of the members have been saying in a "me too" and "let's have it both ways" classification as it also increases substantially money for help, for social services, and particularly one small area, one small step for men.

I'd like to tell a little story about a constituent of mine. Sam Kirschner and his wife called me sometime ago about their father-in-law, her father, who's 80-some odd years old, a retired dentist who had to go to Montreal for brain surgery because of water in the brain. He could not get the surgery here. They are not poor people. They took him to Montreal, the surgery was performed in Montreal and they came back. The surgery there was no problem about reciprocal agreements under the medical plan of Canada in surgery being paid for. She took two weeks off work to go with her father. She paid air fare for herself and her father. There was no reimbursement. They wrote to me. I asked the Minister of Health to respond to this.

What you saw in this Budget was a response. Now whether it was to this specific case, I don't know. It is not a unique complaint - I am sure other members of this House have heard it - of people who have to bear the expense with an ill relative who cannot go by themselves to get a treatment that is not available here. They were bearing the burden of the expense not only for the relative but for themselves.

Well, this may be a small part of this very large \$4 billion-plus Budget, but I would tell you, Madam Speaker, I am very proud that we have dealt with this matter in a way that the people opposite talk about the little guy and the working people and the poor people. Well, Madam Speaker, just this one small item tells me the kind of compassion and the kind of feeling that this government has for the small people. I spoke to Mr. and Mrs. Kirschner on Saturday after they had seen the Budget and these were very happy people. Madam Speaker, these are people who felt that they had been heard in their complaint.

Now, there is still to be determined - the Member for Thompson today in question period brought up the matter of an air ambulance fee of \$8,000 which is now not going to have to be paid by the individuals. Why? Because of the compassion, the intelligence and the foresight of this Minister of Finance and this Budget in effecting and listening to the concerns of people and acting on them in a responsible manner while cutting the deficit, which is not what we hear from members on the other side.

What we hear from the members on the other side is nothing to do with the Budget and I would like to deal, as a unique facet of this debate, perhaps first, until the Minister of Finance speaks, with the Budget.

I'd like to first talk about the general economic picture in this province, and I would suggest that members opposite may not have opened their books and cracked this document. You have a document called The Manitoba Budget Address 1988. I don't know if it is necessary to table it so you read it, but I might have to do that. If you look at page 6 in the appendix - the appendix is a fascinating section - it talks about: In the past six years, Manitoba's economic performance has been better than Canada's over a broad range of economic indicators. Real Gross Domestic Product, non-residential investment, housing starts and personal income all increased more rapidly in Manitoba than in Canada since 1981, a reasonably significant year - which I don't have to go into yet - while consumer price increases have been more moderate.

I'd like to talk more about some of the generalities. If one refers to page 16, it talks about non-residential investment. From 1983 to '87 non-residential capital investment in Manitoba increased by \$980 million to just over \$2.7 billion. The 56 percent increase in Manitoba was double the national average of 28 percent and second only to Ontario among provinces.

Private sector - and I have heard on numerous occasions over the last three years all the terrible things this government is doing to the private sector. They're all leaving. The wagons are going. I've heard this. Well, the private sector non-residential investment increased at an annual rate of 8.8 percent on average, from '83 to '87, the third strongest growth among provinces after Ontario and Quebec.

By the way, I might point out that Ontario and Quebec are not Conservative and neither are we. So, if you look at the first three provinces in this country with private investment, none of them are Conservative provinces.

I would also like to point out the big boys. We hear about Westfair going to leave the province. All those wonderful people from Westfair that the Member for Brandon West loved so well during the strike, that

they're going to leave. Well, look at the last line of page 16 which says, growth and Capital investment spending of large firms in Manitoba is projected to exceed the national average in 1988, according to the latest Federal Department of Regional Industrial Expansion Survey. I think that is probably not an unbiased source. That is certainly not a New Democratic source.

What the Budget is pointing out is generally - ladies and gentlemen colleagues in this Legislature - that the economy in this province has done well under this government, is continuing to do well, and is projected by almost every indicator and every projector, from banks and investment houses, that it will continue to do well under this government.

But the Member for Emerson made a comment and it is an important comment. I think we should look at that in the Budget. It is the general person in the street and in the community who really doesn't understand economic indicators, doesn't understand percentages of housing starts, Capital investment. They ask, as the Member for Emerson very clearly and accurately pointed out, how does this affect me?

Well, I think we should look at how it affects me, and it is also in this document, a very interesting document if someone on the other side of the House might take the time to read it. On page 12, in the appendix, Disposable Income Per Person, disposable income per person averaged \$13,840 in 1987, an increase of \$4,500 per Manitoban since 1981 and was second only to Ontario among provinces and raised the total to 98 percent of the national average, 96 percent in 1981.

Slow but sure, and we're getting there, what this means is that the disposable income, the amount of money Manitobans have to spend on the necessities and the luxuries in this world, is increasing. It is increasing also - well, what are the expenditures? I mean, I have heard the Member for Emerson. I have heard the Member for Emerson and I have heard one of the leaders, the leader from Tuxedo, who speaks in a different voice than the leader from Pembina or the leader from Morris. The leader from Tuxedo is saying that, oh, we're taxing people to death; we're killing them with taxes; the costs are going up.

Let's take a look at this. Apartment rents - renters of one bedroom apartments in Winnipeg and Edmonton are currently paying the lowest rate among 10 Canadian cities. We are also looking at food costs in here, and that is . . . Oh, electricity costs! Our wonderful Crown corporation much condemned by the Member for Lakeside. Based on consumption of 750 kilowatt hours of electricity, a Winnipeg resident pays 34.36 cents per month, about one-fifth lower than the 10-city average in Canada. Not bad.

Another item that this deals with - this document, which is a very interesting and informative document - is the labour scene. I've heard particularly from the Member for Brandon West and during the hearings and from members of the Chamber of Commerce and from one young lawyer, the son of a father who also does some work for government periodically, is that the labour situation in this province is just awful, it's just absolutely terrible.

Well, I would like to point out that on page 15 of this document - Person Days Lost to Strikes or Lockouts, 1983 to 1987 - Manitoba has one of the best

labour management relations records in Canada. Time lost due to strikes and lockouts, relative to the size of the work force, was the second lowest among the provinces, behind Prince Edward Island, and less than one-quarter of the Canadian average.

I would also like to point out when I say the only province we are behind, Madam Speaker, is Prince Edward Island, well, Prince Edward Island has a population of about 100,000 people. It also points out that we have 150,000 Manitobans in a non-agricultural work force. We have more people working in this province than live in Prince Edward Island that we are second to. So what I would suggest is we are first, Madam Speaker, in our labour relations.

Oh, I might mention also, on the personal costs, the food costs, in the 18-city survey in Canada for the four of the last five years shows the weekly food cost in Winnipeg is the lowest among 18 cities in Canada.

Our rents are lower, our food costs are lower, our incomes are growing, our disposable incomes are growing, our investment is growing. Not bad, Madam Speaker. We're not doing very badly at all.

MR. S. ASHTON: I'd say we're doing rather well.

MR. M. DOLIN: You see, the Member for Thompson suggests we're doing rather well. That's something the Member for Emerson missed, the Member for Brandon West missed, and the leaders, whichever one spoke this afternoon, on the other side. The reason I say this is let me talk about what the leaders are concerned about. They're concerned about the deficit.

There is good reason to be concerned about the deficit, but they say we shouldn't bash the feds, that they have no responsibility, the Federal Government are good guys, they're increasing constantly. I've heard this from every member opposite in the last three years, Madam Speaker.

I'd like to refer them to page 2 in the second appendix. Financial statistics - fascinating column. The column is Manitoba Revenue by Source 1980-81 to 1988-89 - the percentage of the provincial Budget total from federal transfer payments - and I would like these figures in the record, Madam Speaker, and I will read them: 80-81, the Province of Manitoba received 42.4 percent of its Budget in federal transfers; the next year 38.4; in 82-83 - 38.2; 83-84 - 37.1 - down, down, down we go, Madam Speaker; 84-85, there was a little blip - 37.5; 85-86 - 35.5; 86-87 - 34.3 - down, down, down, Madam Speaker; 87-88 - whoa! - 31.7; and 88-89, in this Budget year, 30.5. This is down from 42.4, when we formed government here, to 30.5. A loss of 12 percent on a \$4 billion Budget, Madam Speaker, is a federal responsibility. Now, Madam Speaker, is this fedbashing or is this being realistic and trying to stand up for Manitoba? We are standing up for Manitoba. They are selling out.

Let me point out further how they are selling out. There is an interesting little thing which is Taxation Adjustments on pages 9, 10 and 11, which tells you - and this being tax time and everybody can go down to their post office and get a tax form - the little scams to their friends in business put in by the federal Conservatives in the Wilson Government, and how much it is costing us as a province is worked out here, which

is interesting, because it's not how much it costs the entire Canadian taxpayers but how much it takes out of the pockets of Manitobans.

Contributions to RRSP's, Madam Speaker, which is a good thing for those who do not have their own pensions, was \$36.3 million we lost in taxation. What's interesting that I find is Registered Pension Plans was \$34.2 million. There is more money being lost to RRSP's than there are to pension plans. I find there is something wrong with that, Madam Speaker. There are either not enough people who have pension plans in this province or there is too much money being given away to people with RRSP's. That certainly bears looking at.

Dividend gross-up and tax credits, \$8.6 million was lost; preferences for capital gains, we lost - the Province of Manitoba - \$29.8 million.

A MEMBER: Highway robbery.

MR. M. DOLIN: It builds a lot of highways. I heard "highway robbery" on the other side. That's exactly right; they are robbing your highways. The Federal Government has taken \$29.8 million and given it to speculators instead of building highways. Do I hear one word from the other side? Not a peep. (Interjection)- I'm not finished, Madam Speaker. The chirping from the link on the other side can wait.

Partial exclusion of capital gains - \$14.8 million; \$11.6 million for excess capital cost allowance over book depreciation. This is all for poor people, Madam Speaker.

Let me tell you something that I find appalling. The most appalling part of what I have heard so far is the leader from Tuxedo as opposed to the leader from Morris, and I'll get to the leader from Tuxedo.

MADAM SPEAKER: May I remind the honourable member to only address honourable members by their proper titles in the House.

MR. M. DOLIN: The Member for Tuxedo, the present leader of the Conservative Party, the present and maybe not future leader of the Conservative Party, has stood up during two elections that I have been aware of and said he would eliminate the payroll tax.

I challenge any member on the other side to stand up and deny that the Leader of the Opposition, the Member for Tuxedo, has said he would eliminate the payroll tax. He has told us that Dorothy Dobbie, the present president of the Chamber of Commerce, and all of her predecessors, they support and they have publicly supported that statement that the payroll tax will be gotten rid of.

Well, what does that mean, Madam Speaker? It is \$197.4 million. Now, \$197.4 million means eliminating the entire budget for the Departments of Agriculture, Business Development and Tourism, Co-op Development, Energy and Mines, Environment and Workplace Safety and Health, Housing, Industry, Trade and Technology, and for good measure, Consumer and Corporate Affairs - all of them - and there's still a million dollars left over, Madam Speaker. That's what they would do.

Well, the Member for Morris, the man who would be leader, then says - and I've heard him shout this out

during the debate on numerous occasions - "Don't borrow - Tax," he said, and I quote. Well, we have cut the the operating deficit to \$68 million.

The present leader of the Conservative Party, the Member for Tuxedo says, "Add \$197.4 million to that." The Member for Emerson says, "Build more highways." He says, "Build more hospitals - where's my hospital?" The Member for Morris then says, "Don't borrow, tax." What kind of tax? A payroll tax is obviously a no-no - the payroll tax. The day they are elected they have sworn, Madam Speaker, they will eliminate the payroll tax. They have gone to the business community with that as a promise and the business community, the Chamber of Commerce, have come out and supported them on that basis.

MR. G. ROCH: What about the employees who work with those businesses? Don't you care about them?

MR. M. DOLIN: Ah, the Member for Springfield suggests he . . .

MR. G. ROCH: I care for the employees, what about the employees?

MR. M. DOLIN: The employees - what about the employees?

MR. G. ROCH: Do you care about them?

MR. M. DOLIN: I would suggest, Madam Speaker, that the Member for Springfield should sit down with the Member for Morris. I would first suggest that the Member for Springfield take a valium - calm yourself. I am suggesting something perhaps for your edification. Will you sit down with the Member for Morris who has some understanding of economics? He disappoints me on occasion, but he is not stupid when it comes to determining what effects adding \$197.4 million to the deficit of this province would mean. He is saying, "Do not borrow because borrowing mortgages the future of the people of this province. Do not borrow - tax."

I then challenge the Member for Morris and his colleague, the present leader, who would do away with the tax. Where would this tax be? It obviously, Madam Speaker, would not be a payroll tax. An equivalent to mounting a sales tax would bring the sales tax up to approximately 11 percent. I think that's a frightening amount. What would happen to the employees in the retail sector if the sales tax went up to 11 percent? I answer the Member for Springfield, there would be a lot of them out of work.

Where would the businesses be? A lot of them would be moving into Alberta where there is no sales tax. Maybe the Member for Morris and his colleague, the present leader and Member for Tuxedo, should think about that, should think about the ramifications of saying, "Get rid of the payroll tax, no more payroll tax - \$197.4 million - but don't borrow." So what you would have is here in this solid Opposition the people who would be government, who are telling us how to run a government, Madam Speaker. These people are saying you have one, who is presently the leader, saying, "Cut the payroll tax, cut the deficit." You have the other, who would be the leader saying, "Don't borrow any

money, raise taxes." Yet the people of Manitoba - and I think one of the reasons that the fellows and women on the other side of the House have lost four out of five elections is because people don't believe that nonsense.

You can't say both things to people; they're not fools. The people in this province are not going to be suckered in by one person saying we're going to cut your taxes and the other person saying we're going to increase your taxes. What they ask and a logical thing because, as the Member for Emerson says, people ask, "How does this affect me?" When somebody cuts the payroll tax and adds that money to the deficit and the member who would be either leader or Finance Minister in a Conservative Government says, "Tax, tax, tax, tax," while the backbench says, "Spend, spend, spend," Madam Speaker.

This is a bizarre kind of chorus. It is antiphonic, Madam Speaker, it is cacophonous. It makes no sense; there is no harmony. On this side of the House you have harmony. The harmony is in this beautiful, brown document, Madam Speaker, that cuts the Budget without significantly raising taxes and increases the amount of money spent for people services. That is the difference. The difference between these two governments are chaos on the other side of the House and some logic and consistency on this side of the House.

The Member for Emerson says, "Call an election." Madam Speaker, if I had my way, I would call an election because in 30 days it would make so much sense to the people that they cannot get away with what they are saying, that people will not buy it. It will not wash because it is not possible and it is not true. What you have here is a good Budget, a responsible Budget, from a group of people who have experienced government, who know how to govern. If in governing this province, except for four dark and best forgotten years since 1969, we have experienced government and we will continue to do this.

Madam Speaker, I would suggest that before the loud voices on the other side come into this Legislature or go into the streets and say we want an election that the Member for Morris had better talk to the Member for Tuxedo, who had better talk to the Member for Brandon West, to get their act together and start singing in harmony because what we hear here and what we see here is not harmony, it's nonsense. It is total noise without any focus, without any direction. I suggest to honourable members that this Budget is something they should start learning how to read, that they should come up with something as reasonable as this if they ever intend to govern this province.

Madam Speaker, all I would say and this is that the figures speak for themselves. I commend this Budget to the people of the Province of Manitoba. I suggest that they read it because obviously the misinformation coming from the other side of the House will not convince anybody that they not only read the Budget, that this is not a perfect Budget, it is the best Budget given the circumstances we have, given the finances and given the will of this government to protect the services that people need.

We are going to implement this Budget. We would appreciate cooperation from members opposite but we will live without it, Madam Speaker. We have lived

without it before; we will live without it again. I personally, Madam Speaker, look forward to debating this in a more significant place. I look forward to debating what they are saying on the other side, and this total inconsistency and this total argument between various members on the other side, I look forward to debating that on the hustings and on the streets. I want to see them try and sell that nonsense to the people of Manitoba because this Budget can be sold. This Budget will be sold, Madam Speaker. I oppose the amendment as being facetious, absurd and political grandstanding.

I suggest to honourable members on the other side they read the Budget, that they get their act together and decide whether they want to cut the deficit or increase services and whether they really want to protect people or whether they want to harm them, what they really want to do. Then I would suggest we finish the Estimates, debate the Budget, and let's get on with governing this province in the proper way.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Springfield.

MR. G. ROCH: Well, I certainly would like to congratulate whichever of the numerous hacks and flacks that this government hires who wrote the speech for the Member for Kildonan. It was obviously, it was so - he almost crawled on his hands and knees to allow this Budget. He is wanting to go to an election. He says things like that knowing full well that this government hasn't got the guts to call an election right now. I'm sorry, Madam Speaker, I said something unparliamentary. I withdraw those remarks. This government does not have the courage to call an election. - (Interjection)- November, the Member for Elmwood says, fine. Fine, I say, the sooner the better. I would like to see it next week.

But in any case, Madam Speaker, I hadn't originally planned on speaking tonight, otherwise I would have given the required 24 hours notice for the translators so I could have made a few remarks in French. But this government does not allow, they pay a lot of lip service - (Interjection)- Oh, I hear, oh, oh, from the dumbbells from the back benches and the few in the front benches. The Minister who interfered with Workers Compensation for many years, the Member for Radisson, who interfered politically, ministerially, so his friends could get compensation. It's on record, he's unhappy; that's why he opposes hearings into the Workers Compensation Board.

But that's another topic for another day, Madam Speaker. He's a little sensitive about that. He said the other day he would have spoken for two hours; he had trouble with two minutes. After that it was the usual drivel. The Government House Leader put program one on the current Minister and program two on the former Minister. It was tweedledum and tweedledummer. Madam Speaker, but you know a colleague of mine says there was a lot of meat in their speeches. Unfortunately it was all baloney.

In any case, Madam Speaker, I'm here to speak on the Budget. As the member for wherever, the pride of Kildonan, you know, rah, rah, rah, rah - everybody knows who he is. He used to play ball in the standings with the Dodgers but in any case . . .

A MEMBER: Brooklyn Dodgers. - (Interjection)-

MR. G. ROCH: Sorry about that, Madam Speaker, I couldn't help it. There's a couple of members on the team on that side. Of course, the Member for St. James doesn't really care for those people, we all know that. Would he be a bigot because he doesn't care for Americans? I don't know. But the fact is, Madam Speaker, this is a very standpat Budget, a very standpat Budget. Why?

You know, they taunt us about leaders here, eh? It's a well-known fact that the Member for Concordia is very much so a leadership candidate. He hasn't got much of a power base in his own party, but he has the power within the union movement. But regardless of this facetious talk about leaders, we all know who - the controller used to be the Member for Churchill. I guess he still does to a certain extent, but right now the Member for St. Vital calls the shots.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. G. ROCH: That's right. We get heckled if we criticize anything they do. The Premier goes on TV like this, "it's constructive criticism," and yet he gave more of a Tory speech than anyone else during the Speech from the Throne.

Madam Speaker, they like to brag that there were no major tax increases this last Budget. The 2 percent tax on net income, which was brought on last year, really kicks in this year. That's a fact. They have raped and pillaged the taxpayers in the last year. They will continue to do so this year. They are reaping the revenues this year to finance their misguided programs and what have you. The fact is, too - it's been overlooked by many people - that the Budget this year has done nothing to eliminate that tax and it's a tax on the working people, especially, of Manitoba. It's a tax which takes effect before any deductions are taken into account. What have they done to alleviate that? Nothing, absolutely nothing. The fact remains that people have less, much less disposable income, due to higher taxes, due to higher fees, due to the higher cost of everything in Manitoba, because of this government. Let's not forget Autopac. - (Interjection)- The Member for Radisson is proud of that. He says, "That's good, let's do that more."

A MEMBER: Like Western Grain Stabilization.

MR. G. ROCH: That's a real example of how members opposite think. Raise everything - socialism - the equal distribution of misery. Madam Speaker, the results, what are the results of this economic downturn? - one of them, specifically Autopac. There was a headline in the Free Press, and the members opposite often criticize the Free Press so they must be doing something right. The headline says, "Autopac bites restaurant and retail sales." I'll just read the first paragraph. It says, "Heavy increases in Autopac rates this year have caused restaurants and retail stores an additional 10 percent reduction in business during the traditionally slow month of February, industry spokesmen say." That's what this government is doing to us. That's just one small example, that's just Autopac.

Madam Speaker, what else have they done? Again, they like to say taxes have not gone up much this year, but yet last year we had one of the biggest tax grabs in the history of this province. Never, never, except with the point of a gun, have people had so much money taken away from them as they have by this government of bandits.—(Interjection)—The tax of 2 percent I touched.

Hydro rates went up 9.7 percent. Was it reduced this year? No. Telephone rates have gone up; Autopac has gone right out of sight. All fees have gone up; sales tax have gone up; land transfer tax has gone up; sales tax; payroll tax; even the tax on water. I'm surprised that they're not taxing the air we breathe this year. The only reason they probably didn't do that is because —(Interjection)—I shouldn't say that, they might do it. But they won't do it this year because they're still not sure, despite his public announcements, how the Member for St. Vital will vote. Therefore, they haven't dare yet taxed the air we breathe.

Madam Speaker, in a recent editorial the Free Press said the trouble is that last year's massive tax increases, the biggest tax grab in the province's history, continues to bite, relieving Manitoba taxpayers of an additional \$400 million. Manitobans, as they complete their income tax forms, realize what Mr. Kostyra did to them a year ago. When they fill out their forms a year from now, they will understand that they were given in this Budget another dose of the same medicine.

Well, one could say it's simply an editorial writer putting his opinion. That is true. The fact is we hear it over and over and over again from different constituents. We heard one of the members a while ago saying my constituency this, my constituency that. I think they're being very selective as to who they hear from, very selective. Because if an election were held right now, where would we get volunteers for our campaigns? It would be very simple. We would go to the nearest Autopac outlet and get the volunteers from the line-up. About the only Autopac outlet that probably doesn't have any line-up is the Member for Elmwood's. I wouldn't blame them for not buying from him because he's responsible for their increases.

Madam Speaker, this government is being very hypocritical. They are not reducing the deficit without major tax increases. The fact is, as I said earlier, they are reaping windfalls from last year's Budget. It's those revenues which are helping a tiny bit, a very tiny bit, to reduce the deficit. Madam Speaker, the massive tax revenue they had last year, of all the revenues which were brought in last year, very little of it is going to reduce the deficit. The irony is that they're being forced to reduce a deficit that they created. They created the deficit; about that there is no doubt.

Manitoba has been a province since 1870, and yet half of the accumulated deficit was created by the people sitting opposite since 1981. It took 111 years to accumulate the total deficit and only six years for this government to accumulate the other half. Of that, no less than \$5 billion is direct government debt. If you include the Crown corporations, the total debt is \$10.5 billion - in six short years, Madam Speaker. That's unbelievable. It's unheard of in history. Here or anywhere else.

Madam Speaker, of that debt - well it works out to approximately \$10,000 for every woman, man and child in this province - the alarming factor is 58 percent.

Last year it was less than half. This year 58 percent, no less than that in any case, possibly more, is owed to foreign lenders. The average family of four is in debt in Manitoba alone of \$40,000.00. They owe approximately \$25,000 of that to foreign lenders, and we're talking Canadian dollars here. Currency fluctuations could increase that much more. It could always decrease it, hopefully it will. But whether it decreases or increases, the fact remains that we're in debt more than we can afford. Businesses, families cannot operate that way.

Madam Speaker, we hear these people rail against the banks all the time. Yet, who are the biggest beneficiaries of these Budgets? The bankers, Madam Speaker. The very bankers that they rail against are the benefactors of this government. They crawl on their bellies; they go on their hands and knees; they go cap in hand to the bankers of Zurich, of London, New York, Tokyo, wherever they lend money, say please, please, can you lend us more money so we can finance our ineptness, our incompetence? And, of course, they do. As long as there are working people in Manitoba whom they will tax to pay for their follies because very few, if any of them, ever worked a day in their life. But they will tax the people that work for a living to pay for those debts. So the bankers love them, Madam Speaker. They just love them. Of that there is no doubt.

What's alarming about all this, Madam Speaker, is that servicing the debt is fast becoming our fastest growing expenditure. As a matter of fact, and I'll quote the same article I read from awhile ago, it says, "The result now is that a larger proportion of the money the government takes from taxpayers has gone to finance the growing provincial debt. Today in what the government claims is the sixth year of sustained economic growth, it still projects the deficit of \$334 million." Despite Mr. Kostyra's boasts, that does not reflect the fiscal strategy which is rational, which is well thought out, which is working.

Madam Speaker, that somewhat sums it up. The result of this ever-growing interest, this ever-growing need to finance the debt of this government of mismanagers, basically a bunch of incompetent socialist ideologues is what they are. They've gone right out into Neanderthal times, picked out outdated policies and they're trying to make them work in the 1980's. They don't work any more. And what's the result of that? Well, they take some 1910, 1920 ideologies, try to put them in the 80's, and what do we have? The Department of Finance is now the second largest department in terms of dollars, having gone from fourth to second place, and the worse part is it's showing no signs of stopping.

Finance now surpasses education as far as gobbling up tax revenues. How long is it before it replaces health? As I've mentioned before, and I will never stop mentioning it, we have all seen, we all know what is happening to the health care system in Britain. It's falling apart, or at least was, because of governments with a similar ideological bent as these people.

This government has brought us to the point - is publicly saying that the Budget, which was brought down last Friday, that paying interest to foreign bankers is more important than educating students of Manitoba. That's a shame, Madam Speaker, a shame. How much longer is it before they decide that paying interest - possibly soon half the Budget will be interest - is more

important than taking care of the elderly, the ill, the dying and the crippled in our society? That's what this government is doing.

Madam Speaker, I have mentioned how close they are at getting to destroying our health care system. We've already seen what they've done to our system of highways, our infrastructures and our natural resources. In the right thinking government, in a well-balanced, rational government, highways and transportation, natural resources would be high priority departments. What does this government do? They use their incompetent Ministers, which they did not dare kick out of Cabinet, and demoted them to those departments. That's what they use natural resources and highways for - as a place to send their incompetent Ministers. Those are two areas where they should place competent people, and I realize there's a lack of it out there. One of their more competent people resigned not long ago, another did not run last time.

But the fact is the whole infrastructure of this province - and when I say infrastructure, I think we have to include natural resources because our parks are part of a total infrastructure. Those are very important key areas which we cannot allow to let go down the drain like they're doing to other departments. Like they are presently doing, where they're cutting back, when we're seeing millions and millions and millions of dollars taken out of that and instead being spent in areas such as communications which are a total and blatant waste of the taxpayers' money.

A MEMBER: Apple-polishers.

MR. G. ROCH: Apple-polishers, as the former union boss of the MGEA would call them.

What is frightening, Madam Speaker, is that interest charges now consume 13 percent of total revenues, approximately three times or maybe more than three times of the 1981 percentage. And this will continue to increase. What will happen then? There is no serious effort on the part of this government to actually contain the deficit. They keep saying platitudes like we're more interested in providing services, we're more interested to health care, we're more interested in this and in that. What they're really saying is that they've painted themselves into a corner, they're trying to borrow their way out of that corner and they can't do it.

What they can't or at least won't admit to realizing is that if they do not get the deficit under control all of our social programs will be destroyed. That is the No. 1 thing that has to be done. We have to get our finances under control. Sometimes I fear getting into government and inheriting the mess that they created. What motivates me is the fact that it has to be done; it has to be done. We have to get rid of this government and somehow or other I hope that the people of Manitoba will realize that never again must they be allowed to regain power. We simply cannot afford it. We're barely surviving right now. A second time around might bring about the destruction of Manitoba's finances as we know them today from our whole way of life.

Our whole economy, Madam Speaker, is based on borrowed money, and to prove that, I'd like to quote one of their own members, the Member for St. Vital,

who said on February 12, and I quote, "That's public money that we have been borrowing to pay for these things. Our economy is good on borrowed money. We've been doing well in this province. But are we doing well on borrowed money? The day of reckoning will come whether it's next year or the year after."

Madam Speaker, the Minister of Finance said that he is willing to have an election on this Budget. Well then, let's go for it. He said it when he leaked Budget information to the Winnipeg Sun the day before the Budget. Traditionally a Minister would resign for doing things like that. Traditionally, when a scandal-plagued government has all kinds of inept, incompetent, corrupt Ministers, they ask them to resign. This government did not.

They like to point at Ottawa. If a Minister does something wrong in Ottawa, however minor, even if it is perceived to be wrong, that Minister resigns. This government is full of incompetent Ministers who have done all kinds of scandalous things, not one of them has resigned, nor has the First Minister even asked for their resignation.

Why? Because, as their friend Frances Russell said, they are the Cabinet of the walking dead. The First Minister cannot afford to offend any more people than he already has because he can barely hang on to power the way it is. Madam Speaker, I, as all 25 of my colleagues, and I'm not sure about the Member for River Heights, but I don't think she would be willing, but she might be, but I know that we in the Progressive Conservative Caucus are willing now, tomorrow, any day, to face them in an election campaign.

So, instead of making small talk about "I'll go for an election on this Budget," do it and see what happens to you.-(Interjection)- Yes, he said that in the Winnipeg Sun and he never denied it. As a matter of fact, the butt kicker from Kildonan said it tonight that he would be willing to go to an election. I would love it. He would be the first one to be defeated.

Madam Speaker, the Minister of Finance claims that they have, and I quote, "managed well." Isn't that a joke? Isn't that preposterous? Managed well. Well, let's see what one of their members says about their management.

Again, I quote from the Member for St. Vital whom the First Minister asked to move the Speech from the Throne. Therefore, they must have a lot of faith and give a lot of credibility to what he says. What did he say? He said, "The average householder in this province usually knows that there are things to do around the house. Maybe the roof needs repairing a little bit and it would be nice to have a new carpet and maybe we should get a new dining room suite. The stove is on its last legs, and maybe a landscaping would add to the attractiveness of the garden. A different car would make transportation costs a little bit less. In fact, it would be nice to take a Caribbean holiday for a month this year. But the householder knows that he cannot afford to do all those things at the same time. Maybe he can afford to do some of them.

"He checks his bank balance, how much money he has. He checks his income for the year and how much his expenses are, and whether he can afford to put the money in that particular area. If something has to be financed over the years to come, again that has to be given consideration because that is limited for most

of us - there are not many of us who are millionaires. The householder will prioritize the things that need to be done and he will trade off safety against convenience and preventive measures against transportation and lifestyle and things like that, and generally put in some sort of order of priorities those things that ought to be done and those things that maybe ought to be done and maybe those things that can be put off for next year and, if he's wise, leaving a little bit of money on the side for unforeseen disasters, emergencies, which always crop up in the lives of householders. That we all know, too.

"Governments operate slightly differently, perhaps very differently," he goes on to say, "But is the forest of government programs to be paid for made up of those individual programs that are put in there, or does the government approach it from the other side and say, this is the size of the forest that we have, and we have to divide our resources up into the programs that we presently have? I suspect that it's the former rather than the latter.

"The government then finds itself with the problem of paying for all of this, and it turns to its trusty Minister of Finance every year and asks him to do his very best to pay for these commitments that have been made.

"So the Minister of Finance in a rather awkward position looks around to see which taxes can be increased? What new sources of revenue does the government have? What new thing can we tax? You know, there used to be an expression in the army that if it moves, salute it, and if it doesn't, paint it. I'm afraid government philosophy tends to be: if it moves, then tax it, and if it doesn't move, put a tax on it. That is the perception that people are getting out there.

"When they see all of these taxes, some of them are regressive. Some of them are not as progressive as they could be, like the sales tax. You have the employment tax which has a name that I cannot remember." Let's not forget, Madam Speaker, I am quoting the Member for St. Vital, because we all know what that tax is, it's a payroll tax.

But to continue the quote from the Member for St. Vital, "But at the same time, the Minister does not cover all of these outgoes, and so there is a deficit. He is borrowing money, and not just to build bridges" - I wonder if he included the bridge to nowhere in Selkirk. In any case, let us continue with the quote, "but not just to build bridges and schools and houses and other things, which can be amortized the same as the householder amortizes the cost of the house that he's buying. But the Minister is also borrowing money to operate the province on, and that's a situation that simply cannot occur. If you tell your neighbour or people that the province is borrowing money and it's like you, as the householder, being short of money to pay for groceries at the end of the year and you borrow money to pay for it, the householder knows that he has to pay that money back and so he won't do it. He knows that's the route to bankruptcy. Yet he sees his government doing that and that is not going to inspire confidence."

The Member for St. Vital goes on to say, "People are not sure that is happening. People are not sure of who is in charge of the store or, more frighteningly, if anyone is in charge of the store."

Madam Speaker, the Member for St. Vital said all these things. He pointed out all the items as to why this government does not deserve to be in office.

A MEMBER: Then what did he do?

MR. G. ROCH: Then, as my colleague for Emerson says, what did he do? Our reader's amendment addressed every single one of these concerns. What did he do? He supported this government. He said lamely, well, 10 days is not enough time for which to give them time to change. They've had six years to get their House in order and they never did.

Madam Speaker, I held on to hopes that night. We could feel the electricity that night. The galleries were full; the press gallery was full. Everybody was hoping, hoping that finally the Member for St. Vital would have the courage, would use his principles to help bring sane government to Manitoba. What did he do? One of two things. He either did not have the courage of his principles, the courage of his convictions, or else a deal was cut by the members opposite. That's the problem. He certainly did not do it because he listened to his constituents.

We know right now that it's not only the members opposite, half of whom their political lives are at stake. But the numerous parasites who live off the tax trough of this government, the Michael Balaguses of this world, there are hundreds of them who have never worked a day in their life, who would be without a job if this government lost power.

Madam Speaker, there is no NDP haven to run to. We've absorbed all the riffraff from Saskatchewan. Years ago we absorbed the riffraff from B.C. when they were defeated out there. There's no place for them to go. Even the Eastern Bloc won't have them. They have enough parasites out there already; they don't need the ones from Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, it was very disappointing. Since the beginning of this year I have been doing canvassing in my riding. I kept hearing, will he vote for you guys, will he vote for you guys? I was never sure but I held out the remote hope, the remote possibility that it could happen. There was even hope at one point from the Member for Inkster because of comments he made at his convention, because of the fact that they tried to knock him off the nomination last time. They will do so again next time. He has certain principles which I believe he believes in but unfortunately, and one of those is on the question of gay rights, but unfortunately both he and the former Member for St. Boniface prosecuted their principles in that bill and voted for it. The Whip was on.

But still the focus was all on the Member for St. Vital. But, Madam Speaker, he failed miserably to live up to the expectations of Manitoba and allow us to take over the reins of government with a massive majority that would have certainly come upon us. Of that there is no doubt.

Madam Speaker, the Minister of Finance says and I quote again: "They have managed well." Let's take a look at their record.

A MEMBER: You better mention Howie in your speech.

MR. G. ROCH: Howard who? Oh, the Member for Selkirk, the token Premier.

Madam Speaker, we all know. My colleagues, they mentioned the First Minister in my speech. What for?

He always has to look behind to the Member for Churchill before he can even answer a question - my golly. I respect the Member for Churchill. I wish I had that much power. As a matter of fact, if it wasn't for the Member for St. Vital, he wouldn't be as nervous as he is these days.

The Member for Selkirk is a very nice guy, don't get me wrong, but as far as intellectual depth and capabilities that's another story altogether. But we don't want to get into that kind of a story because we could break out into laughter here which would use up the rest of my time.

But going back to the Budget, the Minister of Finance who claims to have managed well, let's take a look at their record in managing Crown corporations. Many of my colleagues have cited examples, but they tend to throw that back at us because we are a bunch of Tories - we've done this, we've done that. So let's take one of their members. What has he got to say about their management of Crown corporations? I'm talking about the Member again for St. Vital who's been there since 1971. What does he say?

The public asks why do we lose these large numbers of millions of dollars in reinsurance? Did that happen just overnight or has that been happening over many years in the past? If it has been allowed to happen over many years, who was looking at it, who was in charge? Did the deficits in the compensation system - are tweedledum and tweedledummer listening? Your colleague says that the deficits in the compensation system happened overnight. How many years has it been that the government or the Compensation Board or whoever is responsible has been running in the illegal? Let me repeat what an NDP member said, "An illegal deficit for a number of years." But that did not happen overnight. It's been happening for several years and we know the year it happened, Madam Speaker - 1982.

He goes on to say about Crown corporations, "When it comes to MTX, did we lose that money in one night when somebody tripped over in the desert and spilled out \$27 million into the sand?" Of course not. It's been happening and developing over the years. It doesn't reflect well on the competence of the government. This is a government member speaking, Madam Speaker.

MR. G. FILMON: But he's voting for them.

MR. G. ROCH: Yes, as my leader says, but yet he's voting for them. That is the tragedy.

A MEMBER: Who are you talking about?

MR. G. ROCH: The Member for St. Vital. That is the tragedy. But in his opening remarks his one item stands out. One could say it stands out for their whole administration but especially in the area of Crown corporations. He says and I quote: "Autopac is the focus that people have but it's only a symptom of a number of other things." Madam Speaker, a symptom, that is the key word, key word in that whole sentence.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to quote what was said in the Speech from the Throne on Crown corporations. In the Speech from the Throne written by this government it says, "The government and people of

Manitoba have long believed in the social and economic worth of Manitoba's Crown corporations. In order to bring Manitoba's Crown corporations into the 1990's and to ensure that they will function more effectively and efficiently, the Assembly passed The Crown Accountability Act at the last Session of the Legislature. In 1988, MTS, MPIC, Hydro and the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission will hold public accountability sessions."

Madam Speaker, there is no doubt they need accountability, of that there is no doubt. What I find ludicrous is the fact that they lug the LCC in there. Madam Speaker, the Liquor Control Commission is making money. It needs accountability - true, but is that really why they lump it into there? No, it's not, Madam Speaker. It's not even a Crown corporation, but it is the only agency of government which is making any money. Mind you, if I bought something for a dollar and sold it for twenty, even if I lost ten bucks along the way, I might still make a couple of dollars. If a private enterprise did that kind of a business deal, they would be taken to court. And to imagine that this government wanted to take over the gas company. My golly! - as if we haven't lost enough money, as if we are not broke enough. It would have been even worse.

Madam Speaker, the Member for Concordia, in presenting his assessment of Crown corporations, claims that they are making money. He claims, as a matter of fact, that the Crown corporations made \$90 million. That's ridiculous. He conveniently left out the \$185 million which was written off, while including the Liquor Control Commission's profit. The Liquor Control Commission, as I said earlier, is not a Crown corporation. Therefore, if you're going to include the Liquor Control Commission, we should include the Workers Compensation Board which has lost almost \$200 million because of . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

The honourable member's time has expired.

The Honourable Minister of Energy and Mines.

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

The temptation is always there, after following a somewhat rambling discourse by members opposite, to respond in kind, Madam Speaker. Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, the nature of that discourse was such that there wasn't much of substance against which one could respond. I would like to instead, Madam Speaker, focus on some serious questions that were raised by other members that I think deserve a response and a serious question that the public deserves a response to, and that is the question of the government's record.

The Leader of the Opposition, Madam Speaker, posed one question that I think deserves a serious response, and I certainly believe that members on this side, in responding to the Throne Speech, in responding to the comments by members opposite in this Budget Speech Debate, will want to reflect on that question. That question is, "What has the government done?" A legitimate question. Since 1981, the New Democratic Party has formed the Government of Manitoba and I think it is a good question. What exactly has been the record of this government?

Madam Speaker, I just went through the Legislative Journal, and to refresh my memory on the legislative

action of this government, I said, "What is it that we have achieved as a government since 1981?"

MR. L. DERKACH: Not much.

HON. J. STORIE: Now the Member for Roblin-Russell says "Not much." Well, Madam Speaker, I believe that the history of this province has been forever changed by action of this government, and I believe, having been a part of that, that it is a record of achievement for which I will be proud and my family will be proud and those I represent will be proud. Madam Speaker, and outside the very, very partisan nature of this Chamber, Manitobans will be proud.

Madam Speaker, we can talk about The Family Farm Protection Act, The Justice for Victims of Crime Act, The Conflict of Interest Act, The Manitoba Energy Foundation Act, The Manitoba Hazardous Wastes Management Act, The Pension Benefits Act changes

MR. G. ROCH: All you do is speak and talk about it; but we need action, not talk.

HON. J. STORIE: Madam Speaker, the Member for Springfield had his opportunity to speak. I wish he would pay the due respect to members on this side while they attempt to enter this debate.

Madam Speaker, acts like The Pension Benefits Act which have significantly changed the relationship of individual workers to pension benefits, which have brought Manitobans, and particularly Manitoba women, Manitoba part-time workers, into the 21st Century; legislation like The Child Custody Enforcement Act, The Community Day Care Standards Act, The Residential Rent Regulation Act, The Workplace Health and Safety Act, The Criminal Injuries Compensation Act, The Family Maintenance Act, The Law Enforcement Review Act - legislation that has fundamentally changed the way we perceive ourselves, the way we relate to government and government agencies, changes that enhance our rights as individual citizens.

Madam Speaker, The Pay Equity Act, The Payment of Wages Act, the new Environment Act, The Surface Rights Act, The Transportation of Dangerous Goods, changes to The Workers' Compensation Act - it's a legislative agenda which consists of hundreds of bills over a series of Sessions which has changed the nature of our society for the better.

Madam Speaker, apart from the legislative program, this government has introduced programs which have changed the individual lives of Manitobans because it gave them hope or opportunity. We could talk about the Interest Rate Relief Program which was an important program introduced by this government in the early 1980's when, following on the heels of an incompetent government, in the minds of the public of Manitoba, we introduced some legislation, some programs to support people through a period of high interest rates.

Madam Speaker, we introduced programs like the Manitoba Jobs Fund which has contributed to a whole array of programming to create job opportunities and training opportunities and business opportunities in the Province of Manitoba. We have the Homes in Manitoba Program which introduced new and innovative housing

programs into the Province of Manitoba that affected the province as a whole, the inner city, and created a momentum in the construction industry, Madam Speaker, the like of which has never been seen in the history of the province. Madam Speaker, we had programs like the Main Street Manitoba Program, the Careerstart Program. Madam Speaker, all of those programs serve a useful and recognizable function in the life of this government. They've served Manitobans well.

Madam Speaker, we are bombarded on a daily basis by comments from members opposite who, in their rightful role, criticize this government for specific action. Whether it be our involvement, the Manitoba Telephone System's involvement in MTX, or others, Madam Speaker, we have been duly chastized, and I think as a government have responded - not only responded in a managerial sense by extricating ourselves from difficult circumstances but also by going beyond that by saying, "What is the root of the problem?"; by the introducing The Crown Accountability Act, Madam Speaker; by doing some things which are viewed right now as perhaps cosmetic by members opposite.

We have introduced a new concept in terms of the relationship between the public of Manitoba and Crowns by having accountability sessions, something that I believe will provide, in the long run, the opportunity for improved service and certainly improved communications between Crowns and the public of Manitoba. So we have done something about it.

But on the larger question - and perhaps the more important question for not only us in this Chamber but the people of Manitoba and my children and the children of members opposite - what does the future of Manitoba look like in economic terms? What is the record? Set yourself aside, Madam Speaker, from the rhetoric that you're going to hear from members opposite on the Budget. What is the real record? How has the Province of Manitoba done when you compare it to the economic record of other provinces?

The Member for Brandon West, the Member for Emerson, other members of this Chamber, are certainly reluctant to start discussing, in any concrete way, the performance of this government on its economic record in comparison with other provinces, partly, Madam Speaker, because those other provinces to whom we might make reference are not administered by New Democratic Party Governments, much to the chagrin of the people of those provinces.

The record, Madam Speaker, is unblemished; it's a record of failure. From the Province of Saskatchewan, on west, Madam Speaker, to the government in Ontario that was ousted after a lengthy reign, the record is unblemished.

The Premier, in his comments on the Throne Speech, read into the record the view of nonpartisan observers of the Manitoba economy - nonpartisan meaning non-Conservative, non-right-wing Fraser Institute, Madam Speaker - "The Conference Board of Canada, in October of 1987, estimated real growth in Manitoba at 2.2 percent to have been the strongest amongst the prairie provinces."

Now when we're talking about prairie provinces, what's the administration of the prairie provinces? Are there any NDP Governments? No. They seem to be Tories. In addition, they estimated the unemployment

rate to be the third lowest amongst provinces; and, in 1988, the board anticipates a slightly stronger growth at 2.5 and a further decline in the unemployment rate in Manitoba.

What did the Bank of Commerce say? Well, I won't bore members opposite with the facts because it would certainly cloud their rhetoric. What did the Royal Bank in December say? Real Gross Domestic Product in 1987 is estimated to have been above other prairie provinces. Now who is governing in those terrific provinces? - (Interjection)- Oh, listen. The Royal Bank of Canada, 1987, what did the investment dealer say, Madam Speaker? Did they not say exactly what this government has been saying for the last four, five, six years, saying that good management doesn't just happen? It takes a concerted effort, it takes a plan, it takes organization, it takes commitment, it takes cooperation, and the key, Madam Speaker, is cooperation - cooperation of private industry in this province, cooperation with other levels of government. That has happened and the results have been unmistakable, the results have been clear. They are factual, they are not figments of my imagination.

If members oppositewant to quarrel with those kinds of comments, then they will have to take the Royal Bank, the Bank of Nova Scotia, the Conference Board and the investment dealers and all of those others who have reported objectively on the situation in Manitoba and take them to task because the problem doesn't lie over here. The economic record of this province is second to none.

One of the other concerns that is expressed not only by members opposite but by individuals on this side of the House as well, and I could reference the Member for Inkster who has raised this concern on a number of occasions. I certainly would reference the Minister

of Finance who has said, as has the Premier, that yes, in fact, the province must have a fiscal plan; that we do intend, in a staged manner, to reduce our operating deficits, a commitment which we take seriously, and the evidence that we take it seriously, Madam Speaker, is before every member of the House.

In 1986-87, the provincial deficit was \$559 million; the projected deficit in 1987-88 will be \$395 million, originally estimated to be \$415 million; and, Madam Speaker, in 1988-89, the provincial deficit is forecast to be some \$334 million. Madam Speaker, that is a 78.7 percent reduction. Pardon me, Madam Speaker, that's over a \$200 million reduction.

Madam Speaker, if you look solely at the operating deficit and set aside the capital investment which is going on in the province - and the Member for Sturgeon Creek referenced the reference or perhaps one of his colleagues referenced the investment that's going on in the province through the public sector - if you set some of that aside, the operating deficit in 1986-87 was \$310 million; in 1987-88, it was down to \$154 million; in 1988-89, it's estimated to be some \$66 million - a major reduction of 78.7 percent over the last two years. No other government in similar economic circumstances has achieved anything like that kind of reduction.

Now I recognize that it galls members opposite . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

The hour being ten o'clock, I am interrupting the honourable member who will have 25 minutes remaining when this matter is again before the House.

The hour being 10:00 p.m., the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow. (Tuesday)