



Fourth Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

41 Elizabeth II

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ALCOCK, Reg	Osborne	Liberal
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	NDP
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	Liberal
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
CHEEMA, Guizar	The Maples	Liberal
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	NDP
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	Liberal
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	NDP
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	NDP
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Liberal
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
GRAY, Avis	Crescentwood	Liberal
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	NDP
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Liberal
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	NDP
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	NDP
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	PC
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
NEUFELD, Harold	Rossmere	PC
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	PC
PALLISTER, Brian	Portage la Prairie	PC
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
REID, Daryl	Transcona	NDP
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	PC
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	PC
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	NDP
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	PC
WASYLCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP
<i>Vacant</i>	Rupertsland	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, November 30, 1992

The House met at 8 p.m.

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE (Second Day of Debate)

Madam Deputy Speaker (Louise Dacquay): Order, please. The hour being 8 p.m., will the House please come to order.

Mr. Jack Reimer (Niakwa): Madam Deputy Speaker, indeed it is a pleasure to stand up here and talk today on the throne speech, and it is similar to when you are in school. One of the first assignments you have when you get back into class from the English teacher is, how did I spend my summer? You have to look back and say, well, this summer has been tremendously exciting and changing for myself on a personal basis here and the functions and the things that I have had the opportunity to attend. The summer of '92 will certainly go down as one of my most eventful summers in my life.

Firstly, what I would like to do, Madam Deputy Speaker, is send out some congratulations to the new faces here in the Legislature, and it is my pleasure really to extend congratulations to the new member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister) and the new member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray) for the Liberal Party. I would also like to at this time extend best wishes and all the best in the future for the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper) who has put in his resignation for bigger and better things, and I wish him all the best in any endeavour that he wishes to enter into. I have had the opportunity to meet with the member the odd time, and indeed his contribution and his involvement with Manitoba and the history of Manitoba will certainly be noticed.

I would also like to extend best wishes, salutations and good health to the Leader of the Second Opposition, the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs), who has announced her retirement—oh, pardon me, not her retirement but her stepping down as Leader and possibly stepping out of the political agenda in the near future.

An Honourable Member: How come you are always so nice when they are going?

Mr. Reimer: When they are going, we are always nice.

I would like to also take the time to extend best wishes and good health to our Lieutenant-Governor (Mr. Johnson) who was not here for the throne speech, but I understand that he is getting better, getting back into fine form. He was missed during the throne speech, and I wish him a speedy recovery and good health.

In looking back, as mentioned, when you look at your summer and what happened in the summer of '92, I have to look back at some of the events and some of the things that I will just take some moments to sort of highlight in a sense. I guess when we look at Winnipeg, and being an urban MLA in the great constituency of Niakwa, southeast Winnipeg, in the communities of Southdale, Island Lakes and part of Windsor Park and a little bit of St. Germain—Winnipeg in the summertime is a very exciting place to be. I had the opportunity to represent the Minister responsible for Multiculturalism, the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mrs. Mitchelson), at some events. Some of the ones that stand out naturally are the Fringe Festival which was enjoyed here in Winnipeg. I believe there were over 80,000 different participants in the various plays that were put in various venues around the city of Winnipeg. Very successful. One of the highest attendance figures they have had.

From the Fringe Festival, we had the Folk Festival here in Winnipeg—not necessarily here in Winnipeg, but it was in Birds Hill. The participation and the amount of attendance at that was at an all-time high, so we had a very exciting time during that period.

Also, naturally there is Folklorama. Here in Winnipeg it is indeed an exciting time. This time, for the two weeks that we had it here, we had over 38 pavilions, various ethnic pavilions spread out over a two-week period. I had the opportunity to visit every one of them. It was—

An Honourable Member: Every one?

Mr. Reimer: Every one, and I will tell you it was something to see if you had not been to them, and I imagine most of us have.

The involvement, the volunteerism was at an all-time high, the attendance was at an all-time high. It just goes to show, here in Winnipeg and here in Manitoba, when the people get behind it and the volunteers get involved, we can make things happen—[interjection] Yes, and as mentioned, when you go to these you have the opportunity to taste the various foods, the ethnic cuisine, not only the cultural shows but everything else that is involved with that, so it is a very exciting time to be here in Winnipeg. Manitoba in the summer time is quite an exciting place.

* (2005)

Going on to the Speech from the Throne, as it was brought forth a little while ago, I cannot help but repeat a couple of the paragraphs that came out right at the very, very beginning. It seemed so very apropos here in Manitoba when we talk about what is happening. I would just like to quote from the Speech from the Throne, and the lines are:

"The winds of change are sweeping the globe. Walls and boundaries that have traditionally defined nations, international trade, national economics and individual lifestyles are tumbling down. This revolutionary process is affecting every continent and touching virtually every nation and every community.

"History teaches us that the most durable and enduring societies are those best able to cope with change, adapt their way of life and take advantage of the new opportunities."

It seems that it should be repeated—the line "best able to cope with change, adapt their way of life and take advantage of the new opportunities." On a personal note, I can attest to that very, very easily, because at times we do have to go through some difficult changes. We have to adapt and we have to look forward to new opportunities. As anybody, you have to turn the page and you keep moving.

Here in Manitoba, when we look at our economy and the thrust that we have to come forth with, we have to be optimistic. We have to look at Manitoba and see the value that we have here in Manitoba. Manitoba's greatest asset and our biggest contribution really is the people. Our people who form the backbone and the desire to make things happen in Manitoba.

We are very fortunate here in Manitoba. We have this type of aggressiveness; we have this type of entrepreneurship; we have this type of labour force;

we have this type of involvement, not only with management but for labour in trying to strive forth to make the best for Manitoba. I guess we can always look back and say that things should have been the way they were before. Unfortunately, in today's society with the changes we have, we cannot look back too far. We cannot look back that far and say that those were the good old days and we want them back, because it just would not happen.

Today's society, with the mass amount of communications and change that comes about, makes what is normal today obsolete by tomorrow, so we have to position ourselves to change. As a government, one of the things that we strive for very diligently is to be aware of the people, to be aware of what is going on in the economy of Manitoba. So it becomes quite significant. When I happened to be listening to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) a little while ago talking about his budget, and I happened to pull out of my little bag here some of the things that he has been talking about, I have to just make a few comments about the Leader of the Opposition in the sense of what he brought forth as his type of agenda. I could not help but bring forth when our throne speech came out—when I say "our," I mean the government—the NDP or the New Democratic Party brought out their news release on their priorities for this session.

We have to look at what they are coming up with and what they are suggesting as a way of doing business and the way of going to the community and try to see where their answers are and where their directions are. The Leader there, the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), kept talking about and criticizing this government for the studies and the reform and the changes that this government was bringing forth, and saying it is the same old rhetoric rehashed and it is brought forth again and again, but we have to look at what their agenda is. Then they come out with a very broad spectrum of statements, and actually it is so broad it only takes up, I believe, two pages—priorities for the session which take up two pages.

* (2010)

It becomes quite a budget speech for the NDP in the sense of where their priorities are. In here you see words like performance, and you see words like reform, and you see like studies and you see like boards and commissions, and you see a lot of the same type of thing that they are talking about over and over again. They talk about their positive

thrust, of what they feel they should be doing, but they seem to be doing the same old rhetoric and the same old rehashing of how they used to do things. They look backwards all the time as to what should be brought forth to the people of Manitoba. You have to wonder where the priorities of the Leader are and what he is talking about.

He did happen to mention about being out of touch. He kept saying that this government is out of touch. It has to go across the road and take a walk across the street, and he talked about the fact that the delegates at the convention, the Progressive Conservative convention—in fact, I should point out that at the Conservative convention that was just held, we had over 500 members in attendance and we had a tremendous turnout of the membership. I guess he is referring back to a guess when his convention was on just a few weeks ago where they had, I think, it was only 200 memberships or people out. So, when he talks about the interest in the party and his strong mandate, when he is talking about his 200 delegates, and the conference that we just went through where we had over 500, you can see where the interest is and the direction of priorities.

In one of the comments made by the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), the Leader of the New Democratic Party, he talks about our being out of touch, the delegates at our convention, but I have to look back at one of the comments and one of the directives that came out from the NDP convention, and this was the instructions that they had for the youth. This was a package that was distributed to the youth of the NDP, and some of the things that they were saying that they should be involved with. One of the things they said is they should have a conference, they should get together, and they asked the youth to pick up, as an item of conversation and discussion, the Regina Manifesto. The Regina Manifesto is what the youth of the NDP should use as a guiding light in discussions.

Now, when you talk about the Regina Manifesto, you are talking about 1930s policy. This is what the executive of the NDP are telling their youth to use as a guide, the Regina Manifesto of 1930. My gosh, how could you use that as a guideline? How could you use the 1930s as a guideline for the 1990s? This is the youth of the NDP that they are trying to get going. I mean, you have to get more in tune over there. You just cannot look backward and look backward.

I have to revert back to when I talked one other time, and I called it the new dinosaur party. My gosh, I guess it still is the new dinosaur party. I mean, we just keep looking backward and backward across that way. Mr. Doer also, I believe, came up with the line—I have to make sure I have it right here—when he was talking about the junkets. I believe what he was talking about was the Premier (Mr. Filmon) being the junket king of all premiers. This is attributable to Mr. Doer. He was talking about the various trips that our Premier had made overseas.

We have to look back and say, well, what was the reason for these trips? Well, when the Premier took the three trips—they were talking about the trips to Brazil and to Britain and to the Orient. Now, why would the Premier of Manitoba be going over there? Well, he would be going over there to drum up business. The name of the game is to get business back here in Manitoba.

Who did he take with him when he went over there? He took businessmen, and they paid for their own way, not at the taxpayers' expense. I believe when he went over to the Orient, there were about half a dozen businessmen. When he went over to Britain, there were about half a dozen businessmen.

They say, why should he be going over there? I have to look back to 1987 when the then Pawley government took a trip to the Orient also. Yes, they took people there too, but did they take businessmen? No. They took cabinet ministers. [interjection] No, it was a trip to the Orient, a 10-day trip to exotic places.

* (2015)

Now, how did it go over in the newspaper here in Winnipeg? Well, here in Winnipeg, we heard that Eugene Kostyra, who was Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology, went. We heard that Vic Schroeder, who was Energy and Mines minister went, and Jerry Storie went, too. They also took along Marc Eliesen. He was the chairman of the Manitoba energy society and the chairman of Manitoba Hydro.

Mr. Eliesen, as we all know, has gone on to bigger and better things from here. In fact, he has gone on to Ontario where he had a nice job for—I believe it was originally what he was asking for from the Ontario government, the NDP government there. I should mention that he used to be with the NDP

government here as their advisor, but on to Ontario where he took on a contract for, I believe it was \$340,000, but then there was such a hubbub over there that he said, no, I will take a cut in pay. He went down to \$270,000. I mean there is a man that sacrifices his moralities for money.

From there he decided there were little greener pastures when there was a little bit of a change in government. He ended up in British Columbia, where he is now with Hydro there. He is one of the persons who went on this trip with Pawley to the Orient. So I find it kind of passing strange, if you want to call it, that we have the people over there in the opposition talking about the Premier (Mr. Filmon) going on the junket king of all Premiers when we have over there all those from 1987 going on trips.

In the paper there the other day I could not help but notice a picture of Premier Bob next door. It is a picture of Premier Bob at the telephone, and I think he is phoning either—no, he is not phoning home, it is from the Taiwan Hotel. My gosh, he is over there on a business trip too. Yes, Premier Bob, the fellow from over in Ontario, another Premier travelling. In fact, as a matter of record, in 21 days of sitting last summer, Premier Bob, the NDP Premier, has missed 14 days. Fourteen out of 21. Where has he been? He has been to France; he has been to Germany; he has been to Britain; he has been to the Orient and he is going back to the Orient. This man is a travelling Premier.

Our Premier (Mr. Filmon) goes to three places. He goes to Brazil on one of the biggest ever conferences on the environment that has ever been called in the world, 100 leaders from all over the world, 30,000 participants. Our Premier was there representing Manitoba at an environmental conference that was beyond reproach. [interjection] Now we are talking about someone from Ontario just doing something, but we say, well, why do we always talk about Ontario? I mean, why should we be talking about Ontario? Well, we have to look at a statement that was made by Premier—[interjection] Mr. Doer. He was talking about Premier Bob and he says, I have to recall when the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) said, I like Bob Rae; I think Bob Rae is doing a great job. If you want to debate the Province of Ontario, my friends, I will debate it and we will debate it with pride any time.

* (2020)

Here is Premier Bob doing all these trips. I mean, you just have to wonder where the priorities are on this. I have to go back to what the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) was talking about when he was talking about wanting to get things happening here in Manitoba, wanting to get the economy going and to spend money. Spending money is something that the NDP government knows very well. In fact, when we looked back on some of the comments that were made, he talked about—and this was in the paper the other day here too, November 16, I believe, when the NDP conference was on, and Doer compared his economic blueprint to the Jobs Fund that Howard Pawley's NDP government announced in 1983 to finance small construction and jobs.

Now, we have to ask, where is the Jobs Fund, and where are his priorities? Back in 1983, the same Gary Doer, while speaking about the Jobs Fund, and I quote: It is bloody immoral in my mind, he says. The government does not understand the difference between a make-work job and a structured economy. He is talking about the Pawley government at that time. Any economist will tell you a structured job is more beneficial to the economy.

He went on further to criticize the NDP government for its Jobs Fund which he likened to the government dropping people who fixed pot holes in the highway to hiring people to cut flowers along the sidewalk. My goodness, this is the same Gary Doer. At that time, he was MGEA president. So at one time, it is bloody immoral in my mind, he is quoted as saying. Now he is saying we should be getting the Jobs Fund going again. [interjection] Quite dishonest in fact, because it comes from all areas that way.

What we have to ask Mr. Doer is, where is this money going to come from in the Jobs Fund? I mean, if he is going to come forth with a Jobs Fund, we have to look out and say, well, where is the money going to come from? Where is Mr. Doer going to get the money from? Well, we got a bit of a hint when we see a quote from the—this is from the Swan River Star & Times, September 23, 1990. This is from Swan River, a very good riding.

I would think that the Leader of the NDP always gets a little apprehensive when he goes into Swan River. [interjection] Well, I believe the former member in there was a very strong candidate, sort of gave him a run for the money a bit. In fact, if we recall, I believe there were only 21 votes in that

leadership campaign. But I have to quote—actually what I am quoting about is where the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) was going to get his money to run the Jobs Fund, and here he comes out and says that possibly they could allocate resources from the social assistance budget to job training and job creation programs. The Leader of the NDP is saying that to pay for the Jobs Fund, they will take it out of the social assistance budget. Now he stands up here and he says that the social assistance budget is sacred. There should be more money going into it, and here I will quote, September 23, 1990, allocate resources from the social assistance budget. It goes this way and that way.

There is duplicity there. In fact, if we talk about duplicity, we are talking about the duke of duplicity over on that side right now because of the flip-flop, the insincerity. He is going to use the social assistance budget for job training and for jobs for the Jobs Fund. So that is where he feels that the money should be coming from. So when we look at the Jobs Fund and the blueprint for monies paying for it, we should look also to where other monies are being spent.

We look at Ontario. I bring up Ontario because of the fact that our Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) feels that this is some sort of a guideline and this is the type of model that we should be forming ourselves after, because Ontario has come up with a Jobs Fund also.

* (2025)

Now, the Jobs Fund in Ontario, where the NDP Government there was planning to spend a billion dollars on job training which was announced six months ago. In six months they have spent \$21 million in Ontario to create jobs. That \$21 million should create thousands of jobs, but it has created 675 jobs so far, and they have spent \$21 million. In my calculations, that is about \$31,000 per job that they have spent in trying to create jobs. There is also a quote there where they have made limits of up to 20,000 children through child care subsidies, and to date I believe they have only utilized something like 38 spaces.

So, in looking at the comparison, we look at Ontario because of the fact the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) seems to feel that there is some sort of correlation between good government and the NDP Government. I guess we can look back at the NDP governments here in Canada as

something like the Marx Brothers. You know, we have got Harpo, Chico and Groucho. We have Harcourt, we have Romanow and we have Rae. So we have our own versions of the Marx Brothers here in Canada if you wanted to talk about Marxism.

We have the NDP governments, and not only that, what is happening with the NDP governments in other parts of Canada—finally realizing that there is such a word as fiscal restraint. We are looking at cutting of jobs. They talk about cutbacks into their funding to education. They are talking about their welfare cuts. They are doing a lot of things that are not really going contrary to what they are supposed to be doing when they talk about the fairness and the equity to people.

So we look at what we are trying to do here in Manitoba with our economy and some of the emphasis and the directions that we are trying to come out with, and we talk about the fairness, the responsibility of the government in bringing forth legislation to help with a new age and a new direction for Manitoba.

As has been pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer), when we had the Economic Innovation and Technology Council that was just here in Winnipeg a while ago, where you had over 400 businessmen, and labour, education and the government examine ways to try to bring forth a new direction and an emphasis of understanding here in Manitoba.

It is this type of involvement and this type of appreciation to try to make things happen that will make and bring Manitoba into a better position here in Canada because there are other forces working at trying to bring forth the aspect of a continuation of growth.

One of the things that was presented and was built upon is Workforce 2000 which is looking at a training force of almost 25,000 people by the time it is finished, and these are people who are being trained in the work force themselves by the employers and the employees helping each other. A lot of the emphasis and the direction is to try to help people build themselves up.

* (2030)

The Leader of the Opposition, the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), talked about the Crocus Fund and how all these things were brought forth by his government. In fact, the impression that I got from when I was listening to him speak was that most of

the direction, the emphasis and the content of the throne speech is actually as it was for the former Pawley governments and the Schreyer governments. Well, if that is such a true case, I would see no reason in the world why he would be voting against the throne speech and bringing in amendments to it, if he comes out so strongly saying that the direction and the emphasis that is in this throne speech is old hat for him. So we have to look at what the Leader of the Opposition is trying to bring to us when he talks about trying to make a new beginning or rehash some of the things that are talked about here in the throne speech.

There are a number of other indicators that we can look at, economic indicators here in Manitoba, and these have been alluded to before. At the same time, I think that there is a willingness or an agreement to make sure that these are understood when we talk about the capital investment being up 8.9 percent over 1991, as mentioned, which was one of the best performances of all the provinces, when we talk about a national figure which is at a 2.7 percent drop. There is a 51.8 percent increase in manufacturing and capital investment for 1992, which is going to far exceed the second-best performer. The national figure actually represents an expected decline of 4.2 percent, so when we look at an expected 51.8 percent increase, we are looking at a very significant increase in manufacturing capital here in Manitoba.

Manitoba is only one of three provinces recording a decline in business bankruptcies in 1992. You do not like to see any type of bankruptcies but, at the same time, I guess you have to look at it in a comparison rate, and any type of business bankruptcy is not a welcome sight in any province.

Unemployment has dropped to 10.3 percent in July to 10 percent in August of '92. The first eight months of 1992 showed a 30.3 percent increase in housing starts in Manitoba, which was the fourth best performance in the country, which is doubling the national average. The national average was only 15.3 percent. Total capital investment is expected to increase over 3 percent in 1991, with B.C. being the only province to pass us. Their increases are expected to be 3.8 percent, and we are looking at 3.3 percent.

So these are all very positive indicators of our confidence here in Manitoba. At the same time, you see, when the opposition over there sees figures, they use them as a doom-and-gloom scenario.

It is just like the old Chicken Little scenario, the sky is falling, the sky is falling, but at the same time the Leader of the Opposition is like the rooster. He is the rooster in the Chicken Little scenario and, like the rooster, he likes to crow in the Sun every morning. The Sun we will refer to is The Sun paper with the little 10-second clips there.

An Honourable Member: But he is no little red hen.

Mr. Reimer: No little red hen, no.

In fact, the Conference Board of Canada, which the members of the opposition often refer to, predicts that Manitoba will experience real economic growth of 1.4 percent for 1992. Granted, you always like to see better growth and you always like to see better percentage rates, but at the same time on a positive note it is a confidence in Manitoba. It is a confidence in the direction that it is bringing forth. I had the opportunity the other week to be at a mining exposition here in Winnipeg where there was a tremendous interest shown by mining companies and prospectors and people involved with mining development here in Manitoba that was unprecedented.

One of the noticeable things is that when we talked to the people there, when I had the chance to talk to some of the people from other parts of Canada—in fact, there were people there from other parts of the world—they talked about the positive attitude that this government has shown in trying to attract mining and investment here in Manitoba. Mining and exploration can be a very big boon not only to northern Manitoba but to all of Manitoba, because the economies as we know in northern Manitoba need the stimulation and the job growth and the positive attitude of growth of all places because of their isolation and their dependency on workers. It is just as important in all Manitoba.

In northern Manitoba, any type of positive aspect has its spin-off because of the jobs it creates and it will flow down to all aspects of Manitoba. Mining exploration and mining development are a big factor and a big stimulus for Manitoba. Anytime there is a new mine, it creates the activity, and it creates the positive attitude of growth. At the same time, with any type of mining, I guess as soon as the mine is open, that is the day it starts to close, because somewhere along the line the orebody runs out. When the orebody runs out, the mine, unfortunately,

has to close, so there is a certain realization that this has to happen.

But at the same time if there is a growth factor involved, this province and this government should take advantage of it and try to encourage this type of development in Manitoba. As mentioned, any type of jobs will have the positive effect here in Manitoba.

In going back to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer), he would feel that any type of work force or any type of job creation has to have some sort of tangent to it or ring so that there is a concern that all factors are being attuned to. We have to go back to what the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) was talking about in his reply to the throne speech when he was talking about large corporations and the corporations moving and the movement of capital with these various companies and corporations.

We must remember what a corporation is, and we have to look at the definition of a corporation. The definition of a corporation actually is shareholders. Shareholders are people that invest money in a company, and one of the things that they put forth to the directors of that company is the fact that they have to be profit-oriented. Profit is not a dirty word; profit is something that makes the economies grow. If a company does not have profit, it will not stay around.

The NDP in one of their philosophies in one of their statements at the convention just recently said that they would make Manitoba the toughest place to close a business. Now, is that not something great to try to attract business here to Manitoba? Go to a big company, a big mining company, a big manufacturer, ask them to come to Manitoba, and at the same time tell them that we will not let you close. We will make this the toughest place in Canada to close.

How can you encourage business on one hand and tell them to come here and then tell them, we are going to regulate your profits, we are going to tell you how much money you can make, we are going to tell you when you can close and when you can open? What kind of hypocrisy is that? The duke of duplicity has got it all. You cannot have it both ways.

When you talk about companies, you talk about corporations, you talk about profit. There is nothing wrong with making money, and if you are going to make money you are going to stay in business. If

you are going to stay in business, you are going to create jobs and, when you create jobs, you create money. Money makes taxes and taxes pay for the social services that this government wants and which all governments want.

We are not going to have that if we have tough legislation and legislation that is going to say that you cannot close your plant when the thing does not become profitable. There has to be some sort of regulation where people can do that, but no, they are going to sit there and say that you cannot close. That is one way to get corporations to Manitoba. That is a great philosophy by the NDP.

It just does not make sense that they can come up with such a strong statement and bandy this around. This is a new resolution from the NDP that this is the way you attract government, this is the way you attract jobs, this is the way you attract business here. Do not bring a shop to Winnipeg, because we will not let you close. We will make it the toughest place in Canada to close.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I see by the flashing light on my table that I have no more time left. Thank you very much for my time, and I thank you that I had this great opportunity to talk on this throne speech. If anything matters, the positive attitude will continue on this side, and we will continue to try to make things better and best for Manitobans.

Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker.

* (2040)

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Madam Deputy Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this so-called throne speech here. It was about the eleventh—yes, it was one of the most dismal throne speeches that I have seen here. It ranks right down there with the '91 throne speech that we had in this House.

I want to, before I get into some of the debate on that, congratulate the member for Portage (Mr. Pallister), who has already crossed over to our side, and the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray) on their election. I hope they will have a number of good years in this Legislature and be able to contribute in a positive way to the debate. [interjection] Just like you wrote it, eh, Mr. Premier. So I would like to congratulate both of those members. As well, I want to congratulate the new staff, including the Pages in this House and all of the staff for their support.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I found it kind of interesting when the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer) was speaking about trying to rationalize the junkets of the Premier (Mr. Filmon). Of course, I know all about that. When I was the Minister of Transportation, the member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard), at that time as critic, said that I was on a junket when I went to Frobisher Bay. He recalls that very well because that was his version of a junket by the NDP at that time.

I have to admit, I did not have as good taste as the Premier has and a number of these ministers as they become world travellers, as has been done in the last number of months by the Premier and certainly a number of the ministers as well.

Inside of five months the Premier went to Brazil and Europe and Ukraine and Russia and the Orient, and certainly instead of dealing with the problems here at home, right here in Manitoba, which were growing week by week and month by month he is busy travelling around the world. Yes, those business people that were along certainly were quite capable of going on their own and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) did not make a darn bit of difference as to what kind of effect or impact it will have on the Japanese or any of the other countries there. It is simply a junket by that Premier quite clearly, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Now, I will not dwell on that too long except to say that if the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer) cared to look at all the statistics for the province of Manitoba, he would rather, I believe, red-faced turn away from them and not mention them in this Legislature because he had to be very selective in picking out the odd one that happened to make the province look somewhat relatively good compared to the other provinces, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Then he said these are all good news indicators for the province of Manitoba. That is good news? Ten percent unemployment is good news to a Tory. A minus 3.3 percent in the gross domestic product of the province in the previous year, a decline of 3.3 percent, that is good news for Tories? Well, the member for Niakwa says, up, up. Yes, he wants it to go up, but the fact is it went down 3.3 percent in 1991. Unemployment as indicated at 10 percent; private and public investment in the province of Manitoba was ranking tenth out of 10. Certainly the indicators show conclusively that Manitoba is faring very badly under this Conservative government and is really stretching it to try to make the case that

somehow Manitoba is doing well. All these members have to do is get out there and talk to Manitobans, and they will realize that in fact they are facing unprecedented problems under this Tory government. Not since the Lyon government, that Lyon good for nothing—oh pardon me, that Lyon government of 1978 to 1981.

An Honourable Member: Get your facts straight.

Mr. Plohman: Well, the member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) does not like me referring to the government before the Pawley government as the Lyon government. Now, he should not be so sensitive about it. The fact is I am not talking about their truthfulness, I am talking about the Sterling Lyon government. But he has forgotten that is the name of the Premier at that particular time, and he should, because at that particular time the province was in a recession far ahead of any other province in this country, and we are followed, mired in that recession again with this Filmon government much the same way as they were with Sterling Lyon.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Now, I find it interesting that the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer)—I am going to take a few minutes to deal with his speech—that he would talk about NDP governments not knowing the definition or the meaning of fiscal restraint. He said they did not know that, but what he forgot to mention was the Tory government in Saskatchewan, the Devine government, the last year left the Romanow government a \$940 million deficit in one year, a \$14 billion accumulated deficit. Is this the kind of fiscally responsible people that this member for Niakwa is talking about? Is that who we should be emulating in this country? These were Tories, provincial Tories in the sister province of Saskatchewan.

Now look at these guys, Mr. Speaker. We have the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) talking about his record that he seems so proud of. He has taken it from a \$50 million surplus in 1988 to a \$642 million deficit in 1992. That is a turnaround of \$700 million the wrong way by these Tories, and they say that they are fiscally responsible, and they have the gall to stand up and believe their rhetoric and believe that somehow the previous government was less fiscally responsible than this bunch over here at this particular time. Nothing could be further from the truth. Clearly the record shows, so let them not use that comparison because clearly they have gone backward. They are irresponsible.

When they put in last year's throne speech they intend to spend carefully and manage wisely, nothing could have been further from the facts in this province because we saw what their record has produced. We have seen it over the past year, we have seen it over the past four years, and we will see it, I am sure, unfortunately, for another couple of years in this province, but no longer, Mr. Speaker. We will not see it more than two years because the people of Manitoba will not allow this Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) to sit in that chair for longer than another two years.

The Minister of Finance is quite proud of the fact that he can talk about freezing personal taxes for four years. It sounds very much like the Lyon government talking about their five-year Hydro freeze. Remember that Hydro freeze that they talked about and bragged about that somehow that was going to bring economic prosperity to this province? What happened? We were mired in the deepest recession ahead of any other province at that particular time.

Now what has this personal income tax freeze done for the province of Manitoba over the last four years? What has it done? Has it given us this economic prosperity? Have we seen the economic prosperity? Have we seen jobs in this province? No, because the companies that are getting the breaks in taxes, Mr. Speaker, are not creating jobs, and they are running away waiting for some leadership from government which is not coming from—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Energy and Mines): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member would submit to a question?

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, this member has been around long enough in this House to know very well that there is plenty of opportunity to ask a question with leave after the speech, and I would be pleased for him to do that at any time, but I kind of resent the fact that he wants to cut into my time right now.

When they talk about freezing the personal tax rate, they should be honest about it with the people of Manitoba. The fact is that rather than getting the money from the personal income tax that they are so proud of saying they have frozen, what they have done is taken it from other taxes from the people of Manitoba.

An Honourable Member: Where?

Mr. Plohman: That is precisely the question I wanted the member for Steinbach (Mr. Driedger) to ask. He said, where are they getting it? Well, we know where they are getting it. They are getting it from the property taxpayers of this province. They underfund education, they transfer it onto the municipalities, and they have to assess the taxes.

* (2050)

It is called the GFT. The minister does not recall the Gary Filmon tax. They have not admitted the fact that these taxes have been put in place precisely because this government has transferred responsibilities, funding responsibilities and program responsibilities onto the municipalities. So they are not being honest with the people of this province when they only talk about one side of the equation. They only talk about personal income taxes.

The other thing the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) should do in this province is stand up once a year if not more often, at least once a year, and he should thank Eugene Kostyra for putting in place the infrastructure in the tax system that would ensure that we would have surpluses in this province. That is the only reason this minister has been able to freeze personal income taxes that he likes to brag about and take personal credit for the last four years because of the fact that he was left with revenues that were more than adequate to ensure a positive surplus in the budget in this province, not a deficit. So it has been through no good management of this minister that he has been able to freeze those taxes.

Mr. Speaker, I want to just take a few minutes to look through the previous speech that was brought into this House, the 1991 speech, because from that I think it can tell us a great deal about how much credibility we can place in the kinds of commitments and promises that this government makes in its throne speech this year, if we look at past throne speeches, look at their track record and see whether in fact they will produce on what they say.

When you look through it, first of all we find the complete reversal from what they talked about as spend carefully and manage wisely. We have not seen that. We have a record deficit in this province. Obviously, they failed on that count.

They talked about a new Economic Development Board of Cabinet in last year's throne speech. What results has that new cabinet committee had over the

past year in this province? What has it had besides one of the highest unemployment rates in this province's history? Where is the economic development in the rural areas of this province? Why are people flocking out of the province instead of returning for all of these jobs and economic activity that this cabinet committee would seem to indicate have taken place here? They are not here. They have not produced. They got zero, and then when the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) talks about zero he is absolutely right. That is the record of this government. If I was giving them a mark it would be zero out of 10, Mr. Speaker, quite correct. I have to give the Minister of Northern Affairs his dues on that.

Let us look at the review of the Manitoba Crop Insurance Corporation. They said they were going to conduct a review and the minister appointed a—he announced that in the '91 throne speech. What have we seen from it? He got his report from the hardworking people he appointed to that committee who travelled around the province and reviewed the Crop Insurance Corporation in this province, as was their mandate. He received this report in June of 1992. Now, five months later, he has not even released it to the public. He does not want us to see it, despite repeated requests that we have made to him in person, by phone, in writing, despite repeated requests being made by his committee that he appointed. People from his committee have phoned the minister and pleaded with him and written to him.

The Keystone Agricultural Producers have asked him to release it. Farmers from across Manitoba have asked him to release it. He will not release it. Do you know why he will not release it? I believe that report proves what we said all along, Mr. Speaker. It says that the inequities in crop insurance were grossly exaggerated in the GRIP program as a result of the higher premiums and higher payouts and inequities that existed in that base in crop insurance were made even more negative in terms of their impact under GRIP, and that GRIP, in fact, has been unfair and inequitable in its application across this province because he insisted on basing it only on crop insurance records, but he will not release that report. He says that he is doing an analysis first. What is he hiding from? Why will he not release that report to the people of Manitoba, to the farmers and to the official opposition in this House?

Now that is what we get from this government's reviews. The only time that they act quickly on reviews is when they can hack and slash and cut programs. Then they will move quickly, Mr. Speaker. But when it comes time for making improvements and dealing with difficult problems, we see no action from this government. That is what we can expect from review upon review upon study by these ministers and this government. It is clearly a method that they use to get them past the next election, to get them past difficult problems to delay dealing with the difficult issues that they must deal with in this province. We have seen it in that particular case.

Now what about the statement that they are going to identify opportunities in environment, health, information technology? Mr. Speaker, they have the Green Team. The member for Roblin-Russell (Mr. Derkach) today, the Minister of Rural Development, talked about his Green Team. He talked about some 200 jobs. Now I think all that he did with that money is produce caps and maybe 200 part-time jobs he talks about.

The member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer) is complaining about the 675 jobs he says Ontario created. Well, we got 200 jobs, the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), part-time jobs that he has had with his Green Team. That is what he is bragging about here in Manitoba. That is his record of success, his make-work jobs, and he talks about the NDP putting money into make-work projects. This is the kind of solution that we see from the minister of northern development, supported by the member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard), in cabinet no doubt. Oh, yes, that is a great idea, the Green Team. Let us get caps, too, for them. That will be good. That will make them feel proud to be on our team. Well, we do not get any results, Mr. Speaker. No jobs, 200 jobs, what is that? A drop in the bucket, not even a drop. It evaporates before it hits the bottom of the bucket.

Let us look at the deregulation of MTS. Now I want to take a few minutes to talk about that, because I am sure that the cabinet ministers were not very pleased when they saw these two headlines in the press back to back, Mr. Speaker. Air mess blamed on deregulation and right below, the member for Springfield, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), the minister responsible for the telephone system, is going to announce his

deregulation of the telephone system communications.

We believe Manitobans want the opportunity of choice, he said, and he knows if he would learn from the Minister of Transport who knows the facts on this deregulation of transport, particularly the air industry and rail, that in fact this has been terribly detrimental to the province of Manitoba and to the country, and they are going to follow like lemmings over the cliff with the telephone system.

Mr. Speaker, now will they say, well, deregulation is not working even though they follow right on the heels of Lloyd Axworthy, the previous Minister of Transport under the Liberal government when he was moving as quickly as he could before the '84 election to deregulate the air industry, because he thought he could get some quick fixes, he could get some low fares quickly. The people say, who gave us those low fares? Oh, it must have been Lloyd Axworthy. Let us vote for Lloyd. That is what he wanted to do in 1984. He could not put it in place quite quickly enough. Mazankowski realized this beautiful opportunity he had and jumped right in, because it was completely in tune with the philosophy of the federal Conservative government. These two go side by side, the Liberals and the Conservatives and the deregulation side of it.

Now, on the other hand, when it does not suit their agenda, their corporate agenda, then they want to regulate more. Now let us look at the regulation in the pharmaceutical industry. They want to provide greater regulations, greater protection for these companies. Yet, on the other hand, they want to deregulate in the transportation. When it fits their agenda, on the one hand they will deregulate and regulate on the other hand.

* (2100)

I say there is no consistency in the philosophy, just as there is no consistency in the philosophy of this Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) here today when he stood up and denounced finally the reregulation, the greater protection for the name brand drug companies, while his First Minister, his Premier (Mr. Filmon) refuses to denounce the North American Free Trade Agreement, which includes precisely that provision that will enshrine it in an international trade agreement, which makes it more difficult to change in the future.

I say that these ministers are all over the map. They know not whereof they speak. They have no

plan. They have no consistent philosophy except that the corporate agenda is the only agenda for this country and for this province. They follow along on the Mulroney agenda that we have seen that has been put in place in this country over the last number of years that has been discredited. They will, undoubtedly, see the end of the Mulroney government in the near future, but unfortunately if it is a Liberal government federally, I do not think that there will be much change in the direction of the nation under Jean Chretien, the tired old lieutenant of Trudeau in his province.

Mr. Speaker, I want to also raise some other major issues that I believe should have been in this throne speech that were not in this throne speech by this government.

This throne speech has one very small section on agriculture. There are about three small paragraphs. In one, obviously, the minister has seen that the farmers of Manitoba want some action on the sugar industry and so, because of the writing campaign that was undertaken, he finally figured he had to put something in the throne speech. So he pushed for having a mention of the sugar beet industry and broadening opportunities for processing, hopefully, in this province.

This is long overdue just like the reference to diversification. While this government has talked about diversification for five years, they have done nothing. Now they are going to have a forum; that is their great project in diversification, a forum. No action, Mr. Speaker, on diversification. They have cut back on research.

At the same time they have done nothing on a sugar policy. We can go back into the 1970s, we can go back into the 1980s under New Democratic governments when we were pushing the federal governments to put in place a national sugar policy that would ensure a vibrant sugar beet industry in this province and across this country. This party was nowhere on that at that time. They were not supporting it, Mr. Speaker. Now, suddenly they get a few letters coming in, and they realize it might be popular at this time, so now they say they are going to call on the federal government for a national sugar policy. It is a fact that 90 percent of Canada's sugar needs are served by importing of sugar from outside this country. That is something that has to change.

We support the fact that this is mentioned in this throne speech, but it should have been acted upon

and dealt with many years ago by this government when they had the opportunity. They have not done that. They have not supported that concept over the last number of years, so the sugar beet industry can indeed make, I think, a great impact on the economy in the province of Manitoba. It is making a significant impact now. It could be much greater in areas like Portage where the new member for Portage (Mr. Pallister) has just moved into the Legislature, as I congratulated him earlier on; there is an example where sugar beet production could be expanded.

Certainly, in the member for Steinbach's (Mr. Driedger) constituency and the Interlake area and perhaps many other areas of this province, we can see tremendous growth in the sugar beet industry. It is something that this minister and this government must move aggressively on in order to ensure that the federal government puts in place a national sugar policy.

I do not believe that they will do it, Mr. Speaker, because they will say that is protectionist and the Free Trade Agreement will not let them do it, but here they have it in their throne speech that they are going to take action on sugar beets. We will wait and see whether in fact there is anything substantial or whether it is just more words, more rhetoric, for the people of Manitoba to have some belief that this government is going to do something. I have my doubts, but I am prepared to wait a very short time to see.

We see no mention in this throne speech, Mr. Speaker, in agriculture by this Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) with regard to the proposals that are being made with regard to the Crow benefit, major proposals by the former Deputy Minister of Transport, Ramsey Withers, under the Liberal government, under Lloyd Axworthy, when the Western Grain Transportation Act was put in place. He started the dismantling of the Crow then, and he wants to finish his work now under the Conservative government.

Ramsey Withers has put forward a proposal to the ministers that would see the massive dismantling of our grain transportation rail system in this country, particularly in the province of Manitoba, that would see the payment going to producers. One of the excuses that they are using is that it is not going to fit with any hypothetical GATT agreement. That is something that infuriates me and many people, I believe, because there is no GATT agreement, yet

they want to and they continue to put offerings on the table before they have an agreement. How is that negotiating from any point of strength, when you put things on the table before you even finish the negotiations.

There is no agreement at GATT, and we should not, Mr. Speaker, be giving away the Crow benefit or using that as an excuse, as Charlie Mayer is doing, the Minister of Grains and Oilseeds federally, or it seems supported by this Minister of Agriculture that he is too using that as an excuse.

Now, we do not have any mention of that issue in this throne speech, any mention of that issue to stand up for the farmers of Manitoba, to ensure that our interests are protected, that the rail system is protected, that we have some protection for our road network in this province—nothing in this throne speech.

Of course, before the federal government has done its evil deeds for this country, it wants to deregulate agriculture in Canada. They say that under the guise of some efficiencies, of being more competitive, they are going to remove many of the regulations that are in place at the present time. I know the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) is probably supportive of what they are saying there. I hope he is not, but I think, unfortunately, he is. He cannot sit smugly and say everything is rosy in agriculture because, if he looks at the net farm income for '91, Manitoba has the biggest drop, a 68 percent drop in net farm income, the largest drop of any province in this country in '91 over 1990.

We see a drop of 8 percent in the farm population, from '86 to '92 as well, something else that the Minister of Agriculture cannot be proud of. He cannot sit there and say that agriculture is looking rosy, even though we just have a report that we have a near record harvest, according to Statistics Canada, albeit feed wheat worth less than two bucks a bushel.

Let us take a look at what this minister is silent on with regard to the Wheat Board and other Agriculture Canada regulations. Mr. Speaker, from the information I have, not only are they looking at removing barley from the exclusive jurisdiction of the Wheat Board for a dual system on a North American market, which we oppose and believe the Wheat Board can do a better job of supporting or of marketing our barley, we are interested in finding out where the minister sits on that and whether he, in

fact, is going to stand up to these moves by the federal government. [interjection]

It started with oats. The Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) points out that oats was removed from the Wheat Board. We said that was the first step. Now we see that it is the first step and that the minister from Manitoba, the Minister for Grains and Oilseeds, Charlie Mayer, is attempting to finish a lot of his destructive moves before the people of Manitoba and Canada kick him out of that job. We think that will happen very shortly.

An Honourable Member: Who is going to kick him out, Audrey McLaughlin?

Mr. Plohman: Well, the people of Manitoba are going to kick him out.

An Honourable Member: No, they are not.

Mr. Plohman: Yes, they are, Mr. Speaker. [interjection] He is certainly not going to be in government, so he is not going to be in that position; so he is trying to do as much damage as he can right now.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to taking out barley and removing barley from the exclusive jurisdiction of the Wheat Board, there are other major implications of the deregulation which include the country's grading system. Now the minister has not mentioned any of these initiatives.

I raise this in the Throne Speech Debate because there is nothing in Agriculture in the throne speech other than the mention of sugar beets and a forum on diversification. Nowhere does the minister mention the tremendously serious problems facing Manitoba farmers on these issues of the Crow benefit, on these issues of the Wheat Board and the deregulation, and GATT. This minister is not dealing with those issues in this throne speech, and I think he has been negligent in putting them forward to the Premier and ensuring that they are in this throne speech to indicate some kind of action on his position.

* (2110)

I believe he is lying low on those issues. He wants to see which way the wind is blowing before he starts taking some positions. Clearly, we know from his philosophical bent that he is probably supportive of any of the moves that Charlie Mayer is making with regard to the Wheat Board, any of those he is making on the Crow benefit. As a matter of fact, it was this Minister of Agriculture who stood

up apparently at the Agriculture meeting last spring and indicated that he would like to see the Crow benefit paid—or at least a review undertaken to see the Crow benefit paid differently to each province and managed under the provincial jurisdiction.

So he started that—[interjection] Well, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) can clarify that at some future time. I am sure he will have an opportunity to do so, and I look forward to that.

Let us look at the grading system that would be deregulated, Mr. Speaker. Red meats, feed grains and potatoes perhaps could be removed from regulation under the agriculture grading system in this country. It advocates that Canada adopt a system whereby export commodities would only have to meet the standards of the importing country rather than the Canadian standards. I think that is of serious concern, and I hope the minister is going to take a strong position against that kind of change in agriculture.

The report, as I understand it, Mr. Speaker, also recommends that livestock grading become the responsibility of the industry rather than government and that grading be carried out on a cost-recovery basis and even then it could be optional under some circumstances, which is absolutely ridiculous. So I believe that we stand to lose a great deal because we have a very respected grading system with high standards in this country, and we should not allow this federal government with no mandate to do these kinds of things at this time to dismantle many of these regulations that are going to hurt our reputation as a supplier to international markets of many different commodities and for domestic use.

So I say that this minister has not represented the interests of agriculture well in this throne speech. I see that there is no mention of the livestock industry, the decimation of the packing industry in this province. Many people are raising concerns, many farmers that I talk to. What initiatives is this government taking to try and turn that around? Are they just simply going to resign and say, oh, well, who killed it? How is that going to solve the issue right now?

There is the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). I thought he could ask slightly more intelligent questions than that. He must deal with solutions to these problems. He is in government. He is responsible. The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) is responsible. The livestock industry, the

packing industry in this province and processing industry are going down the tube, and these people are not doing anything about it. The people of Manitoba, the farmers of Manitoba, the people of rural Manitoba notice this. They are disappointed in this minister and government, and they watch daily with a great deal of disappointment at what this government is doing.

I notice there is no mention in this speech either, Mr. Speaker, about the Keystone Agricultural Producers new funding formula for the organization, the new check-off that they want. Where does this minister stand on that check-off legislation and changes that they are proposing to get greater dollars flowing in? Is he willing to make that check-off legislation optional in terms of the designation to the organization of the producers' choice? Is he willing to look at that if it is going to be increased?

This is something that this minister has not clarified and has not included in this particular throne speech. In addition to that, as I mentioned, he has waited now some four years, into his fifth year, on diversification, talks about diversification, and now we see a showpiece in this particular throne speech, a showpiece of action.

Where is the action on diversification, Mr. Speaker, by this minister? Why does he continue to cut back? Why does he continue to cut back in research, in dollars for diversification? I want this minister to deal with that issue in the next budget to ensure that that is a priority when he brings forward his estimates to the Treasury bench and to the Treasury Board, that he will indicate that this is one of his major priorities for the province of Manitoba in agriculture. Diversification is essential.

Mr. Speaker, I want to point out in the four minutes I have left that I hear these remarks from members across the way about deregulation. I want to put in perspective for these ministers and these members opposite that when we were sitting in government and the deregulation philosophy was running rampant in this country, both by the Liberal federal government, the Liberal provincial governments and Conservative provincial governments, only one NDP government in this country, we stood against that deregulation time and time again with the federal government in air deregulation, in rail deregulation, presentation after presentation, because we did not have direct jurisdiction in those areas, but we made it known publicly in every forum

we had that this was a death knell to the air industry, that there was short-term gain for long-term pain for the consumers of this country.

They refused to listen and they went ahead, and now they are talking about reregulating the transport industry in some of those areas because it has been a disaster and we see the results now. We see it in rail—10,000 workers are going to be laid off in CN. Now they talk about a gain. We see this resurrected, this proposal. We see the massive layoffs in the air industry.

Mr. Speaker, only as a last resort, reluctantly, did we sign the Memorandum of Agreement dealing with deregulation in the trucking industry. Yes, we signed it, and let me say that we wrung every possible concession out of the federal minister, John Crosbie, before we did that.

We ensured that there was shared funding to implement the National Safety Code. We ensured that the safety code would be committed to and put in place before we agreed to deregulation. We ensured that there would be a trial five-year period, that there would be a review before that period was over, and we ensured that Manitoba would put in place a regulatory system. Even though there was a move to reverse onus, it was a meaningful test.

The Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) knows that. He has retained the same transport chairperson who has continued to do that I believe to the extent possible under the circumstances in this country.

Now, Mr. Speaker, those are the facts with regard to deregulation. We do not hear the Minister of Highways and Transportation stand up in his place in this House and say that the great deregulators in the transportation industry were the NDP, although he has strayed from the truth. He has occasionally in this House left the impression that I, as former Minister of Highways, was responsible for the deregulation of the transportation industry. He is wrong, as I have stated, categorically wrong, and I know that the members of the Treasury bench, members of this cabinet fully understand that issue now, even if the Minister of Transportation has not explained it to them in the past, but I would hope that he has.

Mr. Speaker, this throne speech is a dismal recipe for this province. It gives no direction. It shows a floundering government that is going nowhere in this province. I know that there is only one solution, and

that is to put an end to this government within the two years that they have left here. I know the people in Manitoba, when they know the complete story about this government, are in fact going to do that in the next election.

We are going to make sure they know about the facts of this non-throne speech that we have received in this House under the guise of a throne speech and a plan for the province of Manitoba. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I feel sort of honoured by what appeared to be applause on your behalf, and I appreciate that. Another new session, and I want to indicate to yourself that I do not think I have ever seen you look better sitting in that chair. Obviously you are in good health and seem very enthusiastic, and I think it is proper.

Mr. Speaker, there is a saying that says, the more things change, the more they stay the same, but that is not quite true, because things have changed even in this House from the time that we finished our session last June, I believe it was. Since that time, you know, we have had a couple of members that have stepped down; we have had some by-elections.

I want to take this opportunity to welcome the new members, one that has been re-elected and certainly to the member on our side, the member for Portage (Mr. Pallister).

Things do change. We had a resignation just the other day, Friday, so things do change. Other things have changed in this House. We have a new face sitting at the table here, so things happen that way.

* (2120)

New Pages, and I sometimes wonder what our new Pages think of when they get into this Legislature. I want to pay a special tribute to the young lady who did the first vote count on Friday. I thought it was exceptional. For the years that I have been here, Mr. Speaker, I think sometimes when the Pages come here they seem sort of awed and nervous. This young lady walked up there and without looking at her notes, she called every shot right. That is no reflection on the others, but it is a very difficult thing and she did it with poise and confidence. I thought it was one of the better ones I have heard. It was good.

I have had the privilege over the years that I have been here to participate in many of the throne speeches and I have sat in various seats in this House. When I was a backbencher, I sat over there somewhere. When I was in opposition, various seats on that side, and I have to say I listened to many, many speeches, good speeches, bad speeches, meaningless speeches. Possibly, Mr. Speaker, for all the ones you have listened to, probably the meaningless ones are the most ones that you hear. Surprisingly over the years, we have listened to the speeches from wherever you sit. The member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) is always very boisterous and tries to be very aggressive.

I think back to the speeches, and I say this for the benefit of the new members, over the years the speakers who draw one's attention, and I want to make reference to some of them over a period of time. It used to be Russ Doern at one time, he had very colourful speeches. Nothing in them, but colourful speeches. It was interesting to listen to, to some degree, if you wanted some entertainment.

An Honourable Member: You cannot even say that about Maloway.

Mr. Driedger: Well, I was just going to make reference to the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) now. The member for Elmwood now tries to follow along those lines—[interjection] I cannot even say it is that comical all the time. You need some of this stuff in here as well.

I mean if you had all the speeches of the calibre of the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), and I should not make reference to the amount of empty seats in here, but it used to be different when there was a lot of attention during these debates and everybody seemed to be here and pay attention to these things. Maybe it is a reflection on the quality of the speakers whom we have making speeches nowadays.

I can recall other good speakers in this House. There was the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) in his younger days. He used to be very boisterous and have very entertaining speeches. He still does. He has always been a very fluent speaker and expresses his views. He had his own personal views in terms of the international scene to some degree. For many of the new members coming in, the member for Lakeside in his speeches has always been a very colourful speaker.

Another speaker in this House whom I had a lot of respect for, I did not value any of his political background, but Mr. Sid Green at that time I was almost awed by him. First of all, he was a lawyer, had legal training, very qualified speaker. I always made reference in my earlier days in the House as a backbencher that Sid Green could take the head of a needle and speak in it for 40 minutes and you would listen and wonder what was coming out of it. At the end nothing came out of it, but he sure kept you listening and paying attention for 40 minutes whenever he spoke.

Those were the kinds of speakers whom I remember over the years participating in the debates here, but then we have an awful lot of speeches here that we get through this rhetoric to some degree. We just experienced some with the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), who has a tendency to go in that direction. We all have our own way of presenting our views in here, and that is what makes it nice and interesting.

I want to say to the new people coming here, do not get despondent. I walked out with the member for Portage (Mr. Pallister) in the afternoon, and he said, boy, I am getting a headache from this stuff. I said, this is your first time around. Wait till you have been here 15 years, then you know what you want to sort of close out and what you want to pay attention to.

But this is a process that after all the years that I have had the privilege of speaking in this House, I always find it challenging and exciting to get up for it to some degree to participate. It is because I like the system, I like what I am doing. I like being a politician, and I have said many times regardless of our political parties that the majority of the members who come into this House are sincere about trying to do the best they can for the constituency and for the province.

Some just do have not the capabilities, I guess, but that is a shot. I have no need on taking many shots, but we all have our own views and what we think is important and how to do it. That is why the political system in this country is so good, because I was terribly disappointed when in '81 the Sterling Lyon administration got defeated. I thought that we were good government at that time, that there was foresight, but the public is always right. At that time the public made the decision that they wanted an NDP government and they had them for two terms, and ultimately the public said we have had enough

of those people. We do not agree with their philosophy anymore; we want to change. They changed. The debate can continue here forever where you say, well, you know we are doing the wrong things.

I sat back there exactly where the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) is sitting right now in that chair and remember really going after the government of the day, the crazy things that were done. At that time the government did what they thought was best. Philosophical differences, that is allowed; we should be able to have that. But, Mr. Speaker, sometimes I think that the level of debate gets a little shallow. Really, it does get a little shallow because when we consider that economic situations that happen in the country, not just in the province, in the country, internationally, affect the things that happen within this province. Ironically, when you look within this country of ours we have four NDP governments, or is it three? Three. We have four Liberal governments. We have four Conservative governments. Every one of these provinces is struggling with the same problem.

When the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) gets up and says, this government has done the wrong things, compare our record with the other provinces. [interjection] Yes, the member for Dauphin says compare our record, but the member for Dauphin does not indicate that during the time they fortunately were government that the economy was strong. The economy was very strong comparatively. Every one of the provinces is paying the price of the change of what has happened in the economy, not just in Canada, not just in North America but in the world situation, and it is affecting all of us.

So when we have a lot of these speeches, and I expect there are going to be many more coming where the criticism coming says, "The Minister of Finance has not done this, or the Premier has not done this." Go for it, that is fine. But I think we still have to have some sense of realism in this thing when we speak and challenge each other. We think what we are doing is right. We are doing the best we can under very difficult economic times. Within my department, every one of my colleagues, as ministers and our caucus as well, realize tough decisions that we are making as government, very difficult, and the member for Dauphin, tongue in cheek, should not make some of the accusations that he does, because he was involved in making

some very tough decisions when, as Minister of Highways and Transportation, his capital budget, which was under the member for Pembina at that time, was \$100 million in 1981 when they took government. By the time the member for Dauphin was through being Minister of Highways and Transportation it was around \$85-86 million.

Those were tough decisions, and do not tell me that the member for Dauphin liked those decisions. So now he stands there and spouts the wisdom of—so I am just saying that things should be put in the right perspective.

* (2130)

I am not going to be critical of the other provinces, Saskatchewan or Ontario, because they are making tough decisions as we are making right now, and that is out of sorrow. It is not a happy time for them, it is not a happy time for us, but these are things that should be taken into consideration when we as politicians want to have respectability from the general public out there who elected us.

What do we do? We damage it ourselves. We do it to ourselves. I think we have to be a little bit more conscientious. I have always enjoyed being here. I am proud to be an MLA. I am very proud to be in the seat that I am in as Minister of Highways and Transportation, with the difficult decisions that come with the position. I am proud to be here because, as my colleague from Lakeside (Mr. Enns) very often said, only 57 people out of over a million have the privilege to be here, and we should weigh that heavily in terms of how we respond and how we react to each other.

I do not necessarily agree with the stepping-down Leader of the Liberals, who was trying to give us the sort of motherhood type of thing that we should do. We are all of age here. We do not necessarily have to be scolded and told to do that because, invariably, we all fall into the same trap, and I do. I have been from time to time in speeches in this House, I have just been going at it and critical and quite enthused with that, and there should be enthusiasm here.

One thing that I found sort of interesting in the speeches that have taken place today, in fact the member for Flin Flon talked of being tired. Obviously the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper) is tired; he has resigned. You know, there seems to be a tired attitude here.

Well, I will tell you something. I am not tired. I like where I am. I enjoy the challenges. They are very

frustrating at times, but that is part of the responsibility we have.

So I like to be here. I like to do the best that I can together with my colleagues. When our Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) has to make tough decisions, I sometimes personally get upset with him from time to time because of the targets and because of the things he asks me to do, but that is his responsibility. My responsibility is highways and transportation.

The changes that are taking place in the world are very challenging. Every province is facing these things. I have to defend what happens in my department. I have to say to everybody that transportation is a very important part of the changes that are taking place. As we try and get the economy stimulated again, when we talk of world trade, things that affect us internationally, transportation is a very important mode and a very important component. I want to make sure that that gets addressed in terms of how we deal with some of these problems as the economy turns around.

I think the most frustrating thing that can happen to a government if they go through the economic tough times, do the right things, and when things start getting better, they get booted out. That must be a terrible frustration, and I experienced that to some degree from '77 to '81, when the Sterling Lyon administration made tough decisions, had things going on the right track. In '81 the public said, that is enough, out they are, and in came the NDP administration under Pawley at the time, and I will not use the expression, started spending like drunken sailors, but certainly capitalized on the upturn of the economy and managed to do all kinds of things and now sit back and say, look what we did.

There is an old saying, what goes around comes around, and invariably we all must face the things that we have said. So I caution all members in this House, from time to time when they make comments, think a little bit, be careful. If you made a statement eight or 10 years ago and you have changed your position, do not apologize for that.

There used to be some of the members that made a point to go and look through Hansard, what did the member say 10 years ago and now he has changed his position. I know the teasing that I have gotten and the kidding that I have gotten from members opposite because I voted against seat belt

legislation. I am now a strong supporter of seat belts; I make no apologies for that. At that time those were my views. I was entitled to state those views. I voted against it, which was my right. Now I am the administrator, to some degree, of seat belt legislation and I support it.

I want to indicate the kidding that has taken place—and the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) seems to have some fun kidding me about Sunday shopping. What I did in my particular case, and I am prepared to put it on record, was I wrote every one of my chambers and councillors and asked them what their views were on it. They indicated to me in my specific riding they were opposed to Sunday shopping. They felt it would have a negative effect on a rural constituency. I brought forward those positions in the debate in our caucus. The decision has been made to allow Sunday shopping and I support it. I have had my case. I am there to debate again next time on a different issue. I do not expect to win or lose all the issues that I deal with. I think that is what we are here for. So I think that is the mark of what we are responsible for in terms of making decisions.

Some individual came up to me. Well, he said, if you did not have your way on the decision on Sunday shopping, why are you still there. I said, what will I do, take my blocks and go home. I am elected; I am responsible; I accept that decision that has been made. I do not know how other caucuses operate, but in our caucus we have open debate on these things. When the decision is made, we accept that decision, and I expect all of the other caucuses do the same thing.

Show me any member of this House who has not lost some issues. What do you do? Do you sulk? No, that is not the way you do it. So anyway those are the challenges and interesting things that happen in the Legislature.

I want to spend what time I have left in talking about transportation issues. I am glad the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) is here, who is my critic, because in some of the questions and answers that take place during Question Period there is not really enough time to get into some of these issues. I will try and cover as much as I can during the time that I have in terms of dealing with some of that.

I think the members in the Legislature are well aware that the trucking industry, with which I will start off first, is a very important industry to

Manitoba. We are an exporter of transportation services. It is part of the economic thrust that we have here, basically because we are located in the right place. We are located in the middle of Canada, but it is important to us as some of these things happen we know that the industrial development is out in Ontario and Quebec and that we have our certain strengths in the western part, but we are located in between, and that is one of the reasons why seven out of 11 national carriers are headquartered in Manitoba and that is why it is part of the whole distribution centre.

I want to tell the members here that the truck port of entry at Emerson is the fourth largest in Canada and it is escalating almost on a daily basis. I say that in justification for the twinning of Highway 75. We have a tremendous amount of truck traffic coming along Highway 75, and I think it is a very important vital transportation link.

The traffic is changing more to north-south whether we like it or not. I could get into the debate of the Free Trade Agreement with the States or the NAFTA agreement, but I will not touch on those things at the present time. I do not think I have enough time.

The onus is on a north-south basis. That is the reality of life. I will tell you something. What I will try and do for the members opposite is try and give them the information in terms of the escalation of truck traffic, because they come north-south and then go east-west. We are in a good, positive position for that.

The trucking industry has gone through major problems across the country. If members know, the strikes that were taking place in Ontario and Quebec were because the truckers were unhappy with the deregulation aspect of it, the impact that it had on them. The position of Manitoba, I have no qualms saying that we have not changed our position from the time that the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohma) was the minister.

We are still on the same track in terms of trying to make sure that certain issues were addressed as this deregulation took place. I have followed through on those things. That is why we work co-operatively with the trucking industry, and that is why the trucking industry has not been that unhappy with us. I mean, they are not always happy with us, but they are not to the point where they have demonstrations and strikes, because we have an

intimate working relationship with them in terms of trying to make things a little better for them.

We have extended our RTAC routes throughout the province to accommodate them. We have extended the loads, the dimensions on the trucking industry. These are all little things, but positive things for them.

* (2140)

The member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohm) was making reference to the National Safety Code. We will virtually have it implemented by the end of this month. We will talk about inspectors later. The National Safety Code is virtually in place, and I will have the privilege of addressing the Manitoba Safety Council tomorrow on commercial inspections at their meeting. I think it has been an accepted thing that we would phase it in. It has not created a big uproar. We have the inspections in place, and we have that kind of relationship developed in there. I could speak at length on that.

I want to touch on some of the issues that have been raised in Question Period and also have been on the news lately. The air industry is going through dramatic changes. Everybody is aware of the fact that for some time both our national air carriers, Canadian and Air Canada, have been losing dramatic money to the point where they were virtually both going broke if they would have kept this on.

It was at that time, Mr. Speaker, when I made the personal comment saying that deregulating it at the speed that they did has created some of the problems. I think everybody is aware, when you start losing \$600,000 a day or whatever they are losing now combined individually that you cannot have two carriers flying out of the same place, for example, from Edmonton to Winnipeg, within half an hour of each other and both half full. That is where the economy just does not make sense. That is why I made that reference that there possibly should have been some regulation still in place. I justify my position on that.

Actually, after I was quoted in the press, ironically I had a 50-minute interview with the media. This was one of the last comments I made and that is the one that makes the headline. Mr. Mazankowski has indicated as well that possibly they maybe should have reviewed some of these things. We cannot change some of these things, but I think it is

incumbent on us to raise some of these issues that we feel could happen.

I feel very proud of my transportation advisory staff that I have, who basically are on top of these. They have been dealing with transportation issues, whether it is air, rail or whatever. These are the people I rely on to give me the right information so that I can assess it and bring these points forward. I think that is a standard approach to these things.

Under the air industry, we saw the thing unfold where Canadian was running into difficulty and was trying to amalgamate with American, and then that one fell through and they tried to do an amalgamation with Air Canada. That fell through and then Air Canada amalgamated with Continental. [interjection] Well, Continental basically is a company that has been in and out of bankruptcy, I think, for the last eight years. Ironically, at a time when they are losing that kind of money, Air Canada could still afford to buy, together with some investors, for \$450 million of that industry.

I have no bones about indicating that I prefer to see two carriers so that we do not have a monopoly on it. I do not believe in this monopoly aspect of it, so any which way within reason, making sure that we look after the taxpayers' dollar that we try and have a dual system going out here. I think there is something that can be worked out. There has been endless meetings and endless discussions taking place on this. I think that once we know exactly what is going to happen, the position that we have taken is that before Manitoba is going to put in any money, if they are looking at that option of putting money into helping Canadian, that there has to be a good business plan presented so that we are not going to take and pour money down the tube somewhere with no benefits out of it.

There is the aspect of Gemini and Sabre. It is surprising, Mr. Speaker, that I have to indicate that I have never seen corporate giants really operate the way they have been operating lately. They can be pretty ruthless in terms of looking after their own interests whether it is Air Canada, whether it is Canadian or Gemini. These are big corporations. It is not like a personal arrangement that we have when I deal with my colleagues or something like that. This is tough business.

So I am hoping that out of the whole turmoil that has been out there with the air industry that something will come out of it that is going to be to

the satisfaction and, certainly, the position we have put forward that in the decision making that ultimately we might be faced with is that we look at the economic and the job impact on Manitoba. That has to be there, because we have—and this is not talking disrespectfully of Air Canada—but we have 1,800 Air Canada employees. We have 450 Canadian employees, and we have 171 people employed with Gemini. So these are the things that we have to balance as we make decisions in terms of what is positive for our province, keeping in mind what is also positive on the national scale, but I think that is how we have to deal with it.

Now I want to touch briefly on the rail industry. The member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) raised the question today of how many jobs were lost. He sort of lobbed a wide-ranging question, and I fielded it with sort of a political answer on that, but there are problems out there. We know that CN is challenged with rationalizing their operation to be more efficient, to be competitive. When they do that invariably it affects jobs.

As I indicated in my answer today, we are the second highest employer for the railways. I think we have something like 5,500 employees with CN—do not quote me specifically—and around 2,800 with CP, in that range, Mr. Speaker. So that is a big employment impact for us. If they talk of layoffs, I think there is a discussion taking place right now between CN officials and the union people, no decisions have been made. As the decisions come down, I would expect that probably the member for Transcona and myself will probably know at about the same time, because usually he has his connections with the union and gets the information as fast as or faster than I do from time to time.

That is the concern that I had, and I was talking to my staff today and saying, here it is a few weeks before Christmas, and the anxiety of potential layoffs, whether it is with Air Canada, whether it is with Canadian, whether it is with CN or CP, it must be really stressful for people. If you have a house mortgage, you have a wife and a family, a young family, you have worked with this company or a corporation for 15, 20 years, and all of a sudden the potential of a layoff comes along. I would consider it very stressful. I think it is always tragic.

We debate here and say, well, what have you done, or what have you not done? Ourselves, as government, we cannot make the decision for CN as to should they lay off or not lay off. They make

their own decisions—the same thing for the corporations, Canadian, Air Canada. They do not have to answer to us in terms of how they rationalize and whom they lay off, but I think that the human aspect in terms of doing this should be considered. I will throw forward a suggestion that, for example, within government, we try and anticipate some of these things. Then we try, and instead of having warm bodies being affected, we use the attrition route to some degree rather than just straight lay off 400 people.

It is a difficult decision-making time for people involved, and I am sure that the people who basically end up finally giving notice to individuals that their jobs are terminated do not enjoy it either. It is a tough, competitive world out there. Dramatic changes have taken place in the whole transportation industry. Reference was made by the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) in terms of the method of payment and potential changes coming. I expect that the federal government has chosen that course, and the impact that it will have on Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, these are things we have to be very careful of to make sure that we, in our view, bring forward the best arguments we can in terms of making sure that the impact is the least on our people.

These are tough decisions that we make at a changing time. When things are going well, money is there, everything is flowing fine, it is easy to be government, because you are going to look good. But it is not easy to be government when you have to make tough decisions and you make the decisions that are affecting people's lives. That is the thing that always bothers me most, even when we go through the agony of trying, going through the budget process, trying to achieve certain targets and it is going to affect people's lives. I would like to think that everybody is compassionate. It bothers me. It bothers me that some people are going to be without a job, because I have four children, three of them married, who are affected by these things, have experienced first-hand, the layoffs, being out of a job. I think that is a real tough thing under the circumstances that we have today.

I keep thinking back when I got out of school, at that time Grade 12, and I had one year university. If you wanted to work, jobs were there. Jobs were there, but now, when you post a job for any position, we have—what?—150, 200 applications. It shows

that people want to work, that all we need is the jobs, but we cannot control the national, international economy. We are affected by those things. For example, as the Minister of Agriculture has indicated, the GATT agreements affect what is happening to our farm communities. Dramatic change is taking place. The method of payment is going to affect that. It will affect my department, and I raise this when we have our discussions in terms of, if you pay the producer, what will it do to my infrastructure? These are things that all have a bearing on it. That is why we are challenged with the decisions that we have to make, and they are not always easy.

* (2150)

Mr. Speaker, there are two other areas that I wanted to touch on, and I could belabour for a long time the issue of Churchill. Churchill, for myself, has been one of the most frustrating experiences in this office that I hold. The record of grain moving through the Port of Churchill has not been good in the last years in spite of the best efforts by this government to try and influence the Wheat Board, the federal government and CN. It is not a positive thing that is taking place there.

I thought this year with the Russians, with the changes that took place in the Eastern Bloc, the Russians wanting grain, not having money, that under the credit system that we should have been able to dictate to them where they take the grain. Obviously our message—and I do not mind being critical of the Wheat Board—I think they had the opportunity even with the short shipping season that we have which could be extended in my view, especially with the Russians who are used to dealing with those kinds of situations, that we should have capitalized and had a banner year.

I want to tell and I repeat again, the enemies of Churchill are many. The St. Lawrence Seaway people have a strong lobby. They would like to see Churchill shut down. Ports Canada is to the point where they have been losing money now and they have to get money from other ports to take and sustain the ports operation. They are talking about a potential closedown. CN from when I first got into this office offered to sell me CN for a dollar, their whole line to Churchill for a dollar. Then we have the private grain companies who really do not give a damn about Churchill or not because they have their own operation.

There are many enemies out there. We have the emotional support from many municipalities, from certain farmers, but I want to indicate that I think that we are in a crucial time in terms of decision making with the federal government and Churchill. The rail cars are being depreciated and deleted. I do not know whether we could even deliver any more or CN could deliver any more with the present system of using the rail cars. I still feel we could use the hopper cars down there. You know, the line rehabilitation is a major problem. So many components to this thing and if there was a real desire by the federal government, I think there would be no problem.

We have tried to instill that desire as best we can and I have to indicate that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) himself has taken a very active role this year in terms of trying to promote the activities of Churchill. I know that my colleague the Minister of I, T and T (Mr. Stefanson) has been dealing with the Murmansk people in Russia direct in terms of having the Arctic bridge concept that we are talking about, having stuff go both ways.

We have the potential rocket range out there. We have the potential national park. There are many things that are still out there positively, but there has to be that desire. How we instill that desire aside from the components that we can deal with, there has to be a broader acceptance of that. If we could ever get somebody like—I have said this before and I make no apologies—if the Port of Churchill was located in Quebec, it would be a thriving, humming industry, and I make no bones about that.

I would hope that the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) asks about the feasibility study on the rocket range. My colleague the Minister of I, T and T (Mr. Stefanson) is prepared to probably deal with that when he has the opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, time goes fast when you are having fun, but I have many issues in my department which I would like to address. The other is the Highways issue. I am just glossing over some of them very fast in terms of issues that I have, but Highways itself and that is always a very challenging and exciting thing. When my department builds a new road, it is there. You can see it. It is living proof and the appreciation is there. The only frustration I have is there is not enough money there all the time.

Mr. Speaker, the national highways program—I am hoping, fingers crossed, that there is still going

to be an announcement coming down. We have been up and down with enthusiasm from this spring when the First Ministers met and they talked about the potential of a national highways program coming down which would be some cost-sharing with the federal government. This will be the first time that Canada would have that kind of a program. There has been some cost-sharing on specific projects, but we are talking of a 10-year national highways program—an exciting thing. We are the only developed industrial western country that does not have a national highways system.

If it happens, I have made some kind of remarks about what I would do if it was announced. I do not think I want to put it on record; somebody might hold me to them, but I want to tell everybody here that my deputy and myself have been the strongest promoters. Manitoba, probably the smallest benefactor of a national highway system, has been the strongest promoters of it. Maybe that is the way it should be.

I am looking forward with some mixed emotions and anticipation for Wednesday when Mr. Mazankowski will be bringing down the economic statement. Maybe the national highway program is in there. Mr. Speaker, if that happens, I may not be here for a day or so because I would be rather excited, but we are hoping that will happen.

In terms of the provincial construction, and when I compare the record of this government, to us it has been a priority. It is important that our capital programs—highways, hospitals, schools—have not been deleted, that they have been the biggest ever I believe. Right?

When you consider what poor Saskatchewan had to do, they have cut theirs virtually in half. You know when I meet the ministers from some of the other provinces who have had dramatic cuts, then I feel relatively fortunate, and it is not much of a solace because you know they go through agony as well in terms of making these decisions.

I am looking forward to further debate on many of the issues that I have covered here. I have tried to highlight some of them. I have expressed my views.

Mr. Speaker, once again, it has been a pleasure to participate in the throne speech. I look forward to listening to comments from other members of the House. I hope there is some substance to some of the discussions that will take place, instead of just having the sort of meaningless discussion that takes place from time to time. It has been a pleasure, thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it ten o'clock?

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

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Monday, November 30, 1992

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