



Sixth Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(Hansard)

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Speaker*



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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature**

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, December 12, 1994

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Physical Education in Schools

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Kathleen Matwee, Bernie Moore, Colleen Budzinski and others urging the Minister responsible for Education (Mr. Manness) to consider reinstating physical education as a compulsory core subject area.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Physical Education in Schools

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Lamoureux). It complies with the privileges and the practices of this House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

The petition of the undersigned residents of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT in July 1994, the Minister of Education introduced an action plan entitled Renewing Education: New Directions;

THAT this report will make physical education an optional course in Grades 9 to 12;

THAT the physical education curriculum should be regularly reviewed to ensure that it meets the needs of students;

THAT the government is failing to recognize the benefits of physical education such as improved physical fitness, more active lifestyles,

health promotion, self-discipline, skill development, stress reduction, strengthened peer relationships, weight regulation, stronger bones, reduced risk of health diseases and improved self-confidence.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly urge the Minister responsible for Education to consider reinstating physical education as a compulsory core subject area.

Rent Hike Cancellation

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Martindale). It complies with the privileges and the practices of this House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? The Clerk will read.

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

WHEREAS thousands of Manitobans depend upon public housing as affordable housing geared to their income for themselves and their families; and

WHEREAS these units are particularly important for low income seniors and single parents; and

WHEREAS the provincial government upon the request of the federal government has increased without notice the rent payable for tenants; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has also cut property tax credit of these tenants resulting in a further rent increase amounting to a total increase as much as 17 percent for some tenants; and

WHEREAS the federal government has failed to provide any funding for new public housing; and

WHEREAS seniors and other Manitobans on modest incomes have already had their standard of living reduced by the erosion of Pharmacare, the increase in nursing home rates and the cuts to home care;

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly request the Minister responsible for Housing (Mrs. McIntosh) to consider cancelling the recent unilateral rent hikes.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the 1993/94 Annual Report for Manitoba Health.

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Government Services): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure of tabling the 1993-94 Annual Report for Government Services, the '94 Annual Report for Fleet Vehicles and the '94 Annual Report for Materials Distribution.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the Annual Report 1992-93 for the Women's Directorate.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the reports of the Manitoba Development Corporation for 1993 and 1994.

* (1335)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 11—The Cattle Producers Association Amendment Act

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I would like to move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey), that leave be given to introduce Bill 11, The Cattle Producers Association Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Association des éleveurs de bétail), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Enns: Mr. Speaker, just a few comments at first reading. This bill essentially enables the cattle producers of Manitoba to better organize their affairs, and it strengthens the check-off legislation that they are currently operating under.

As well, on occasion there are still some bad actors on the cattle scene where cattle producers, while not facing the rustling of yesteryear, are nonetheless left holding the bag when a vendor goes broke or does something else.

This would enable the cattle producers to better fund their own business by topping off the bonding requirements currently in place in the province.

I am advised that the cattle producers are anxiously awaiting these amendments and look forward to making them law when next we meet.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 12—The Development Corporation Amendment Act

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the minister of food and fibre, otherwise known as the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), that leave be given to introduce Bill 12, The Development Corporation Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société de développement), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, just a brief explanation. This is mainly a housekeeping bill which will further add to the efficient operation of the Manitoba Development Corporation, coming into line with some of the practices that are being carried out, and as this government has continually done, bring more efficiency to all operations of government.

Motion agreed to.

**Bill 13—The Mines and Minerals
Amendment Act**

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Energy and Mines): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness), that leave be given to introduce Bill 13, The Mines and Minerals Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les mines et les minéraux, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, as all members will recall, two sessions ago, we passed the new Mines and Minerals Act which brought the principles of sustainable development into the mines and minerals production industry of the province of Manitoba.

In the course of passing that new legislation, a number of minor amendments were noted that are being proposed in this bill.

As well as with recent significant activity in terms of claim staking for the search for diamonds in the province of Manitoba, there needs clarification around the staking of mineral claims below the surface of the ground on property that may well have been staked for the purpose of aggregate extraction so that we do not have any disappointment in terms of staking of a deep mineral and diamond potential beneath known quarry lands.

Motion agreed to.

* (1340)

**Bill 212—The Child and Family Services
Amendment Act (2)**

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), that leave be given to introduce Bill 212, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur les services

à l'enfant et à la famille, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Speaker, the purport of my bill is to do that which the government refuses to do, namely to require the Children's Advocate to report to the Legislative Assembly, instead of the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer).

Motion agreed to.

**Bill 214—The Residential Tenancies
Amendment Act**

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), that leave be given to introduce Bill 214, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la location à usage d'habitation, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Santos: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this legislation is to remedy an unfair situation when unforeseen events happen that lead to undesirable consequences. The purpose of this bill is to allow senior citizens who are tenants of public housing who have been paneled and therefore cannot get back to the apartment but yet get charged for the rent—this is an unfair situation and a fair government cannot tolerate this to happen.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery, where we have with us this afternoon from The Maples School 30 English language students under the direction of Mr. Murray Goldenberg and Mrs. Liisa Schell. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski).

From the Daniel McIntyre Collegiate, we have seventeen Grade 11 students under the direction of Mrs. Baker. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett).

From the Kelvin High School, we have twenty-five Grade 11 students under the direction of Mr. John Durham. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray).

On behalf of all honourable members, I would like to welcome you here this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Kenaston Underpass Environmental Review

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

Allegedly, one of the good ideas that came out of the pre-budget consultation sessions last year was the Kenaston underpass, a project that all three levels of government have approved, some \$29.6 million for the underpass portion of the project.

We have had a number of concerns about this project, the amount of money and the merit of this project, and the process under which this project will be approved since we have heard its announcement last year and have asked questions in the Chamber.

We have been concerned about the process of approving this project, both in terms of the cost benefit and in terms of the environmental process. The original document indicates that there would be public participation and a review of the environmental process and that this would be completed by December 31, 1994.

I would like to ask the Premier, how will the public be involved in the environmental licensing process through both the federal and provincial governments?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I just want to ensure that the member opposite knows that first and foremost, that is a project that was approved and agreed to by the federal Liberal government, by the City of Winnipeg government, and through the allocations committee that has been set up by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), who is the lead minister from the provincial government.

That allocations committee includes membership from the Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities, Union of Manitoba Municipalities and public leaders throughout Manitoba, and, yes, that project was put on the list of priority projects. It is the No. 1 priority for a grade separation in the city of Winnipeg and, as such, was one of the projects that was recommended.

Along with it, of course, there will be a four-lane divided Kenaston that will go all the way from Wilkes to Scurfield Boulevard. If the member has ever travelled that, he will know that it is a stretch of road that is subject to many, many accidents, a stretch of road that is really quite dangerous in its current circumstances and has been the subject of demands for a four-lane expansion for quite some time.

* (1345)

Mr. Speaker, the underpass will be subject to the normal review process that is provided for under The City of Winnipeg Act in terms of environmental review and also in terms of our own process, and that decision as to what type of environmental assessment and review it will undergo will be forthcoming from, I believe—and I do not have the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) here, but I believe the act calls for a review by the director and recommendation as to what type of public involvement is required for such a project.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the federal government, in a document signed by the Western Diversification branch, has said, in conclusion, the Kenaston Boulevard underpass project has been

screened, and a public review of the project is not considered desirable. As such, the project may be approved.

The provincial Ministry of Environment had a recommendation from the City of Winnipeg to have an environmental assessment pursuant to The Manitoba Environment Act, but we have been informed, again under the same Diversification document, that the Manitoba Environment department is not going to have a public process and therefore is not going to require a public hearing process for this project.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Premier has been telling his own constituents that a public process would proceed. The federal Liberals have been saying that we have to stop this back-room wheeling and dealing in the red book.

Why have the two levels of government proceeded to approve this project and the environmental licence, contrary to the public indication that we had last spring with the announcement of this \$30-million project and contrary to the public being involved in this process, as they are entitled to be here in Manitoba?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I find it fascinating that the Leader of the New Democratic Party is complaining about a process that he and his party laid out when they designed, drafted and passed The Environment Act under which we operate.

It does provide specifically for that kind of screening to determine whether or not indeed this is a project that requires full-blown environmental assessment review with public hearings and all of that, or whether it is one that, in the opinion of the director who is a nonpolitical, nonpartisan senior civil servant of government, makes that kind of judgement and recommendation.

The act was done in that way, as I understand it, to try and remove the politics from these kinds of decisions, Mr. Speaker. Now when the act is being used in the manner in which it was intended by the New Democrats when they passed it,

drafted and designed it, they are now saying, well, we ought to get politics into it, because that is precisely what the member is trying to do in this particular forum on this particular issue, is to try and make some cheap politics out of it.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, this is the largest politically approved project in the whole infrastructure program here in Manitoba.

It happens to be in the Premier's riding. It happens to be adjacent to the lead minister's riding who also is politically responsible for the Western Diversification branch of the federal government.

People in those communities want to be assured that a public hearing would proceed. The initial document said that there would be a process, but time constraints would make it necessary to have a very quick process.

But a public process should be required for the people of this province. We still may have this project end up in court because the two levels of government are trying to sidestep, in our opinion, a public process of this project.

Will the Premier now review with his Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) and his lead minister, the merits of this project in terms of the cost benefits of \$30 million at a time when northern roads are crumbling?

We have \$30 million going into the Premier's riding for an underpass, Mr. Speaker.

Can the public have a public review process, which I believe they are entitled to?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, now we see the real agenda of the Leader of the Opposition. When he starts talking about northern roads and his constituents and all that, this is pure politics.

This is pure politics, and fortunately, they were more responsible when they were in government and they set up an act that tried to remove the politics from this kind of decision making, and the act is being followed.

Child and Family Services—Winnipeg Provincial Auditor's Report

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, it is becoming very apparent from the Auditor's Report and elsewhere that there is a crisis in the delivery of services to children from Child and Family Services agencies in Winnipeg.

The Auditor points out that there is inadequate government funding in relation to service demands, that there is no formal strategic plan. They are now using two hotels instead of one to put up children. They are using the Salvation Army. Front-line workers are saying that children are not being brought into care even when there are outstanding protection issues, and Manitoba has the highest number of children in care of any province per capita in Canada.

I would like to ask this minister and her government, what is she going to do to address the very serious concerns of the Provincial Auditor and the recommendations in this recent report? Will the minister do something positive for children under the care of Child and Family Services in Winnipeg?

* (1350)

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, I want to start out my answer by indicating that I do not think there is a minister responsible for Family Services over the last number of years in the province of Manitoba who has not taken very seriously the protection issues for children to heart.

I do want to point out, too, that I am sure that every former Minister of Family Services, and myself included, has spent many sleepless hours at night looking at the issue of children who are at risk and trying to come to grips and find some of the positive solutions to providing support for those children.

Mr. Speaker, all members of the House must understand that the reason we need a Child and Family Services agency and a child protection

branch in the department is that, in fact, there are children who are being abused and neglected and are in need of government support and some protection. We take the issue of child abuse very seriously.

Mr. Speaker, the Auditor has raised some issues that are of concern, and the issues that have been raised is constructive criticism that has to be taken into account in any way that we deal with the child welfare system in the province of Manitoba and specifically in the city of Winnipeg.

We are in the process right now of setting up an operational review of the Winnipeg Child and Family Services agency contracting out for services, and the agency and the government of Manitoba will be involved in trying to determine what the issues are that are facing us and how we come to grips with dealing in a very proactive way with children in Winnipeg.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services if she is willing to make a fundamental shift in the system, so that instead of the agencies getting money because children come into care, that they will get the money so they can put it into prevention and keep children and families together.

Will the minister make a commitment to do that today?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, I wonder where that question comes from, because we had a lot of dialogue in Estimates last year, and that fundamental shift was made last year.

In fact, there has been \$11 million freed up in the Winnipeg agency as of last year's budget that says no longer do you have to take kids into care like they have had to for many, many years.

Even before this government came into power, Child and Family Services had to take children into care in order to get funding. Mr. Speaker, that shift has been made, and the agencies now have \$11 million freed up to ensure that they can put in place the up-front early intervention so that

children do not have to be taken out of their homes to be supported.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Speaker, the minister speaks of \$11 million, but there is only \$2.5 million in the budget line for the Family Innovations Fund.

I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services if her solution to this very serious problem is to lower the age from 18 to 16, so that Manitoba will no longer have the worst rate in Canada. Is that how she plans to deal with this problem?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, I do want to indicate, yes, there is a \$2.5-million Family Support Innovations Fund, and there is also \$11 million that has been freed up in the agency, where we have said to the agency, you no longer have to take children into care in order to get the funding to provide supports for those children. That decision has already been made.

Mr. Speaker, in answer to the specifics around 16- and 17-year-olds, we have indicated that the supports are there for those who want to be a part of treatment. If there are those out there in the community who are not a protection issue and who say that they do not want to be involved in any treatment programs, it is very difficult to treat those, but the services and the supports are there for those children who need protection or are prepared to be part of a treatment process.

* (1355)

Manitoba Telephone System Oz Pedde—Contract

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Telephone System.

We have now had confirmed from two sources at the Manitoba Telephone System that the government recently paid Mr. Oz Pedde \$225,000 to leave his position before his contract was up as CEO of MTS. While the board chair reported in

the media that Mr. Pedde had "fulfilled his mandate," in fact, it is our information that Mr. Pedde was paid out for the remainder of his contract and, in addition, was given a further year's salary of \$150,000 to leave for a total of \$225,000.

Mr. Speaker, why did the government feel they had to pay Mr. Pedde \$225,000 to leave before the end of his contract? What was the problem, to pay that exorbitant price?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister responsible for the administration of The Manitoba Telephone Act): Mr. Speaker, the member's information is wrong according to the information I have. My information is he resigned and that they negotiated a settlement of eight months' salary, and during that period of time he is to continue to do services if MTS requires—eight months' salary.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, would the minister be prepared—[interjection] Well, we will see.

Mr. Speaker, in fact, it is eight months until Mr. Pedde's contract is over. It is my information that in addition to the eight months, he was given a further year, which would total approximately \$225,000 as the settlement.

My question for the minister: Is the minister prepared to table the agreement that was signed with Mr. Pedde, and further, is the minister prepared to do as he said he would do on May 17 of this year—and this was at the end of the Public Utilities Committee review of the '93-94 Annual Report which was never passed—when he said: I can assure the member that we will answer as we always do; we will talk to our House leaders with the idea of trying to find an early date to reconvene the meeting.

Is the minister prepared to bring the Manitoba Telephone System back to the committee and table the agreement that was signed between the corporation and Mr. Pedde?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, the House leaders, they will negotiate when those committees are

called, but I remind the member that he should not use hearsay to come to Question Period. He should be sure that he knows his facts.

Oz Pedde—Resignation

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): Would the minister table the agreement?

Mr. Speaker, if they would table the agreement or table the agreement with Faneuil, which has been asked for, he would not have to stand up and discuss this issue, if he would table the agreements that this corporation signed.

My final question for the minister: What was the basis for the required, the desired departure of Mr. Pedde from the Manitoba Telephone System? Was it that he questioned the advisability of the Faneuil deal? Was it that it was a precipitous, he felt, and undervalued deal with the Shaw Cable consortium? Was it the fact that the Manitoba Telephone System is being required to carry its competitors like Netlinks, which has up to a million dollars in arrears owing Manitoba Telephone System today?

What was the reason that the relationship between Mr. Pedde and the board came to an end?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister responsible for the administration of The Manitoba Telephone Act): Mr. Speaker, it is very unfortunate that this member brings all kinds of innuendo and misinformation to this House.

The former president of the Manitoba Telephone System submitted his resignation, for reasons known to him. Basically, he felt he had completed his mandate.

The member maligns a certain small business in the province of Manitoba today called Netlinks. He used the figure of a million dollars, totally maligning that particular small business which is out doing business in Manitoba, in competition—[interjection] Mr. Speaker, the member put his

question. I would respect him to not be giving the answer to him and to other members of the House.

Netlinks is one of two people that are in the reselling business. Their particular financial arrangements are technically confidential. In the start-up period, there are some problems with billing both of those companies. MTS is negotiating with them as we speak, and there is a letter of credit on file with the Manitoba Telephone System from the company he mentions. The Manitoba Telephone System is fully covered in the process of negotiating. That kind of information is confidential.

I want to remind the Liberal Party, you do not bring to this House confidential information of small businesses, because that hurts them in the competitive marketplace.

* (1400)

Physio/Occupational Therapists U.S. Recruitment

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, in the past two years, an alarming number of graduates from the physiotherapy and occupational therapy program have been recruited to leave Manitoba despite their desire to remain here and despite the obvious needs in the community.

Since this government has 100 secret committees studying everything and reporting to the public on almost nothing, can the minister outline what the plans are to help keep these trained Manitobans here in Manitoba to provide the service needed?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question today. It is true that American recruiters have stepped up their attempts to recruit Manitoban and Canadian physiotherapists and occupational therapists. There is a reason for that, because as quoted in the Winnipeg Free Press: "when it comes to skills, Canadian therapists can 'dance around' their American counterparts."

I suppose the honourable member should be sharing with me the pride that I have for the standards that we have and the educational excellence that is producing these kinds of physiotherapists and occupational therapists.

I also understand from the same article, Mr. Speaker, and I quote: "The best information we have shows that most returned in a couple of years." That was Pat Findlay, the executive director of the Manitoba Society of Occupational Therapists.

So while I can understand Americans who are not graduating as many therapists per capita or therapists as competent as we are here in Manitoba, I can understand them stepping up their efforts, but we are monitoring that carefully to try to ensure that we can keep those therapists here and working for Manitobans to the best extent that we can.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for reading the column back to me, but I note that he did not answer the question.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke with people involved in the system, and they advised me that one of the major reasons they feel that people are leaving the system is because of the cutbacks at the institutions.

Can the minister outline for me what the plans are to keep physiotherapists and occupational therapists here in Manitoba?

Mr. McCrae: Well, I have to correct the honourable member because he is wrong in what he says. Hospitals in Manitoba contract with Community Therapy Services, Mr. Speaker, and the Community Therapy Services' grant from the Department of Health in 1992-93 was \$2,309,000. In '93-94, it was \$2,929,000.

So the honourable member continuously talks about cutbacks, and while I have acknowledged that there are shifts happening in the health system, the honourable member uses the language

in such a way that it misleads people. I would hope that he would try to avoid that and perhaps even apologize for misleading the people of Manitoba.

Rural Manitoba

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to misleading, I think the minister actually should be looking at his own notes. I asked the question about institutions, and like the minister dodges and weaves the questions, he either totally overlooked the question or did not answer it because he does not know.

Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary: The minister does not recognize that community services is not institutions like St. Boniface, like Health Sciences Centre, but notwithstanding that, my final question for the minister is, what resources is the minister going to put in place so that students who graduate can feel comfortable going into rural Manitoba, so that there are trained personnel around and so that resources in the community are expanded so that new graduates can move there comfortably and feel confident working in those new positions?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, it is a constant endeavour of this government to enhance the opportunities for Manitobans to locate in rural Manitoba, in communities in rural Manitoba. It is our constant effort to stress the high quality, high standards of living and quality of life that exist in those places.

We would really appreciate it if honourable members opposite would support that. I extend that plea to members of the Liberal Party who make the claim, for example, that rural Manitobans are not smart enough to carry out the duties of some of the professions.

I find that repugnant and offensive, and the lack of support from honourable members in the New Democratic Party for decentralization initiatives is equally disturbing because it sends another message. When some of the programs that we carry out in rural Manitoba to try to attract people to live there are called small potatoes by people

like the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Edwards), they are working at cross purposes. We are looking for their support.

The Wildlife Act Aboriginal Hunting Rights

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): I want to quote from a committee meeting that was held on June 28. My question is directed to the Minister of Natural Resources.

The minister said on June 28: In checking with our legal counsel, we are advised that the constitutional rights of the natives for hunting and fishing is not affected.

Another quote: This legislation does not deal with any of those rights. It does not take away from those rights. Another quote: Section 94—It makes provisions to allow for the aboriginal hunting and fishing rights, and lastly: Our constitutional lawyers say that those rights are overriding rights, and no matter what we do in The Wildlife Act, that will remain.

Mr. Speaker, I took the minister's word, and I said in committee that the minister is an honourable person. I told him that if a treaty issue ended up in court, I would be the first one to come to the minister and tell him, I told you so.

My question is, will the minister come clean, be honest and be the honourable person that I know he is—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I caution the honourable member in the terminology you are using. We are all honourable members in this Chamber. Your reference to the minister being honest means that he has been dishonest, which is not quite correct, sir.

Now, the honourable member, kindly rephrase your question.

Mr. Lathlin: Will the minister come clean and be the honourable person that I know he is, and advise the House that he did, in fact, assure me

that those treaty rights would not be affected? Did the minister mean what he said in committee on June 28, 1994?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, this question was raised by one of his colleagues just, I think, a week ago, when we opened the House. The same question came forward. I said at that time that the legislation never dealt with the treaty rights in terms of individuals. The purpose of it was for the safety of Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, I will repeat again the reason it was brought forward, that people are discharging firearms at night. These high-powered rifles carry for a mile, up to two miles, and in the dark, even if you use a spotlight to shoot, you cannot see what is behind that. That was the purpose of the legislation and why it was brought forward.

I want to repeat it again. I have never challenged the aboriginal rights in terms of hunting that have been established by treaty. The same issue is being brought forward by the Metis community, and I am not in a position to deal with their rights.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Speaker, I said it once, and I will say it for the last time. Bill 10 was a backdoor approach for this government to attack treaty and aboriginal rights.

My supplementary question is, why then are Indians being charged today under The Wildlife Act if this legislation was never intended to attack the treaty rights in the first place, as they are affirmed in Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution?

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, I will repeat again. I am not challenging the rights of native people to go and take game for their own use. They can do that by whatever means. What I am addressing or what we addressed under that bill was the safety of Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, there has been no treaty individual who has been hunting for food—using the normal

process, he can hunt on a year-round basis. We are not challenging that. I think we are within our responsibility to make sure that the safety of Manitobans is protected.

I have no argument with them taking game on a year-round basis. I look forward to actually working together with the native communities in co-management arrangements in many cases to enhance and make sure that we have a sustainable renewable resource in wildlife for the future.

Mr. Speaker, I take exception to the fact of his saying that I am challenging the rights of native Indians to take game.

* (1410)

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Speaker, I want to put on record in this House that in committee, I also said that we are all, as aboriginal people—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have recognized the honourable member for your final supplementary question. Your question, sir?

Mr. Lathlin: Why did the minister say one thing in committee and then turn around the next day and give his officials the marching orders—it is open season on Indians?

Mr. Driedger: I take exception to that kind of remark in this House, because I will not accept that kind of accusation from that member.

Immigration Family Class

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, immigrants have helped shape Manitoba and have been an integral part of our history as a province.

However, a steadily decreasing number of immigrants are coming to the province of Manitoba, currently only 1.8 percent of those who come to Canada, instead of the 4 percent we should be entitled to as a representation of our population.

New federal policies which have recently been introduced sharply decrease family class immigrants and require a \$500 application fee for every immigrant who wants to make application, no matter what their country of origin.

I would like to ask the Minister responsible for Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, what effect are these changes from the federal government having on Manitoba's ability to attract and keep immigrants?

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for raising the question.

There is certainly reason for grave concern with the new Liberal immigration policy, that there is an attempt there to seriously curtail the family reunification class because of the perception that there are problems in Ontario. The federal minister recently said that this move was going to prevent Canada's welfare system from being abused. We have written to the federal minister and have been trying to set up a meeting with him to make him understand that if there are problems in Ontario, that this should not be a cause for national policy and that he should relook at this.

Last year, 49 percent of Manitoba's immigration was from the family class. The member is absolutely right that our immigration levels have declined, and this will have a serious effect on that. We are urging the Liberals to take another look at this.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, the government promised in the 1990 campaign to work towards increasing the economic class of immigrants.

Is the minister and his government now trying to increase the family class, or are they going along with the federal government's new guidelines and policies which will make it much more difficult for families to reunite?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, we have been working with the officials of the federal

government to increase Manitoba's numbers in terms of immigration.

We have signed a Memorandum of Understanding, and we hope this leads to a substantive agreement between Manitoba and the federal government to allow us to do more recruiting, to enhance the co-operation with federal officials and to be able to more actively put forward Manitoba's position.

We know from the direction that the federal Liberal government is going that this is going to be increasingly more difficult. We cannot depend on the federal Liberal government to sell the Manitoba position, and we are becoming more active in doing our recruitment abroad.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, when the minister talks about the Memorandum of Understanding that has recently been signed, can the minister share with us what authority under this Memorandum of Understanding the provincial government actually has in setting and establishing the number and type of immigrants that will come to the province?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, the Memorandum of Understanding and the agreement we hope to sign is simply a question of good will.

There is only one gatekeeper and that is the federal government. It is the federal government that determines the levels of immigration. They have deemed, because of the perception of problems in other parts of Canada, that they want to shrink the number of immigrants coming to Canada. It is the federal government that is the gatekeeper. They are the only level of government who can determine the numbers that are coming into the country.

Again, I have attempted to meet with the federal minister. I have written to the federal minister protesting some of the changes that he is attempting to make in the family class, asking him to look at it again, because this could have a devastating effect on the numbers that come to Manitoba.

Health Care System Nutrition Policy

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the Minister of Health about his own government's health promotion task force report of 1991 where it recommended that the government develop a co-ordinated food and nutrition policy linking preventative nutrition and health. I would also tell the minister of his recent 1994 nutrition services in Manitoba report where, in fact, the very same recommendation was made.

Can the Minister of Health tell us, given that in the recent throne speech, the word "nutrition" let alone "nutrition strategy" has not been mentioned, will he be at least considering these two very important reports and, in fact, acting upon this very important recommendation which will save millions of dollars in the health care system if done properly?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): We certainly will be considering those reports, Mr. Speaker.

We agree with the honourable member wholeheartedly, that any population health strategy or, more importantly, child health strategy has a very, very large nutrition component to it. I think that as the debate unfolds, we may be discussing perhaps how widespread a food policy ought to be or whether it ought to be more targeted, because we are fortunate in Manitoba to have data which assists us in targeting effectively this type of programming.

The answer, very briefly, is yes.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question to the minister.

In both these reports, they talk about a nutrition policy for all ages, from young children to the elderly.

Given that it is six and a half years into this government's mandate, when can we expect to see a nutrition policy developed, and will the minister

table that information to the House before the next election?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, when the honourable member asks that question, she neglects to refer to the significant changes that have been made in the last six years. You listen to the New Democrats and nothing should change. You listen to the Liberals, and they tell you things are not changing fast enough.

I understand where these questions are coming from. We are moving on many, many fronts. I expect early in the new year to be able to make better known the plans of the government with regard to our child health strategy. Of course, we are not ignoring the rest of the population by giving some attention to the children of this province. That suggestion—if that were being made by the honourable member—would be incorrect, too, but I do not think she is saying that.

Ms. Gray: My final supplementary is to the Minister of Health.

Can the Minister of Health tell us, does he accept the recommendations in his own government's report, nutrition services in Manitoba, and will he, in fact, be implementing those recommendations?

Mr. McCrae: As I say, Mr. Speaker, perhaps when we examine the department's plans in more detail, we can deal with them recommendation by recommendation.

In general, we do accept recommendations which deal with proper nutrition, especially for young people, but certainly other Manitobans as well.

Public Housing Rent Increase

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

Hundreds of seniors in the Brandon area have signed a petition protesting the rent increases by

Manitoba Housing ranging as high as 17 percent, which they find exorbitant and a real hardship.

I would like to table, for the information of the government at this time, petitions with about 500 signatures. I would like to point out that these increases are partly as a result of including Manitoba tax credits in the income calculation.

My question to the minister is, my constituents would like to know if the government, if the minister, would reconsider and remove the Manitoba tax credits from the formula to lessen the rent increase for 1995.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Housing): Mr. Speaker, I will certainly be pleased to receive the petition and to have it referred to the rent appeal process, if it is deemed that is what is necessary.

I should indicate to the member that the increase, the property tax credit being counted as income for purposes of calculating the rent geared to income, plus the change from 26 percent to 27 percent of income, amount to about \$7 to \$8 a month each. So for seniors who are receiving the basic pension, plus the supplement, that is the amount they are looking at.

Of course, there are many other things that can cause a rent increase. We have found in looking at some that people have had amenities that are over and above the basic shelter that we provide, and an audit had not been included. Of course, then they have to be calculated in.

By and large, many of the increases we are seeing occur because the tenant's income has increased. Of course, if your income increases and you are paying 26 or 27 percent of your income, your rent will also, at the same time, increase. So there are many factors that are included in rent changes, and those are all taken into consideration.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, maybe this supplementary question should be directed to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), if not the Minister of Housing.

Will the minister confirm that the Manitoba government will receive a considerable increase in revenue from including the property tax credit in the rent calculation?

How many hundreds of thousands of dollars are you extracting from some of the poorest people in the province?

Mrs. McIntosh: I should indicate, Mr. Speaker, that all of the rent that we collect on subsidized housing all together does not come anywhere near covering the cost of providing subsidized housing to the people of Manitoba.

We collect in some cases 25 percent of income, in other cases 27 percent of income, the lowest rates in the nation for the people here in Manitoba. In addition, they are allowed to receive property tax credit rebates, even though they do not pay the full property tax credit.

We are now saying that this income they receive is truly income and should be calculated as a percentage of the income, but the money that we receive in no way covers the cost. It is subsidized housing. We subsidize that housing so we always take an operating loss.

* (1420)

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, well, the rent increase is like a tax increase for some of the poorest people in this province.

Will the Minister of Finance or the Minister of Housing confirm that his government is extracting about three-quarters of a million dollars from social housing tenants based on this change in the rent-to-income ratio and the inclusion of property tax credits in the formula to calculate the rents?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I think in response to the question from the member for Brandon East, the Minister of Housing has already indicated that at 20 percent, that rental charge is amongst the lowest in all of Canada. We also have amongst the most generous tax credit program in all of Canada.

I would encourage the member for Brandon East to look at the tax situation of seniors here in Manitoba. Seniors in Manitoba are allowed to earn the highest level of income of any province in Canada before they pay any personal income tax, so there has been a series of things that have been done to make Manitoba an extremely affordable place to live for seniors.

You need to look no further than the budget prepared by the government of Saskatchewan, where they show three different income levels for families, a family of \$25,000 or less, and if you include the basic charges, the most affordable place in all of Canada, Mr. Speaker, and I repeat, all of Canada, is right here in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

Speaker's Ruling

Mr. Speaker: I have a ruling for the House.

On Monday, December 6, I took under advisement a point of order raised by the second opposition House leader, the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). He asked whether it was in order for one member to suggest that a person in the press gallery would notice that a particular MLA only attends portions of House sittings.

As the honourable member noted when raising the point of order, there was considerable heckling going on at the time and it was difficult to hear. I have now had an opportunity to read Hansard and to review the relevant Beauchesne citations and to reflect on the matter.

Citation 289(3) states that, "This absence (of members) from the chamber should not be the subject of comment." Citation 481(c) indicates that a member must not "refer to the presence or absence of specific members." Also, Citation 487(2) reads that "Words may not be used hypothetically or conditionally, if they are plainly intended to convey a direct imputation." That comes from Speaker Phillips who in September 1986 made this point when ruling on a somewhat

parallel matter. Therefore, if we read Citations 289(3), 481(c) and 487(2) in conjunction, it is evident that there was a point of order.

To conclude, it is inappropriate and improper to refer directly or indirectly to the absence of another member of the House.

That concludes the point of order.

ORDERS OF THE DAY THRONE SPEECH DEBATE (Seventh Day of Debate)

Mr. Speaker: On the adjourned debate, the seventh day of debate, on the proposed motion of the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) for an address to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, in answer to his speech at the opening of the session, and the proposed amendment by the honourable Leader of the official opposition in amendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable member for Gimli who has 38 minutes remaining.

Order, please. Is there a problem with his mike over here, or what?

Now it is on. Sorry about that.

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): As I was saying on Friday, when I started my speech, I did congratulate . . . the Speaker on your return and also the new Pages. I also want to . . . the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose), the member for Riel (Mr. Ducharme)—

An Honourable Member: It is cutting in and out.

Mr. Speaker: Order, we are picking up the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay), I believe. It is coming through that one—[interjection] Oh, it is that one? Is yours on?

Order, please. Is there leave of the House so that the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer) could move over to the bench of the

honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) so he can get his remarks on the—

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: There is leave to allow the member to move over. Okay, thank you.

Mr. Helwer: Nobody wants to listen to me.

Mr. Speaker: I apologize to the honourable member for Gimli.

Mr. Helwer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is it working now?

Mr. Speaker: You bet.

Mr. Helwer: As I was saying, I started my speech on Friday afternoon, but I only had a couple of minutes left. I did congratulate the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker on their return here and also to welcome the new Pages. I also want to wish the members who are leaving, the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose) and also the member for Riel (Mr. Ducharme)—I want to wish them well in their future lives, whether it is retirement or in another profession or whatever, but I want to wish them well. I am sure that they will enjoy their retirement.

Mr. Speaker, I am but one voice in this government, but my voice speaks on behalf of some of the finest people that you could ever hope to meet. They are the farmers, the fishermen, bankers, office workers, mothers, sons, uncles, whatever—[interjection] Yes, cousins, that is right. They are the neighbours, friends, coworkers and partners—[interjection] Golfers, that is right.

They are all of these things and more. I am talking about the real people who make up the cities, the towns, the villages, the communities of this province, which this government has the honour and the obligation to truly represent.

* (1430)

A very significant pocket of Manitoba has given me the honour and the opportunity to speak to the people of this province on their behalf, that is, the constituency of Gimli. I would like to extend my sincere appreciation for the trust they have placed in me to be their voice in the government, and I shall continue to do my utmost to provide that.

I also want to congratulate the Premier (Mr. Filmon) for having the courage to lead this government along the ever progressive path of prosperity of this province for today and into the future. The government is truly a government of all people as clearly demonstrated in the Speech from the Throne and is evidence of the positive accomplishments of this government throughout this province.

The throne speech confirms the direction that this province has been taking and some fresh new trails to blaze as we look toward the future. The admirable record of fiscal responsibility and the proposed legislation to ensure a balanced budget, operation of government are just an example of the responsible administration of this government as in the past and the concern that this government has to ensure fiscal responsibility, that this will continue for many more generations to come.

I also want to congratulate the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) for going out into the country for the prebudget consultations, with his preconsultation meetings. I had the pleasure of attending the meeting in Arborg that was held in the Interlake area, and it was a really good meeting. At this meeting there were a group of business people, school board trustees, town councillors and farmers. It was really a cross-section of all people in the area. It was very well taken. They certainly did appreciate the opportunity to be able to have some input to the budget consultations, and it worked very well. I want to commend the minister for that and also for the path that he is taking with this approach to the fiscal responsibility of this province.

I am really pleased that the minister did not listen to the two opposition parties when the federal government released here a while ago that

there was going to be an increase in the federal transfers to the province of some \$180 million. Well, now you know what happened to that. That \$180 million all of a sudden has evaporated and we are going to get maybe \$36 million more than what was budgeted for.

This is just an example that our Finance minister—[interjection] That is right. The member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) brings up a point that the economy of Manitoba is doing better, and that is great. It is doing better and certainly because it is doing better our Finance minister has indicated that we will have a \$32-million reduction in our '94-95 deficit and this is because of the actions of this government and the people of Manitoba really because the economy has improved, they are paying more sales tax and taxes on different items so the revenue of the province has increased.

Certainly that has all helped make this budget that much more important. Our Minister of Finance and the cabinet have done a great job of managing the affairs of this province.

One area of particular interest to all Manitobans that is brought to light in this throne speech is the renewal of our education system and the careful development of a curriculum, which will ensure that the upcoming generation maintains competitiveness and that Manitoba continues the stabilization, and that prosperity is utmost on the agenda of most teachers and educators alike. The control and discipline of classrooms to ensure a positive environment to learn are some of the necessary tools that this government is determined to equip our education system.

Also, the security of ourselves and our property has been outlined as a major concern by the citizens of this province and Manitobans want their home to be a safe place. They want their businesses to be a safe place to work and their schools to be a safe place for their children to grow up and to that end both steps have been outlined to ensure that safety is ensured for all.

(Mrs. Louise Dacquay, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

I also want to commend the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) for the new initiatives that she has taken in that line such as the boot camps and some of the things that she has done to strengthen the justice system in Manitoba. I also want to say that she should continue to work on the federal government to strengthen the Young Offenders Act, although that is a federal responsibility, but I am sure that she will continue to stress that to the federal government.

There are a couple of areas that the government is prepared to wrestle with and this is just what the electorate of Manitoba has told this government. These items need to be addressed.

The constituency of Gimli is representative of what this government is doing throughout Manitoba to encourage the economy, to support job creation and support business initiatives and contribute to the social fabric of this province that we call home.

Just recently on November 16, the Interlake Development Corporation together with the Department of Rural Development, the Honourable Len Derkach's department, held an Interlake trade forum. They held two actually, one for the Interlake in Teulon and one for eastern Manitoba in Ste. Anne.

I had the pleasure of bringing greetings to that conference. It was very well attended. Some of the things I said there, I said that nothing warms the heart of government more than to see a gathering of successful small-business people eager to discuss ways of improving their businesses and increasing their markets. I was especially pleased to see so many women there in the audience, because women entrepreneurs are showing their abilities. Their government salutes and encourages them.

Also, the theme of their conference was import replacement and export opportunities. Manitoba is doing very well as far as that is concerned in the export business. As a matter of fact, they have had the best export performance of any province in Canada and are responsible for creating many jobs

for Manitobans right here in Manitoba. Also, the trade missions to Japan and China bring the promise of even more opportunities in the future. So these trade seminars, trade forums were a good opportunity for the business people to get together and share ideas and look at the displays from the various financial institutions, industries in the areas. So it was a great opportunity.

* (1440)

The roots of this province's economic viability are right under our feet—agriculture. Throughout rural Manitoba, the farmers, the families and the communities have relied heavily on agriculture for their continued prosperity. This past month alone \$105 million began reaching Manitoba farmers who were hurt by the below-average crop yields last year. The funds were provided by the Gross Revenue Insurance Plan and the crop insurance to help the farmers and their families in crop situations beyond their control.

Agriculture has been the backbone of this province. Efforts such as these, on behalf of the government, demonstrate the continued support that this government has to rural Manitoba and to the quality of life to the people of rural Manitoba. This summer Manitoba farmers received more than \$366 million in payouts from safety net programs as a result of the difficult growing conditions in 1993. Just another testament as to how this government is dedicated to stand up for the people who depend on agriculture for their livelihood in this province.

Although some crops were below average this year, there were a couple of crops that did make the record books. There was a record volume in the yield of sugar beet harvest this year in Manitoba, although it looked like last spring for awhile there that we would not have a crop, there would be nothing planted.

It was the work of our Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) who appointed a mediator and caused a settlement between the Manitoba Sugar Co. and employees. This was again where our government did a great job in solving the problem, got

everybody back to work and the farmers were able to take advantage of just an excellent sugar beet crop, so this was great.

Also canola and oilseeds, there was another I think a record crop of canola in some parts of Manitoba. Especially in the Interlake area, crops were excellent. We are really pleased to see these farmers take advantage of the good prices. This will certainly help the economy of agriculture in rural Manitoba.

Another crop that did very well this year was the corn crop. With the better growing conditions, more heat units, corn did very well this year. Although prices of corn are not all that good, it still was one of the better years actually for growing the special crops in Manitoba.

Just on Friday in the paper there was a story on Manitoba sugar. I certainly hope that we can get these trade restrictions sorted out because this is an industry that helps farmers, plus the employees of the sugar plant here in Winnipeg in Fort Garry. This is a needed industry. We certainly want to encourage our Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), who is going now to Ottawa next week, to deal with the federal government on these trade issues, the GATT issue. I hope that they can get this resolved to the benefit especially of the Manitoba and Alberta sugar growers, because it is important to Manitoba.

Also the honourable member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) will be interested to note this year also had a record crop of potatoes in Manitoba. Manitoba had the second highest potato yield in Canada as a matter of fact. In the last three years, Manitoba has been increasing their production of potatoes, whereby now Manitoba is the second largest producing province in Canada of potatoes, some 15,260,000 hundred weights produced in Manitoba, of potatoes for Manitoba.

This is another example of what can happen with the value-added crops, the processors such as Carnation Foods in Carberry, McCain Foods in Portage la Prairie, plus the fresh market. I know that we are supplying some of Ontario, some of

Toronto with fresh potatoes out of Manitoba now. We are really pleased to see the Vegetable Producers' Marketing Board be aggressive in marketing these potatoes into eastern Canada and other parts of Canada. This helps not only the potato growers in Manitoba but also helps employ a lot of people in Manitoba. Carnation is an example, McCain, they employ a lot of people in the potato processing business and ship French fries throughout the world. So these are really good value-added industries and certainly a great benefit to Manitobans.

Also in the value-added sector, we are really pleased that the Can-Oat plant at Portage, the canola processing plant, Canamera in Altona—all these are value added, and they use the products that are grown here by Manitoba farmers in the processing of other items, whether it be the vegetable oil in Altona that is shipped throughout the world actually or the rolled oats and the Can-Oat products that they produce in Portage. These are very well received, and we are really pleased to see this type of industry thrive in Manitoba.

I hope that with the help of our Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) and our Ministers of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey) and Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), we will continue to work to try to get these kind of industries, get more of them and get them working, because these are a great benefit to us in Manitoba.

Also, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Community Places Program is building for tomorrow by assisting and improving the quality of life in the communities throughout Manitoba. I understand there has been more than \$4 million allocated province-wide this year to provide the funding support for the upgrading, construction and acquisition of buildings and other facilities that provide long-lasting benefits to communities and their residents.

Some examples of how this government has helped in directly contributing to the culture and heritage all over the face of Manitoba in the community initiatives in my home constituency

illustrate how this government is enriching the lives of the people in this province. From some of the projects from disabled access lifts, like the one in the church hall in Teulon, to ball diamond bleachers in Stonewall, from an agriculture learning sector in Gunton to upgrading the skating rink in Clandeboye, from group homes to community halls, Manitobans of all ages everywhere benefit from these community projects, which are made possible because of some of the lottery revenues.

Just last fall, I think it was on September 15, I had the pleasure, with the Minister of Culture, the Honourable Harold Gillehammer, to take part in the opening of a brand-new library building in Stonewall. This was a project that was assisted by the Community Places Program, a brand-new library, really a state-of-the-art facility, that will serve the areas of Stonewall and Rockwood.

Libraries are very important because they do enrich the lives of people and improve the quality of life of the communities. So this is great. I am really pleased with our Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mr. Gillehammer) and hope he can continue with these types of projects because they certainly do help all of us in Manitoba.

This government has initially reiterated the commitment to quality health care in this province and looking closely at the health care needs, more community-based, and the focus of these directions was outlined in the throne speech last week. But allow me to bring maybe these into the real world of our communities and how these directions have been impacting the lives of some of our citizens and the communities in the past.

Through the Congregate Meals Program, the seniors' resource centres, community resource councils, seniors can now continue to live independently in their home communities.

Just last Wednesday I attended the seniors dinner at Matlock where there were some 150 seniors in attendance. This was provided by the local community through the Congregate Meals

Program. It was a real opportunity for the seniors to get out and to talk to each other. It is nice for them to get out into the community at a dinner such as this and take part in it.

I am really pleased with community organizations like that at Matlock. At Petersfield they do a similar thing where they honour the seniors at a dinner once a year. The community club there does that.

* (1450)

These are just great projects. Also, the seniors resource centres—the one in Gimli which is managed by Bill Sveinson, and Stonewall by Cheryl Clyde and Beth King in Teulon—provide a real service to all the seniors and improves the quality of life for the seniors by helping them with whatever projects they have so that they can remain in their own home and be independent and look after themselves with some assistance.

These seniors sure do appreciate the assistance that they can get from these seniors' resource centres, and they are working very well.

Also, in the health care field, last year we announced the construction of a new hospital in Stonewall which was to replace the old 18-bed hospital. Construction should be finished by March of '95, and they should be able to move into that. So this will certainly be a great addition for the community of Stonewall for it to have a new hospital, and it is very much needed and very much appreciated, you can be sure. Also, once they tear down the old hospital, they will make room for a 20-bed addition to the Stonewood Place, which is the personal care home there, so they will increase their personal care beds from 30 to 50, which would make a real viable unit there and certainly help the personal care shortage that we have there.

In Teulon we announced the addition of a 27-bed addition of personal care home beds to the Goodwin Lodge, which will certainly make that a 47-bed personal care home. This will certainly help that area, because they have been short of personal care beds for many, many years. There

has been a long line-up and this will certainly help that area.

In Stonewall recently I was able to attend the opening of the Lions Manor. There the Lions Club of Stonewall added I believe it was 36 suites to their present 53-suite senior citizens home. This would make, I think, about an 86- or 89-suite apartment. Really a great place, the Lions just did an honourable job there. They just did a great job of organizing and building this facility. The Lions Club of Stonewall certainly deserves a lot of credit. This was also built without one cent of government money, no government money in there at all. They arranged for their own financing, did their own construction and were able to do this on their own. It is a viable project without any government money whatsoever. These are the kinds of projects that we appreciate and we hope there are more organizations such as the Lions, the service clubs that do such a great job for this province.

Through the partnership with our federal government the PAMWI Agreement, Partnership Agreement on Municipal Water Infrastructure, was received, a \$2.1-million project was developed in Teulon. This program was developed and has delivered a new lagoon there and associated infrastructure for Teulon, which I am happy to announce has been completed and is operational as of this fall. The construction of this has been going on for many, many years. The problem with their old lagoon has been going back to the days when Jim Downey was the Minister of Agriculture back in 1980.

They were working on it at that time but then when the government changed hands in '81 it just sat there. The former government did nothing to get the project completed, so it took us, when we came back into government in 1988, our Minister of Agriculture, who was responsible for the Water Services Board at that time, finally got the project underway.

This government negotiated the PAMWI agreement with Ottawa, which is a cost-shared thing which is working very well. Finally we got

this project done to the benefit of the industry and the citizens of Teulon. It took a lot of work on the part of the Village of Teulon and of Water Services Board. I am really pleased to see this project finally come to a conclusion. It is just great.

Some other initiatives that have been stimulating economic growth in this province have been the highly successful REDI programs and the Grow Bonds Programs, which are supported by lottery revenues. These programs are forecast to add close to 1,000 jobs in Manitoba, with some 165 projects approved or recommended for final approval. So behind these numbers are real people, working at real jobs, building a real future for themselves and for their communities.

One example is a CARE corporation in Teulon, which produces environmentally friendly sanitary products. Sterling Press at Selkirk—the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) used them as an example in his throne speech address—that Jim and Debbie Hickson expanded with a Grow Bonds initiative, and now they are expanding again. It just shows what private entrepreneurship—

An Honourable Member: It can be done.

Mr. Helwer: It can be done. That is right. So these are really providing jobs.

Another one that is very successful is Gilbert International in Arborg, which took over the old creamery there, which was not operating, and took over the building there, a very fine building. It is very successful. I understand they have some 40 employees now.

Another industry that is doing very well is Black Cat Blades in Selkirk. That was helped with a REDI grant or loan, and it is doing very well. As a matter of fact, they are expanding and adding on to their plant there. These are just some examples of the benefits of the Grow Bonds and REDI programs.

Also just recently, we were able to turn over the industrial park at Gimli. A good example of the

confidence that the Filmon government has in the residents of Gimli and the surrounding area was evident when we turned over the ownership of Gimli Industrial Park to the Rural Municipality of Gimli. The R.M. will now have the opportunity to incorporate their own logic towards the development of the marketing of the park. We have noticed the residents of Gimli, what they can do once they have been given the opportunity. I am confident that the R.M. of Gimli will do an outstanding job in transforming the park into an excellent place to invest. There again they will use programs, such as REDI and Grow Bonds and things like that, and thus we will continue to support rural Manitoba; make communities, such as Gimli, Selkirk, Teulon, Arborg, great places to invest.

Also, this government—you noticed in the throne speech—has targeted doubling tourism dollars from the \$1 billion level it is now to about \$2 billion by the year 2000. The constituency of Gimli will no doubt share in that goal. Tourism currently accounts for generating more than 50,000 jobs in this province.

Lapping the shores of beautiful Lake Winnipeg and home to one of the largest Icelandic communities outside of Iceland, Gimli is becoming known across the country and around the world for many reasons. After playing host to the 1994 World Sailboarding Championships, Wind Sport magazine, as a matter of fact, a travel guide, in their 1994-95 issue said Gimli and Lake Winnipeg are world renowned as the site of the largest international windsurfing event of the last decade and one of the best organized ever. It continued: Down-home Manitoba hospitality and a highly organized team of some 600 volunteers made this another Manitoba success story attracting more than 55,000 spectators to the first-ever event in Gimli. Some 360 athletes from some 40 countries took part in this.

* (1500)

It also went on to say that a large part of this event's success was the support they received from the town and the Rural Municipality of Gimli.

They also went on to say that the 1994 World's was quickly recognized as the most competitive windsurfing event ever. Not only was the 1994 championship the largest world championship in the last 15 years, but it said they had more than 220 athletes and coaches in attendance than the same championships which were held in Japan this past year.

Gimli really did very well in organizing this. They should be very proud of the job they did hosting the World Sailboarding Championships.

Manitoba was also the site of the 1994 Western Premiers' Conference this past May. Gimli had the honour and distinction of playing host to the leaders of western and northern Canada and their delegations. Some of the discussions there revolved on issues important to the future of Manitoba and western Canada of its fiscal renewal, job creation, economic co-operation, agriculture and interprovincial trade. Gimli was selected as the host for a number of reasons, including the improved conference facilities, the continued community support, the hospitality, and, of course, its scenic coastline.

That is an example of why tourism is so important to Manitoba, to my constituency and to the areas of my constituency such as Gimli, Winnipeg Beach, also the Oak Hammock Interpretive Centre of Ducks Unlimited. It is attracting a lot of visitors.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture):
Were there any birds this fall?

Mr. Helwer: Were there any birds there? Just millions. The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) wonders if there were any birds. Yes, there were many, many birds.

Oak Hammock had one of the most successful summers really as far as people going through the interpretative centre, a lot of schools, a lot of groups and people visiting and watching the ducks and the geese. It is a very enjoyable sight. The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) should be very proud of that, as he had a part in that when he was

Minister of Natural Resources and getting that site located at Oak Hammock, because it is certainly a benefit to the people of Manitoba and especially the people of the Interlake area. It is a great tourist facility.

Also, the Quarry Park in Stonewall has increased their tourism very considerably in the past number of years. It is doing very well and attracting many visitors from Winnipeg and throughout Manitoba and Canada. When people visit the Quarry Park in Stonewall, they can go over to the Oak Hammock area and carry on down along Lake Winnipeg to the beaches there, such as Dunnottar, Matlock, Winnipeg Beach and Gimli, and many enjoyable sights to see. That is why tourism is so important.

Also, some of the events that are held in Gimli every year such as the Icelandic Festival, Sunfest, Sun Country, all these events help tourism, help to attract people from different parts of Manitoba and Canada and the U.S. to Manitoba, to these events, so people like Sam Katz of Nite Out Entertainment certainly deserve some credit for organizing these types of events. They help everyone, help the communities and also keep everything going and then the tourism.

I am also happy to report that Gimli will have the distinction of playing host to the 1998 Manitoba Winter Games. This is when athletes, coaches, fans will descend on Gimli from all over Manitoba for this event. I am really pleased to see Gimli host this event in 1998.

Also, I was proud to be a part of the delegation where the village of Teulon had presented a bid on the 1996 Summer Games. I was very proud to be a part of their presentation. They did an excellent job and certainly deserve a lot of credit.

I realize I only have a couple of minutes left, Madam Deputy Speaker, but one thing I have to talk about for a minute is, I am pleased to be the MLA for the fastest growing community in Manitoba, and that is the town of Stonewall and the area there. I just recently got the statistics from the South Interlake Planning District there. As an

example, of how fast this area is growing, the building permits in the R.M. of Rockwood have more than doubled this year to \$12 million from last year of only \$5 million; from almost \$2 million of commercial development compared to \$156,000 last year. So I am really pleased to see this kind of development going on.

In the town of Stonewall, 56 new homes being constructed again in the town of Stonewall. Last year there were 50, so in the last two years we have had 106 residences constructed or built in the community of Stonewall.

I really want to congratulate this community on the job they have done. Obviously residents most certainly helped make Stonewall and the area around it, the R.M. of Rockwood, a great place to live and a great place to raise a family.

So all these examples are just shining examples of how this government has been working for all Manitobans. The directions outlined in the throne speech are truly a blueprint for the continued prosperity that this administration has been able to provide.

Thanks again for the opportunity to address the throne speech, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Madam Deputy Speaker, it is a pleasure to be here to put a few points on the record concerning the government's Speech from the Throne.

I would like to begin by welcoming back all members of the House, yourself and the Speaker, the Pages, and if I do not have the opportunity I would like to wish all members of the House best wishes of the festive season and peace and prosperity in the new year.

I would like to as well wish certain members of the Legislature who will no longer be with us next session, the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose), the member for Riel (Mr. Ducharme), and of course the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), we hope that they do well in their future, in their retirement, and we all wish them well.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the government in their throne speech failed to mention a number of different things. We have not heard a great deal of some important issues raised by members opposite. As members in the House know, Selkirk has been hurt quite significantly by this government's actions over the last four or four and a half years.

In 1991, of course, they closed the Selkirk School of Psychiatric Nursing. The school of nursing was an institution in Selkirk for 72-73 years. It was our only post-secondary educational facility in that community and its closure was a great loss to the community, a great loss to the delivery of mental health care in the province as well. It brought many individuals an opportunity to further their education.

Then in the following year the government again closed the training plant in Selkirk, the Human Resource Opportunity Centre. This particular facility provided training to individuals who are on welfare. It allowed them the opportunity to receive significant training, allowed them to get off of welfare and return to the work force, but the government, in its infinite wisdom, decided that this was no longer needed in our community.

They did not reach out to help individuals who are on social assistance break that cycle of social assistance and failed to provide them with an opportunity to find meaningful training and then, of course, meaningful employment.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in last year's budget the government withdrew provincial funding to the friendship centre movement in Manitoba. In particular, this was of deep concern to me. I have a close association with the friendship centre in Selkirk. Being a former employee of the centre and having been a member of the board of directors, I understand the significant work that friendship centre fulfilled in our community. There was definitely a need for that type of program, that type of service that the centre provided.

* (1510)

When the government withdrew provincial funding, the friendship centre unfortunately had to lay off three workers. One of those individuals was a worker who worked with youth. It was her task to provide individuals with self-esteem, self-confidence. There was also a drop-in centre facility there, and unfortunately they had to drop that particular program because of the provincial funding cut.

As well, there was an associated cut in their funding from the federal Conservative government. The Liberal government, when they were running for election in 1993, promised that they would rescind those cuts, but of course once they got into power they instead followed through with the reduction in their federal funding which is a core funding. Right now, they are in some dire straights in the friendship centre movement.

We are deeply concerned about the federal budget as it is being formulated—it will be delivered next year—and what that will mean for friendship centres and for all aboriginal and Metis people in the province.

I will provide the members opposite with a chance to redeem themselves. That is something I am sure they are looking forward to do, and I will follow through in a number of those areas.

I want to begin with education. I listened to the comments of the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer). The member for Gimli, in his constituency falls the Lord Selkirk School Division No. 11. As well, I believe, it is part of the member for Lac du Bonnet's (Mr. Praznik) constituency and the member for Springfield's (Mr. Findlay) constituency, so it is not simply in the constituency of Selkirk. He failed to mention the fact that this government cut funding to the Lord Selkirk School Division by 2 percent. It represented a million dollars in their funding.

It was the first time in the history of the province that there was a reduction in funding. That resulted in, unfortunately, the layoff of a number of teachers and support staff. It as well will seriously, I hate to say, jeopardize the education of

those individuals who are currently in the school system.

The member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer), in his comments, failed to mention that. He spoke about a number of initiatives of the government. Some of them, I will admit, are positive ones. He failed to mention some of these unfortunate cutbacks of his government, Madam Deputy Speaker, especially if it affects the constituencies of Selkirk and Gimli. Many members of my family reside in the member for Gimli's constituency, and he did not address at all any of their needs as far as I could tell.

Another issue I would like to raise is the issue of housing in Selkirk, the issue of public housing. Unfortunately, over the last number of years the housing stocks in Selkirk are in serious decay. They are deteriorating rapidly, unfortunately. Once again I want to make the pitch to the government and the appeal to the minister that they put some resources into the rebuilding and the renovation of the housing stocks in Selkirk, in particular, the Outhwaite-Sveinson area. I know that there was some money put into that. They were supposed to have their doors replaced. Once again I appeal to the minister to get that done as soon as possible as we are now in the depth of winter. Many individuals are raising concerns about the poor quality of their windows and of their doors.

It is quite ironic. The only way that an individual can get their door replaced is if it is damaged. Of course there are varying degrees of damage as well. It is a smart idea. It would create employment in our community. In the long run, of course, it saves money because the housing stock would then be—individuals could live there for a longer period of time. As well it would allow the tenants to save some money in their heating costs.

I want to talk a bit about jobs. I want to make some comments directed towards the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey). I ask the ministers to work with the officials of TayCo, or what was formerly called the SHI project, to ensure that those jobs do come to Selkirk, and try

to undo some of the damage done by the Liberal Leader when he demonstrated his ignorance of rural Manitoba and in particular our community.

He has been on record as stating jobs in rural Manitoba are small potatoes. Instead of doing any thorough research, instead of asking the mayor of Selkirk or the Chamber of Commerce or the Triple S Business Development group in Selkirk, he stands up in the House and grandstands to get on the six o'clock news. He seriously affected, in a very negative way, the development of these jobs in our community.

I ask the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism to continue to work with this group to ensure that these jobs do come to Selkirk.

Another issue I would like to raise with the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism is the situation concerning the AMSCO plant, the AMSCO Cast Products plant in Selkirk. I ask the minister, on behalf of the 158 workers who work there now, to find a way to ensure that these jobs and this business are maintained in the Selkirk community. There is approximately a \$4 million payroll which would be lost if these jobs are gone. Again, it is very, very difficult to understand this type of situation. The plant in Selkirk is making money, but the parent company which is headquartered in the United States is losing money. Again I appeal to the minister now to work hard to find a solution to that. I know that his officials in his department are working on it, and there is a great deal of anxiety in the community right now as some deadlines approach, Madam Deputy Speaker. So I will give him, I will offer him, all my support as he works to find a solution to try to save those jobs in our community and to alleviate the fears of the workers and of the community in general.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I do congratulate the government to finally listening to us on this side of the House when they announced that they would be developing and establishing a forensic unit at the Selkirk Mental Health Centre, something that I have been pushing for since my election to this Chamber. It would enhance both the delivery of

mental health care in the province; as well, it would provide a more secure atmosphere, a secure environment for the workers and for the patients at the Selkirk Mental Health Centre.

Madam Deputy Speaker, historians will look back at this period in years to come. They will watch; then they will review the record of the Filmon government. There will be, I think, three or four areas that they will highlight. One of them is the lack of support for children in this province. We do have here the second highest child poverty rate in all of Canada. I believe there are 62,000 children who live below the poverty rate. Only Alberta has a record that is worse than the one we have here in the province. I believe Newfoundland, as well, is in a poorer state than we are, but it is certainly not a record that this government can be proud of.

Another highlight that historians will identify with this period is that this is the government that brought in the highest deficit in the history of this province, and that was in the 1992-93 fiscal year, where the actual deficit, based on Volume 1 of the Manitoba public accounts, was \$748 million. They projected that year that it would be \$330 million. So, clearly, they were well over \$400 million out, Madam Deputy Speaker, and that again will be part of the Filmon legacy as historians will review this period.

Another one of what the historians will find when they review this period is the attack by this government on the public sector of the province. We have seen that with the government reducing the salaries of the public sector. First of all, there was a wage freeze and then a reduction the following year, Bill 22. That particular legislation was unfortunately used by private industry as well to push back the wages of their employees. So you are seeing an attack on the public sector in terms of wages, in terms of the health care system. Unfortunately, we in Selkirk were a victim of that when they closed the School of Psychiatric Nursing, deep concerns now with the Selkirk General Hospital about the employment levels of the hospital staff there. There are concerns as well in the nursing homes. They are deeply concerned

about their administrators now applying the 4 percent cut on their particular institutions.

* (1520)

The other, of course, is the attack of this government on our education system. I mentioned that earlier where the Lord Selkirk School Division unfortunately had to take a 2 percent cut in its general financing from the government, grants from the government. This has resulted in approximately a million dollars and as well will leave many individuals unemployed.

The fourth is probably one of the, unfortunately will be I suggest the largest, the biggest, legacy of this government, the incredible increase in gambling.

We have seen now upwards of, it works out to a 1,650 percent increase in revenue that they have received from gambling since the government took over till this day. Twelve million dollars was their projected revenues in 1988; now it is \$220 million. We have more VLTs per capita in Manitoba than anywhere else in Canada. We have every gaming initiative—think about that for a moment, I would suggest—here in Manitoba. That again will be part of the legacy of this particular government.

One day they brought out a—the Minister of Finance tabled or prepared and delivered some statements on the government's receipts in terms of Lotteries. It was projected at \$180 million; 48 hours later the Minister of Lotteries tabled the annual report, which indicated that the receipts from Lotteries would be \$210 million. So there was a \$30 million difference or \$30 million gain in 48 hours, almost \$700,000 per hour.

The gaming revenues is one issue; the accountability of this government is another. This is why I had the honour of tabling in the House last week one of our private members's bills, the Lotteries accountability act, which will require the government to initiate a commission of inquiry into gaming, to make recommendations after. The commission then would be given a mandate to

travel throughout the province to hear public presentations, then to develop a long-term gaming policy based upon the recommendations of individual Manitobans, something we have been calling for now for three years. We see that the Liberals have joined us in that call after the change in leadership and the change in critic and the former critic who wanted additional casinos. He was relieved of his duties and now the Liberals have taken our line on this and I believe they are calling for public hearings as well.

The Lotteries accountability act would make the Lotteries Corporation more accountable to Manitobans. It would require the Minister responsible for Lotteries Corporation to provide to Manitobans timely financial reports; 14 days after the minister receives those reports, he or she would then be required to table and provide them to members of the House and to the public as well, not the way the system is now, where the minister simply releases that information at his own discretion. Our bill will require the minister to provide us that information whether or not the House is in session and, as well, require the minister to provide us information on the economic benefits and social costs of lotteries and gaming throughout the province, something that is not done at this moment.

There would be a requirement of the five-year business plan to be released to members. There would be reports on gaming and gambling addiction. Those concerns have been raised by members on this side of the House with the government. They have not been able to answer those concerns in a very satisfactory manner.

Our legislation would require that the government provide that information to members of the House and by the government when they do pass their legislation. I assume, and we all assume, that they will be passing the legislation soon. To require them to do so would be to the betterment of all Manitobans.

I want to speak briefly about one of the private members' resolutions that I was bringing in this session. That deals with the situation concerning

the terrible condition of the Selkirk water supply. As members know, from time to time and under extreme conditions, the town of Selkirk draws its water directly from the Red River and uses that as a primary source of drinking water.

There was an agreement signed in 1993 between the town of Selkirk, and I applaud the councillors and mayors and all those involved who worked on this, the current administration and the former federal government under the direction of Mr. Mulroney. There was an agreement entered into by all three levels of government to upgrade the Selkirk water system in a two-stage process. Part of Stage 1 was for the construction of a storage facility which would increase the town's water supply, would give at least three days' reserve. This construction is now underway, but the problem is, Stage 2 of that agreement required the building of additional wells so we had an additional source of water.

Unfortunately, though, now the federal government is indicating to the residents of the community that they may not be able to honour the second stage, so we in Selkirk will have a huge storage tank with no capacity to put water into it.

We are finding this now that the federal Liberal government is renegeing on that, and I urge members, when the resolution comes forward, to speak in favour of it and to support the resolution, demanding that the federal government support the town of Selkirk and the residents of Selkirk as they move toward upgrading and improving their water supply, something that, as members know, has been an outstanding issue in our community for many years. That is a very, very important issue to the residents of Selkirk.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I just want to offer once again the government some suggestions to redeem themselves in the Selkirk community. One would be to rescind their cuts to the education system. Another would be to work towards improving the housing stocks in Selkirk. It is a two- or three-fold idea that would improve both the quality of life for those individuals who live in

the housing stocks; it would provide jobs in our community.

Speaking in terms of jobs, I again urge the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey) to work very hard to find a resolution to the problems facing the Amsco Cast Products plant in Selkirk. He knows that there are 158-odd jobs that are at stake and a \$4 million payroll to our community, and I urge the minister to make sure that he does whatever he can, whatever is possible, to ensure that this business continues in our community. I also urge him to work with the SHI plant, the TayCo plant or TayCo proposals so that we can have those 600-odd jobs come to our community even though there was some damage done by the Liberal Leader (Mr. Edwards) and some of his very unthoughtful comments earlier on in this session. He did considerable damage, but he also did considerable damage to himself. Again, I urge the government to work hard to ensure that these jobs do come to our community.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I just would like to, in closing, urge the government again on another issue, to work with the officials at the Selkirk Mental Health Centre to ensure that the forensic unit is established soon so, again, that we can provide the type of care that this facility can in our community, and I urge them to move forward on that.

So, with those few comments I would just like to say to all members that I wish them the best in the upcoming festive season.

Thank you very much.

* (1530)

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Government Services): Madam Deputy Speaker, I am getting teased a little bit that this is my swan song. Apparently, I will have another opportunity during this session to speak. [interjection] Yes, I am sure I am going to have another time to speak. Usually, though, I get to speak on the budget and not on the throne speech. So it is a good opportunity to have. It gives you a chance to

probably slide around the floor a little bit like they do during the throne speech, but I do not have to go into the constituency items that we generally go into. We usually have to go into them, but the people of Riel have talked to me enough, I guess, in the last 20 years, seven elections. I have been at their doors probably nine or 10 times.

In this House it was almost nine years ago that I was first elected. It seems like nine weeks, but that is how it goes around this House.

Maybe you can relate to the Speaker, and I know we are not supposed to refer to him not being here, but we always refer to the Deputy Speaker being in the Chair, so I must say to the Deputy Speaker and the Speaker of the House—to congratulate him on the way he controls the House. He is like the referee that we need. He is very, very fair in his rulings, and he has become a very good friend, indeed, in the last nine years.

Also, it is a pleasure always to serve in the cabinet. It is always a pleasure to serve with my colleagues in the Legislature. When you start talking about colleagues in the Legislature, after a while, when you are in this room, you start thinking about the individual and start thinking about the area that they are from. That is the type of relationship that comes forward. As soon as something flashed on the news or someone talks about an area, all of a sudden you relate to that member; he is in your mind.

To the Pages, every year, every session, we have brilliant Pages. I cannot get over the other day that one young lady who, the first afternoon in the House, was able to get up and read everyone's name, and she had only been there one afternoon when we had our vote.

Most people in this room probably would not be able to do that after being here for five years, so it was certainly—and that is the type of people we have been blessed with. I congratulate you, and I know you will enjoy your session.

To those members, I will get a chance to say it again, but the member for Dauphin (Mr.

Plohman), who indicated that he will not be running again and my friend Bob Rose from Turtle Mountain, which was a big surprise to me when I got back, that Bob was not running, but everyone of us has our reasons. Some of us feel there are times when we want to do something else in our careers, and that is usually the reason. It is better to have you make your own decision than someone making it for you, but you do go through the process. It is probably no easier to make it five years down the road than it is now. However, when it gets in your mind, you will know when to make that decision.

The Leaders, it is the same story in the House with the Leaders. I look around, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer), whom I did not always with agree philosophically, but one thing about the Leader of the Opposition, he knows when the politics stop. I have always found him very fair that way. Also, to the Leader of the Second Opposition (Mr. Edwards), who is probably a very, very smart young man. I know he is a smart young man. However, one of the seniors came to my office the other day. He said, Gerry, can you say something to the Leader of the Second Opposition? I said, what is that Frank? He said, well, Gerry, he is a bright young man, and he said, generally, tell him, everything in life is just a matter of time; be patient.

I guess, when we enter politics, we all have to learn to be a little more patient. I know, myself, I will never learn to be patient, but at least in your mind you improve on that.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as we near the end of year of the Year of the Family and enter into the year of Manitoba's 125th anniversary in Confederation, perhaps it is a time, of which we have all done in this Chamber during the throne speech, to reflect on what makes our province such a great place to live. Having talked to many Manitobans who travel throughout the world, the majority of these people say that they would not live anywhere else. They say that, once you have Red River gumbo in your veins, you always return. And then we ask, why is it that Manitoba is such a great place to live? What made us who we are

today? I think the answers that always keep coming back to these questions go back to the beginnings before Confederation when our forebears were the pioneers of this province—the men, the woman and the children alike—who, we all know, worked very, very hard physically and mentally to make a better life for ourselves.

I think if you look around, no matter what political stripe you are or whatever you are coming from, today is no different. Like the pioneers of this province who came to a new land with a vision of making a place for themselves on the prairies and a better life for themselves and their families, Manitobans today who started and expanded their small businesses have a strong belief that this province will provide the environment needed to fulfill their dreams.

Madam Deputy Speaker, small business is the mainstay of our province. If you look through the records, it accounts for 80 percent of the new jobs in the economy, and the number of our home-based businesses and cottage industries is growing, showing that the pioneer spirit is still alive and doing well in Manitoba.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in the last six years, this government has introduced initiatives to help individuals start new businesses and expand their businesses. This government has lowered taxes on small businesses, introduced smarter regulations, reduced red tape, introduced initiatives like Grow Bonds and Rural Economic Development Initiative, where our rural communities have invested in their communities.

They also introduced capital instruments to make it readily access financing, instruments such as Business Start, Crocus Investment Fund and Vision Capital. This government in the throne speech has provided and will provide additional capital for small business with the introduction of a pooled investment fund. The Leader of the Second Opposition (Mr. Edwards) in his reply to the throne speech mentioned that this government is doing nothing for small business. I would suggest he go back and maybe do a little bit of homework. The individuals whom I talk to in

small business believe in this province and what this province is doing.

I also ask, and one question I ask the Leader of the Second Opposition—even though I know he reads the *Free Press*, I would suggest he read it and read it because over the last couple of months they have been profiling—and not just read some of the articles written by some of the, maybe I would say, little more than the left-wing type of journalism that we do get sometimes—that they read about some of the small profiling about rural businesses, such as even the small one like the Woodshed in Killamey where the Peters started out by making woodcraft for sale at craft shows and now employ, I think, up to ten people, and are going to expand again next year. Just a small portion of many, many people who have introduced and are doing well in small business. We have heard nothing other than probably a little bit of rhetoric from the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), and we also would like to hear maybe some of his policies and plans for small business in Manitoba.

Madam Deputy Speaker, just another word of caution to the member for St. James, when he looks across the border and sees what has happened there and why the people in the United States kicked out the liberals after 43 years of rule. The whole idea of what the new government has sold—what they have sold is less legislation, smaller government, less taxes—puts more money in the people's pockets. That is what they have sold, and that is why they have all of a sudden after 43 years just completely kicked them out of office.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in his reply to the throne speech, the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) spouts the rhetoric regarding the deficit and unemployment. How does this member plan to get rid of the deficit and create employment? So far he has just stated we should not have a deficit. He also said we should deal more effectively with employment.

Once again, without giving the second opposition's policies and plans for dealing with

these two items, as stated over and over again by the chambers of commerce in this province, in order to create jobs, you have to create an environment conducive to business so that these businesses can employ people.

* (1540)

I do not know where the member has been for the last several years. This government has just done that.

This government has taken large steps towards creating this environment and as a result jobs have been created. This government, while creating a positive business climate, will also reach its goal of a balanced budget in the 1996-97 fiscal year or before while maintaining public services, yes, in spite of the member for Inkster's (Mr. Lamoureux) declaration the other day.

I usually do not quote the member for Inkster because we have something that we have always had, a good relationship in our dealings. He mentioned across the way the other day that he would vote against any budget, any budget at all. Well, I hope that I am in this Chamber, if there is a balanced budget down the road. I hope in this Chamber that I watch as we all get up to vote, watch him as he sits in his chair. However, maybe he will change his mind. Being a Liberal, he might change his mind, being a Liberal.

Madam Deputy Speaker, all this that we have provided in the last several years is in the guidance of, I would say, probably one of the best Premiers this province has ever had, and it has been a pleasure to work under this individual. A lot of people probably do not know the Premier like I know the Premier.

Maybe I will give you a little story about when I decided in May not to run again.

The Premier knew that my wife had been ill, so I went to the Premier, my wife, Yvonne, and I went to the Premier in May, and we sat down with the Premier and walked into his room and I told him that we decided that I was not running again

in Riel. He did not look at me and ask me why. He turned around to my wife right away and said, Yvonne, are you doing okay? That is the type of person this Premier is. That is the type of person, the background that he comes from.

He knows he has a tough job. He has to control all these members in this caucus. That is a tough enough job as it is. I am saying, he knows, and that is the type of individual he is.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we go on with what our government has been doing. We have been maintaining and improving vital public services. It is important to all Manitobans, and this government is committed to doing just that.

As the pioneers before us, caring for those in need is an instinctive response. The homesteaders would band together when a family's house or barn burned down to build another one; and, if someone was without food or clothing neighbours would share what they had. Today, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is no different, and this government has created the system of social services and income programs to make sure that those in need will obtain the support required. Help for women and children in abusive situations and encouraging economic independence for employable welfare recipients have been priorities and will continue to be priorities with initiatives, such as the Making Welfare Work initiative, the second-stage housing for women and children leaving abusive situations, The Food Donations Act, the Taking Charge initiative for single mothers, and a stronger stance on the Manitoba Maintenance Enforcement Program.

As well, Madam Deputy Speaker, this government will use existing programs to provide children living in poverty with the tools and opportunities for a better prospect in life. We have maintained the monies in education and training, and we know it is necessary for everyone to better themselves and their prospects in life.

The Leader of the Second Opposition (Mr. Edwards), in his reply to the throne speech, states the best way to enhance education is put the child

first and to focus on the classroom. Is he telling us that getting back to the basics and involving parents in education of their children are not putting the child first? He also states that the teachers should be allowed to teach rather than delivering health programs and social programs. Madam Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) has just introduced a bill which will allow teachers to teach without the constant worry with regard to disruptive behaviour in the classroom. If the member for St. James has talked to many teachers, he would find that this has been a major problem in classrooms where the teacher has had no authority to suspend disruptive students. I, basically, have talked to a lot of the teachers that have been here many, many years. They are the ones that will tell you how strong and necessary this legislation is.

The Minister of Education has also introduced legislation to give principals the power to keep individuals not enrolled in the school off the school grounds, especially those who are involved in the drugs and are there to create trouble. My belief is that the teachers and the principals of Manitoba schools will welcome this legislation. I believe the students, parents and teachers will also benefit from the numerous education-related programs under way throughout the province that bring the latest in computer information and technology to the classroom through the information highway, for instance, the very important Distance Education and Technology, which will improve the design and delivery of educational programs throughout Manitoba so that all children in Manitoba will have equal access to education.

As well, Madam Deputy Speaker, a new arrangement will give students and teachers improved economical access to a world of information through Internet, a high-speed, high-volume, worldwide electronic information and communication system. In the near future, the global classroom: the interactive sites and sounds bringing students together who are otherwise at great distances. I wonder where the policies and plans of the second opposition are, and even of the first opposition party are, with regard to education.

The information highway, as we all know it to be called, is not only benefiting education but also health in this province.

The Provincial Health Information System is being developed so that the program now in place regarding drugs will be increased to link all health care stakeholders, thus eliminating duplication, unnecessary waste and abuse of services. During a recent conference that I hosted with the federal minister responsible for seniors, there are other provincial jurisdictions that are developing the same kind of networks. As well, the ministers in their communiqué stated that with the increasing desire of seniors to remain in their homes for as long as possible, governments are expanding community-based, in-home health and social support services. This government, as all others, has seen the need for health reform and the shift to more community-based care and services.

Seniors today are one of Manitoba's valuable resources. Too often the contributions of our older citizens are overlooked and ignored. We place little value on the hours of volunteer work given up by this age group.

Without the programs, such as Meals on Wheels, hospital carts, school lunch programs, Friendly Visitors, Handi-Transit, community clubs and others, too many to mention, we would be in trouble. The needs of seniors must be addressed as whole human beings, not just as needy recipients of various government programs and services.

The Seniors Directorate was established by our Premier (Mr. Filmon) in 1988 to find ways of developing a more integrated approach to meeting seniors' needs and to give seniors more profile in the government. That directorate acts as a central point of contact for seniors, Madam Deputy Speaker, a place where seniors can call to get information on a wide variety of services and programs that affect them.

The Seniors Information Line, as we call it, established in 1989, is a toll-free provincial-wide service. It allows seniors to call the directorate,

talk to the experienced staff and have their questions and concerns handled promptly. Not only is the line the central source of contact for other departments, but it is also a way of putting seniors in touch with the community groups or organizations which might help them. The Seniors Information Line is well used. I believe it has handled over 7,000 calls since it was put in.

Just recently we have developed a newsletter for seniors called Seniors Source that highlights government programs and services geared specifically for them. We want to make sure that they are aware of what is available to assist them. The newsletter provides a service similar to that of the information line but in print form. It will be distributed through a bi-weekly publication called Seniors Today.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the staff of the Seniors Directorate realize that consultation with seniors must be an essential part of our decision making, policy development and program planning. We must actively seek seniors' views on all matters that have an impact on them. The directorate also holds frequent meetings with community groups where issues such as elderly abuse, housing, transportation are frequent topics of discussion.

As a result of what seniors and those delivering services to seniors tell them, staff identify issues requiring attention. Directorate staff deliver educational workshops and offer referral and consultation services. They also ensure that the views of seniors and their organizations in rural and northern Manitoba be heard.

The educational component of our work is enhanced by the preparation and distribution of a number of pamphlets. They include information on topics seniors themselves have identified as important. Two of these pamphlets developed by the directorate are Questions to Ask Your Doctor and Pharmacist on Taking Medication, and the other one being Seniors Emergency Preparedness.

In response to requests from professional service providers, we developed the protocols for elderly abuse. We regularly distribute Abuse of the

Elderly, which is a guide for the development of protocols, and the award-winning financial abuse video, *Standing Up for Yourself*. We were told at our conference just recently, Manitoba is this country's leader in understanding elderly abuse.

Sometimes our consultations during our process are more formal. We have just recently completed a consultation on personal care homes and residential care facilities in Manitoba. Sitting on the departmental steering committee involved in this consultation were the Seniors Directorate, Manitoba Health, Family Services and Policy Management.

* (1550)

The primary aim of this consultation was to identify better ways of co-ordinating the services to seniors through home care, residential care and personal care homes. We must also, Madam Deputy Speaker, find ways to keep Manitobans up to date on care, service levels and facilities so they can make more informed decisions.

This view is part of our ongoing efforts to improve health care in Manitoba and find the most cost-effective ways of providing these services. We think it is important to add the community involvement and ensure that seniors and their families have increased input in the care of seniors, and a care report of this consultation is now being prepared.

The involvement of the different government departments and the development of good working relationship among them from the beginning has made for a thorough and effective consultation on the issues involved.

To address the whole of their lives and not only their individuals needs, the Seniors Directorate looks at issues from a government-wide perspective and regularly reviews programs and services for seniors offered across the province. There have been a number of different projects. I have just mentioned a few, and the one regarding residential care and personal care facilities. Previously, in co-operation with Manitoba

Housing there was another video established, *Designing for People, not Prizes*. This video is an educational tool for groups that are planning to develop or renovate multiunit housing projects for seniors.

Another project resulted in the development of a protocol and guide for multidisciplinary teams to deal with elderly abuse. My staff worked with Manitoba Justice to develop a charging directive for law enforcement agencies similar to that for spousal abuse. The government recognizes this is only the beginning, that there is still a lot more that must be done.

Recently the Manitoba Council on Aging, moved over to my portfolio from Health, has been an invaluable source of advice and guidance. Our council has represented various areas of diverse cultures throughout the province. I meet with the council now on a bimonthly basis and look forward to the information they bring. They have a good working relationship and work co-operatively to develop information packages that will benefit the seniors of Manitoba.

As a matter of fact, Madam Deputy Speaker, for the Year of the Family the council held many different contests dealing with grandparents. One of them, the essay was, *Why My Grandparents are Special*. It went out and we had hundreds of replies back. We chose seven winners, and the response was amazing. Madam Deputy Speaker, as we all know today, it is not easy to grow old in any country, and especially Canada. Ageism, prejudice against the elderly, exists everywhere in our culture, including the medical profession, and as the Minister responsible for Seniors and as someone who, some say, is in that aging process, I believe we have a responsibility to find solutions that will allow Canadian seniors to age with dignity, independence and with respect for their experience and wisdom which we all benefit from.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the seniors of today can tell you from experience the changes that have taken place in our society in the 20th Century. Creativity, imagination and knowledge continue to be the essentials of a progressive, productive

society. The products of this energy of the mind and how we use them have changed radically in the 20th Century and are continually changing society itself. I was speaking about the information highway. This is the new world of technology which has developed from the early beginnings of the telephone, television and computer technology. In fact, we are becoming an information society which is involving marriage of computers, television and telecommunications.

On the eve of Manitoba's 125th anniversary, we want to ensure that the people of this province are in the best possible position to benefit from, compete in and take advantage of the new global environment known as the information highway.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, and in the future, this government in partnership with Crown corporations and, of course, very important, the private sector, has worked to foster a positive environment for business development of mainstream players in our information society. The laneways of the information highway, a state-of-the-art fibre optic network, are in place throughout most of the province

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

In April '94, Mr. Speaker, the government approved an agreement that committed Manitoba cable television operators to invest in modernizing the existing cable networks in Manitoba. As well, the cable operators are anticipating spending more to get the information or change it, to gather the information and the existing cable network and are committed to developing a new microwave system to deliver multichannel television service to rural households not serviced by cable TV.

Mr. Speaker, while fibre optics and cable form the roads, there are key technologies involved in directing the traffic at ultrahigh speeds to move a multitude of services such as a voice, video and data. The most critical of these technologies is a switch now known as the ATM system, as ATM switch technology has arrived in Manitoba. This government recently went into market, and in the upcoming year, the private sector and the public at

large will have access to this network. It will mean that business through most of the province will be able to do their data communications in Manitoba without long distance charges.

Mr. Speaker, this type of information—the most important priority is the government's lead that they have taken, a lead that ultimately it is the private sector who will be the dominant player in the development of the information highway.

Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have?

Mr. Speaker: Twelve minutes.

Mr. Ducharme: Okay.

Mr. Speaker, my Department of Government Services has played a major role in the development of this Manitoba information highway. This is only a small portion of what has been happening in my department.

As we stated in the throne speech, spending taxpayers' money smarter has been our guiding principle, and no one knows that more than myself, who is in a department, that you can spend more wisely. Programs have been made more efficient by eliminating overlap and duplication.

This past summer the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Prime Minister of Canada signed an agreement aimed at improving delivery of government services and reducing overlap and duplication between the federal government and the provincial government. While the agreement identified 11 specific programs such as locating federal and provincial services in the same office, using Environment as an example, and the provision of services to federal departments by Manitoba's Fleet Vehicle Agency. There is an opportunity in the future for extension of this type of thinking to other support services.

Mr. Speaker, some of the most gratifying work that I have had in the last couple of years is the development of the Special Operating Agencies, and this reflects the government's realization of the need to change, to remove certain constraints,

promote cost-effective and more businesslike service delivery, delegate more responsibility for operational matters throughout the organization, improve customer service, client consultation and monitoring of service quality, make better use of information technology.

SOAs, as they are called, are operation organizations within departmental structures which deliver these type of services. Government Services has been a leader in this area with two areas, one being the Fleet Vehicles and the other being the Materials Distribution. These are the two Special Operating Agencies in place. Materials Distribution is an agency which provides materials to boards, departments, while the agency provides moving, transportation, disposal, storage services. Its largest revenue base is derived from the provision of approximately 4,000 commonly used products.

Several of the notable improvements have been the attainment of net income, attainment of increased target delivery to client departments, improved inventory turnaround, decrease in data entry time pertaining to accounting activities, decrease in the length of time to pay agency suppliers, improved information to departments regarding savings available.

* (1600)

Mr. Speaker, the other SOA that we developed was Fleet Vehicles, which manages a fleet of approximately 2,200 vehicles and leases these vehicles out on a full-cost recovery basis to government departments and certain boards, Crown corporations and agencies. Some of the positive results after we formed the SOA and different departments were now responsible for their individual costs, we found out that there was an approximate elimination of 500 vehicles, development of a service agreement.

We also achieved not only the 500 less automobiles, but we turned a profit in '93-94, a \$1.6 million profit that we can pay back into the Special Operating Agencies. The Special Operating Agencies are examples.

The Leader of the Second Opposition (Mr. Edwards) often mentions that we have to get more mean and lean in the way we do government. All departments have been doing that. Most people do not realize that our government in four budgets has spent less than we had in revenues. The first time it has been done in many, many years. It is not looked upon, and we have done that in the last four or five budgets.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to look at different types of government operations in dealing with SOAs. We also, in my department, participated in the Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Program. This was the work of the downtown Assiniboine River walkway from the Legislative Building to The Forks. We are working together to provide Manitobans with a remarkable legacy. That is very, very important. I will tell you a little story about when we started this.

Back when the mayor and I and Nick Diakiw talked to the federal government back in '85, we looked at The Forks program. At that time, through the Core Area we were able to do the riverbank, and then the opportunity came to do the final part of that particular program and that was the south grounds. It will have the informal elements related to the casual nature of the existing walkway.

Large plazas are being constructed, one north of Assiniboine Avenue, with a pool and fountain as its focus; one south of Assiniboine Avenue to overlook the river. Both plazas will incorporate additional lighting, benches and interpretive features, landscaping and decorative paving to create opportunities for public gatherings and events. Integrated into the design of both plazas are the sights for the commemorative plaques and monuments to recognize and celebrate the very, very important people and events that constitute Manitoba's history and heritage.

Assiniboine Avenue proper is being realigned for an improved pedestrian crossing area, a bicycle path and designated parking areas. All this will be for those who are always worried about the handicapped; it will become completely handicap accessible.

Mr. Speaker, it is always nice to get up and speak in regard to the accomplishments of the government. There are many things to talk about when you do get up as a minister. Each minister generally likes to talk a little about his department. A lot of the good news does not get out. In general, I know in the last year that people of Winnipeg and Manitoba have now finally decided or finally are starting to receive some of the information that is very, very important to show that this government has been a leader in Canada in regard to its financial. It has been a leader in Canada in looking after its health care and its educational care and its welfare recipients. It is a leader. When we come in and celebrate the 125 years as part of our country, the people of Manitoba will see all that.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I invite all Manitobans to work with us as a team to make Manitoba an even better place to live and work that it has been for the last 124 years. I know this side of the House will continue, and probably continue into the next century, in providing government that these people will look at. Thank you very much.

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): It gives me great pleasure to rise again in this Chamber to reply to the throne speech. Mr. Speaker, 99.9 percent of my speech will be in French. I appreciate the translation that is there at all times.

An Honourable Member: It is a constitutional right.

Mr. Gaudry: I do not look at it that way. I feel that it is what they have done here in Manitoba as far as bilingualism is concerned.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome you back as Speaker of the Legislature. You have been there for a long time, and we appreciate what you have done. I welcome also the Deputy Speaker who has done a great job in this Chamber. I also would like to welcome every one of the members who have returned to this House and would like to pay tribute to the ones who have left and who will be leaving after this session: the member for Riel (Mr. Ducharme) who has been a good friend over

the six-plus years that we have been in this Legislature; the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose); the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman); the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) who have contributed a lot for their constituency and for Manitobans over the years they have served and my past leader, the Honourable Sharon Carstairs who has gone to the Senate—

An Honourable Member: Liberal heaven.

Mr. Gaudry: That is okay. You can say what you want, but she has done a great job for Manitobans also.

Monsieur le président,

Permettez-moi de vous faire part de mes meilleurs vœux à l'occasion de l'ouverture de cette sixième session de la trente-cinquième Législature de la province du Manitoba. Je crois, Monsieur le président, que cette session sera pour vous remplie de nouveaux défis en raison de la présente conjoncture politique de la chambre. C'est certain que vous allez être appelé à prendre des décisions qui pourront avoir des répercussions profondes sur les travaux de cette législature.

Monsieur le président, j'ai eu l'occasion de regarder l'entrevue que vous avez accordée à un journaliste de l'émission «Ce soir» de Radio-Canada, la veille de l'ouverture de la chambre de la dernière session. Vous avez souligné que votre responsabilité première était envers les citoyens et citoyennes de cette province, que vous avez toujours respectés. Je suis certain, Monsieur le président, que si l'occasion se présentait où vous étiez appelé à participer à un vote, vous seriez guidé par l'intérêt public, comme vous l'avez fait dans le passé.

Le fait que le gouvernement dispose d'une majorité précaire ne devrait pas, par ce fait même, nous précipiter en élection. Comme députés nous avons comme devoir le rôle d'étudier soigneusement chaque projet de loi déposé en cette chambre. Comme mon chef l'a indiqué à maintes reprises, si le projet de loi est raisonnable et mérite d'être adopté, nous voterons en faveur. Par contre,

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

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

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

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

Monsieur le président, certains des problèmes identifiés dans le discours du trône sont récents, d'autres ne se prêtent pas à des solutions faciles et immédiates. Par ailleurs, plusieurs autres

problèmes auraient dû déjà être réglés ou devraient être sur le point d'être réglés. Pourtant, les voilà encore à nouveau apparaître dans un autre discours du trône, comme c'est le cas avec la réforme du système de santé, l'éducation et j'en passe.

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

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

Monsieur le président, ce n'est pas nécessaire que les Canadiens et les Canadiennes soient d'accord avec tout ce que propose le «Livre rouge».

Évidemment, il y a matière à discussion et à réflexion. Cependant, ce qu'il est essentiel de reconnaître, c'est que le «Livre rouge» offre aux Canadiens et aux Canadiennes des nouvelles initiatives, des nouveaux programmes, une nouvelle philosophie de gouverner. Ce que nous avons devant nous dans ce discours du trône est un document peu inspirant, un document pondu par un gouvernement vidé d'idées et de politiques, un gouvernement qui cherche à compléter son mandat en espérant nous faire croire que des politiques

recyclées peuvent passer inaperçues, que peut-être après six ans, certains commenceront à produire des résultats.

Monsieur le président, je n'ai pu éviter de me fixer longuement sur une déclaration qui se trouve au troisième paragraphe du discours de la dernière session, et je cite :

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

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

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

Monsieur le président, parmi les programmes de création d'emplois pour les jeunes, le discours du trône mentionne les initiatives REDI et les programmes Lancement de carrières et Partenaires des jeunes. Dans le discours du trône de la précédente session législative, il était indiqué que ces programmes avaient profité à plus de 4 000 jeunes de la province. Ce que j'aimerais savoir, Monsieur le président, est combien de ces 4 000 jeunes ont aujourd'hui un emploi axé sur une véritable carrière.

Monsieur le président, ce qui me bouleverse dans ce discours du trône, c'est la priorité qu'on

semble donner à l'importance d'assurer que les jeunes ont confiance en l'avenir. Quand j'ai entendu ce message de la part du gouvernement conservateur j'étais optimiste que parmi les programmes que le gouvernement annoncerait dans le discours du trône, on retrouverait des initiatives concrètes de formation et de création d'emplois pour nos jeunes. À ma grande déception, il n'y avait rien de nouveau pour les jeunes.

L'absence de nouvelles initiatives de création d'emplois m'inquiète profondément. Déjà dans le discours du trône précédent, le gouvernement se vantait du fait qu'en 1993 il y avait une augmentation nette de 6 000 emplois nouveaux dans le secteur privé par rapport à l'année précédente. Monsieur le président, je me demande quel est l'impact véritable de ces nouveaux emplois sur l'économie dans son ensemble, lorsque six à sept milles personnes par année quittent notre province.

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

* (1610)

Monsieur le président, le discours du trône souligne l'importance et la contribution des petites entreprises à la croissance économique. Ma circonscription compte un bon nombre de petites entreprises, particulièrement le long des rues Goulet et Marion et sur le boulevard Provencher.

J'ai souvent l'occasion de dialoguer avec ces petits commerçants et je puis vous assurer que, pour la plupart, être en affaires représente un défi quotidien. J'admire le courage et la ténacité de ces entrepreneurs, car sans eux et sans elles le chômage dans ma circonscription serait encore plus élevé.

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

Je suis heureux d'apprendre que le gouvernement propose d'entamer de nouvelles initiatives afin d'encourager l'expansion des petites entreprises. J'espère que ces initiatives offriront quelque chose de concret aux petites entreprises car nous ne pouvons continuer de tolérer le taux élevé de faillite dans ce secteur.

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

Monsieur le président, Winnipeg offre encore d'autres avantages que l'on ne retrouve pas dans certains grands centres—une main-d'oeuvre bilingue.

Monsieur le président, le succès que la ville de Moncton a connu dans sa récente croissance comme centre commercial et industriel aux plans national et régional, peut être attribué en partie au fait que les chefs d'entreprises étaient attirés par le caractère bilingue de la ville et le fait qu'on avait accès à une main-d'oeuvre bilingue. Il n'y a

aucune raison pourquoi Winnipeg ne pourrait pas en faire autant à ce chapitre. D'ailleurs, on a eu le plaisir de visiter Moncton ensemble, Monsieur le président. Ce gouvernement doit promouvoir davantage la ville de Winnipeg comme étant une véritable ville bilingue afin d'attirer de nouvelles entreprises au Manitoba.

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

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

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

* (1620)

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

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

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

Monsieur le président, j'étais également heureux d'apprendre que les trois niveaux de gouvernement sont sur le point de signer une nouvelle entente sur l'aménagement de la ville de Winnipeg. Je m'en suis réjoui car, dans ma circonscription, il y a beaucoup de projets qui sont inachevés.

Il est important que Saint-Boniface se retrouve dans cette nouvelle entente. La communauté de Saint-Boniface peut contribuer de façon encore plus significative au développement touristique, économique et commercial de la ville de Winnipeg. Les résidents et les commerçants de Saint-Boniface ont déjà une vision de leur communauté dans le contexte de l'aménagement de la ville de Winnipeg.

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

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

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

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

Dans le domaine de l'éducation, la présente année scolaire est la première pour la nouvelle division scolaire francophone. Je peux assurer les membres de cette chambre que la population franco-manitobaine compte jouer un rôle important dans le développement des politiques en matière d'éducation et je souhaite que le ministre convie les représentants de cette nouvelle division au même titre que les autres divisions scolaires dans le processus décisionnel provincial.

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

la province en souffrira les conséquences à long terme.

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

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

Si le Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface est obligé d'effectuer d'autres coupures dans ses budgets, nous allons perdre un plus grand nombre d'étudiants. Si nos autres universités seront obligées de couper dans leurs programmes et services, le même phénomène se répétera, les étudiants et les étudiantes iront poursuivre leurs études dans d'autres provinces. Je ne propose point par mes commentaires que le gouvernement abandonne ses plans d'intensifier le rôle des collèges communautaires, car cette proposition est valable, mais ne le faisons pas au détriment de nos universités.

Monsieur le président, le discours du trône a traité une série de questions et plusieurs promesses ont été faites. Bien que toutes les questions qui seront peut-être abordées dans cette session soient importantes, voire même urgentes dans certains cas, aucune n'est plus importante que le dossier de

la santé. Le ministre doit ne plus tarder à regagner la confiance de ceux et celles qui oeuvrent dans le domaine de la santé. La santé de l'ensemble de nos concitoyens et concitoyennes en dépend.

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

Monsieur le président, j'aimerais conclure en espérant que le budget qui sera présenté très prochainement devant cette chambre par le gouvernement ne sera pas aussi vide d'idées et d'initiatives concrètes que le discours du trône. Si le présent gouvernement conservateur est fatigué et à bout de souffle, qu'il aille se reposer car le Parti libéral au Manitoba est plein d'idées, avec à sa tête un jeune futur premier ministre plein d'énergie et de dynamisme qui est prêt à répondre aux attentes des Manitobains pour l'avenir.

J'aimerais terminer mon intervention en citant une pensée de Monsieur Stanley Knowles, une pensée qui à mon avis reflète assez bien la situation politique actuelle au Manitoba, et je cite:

Au parlement, l'opposition devrait se comporter de façon à convaincre la population qu'elle pourrait faire mieux que le parti au pouvoir. Personne ne pourra nier que notre système fonctionne mieux lorsqu'il y a un changement de gouvernement à intervalles raisonnables. Fin de citation.

Et Monsieur le président, après avoir alterné pendant de nombreuses années entre les gouvernements conservateurs et les néo-

démocrates, les Manitobains et les Manitobaines auront en 1995 l'occasion de voter pour l'autre façon de gouverner, la façon libérale.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, allow me to convey to you my best wishes on the occasion of the opening of this Sixth Session of the Thirty-Fifth Legislature of the Province of Manitoba. I believe that for you, this session will be filled with new challenges as a result of the present political configuration in the House. It is certain that you are going to be called upon to make decisions that could have profound repercussions on the work of this Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity to watch the interview that you granted a reporter from the program *Ce soir* on Radio-Canada the day before the opening of the last session of the House. You emphasized that your first responsibility was to the citizens of this province whom you have always respected, and I am certain that if the occasion occurred in which you were called upon to participate in a vote that you would be guided by public interest as you have been in the past.

The fact that the government has a precarious majority should not in itself precipitate an election. As members, we have the obligation of seriously studying every bill that is tabled in this House. As my leader has indicated many times, if the bill is reasonable and deserves to be adopted, we will vote in favour of it; however, if the bill, in our opinion, is not in the public interest, we would have no choice but to vote against it. We are guided by the same principles as those which guide you, Mr. Speaker.

For us, as members of the Liberal opposition, our role is not to assume power at any price. Our role consists in co-operating to bring concrete solutions to the problems that concern Manitobans and to ensure a better future for all residents of this province.

I am firmly of the opinion that the government and the opposition each have a very specific role to

play: respectively that of governing and that of criticizing, but criticizing in a constructive and positive manner and suggesting solutions to problems. For it is very easy to criticize. A responsible opposition must be able to demonstrate to the government the seriousness of its bad decisions while offering the necessary measures to remedy the situation. An opposition must be seen by the people as the government-in-waiting—waiting to replace the one that is in power.

For all members of this House, the current session is very critical. We have difficult and important challenges to take up in the coming months. Each sector of our society is in a period of upheaval and uncertainty. In certain cases this uncertainty and this upheaval are related to social and economic phenomena over which we have little or no control; however, in other cases, these upheavals and uncertainties are the direct results of the inaction of the current government in regard to problems which were obvious several years ago and which, because of this inaction, have grown larger and now have become still more difficult to resolve.

Mr. Speaker, certain problems identified in the Speech from the Throne are recent; others do not lend themselves to easy and immediate solutions. Moreover, several other problems should have already been resolved or should be on the point of being resolved; however, there they are once again reappearing in another Speech from the Throne, as is the case with health reform, education and I could name others.

* (1610)

The Speech from the Throne has little to offer that is new. In fact, it is simply a recycling of old ideas, unpopular programs and political rhetoric. What astonished me in the Speech from the Throne is the fact that everything that had to do with new policies and initiatives was inspired by the policies of the Liberal government of Jean Chretien: the infrastructure program, the Winnipeg Development Agreement, the information highway and others. In terms of new ideas

and a new vision, the government has little to offer in its throne speech.

Mr. Speaker, Manitobans, like all Canadians, want new ideas, new programs and a new perspective on the future. Canadians reacted positively to the federal Liberal government principally because of the detailed program that was offered to them and which was so well explained in the red book.

Mr. Speaker, it is not necessary that Canadians be in agreement with everything that is proposed in the red book. Obviously, there is matter for discussion and reflection. However, what is essential to recognize is that the red book offers Canadians new initiatives, new programs, a new philosophy of government. What we have before us in this Speech From the Throne is a not very inspiring document, a document turned out by a government that is emptied of ideas and policies, a government that seeks to complete its mandate in the hope of making us believe that recycled policies will pass unnoticed and that perhaps after six years, some of them will start to produce results.

Mr. Speaker, I could not help but look at length at a statement found in the third program of the speech from the last session, and I quote: The defining challenge for our generation, our most important responsibility to our own children, is to provide security in our lives and theirs, and to build confidence in our future.

There is no doubt that we cannot progress as a society if our children are losing confidence in their future. A young person without hope becomes a burden for society, a burden for each and every one of us. On the other hand, a young person who is filled with hope contributes to his or her society and causes this society to progress.

Mr. Speaker, we must avoid at all costs causing our young people to lose hope. However, if we cannot offer them real jobs, it is very probable that they will lose hope eventually. Incapable of accessing the labour market, a young, unemployed person becomes not only a public burden who has

to survive on social assistance, but in certain cases will turn against society and become also mired in the penal and correctional systems.

Mr. Speaker, among the job creation programs for young people, the Speech From the Throne mentions the REDI, CareerStart and Partners with Youth programs. In the Speech From the Throne for the last legislative session, it was indicated that these programs had benefitted more than 4,000 young people in the province. What I would like to know is how many of these 4,000 young people now have a job that is truly oriented towards a career?

Mr. Speaker, what upsets me in this Speech from the Throne is the emphasis that seems to be given to the importance of ensuring that young people have confidence in the future. When I heard this message on the part of the Conservative government, I was optimistic that among the programs that the government would announce in the Speech from the Throne we would find concrete training and job creation initiatives for our young people. To my great disappointment there was nothing new for young people.

Mr. Speaker, the absence of new job creation initiatives worries us greatly. Already in the last Speech from the Throne the government was boasting about the fact that in 1993 there was a net increase of 6,000 new jobs in the private sector in comparison to the preceding year. I wonder, what is the true impact of these jobs on the economy as a whole when six to seven thousand persons per year are leaving our province?

In other terms, for each new job created in the private sector, one person left Manitoba, and where in the figures can we account for the jobs lost in the public and parapublic sectors? As my Leader mentioned earlier, in fact there are 16,000 more persons who are without a job since the election of the Conservative government in 1990.

Mr. Speaker, the throne speech stresses the importance and the contribution of small businesses to economic growth. My constituency has quite a large number of small businesses,

particularly along Goulet and Marion Streets and on Provencher Boulevard. I often have the opportunity to talk with small business people, and I can assure you that for most of them being in business is a daily challenge. I admire the courage and tenacity of these entrepreneurs because without them unemployment in my constituency would be even higher.

In sharing with me the difficulties that some have in surviving from day to day, I see parallels from one case to another: the GST, the tax burden, the shrinking markets, the wary consumers who lack confidence in the economy, rigid financial institutions leading to a lack of financing. However, most of these business people are still there today, and thanks to them St. Boniface remains a community where small business is omnipresent.

I am pleased to learn that the government is proposing to undertake some new initiatives in order to encourage the expansion of small businesses. I hope that these initiatives will offer something concrete to small businesses, because we cannot continue to tolerate the high rate of failure in this sector.

Mr. Speaker, we also have to look at the telecommunications industry and data processing. In the area of the information industry and telecommunications, there are no borders. For these industries it is no longer necessary to be situated in Toronto or Montreal or Vancouver or New York. They can set up business just as easily in small centres as in large ones. They could be located in Winnipeg or Brandon or Steinbach as easily as in Toronto or Montreal. Indeed, there are even advantages to locating in smaller centres where the cost of living is lower and where, in general, quality of life is better.

* (1620)

Mr. Speaker, Winnipeg offers other advantages that are not found in certain large centres, that being a bilingual work force. The success that Moncton has experienced in its recent growth as a commercial and industrial centre on the national

and regional level can be attributed in part to the fact that business leaders were attracted by the bilingual nature of the city and the fact that they had access to a bilingual labour force. There is no reason why Winnipeg could not do just as well in this regard, and we had the pleasure of visiting Moncton together. This government has to promote this city more as a truly bilingual city in order to attract new businesses to Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of my speech I mentioned the infrastructure program. Although the infrastructure program saw the light of day thanks to the Chretien government, it is an initiative in which the co-operation of all three levels of government up to this time has been almost exemplary. I have had the opportunity to participate in consultations with representatives from the three levels of government as well as with community representatives.

Throughout all these consultations what impressed me greatly was the importance that everyone attached to the financing of concrete, sustainable projects. There was no question of proposing or supporting a project for partisan reasons or in order to obtain some political gain. On the contrary, the interest of the community in its broad sense was the primary consideration.

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

Mr. Acting Speaker, when we examine the choice of projects we see that the projects were chosen for economic and social motives and not for partisan motives. There is no imbalance in the distribution of projects between one constituency and another; no federal MP has been favoured to the detriment of another for partisan reasons. The selection process for infrastructure projects demonstrated to what a degree Prime Minister Chretien is determined in his plans to eliminate favouritism.

Let us admit that an infrastructure program directed by the Conservative government of Brian Mulroney would have been disastrous, with the totality of projects going to Baie-Comeau and

other ridings which were once strongholds of the federal Conservative Party.

Manitoba received more than its share of the federal budget for the creation of infrastructure projects, and let us recognize it fairly: This is in great part thanks to the initiative of the Liberal government of Jean Chretien.

Mr. Acting Speaker, since it has been in power the Conservative government has continually advocated rural development, but I am far from convinced that significant progress has been made in this area to date, in spite of the fact that the government seems to attach so much importance to it. The infrastructure program, in my opinion, will give a better sense of what rural development is.

The extension of natural gas supply services and the new water supply system in Portage la Prairie are just some examples of sustainable projects for rural communities which are translating not only into a net improvement of quality of life for the residents but also into growth of economic activities in the rural milieu.

I was also pleased to learn that the three levels of government are on the point of signing a new Winnipeg Development Agreement. I rejoiced at this because in my constituency there are many uncompleted projects. It is important that St. Boniface be included in this new agreement. The St. Boniface community can contribute in a still more significant way to development in terms of tourism, economy and commerce in the city of Winnipeg.

The residents and business people of St. Boniface already have a vision of their community in the context of the development of the city of Winnipeg. I hope that this new agreement will allow them to fully realize their dreams, and I promise them that I will do everything in my power so that St. Boniface may obtain its fair share.

I am pleased to learn that the government is proposing to renew its interest in the co-operative initiatives between western provinces and

territories. When we think about it, there are fewer barriers between many countries than between Canadian provinces. There are also blocs of nations, for example, those of the European community, who have a greater number of co-operative programs and agreements among them than do the Canadian provinces among themselves. We can no longer delay in implementing this initiative because all the western provinces and territories can benefit from it.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I want to emphasize my support for the job creation projects for those who are on social assistance, however it is important to ensure that these persons are not simply going to be stopgaps and that the positions into which they are placed will permit them to acquire true professional training and the work experience that is genuine and enriching.

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

Mr. Acting Speaker, in terms of post-secondary education, although I recognize the important role of community colleges I object to the government playing off the community colleges against universities. The success of our colleges and our universities is critical to the future of our province. If we are going to allow our universities to cut programs and services dramatically, as the government seems to be proposing, the entire province will suffer the consequences in the long run.

It is my privilege to have in my constituency St. Boniface College which is a university institution that also includes a community college that offers a great choice of courses, bilingual secretarial skills, accounting and administration. As for university programs, after having reached a certain

level many students must leave the province to pursue their studies in French in other disciplines such as Medicine and Law. They have to leave the province to go to Ottawa, Moncton, Montreal or Quebec, simply because the programs in which they wish to enroll are not available in Manitoba.

Some of them when they leave to pursue a program of studies never come back to Manitoba. We lose a person in whom, as Manitobans, we have invested thousands of dollars because of the fact that they could not pursue their program of studies in Manitoba. We lose someone who could have made a precious contribution to our province.

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

Mr. Acting Speaker, the Speech from the Throne dealt with a series of questions and several promises were made. Although all the questions which may be broached in this session are important and even urgent in certain cases, no question is more important than the health portfolio. The minister must delay no further in regaining the confidence of those people who work in the health sector. The health of all our citizens depends upon it.

I would like to conclude my speech in emphasizing that I am confident that this session will be very fruitful. We have difficult tasks to accomplish, and we must work as much as possible in a spirit of co-operation. The members of this House all have at heart the interests of Manitobans. I am convinced of that. Obviously, there are differences of opinion as to what should be our priorities and as to the means of reaching our goals. It is my wish that together we find the compromises necessary to allow us to

improvencrease the quality of life of all our fellow citizens.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like to conclude in hoping that the budget which will be presented very shortly before this House by the government will not be as bereft of concrete initiatives and ideas as the Speech from the Throne. If the present Conservative government is tired and out of steam it should go and take a rest, because the Liberal Party of Manitoba is full of ideas and has as its Leader a young future First Minister who is full of energy and is ready to meet the expectations of Manitobans for the future.

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

Mr. Acting Speaker, after having alternated for a number of years between Conservative and New Democratic governments, Manitobans will in 1995 have the opportunity to vote for the other way of governing, the Liberal way.

Thank you very much, Mr. Acting Speaker.

* (1630)

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Acting Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise once again. It is an honour to rise and to address yet another throne speech, a document which is just full of vision, a document that lays forward the framework and the path of the journey that this province, I know, wants to take.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to the Speaker at this time for providing guidance over the activities of this Chamber, to his staff, to the new Pages, two of which are constituents of mine. I take great pride in their selection and I will even take greater pride in the manner in which

they are going to attend to the services of this Assembly.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

I am very proud of the record of the government and I know we will be called upon as we have over the course of much debate, not only in this House but as we go from place to place, as we go from opportunity to opportunity to explain what it is and how it is that we have governed over the course of the last number of years. I look forward, of course, to defending that record as we move into, let us say, the run up to the election. [interjection] Mr. Speaker, I have been challenged as to whether or not a nomination date has been set in that great riding of Morris and the answer is yes, it has been set. There is a nomination date set for early March and, of course, Mr. Speaker, if the Premier dictates and it needs to be brought forward sooner, it certainly can be done.

Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) is so interested in that great riding of Morris. It does my heart proud to know that he has our better interest at heart.

Although we will gladly and forthrightly defend the record of an incredible government over the course of many years, the issue with respect to this throne speech is renewed vision in the essence of the speech. Yes, I know Manitobans are fully aware that this is a seasoned government, and yet they also know that hard decisions after much consultation have been made. That invariably, of course, leads to some criticism; it invariably leads to a falling-out of some of the constituency. That is part of governing, and members of the opposition parties are well aware of that.

As I will indicate later, it is their great fear of taking a side on any issue and it is why they are afraid to address particularly education renewal and reform today. It is why that in the area of health reform, they can do nothing but dwell on some of the funding issues as if they were in themselves the be-all and the end-all and the guarantor of a healthy public policy and indeed a provision of health services that our citizens want.

Mr. Speaker, I know that members opposite are hard-pressed to take on the new vision that we provided within the throne speech, and yet we will challenge them at every opportunity. You know, as an aside, I find it interesting if one wants to categorize the political parties within the province today that the status quo parties sit to your left.

Mr. Speaker, the parties of change, the parties of reform, the parties of vision, the parties of hope, and the parties of the next century are, indeed, the party that sits to your right, the government that is prepared to accept the challenges, the government that is prepared to accept change.

So I address the clear vision for tomorrow that is obviously encompassed within the throne speech, but before I do I want to once again try—even though I know at times it is difficult, at times I know it is almost counterproductive and some would say unproductive—to focus upon the fiscal state of our province because it is leaning. My commentary is in support of a commitment made in this throne speech, and that is dealing with balanced budget legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I do not delude myself for one second in realizing that this is a quagmire, for recognizing that when one begins to discuss and debate fiscal policy that TVs across the land tune out, that indeed members leave the House, that individuals really do not care. So I am very mindful of that, given the myriad of statistics, given the interpretation of numbers, given the fact that there never is a common base or a common rationale of understanding, but I still try and will try one more time.

I know full well that very few pundits will try to understand the comments that I am going to make. I know the numbers are huge and they are difficult to understand. Yet, I know that some very few will read the record and yet very few though will comment on the words I state or indeed that others will state on the fiscal standing of the province unless of course I make a slip or unless I offer a line that can be taken out of context. The reality is, I feel better in stating it for the record one more time.

So, Mr. Speaker, again I point out for the record, when we left the government, \$89 million was directed towards interest costs, \$89 million when we left the government. The Lyon government left office in 1981. In 1988, when we came back to government, \$500 million-plus was the interest cost of the day—\$500 million. Yet, today, it is still \$500 million-plus. Some would say, well, what a dismal job of governing that that number would still be that large.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): You said it.

Mr. Manness: Yes, yes, and the member for Inkster says, you said it, because it is so easy. It is so easy, Mr. Speaker, to sit over on the other side and totally neglect the lag effect of spending today, borrowing today and watching the flow of cost out into the future, yes. [interjection] The member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) says we should know, says I should know. Of course, he is correct. I know because I was the minister who brought down six budgets, and I saw the effect of decisions made by the Pawley government, and I had to wrestle with them, but, Mr. Speaker, what I did not do when I held that exalted position, the one that I lost a lot of friends over sitting behind me—

An Honourable Member: They are going to come back.

Mr. Manness: Yes, they are coming back. They are coming back.

Mr. Speaker, what we did not do is, we did not practise off-balance sheet accounting, taking the capital with respect to governance and school boards and all that like the NDP government is doing, particularly in British Columbia, moving into a phony Crown and make it appear like it was not a cost to government. It was taken off the current account.

* (1640)

What we have not done of course, is what some Atlantic provinces have done, by the way, the same ones that are drawing some noteworthiness because they are close to balancing the budget, Mr.

Speaker, not the least of which of course is the province of New Brunswick, which of course separates current from capital, and on the current side it is very close to being balanced.

What we have not done, of course, is what small "c"—believe it—conservative Saskatchewan with their NDP government has done and totally ignored, not totally, but significantly ignored allowances for losses. Mr. Speaker, so I am proud of the fact that we have not practised, some would say—what type of accounting?—creative accounting, and I will talk about the savings account shortly. We have tried to deal through six budgets in dealing with the lag effects put into place by profligate spending by one Howard Pawley and Vic Schroeder and company.

Mr. Speaker, I only say that very few pundits recognize the effects, the lag of spending today, borrowing today and leaving it for somebody else in the future to deal with. I can tell you I was troubled by the federal Conservative Party when they used to bring forward in their last few budgets when they used to talk about how it was that on the—what was their wording?—that they had a balanced budget, except for the interest, except for \$40 billion of interest, they had a balanced budget. How do you run away—I mean there is one number that we do not even vote on in this House and that is the interest cost. We do not even vote on it. So I am troubled from time to time how it is that government, particularly in the Manitoba context, how it is that opposition parties honestly try and make the citizenry believe that there is no cost associated with previous debt and that if you vote for us that tomorrow we will do everything, including reduce maybe taxes, spend more in education particularly, spend more in health for certain, and yet we will also have more left over to spend on roads.

Mr. Speaker, I honestly believe that members opposite, however, are going to have to—and I will not let them in the little opportunity I have bring forward this revisionist history. I continue to hear how it was we had a surplus when we came into government. If we had a surplus then Jim Walding was probably the only person in the

history of 400 years of Commonwealth government who voted against, brought a government down because they brought in a surplus. It was probably the first and only time that a member—[interjection] At least I have learned something. I have learned that the Leader of the NDP does have a conscience.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Manness: Yes, he does, because whereas a year ago he said you were given a surplus, today he does not say that. Today he says the Provincial Auditor a year and a half afterwards says you had a surplus. What is the difference? A year and a half that is what the difference is, 18 months. But at least the Leader of the NDP, I now realize he has some semblance of integrity, indeed as we all do, Mr. Speaker—I want to stay within the rules—because now at least he references the Provincial Auditor. But not the Liberals. The Liberals still go out everywhere they speak and they talk about the surplus that we inherited. Well, we will move on to that shortly.

Mr. Speaker, these are all matter of fact. Once through the 1988-89 budget year, we realized that there was going to be some good news on the revenue side. What did we do to it? Did we rush out and spend it? No, we put it into a savings account. The NDP supported us. I give them credit for that because, having been in government, they know also or they knew the pressures that would be there to spend it immediately. One thing you realized if you have been part of a government, more so if you are part of a Treasury bench, is that once you lock it into spending, the ability to pull it out, the ability to make the decision to withdraw it is almost impossible.

Some would say, not only very dumb, some would say, almost impossible.

Mr. Speaker, so instructive in that is, of course, the news that came forward a month and a half ago, when the fourth out of eight revisions that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) will receive in the one year, the one that was leaked publicly, I would say, in Ottawa, because it looked like we

were going to receive another \$180 million, before the ink even dried on the page, the members opposite, to a person, had it spent. Spend it. Good times are here again—spend.

I have not talked to my colleague the Minister of Finance, but I am willing to bet—[interjection]. That is what it is now, yes, fifth revision out of eight. Now it is down to 36. But when it is all spent, it is committed, at least it is in the minds of the opposition party. Profligate spenders, that is what sits across the House from us, nothing but spenders, all for political advantage, just to try and buy favour with the public, the very reason why the nation today is on its knees, because of spenders like the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted, again for the record, to say, when we came into government, revenue growth, that is one year over the next, was 1 percent or 2 percent. Revenue growth in the year 1984, when Mr. Schroeder was the Minister of Finance, was 19 percent—19 percent.

This is what I asked. I asked Premier Pawley of the day—this was in Hansard, Thursday, June 10, 1982, page 3255. I asked the First Minister at that time, I said: "What year, what specific set of circumstances," and I am quoting, "has he seen in the past or will he have to see in the future before he is part of a government that will allow itself to save money, meaning nothing more than that?"—the simplicity of the question. Now this was a Premier who was on the verge of 12 percent and 14 percent increases in revenues at that time and shortly thereafter and for years to come, running deficits in the magnitude of \$500 million, \$600 million. This was at the time when the base level of government spending was \$3 billion, not \$5.5 billion, \$3 billion.

This is, by the way, what the leader of the government said at that time. He is not saying this now, by the way. I wish I had the quote of what he said here about six months ago. He said many things; as a matter of fact the response goes on over a page. He says this, and I am quoting again on the same page: it may be that surplus will be reduced because that will be—he says, I do not

know whether that answers the member's question. He is talking about the economic recovery coming back and possibly there being a surplus, and then he goes on to say: it may be that surplus—meaning there could be a surplus—will be reduced because that would be the time that one would want to look at new social programs. I think that we do not have major social programs that are pressing upon us until such time as the economy is turned around, but at that given time I think a government would have to determine, does the public want—not whether it is wise or not wise—does the public want additional social programs that will cost X amount of money that will reduce the surplus.

* (1650)

And he went on to say: I think that it is a political decision that has to be made at a given time in which a government has to democratically gauge the pulse of the public as to what the public at that time supports.

In other words, ladies and gentlemen, what the Premier of the day was saying is, the public is always going to want basically more programs; therefore, we will give it to them and there will not be a surplus. Mr. Speaker, that is why legislation coming forward giving balanced budget legislation has to be supported. That is why it has to come forward, and that is why of course there will be a philosophical difference between how we debate that legislation.

The members opposite, particularly the NDP, will say, retroactive. Well, that is not a put-down on this government sitting here. That is a put-down on their legacy in government that they left us, Mr. Speaker, because if we did not have that lag effect, as I said, that \$500 million or \$600 million, we would have had a balanced budget every year. Yet the reality is, who voted against every one of these budgets because we did not spend enough in deficit? Members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, so the members opposite want us to have retroactive legislation, because they either understand or they do not understand or they

choose not to understand the fact that any of the deficits we have had are totally as a result of their profligate spending in the decade of the '80s.

Mr. Speaker, this is what Mr. Schroeder—and I know Mr. Schroeder at times was part of a smaller "c" group within that caucus. I do not know if the group was any larger than two. I would think Mr. Storie was also part of the group of two. I think there only were two of them.

This is what Mr. Schroeder said, and I am quoting again Hansard, April 18, 1983, page 1814. He says: "A \$578 million deficit would, especially if most of it was current deficit, current debt, would have to be considered to be totally unacceptable in times when we are generally considered to be in a boon. I think that would be a disaster for the province because it would be an indication by any investor who looks at it that we are completely out of control." That was Vic Schroeder. He said that at a time when the total expenditure of the province was around \$3.3 billion, and he admitted that. Today the base of spending is around 5.5.

Mr. Speaker, I am not particularly proud of deficits that are in the \$300 million, \$400 million or \$500 million range. I take no great joy. That is the real deficit. [interjection] Well, they say that I was not devastated when the census—Stats Canada came in and did a recalculation of the census totally out of keeping with the methodology that had been used in the past and the great impact it had, particularly on our '93-94 and '94-95 year-end. [interjection] Well, part of the adjustment that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) and the fourth revision I am talking about, was the realization in part that the Stats Canada number that was used against two years before in fact was an error.

Anyway, I digress. I only want to point out to those members who are listening that the issue and the debate around balanced budget legislation, in my view it would be very instructive. It will take, of course, an incredibly philosophical nature, and it will put into place, I guess, the great differences of views not only between conservatives in

Progressive Conservatives in Manitoba versus maybe those that existed in the Devine government in Saskatchewan, but it will also point out the great philosophical difference between the small "c" conservative approach taken by the NDP Romanow government in Saskatchewan as compared to the big "L" Liberal approach taken by the NDP party here, and where the Liberals, where they are, Mr. Speaker, that is—at least I know where the NDP is. I do not have a clue where the Liberals are. Of course, it would be a heck of a lot easier to know, as my colleague said, it would be a lot easier to know where the Liberals were if they knew themselves where they are at.

I am still having trouble getting my arms around what their former member for Fort Garry said. He wanted retroactive crop insurance. In other words, you do not buy a premium, or if you do buy a premium, you only buy it after you know the barn has burned down. So I sense that is the business acumen that they are going to bring to government, if they were ever so given the opportunity.

I should not direct my criticism certainly to the NDP, but the Liberals are hard to pin down, almost impossible to pin down on this area of fiscal philosophy, because they really do not have one. Of course, the very essence and the very thrust of the whole election campaign, in part, will be to drive these individuals here who will hide behind every shadow, Mr. Speaker, to drive them out into the open and to make public and to make more certain where they stand on some of the issues dealing with the fiscal standing of our province.

All we have heard right now is, give Manitobans a tax holiday with respect to the sales tax and everything will be okay, or, on one hand, their cousins in Ottawa promised that they are going to do away with the GST. Yet, today, they get federal Finance to float a survey result which indicates that now two-thirds of Canadians do not want reform in the GST.

I, too, as concerned as I am about federal Finance, and I have been concerned for three or four years, I am even more concerned now that

they are doing the bidding politically of the Liberal government in Ottawa. When indeed on this GST issue, when the word came out that federal Finance was taking the lead and trying to be the carriers of the word that the GST was now held in higher favour in the Canadian public, I again call into question federal Finance and the pressure that is being imposed upon it by the government federally.

I will obviously have a much greater opportunity to dwell on the fiscal issues when we debate legislation around a balanced budget.

Mr. Speaker, I started off by saying that this throne speech was a visionary document. It was one that obviously we will carry forward out of this Chamber to the people of our province. It is the one that I have no doubt will convince again the vast majority of Manitobans that in keeping with the record and indeed in keeping with the reality that this province has to be well led as we move into the next century, that this is the party that is going to enjoy the majority of support throughout this province.

Mr. Speaker, in the area of vision, I would like to dwell specifically on education. Education reform and renewal has been part of this government since we took office. Notwithstanding the negative comments coming from members of both political parties opposite and their desire to maintain the status quo, the reality is, citizens of this province want changes to their publicly funded institutions. This government knows exactly where it is going along that path, and it will provide the leadership that the citizens want with respect to the public schools education.

* (1700)

Mr. Speaker, there were 15 pillars that were part of the reform document that was released in July. Not one has been addressed so far in this session of the Legislature in this House, not one. Can you imagine that? Can you imagine a document that spells the directions out as did the July document, New Directions, and yet the opposition critics, more importantly, the Leaders of the parties

opposite have chosen not to address one of those 15 pillars? [interjection] Not on any of the 15 pillars, the member has not.

He will ask questions on the black and white issue, on the supposed, some would say the sexy, issue of compulsory phys ed and on history but none of the peer pillars, Mr. Speaker, a reform that addressed the issues of honesty—honesty to our students, honesty to their parents, choice of schools, technology, reinventing parents to contribute, standards, curriculum building—no questions. What does it say? Their silence speaks volumes.

The reality is that this is a visionary document that members opposite cannot take issue with. [interjection] Well, the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) says the teachers of the province are closing their eyes. They are scared.

An Honourable Member: I said you are scaring them with this blueprint.

Mr. Manness: Oh, I see, Mr. Speaker. So the teachers of this province, according to the Liberal education leader, the would-be Minister of Education, that this document—

An Honourable Member: The would-be Liberal Leader.

Mr. Manness: And the would-be wanter of more casinos throughout the land, but, Mr. Speaker, another time.

The reality is, the member says, that this document is scaring the teachers. What does he mean by that? Is he saying that teachers do not want more power in the classroom? Is he saying that teachers do not want an improved curricula?

You see, this is where we differ philosophically. This government on education issues knows exactly where it stands. The Liberals do not have a clue where they stand. They are trying to reach out to every vested interest group. They are trying to reach out to every group within the system, and I say to the members opposite, that is impossible.

I listened to the commentary of their Leader (Mr. Edwards) the other day when he spoke to the trustees, and I can say the trustees are one important dimension of the enterprise of education but certainly not the only one. Mr. Speaker, I guess I have been in the office long enough to know that if you believe that there is going to be broad consensus as to where one should proceed on education reform, and unless you can do it either through taking the present budget and magnifying it tenfold, unless you can do it through basically having pupil-teacher ratios that are just a fraction of what they are now, you will not have consensus. So the reality is that somebody is going to have to make decisions, somebody is going to have to leave because time is wasting away.

I do not know how many parents have come to see Education critics on the benches opposite, but nothing has struck me as to how important it is that we begin to move along this process of reform than parents of students who are now in Grades 9, 10 and 11 or 12 or Senior 1 to Senior 4, as we know it, who have just come to the realization that their children do not have the ability to read and to write, and who are just calling out in anguish, Mr. Speaker, looking for an instant solution. The fact is, what we have done is offered not only hope but a course of action, a plan of attack, to put into place the changes as quickly as possible.

What have the NDP and the Liberals offered? What have they offered, Mr. Speaker? I listened to their Leader. Well, you are going to find the broad consensus. That is what the Leader—broad consensus. We will find a way. Elect us, trust us, have faith in us and we will show you the way. They may think that is going to work well on the hustings. They feel that will sell at the door, and yes, they may even be able to use some information that is going to call into question what you particularly put into their hands as to our contribution to the public school system.

I was at Sisler High School today in the Grade 11 history class. I addressed that class today, and whoever spoke in their classroom a week ago said that we were now as a government giving, on a per

pupil basis, more support to the students in the private schools than we were in the public schools. Can you imagine that, Mr. Speaker? You see how it is? And you can understand why when I asked the students what they thought of the term "politician," three of them said dishonesty. [interjection] Someone from one of the other two parties. I am not even saying it was an elected person, but somebody representing one of these other two parties went into the public school setting and said that this government was providing, on a per capita basis, more support for students in the independent private school system than they were in the public school.

Mr. Speaker, the point I make is simply this, that I know that once the election comes along the members are going to play probably a little bit loose with facts, but the reality is we have stated for the record, we are on the record, we have put forward how the very fundamental, the 15 pillars, all of them which will be supported by action over the course of the next few years. The members will see that document addressing those 15 action statements. They will see it within the month. Once again, it will put even greater pressure on the opposition party to either be just purely critical of it or show us their way, because that is what the public is demanding today. They are getting tired of leaders coming around and saying, vote for us, we will show you a better way, trust us. That is not going to sell in this election on the issue of education. We have stated for the record how we plan to see the public school product improve over the course of the remaining years in this decade, in this century, and I call upon members opposite to do the same.

Mr. Speaker, in the minute that I have left I would like to again acknowledge the tremendous support of the constituents within the riding of Morris. I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of the members on this side of the House toward good government over a period of a number of years. But mostly I would like to indicate to members opposite that all of us on this side hold our record of achievement with great pride. We will present that with great pride to all of the voters in this province, yet tied to it will be

a vision for the next century that I know Manitobans will want to support. Thank you very much.

* (1710)

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): I am pleased to join the debate today on yet another Conservative—oh, excuse me, Filmon government throne speech.

I want to thank you and welcome you back to the House again, Mr. Speaker, as well as your staff and the staff in the Clerk's Office and the Pages and all the other staff that work in the building here.

This is likely our last session before we hit the hustings again, and I guess we will see if this government is going to be back again. We heard a few members are choosing not to return to the House. I wish them well in their future—the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose), the member for Riel (Mr. Ducharme), as well as the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman). I hope that they leave with the feeling of accomplishment and a sense that they have made a difference and had a chance to contribute through this process.

I also want to say that I have had a sense of accomplishment on occasion here. I have had a sense that you can make a difference on various issues, whether it is assisting with constituents as they contact the office, whether it is getting involved with the community and dealing with the local issue or, in fact, in dealing with larger provincial issues which we may encounter through our critic areas.

I often though have a sense of frustration at the way that the process works both in the Chamber and generally in politics. I hope we get to talk a little bit about the role of the media, because I am becoming more and more interested in the role of the media in changing and influencing how politics is played out in our society these days.

What I want to focus on, first of all, are also some of the issues of importance in my

constituency. I enjoyed very much meeting with groups and with individuals in my constituency and want to recognize again the contribution to the quality of life that a number of voluntary organizations make in the East Kildonan-Transcona area.

It becomes clear when you are going and meeting with these groups and going door to door that there are not very many people that have not been touched by the agenda of this government. The number of people that raise issues of daycare, cutbacks, changes in the Pharmacare deductible, the funding for foster families, special needs funding in the schools, the changes in home care—these are the issues that come up over and over again in Radisson when I am talking to people, and none of them are favourable for this government.

We start asking ourselves at this point in the government's mandate, especially after we are moving towards seven years of this government, is Manitoba a better place? Is the quality of health care better in Manitoba since we have had this government? Most people would say no. The quality of health care in Manitoba is not better.

You would ask, is the quality of education better? I would say, most people would say no. They do not feel that their children are getting a better quality education in Manitoba with this government.

Are the services in child care, in daycares better in the province of Manitoba? Again, with the cutbacks and the policy of this government I think most people again would say no, those services are not better in Manitoba since we have had this government.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, when you listen to the Speech from the Throne of this government, it is like how great things are. The Speech from the Throne from this government was like everything is wonderful in Manitoba, and we are just going to keep plugging away. You would not think that there are thousands more people unemployed in this province now. You would not think that there are

fewer people being able to go to university and colleges, you see by the decline in enrollment rates. All of these things would indicate that things are not better in Manitoba after going on seven years of Filmon Conservatives.

I think people are anxious to stop the erosion of government support, the inequities that are continuing in our communities, the increase in crime which we have seen under this government and the increase in the gap between the rich and the poor.

I was quite interested to hear some of the statistics that have been put forward that demonstrate that the poorest of the poor in Manitoba are getting poorer. When we look at statistics, not like the government would choose when they talk about in their throne speech, the growth in the manufacturing sector or the increase in exports, selective statistics like that in the economy, we know that we have an economy that does not look at economic indicators.

We know that the entire debt is stacked against those people in our community who are the least able to speak on their own behalf. They are the least able to support themselves, and as a government I think that is what we are here for. What the government is here for is to ensure that we have some kind of balance in the economy so that these people are going to have a little bit more fairness in their lives.

When we see that 20 percent of those who are most disadvantaged in our society have over the last half decade gone from 3.12 percent of the provincial earnings to only 1.78 percent of the total earnings in our province, that is the kind of statistic that demonstrates the unfairness of a government regime like we have had, where we can see that the people that are paying the cost of the deficit are not the large banks or companies that are in manufacturing and able maybe to export more goods, which are not, by the way, being transferred into higher wages or a higher level of standard of living for the workers. The economic indicators that they use, we can see, are not showing that things are getting worse for those

people in our community that need the most support, that rely on government services. So they continue to erode social supports, the social safety net in a recession.

I am going to go into some detail in the Housing area, in one area in my critic area, in Housing, but before I do that, I want to talk a little bit about some of the areas in my constituency, specifically in the railways.

Since this government came to power in 1988, Manitoba has lost 3,000 jobs in the railway industry—

An Honourable Member: Yes, and another 200 this week—another 150 sorry.

Ms. Cerilli: As the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) says, there are another 150 up for grabs, on the chopping block, to go from Manitoba, yet in this spirit in the throne speech, the government goes on about how the transportation sector in Manitoba is stable. How they could make that claim in their throne speech is beyond me, Mr. Speaker, it boggles the mind, because maybe there still is a higher percentage, which again is the selected statistic they use in their throne speech, of Manitobans that are employed in the transportation sector, but there still are more Manitobans employed in the transportation sector than any other province. We are the centre of the country; that should not be surprising.

This has been an important industry to the development of Manitoba, but I would safely hazard a guess that that percentage is declining, that there are fewer people in Manitoba working in the transportation sector because we have had, not only going seven years of the Filmon government, but we had the legacy of the Mulroney years at the national level, which made a practice of eroding the railway industry in this country.

We recently had a meeting with the rail traffic control workers, and they, again, are very concerned about policies that are going to shift more jobs to Edmonton. We are also, in this kind of policy, putting at jeopardy the safety of not only

the workers in that area but also all of us who have to drive and cross railway lines.

* (1720)

Another issue in my constituency that is affecting Radisson is with the federal government, the Liberal government, carrying on the Conservative policies and the fascination with marketing boards, where both levels of government are doing whatever they can with any marketing boards to erode this system of orderly marketing.

They are doing it also with the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. I would think that that kind of corporation would be able to find a way of marketing fairly the product throughout Manitoba so the fishermen in northern Manitoba could equitably transport their product to Winnipeg so that it can be processed in the high-tech facility that is in Transcona. Again we can retain those jobs and maintain the use of that facility, which is second to none in the world, Mr. Speaker.

The other issue that is important, as I mentioned already, in Radisson is the issue of daycare. I think the government's approach to daycare has jeopardized families. In the Year of the Family we have more and more families scrambling and finding it difficult to ensure that their children are going to have adequate care. We had one of the best daycare systems in the world, certainly in the country, and this government has done everything it can to change that and to go backward.

One of the industries as well in Radisson that I have been pleased to see has done well is the New Flyer Industries. They have done well. They I think deserve some credit in the ingenuity that they have shown in developing the accessible bus, in marketing that internationally. I think that is the kind of ingenuity that this province needs to take a look at.

(Mr. Jack Penner, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

The government goes on about—especially the former Minister of Finance, after just listening to

him go on about the financial state of the province. We have the Liberals in Ottawa, as well, with Mr. Martin going on about working on the spending side. He has taken a page out of Ralph Klein's book, going on about the deficit, dealing with the deficit on the spending side and it is not a revenue issue.

The members across the way may criticize us because we have—it often feels like we do say the same things because things are not changing and we do still have corporations in this country making billions of dollars, the five charter banks that made almost \$5 billion in profits in this country, and that there has been no change to the tax legislation, the unfairness in the tax legislation to deal with that.

There has to be some dramatic changes in this country and in this province. We have some pretty horrible statistics right here in Manitoba, some pretty horrible records with Manitoba having the fastest growing crime rate in Canada last year. We also have suffered the worst poverty rate in Canada, especially with children living in poverty. We have the worst drop-out rate of high school, the most young people not completing school. We have the worst record for the number of children needing child welfare care in Canada, and we have the lowest minimum wages in Canada.

All of these, Mr. Acting Speaker, do not paint the kind of picture that the Tories would have us believe is occurring. It has been seven years of this government and they still fail to see the connection between that kind of record and increase in some of the other social problems like crime, the other problems they are contributing to like in gambling, and domestic violence, those kinds of problems. There is a connection between what is happening in the economy, what is happening in terms of crime and what is happening in terms of social problems in the province.

Mr. Acting Speaker, one of the issues I want to focus a little bit on I think that shows the unfairness of both the federal Liberals and the provincial Conservatives is with the housing

increase on public housing. We have had this increase of 2 percent on people's income to contribute to their rent in public housing, and I just found out today that has amounted to almost \$750,000 into the coffers of this government. It is one of the most dramatic examples of how this government is paying for the deficit and the debt on the backs of those who can least afford it.

It is the kind of policy where the federal Liberals and the Conservatives have worked together. This government, rather than standing up to the federal Liberals and saying that this is not just, this is not fair, they have gone along with it. We have not heard of any public message of this government going forward to the federal Liberals to say, this cannot occur.

The recent University of Winnipeg Urban Institute does a good column on this, and it says: In social housing there was recognition back in the '80s that low-income households should pay less. The rent-to-income scale established for social housing tenants some 25 or 30 years ago required low-income households to pay as little as 17 percent of their income.

But it seems like both the federal government and the provincial government here are taking a page out of Reagan economic and social policy, because it was the Reagan administration that first made the decision to move rent geared to income to 25 and 30 percent. So we have the Conservative government in Manitoba and the federal Liberals now practising Reaganomics and we have seen the disparity grow for people who are renting.

There is a moral dilemma associated with increasing housing expenditures for low-income renters in a period when the circumstances for the poor would suggest a move in the other direction might be justified. It also comes at a time when housing costs for moderate- and upper-income groups are declining because of moderating interest rates, housing prices and rents. So what is happening is, those of us who are fortunate enough to own a home are paying 9.5 percent on average in 1990 for our housing, whereas renters are

paying 23.9 percent of their income. This is the kind of policy that the governments in Manitoba and in Canada are encouraging.

* (1730)

I want to make a few comments as well about the government's policies in education, especially after just hearing the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) make his throne speech debate.

As I look through the document that they have produced, there are some of the things in here which I would say it would be difficult to argue with. There are some things that I do not think are going to make a substantial difference in really what is happening in education, but there are some changes, particularly in the area of curriculum and in the area of exams, that I think are causing a lot of concern.

The minister has criticized the opposition for not raising more issues from this document, but I would say, we want to see more parents involved in education. We want to see a clear role for rights and responsibilities of parents. We want to see the policies to deal with violence in the schools, all of this kind of thing.

But this document, Mr. Acting Speaker, is not the legacy of this government in education. The legacy of this government in education has been last year for the first time decreasing funding to the public schools. That is the legacy of this government in education, decreasing what amounts to last year, when you account for inflation, over \$32 million being taken out of public schools in Manitoba.

This document really does not make a lot of difference when you are doing that to the public school system, because you cannot, on the one hand, as the minister is saying now with his bill on authority in the classroom for teachers, say that teachers can throw kids out of the classroom, expel them when there is a problem, but then at the same time, Mr. Acting Speaker, be putting more and more students in that classroom which is adding to the stress, adding to the demands on the teacher

and adding to the problems and the likelihood that there are going to be difficulties for students.

I would think that even though there may be some positive things in the direction document, there is also the disaster on the financial side for the public schools. Then the curriculum changes. I have never in my wildest dreams thought that a government would make a backward move like eliminating compulsory physical education in high school. It goes against everything we think that health reform could be in terms of preventative health.

The government's own department—and we have had committee after committee, organization after organization saying that this is not the way to go. Yet this government seems to think that under the guise of giving the community more decision-making responsibility or input that they can do—what this amounts to is more offloading, that they can bring in this kind of a proposal.

I think this proposal is going along with some of the comments that the minister made last year when he talked about getting rid of specialists in schools. We know there are other school divisions employing other tactics like trying to get rid of all of their higher classification teachers. All the teachers that have more degrees and more years of experience are being put into situations which, in essence, could force them out of the system so that those school divisions could employ cheaper to fund teachers.

These are the kinds of things that are happening in the public education system. I have students telling me they know that their math teacher has no background in math. They know that they are being taught by teachers that are not in their specialty. These are the kinds of situations that are occurring in Manitoba schools because of this government. That is their legacy in education, Mr. Acting Speaker. It will not be this blue document, I can assure you.

My colleagues tell me that I am using up my time. I want to make sure that my caucus has a chance to speak, so I just want to finish by saying

that the record I was reading earlier about young people in particular in Manitoba, having fewer young people being able to go from university into the workforce—we have had something like 30,000 people leave the province, most of these young people. I think more and more young people, when they have these kinds of experiences, start taking an interest in what governments do or do not do, what kind of government policies are brought in and how they affect their life. I think maybe that one of the side effects of this kind of government is that more and more people start to become politicized in paying attention because their lives are affected by the policies that are coming in.

With that I would just like to conclude and to wish all members of the House a safe and pleasant Christmas, and I look forward to coming back into the session after the New Year. I would hate to think that we would not come right back in after the New Year, given the long delay that this government had in being accountable to the public of Manitoba and sitting in this Chamber. I think that the people of Manitoba want to see a number of issues debated. There are a number of other things I would have liked to mention in terms of workplace safety and health, in terms of the erosion in health care, in terms of some of the ongoing problems in environment, but I guess, Mr. Acting Speaker, I will have to leave that for another day. Thank you.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Acting Speaker, I am very pleased today to rise to speak to our government's throne speech, which is a throne speech of action and a throne speech of direction.

First, let me pass on my welcome to the Speaker and to all members as we come together in another session of the Legislature.

I would also like to extend a warm welcome to the Pages. I hope that they enjoy their work in the Legislative Assembly. It is very important work to all of us as members, and we certainly appreciate all of their efforts. I welcome them and look forward to getting to know them much better.

I would also like to recognize some colleagues in the Legislature who have chosen to retire after a period of service. First of all, the member for Riel (Mr. Ducharme) our colleague in government. The member for Riel has a long-standing history of commitment to his constituents and also a commitment to government and a commitment to his colleagues. He has been a great help to all of us as members, but certainly to me as a member. I was a new member elected in '90 and relied on his guidance and support. We are certainly going to miss him.

Also the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose) who was elected in 1990 at the time that I was elected. I have really enjoyed getting to know him. He has worked very hard on behalf of his constituents, and he has brought a great deal to the Legislative Assembly.

Also to members of the opposition, the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) who has also chosen to retire. We wish him well, as we do all members who have taken this step.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I would also like to thank the people of Fort Garry for the opportunity to represent them in this Legislature. It is always a privilege to bring the issues of the people of my community here to government and to look at addressing their issues and to take back to my community the direction of government.

Over the past several months, I have had a great deal of opportunity to interact with the people of Fort Garry in a number of really pleasant experiences. I have had the opportunity to read in the schools, and I look forward to continuing to do that after the Christmas break. It is a great opportunity to be in our school system to speak informally to teachers, to meet students and just to be a part of the process of education.

I have also participated in a number of community coffee parties and community club events. I have met with presidents of the parent-teacher associations within my community. I can tell you, Mr. Acting Speaker, that they welcome the Minister of Education's (Mr. Manness) parent

advisory council initiative. They certainly are very pleased that the Minister of Education has chosen to start with parents as he moves ahead in the blueprint.

I met with the Victoria General Hospital and had an opportunity to meet with the board, continue to tour the facility and have regular contact with the hospital in my community.

I have also been a part of the activities of the University of Manitoba, which is in Fort Garry constituency, met with student representatives there as well as other people who work with the University of Manitoba.

I would like to mention last Friday, parents from Whyte Ridge Elementary School came to my legislative office and decorated the Christmas tree in my office with decorations that the students in my community had made. They were wonderful decorations. My Christmas tree really looks like it has been decorated with a lot of care and a lot of affection, decorations made by young people. I am very proud of it, and I hope that a lot of people have the opportunity to drop by and see it.

Also, I would like to say a thank you to the students of Ralph Maybank School, who also made some decorations that are in my office and on my desk. It is just a privilege to have that connection with my community and have them send these things to my office in the Legislature.

* (1740)

Mr. Acting Speaker, as I said, it is a pleasure to stand today and respond to the Speech from the Throne. As the Minister of Justice and as the Attorney General of the province and also the Minister for the Status of Women, I am very proud of the accomplishments of our government. This speech continues the work on behalf of Manitobans, continues to deal with the issues that are important to Manitobans, that this government started in 1988, when we came to power. We started with a series of principles. First of all, the principle was that the spending which was totally out of control cannot continue, that we needed to

increase the number of jobs that are available and the climate to encourage the growth of jobs so that we could increase the revenue and Manitobans could become employed and that we could not continue to tax the people of Manitoba. Those three principles guided decision making of this government. I am very proud of our record because we have not raised taxes for the past seven years, and we have moved Manitoba from being one of the heaviest taxed provinces under the former NDP government to the third lowest.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we have kept effective control of government growth and government spending. We have a strong record of creating jobs for Manitobans, and we have the ability of attracting new industry and business to the province of Manitoba. We have been named the best place to do business two years in a row by The Globe and Mail. I think that is a record of importance and a record which has been shown across Canada.

I would like to address two very specific issues in my response to the Speech from the Throne. The first is the area of education because education renewal was required. We knew from what parents told us, what teachers told us and what young people told us. They told us that the system needed to be renewed and it needed significant changes in order to allow our young people to compete with young people across Canada and also young people around the world.

That competition has already started. Manitoba has not done very well, and those results showed us in no uncertain terms that the changes had to happen. The changes are occurring, according to the blueprint, in five very important areas to Manitobans.

First of all, in the area of standards, Manitobans have said that our curriculum and our standards in that curriculum have to be the strongest that it can possibly be. It has to be world class. And to make sure that curriculum is world class, I am very pleased with the co-operation that our Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) has entered into with other provinces across the country.

We recognize that if we want to have the strongest curriculum we also need to co-operate, and in co-operating with other western provinces in the development of these curriculums, it will certainly allow our students mobility and also the standards that are required by Manitobans.

The best standards in the world do not help you if you do not have accountability. There has to be accountability in the process of education. I am very pleased that within the document within the blueprint for renewal that accountability for education and curriculum is now built in. So Manitobans can be confident that learning will occur at the times when it is supposed to occur and assistance will be given where it is required, and that in the long run our students will be able to show the world that they come from a world-class system.

People also told us that they were worried about the learning environment, that when young people were in schools and where teachers were working in schools and where parents participated in schools, that that environment had to be a safe one, and it had to be an environment in which people could maximize the learning opportunity.

I am very pleased with the steps that are shown within the blueprint for education that deal with the learning environment. I am also very pleased with the statements that were made in the throne speech that we will not tolerate violence in the schools, the recognition that teachers also must feel secure in the classroom, and I am very supportive of the legislation which has been introduced to give teachers more power to preserve order in their classrooms. That is a support to education.

Mr. Acting Speaker, in addition, we also had to look at teacher training. Teachers have had to be sure and confident that the training that they received within the institutions and the universities actually matched what was required of them when they were out in the community. So I am very pleased to hear how the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) is working with the universities to ensure that the teacher training and the

certification will allow our teachers to take the position where their training will in fact meet the many challenges that are within their classroom.

Finally, the fifth very important change is that parents will become involved in the education system again. Of all the places that the Minister of Education and this government could have started, bringing forward very significant documents that show the way of change, they chose to start with parents.

The parent advisory councils have been met with approval and joy and support across this province, because parents have been looking for a way to be brought back into the system and brought into the system in a very significant way to show that their views are important, their views of how schools are run and what curriculum should be all about, should be considered in education.

So that document that deals with parent advisory councils has been a way that parents know that their input is valuable.

(Mrs. Louise Dacquay, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

We look also for greater teacher input. We have overall established a new direction to ensure that our children are able to read and to write and to successfully compete in the global environment.

I was very pleased in the Speech from the Throne to hear about the Western Institute of Reading Recovery that will be established. That is particularly of interest to me.

I chair the province's task force on literacy, and I am aware that across this province, across this country there is concern that young people and adults have the ability to read and to understand what has been put before them. That is the key to employment, and so I am very pleased with that proactive initiative.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I will continue to be very supportive of the changes and the renewal in the area of education because I believe that that is

one of the keys to making our province the most successful province that it can be.

The other area I would like to address is the area of justice, because people around Manitoba have said that they have a great concern for their personal safety and they want to have faith in a justice system. Their concerns were that they were beginning to feel that perhaps their personal safety was in some way being jeopardized, particularly by some of the federal laws which have not been changed but which they believe must be changed.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this government has taken a very tough stand on crime and violence. We began that tough stand last December, a year ago December 4, when we held the first ever Summit on Youth Crime and Violence. We brought together 500 Manitobans to address the issues of prevention to try and help young people avoid a life of crime; intervention, so that where young people have had a brush with the law, their lives can be turned around; and consequences, where young people have committed a criminal act, that there be a consequence to that criminal activity so that those young people will not commit that activity again.

Seven hundred recommendations came forth. Those recommendations were recommendations which families can use, which community groups could use, which schools could use, neighbourhoods could use, and, yes, there were some recommendations for government.

One of the major recommendations was changes to the Young Offenders Act. The people of Manitoba said that the framework law which dealt with young offenders was a law which they had begun to lose confidence in and which they wanted changed. They wanted change in several areas. First of all, they said there has to be a mechanism to deal with young people under 12 years of age who commit a heinous crime such as a murder or an assault which leads someone to permanent disability. At the moment there is not such a way to deal with children under 12 years of age. Manitobans said they wanted that mechanism.

* (1750)

They also said that where young people are 17 years of age and they commit a crime such as a murder or a serious assault or were continued repeat offenders, those young people, there should be a presumption of their trial in adult court so that the sentencing available to adults was available to those young people who are 17 years of age and older.

Madam Deputy Speaker, they also said that in the interest of public safety we should be able to publish the names of young offenders. When young offenders are at large and Manitobans have to protect themselves, we should be able to let the community know who they are.

Parent involvement in justice—it was recognized also that parents needed to be involved in the system, needed to be able to participate with their young person. However, our government took the strongest stand to the federal government, the strongest stand across Canada.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I have to ask in the Chamber in response to the throne speech, where do the NDP and where do the Liberals stand?

Unless they get a kick-start from the federal government, they have no opinion. They have totally failed to bring forward an opinion on the Young Offenders Act. The people of Manitoba are concerned when they bring forward petitions of over 20,000 Manitobans, not one word, not one word from the Liberal Party, not a word.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I am experiencing difficulty hearing the honourable Minister of Justice.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Deputy Speaker, as I said, unless they get a kick-start, a signal from Ottawa that this is exactly where they should go and what they should speak up for, the people of Manitoba have not heard from them. They have been silent.

This government was not silent. We acted. We acted with the strongest position. We acted with a nine-point plan, Madam Deputy Speaker, a nine-point plan which has been acted on. We put in place a youth gang line called Street Peace. The youth gang line had co-operation of the private sector, and with that co-operation we have been able to operate a phone line which young people who are at risk, particularly those who want to get out of gang activity, can phone and can get information and can get themselves out of those situations. Parents or other interested adults can also phone that line.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as well, we acted in the area of consequences. We recognized that our institutions had to be tightened up and our institutions had to be a place where consequences were applied.

The people of Manitoba called them boot camps, but they said that they wanted them to be a made-in-Manitoba solution and that is exactly what we have delivered. Boot camps are characterized by structure. A lot of young people have never experienced structure. They actually have not known the rules. What our boot camp model has done is make sure that the rules are well known with well-known consequences.

We put a community service component in as well, because a lot of young people have never had a positive experience with the community, nor has the community with that young person. So now, Madam Deputy Speaker, we will fold and stuff envelopes for not-for-profit groups in this province to assist them, groups such as the Manitoba Heart Foundation or the Cancer Foundation. When their volunteers need their time in the community we will fold and stuff the letters in the envelopes in the youth centre, we will wash and iron clothes, we will do work on behalf of the community.

I just received a notice from the youth centre which said that they are donating about 50 toys which they have made, young people in secure custody have made. They are donating those toys that they have made to the Christmas Cheer Board, Madam Deputy Speaker.

We also have recognized that they need intervention programs. We provide intervention programs, programs that deal with drug and alcohol addictions, with criminal thinking errors. We make sure that young people have the opportunity to modify their attitudes and modify their behaviour.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we also have put in place year-round schooling. We recognize that a number of young people were not in school when they offended. We have a short time in which to turn their lives around, so we will do so by offering school 12 months of the year. There are no summer holidays in boot camp. They are gone. Gone are the pool tables. Gone are the TV sets. Now our youth institutions are institutions with consequences.

I have to ask, where do the NDP party and where do the Liberal Party stand on consequences for young people? They have been strangely silent, Madam Deputy Speaker. They have offered no support. The people of Manitoba know that they are soft on crime. They know there has only been this government who has come forward with a plan and acted on the concerns around criminal behaviour.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we also announced last session and have proclaimed—the Minister of Highways (Mr. Findlay) and this government—amendments to The Highway Traffic Act. In the interests of public safety we have increased the suspension under The Highway Traffic Act from six months to one year. We have included within that act, where a Manitoban, whether it is a young person or an adult, is involved in an act of vandalism or the theft of a car, that person now, in the interests of public safety, will have their licence suspended for one year, and if they do it again, up to five years.

We have taken a strong stand in the areas of public safety. We have the toughest drinking-and-driving laws in the country.

I would like to speak a little bit about initiatives which were addressed in the throne speech, because we recognize that in the area of adult corrections we could not have a system that was

any less rigorous than the system for youth. So we have made changes now in our whole area of adult corrections. Adult corrections now, Madam Deputy Speaker, is one of rigorous confinement, a full work day.

I have to ask the Liberal Party and the NDP, where do they stand on rigorous confinement for adults?

Madam Deputy Speaker, in addition we will be introducing a night court, a night court which is specifically focused for young people, because we want to make sure that young people are able to attend court with their parents and they are able to attend court and not miss school.

We have worked with our courts area and we have worked with the judiciary. Night court will be introduced and it will be focused on helping youth.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would also like to mention the area of maintenance enforcement. Our province has been a model for other enforcement programs across Canada. We have taken a very strong stance on maintenance default, but we recognize we have to continue to improve the system, and so we have. We have been enhancing our computer. We are moving to a voice automated telephone system. We have added people to work within the area of maintenance enforcement, but I will be announcing very shortly some extremely significant changes in the area of maintenance enforcement.

The enforcement changes will be first of all in the area of enforcement to make sure that the orders are complied with. It will also deal with the area of resources available to make more resources available to be paid for maintenance orders. It will also deal with legislation, and it will also deal with the federal government, because we demand the co-operation of the federal government to enforce maintenance orders. We need access to their data banks, so we will be looking for their co-operation. However, where has the Liberal Party in Manitoba been on this? Nowhere. We have had no support from the provincial Liberal Party in the area of maintenance enforcement and dealing with the federal government.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we are also bringing forward amendments in the area of antistalking legislation. The previous Minister of Justice worked very hard to have this recognized within the Criminal Code. Now Manitoba is asking for changes in the area of antistalking legislation to enhance the legislation and to make sure that now the victim is considered in the concerns of stalking, that authorities would be required to contact the victim if the stalker is released or escapes from jail, that there should be an enhanced penalty if the stalker violates a protective order while stalking his victim, that once charged and taken into custody, the stalker should justify release on bail rather than the Crown justifying detention.

Where the evidence suggests that the stalker continues to pose a threat to the safety of a victim, those charged should be required to surrender all firearms and firearm acquisition certificates, and where the stalker ultimately kills his victim, he or she should be liable for the first degree murder, irrespective of whether the evidence demonstrates planning and deliberation as defined by case law.

I presented these changes in the area of antistalking law to the federal minister and also to ministers across Canada, and I look forward to their positive consideration on behalf of the people of Canada in amending the Criminal Code to deal with antistalking legislation.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am also very pleased as Minister for the Status of Women to speak about the Training for Tomorrow Scholarships. The Roblin commission made it clear that we needed to look at post-secondary education both at the community college level and also at the university level and that we also had to make sure that women became included in the nontraditional professions. I am very pleased that I will shortly be giving the details of the Training for Tomorrow scholarships for the women—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hour being 6 p.m., in accordance with the rules, I am leaving the Chair and will return at 8 p.m., at which time the honourable Minister of Justice will have 16 minutes remaining.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, December 12, 1994

CONTENTS

Presenting Petitions		Amendment Act	
Physical Education in Schools		Santos	329
Lamoureux	327		
Reading and Receiving Petitions		Oral Questions	
Physical Education in Schools		Kenaston Underpass	
Lamoureux	327	Doer; Filmon	330
Rent Hike Cancellation		Child and Family Services—Winnipeg	
Martindale	327	Martindale; Mitchelson	332
Tabling of Reports		Manitoba Telephone System	
Annual Report, Health		Edwards; Findlay	333
McCrae	328	Physio/Occupational Therapists	
Annual Reports: Government Services, Fleet Vehicles Agency, Materials Distribution Agency		Chomiak; McCrae	334
Ducharme	328	The Wildlife Act	
Annual Report, Women's Directorate		Lathlin; Driedger	336
Vodrey	328	Immigration	
Annual Reports: Manitoba Development Corporation		Barrett; Gilleshammer	337
Downey	328	Health Care System	
Introduction of Bills		Gray; McCrae	338
Bill 11, Cattle Producers Association		Public Housing	
Amendment Act		L. Evans; McIntosh; Stefanson	339
Enns	328	Speaker's Ruling	
Bill 12, Development Corporation		Point of Order, Dec. 6, 1994	
Amendment Act		Rocan	340
Downey	328		
Bill 13, Mines and Minerals		ORDERS OF THE DAY	
Amendment Act		Throne Speech Debate	
Orchard	329	(Seventh Day of Debate)	
Bill 212, Child and Family Services		Helwer	341
Amendment Act (2)		Dewar	348
Martindale	329	Ducharme	353
Bill 214, Residential Tenancies		Gaudry	361
		Manness	371
		Cerilli	378
		Vodrey	383