

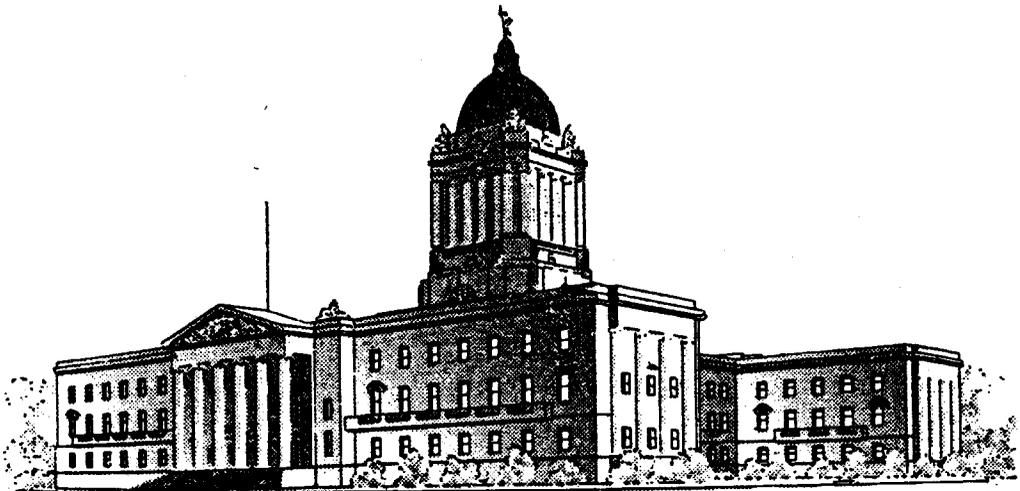


Sixth Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(Hansard)

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

<u>Name</u>	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Party</u>
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
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REID, Daryl	Transcona	NDP
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	P.C.
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	P.C.
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ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	P.C.
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	NDP
SCHELLENBERG, Harry	Rosmere	NDP
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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

Tuesday, December 13, 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 T. Headon, G. Milne, H. Boundy and others urging the Minister responsible for Education (Mr. Manness) to consider reinstating physical education as a compulsory core subject area.

Canada Post—Unsolicited Mail

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of John Samson, M.E. Owen, Karen Moffatt and others requesting the minister responsible for Canada Post to continue bringing in legislation requiring all unsolicited mail and fliers to use recycled materials.

Children's Dental Program

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Justina Waldner, Rachel Waldner, Hilda Waldner and others requesting the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993-94 budget year.

Rent Hike Cancellation

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupertsland): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Patricia Sinclair, Ricky Spence, Leonard McPherson and others requesting the Minister responsible for Housing (Mrs. McIntosh) to consider cancelling their recent unilateral rent hikes and restoring the voluntary boards of the housing authorities.

Children's Dental Program

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Angie Waldner, Mary Anne Waldner, Dave Waldner and others

requesting the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the '93-94 budget.

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Deborah Waldner, Leonard Waldner, Ruben Waldner and others requesting the Minister of Health to consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the '93-94 budget.

Rent Hike Cancellation

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Ed Gregoire, Albert Oman, Ernie Spence and others requesting the Minister responsible for Housing (Mrs. McIntosh) to consider cancelling the recent unilateral rent hikes and restoring the voluntary boards of the housing authorities.

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 it complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, the Clerk will read.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): 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.

* (1335)

TABLING OF REPORTS

Mr. Speaker: In accordance with Section 54 of The Freedom of Information Act, I am pleased to table the Annual Report for the period January 1, 1993, to December 31, 1993.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister responsible for Sport): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the '93-94 Annual Report of the Fitness and Sport Directorates.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister charged with the administration of The Communities Economic Development Fund Act): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the Annual Report of the Communities Economic Development Fund for the year ending March 31, 1994.

As well, I would like to table the Communities Economic Development Fund Quarterly Report to June 1994 which was provided, I believe, earlier in the year to all members directly.

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the following Annual Reports: 1993-94 for the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation, the Centre Culturel Franco-Manitobain, and 1993-94 for the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship.

On behalf of the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson), I would also table the Annual Report 1993-94 for Manitoba Family Services.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, pursuant to The Regulations Act, a copy of each regulation registered with the Registrar of Regulations since the regulations were tabled in this House in April 1994.

Also, I am pleased to table the Annual Report 1992 of the Office of the Commissioner, Law Enforcement Review Agency.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 202—The Winnipeg Jets Funding Agreement Termination Act

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I move, seconded by the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), that leave be given to introduce Bill 202, The Winnipeg Jets Funding Agreement Termination Act; Loi sur la résiliation de l'accord de financement des Jets de Winnipeg, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, this bill is straightforward. It is modeled after the Pearson Airport bill that has been introduced federally.

This Legislature, we believe, should have had an opportunity to vote on the operating-loss agreement of the Winnipeg Jets before the contract was signed. This legislation will do that and will also protect the 18 percent that was agreed to in the agreement.

This is extraordinary legislation, and we understand that, but we believe that extraordinary legislation is necessary in order to protect the taxpayers for operating losses of some \$43.5 million, which was entered into by the provincial government without any debate, without any vote in this Legislature, without any consultation with the people of Manitoba. Thank you.

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 thirty-five Grades 5 to 12 students of the Manitoba Association of Christian Home Schools. They are under the direction of Mrs. Debbie Martin. The students and parents are the guests of the honourable Minister of Education and Training (Mr. Manness).

Also, from the Inwood School, we have twenty-five Grades 7 to 9 students under the direction of Mrs. Donna Jaremy. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

SmartHealth Royal Bank Contract

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

Yesterday, after Question Period, we learned that the government had entered into an agreement with a subsidiary of the Royal Bank for a hundred-million dollar contract for an information system with the SmartHealth subsidiary of the Royal Bank. This contract lasts a number of years and requires considerable financial investment by the Province of Manitoba. The first payment is due in 18 months, Mr. Speaker.

We have a number of questions that were not answered by the government in its press release on the contract.

I would like to ask the Premier, has the government signed the contract? Who was involved in vetting the contracts? Will they table the contract in the Chamber today?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question, which is a question about one of the most important health care initiatives to be undertaken by this or any other government in Canada, important not only for the effective delivery of health services in all of the health sectors, but also in terms of the convenience of the patient and the user of the health care system.

The announcement yesterday is the culmination of a number of things, Mr. Speaker. Thirty-three requests for information were sent out. Of those, 11 final bids were submitted. There was a vendor selection committee, and it examined all of the information packages that were sent out. There was a representative on that committee from the Manitoba Society of Seniors and from the Consumers' Association, as well as the Urban Health Advisory Council and others involved in the selection process.

The contract will flow from that information that was made available as a result of the request. We will endeavour to make every effort to make as much information as possible available to honourable members.

* (1340)

Records Confidentiality

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, with the greatest of respect, I asked two questions: Has the contract been signed, and will the minister table the contract? Both of those questions the minister refused to answer. This is a \$100-million investment of the people of Manitoba and surely members of this Chamber, particularly when the government does not have a mandate into the next 18 months—no one has—would have a copy of this contract so that we can know the legitimacy of the investment the government is making.

We have a number of questions dealing with confidentiality, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to ask the minister: Will the government be proposing legislation dealing with confidentiality

of health records? How, for example, will an AIDS patient or a person who sees a psychiatrist be protected in terms of their own confidentiality with a system that seems to have access at unlimited numbers of terminals across the province of Manitoba?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, with due respect to the honourable Leader of the Opposition, I answered both of his questions. I told him that we are working towards the completion of a contract and that all information that we are able to make available to the honourable member, we will make available.

At this point, we are working with SmartHealth to arrive at the final contract.

With respect to the issue of confidentiality, it is an extremely important question, but in order to ask the question and maintain one's credibility one has to answer a question or two. For example, what information is it that the honourable member wants protection for that does not exist now, and from whom? The more and the better quality of information available to health providers, the better service that will be able to be delivered to the patient, so we need to know.

The honourable member referred to a couple of specific instances—psychiatric issues and issues related to AIDS—and the honourable member knows what protections are available to people now. We propose not only to maintain those protections through this system but to enhance them. So, as the nature of the public health information unfolds and becomes more known to honourable members, these questions will be answered.

In addition, we have taken the step, because I realize and so does everybody else that patient confidentiality is a fundamental issue and a very important one, that we will have an access and security committee just like we had when we were setting up the Drug Program Information Network which included organizations such as the Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties, so we are very mindful of that as a concern. The

honourable member opposite seems to have decided that these problems are there and they have not been solved, but he is dead wrong about that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, my question again to the minister was, does the government intend to bring in legislation to protect the confidentiality of people on an information system that has been set up with a subsidiary of the Royal Bank of Canada?

The minister did not answer the question whether they have any legislative protection in mind to deal with some of these very, very sensitive, confidential issues that the public of Manitoba will be asking all of us legitimately over the next period of time.

I would like to ask the minister, under the contract that has not been signed, who owns the information? Is it the subsidiary of the Royal Bank, the SmartHealth organization? Do they own the information? Do we own the information?

Can the minister table today the contractual language dealing with that information, and can the minister table today the legislative policies that must be put in place to protect the confidentiality of people in Manitoba?

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member seems to want to preserve a system where people's medical records were found in back alleys in the city of Winnipeg, under his administration. We want to improve that situation. Indeed, I do not blame the honourable member for asking these questions because they are perfectly legitimate concerns that he or members of the public would have.

The ownership of records, as it stands today, will remain under the new program. There will be no transfer of ownership of any kind of confidential information. I have no hesitation giving the honourable member whatever assurances are necessary to guarantee that the fundamental principle of privacy of information is respected under this system.

Indeed, it is our understanding of the contract that we will be entering into, that it will enhance people's rights in terms of the privacy of information about them.

* (1345)

Health Sciences Centre Budget

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, more promises that we have to take at face value from this government.

My question to the Minister of Health: We have learned that yesterday the board of directors of the Health Sciences Centre held an emergency executive meeting to discuss the government's proposed cuts to their budget, which are anticipated to be in the range of \$15 million to \$20 million for next year.

Can the minister confirm that and advise what the status of that is?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): I think it is noteworthy that the honourable member for Kildonan should have been taken by such a surprise yesterday, that we would be announcing a public health information system.

I have tried at almost every public speaking engagement and in this House and everywhere else to give very broad hints that we were heading in that direction. It was in the throne speech, as well, so I find it hard to understand why the honourable member should be taken off guard in the way that he has been.

It might be helpful, Mr. Speaker, if the honourable member took me up on my offer of at least a dozen times now. Come and talk to me. Meet with me. We will discuss the directions we are taking in health. But he consistently refuses, and I suggest it is for less than savoury reasons.

The member asked about a meeting at Health Sciences Centre. I was not there. I was not invited, and I can only ask the honourable member to get in touch with the Health Sciences Centre.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary to the minister, the question is quite simple. Perhaps the minister can try very hard to answer the question.

Can he confirm that they have advised the Health Sciences Centre to expect cuts in the range of \$15 million to \$20 million next year, which are far in excess of the guidelines released by their chief accountant Jules Benson? Can he confirm that those cuts are going to take place next year and that they have informed the Health Sciences Centre as of yesterday?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, as I understand the rules of this House, the honourable member should bring information and not seek confirmation from this side of the House. If he has some information that he wants to put on the record, let him do that.

A couple of weeks ago the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) met with hospital facilities administrators in this province and gave them a preview as to what might be expected for the upcoming fiscal year, and it would not be any surprise to me at all that hospital boards around Manitoba would be meeting and talking about how they are going to handle their budgets for the upcoming fiscal year.

We have worked very closely with the hospitals to assure that our bottom-line concern about patient care is being taken care of by the hospitals. We are given assurances by them in the ordinary course of doing business in the Department of Health and in their administrations that that is something that we do not discuss, any negative impact to patients. We will not allow discussion of items that would have a negative impact on patient care. That has been and remains our bottom line.

* (1350)

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I do not think that anyone in the province of Manitoba believes this government when it comes to health care.

My final supplementary to the minister: Can the minister outline what the impact of the proposed

cuts to the Health Sciences Centre will be on patient care, because proposals that the Health Sciences Centre is considering include continuing Filmon Fridays and implementing the Connie Curran recommendations even greater than after the election which is when the government planned, et cetera?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, knowing the way the honourable member conducts himself in this House and throughout Manitoba, frankly it does not come as any surprise to me when he says he does not believe me. But when I tell him and I tell the people of Manitoba that we are spending \$500 million more this year on health care in Manitoba than we were spending in 1988, those numbers speak for themselves. When I can show people in Manitoba and the honourable member the amount of money being spent in the community through massive increases to the personal care program, massive increases to the home care program and large increases in the number of procedures being done in this province, those numbers speak for themselves.

If the honourable member does not want to believe the facts and if he does not want to accept my invitation to come and talk about health care, then I cannot help him any further.

Health Sciences Centre Budget

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health.

The minister indicated today, the emergency meeting that was held at Health Sciences Centre, that there will not be cuts of some \$15 million to \$20 million. There have been rumours and innuendo at the Health Sciences Centre for a number of weeks about what the nature of the potential cuts are going to be in the coming number of months.

The minister does have a responsibility to set the record straight and, in fact, indicate to Manitobans what has the hospital been directed in terms of the amount of money that they have been

asked to save, and what was the nature of the emergency meeting.

Can the minister indicate to the House? Set it straight.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, the honourable member seems to attribute to me some confirmation of information. All I confirmed is that the hospitals have met with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) to discuss in a general way the budgetary direction.

I think that is also set out to some extent in the Speech from the Throne, which points very, very clearly to a shift to the community, Mr. Speaker, of health care spending and priorities.

Those are areas that the honourable member repeatedly talks about in this House, urges the government to build a bigger and better community infrastructure, and that is exactly what we are doing. The past number of budgets in Manitoba demonstrate that very clearly, as do the services that are being provided for people in Manitoba show, as the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation confirms and bears out, that the moves that are being made are showing a great deal of foresight and respect for the care of our fellow Manitobans.

Ms. Gray: With a supplementary question to the Minister of Finance: Will the Minister of Finance then indicate to this House what the nature of the discussions have been with the hospitals in regard to their upcoming budgets?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): When we met with the boards and the CEOs of the hospitals and the personal care homes, Mr. Speaker, we provided a total allocation for 1995-96 of \$1.2 billion, the same amount of money as is being provided in 1994-95 for hospitals, personal care homes and community health centres here in Manitoba.

Individual facilities are now receiving the detailed information in terms of what their allocation is, but I can only remind members of the

Liberal Party and members of this House that we here in Manitoba spend the highest percentage of our budget on health care of any government in all of Canada at 34 percent. We have the third highest per capita allocation for health care, Mr. Speaker, and the budget consultation processes that we have been going through over the last weeks, Manitobans are telling us there is lots of money in the system.

The focus has to be how that money is being spent and to address the shifts in the community, as our Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) has outlined, shifts to home care, shifts to personal care homes and so on.

That is exactly what is being done with the allocation of resources, Mr. Speaker, in terms of meeting the needs of Manitobans.

* (1355)

Health Care System Nursing Services

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): With a final supplementary to the Minister of Health, the minister must be aware that in order to ensure appropriate community-based services, you cannot starve the hospital system.

Nurses at the reception yesterday at MARN, at which a number of members were there, have indicated that they cannot afford to have nursing services in the hospitals cut any further.

Can the minister at least indicate to the House today, with the changes to funding that will be affecting the hospitals, can the minister assure us and nurses and Manitobans that, in fact, nursing services will not be jeopardized in our hospital system?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, we have taken a very, very careful approach to staffing realities and needs at our acute-care centres in Manitoba. We have spent a good deal of time studying that, along with the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses, the Manitoba Association of Licensed Practical

Nurses, the College of Physicians and Surgeons. I was at the MARN reception last evening as well. I had a very nice time with the nurses there. We talked about important issues such as nurse-managed care, which is one component of the kind of shift that the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) was talking about.

Because we are making that shift, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance and my colleagues are able to make available funds so that we can establish nurse-managed care centres in Manitoba. That is something we are proud to work on with the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses so that we can develop that and develop community development programs and preventive and health promotion programs in various communities in Manitoba.

Aboriginal Justice Inquiry Recommendations

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice.

In a new decision under The Law Enforcement Review Act a judge has again chastised this government for failing to act on the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry report, in particular the key recommendation that the minister establish an investigation body which is independent from police forces, to look into serious acts alleged against the police. This recommendation of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry report was based on the unfortunate experience in the Harper case. This time the judge found that the Brandon police were prone to adjust their evidence and did not proceed appropriately.

My question is: Would the minister commit finally now to put in place an independent process to investigate serious complaints made against police forces in this province?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, the specific case which the member refers to is one that I am not able to discuss. It is a case possibly still before the courts and therefore, as the member

knows, entirely inappropriate to bring before this House and to discuss at this time.

In terms of our initiatives in aboriginal justice, this government has made significant progress in the area of aboriginal justice initiatives, right from the policing and through the courts area, through the probation area and corrections. As the member knows, at the moment we do have LERA which operates to investigate concerns of the public.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, nothing is more appropriate than raising that case in this Legislature. She cannot hide behind some phoney rules of this House.

This is the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry report. The minister has never seen this.

My question is: Given that we have increasingly heard from residents of northern Manitoba, particularly from Chief Geordie Little, from the MKO, that yes, you have serious backlogs in the courts in Winnipeg—but up here in the North nothing compares to the delays.

Mr. Speaker: Is there a question here, please?

Mr. Mackintosh: Given that we are aware of one-and-a-half-year waits for trial—

Mr. Speaker: Question, please. The honourable member for St. Johns, with your question, sir.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, given that we are told of waits of up to three years for court trials in the North, my question to the minister is: Would the minister now immediately review the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry report and put in place the recommendations to ensure swift justice for northern Manitobans?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure which rules he has referred to as phoney rules of this House, but I would be very interested if the member for St. Johns would make himself clear about which rules he believes are phoney rules of this House.

As the member knows, again, there are rules which govern as Attorney General things which I cannot speak about. One is a case before the court.

In terms of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, this government, and I as minister, most certainly am familiar with the recommendations. So let me begin by telling the member and reminding him of some of the issues which we have addressed and are addressing very thoroughly, right from the policing end when we are looking at entering into First Nations policing agreements, through aboriginal court workers, through negotiations and entering into community participation agreements and in communities the naming of aboriginal magistrates within communities as well.

Mr. Speaker, the member continues to speak about what he calls court delays, and he continues to give information which is simply not correct. I would like to be able to take the opportunity to correct him and let him know exactly the length of time.

* (1400)

Mr. Mackintosh: I would like to know what recommendations this minister has implemented, Mr. Speaker.

My question to the minister is: Would the minister now confirm what is one of the blackest clouds over this government that despite a little activity following the by-elections last year, this government has now walked away from even any framework discussions to put in place the Aboriginal Justice recommendations, that this minister has said no to aboriginal peoples and no to justice, Mr. Speaker?

Mrs. Vodrey: What a ridiculous comment that is, and the member knows full well, as do Manitobans.

This government, and again let me start from the beginning, spoke when the federal Liberal government came into power on behalf of our government. I made a trip to Ottawa to confirm

with the federal minister that they were prepared to proceed with the First Nations policing policy.

When I had that information and confirmation from the federal minister on a Thursday, arrived back in Winnipeg by a Friday, we had our negotiators in the air going to aboriginal communities to negotiate First Nations policing agreements by Sunday evening.

We have acted very quickly. We have had some difficulty with the federal Liberal government in terms of their commitment to the court process; however, in areas where we are able to act on our own in Manitoba the naming of aboriginal magistrates, the movement towards community participation agreements for corrections, we have done so. We have a very significant record.

Education System Physical Education

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, we have letters, we have petitions, we have reports from community organizations, urging this government to reconsider its proposal to eliminate physical education from the high school core curriculum.

We now know that one of the government's own health committees has also recommended to increase physical education right through to Grade 12 as a required course.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) why he is brushing this off and saying it is not a Health issue and brushing it off with letters recommending the Minister of Education deal with this when his own health advisory committees are recommending an increase in physical education for school children in Manitoba.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, the member is in error. The Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) and indeed this whole government is not brushing off those statements that were made and take them very, very seriously. That is why the very essence

of the curriculum and the core subject areas from Grades 1 to 8 will include, of course, compulsory physical education. Indeed, compulsory from nine to 12 will occur in those schools also where the parents accept their responsibility and judge accordingly, and I am sure in virtually every school in the province of Manitoba physical education will be compulsory.

The very essence of the reforms are trying to take 12 years of literacy training and trying to compress them into 10, and to give students a greater opportunity to practise in the field of technology, practise in the field of skills training and to put into place vocational education, co-operative education outside of the school. Students that are going to take part in that have to have some greater flexibility. So this government and certainly I know the Minister of Health does not disagree in any fashion with those statements made.

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Speaker, the minister should know there are studies that show academic learning increases when students participate in physical education.

I am going to table a letter addressed to me where the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) refers my correspondence to the Minister of Education saying, it is not a Health issue, it is an Education issue. I would like to ask the minister if he has recommended or made the recommendation from his advisory committee known to his cabinet and to his Minister of Health, and if he has not done this on this crucial important issue to the health of Manitoba children and youth, why he has not made the recommendation known—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has put her question.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I accept, and I know the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) accepts, all of the comments made by the research leading to this. The government totally accepts that, and that is why of course we would sense that parent councils in the 800 schools in Manitoba will also accept those statements.

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

I would ask him if he would not at this time acknowledge that this is a critical preventative health issue for young people in Manitoba and if he will raise the issue in cabinet so it can be discussed and reconsidered.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Health, and I think all of my colleagues, we have never said anything but that physical education for young people is extremely important.

Hog Industry Marketing System

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, some weeks ago, as the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) referenced a few days ago, I was at a meeting with him and with the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) regarding the hog industry and the recent report of Mr. Moore and Mr. Gilson that was provided to the minister.

There has been quite a lot of discussion amongst the hog producing industry. There are some 2,300 of them in this province. There is a lot of concern about what the minister's intentions are with respect to that report. At the very least, the hog producers made the very strong statement that they felt they had not been adequately included in the consultation process.

Can the minister clarify today for members of the House and for the industry what his intentions are with respect to the key recommendation of that report which is to move away from the single-desk marketing system to a dual marketing system, Mr. Speaker? Can he clarify what his intentions are, what the process is in his office with respect to that report?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. Let me first of all acknowledge the fact that Manitoba hog producers are going

through a difficult pricing period with respect to some current oversupplies in the North American red meat market. That I think is their first and immediate concern at this point in time.

I just yesterday met with the chairman, Mr. Ken Foster, of Manitoba Pork, along with members of his board, to deal with that very specific issue of concern to hog producers in the province.

Mr. Speaker, the major recommendations—and there are many that are included in the report that is referred to by the Leader of the third party—include the recognition that other changes taking place in agriculture, notably the disappearance of the support for the movement of grain and feed prices out of Manitoba, place a particular onus on Manitoba and on the Department of Agriculture to provide whatever it takes for continued livestock expansion in the province.

One of the recommendations has been that Manitoba Pork and pork producers in the industry should look at a freer and more flexible marketing system referred to, as the member indicated, as a dual marketing system. That and many other conditions are being seriously considered by this government.

* (1410)

Mr. Edwards: Well, Mr. Speaker, no doubt it is being seriously considered by the government.

My further question for the minister: I am glad to hear that he met with Mr. Foster, I believe he said yesterday. What is the process which the minister is going to embark on to expand, Mr. Speaker, the circle of consultation, and, in particular, to include the some 2,300 independent hog producers in this province, who made it very clear that they felt they had been left out of the consultation process leading up to the report?

What is the process, if any, that the minister and Manitoba Pork and others have agreed upon to further expand the consultation process to the some 2,300 producers in this province, who have made it clear, I believe in some significant

numbers, that they feel they would like the opportunity to give further advice to the minister before he takes the precipitous act of doing away with the current marketing system?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Speaker, allow me to very quickly correct the impression just left by the honourable member for St. James, the Leader of the third party, that there has been no suggestion contained in the report that he refers to or by any comments that I have made about doing away with the present system. What we have talked about is adding some flexibility to this system.

I reject, secondly, that we have not consulted with Manitoba hog producers. In the very first instance, Manitoba Pork is duly elected, with members who are represented from all hog producers in the province of Manitoba.

They were the very first and have been continually consulted through this process. It is no different than, I suppose, if the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) or the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) meets with the leadership of the duly elected people representing the nurses or the teachers or the school trustees in dealing with matters of concern in his department.

In addition to that, as the member can attest to himself, as indeed the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) can attest to, I have accommodated by myself and my staff being present at any and all meetings where hog producers choose to gather, as they did in Grosse Isle in large numbers, as they did at Hog and Poultry Days the other day at the Convention Centre and as they have done in Altona and will be doing throughout the province.

Mr. Speaker, I only gain in meeting with the primary producers of Manitoba where and whenever it occurs.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, no doubt they, as Manitoba Pork, at every one of those meetings, have made it absolutely clear to this minister that it is by no means clear to them, that there needs to be the type of significant change to the marketing

system to achieve the type of growth the minister is talking about.

The reality is, pork production has doubled in the last 15 years under this current marketing scheme.

Has the minister made up his mind already, Mr. Speaker, that single-desk marketing needs to be scrapped to achieve further growth?—because that is by no means clear to the members of this party nor to the 2,300 producers out there.

Mr. Enns: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the attention that my colleague the honourable member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) is paying to this important aspect of agriculture.

Let me also put on the record, it was a visionary and aggressive Minister of Agriculture who now sits in this Chamber as Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey) that said a little over a decade ago: Let us try to double the hog production in Manitoba. I congratulate the hog producers of Manitoba. They have done that and provided thousands of jobs while they have done that.

Mr. Speaker, not wanting to be satisfied with the status quo we are facing some particular challenges which I mentioned: the disappearance of the WGTA, the tremendous new trade opportunities that the international trade obligations that our country has entered into has opened up doors for us in Japan, in China, in Korea, in Indonesia, not to speak of our immediate neighbours to the south. All of these reasons indicate the necessity for addressing the opportunities in the pork industry, and they are so being addressed by this report.

Natural Gas Rural Manitoba

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, another issue that is very important to rural Manitoba is the expansion of natural gas.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), in his prebudget consultation meeting last year, indicated

that this was one of the important issues that was raised. However, the announcement has not become a reality, and the expansion has run into difficulties because of the high requirement of sign-up rate in residential. Even though it has been reduced there are still problems with it.

My question is to the minister responsible for the process of expanding natural gas through rural Manitoba. What steps is this government going to take to ensure that there is an expansion of natural gas into rural Manitoba so we can have the economic growth that we desperately need there?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, I can certainly assure the member for Swan River that this government has taken every possible action to try and encourage communities who have worked with Centra Gas to get the necessary sign-ups to enter into agreements so that natural gas can be extended into those communities.

Mr. Speaker, we set a fairly aggressive agenda out when we signed the agreement with Centra and with the communities in a partnership with the federal government, our own provincial government and with municipalities to try and expand natural gas into many of the rural communities in Manitoba.

Of those communities, Mr. Speaker, I understand there are about eight that are now ready to go, and others are looking towards an opportunity in the very near future to have the necessary numbers signed up to get expansion going into their communities.

Ms. Wowchuk: But I asked the minister what steps is this government taking to aggressively promote the expansion of natural gas.

We have seen ads that promote the REDI grants and grants to small businesses, but are they doing anything to aggressively promote the expansion of natural gas, or are they leaving it all in Centra's hands?

This is an important project. You have said it is important. What are you doing to promote—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has put her question.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, several things have happened in the course of the natural gas expansion.

First of all, there was an agreement signed with Centra Gas and with the communities that were identified for the expansion of natural gas. Secondly, this government has put in a significant amount of money into the expansion of natural gas into the rural communities that do not have it. Thirdly, we do have personnel within the Department of Rural Development and also Energy and Mines who have worked with communities and continue to do that and also from the infrastructure secretariat who continue to work with communities in making sure that we have the necessary sign-ups addressed.

Meetings are going on almost daily to encourage people to sign up and to make this project a success in all the communities that have been identified.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, since the Clean Environment Commission recommended that the RTO emission controls be put into the Louisiana-Pacific plant, and to have that RTO operate, we need to have natural gas into the area.

Will the government talk to Centra Gas to ensure that the amount of gas used by Louisiana will be taken into consideration, since that amount is equivalent to that which is needed in the town of Swan River? That has to be taken into consideration in this expansion.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, it is nice to see the member for Swan River now stand up and give her support to Louisiana-Pacific. Unfortunately, that has not always been evident from the members opposite.

We know, Mr. Speaker, that Louisiana-Pacific is an important member in the use of natural gas, and that certainly will be taken into account when the project is being identified and being worked on in the communities of Swan River and Minitonas.

Air Safety Dauphin, Manitoba

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, on Monday, the Transportation Safety Board called into question Transport Canada's ability to ensure air safety.

In June, the federal Liberal government's transport department closed the flight services station at Dauphin airport, throwing some six staff out of work. These six people were replaced with automatic environmental services, equipment which was found to be faulty in both Edmonton and Montreal.

My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Has this minister received any notice from the federal Liberal government or Transport Canada concerning the problems with the AES system? What action does he intend to take to correct the potential air safety problem?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, my understanding is the AWOS equipment that the member is referring to is used in some 50 locations across Canada. In two locations that he has mentioned, I think Edmonton and Montreal, some problems were found with the equipment. They are aware of those problems. They are working on them.

There is only one location in Manitoba where that equipment is currently in place, and that is Dauphin. We are not aware of any safety problems as a result of it.

I want to assure the member, we are going to keep a close eye on Transport Canada with regard to whether they do adequately address the issues that they have identified with the equipment they have in place.

It is not a significant issue at this time, but in large airports certainly Transport Canada is taking the right action.

* (1420)

Northern Manitoba

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I believe this is the same equipment that is now going to be used in both Norway House, Berens River and Island Lake airports.

I want to ask this minister if he has determined whether or not this is indeed the same equipment that has been found to be faulty. What action does he plan to take to ensure the safety of the travelling public and the aircraft operations in northern Manitoba?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, the member has identified that equipment is to be put in place. It is equipment for atmospheric environmental activities, and we are working with Transport Canada to ensure that air safety is paramount in this province as we want it also to be across Canada.

Recent comments that came out, as the member might have noticed in today's paper, are reason for grave concern, that there is some problem between Transport Canada and the safety board with regard to air safety in this province—a very serious issue which we are going to ask the federal minister to take immediate action on to be sure that the cost-cutting that the federal Liberal government is now doing does not in any way impede with adequate consumer safety in the air in Canada.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE (Eighth Day of Debate)

Mr. Speaker: On the adjourned debate, the eighth 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.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate fully that the hour is drawing quickly to a close in this particular debate and there are many members of this House who wish to speak on it. I will be making a rather unusually brief speech in this House today to accommodate other members.

There are a few particular matters that I would like to touch upon. Before I do that, I would like to pay a particular tribute to two of my colleagues who have announced to date that they will not be standing for re-election: my colleague from cabinet the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme) and MLA for Riel and also my good friend the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose).

Both of these gentlemen I have come to know well as we served in this place together. I have a great deal of respect for both. The member for Riel was one of my mentors in the days between my first election in 1986 in which I was not successful, when I first got to know him as a fellow candidate, and my election to this House in 1988. He has been a good friend and mentor in that particular period.

The member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose), he and I have gotten to know each other very well, and he has always brought to our discussions on any issue a great deal of insight that comes from a lifetime of experience that is so valuable, particularly to me as a younger member. I can say with great sadness that he will be missed in our caucus and in this Chamber.

To both members, I wish them well in their future endeavours, and I hope that they are not strangers to drop into this House and drop by on many occasions to spend some time with us.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take the opportunity to welcome everyone back, repeat some of the comments members have put on the record to date. It is always good to be back in this Chamber to discuss the issues of our province.

Two particular matters that I wanted to touch on with relation to my constituency, one a matter of

which I am most proud, proud of the work done by my constituents over a three-and-a-half-year period and that of course was the buyout of the Pine Falls paper mill which was concluded on Labour Day of this year with the formal transfer of ownership from the Abitibi-Price corporation to the management and employee-owned company, the Pine Falls paper company.

It was a very proud day for my constituents and for all of us who were involved in that particular matter. When we celebrated with a dinner in Pine Falls, some 1,200 to 1,300 people were in attendance and one could feel the confidence of the people in that room in their pride and belief in themselves in taking over that operation. That was a pretty large undertaking for that group of people, a large undertaking in that, for 60 to 70 years of the history of this mill, they have been part of someone else's company, and now they have taken the great step of buying the mill and operating it themselves.

I am pleased to report to this House that all indications from their first months of operations in my discussions with the chief executive officer of that company are that they are doing well and are ahead of schedule and that the confidence the people of Manitoba have placed in them in providing a repayable loan will certainly not be wasted. In fact, I suspect that they will be a very significant taxpayer to the people of Manitoba in the years ahead.

I was very proud and honoured to have had an opportunity to play a role in that particular buyout. When I think back over the three and a half years that we were involved in it, I think of the very tough issues with which we had to deal. I know some members of this Chamber on the opposite side of the House may not be pleased with our success, but I think the vast majority of Manitobans, in fact, I believe that the majority of members in this Chamber are pleased that we were able to succeed in this particular venture.

Mr. Speaker, I would also on that note like to thank a number of my colleagues for their support and effort, the former Minister of Natural

Resources, my colleague from Emerson as well as particularly the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) in his service as Minister of Natural Resources and of course the Minister of Industry and Trade (Mr. Downey), all of whom did yeoman service over the years in putting this particular deal together.

Mr. Speaker, in my constituency perhaps one of the greatest challenges that I face as MLA and we as a community face and certainly as a province face will be over the next few years, perhaps in a shorter time frame than we expect, the securing of the future of the Atomic Energy of Canada site at Whiteshell.

Needless to say, the election of a federal Liberal government in the general election of last year which held the hope and promise for many in my constituency of a renewed commitment to that site and to the nuclear option for Canada has been somewhat dashed by a continuation really of the layoffs that have been there. It gives a great deal of worry to us as a community as to where AECL will be in the future of federal funding.

I am confident at this stage that the current government will have a role for that corporation in its science funding, but my particular concern, and we as Manitobans should share this concern, is, what will be the future of the Whiteshell facility, which employs some 1,000 people in our province, many in Winnipeg, from Winnipeg to Pinawa, that makes a major financial contribution in tax and other payments within our province?

As I look ahead over the next few years, the real challenge for us as a community is, and I hope and I am confident at this stage that my federal Liberal colleague Mr. Iftody, the member of Parliament, will be able to work with us as a community and I know there is a good will there amongst us to be able to achieve a success that we as a community, all of us who represent that community, all of us who are part of that community and certainly with a role for us as a larger provincial community will be able to ensure that Whiteshell Laboratories have a role, a continued significant role in the provincial economy of our province.

There are many opportunities there for future economic development and growth for other industry in Manitoba to take advantage of work that is done at the Whiteshell site, and it would be a shame not only to my area but certainly to the whole province to lose that facility.

As I look to the next few years in political life as the MLA for Lac du Bonnet, that has to be, I think, probably one of if not the most pressing issues facing my part of the world. I will be looking to other members of this House, my colleagues and to members of the opposition party for their support from time to time as we try to tackle this difficulty together.

Mr. Speaker, my time is drawing somewhat short, but I would be remiss, as Minister responsible for Northern and Native Affairs, not to make a few comments about the very historic signing that took place in Winnipeg last week between the First Nations of our province and the federal government.

I would like to say this, at this time, that I have been asked many times in the media, why was the province not involved in these negotiations? I know some of my colleagues opposite who have had, in other days, roles as chiefs of First Nations and have a very intimate understanding of this issue appreciate the fact that the relationship that is being discussed is a relationship between the federal Crown based on treaty and those First Nations, and that the relationships and delegations of authority and transfers of authority and issues of jurisdiction are matters that have to be determined between the Government of Canada and, I would suggest, the Parliament of Canada and the First Nations.

* (1430)

I say to members opposite, as I have said in some of the press interviews that I have had, that one difficulty that I foresee in this process, and not one that is hard to overcome, is that many of the issues that Mr. Irwin, the federal minister, will want to deal with that are laid out for discussion

and planning in this framework agreement will require legislation in the federal Parliament.

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

I am somewhat surprised by a position the federal minister took with myself and my colleague the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) when we met with him in Ottawa this fall, where he indicated that the Prime Minister has said to him that he should not come to Parliament with amendments, that he must do this without acts of Parliament to accomplish what he wants to accomplish.

I have said publicly that the type of transfers and changes that are contemplated by the First Nations and Mr. Irwin, if they require legal authority, then it is Mr. Irwin's duty to take those changes to the Parliament of Canada, that he should not expect the Province of Manitoba, the First Nations or anyone else to be able to act solely with administrative agreements without dealing with the issues of authority in jurisdiction, which can only be dealt with by the Parliament of Canada. So my first advice and my first comment to the federal government at this time is that they will have to ultimately, if they wish to accomplish and meet the expectations that are there among the First Nations people, be prepared to face the Parliament of Canada and do what they want to do in the proper fashion.

With respect to the Province of Manitoba, we have not been involved in these negotiations or discussions, nor, quite frankly, in my opinion, was it right that we were because they were not issues with which we have jurisdiction or responsibility. The First Nations have clearly said that, and we certainly acknowledge it.

I can tell this House that I as minister have had some discussions with the Grand Chief, and there is a recognition that the province has a role to play in certainly some areas where we already provide certain services—Child and Family Services, for example; in Education where we provide curriculum—that the First Nations will be looking

to us for some agreements, to share information, to be able to provide our expertise in those particular areas. I certainly can say today that there is a willingness to do that.

We, Manitoba, will certainly live up to our constitutional and legal requirements. Again, it will be up to the federal Parliament and the minister to make the transfers of jurisdiction which he intends to do by going to the Parliament of Canada and not expecting this government or this province to assist in simple administrative arrangements to do what he should be doing by act of Parliament. I think that is the route he will have to take. I would encourage him to recognize that fact, and the Prime Minister to recognize that fact, to give full effect to what they have discussed with the First Nations.

Madam Deputy Speaker, one last comment that I make in this particular area as my time grows very short and I say this to all concerned, to the public generally, that what is important is that whatever dollars are being spent in this process that better value be obtained. Ultimately, in a province like Manitoba, when we look at our greatest health needs, educational needs, training needs for example, many lie in the most remote parts of our provinces, and if this process is able to improve the life of people by getting better use of dollars that are spent now, then it is certainly a worthwhile process. I know there is concern in some First Nations.

The member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) made some reference to the Northern Economic Development report. I just say to him that one of the recommendations of that report was the settlement of Northern Flood and the settlement of Treaty Land Entitlement.

In terms of Northern Flood, we now have four comprehensive agreements in the works with the five bands involved and have made more progress on it in the last number of years under the direction of the Honourable Jim Downey than we have at any time in the history of this province.

Secondly, on Treaty Land Entitlement, which is a federal responsibility, we are to provide

unoccupied Crown land as required, and we work with the federal government in that process. We have made again more effort in settlement and more progress towards settlement than has been done in the past. I was pleased to be part of the signing at the Long Plain First Nation as well as in the Island Lake area last year, and these are firsts.

I think there is interest and much progress and there are going to be very interesting times in the next months and years ahead.

My time has drawn to a close, Madam Deputy Speaker. I look forward to having the opportunity to speak in the Budget Debate. Thank you.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Deputy Speaker: I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the loge to my right, where we have with us this afternoon J. Frank Johnston, the former member for Sturgeon Creek.

* * *

Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake): Madam Deputy Speaker, it is a pleasure to be able to rise and make some comments on this very historic event, historic in a way that it is the sixth throne speech that we have listened to, that we have had presented to us here in this Chamber—six fairy tales, six story books, that we have had the opportunity to read.

Before I continue, I would certainly like to add my congratulations to the new Pages, wish them well, and to the Clerk and his staff. It has been quite an opportunity to work with the Clerk and his staff, and I certainly do appreciate it. I look forward to working with the Clerk and his staff in many years to come.

I would like to also just add my congratulations and my best wishes to the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose) who has decided not to continue, not to seek re-election in this upcoming spring election. I would just like to say I wish him and his family and his wife all the very, very best. It has been very nice to have the opportunity to

speak to the honourable member on many occasions and have our little laughs and have our discussions at times and exchange little anecdotes and just a good time with the member, and I wish him well.

Also, to the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme) who had announced some time ago that he was not going to seek re-election and that he was planning on setting up a retirement home and do the things that he really likes to do, and that is, call out "fore" whenever he has the opportunity.

I know that he will enjoy himself down south during his retirement. I know that he and his wife will enjoy the many years that are left to them to go to golf, as I mentioned before. I will never forget, and the minister knows what I mean by that, but I wish him and his wife and family very, very well.

* (1440)

Also, I never had an opportunity to really say some nice things about the previous member for Flin Flon, taking on his new position in August. I must say that the previous member for Flin Flon was like a brother, like a leader to myself and some of the others who were elected in 1990, who guided us. He guided me an awful lot, and when there was something I did not understand he would always be there to explain it, and off to the side we would have our walks at noontime, go for lunch. I picked up a lot more from him during that period of time than a whole day in here and trying to understand what was going on.

And, of course our member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), definitely a good man. It was like he and the previous member for Flin Flon were like salt and pepper shakers on each side of the table. You could either go to one—if you wanted some real information, you went to one in confidence, and if you wanted something else you went to the other. So I wish the honourable member for Dauphin and his family the very best in their endeavours and in future, to their children, and I wish them well.

Since 1990, I think, as I said earlier, we have had six throne speeches, six fairy tales, as I may call them at times, I strongly believe. Madam Deputy Speaker, when I brought the throne speech home to go over it, I asked my son to read it. Well, he took about 2 minutes, and said, Dad, I get a lot more out of reading my science book than I am getting out of reading the throne speech, and I do not know how you are even going to talk about it.

Well, it will be difficult because it has nothing to it. So what I will do and attempt to do is just bring to light some of the issues that are in the Interlake constituency which I have been proud to represent for the last four and a half years, and hopefully will be there for another four years and another four years and another four years representing the community of Interlake.

It has been a pleasure. I have learned an awful lot in the four years-plus that I have been involved, a tough learning process from the beginning, like all new members have, but I think as issues come up, as constituency work comes up, you pick up more and more. The more you pick up the more you get, and the more you get the tougher it gets. Issues and constituency work and the different problems that we have out in the province come to you in one way or another. It has been a great learning experience in trying to deal with some of these problems that are out there, Madam Deputy Speaker, whether it be in health care, whether it be in education, whether it be job creation, whether it be drainage.

A few positive things that I would like to compliment the constituents on, through their initiative, is the Fisher Branch community board which has worked so very hard in the last four years to have a personal care home built in their area, something that is very dear to me too, as I know that the community that I reside in has attempted and has been working very hard in attaining a personal care home in Riverton.

Now, we had the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) come to Riverton to explain his side of things. I must say that we all felt that the minister

was not as well prepared as he should have been when he came to address the people, but I think that with the continued hard work of our communities in Fisher Branch and the people in Fisher Branch and the people in Riverton that we will be able to achieve full personal care homes for these two communities, Madam Deputy Speaker.

As I presented my resolution that I brought in the last session on behalf of the Riverton personal care home and the people of the community, as usual comments were made. It was a nonpartisan attempt to bring forth to the government the need for a personal care home, not only in Riverton and area, but also in other communities that are more concerned with maintaining the livelihoods and maintaining the economic benefits and maintaining the infrastructure by keeping our seniors near to their families, near to their communities and also near to the hearts of everyone that may be involved.

We are still plugging along, Madam Deputy Speaker, when it comes to the personal care homes. I know I spoke to the community from Fisher Branch, not two or three weeks ago, to some members, and they are very gung ho, if I may use the word, that the groundbreaking will be occurring very soon, and that, in the meantime, the community and committee from Riverton are meeting with the Health people to further discuss getting the personal care home in Riverton going as quickly as possible.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there are some disappointments in the throne speech, in fairy tale No. 6. Some of those concerns were the lack of effort made in addressing agricultural issues. I had an opportunity to meet with my KAP district board executives and, really, the questions that they asked were some of the questions that we ask here on where the government stands on certain issues, as the marketing board, on the dual marketing attempt to change the hog marketing board.

We have met with the hog marketing board, and the consensus in my area and other areas is that they want to maintain the status quo to a level with an opportunity to change within the structure, not

necessarily have dual marketing, have the single marketing, but attempt to change so that the marketing boards will be more available, more constructive for our farmers and for our hog producers in this province.

It has not been addressed and why the government sits quiet on it, why the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) today did not answer the questions, basically, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think that they are worried that they as a government want to make changes within the system, but the people in this province, the farmers and the producers in this province do not want to see a total change and do not want to see dual marketing in our system.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in agricultural issues, I have for four years—four years—asked the then-Minister of Natural Resources and have brought it to the attention of the now-Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger), and the previous Minister of Natural Resources is also with us today, a member whom I have a great deal of respect for, and at times, we have said on this side of the House that, boy, we sure would like to have the old Minister of Rural Development and Natural Resources back at the helm, and that is meant very sincerely.

I know that the previous minister, the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), is going to agree with me on this, and that is the Washow Bay project.

The Washow Bay project, Madam Deputy Speaker, was a project that came about some six, seven years ago. Four years ago they completed a certain phase and during the campaign, not knowing a whole lot about the area then, I spoke with some people from the Bifrost community and area, farmers who said to me, Clif, whatever you do, whatever you can do, please go to the Minister of Natural Resources and work with the minister to try and continue on to the next phase.

Well, the ministry has change and here I come with bells on my toes going to work with the Minister of Natural Resources to get the Washow Bay project next phase going on. But why, why,

why? Because it will benefit the agricultural scheme in that area. It will take water off of prime agricultural land.

So in the four years I have brought to the attention of the Minister of Natural Resources, when is the minister going to act on the Washow Bay project?

An Honourable Member: Did he do anything?

Mr. Clif Evans: No, nothing. As a matter of fact, Madam Deputy Speaker, if I may, on the Washow Bay project, just in April of 1994, the Washow Bay project was again brought up to the new minister and in his response—but first of all, I must say that the previous Minister of Natural Resources indicated that as soon as a very major, as he called it, a major project in and around Gimli was completed, I believe—and we can look in Hansard. I do not have to look in Hansard, because I remember that. I remember the minister saying this to me, and he said, I do not want to say it too loud. But as soon as a project in Gimli, a drainage program in Gimli be completed, Washow Bay will be seriously considered, very seriously. The minister remembers that. It was not once; it was not twice; three times I have brought it up with him.

* (1450)

I would just like to read. In 1990-91 some rights-of-way were acquired and culverts installed. Remedial works are intended this summer. That is '90-91. We are in '94. However, capital funds were not appropriated by the Legislature for this project in '91-92, '92-93, '93-94.

Although the federal government has declined to participate in the funding, it is possible that it will qualify under the Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Program which, under current criteria, would require an equal contribution by the municipality.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, a project such as this, a project such as the Washow Bay project is of great, great importance to the one area of the Interlake. Has this government acted on it in any

way? Has the government met with the municipalities to a point of saying, hey, let us see where we can go with it? Let us see where we can get the money. No, and if they have, there has been nothing that has come out of it—as usual.

Again, you look at the throne speech, at all the throne speeches, you look at these six fairy tales that have been presented to us, and you really see smoke and mirrors, smoke and mirrors in all six speeches. The drainage problems in relation to Washow Bay and to the other areas are very, very major in the Interlake, very major.

I think most of the casework and the problems that I get from the LGD of Armstrong, from the LGD of Grahamdale and from the R.M. of Bifrost have to deal with the drainage problems that have been ignored. The maintenance has been ignored. [interjection] Right. The member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) says for over 25 years. So I have no qualm here whatsoever, and I have said it before and put on record that it does not to me—whatever government was in place in those 25 years and in the process should have been doing something about maintaining the basic maintenance of our drainage system so that the farmers in our area have no problems with getting crops off, with getting their hay off.

For years, for about three years, I have gone out to the LGD of Grahamdale to look at issues, and all you see is water in the ditches and water in the fields, Madam Deputy Speaker. Why? The Water Resources department has been cut back so badly in the last four years there is nobody to do the work. There is nobody to do the survey. There is nobody to do the cleanouts. There is nobody to come out to even look at the issues or look at the problem.

Natural Resources in my area and in northern Manitoba and rural Manitoba is a very important department, and it is a department that I feel that, if government is changed and if we have the opportunity to be government, it will be one department that we will address and maintain to the quality that it should be at, and I say that on record and with true meaning to that.

Madam Deputy Speaker, another issue that brings me much, much displeasure was the announcement of the cuts to the friendship centres. I was last Tuesday in my community attending a seniors Christmas luncheon sponsored by the local Metis Friendship Centre. The director says to me, Clif, this could be the last year that we as a friendship centre will be able to sponsor this Christmas dinner. There is no funding left at all from the provincial government. Cuts are coming from the federal government, more cuts, yet the comment to me by two people on the board: Why are they spending all this money on lottery advertising when they could, in fact, with the amount that it would take, provide funding for friendship centres, which in rural and northern areas are of extreme importance to our communities?

They provide the type of services and leadership and guidance to our young people who in rural Manitoba are beginning to become a problem when it comes to crime, vandalism and violence.

The comments are, once the friendship centre is gone, the kids in our community will be hanging around the local store, hanging around behind the rink, getting into trouble, Madam Deputy Speaker, getting into mischief, something to do, and all they will have to do is go the road of crime, and that is a shame.

An Honourable Member: Strange kids around my town hang around me to get inspired.

Mr. Clif Evans: Well, that may or may not be true. I sort of doubt it, but it may or may not be true.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there is nothing, and there has not been anything in our books of fairy tale to be able to provide these kinds of services, maintain them, keep them going. Funds, there are a lot of funds, a lot of funds being spent on lottery ads. How many? About \$1.5 million, the honourable member says.

Now, that would go a long way in our friendship centres in our communities and go a long way in

helping and assisting the communities which have a problem with crime.

A very disturbing meeting I had, a call some weeks ago from the RCMP in my area to come and attend a meeting in the community of Fisher Branch. I thought it was a meeting, knowing that we were going back to session, that it was going to be a meeting on related issues as we came back to session. No, Madam Deputy Speaker, it was upwards of 60 people, upwards of over 60 people on a bad weather night who came to express their views and concerns about the rise in vandalism, the rise in school crime, the rise in crime in general and violence occurring in and around the Fisher Branch area, concerns of the RCMP, concerns of the people.

It is out there. The people are saying it is out there, and something has to be done, and I did say in my little address that I felt that it was up to us here, the 57 members, to work together and address the situation, whether it be in Fisher Branch, in Riverton, Swan River, Winnipeg, anywhere. It has to be addressed.

It brings me to a few more issues, Madam Deputy Speaker. This past fall we had the opportunity of hearing a federal standing committee on freshwater fish. I attended these meetings. The fishermen have indicated to me, have said to me that they want to—again, as with the wheat marketing board, as with the hog marketing board—maintain it, keep it, improve it, work with it, do with it whatever is possible so that it does not go away. It cannot go away. It is needed. It is needed in my communities. It is needed in other communities, and I am sure the concept is needed in the northern communities.

It was also a pleasure to be in attendance at the announcement when two aboriginal members of the communities, one being in mine, Sam Murdoch, were appointed to the board, something that they were asking for, and it was done. I am sure we will all in the fishing industry work together with Freshwater Fish and maintain the status quo that I had said.

* (1500)

Madam Deputy Speaker, the sixth fairy tale talks about distance ed, working towards getting further with distance ed. I say good to that, because distance ed was a concept that was brought in by a gentleman right in my own community, Mr. Lloyd Roche, who came to this government many times to get assistance, to get some help, who went to different departments and different people to get help. Through his diligence and hard work, and others of his group, they were able to open a four-school distance ed program where you could have a teacher teaching math in Fisher Branch, and students from Arborg, Riverton and Gimli would be able to get their lessons from the teacher teaching in Fisher Branch or the teacher teaching in Arborg teaching another course in the other areas. It is a wonderful concept. I do hope that we continue to encourage it and do whatever we can to make it even a better program for our children.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I just want to make a few more comments. I would like to congratulate my bro and my colleagues in the House and the aboriginal communities on the signing of their agreement just last week going towards self-government, something that they have long been waiting for. It is a concept that they will further be discussing. I know that we in fact will do what we can to assist the aboriginal communities in achieving their goal and in doing it in an expedient way so that we may all work and live together, so that we may work together and be together.

I also want to congratulate—and there are many veterans in my constituency from my reserves who acknowledge the fact that the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) and the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) were able to pass the resolution through House here to honour the aboriginal people who served in the forces and that we had a day set for them, November 8. I think that, too, is very important for aboriginal communities, and we should work with them, not against them. We should work with them at all times.

An issue, Madam Deputy Speaker, that I put out a survey on, and that is VLT revenues. I asked my communities, talk to the hoteliers in my area about VLT revenues. Well, we all know that VLT revenues have increased amazingly in the past couple or three years, and we all know that these VLT revenues are coming out of areas, out of communities. The question out in rural Manitoba is that we could be better serviced with this money being allocated to the education system, to the health system, to the roads in rural northern Manitoba, to maintain and assist with the crime issue in this province and give back more to the people who are putting the money in. Get it back to the communities and increase their infrastructure.

There are other issues that I would like to discuss, that I would like to talk on as far as the throne speech goes. I think we will have an opportunity during Budget Debate to continue some of the discussions. But I do want to say, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I do not know whether any of the honourable members here, I have not read through all or been available to hear first hand some of the debate. I do want to say that after four years, I want to offer my congratulations and my love and best wishes to my wife and two children who have, as a rural member, put up with many, many weeks, days and months being away from home and not being able to see the hockey games, not being able to take the little one swimming. I think that when we are here battling the battle of battles we should always, in our hearts and in our minds, in the back of our minds, remember the fact that there is the family that is out there, and when we are done here they are still there and waiting and know the fact that you have to go away again and continue to do this to make sure that you are doing the best job that you can do.

Madam Deputy Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity.

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Madam Deputy Speaker, one of the joys of having the privilege to serve as a member of the Legislative Assembly is that we have opportunities to speak to high school

students who tend to come to the Legislature from time to time and have an opportunity not only to tour the building and find out about the history of this building but actually be observers in the Question Period discussion.

Since 1988, when I was first elected, I have oftentimes had the opportunity to speak to the high school students. I ask them a very important question when I speak to them after Question Period. I have been asking that question for a number of years. I had the opportunity this past Monday to meet with a group of Grade 11 history students from Kelvin High School. As usual I asked them the question, what did you think of Question Period. Unfortunately, Madam Deputy Speaker, their answer was the same as the answers have almost always been when I have asked the question. They said that they found this Chamber very disruptive, that members were, and I quote, rude, obnoxious, interruptive and generally bad-mannered, unquote.

This is a very sad commentary on Manitoba's Legislative Assembly. I wonder, what example are we setting for our young people who are tomorrow's future by leaving the impression of a Legislature that breeds such bad habits?

There is no question that the role of the Speaker of the Chamber then is a very difficult one. To encourage members to treat each other with honour and dignity and respect, I believe that is something that the current Speaker has tried and attempted to do, and he has done that with vigour and with commitment and certainly with firmness. I will always remember his remarks about the fact that we are all honourable members and that is something that we should remember.

The role as Speaker has certainly necessitated objectivity and fairness and an ability to make decisions that are to be based on fairness and neutrality and the facts of the situation, not on partisanship or other less desirous reasons. I would commend the Speaker for his commitment to the role of Speaker and for doing a job that in fact is a very difficult one. I certainly wish him success in his day-to-day decisions.

I would also wish well the Deputy Speaker, who must discharge her duties with the same amount of fairness and impartiality, and I applaud her efforts.

I would welcome back the Clerk of the Legislature and his staff. Certainly their assistance with rules and regulations and particularly their good sense of humour is very much appreciated.

As well, thank you to the Hansard staff who must have the task of ensuring that our recorded word will be part of the history of this province.

Congratulations to the new Pages in this Chamber and as well to the six interns who are part of the Legislative Assembly tradition. There is an old saying: Do as I say, not as I do. My advice to the Pages and to the interns might very well be: Do not do as we say or necessarily do as we do.

That may sound like a cynical comment, but aside from that I would trust that the interns and the Pages that their experiences will be very positive, will be rewarding and in fact valuable as they decide on what their future careers are going to be. We really do appreciate the work that the interns and the Pages do provide and hope that the experiences they will see in a positive light as they move in the future.

There are a number of MLAs who are leaving us before the next election, on a voluntary basis, and I would like to wish each and every one of them well. There is something to be said for MLAs who decide to not return as elected officials on a voluntary basis as opposed to MLAs whose constituents choose for them.

I must say that I particularly enjoyed the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose), his response to the throne speech last night. I did not necessarily agree with all he said, but that is okay because that is part of the democratic process. I very thoroughly enjoyed his remarks. It was very good to hear and very nice to hear his comments and his perspective over the last number of years as being a member of the Legislative Assembly.

* (1510)

Because my colleague the honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) does not have the opportunity to speak this afternoon, I did want to clarify the record about a situation which was referenced by the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) last evening. It is pertaining to the Metis Veterans Day wreath-laying ceremony which was held on November 16. At the wreath-laying ceremony, the master of ceremonies recognized that the honourable member for St. Boniface was not present at the celebration and was usually there and not only has laid wreaths in the past as the member for St. Boniface but in fact has done that previous to that responsibility. He did mention the fact that there had been a sudden illness in the member's family and so the member for St. Boniface had asked that his assistant be there to lay the wreath.

I think it is true that it was announced, unfortunately, that I would be there representing the party and that was not the case. It certainly had been predetermined that I was at an AIDS benefit luncheon, and I recognize and I think all members generally recognize that we all have commitments and certainly attempt to honour those as much as possible. I recognize and I am sure there were excellent reasons why all 57 members were not able to be at the AIDS benefit event as well. I was very pleased to represent all members of the Legislature at that particular event.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I wanted to comment on the government's throne speech, and because of the limited time I thought I would limit my comments particularly to the area of health care. I hope some of my comments, although some of them may sound a bit critical, I really do want to focus on what I believe should be some of the suggestions or issues that need to be discussed and need to be thought about as we enter into our health care renewal in the province of Manitoba.

First of all, I wanted to talk a little bit about the health reform process and health renewal, and I want to relate that to another "r" word, and that "r" word is regionalization. We know that the

government has decided to move to a system of what they call regionalization of health care services within the province of Manitoba, and certainly we would like to put on the record that if, in fact, one of the main goals for a move to regionalization is that there will be more local control of health care needs by members of a particular community, then we support that particular goal of moving to regionalization.

We know already that the Manitoba Health Organizations has spent quite a bit of time on looking at which communities will be part of what regions, and, of course, it is a very difficult task to undertake.

Now, I am speaking particularly of the rural and northern areas. I think, when we talk about the city of Winnipeg, which currently is now one region, that is another entity unto itself, and, in fact, will need some special addressing in terms of what we do with the city of Winnipeg as far as deciding on how we will deliver health care services, not only because we deliver those services to the majority of the population in this province who reside within the city limits, but, of course, we also deliver services on a provincial basis to members of our other communities in rural and northern Manitoba.

I think with regard to the regionalization, I would suggest, and I hope that the minister is currently doing this, that the minister take particular note of some concerns that there are with regionalization. One of the issues will relate to what type of structure will be set up in the various regions to determine the planning and the policy development of the health care for that region, and who decides on how much money will be available for what particular services.

I do have some concerns with one of the proposals that has been brought forward that will suggest that a regional council will be made up of individuals who will be paid, and that we seem to be moving away from a voluntary component of how we deliver health care services. I think it is incumbent that we remember that health care delivery in this province in the early 20th Century

and, in fact, predating the 20th Century, was delivered by individuals of various religious faiths, and certainly the Jesuits and the Roman Catholic faith did deliver a number of outreach and public health services in the early 20th Century.

We know as well that other religious-based organizations—and I think, as an example, of the Mennonite Central Committee—have done a lot of work in the area of health care delivery. They are very concerned, and I know they have expressed those concerns to the present minister, about a move away from that voluntary component of delivering health care.

I think it would be very, very important, when we look at the structure of the various regions, that we ensure that we do not totally remove our voluntary component of our local health boards, whether it is a local hospital or a local institution, such as the Eden Mental Health Centre, or a local board that delivers community public health services. So I think we need to be very careful that, in fact, we ensure that there is the voice of those individuals to be part of the decision making as to what kinds of services get delivered in the various regions.

When we look at the city of Winnipeg, that is another ball game. The city of Winnipeg is unique in the sense that it also has tertiary care hospitals as well as community hospitals and a wide variety of nongovernmental organizations who deliver health services.

I understand that a number of the community-based organizations such as the Village Clinic, Mount Carmel and the Lindenvue centre out in St. James have been told by the government that they would like to see them move towards more of a community-based outreach clinic model. Although I think there is some value in that type of move, I think what is missing in the process is a real information sharing.

We have some organizations such as the Village Clinic who know a little bit. We have government civil servants who are public health nurses and in other areas who know some of what seems to be

going on. We have hospitals in the city who seem to have a different idea as to what should occur. We have members of the Legislative Assembly who have not had an opportunity to really see what the particular plan is and what is envisioned in terms of what kind of health care services will be delivered within the city of Winnipeg.

I think we need to see what that plan and that vision is, what the goals are within that so there can be an orderly reform of the health care system and it can be determined what kinds of services should be delivered, by which various organizations, and in which communities. I think that is muddled right now and is not very clear.

It may be clear to the minister and to the deputy minister, but it is not clear to the rest of Manitoba. I think we need to know that information so we can be part of the renewal process and not just stand here and criticize.

I would ask the minister to take those comments into consideration.

The other point about regionalization is, it would appear that some of the regions are further ahead than other regions in terms of deciding how they want to set up their structure of delivering health care services.

My Leader and myself had an opportunity to meet a couple of weeks ago with Larry Todd, the executive director of the Brandon General Hospital. He laid out for us what Westman is looking at in terms of their structure. It may be different than what some of the other regions are looking at.

Again, I would suggest to the minister as a positive suggestion, we hope that the minister will encourage some flexibility in terms of those regional structures and how they look, because if the bottom line in terms of delivering health care services is met and if some of the guiding principles are certainly met by the various regions, if they have a different structure than another region but feel that they can deliver that service,

then let us let them try that and let us have some flexibility in the system.

One of my other concerns as well in this whole system of regionalization is that we still, as a government, have not dealt with the issue of dual jurisdictions of delivering public health services. We still have the city of Winnipeg delivering public health services in some parts of the city and we have the province delivering some of those services.

* (1520)

I had the opportunity to see some internal documents from the city of Winnipeg, two reports which were done that looked at that very issue, the city of Winnipeg and the provincial government and how services were delivered. In fact, although they did not come up with the recommendation as to who should deliver service, they certainly were very clear on the recommendation that only one jurisdiction should be delivering the service.

So we already have a report that suggests that there should not be duplication, and two service deliverers, the City of Winnipeg and the province. There should only be one.

I think it is incumbent upon this government to address that particular issue, because if you have a community outreach program such as the Village Clinic or Mount Carmel that is providing services in a particular geographical area, how do you mesh that with the particular services that the City of Winnipeg public health staff are providing? There I think what you have is an opportunity for a lot of overlap and duplication and also fragmentation of service, and we want to avoid that.

So I would again encourage the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to address that. I know it is not an easy issue, but I do think it needs to be dealt with.

My other concern in regard to regionalization of health care services is to allow the hospitals within this province to have a clear mission statement as to what they are all about.

Some of the hospitals will tell you they want a strong hospital system, and they are there to provide acute care. They are there to provide some outpatient service and some day surgery. That is their mandate. Other hospitals feel they need to move into more of the health promotion aspects of delivering health, and I think that needs to be clear. There needs to be a statement made by the government in conjunction with the hospitals as to what their mandate is. Who should be delivering those types of services? I am not sure that within our system to date those decisions have been made.

The Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), although it is not in the throne speech, certainly has referred to the issue of moving towards a health care system in the community that is based on primary health care. I think that the Winnipeg Health Organization articulated in their declaration of 1978 an excellent definition of what primary health care is. The declaration defines primary health care as essential health care based on practical, scientifically sound and socially acceptable methods and technology made universally acceptable to individuals and families in the community through their full participation and at a cost that the community and country can afford to maintain at every stage of their development in the spirit of self-reliance and self-determination. It is the first level of the contact of the individual, the family and the community with the national health system, bringing health care as close as possible to where people live and work, and constitutes the first element of the continuing health care process.

I read that definition into the record, Madam Deputy Speaker, because I think it is important that, when members of the Legislative Assembly talk about primary health care, we really have an idea as to what it is that we are referring to.

In the area of primary health care I found it particularly interesting the other evening that Dr. Michael Rachlis, a former Winnipegger and now at McMaster University, spoke to a group of consumers and nurses and interested individuals of the community and talked a lot about primary

health care and the need to reform the health care system.

He made a very interesting analogy when he talked about how we have conducted studies in North America, whether it be in the United States or in Canada, about the efficacy of doing primary prevention. He gave an example of a number of individuals in the United States where in fact they had actually practised some primary prevention with these individuals. Over the course of time they had proven that with their methods of primary health care they had saved dollars. As Dr. Rachlis said, we know that information, but we do not practise it. If that had been a drug that we had found out about, and he used the example of Prozac—everybody knows about Prozac; everybody is prescribing Prozac in this country. We think it is a miracle cure, yet we already have the miracle cures. We know what works. We know that primary health care works. We know that preventive medicine works. Why are we not doing it? Why are we not using it? I thought he made an excellent point that we really need to move in that direction.

It is very difficult to do as politicians because we all live under four-year mandates, and we also know that when you put your dollars into preventive medicine, you do not necessarily see the results of your work within that four years. So it is difficult for politicians, but I think we certainly need to move in that direction.

I noticed in one of the reports that the government had produced in '91, the Health Promotion Task Force, these are old statistics, but in 1988 and 1989, the Province of Manitoba, the total Health budget was \$1.4 billion. The money spent on curative health was 99.66 percent. The money spent on preventative health was .34 percent of the total budget. Now, I am sure that figure has increased. I would bet that in fact we are spending a few more dollars on preventative as opposed to curative, but it would be interesting to see an updated chart as to whether we are even at 3 percent as recommended by the government's own task force and whether we have moved that far. I would suggest that in fact we are not at 3

percent. If we were only at .34 percent in 1988 and '89 fiscal year, I would suggest that if we are at 1 percent we are doing well. I think that is a goal for the government to move towards whoever the government may be after the next election.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I wanted to speak a little bit about mental health services and home care—and I appreciate again that my time is limited and other members do want an opportunity to speak. Although the government has touted mental health services as sort of the jewel in their crown as far as health care reform is concerned—and we are pleased that there have been positive changes made in the health care system—I think that we need to move on that continuum and still improve our health care services. That improvement needs to be looking at, again, what we consider preventative mental health.

Currently, our mental health dollars are focused on rehabilitation. They are focused on cure. They are not focused on prevention. I had raised this question with the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) a number of months ago that in fact, again, particularly in rural and northern Manitoba, if you have some mental health difficulties, although you have not been labelled with a mental illness such as schizophrenia or manic depression, it is very difficult to get a service in rural or northern Manitoba because the mental health workers through the government will not provide that service because you have not been given a diagnosis.

Yet studies will show, in particular with women who have been abused sexually and then get into drugs and have then mental health illnesses, that if some preventative work could have been done to counsel those individuals and work with them at the initial onset of what they saw as their difficulties, we could prevent some of the long-term costs of health care and provide a better quality of life.

So I would ask the minister to look at the area of preventative mental health. I am not suggesting that government should be delivering that service, but that community-based organizations may want

to look at a mandate for those kinds of services and certainly the self-help organizations as well.

The other area in mental health was just in the area of child and adolescent services. Having had an opportunity to meet with a couple of these psychiatrists in child and adolescent services at Health Sciences Centre the other day, although they are pleased with the new ward that they have and the number of beds, they still see huge gaps in the area of adolescent services, psychiatric services and mental health services for children. They are not treatment centres or services for those adolescents in the community.

We have Knowles Centre which really does not deal with psychiatric issues of children. We have the Manitoba Adolescent Treatment Centre which has 25 beds and deals with a very narrowly focused group. It is an important resource, but there are still a large number of adolescents out there who do not necessarily need to be in a psychiatric bed at Health Sciences Centre or in a hospital, but there is not any kind of supervised treatment services for them in the community. I think that is an area that needs to be addressed as well.

The Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) was quoted in the throne speech that the self-managed Home Care program is being expanded to rural Manitoba. We hope that does occur. That was mentioned in the earlier throne speech as well. We see a number of repeats in this particular throne speech under health care, but we do hope that in fact that program does get off the ground.

I noticed the minister referred in this throne speech and in his comments about the Home Care program and the appeal process. I would beg to differ with the minister, and I would suggest that in fact the appeal process is not working well. I think if you talked to the appeal panel members—and with all due respect to them and certainly the head of the appeal panel happens to be my former family physician—and I think they are all qualified individuals, but they are having difficulty as an appeal board.

* (1530)

The home care staff in the region and in fact the clients who are being serviced are having an even more difficult time with the entire appeal process, because they have not really established some policy guidelines in terms of what should be considered as far as home care. Again, I think when we are talking about the Home Care program, I would encourage the minister rather than to use his pat line of how much more money they have put into the Home Care program—which of course they have because acuity has increased and the volume has increased so obviously there are more dollars going into that particular insured service—to look at the criteria and what kind of services are we providing for the aged and infirmed and the younger disabled to ensure that they can be in their homes and be maintained safely and live a productive life.

It may not be a home care defined service that they need, but it is a service that affects their health and it is a service that is necessary to either be provided by the government or for the government to encourage nonprofit organizations to ensure that service is there. I am speaking of such supports such as home maintenance, laundry services, housekeeping. It has been proven in studies and time and time again and in fact those kind of services will assist people in staying in their own homes for a longer period of time. Rather than having the government totally move away from that, as they have done in the Home Care program, they need to re-examine that and decide: first of all, make the assumption that, yes, this is a good type of support service, and then look at who should be delivering the service. If it is not the Home Care, then someone needs to be out there to be delivering that particular service. I would encourage the minister to look at those particular issues.

I wanted to talk briefly about the Healthy Child Development. Again, the former Minister of Health spoke at length, I believe, in the Estimates process about Healthy Child Development and how wonderful the system was that they were going to develop, et cetera. It is now about a year

and a half later. We see this coming up in the throne speech again, and they talk about a Healthy Child Development strategy, which we support as opposition if, in fact, they ever get it implemented and decide what they want to do.

I would encourage the minister, when he is looking at that type of strategy, to also look at his own government's reports from 1991, and the most recent one in 1994, in regard to looking at province-wide nutrition and food strategy for Manitoba. Again, this ties in very much to the whole issue of primary health care and preventative health. There are excellent recommendations that are in those reports that talk about the need for provincial nutrition and food strategy; and, if this government truly believes in health promotion and prevention, they will move in those directions.

The members of the House may note one of the resolutions that we put on the Order Paper in this session is regarding fetal alcohol syndrome. The members will also know—and, of course, this is a particularly high profile case, but Mr. Kelly Sawchuk, who is oftentimes written up in the papers, happens to be an individual who had fetal alcohol syndrome as a child and now as an adult. He is costing the system hundreds of thousands of dollars over the course of a number of years.

The sad part about fetal alcohol syndrome is that it is 100 percent preventable, and we know that. We know that it is 100 percent preventable. I would like to see this government examine some preventative programs in the area of fetal alcohol syndrome.

Again, when the Leader and I were out in Brandon a number of weeks ago, we had an opportunity to meet with the Brandon school board members as well as the superintendent and a number of teachers. They talked about their difficult to manage, behavioural problem children that they had within the school system. There were about 10 that they had identified as real problems, and they worked out a system of an interagency collaboration to sort of work with these kids. I said to the teacher, how many of those 10 kids

would you say are substance-abuse or fetal alcohol syndrome children? He said, about six. So, again, there are enormous costs to the system, and it is something that can be 100 percent preventable.

I was interested to see that again the Breast Screening Program was mentioned in the throne speech. I understand, from some of the people who were involved with that particular program, that it really is not up and running.

I was also interested to see where we are looking at a prostate centre. I would be interested in more details on that particular program. It is quite interesting, as you read through the throne speech and you pick up a number of the issues that have been identified in health—certainly it is interesting because it has never been an issue that, for whatever reason, has come up as an issue to me from members of the public or even urologists in the province of Manitoba. So I certainly would be interested to see what the goals are going to be for this particular program.

I would encourage the government to at least get the Breast Screening Program up and running and functioning before they start moving on to another program. Let us start doing one well. I understand that the Breast Screening Program still is not up and running and so it needs to be.

I would also ask the minister—and again I am sure he has had an opportunity to hear the comments of Dr. Michael Rachlis who spoke at MARN—to examine the whole issue of fee for service. I recognize that we have a Manitoba Medical Association and a government of Manitoba agreement that is in place.

Again, when you talk to family physicians and even when you talk to specialists, they will tell you that the fee-for-service system as it currently exists does not necessarily assist the patient or the individual in the community.

In fact, it does not even assist the physician in doing good preventative medicine. In fact, in some cases, it encourages the opposite.

If you have physicians who spend a lot of time with their patients, whether that be by visit and/or telephone calls and they feel they are doing a good job, they are not necessarily compensated for some of that extra work. Physicians are compensated to keep encouraging patients to come back to see them at the physician's office and then get a particular fee for service for that particular visit.

We have a fee-for-service system set up that is, in fact, archaic. There have been suggestions that we should move to more of a capitation system where physicians are paid for the number of patients that they see. This is being looked at in some other provinces. It is obviously a fairly complex formula. It would have to be worked out. Again, rather than saying, here are all the answers, my suggestion to the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) is to say, let us look at that fee-for-service issue and see if there cannot be changes to fee for service.

In a meeting a number of weeks ago with the president of the MMA, Dr. Neil Donen, he even talked about the idea of looking at salaried physicians and block funding for physicians. Obviously, if the president of the MMA is saying that, they are willing to discuss the issue. I would encourage the Minister of Health and his new deputy to enter into some conversation and discussion with the association about these very real issues.

I have one more comment to make. I wanted to talk about re-engineering government, but I will not have time to do that. I will only recommend to every member of the House that they read the book *Re-Engineering Government*. It is an excellent book.

There was also an excellent article in *The Globe and Mail*. I do not have the date, but it was sometime this fall. It was a remark by Paul Tellier, who was a Clerk of the Privy Council and secretary under Brian Mulroney and was basically a career civil servant. He outlines eight excellent points about how we should reinvent government and what we need to do in the bureaucracy and the changes that we need to make.

I am sure that if you ask most civil servants, they could tell you what those changes are, but it is very much worth reading and I would be happy to give anyone a copy who is interested.

As one final comment and as I end my remarks, I wanted to raise the issue of co-ordination of our services in the area of Health, Justice, Education and Family Services. Again, it is something that I have been talking about since 1988 along with the whole area of preventative medicine and health promotion, but I still will reiterate it.

We really have not done a good job of interfacing among the departments in terms of the programs we deliver, and not only that but in knowing how decisions in one department affect cost and outcomes in other departments. I think of an example in our hospitals. We have intensive care pediatric wards where in fact we have babies in intensive care where the beds cost about \$1,000 to \$1,400 a day. When those children are ready to go home, oftentimes they are not going back to their families, they are to go to foster families, and because we have a shortage of trained foster families in the system, those children remain in hospital for more days than what they really need to. There is one example of how we have extra costs incurred to the Health system because of gaps in the Family Services system. The examples are many. Another example is the whole issue of physical education and what we teach in the schools versus what has been documented in health as being very important for Manitobans.

* (1540)

I will leave my comments with those two examples, and I would hope that the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) will have an opportunity to hear my remarks and some of the suggestions and the issues I think that need to be looked at in the area of health care. Although we will certainly have an opportunity to meet with the public and meet with the professionals over the next couple of months, we may not have an opportunity to actually address these issues within the Legislative Assembly.

I would just like to close, Madam Deputy Speaker, because it is the season, to wish all members of this House and all staff within the Legislative Assembly the very best during the holiday season and certainly health and happiness in 1995.

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Deputy Speaker, I commence my comments here on the throne speech by welcoming yourself and the Speaker back to this session as well as all of the Pages and those involved in the Chamber. I find the work of all of you most efficient and we appreciate all of the work we do with you. I would also like to commence by wishing all members of the Chamber the best of the holiday season.

I briefly wish to reflect on a number of issues since time is short, a number of issues in the context of this speech because other members wish to speak. [interjection] For the purpose of the member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) who is already trying to contribute to my speech, I have reserved some direct comments for some of the developments that he has participated in.

I do, again, thank the residents of Kildonan constituency for their ongoing support. I have always said it is an honour to represent that region of the city and the province.

Two weeks ago, I was here in the Chamber, celebrating Hanukkah and dancing the hora; and in about a month from now I will be somewhere else, dancing the hopak with the Ukrainian community as they celebrate Malanka which is Ukrainian New Year's, and I think it is one of the wonderful things about being an MLA in Manitoba. It reflects the character and the background of the community, and I thank the residents of Kildonan, who I continue to consult on a weekly basis through my regular door knocking, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker, one does not wish to dwell on the negative in this Chamber, and one wishes to be positive, which is one of the reasons why our Leader announced both a 10-point youth plan that, if you look at what the government has

done, completely overshadows everything the government has done.

We in the opposition have put together a youth plan that the government has been studying for seven years, Madam Deputy Speaker. Further, the Leader of our party put together a throne speech that absolutely dwarfs the efforts of this government in its throne speech, and I have to ask, what is wrong with the government?

I think the reality is that the government has grown tired. The government is going into its seventh year, and there is some wisdom and there is some logic in a system that generally sees—the historical pattern has been that governments in their second term, in this case, the second term for this government, the third election, but generally, there is a transformation, there is a change after the second term, because, generally, all governments—and I saw it happen in the Schreyer government, and I saw it happen in other governments, that you do run out of steam.

This government has run out of steam. This government has run out of ideas. This government has run out of direction, Madam Deputy Speaker, and they have come to the point where only one thing matters, and that is to get re-elected. There is no vision. There is no idea. There is only one goal for members on the opposite side of the House, and that goal is to get re-elected at all costs.

I believe that sincerely, Madam Deputy Speaker. I believe that this government has run out of ideas, it has run out of steam, and its only goal is to be re-elected. There is no vision for the problems of Manitoba. There is no vision for the children of Manitoba. There is no vision for the elderly of Manitoba. There is no understanding and a comprehension of what our social system was designed for or should be designed for or offer. [interjection] I will get to the Liberals.

The member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) said that it is the Liberals who designed it, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I dare say the Liberals have done more and are intending to do more to damage

our health care system and our social care system than even Mulroney would have contemplated.

But to return to my point, Madam Deputy Speaker, this government does not have a vision, and they have run out of steam, quite frankly, and the goal is to be re-elected. Let me use one case in point. Let me talk about why, all of a sudden, after seven years or six years of running deficits, the highest in provincial history, the government has all of a sudden decided that they are going to bring in balanced-budget legislation.

Now, why have they done that? There are various theories, but my theory is, and I think it is true, that when the government discovered that we had determined they had a slush fund and they had money, a lottery slush fund, they had to do something to try to move the public's consideration from what the government was doing with this money. They came back and said let us bring in balanced budget legislation, and we will talk about that this session. We will not introduce anything, but we will talk about it, and maybe the public will stop asking us, what is this over a hundred million dollars doing in a slush fund when you have decimated the many areas in our health care system?

Madam Deputy Speaker, that shows generally that this government's reactions are mainly political, and they are mainly intent on getting re-elected. It is certainly evident in the health care field, the health care field where this government has put on hold its plans to cut a thousand positions further at Health Sciences Centre and at St. Boniface Hospital, where they have put on the shelves their great friend Connie Curran and her recommendations. They put that on the shelf until after the next election, and most of the so-called government plan is on the shelf until after the next election.

Regionalization, which was mentioned by the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray) is also a process, a stilted one, that is proceeding in spurts and struts and starts, Madam Deputy Speaker, only designed to politically get this government through the next election. They finally, after changing their

direction and ideas three or four times, have determined where they are going to go, but they are not going to go there before the next election. The members know of what I speak.

I will be touching on many aspects of the health care system, but before I do that, I want to talk for the benefit of the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) who was unable to attend a public hearing even though his two predecessors of the Department of Education attended forums at the Seven Oaks School Division. I was personally offended by the fact that the Minister of Education refused to attend to answer questions or to send a representative to attend to answer questions on what the government has done on education.

The minister makes pronouncements from on high as if he and he alone has the answers to the education system. [interjection] The member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister) pipes up as he is apt to do during my speeches, and I am glad he did because I want him to know about a meeting I attended last week in Seven Oaks School Division that was attended by parents. [interjection] If the member for Portage could keep his voice down, he had his opportunity to speak. He had his opportunity to speak on a number of issues between sessions, and he had his opportunity to speak on this Throne Speech Debate.

I attended a meeting of the parents of a school that is being constructed in the Kildonan constituency, Seven Oaks School Division. The school is not yet constructed, and yet the school division brought together, and the parents came together, to talk about the principal they would have, talk about the program they would have. It was attended by members of the community, and I wish the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) was aware of that because he seems to be unaware or does not choose to be aware of the fact that this is happening in Seven Oaks School Division. In fact, there has been intensive involvement, but he seems to be living in a cocoon. That is why I was offended by the fact that he did not attend the recent forum held in Seven Oaks School Division, because he could have perhaps learned something about what is happening in our end of town, and it

is happening in our community, but that did not take place.

* (1550)

Madam Deputy Speaker, in my regular door knocking, one issue has become very clear to members on this side of the House and certainly to me, and that is that the Winnipeg Jets are not, shall I say, on the highest priority of my constituents. In fact, I think it would be safe to say that they are offended by the money being paid to the Jets in light of draconian, dramatic, unfair cutbacks in the health care system.

They simply do not want any money going to the Winnipeg Jets. In fact, it is funny how the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the whole government were there to try and save the Jets, and they keep on it, and they sign an agreement. They will attend a multitude of meetings, but when it comes to health care, the Premier is nowhere to be seen, and members on the opposite side are nowhere to be seen and have no answers. There are answers for the Jets and there are no answers for health care, and I resent that.

I resent the money that is going to the Jets, and I resent money going to an arena when this group of individuals is undermining the very social fabric and social structure that we have established and set up in this province, and that is part of the lack of vision. Because if this government had vision, if this government recognized what our strengths are, perhaps they would build upon them. Perhaps they would stop the theory of confrontation. Perhaps they would stop sending up straw men, because after you have alienated the teachers, after you have alienated the nurses, after you have alienated the elderly, after you have alienated the doctors, who is left? After the young people have been leaving the province in droves, Madam Deputy Speaker, who is left? That is the legacy of this government, a government of confrontation. It is no better stated than in our alternative speech from the throne, which I am going to repeat for members opposite because it was absent from comments in their so-called Speech from the Throne.

Today some of the spirit of success is gone. For more than six years we have seen a government that only fosters confrontation. This is not in keeping with our traditions of co-operation and working together. Instead of building together for the future, we see a government that sets up one group against another, trying to create winners and losers, a government that sees high levels of unemployment and record levels of poverty as unfortunate by-products of the marketplace, Madam Deputy Speaker. I think that has been and is the legacy of this government, and that is one of the reasons why after seven years in office the government is due for a change and ought to be changed on behalf of the public of Manitoba.

It is ironic that yesterday the minister announced the \$100 million program of computerization on the same day that they inform the Health Sciences Centre, oh, by the way, you are not going to get the 2 percent cut that was proposed by our chief accountant, Julian Benson, a couple of weeks ago; you are going to get a cut in the range of 8 percent to 10 percent which is on top of the double digit cuts that you have had the last several years. It is ironic that should happen the same day.

I tried to look at the government's health care policy in a holistic sense, and what came to me is we had sort of like a three-legged stool. One leg was Connie Curran Inc. brought in to reform the system, to deal with nurses and to deal with the hospital sector. Remember, Madam Deputy Speaker, she was going to save \$65 million. Of course it did not happen. The second leg of the stool is We Care, which is the We Care Inc., one of the favourites of the Minister of Health, which is privatized nursing care, done by a private firm. The third leg of the stool is the Royal Bank of Canada that has now been given the contract to have all the information, and it sort of fits a tidy pattern.

We have Connie Curran on the one hand, We Care on the other hand, and if I did not know better I would think the minister had shares in the We Care from the way she is defending them, but given their closeness to the scene. [interjection] The minister asks do I agree with the We Care.

Does the minister agree with the cuts in the health care system? Does the minister agree with the cuts in Home Care? I suggest that the minister does. When she sat around the cabinet table when they cut home care—

Point of Order

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Urban Affairs): I wonder if the member would be willing to entertain questions.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The honourable Minister of Urban Affairs does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Chomiak: I recognize that members opposite are very sensitive on health care issues. That is fairly clear, Madam Deputy Speaker, from their reaction.

Perhaps I will use this opportunity to read into the record some information that has come to my attention, because members opposite try to create the illusion, and it is illusionary, that there were no cuts in the home care system, and I have in front of me the annual report of Manitoba Health for '93-94 and that was the year in question. That was the year when they tried to sneak through this House cuts to home care, and the former Minister of Health insisted there were no cuts and the present Minister of Health insisted there were no cuts. In fact, I would suspect that since then the volume has increased because the number of patients being forced out of hospitals has increased and the acuity of care has increased, but in their own stats from the government's annual report, it says, the number of persons receiving co-ordinated home care service in Winnipeg for April, 1993, 8,645; March of the next year, 7,882. Close to 1,000 people cut off home care.

Let me emphasize, close to 1,000 people cut off home care, and, you know, these are their own statistics from their own book. If you look even at the yearly, the year they made the major cuts, home support service 1989-90, 6,349; in '93-94, 4,541. That is only a cut of 2,000 to home care, and the members opposite insist there are no cuts.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it defies logic, and you know what? The member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) insists—why do you not just come straight and admit the fact? Why do you not just admit it that you did indulge in cuts because perhaps the public will begin—and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) nods his head—perhaps the public will start giving you some credibility on the health care issues, because they give you absolutely zero credibility on health care issues. On issue after issue in health care, we have been correct, and they have been wrong. Part of the reason why they have no credibility is they refuse to answer questions or they obfuscate, and it only hurts to reinforce the opinion which has occurred time and time again either that they cannot manage or they do not care. I do not think it is so much that they do not care. It is just that they cannot manage the system, because what they are now doing—

An Honourable Member: How about Ontario?

Mr. Chomiak: —and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) says, how about Ontario and Saskatchewan? I like that. You know, I like the fact that every time they get into trouble they do one of two things. They attack us personally, which does not surprise me, or they say, what about Ontario or what about Saskatchewan, Madam Deputy Speaker? The elections are fought here. The decisions are made here, and if they had any intellectual integrity, they would deal with the issues here, but they do not. They defend it by looking at Ontario and Saskatchewan, and that is not only intellectually dishonest, but it does a disservice to the people of Manitoba. Because if you go door to door—

An Honourable Member: You are intellectually bankrupt.

Mr. Chomiak: The Premier (Mr. Filmon) says that we are intellectually bankrupt.

* (1600)

A government that time and time again repeats the same promises in a throne speech, Madam Deputy Speaker, and does not deliver, a government that has been studying a youth plan for

seven years and has not made any announcements—we as opposition made a 10-part proposal that the government's plan, which is nonexistent, pales by comparison. You know what? We had to. We had to because aboriginal youth are in a crisis situation based on what has happened in this government, or lack, not happened in this province for seven years. The situation affecting youth in this province is nothing short of disastrous.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

You know, Mr. Speaker, that is why we were forced, and we have a program in effect. After the next election I believe that we will have the opportunity of putting into effect that program to improve the status of health for young people in Manitoba, and we will ask all members of this House to join us in doing that.

Mr. Speaker, I see that my time is up, and I have much to talk about that I will not have an opportunity to deal with. Just in closing I want to talk about the 100 committees that are studying health care, the 100 secret committees that the government has set up, most of whom did have to deliver bad news will not of course deliver the bad news until after the next provincial election. The good news will be trotted out and announced and reannounced as it happened in the past, as would happen with the youth plan, as would happen with improving health care services. We will not see that until after the next election.

Community-based care has all of a sudden become a priority with this government, seven years into their mandate, which I suspect is too late. Nurse-managed care, all of a sudden the government has discovered, announced and reannounced too late in the mandate, seven years after their government. It is something that should have been at the front end, not at the back end but discovered—

The Premier indicated that I have spoken for over an hour and half. I could only have hoped that. I do understand that the Premier should have the opportunity to speak before we close, and I will close my comments by wishing all a very

happy holiday season and by adding that we are dealing here with ideas, not personalities and that I have a great deal of respect for all members of the House. I wish them all well, both in the new year and beyond. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, it really is a pleasure for me to rise and make my contributions to the Throne Speech Debate. I am losing track, but I believe it is the 16th throne speech that I have been able to debate. It always is a thrill and a pleasure for me to be able to make my contributions, and I want to begin by welcoming you back to the Chair and presiding over the affairs of this House. You continue to do so with equanimity, with fairness, with I believe are the best intentions of the parliamentary system in your efforts. I congratulate you and welcome you back.

I welcome the new Pages, both those who are able to be with us today and those who have been serving us throughout the course of this short session. I welcome the Pages. I wish them well in both their efforts here in the Chamber and also in their school work. I know it is an honour for them to have been selected, and I recognize that they will gain experiences here, most of which will be very positive and helpful to them in their future efforts and hopefully an appreciation for our parliamentary system of democracy and all that it means for our province and our country.

Mr. Speaker, I also, in beginning my words on the throne speech, would like to be able to extend the greetings of the season to all, both who are here in this House and all who they represent, and as well, of course, to the families of all of our members in the House.

This is a family time of year. It is a time when all of us think about the feelings of peace and good will and friendship and the warm feelings that are evoked by the holiday season, regardless of what religious background or what faith we have. We celebrate at this time of year a variety of different celebrations, and I wish the best of the holiday season to everyone and the very best for the new year.

I might say that in responding to some of the positions put forward in this Throne Speech Debate by members opposite, and I had the opportunity to review them, either listening to them verbally or reviewing Hansard, certainly I sense that we are having an opportunity to do something that we have not always done, and that is to debate real issues.

There was an editorial in the Free Press, and I do not always endorse the editorial positions of the Free Press, although I think more often than not I do. In this particular case, they pointed out that this session, led by the material that was in the throne speech and the proposals that were laid out by the government, was one that was for the first time perhaps in a while laying out real issues that in effect were a line in the sand between members on this side of the House and members on the other side of the House, that really did speak to differences in philosophy and differences in approach to government between our party and the parties opposite.

In that, Mr. Speaker, it leads me right into my approach to the discussion of the throne speech, and that is to talk in terms of the vision that is contained within the throne speech, the concrete plans that are put forward for significant achievements and perhaps significant change, and finally, the credibility to carry it out. I think that, given that the parties opposite attempted their own versions of a throne speech, in other words an alternate throne speech a day or two prior to ours, this does allow us to make comparisons, direct comparisons, between the vision, the plans and the credibility to carry out those efforts this side and that side.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by saying that our government has carried on, as we began a number of years ago when being elected to office in 1990 for the second term, with our view that our efforts will make and are making the 1990s a bold decade for Manitoba. We have said over and over again that we want this to be the best place in Canada to live, to work, to invest and to raise a family, and this throne speech continues in the efforts to ensure that that will be the case.

We believe that the role of government is to facilitate and to create a stable and competitive environment in which people can dream their dreams and pursue their excellence with pride. We believe and I believe that Manitobans have shown that anything can be done right here in Manitoba. The throne speech provides a clear vision for the future of Manitoba. Manitobans are rising to the challenge. It is wonderful to be able to see things like the program called *The Innovators* that is on Sunday nights on CKY TV. It is wonderful to be able to talk with individuals who are making a difference, who are using their innovative skills, who are using their knowledge and their creativity and doing things of international scope right here in Manitoba.

Just earlier today I spoke with an individual whom I had not met before but read an article about in the *Manitoba Business Magazine*, who is actually making replica automobiles like the old Model T's and things of that nature that are being used in movies, because these are actually virtually hand-made automobile reproductions of the old styles that they need for movies. He obviously does not make too many because they are made, as I say, by hand literally. The only things that he imports are the axles and the engines. Everything else is made here, and they are being sold all over the world because people need them for those specific purposes of trying to recreate the classic automobiles of the past.

* (1610)

It was just one of so many examples of what is happening today as Manitobans have been energized, Manitobans have been given confidence to know that they can compete with the best and they can succeed anywhere in the world.

Our goals for Manitobans are clear and straightforward. They are to provide jobs, economic security as well as personal and community security, secure and satisfying jobs, not only for this generation but for generations to follow. We want, of course, for our children to be taught the fundamentals, the new skills they are going to need to be able to compete in the next century. We want our health care to be high

quality and accessible. We want safe streets and neighbourhoods. We want our public business, and this is very important, to be conducted with integrity and with accountability. We want, of course, to continue to work in partnership with the people of all the communities of Manitoba.

Our vision for the 1990s is to prepare Manitoba for the 21st Century and to continue to make Manitoba an even better place in which to live, to work, to invest, to raise a family. We are building a strong Manitoba. We have proven that we have the leadership, the stability, the consistency and the success upon which to found that vision for the 21st Century. This government has helped put Manitoba back on the road to prosperity. We have the new ideas and the new opportunities to explore in building a stronger tomorrow, and together with our vision and our commitment and our new ideas we will indeed make Manitoba stronger than ever.

Of course, since our very first throne speech, jobs and the economy have always been our top priority. Fiscal management and sustainable development have consistently been the foundation pieces of our economic strategy, and the framework for economic growth outlined our economic strategy. It addresses the need for a favourable and competitive climate for growth.

I think that it is important that we begin with this kind of foundation, that we begin with this kind of statement. Economic and social policy are intrinsically linked. That is what the framework says. Economic growth is not an end in itself, but it is essential to creating jobs, to sustaining health care, education and social services and our high quality of life.

I was very pleased when the Leader of the third party said that this was, quote, a very accurate statement, one that I agree with. Very, very interesting that he should say that.

On the other hand, as he proceeded into his speech, he then took great exception with me for suggesting that the government's role is primarily as a facilitator to establish policies that create the climate for record growth of business and jobs.

When I said that government alone was not able to create jobs and opportunities, he took great exception to that. I find that interesting, because he himself in an interview with Peter Warren on the 6th of July, he said and I quote: I think people have to recognize government cannot be all things to all people. We cannot create those jobs, that is what he said. We cannot create those jobs—those are his exact words. I figure that is what he is talking about himself in government. He did not say, alone; he said we cannot create those jobs.

What we can do is provide a framework, a face and policies and programs which allow people, essentially, and businesses in the private sector to stimulate the economy. I mean that is all government can do, that is what he said. He concluded by saying, people who tell you that government can do more are not being honest. That is what he said.

Mr. Speaker, that is really interesting because he, the Leader of the Liberal Party, has difficulty keeping track of what he says and to whom he says it. He changes almost with each passing day. When we talk about credibility, and he wants to attack somebody who says that government by itself cannot create jobs, and then he turns around and he says the same thing himself, then he proceeds to say different things.

I have to read a letter that was in the Carillon on Wednesday, November 9, and it is entitled, Don't mislead voters. It says: Dear Sir. I feel I must write to express my dismay over remarks made in your editorial on Manitoba Liberal Leader Paul Edwards. In particular, I am amazed that he would travel through rural Manitoba and suggest that, quote, government has few roles to play beyond providing health care, roads and a few other basic services. That is what the Leader of the Liberal Party said apparently. It is in quotation marks.

When I read this I agree with the basic idea, but I doubted the Liberal Leader's sincerity and questioned his motives in making such an uncharacteristic comment. It did not take long to

uncover the real Paul Edwards in his first speech to the Legislature on April 12, 1994. He said, quote: Government, I believe, has a greater role to play. More than the Conservatives believe it does.

So this writer, Mr. P. Friesen, of Niverville, Manitoba, concludes: Politicians devoid of principles are a common breed. Real leadership takes a consistent position in all areas and in all seasons. In Manitoba that means saying the same thing to rural Manitobans that you say to people in Winnipeg.

Paul Edwards knows what people in our area want to hear. He knows that we respect the values of hard work in rural Manitoba. We generally look within during the time of need and do not see bigger government as a solution to our problems.

Mr. Edwards, if you should read this I want to tell you one thing, all we ask for in rural Manitoba is equal opportunity and honest government. Please do not mislead us.

He concludes saying, please do not mislead us, just give us an honest opposition party after the next election.

This is an interesting thing because we on this side of the House have wondered the same things. We have wondered how it is that the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Edwards) could get up and say so many different things in so many different places on so many different topics, Mr. Speaker. We wonder how it is that he could get up so far for eight days in this Throne Speech Debate and say all sorts of things but not tell us where he stands on some critical issues to Manitobans.

Like, for instance, where does he stand with respect to proposed Liberal tax increases in Ottawa? I came out saying I did not believe that the federal Liberal government ought to be increasing taxes, that they ought to be trying to keep—now, he has said nothing about this. I believe the New Democrats have come out and said that they believe that the federal government should not increase taxes, but the Leader of the Liberal Party here in Manitoba does not have the

courage or the sense to be able to give a position on that. I find that incredible.

Mr. Speaker, this party and this Leader and the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) have come out strongly against the potential closure of the Air Command Headquarters in Winnipeg.

The Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Edwards) in Manitoba, the member for St. James, he has refused to come out on that issue. Now maybe he does not have a position on it yet, but he should at least have the courage to say that, that he is still making up his mind, that he is not sure. Let him tell us something. Maybe he thinks that the Air Command base in Winnipeg is like he thought the NACE headquarters was when Winnipeg lost it to Montreal. He said "we have bigger fish to fry."

* (1620)

Mr. Speaker, are these the bigger fish that we are frying now? He is going to get rid of hundreds of jobs by supporting his federal colleagues on the closure of the Air Command Headquarters. Are these the bigger fish that he is now frying or was it the bigger fish that he was frying when he endorsed the decision by his federal colleagues to cancel the EH-101 helicopter contract and get rid of 300 to 400 high-tech jobs in Winnipeg? Are the bigger fish that he wants to fry the reduction in work for CF-5 overhauls that is going to reduce another couple of hundred jobs at Bristol? Are these the bigger fish that he is waiting to fry? Why does not he speak out on these things? I wonder about these things.

An Honourable Member: He is too busy with Winnie-the-Pooh.

Mr. Filmon: I found it interesting that one of the major issues that he has raised in this session is Winnie-the-Pooh. Now he used that as his lead-off question last Monday in Question Period. The Liberal Party gets anywhere from six to nine questions a day in the Legislature and he used three of them on Winnie-the-Pooh. That I find absolutely fascinating, but then again you have to take a look at what his priorities are in his alternate throne speech. His alternate throne

speech is a two-page throne speech. I know that brevity is the soul of wit and I compliment him for brief, but he said that all that was important in Manitoba or the most important thing in Manitoba was families and children.

He does not even believe his own research. He does not even believe the information that he uses taxpayers money to accumulate on behalf of the Liberal Party, because if you take this research which he has put together, courtesy of the folders that he sent out at taxpayers expense to ask Manitobans what their priorities were, the No. 1 priority was jobs; 53 percent of those who responded to his Liberal brochure said jobs were No. 1. Obviously, the most important thing you can do to strengthen families and to encourage and create a better environment for their children is to have families that have jobs and economic strength. That is what you can do.

But the Liberals do not understand that and the Liberal Party led by the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) has not a clue when it comes to the priorities of Manitobans. No matter how much he spends to find out from them what their priorities are, he still does not understand. This is his response with the pie chart, 53.2 percent say jobs are No. 1—nowhere in his alternate throne speech, nowhere on his priority list.

Mr. Speaker, he said that one of his top priorities for a throne speech was childproof lighters. Now childproof lighters in Manitoba, I do not want to say that in a perfect world we would not try to do everything possible to ensure that we created a safer environment, but this is one of his two pages of top priorities for Manitobans, childproof lighters.

I tell you, one of the things that he ought to have been doing was to get out and work with members on this side of the House and the official opposition to try and convince his federal colleagues that they ought not to encourage more people to smoke by cutting down the tobacco tax across this country. That would have perhaps removed a whole lot of lighters out of the hands of people and out of the homes of people.

Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, as I talked earlier about the beginning of the throne speech, we are dealing with visions, plans and creditability, and he continues to show his lack of creditability by doing things like yesterday, coming forward and saying that a buyout, a major buyout of \$225,000, had been paid to the former president of Manitoba Telephone System.

Mr. Speaker, the fact is that it is absolutely false. He was dead wrong. He uses that as the basis of his attacking government in the House. How can anybody respect his credibility or his views when he does not have the time or the inclination or the integrity to check facts before he dumps them on the House here and makes accusations?

What he says and what he does are two entirely different things. We would like to know his position on major issues. These days we hear from people who are involved with the public school system. A number of them, of course, are teachers, are school trustees, are people who are involved in making a commitment to the public school system, and they are saying that the Liberal Party and the Liberal Leader (Mr. Edwards) from St. James are all telling them of their tremendous commitment to the public school system in Manitoba.

We would like to know then whether or not he is going to come out publicly and renounce the commitment that he has made, that his party has made to 80-percent funding to independent schools.

Is it no longer the position of the party or is it? Let us have a little courage. Let us have a little integrity. That is all the public wants. Can the public expect less from its representatives than a little bit of integrity? How about it? Let us have your position on it. Let us be honest.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear because that is what it is in writing by the Liberal Party; it is 80 percent now. In fact it was 80 percent in 1990, that they were going to do it immediately.

Mr. Speaker, how about health care? How about little things? They have candidates running around saying different things about issues like, how about the issue of health care?—[interjection] I think we have a little caucus going here. The Leader and the Leader's opponent are trying to figure out what the policy is, and they are about to announce it. I think they are about to announce it.

Mr. Speaker, there may be an announcement shortly. There may be an announcement from the Liberal Party about their position shortly. We have the same concerns about a party that would nominate candidates and have them go throughout their areas telling different things on the same issues. We have concerns, for instance, about the Liberal Party's position presumably on the new hospital that is scheduled to be built between Winkler and Morden.

That hospital, according to the Liberal candidate in Pembina, would have been built even sooner if a Liberal government had been in place, but that candidate in Pembina is criticising it, saying that he would have, had he been in office and his party, built it even sooner. They can hardly wait to get to it to build.

Their candidate in Morris is going around Carman saying that the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) has told him that if they are elected, they will cancel that hospital. Now that is integrity. That is government you can count on. That is really what you have to have around here.

Mr. Speaker, let us talk as well because the Leader of the Liberal Party spent a little bit of time during his speech on balanced budgets. That is a very, very interesting topic when it comes to trying to discern the difference between our party and the difference between the parties opposite on that particular issue.

The position, if I understand it correctly, of the Liberal Leader is, that is Liberal policy; balanced budgets are Liberal policy.

* (1630)

Mr. Speaker, of course, anybody who has ever spent any time around this Legislature, listened to speeches and watched that party vote, could never believe that. Of course, the public knows they have no credibility on that issue, but he then proceeds to tell about how he had a news conference in which he issued a news release saying Liberals were in favour of balanced budgets, but there were some qualifiers. Firstly, the budget would only be balanced once in every four years that you were in government, and secondarily, their view of a balanced budget is Frances Russell's view of a balanced budget, which is that capital is not included. The old mortgage theory, capital is not included.

So I would like to invite the Leader of the Liberal Party to examine the records of this government in office over a period of seven budgets, because if he would like to evaluate it on that basis he would find in seven budgets, four of those seven budgets were balanced on an operating basis, and a fifth was within \$34 million of a balanced budget. But he did not vote for any of those because he did not want a balanced budget. He wanted to spend more money. But it is really interesting because he points to balanced budget legislation in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick under Liberal governments, and he says that is what shows you where Liberals really stand on balanced budgets. And you know what? In New Brunswick, they leave out capital spending entirely, so at least they are in accord with what the Leader from St. James has in his philosophy. In Nova Scotia they leave out interest on the debt entirely. Now, under those circumstances, guess what? We would have had a balanced budget every year.

I think we have some things that we want to talk about with the opposition, the Leader of the Liberal Party on the hustings, in public. I think we want to get him out and say where he stands on these important issues. I think we want to stop this confusion between a candidate in Morris and a candidate in Pembina and a candidate in Rupertsland, and so on and so forth. You know, we cannot have this difference, as the person who wrote the letter to the editor says, between what

you say in Winnipeg and what you say when you are in Steinbach and what you say when you are in Roblin. We cannot have those differences. The public does not want somebody who is not honest enough to be able to say the same thing on the same issue no matter where he is, in Winnipeg or anywhere else, Mr. Speaker.

I do not want to spend all of my time dealing with the Leader of the Liberal Party. I want to address a few remarks to the Leader of the New Democratic Party, who gave me very generously of his views just on Monday, I believe it was over an hour and a half. I know he was just trying to be helpful, but Mr. Speaker, we have some concerns about his integrity and perhaps his credibility, and so let us deal with some of the things that he put forward. We will leave aside—incidentally, I may talk if I have time about the negativity of the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) and the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), but I want to talk primarily, when it comes to credibility, about what he has to say about the economy and what he has to say about deficits because he implies somehow that the deficits were really, really under control and they were not a problem under New Democrats.

I have to tell you that, when it comes to deficits without raising taxes, without raising any major tax rates in Manitoba in seven consecutive budgets, this government's deficits have been the lowest in Canada as a percentage of GDP. Take a look at the figures. They are confirmed by Dominion Bond Rating agency at 1.3 percent, the lowest as a percentage of GDP of all the provinces in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to that, there was a forum that was held just the other day in Toronto. It was called, Hitting the Wall: Why Canada Is Bankrupt, and it was hosted by the Toronto Society of Financial Analysts and the Fraser Institute. At that they had some very complimentary things to say about Manitoba. Of course, the members opposite know that Dominion Bond Rating Service has gone on record as saying that this has been the most fiscally responsible province in Canada from 1987 to the present. If

he wants to take credit for half a year, that is his business.

At that forum they spoke about their all-star list of the best administrations in Canada over the last few decades. [interjection] Yes. And the three worst, the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) is right about one of them, the three worst over the last few decades were the Devine administration in Saskatchewan and the Rae administration in Ontario and—can you hold on?—the Pawley administration. One of the three worst, all time. Of course, we are interested in that because the member opposite, the Leader of the New Democratic Party, says that he wants to emulate Howard Pawley, that if given the chance he would bring in some of those old programs like the Jobs Fund, or like all of those, and he, of course, has around him some of the dregs of that administration still with him, Mr. Speaker, and so he still has some of those people surrounding him, people like the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), people like the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), of course, people like the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos) and so on. He has plenty of the vestiges of that old administration around to advise and support him.

Mr. Speaker, modesty prevents me from saying the three top administrations that he also named in the past three decades. Modesty prevents—well, okay, the three top administrations that they name are the Blakeney administration in Saskatchewan, the McKenna administration in New Brunswick and the current government in Manitoba. That is on the fiscal side. We know just exactly what a record they represent and what a terrible tragedy they were for Manitobans, the New Democrats in office.

Mr. Speaker, we will take a look now at what the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), has to say about growth rates because this is very important, again, to know about credibility. This is what he said, and I quote:

If they do not want to listen to Stats Canada, perhaps they should listen to their own Manitoba

Bureau of Statistics. I wonder what the Minister responsible for the Bureau thinks when their own ministers say, oh, we are really not in tenth place. Stats Canada is wrong. When the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics both in 1991 and in 1993 also had you in tenth place, last place, it is not a very happy occasion.

He goes on, as he is right now, to say, GDP is the only reasonable measure. He says, of course, the GDP is the measure of everything you do, every economic indicator, private sector, public sector, voluntary sector; it affects the commodity prices.

* (1640)

Well, Mr. Speaker, we went to the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics because we drew our figures from them, and we took the quotes of the Leader of the Opposition to the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics. I have permission from Mr. Falk, who is the Director of the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics, who used to provide information for the member for Brandon East. He is the authority in Manitoba on this. He is the director of the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics.

Here is exactly what he said. This is his briefing notes, and I will read it into the record, quote: There are several different measures of economic performance of gross domestic product produced by Stats Canada and other organizations including Conference Board and Manitoba Bureau of Statistics. The numbers are released at different times, using different methodologies, and because this is an imperfect world they do not often agree with each other. This can lead to confusion, but here is what some of the organizations say about Manitoba's economic performance. Conference Board says that in three of the last five years Manitoba did better than the national average. So we outperformed Canada 60 percent of the time.

Statistics Canada says that Manitoba did better than the Canadian average in two of the four years. Those years were 1990 and 1992 where we were fourth and second best. So, again in those four years, according to Stats Canada, under these

figures—hold on to your hat—we outperformed Canada 50 percent of the time.

Now, Manitoba Bureau of Statistics, which is what he says is the authority that ought to be listened to, that is the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer). MBS says that Manitoba outperformed the national average three years out of four between 1990 and 1993. Those years were 1990, 1991 and 1993. Now this is a quote: Mr. Doer claimed in the House on Monday, December 5, that for the years 1983 to 1989 Manitoba had outperformed the national average every year. Statistics Canada was quoted as the source of that information.

The Statistics Canada data does not support Mr. Doer's assertion. He has misread the attached chart released by Statistics Canada. The chart tracks changes in level of GDP for Manitoba and Canada since 1984. The data being charted here is in the form of an index reference to the year 1989. It is not a comparison of annual growth rates between Manitoba and Canada, nor did Stats Canada present it in that way. In fact, between 1983 and 1989 Statistics Canada GDP estimates show that Manitoba's annual growth rate was above the national average only once, in 1985. The attached table shows it clearly. This is from Manitoba Bureau of Statistics. This is your source of information, and this puts—[interjection]

Point of Order

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Premier is abusing the rules as usual, going into the low road as usual, misusing the debate in this Chamber. He used the term lie, and I would ask him to retract.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised, I did not hear the word "lie". I did not, but I will take the opportunity and I will peruse that—

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I will ask your interpretation. I said, this puts a lie to everything he says. I am not sure of the acceptability of that. I will take your ruling on it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I appreciate the honourable First Minister's—the word "lie" does come into play several times in Beauchesne's. It is deemed unparliamentary and it clearly indicates just the word "lie". So if the honourable First Minister wants to withdraw, fine.

Mr. Filmon: Clearly, even according to—
[interjection]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable First Minister has indicated that he would allow me a moment to look at the rules. The word "lie", sir, is clearly unparliamentary. It does not matter in which form it is shown here. There are about 25 different incidents where the word "lie" has been ruled unparliamentary. The honourable First Minister to withdraw the remark then.

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, this is the point.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Filmon: I will withdraw that word.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. Thank you. That resolves it.

* * *

Mr. Filmon: Everybody knows how deceitful the Leader of the Opposition is. Everybody knows that what he has put on the board is incorrect, and I will tell you why, Mr. Speaker. In his very words he says, the GDP is the measure of everything you do, every economic indicator, private sector, public sector, voluntary sector.

The chart that he was referring to leaves out all sorts of our economy. It leaves out for instance all of the programs that go into agriculture. It leaves out GRIP payments; a third of \$1 billion worth of GRIP payments in 1993 are left out. It leaves out all of the—Mr. Speaker, he does not understand and he does not want to understand and that is part of the dishonesty that people understand. That is why he is at 22 percent in the polls.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table this so that maybe the Leader of the Opposition, if he has any

integrity, would read it and at least try and understand.

The other thing of course, the other thing in his remarks is he took great exception to the tabling by the member for St. Vital of the budget that was defeated under the Howard Pawley administration. That was the budget that of course Jim Walding, the former member for St. Vital, voted against. He did not vote against it because it was a balanced budget, Mr. Speaker. He voted against it because it had a deficit of \$334 million. That is the budget that was defeated. He keeps harkening back to that and saying it was a balanced budget. That is the kind of dishonesty that we are dealing with.

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

He also refers in his notes, talking about last year's deficit he says: He reported \$431 million—he refers to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson). The actual was \$458 million. The fact is that was the projected figure that was in the budget, and the actual deficit was \$431 million. That is the true one; that is the one that is accepted by everybody else in the country. He persists in misrepresenting it, Mr. Acting Speaker.

That is what we are dealing with. To show his desperation, though, we now have yesterday, the big deal that he is making, for instance, over the Kenaston underpass being a part of the infrastructure program.

In that, he makes the argument that there ought to be a public hearing on this. Well, first and foremost, there was a public hearing on it. When he was in government the city built the last two bridges with money from the provincial government, the Chief Peguis Trail bridge and the Keewatin underpass, the last great separation that was done. Neither of those had an environmental assessment. Neither of those had public hearings. Neither of them was required by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) when he publicly influenced the City of Winnipeg by offering them \$10 million to build the Chief Peguis Bridge.

What hypocrisy to come out here and say that we ought to do it when his government did not do it and would not do it. What hypocrisy.

* (1650)

Mr. Acting Speaker, the throne speech presents a number of things that I think ought to be of great interest to members opposite. It talks about how the economy is growing, how the economy is improving in sector after sector. This is an all-pervasive recovery. It is a recovery that is being felt in virtually every area.

It is absolutely astounding that we could have the negativity and the doom and gloom from members opposite. Last year Manitoba's number of jobs increased. It was the third highest increase of any province in Canada, 6000 full-time jobs. So far this year we have increased by another 8000 full-time jobs. As a matter of fact, our job growth in the last three months has been second best in Canada, yet members opposite continue to try and sell their negativity everywhere they go in this province and beyond.

The Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Edwards), of course, goes to Toronto, and he speaks to the corporate community and tries to sell his negativity. Now is not that a wonderful way to try and draw investment here? Is that not a wonderful way to try and encourage people here to work harder, to invest, to grow, to create jobs and opportunities, go and talk in the boardrooms of Toronto and try and tell them that this is a terrible place to be, bad mouth the province? I cannot believe that, but that is what the Leader of the Liberal Party does.

The Leader of the New Democrats (Mr. Doer), of course, does it here in Manitoba, and he does it in some way to try and appeal to his base. His base, of course, are people that are—[interjection] They are people who have supported his party in the past, who are the only ones who are left. They are down to 22 percent of support. That leaves them with just the hard-core socialist element—just the hard-core socialist element.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Order, please.

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Acting Speaker, in the first nine months of this year, our total merchandise exports to the world are a third higher than in the same period last year. That is the best performance by any province in Canada. We have had the best growth rate in our retail sales in six years. Tourism is buoyant. Our growth in overseas and U.S. tourists is the among the best in Canada.

Manufacturing growth, now here is a real success story. Last month we reached a 13-year high in the number of people employed in this province in manufacturing; manufacturing investments increases this year are leading the nation. Manitobans all over are taking pride in these facts, because they know that it means a better economic future for them and their families.

Mr. Acting Speaker, there are other areas; for instance, the mining sector has been having a tremendous boom. The mining sector is having increases in investment, in exploration like we have never seen before. Last year was an all-time record high in exploration levels. As a result, we have found major new—[interjection]

Mr. Acting Speaker, the member opposite is unhappy because housing prices are not going up. We think that it is reasonable for housing prices to stay stable so that people can afford a home in this province. I cannot believe that he wants inflation. He wants to have higher prices in houses. That is the most ignorant thing I have heard him say today. That is unbelievable.

We have found new deposits, major deposits in nickel, both in the Thompson area, in the Williams Lake area. There is one gold mine that opened earlier this year, two more that will be opened by the end of next year, titanium, vanadium, all sorts of new mineral deposits, thanks to the efforts of this government. The Mineral Exploration Incentive Program, new mining tax holiday, all of these efforts to make this an attractive environment

for investment, and it is working. You can talk to anybody in the mining industry; this is the hotbed in Canada. It is an entire reversal of where it was when the NDP were in government.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I have not really talked as much as I ought to about the taxation environment in this province, but the fact of the matter is that when we took office the tax load that was carried by Manitobans, all Manitobans, was the second highest of all the provinces in Canada. We are now the third lowest, and that is good news for each and every Manitoban. That is good news for Manitobans across all economic levels. For a taxpayer, for instance, with \$25,000 annual income, our combined taxes and charges that are imposed by the provincial government are the lowest of all the provinces in Canada. That is in the Saskatchewan's budget this year. For a taxpayer at the \$50,000 annual income level our taxes, our combined personal taxes and charges, are the second lowest of all the provinces in Canada, and for a taxpayer with \$75,000 income, according to the Saskatchewan government budget, the taxes and charges imposed by provincial governments, we are the third lowest of all the provinces in Canada.

What that means is that every single taxpayer, every single family, has more money to spend as a result of having this government in office. In 1992 we had the best increase, the highest increase, in disposable income of all the provinces in Canada. For 1994 and 1995 the Royal Bank says we are going to have the second best increase in disposable income of all the provinces in Canada for this year and next, Mr. Acting Speaker. That is the result of very, very committed consistent policies to keep taxes down and to keep our expenditures down, and it has not been easy. We, like all provinces in Canada, have faced difficult choices, but we have not dodged those difficult choices, and we have not made inappropriate choices. We have made choices that at all times put Manitobans first. We said what is best for the people is what this government will do, and that is why the people are in better circumstances today by far than they were under the New Democrats in the '80s—by far.

* (1700)

I found it fascinating that the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) made a comment, and his only response when faced with all of these facts about taxes being down, about deficits being down and all of these things that were going on to make this a more attractive economy, oh, he said, but in the '80s under the New Democrats the quality of living was better. Mr. Acting Speaker, unbelievable, unbelievable stuff, that they could consider that by ripping more money out of the pockets of taxpayers that they were giving them a better quality of living. That is absolute foolishness.

We had Crown corporations—I mean here is the thing—you had MPIC going up at more than double digit rates, over 20 percent in one particular year. Huge increases. Ripping money out of the pockets of the taxpayer. You had increases in everything from telephones, because of their \$27 million lost in the sands of Saudi Arabia, to hydro rates going up dramatically and all of those things. Manfor, \$30 million losses being absorbed by the taxpayer. This is, of course, the real bottom line analysis and that is, during that brief interlude, that was far too long for most Manitobans, that is six and a half years of Pawley administration with a number of the sorry souls opposite as part of that, during that period of time they tripled the net debt of the Province of Manitoba—tripled it. That is the tax-supported debt that was tripled in the space of six and a half years.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I found it interesting that the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Edwards) tried to make some hay about the level of debt in this province and persisted in misrepresenting what has happened to the debt of this province in the last six and a half years, seven budgets of this government.

He took a figure and he said it was a \$4 billion increase in debt. Of that increase, \$1.7 billion was the simple paper transference of Limestone out of the construction phase onto the books of Manitoba

Hydro—\$1.7 billion that was not added to the backs of the taxpayers of Manitoba.

The next thing was that Manitoba Telephone System has wisely invested throughout Manitoba in getting rid of party lines, of new fibre-optic cable and new switching equipment. Almost a half billion dollars of additional debt is on the books as a result of that investment. That is not tax-supported debt; that is supported by the rates that are set by the Public Utilities Board, now CRTC.

Mr. Acting Speaker, all that is left out of that equation is \$1.7 billion that was added as a result of the budgets of this government. Of course we have been paying over \$550 million a year of interest on the Pawley debt as part of that each and every year for seven straight budgets. [interjection] The Leader of the Opposition says, Lyon did not have it. Well, Lyon did. Lyon had interest costs of \$1.4 million in the last budget that he left to this sorry lot opposite when they took government, and they ballooned it up to \$550 million in a space of six and a half years.

Those are the actions of New Democrats, Mr. Acting Speaker. They talk about how concerned they are with people, and they saddle them with interest costs that rob their ability to have a good living, that put their children into the poorhouse.

Mr. Acting Speaker, another area that deserves some attention is the suggestion on the part of members opposite that in some way we have been neglecting the services to people in this province. The facts of the matter are that we have moved the expenditures on Health, Education and Family Services, the three biggest departments, the three biggest spending areas of government, the three areas that people depend upon most—those three areas have gone from 59 percent of the entire provincial budget to 65 percent of the entire provincial budget.

We are spending, on health care, 34 percent of our budget. That is the highest percentage of any government in Canada on health care, and it is

substantially higher than it was under your administration, the Pawley administration.

Mr. Acting Speaker, on a per capita basis we spend the third highest of all the provinces in Canada on health care, and we are continuing to make investments. We have increased spending on home care by 93 percent, and we will continue to increase that.

We have added over 500 new beds in personal care homes. We are making the shift to community-based care. We continue to make those investments.

How does this compare with what is being done of course in other provinces? Well, let us take a look at what New Democrats do when they are in office, not when they are sitting in opposition and irresponsibly just mouthing the words of do more, do more, pay more, spend more. What do they do when they are in government, and they have the responsibility? In Saskatchewan they closed 52 rural hospitals.

The New Democratic administration in Ontario, one of those governments that has been rated as one of the three worst, they closed 7,900 beds. That is what New Democrats do to health care when they get a chance to do it.

I did want to make one point with respect to differences that we see between the members opposite and the parties opposite. That point is this. Again, some members put out news releases arguing that they are in favour of doing things for children and for families and so on. In 1989 we had a budget in this province that brought in the richest tax credits for families with children in Canada.

I will give credit to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) and some of his colleagues who were there at that time. They supported that budget. It is the reason why those figures say that for families in low-income level this is the least-taxed province in Canada. But I will tell you what. The Liberal Party, and the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray) was there, and the Leader of the Liberal

Party (Mr. Edwards) was there and several of his colleagues, the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) was there. They voted against it.

When they had a real chance to help families with children, they voted against them. So, Mr. Acting Speaker, nobody can believe them when they say that they are interested in helping families with children.

One of the things that has happened in the economy, of course, is a renewed emphasis on small business and opportunities for businesses, particularly in rural Manitoba, to grow.

In that area, we have had some significant upturn and some significant success in people taking charge of their destiny, making investments in their own future and creating opportunities within their communities, so their children did not have to migrate to the bigger cities, whether they be in Manitoba or elsewhere, and I am talking about programs like Business Start, like REDI, like Grow Bonds, all of these things which were particularly designed for the needs of people in rural Manitoba, to give them some incentive and to give them some opportunity to attract investment and to create opportunity.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

The programs that we have brought in have done a very, very good job. They have created over 2,000 jobs since their inception, and that, Mr. Speaker, is not insignificant. I have to tell you that I have heard again on different fora the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Edwards) go and say, do not get involved with trying to do hundreds of jobs with big corporations. It is the five and 10 and 20 jobs at a time that really will build this economy.

Well, that is exactly what those programs were designed for, and what did the Leader of the Liberal Party say when confronted with those programs and the success of those programs? Well, I would like to quote him exactly, so let me just get this right.

* (1710)

I apologize. I do not have the—I will paraphrase it, and if I am not quite accurate, I am sure that he will correct me, but he said, well, the programs are okay, but they are small potatoes. Small potatoes. You know, what an insult to rural Manitobans. What an insult to rural Manitobans. It adds to the insulting attitude that his former Leader took when she told rural Manitobans that they did not have enough knowledge and ability to be able to analyze investments under the Grow Bonds Program, that this was not a good thing to allow rural Manitobans to do, because they did not somehow have the entrepreneurial or intellectual capacity to be able to use Grow Bonds Programs.

That is the incredible thing, that this party, the Liberal Party, could honestly even field candidates in rural Manitoba when they would say those kinds of things about rural Manitobans and about the business opportunities in rural Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

You know, I want to say another thing. The members opposite often talk about things that need to be done for small businesses in rural Manitoba. Well, one of the things that we felt needed to be done was to remove the payroll tax off all of the small- and medium-sized businesses, and I will say that under the New Democrats, about 70 percent of the businesses did not pay the payroll tax, the really, really small ones, and we expanded that so that now over 90 percent of the businesses do not pay the payroll tax. Mr. Speaker, in bringing in that next tranche of businesses we now have most of the medium-size businesses covered in Manitoba.

You know how much that exemption from payroll tax saves small- and medium-size business annually in Manitoba—\$55 million. None of that is big business. I would say that there is probably no business with more than 50 employees that is covered by that. That is exactly the kind of help that small- and medium-size business needs, but that is not something that was supported by either New Democrats or Liberals when we made those changes in budgets. Neither of them was supportive of it. They have the audacity to mouth the words that they support small business. I have

difficulty with that, Mr. Speaker. I have great difficulty with that.

The other thing, of course, the Leader of the Liberal Party, who I know hears my voice, he talks about the fact that the Liberal Party is against incentives to business. Now I know that in certain areas he has talked about being in favour of incentives to business, but he also is on the record as being against incentives to business.

So when he is cornered, he tries to sort of divide it and say, well, we do not want straight grants and we do not want them to go to big business, and we do not want them to go to businesses from outside our province.

If we assume that is his position, let us see whether or not the criticisms that he has been making, the myths that he has been spinning about us throwing money at businesses to create jobs here. We did an analysis of all the programs that we had—and I have talked about them—to see which of those businesses he could possibly be talking about in which we were just giving grants and throwing money at big business. The fact of the matter is we had great difficulty in coming up with those businesses.

So, Mr. Speaker, here is the analysis. Under the programs since 1988 that we have used to assist in expansions or relocations that have created direct incremental long-term jobs with direct benefit to the Manitoba economy, this is the number of firms that have received that support. The total number of firms is 338; the number of firms that were from outside Manitoba, three. The total program assistance \$46.9 million; the amount given to outside-of-Manitoba-based firms \$3 million. The jobs created that he is complaining about by Manitoba-based businesses, 99 percent of the time, 4,631 jobs.

An Honourable Member: How many?

Mr. Filmon: Four thousand, six hundred and thirty-one jobs, Mr. Speaker. One further thing, these are invariably repayable loans and loan guarantees. They are not grants, as he keeps

referring to. That is another example of lack of credibility and/or lack of understanding.

What are the alternatives that are being offered by members opposite when it comes to doing something real and substantive for the economy, helping people with jobs, helping people to do something that is positive and will build our economy? Well, the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Edwards) said, give them a 3 percent sales tax holiday for three months. That, firstly, would have a \$135-million price tag. In addition to that, of course, all it would do would be to have people move up their purchases and no benefit to the economy, just lost 3 percent for a period of three months. Now what kind of help is that in creating jobs, in stimulating the economy?

Then there is the agenda that both parties have for increasing the minimum wage. I will be the first to say that I think that some modest increase in the minimum wage is probably needed. That is why we have a review going on. That is why we have a combination of people from business and labour and various sectors of the economy taking a look at it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the New Democrats want to go all the way from \$5 to \$6 overnight—I am sorry, six months from \$5 to \$6. I mean talk about arrogance, talk about giving. That is not giving a lifeline to small business, that is throwing them an anchor. You know, that is not giving them a break, that is the straw that would break the camel's back. That is what New Democrats want to do for small business in this province.

The member opposite, the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), has come up with an idea. He keeps talking about capital markets. He says, where has the plan been? This is a quote: Where has the plan been to attract any significant desires of the capital which has left this province? I think it must be degrees of the capital—I do not know what that is. Anyway, he says, and his idea is to have a stock exchange, a prairie stock exchange which will magically raise equity capital. Now we of course had a capital markets task force study this issue, and I might say that the Leader of the

Liberal Party (Mr. Edwards), when they reported, said that he thought that the capital markets task force had done a decent job.

What they said in that capital markets task force was as follows, quote: There are misunderstandings about what a stock exchange really can and cannot do. A stock exchange does not invest capital. The integration of regional stock exchanges does not address the problems related to the accessibility of capital for small- and medium-size business. That is why we have the Vision Capital Fund. That is why we have the Crocus Investment Fund. That is why we are going to have the pooled investment fund now. Those are the sources—the Grow Bonds—those are the sources of real risk investment capital. What he wants to do is have a prairie stock exchange in Calgary and that is going to be the answer to all our problems in Manitoba. Now that is really bright, Mr. Speaker.

The other thing that I should say is that the telecommunications call centre area has not been an area of opportunity that has been either supported or praised by either opposition party. The New Democrats tended to talk about it in terms of jobs even though a study from the University of North Dakota says that the average wage in that sector is higher than the average wage in the manufacturing industry sector. They have tended to criticize and carp and complain about it in many different respects.

* (1720)

The member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), of course, takes on the Faneuil group, 1,000 jobs in Manitoba, and he does not like it because it happens to be the highest technology company in North America in their field, and they happen to come from Boston to Manitoba because they see an environment and an opportunity here that they cannot see anywhere else in North America. He does not like it even though there are 1,000 jobs.

Mr. Speaker, in the last 18 months alone 3,000 jobs have been created in that sector, and we are confident that we will have 10,000 jobs in that

sector by the end of this decade. We are committed to doubling the tourist industry in this province by the year 2000. We are committed to doubling mining production by the year 2000. We have many, many opportunities.

One of the opportunities, one of the great opportunities is, of course, what is happening in the agriculture sector. The agriculture sector continues to be in more positive circumstances than it has been for a long, long time. Virtually every commodity group has done well this year both in production and in prices. The GRIP program is working better than it is in any other province, and the NISA program, because farmers helped us design it, has the highest level of participation in the country. That is because this government listened to the people, worked with the people.

New markets are increasing throughout the world for us. In Asia and worldwide our agrifood exports have grown substantially. We are encouraging value-added industries in the whole food sector. Gilbert International in Arborg, Woodstone Foods in Portage, Keystone Grain in Winkler, Pizzey's in Angusville—all of these different businesses are successful and growing because of our support for the agrifood sector.

What are the Liberals doing for the agrifood sector? What are they doing? Well, Mr. Speaker, who gave into the Americans, capitulated totally on durum wheat sales, accepted a cap on durum wheat sales that is half of what the sales were last year—completely capitulated? Not a peep out of the Leader of the Liberal Party of Manitoba (Mr. Edwards). Not a peep out of his colleagues, to stand up to their federal colleagues and tell them that this is no way to treat agriculture in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, we are working with the whole transportation industry in Manitoba. We have tremendous opportunities now, not just with our traditional strengths of CN and CP, the railways. In addition to that, of course, the air transportation, which has growing opportunities through concepts of the Northern Hemisphere

Distribution Alliance, which will involve truck, train and air cargo. We have, of course, the central corridor, trade corridor right through from Highway 75 through I-29 and I-93 all the way down to Mexico, untold opportunities for our trucking firms. Arctic Bridge, an opportunity to maintain and enhance the future of the Port of Churchill. All of these things are wonderful opportunities for the future.

Our trade missions have been able to assist Manitoba companies in developing new skills. For instance, in China, we have Agri-Tec; we have Feed-Rite; we have Teshmont. All of these companies have growing opportunities as a result of our focus on external trade and opportunities right throughout the world.

We are going to build on our success of attracting the Pan American Games. Prospects for trade and tourism. We are going to have the World Curling Championships in Brandon. Opportunities for Manitobans to take pride and to welcome the world, Mr. Speaker.

We are going to, of course, continue to invest in our infrastructure. One billion dollars this year is being invested through the government of Manitoba and the Crown corporations in our infrastructure. Now, I find it interesting that some members opposite call this a hands-off government with \$1 billion being invested in the infrastructure, Mr. Speaker.

Our province has led the call for the \$205 million federal-provincial infrastructure works program that has now created over 3,200 jobs. We have said for years that we wanted a co-operative partner in Ottawa that will invest in our infrastructure. We were the first province in Canada to sign an agreement with the federal government on infrastructure. We were the first province in Canada to allocate funds for the infrastructure program. We are the first province in Canada to award contracts for that federal-provincial-municipal infrastructure program. Mr. Speaker, we as a government are committed to a better future for our province and for its people. We are committed to ensure that Manitobans have

the services that they need. We are committed to ensure that—

We have set out our vision. We have set out our plan. We have told Manitobans where we stand on all the major issues, Mr. Speaker. We have done so and we have the credibility to carry out the plans and the programs we say we are committed to. We believe, unlike members opposite with their doom-and-gloom theories, that Manitoba has a bright future. We believe that the 1990s will be a bold new decade for Manitobans that they will carry through with strength and with a positive attitude into the 21st Century. We believe as we enter the 21st Century that people right throughout the world will recognize that this is the greatest place to live, to work, to invest and to raise their family.

We believe, Mr. Speaker, that Manitobans know that our goals are clear and straightforward, that jobs and economic security come first and foremost. Personal and community security is also very high and that in doing all of this we will ensure that we will have the revenues to fund and to support the finest health care, the finest education and the finest family services in all of Canada. We have made that commitment and we carry it out.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Pursuant to Rule 35(4), I am interrupting proceedings in order to put the question on the motion of the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), that is a motion for an address in reply to a Speech from the Throne which is for an address to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor in answer to his speech at the opening of the session.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Formal Vote

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Nays and Yeas, please, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: A recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

The question before the House is the motion of the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), that is a motion for the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne which is from an address to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor in answer to a speech at the opening of the session.

Division

A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas

Cummings, Dacquay, Derkach, Downey, Driedger, Ducharme, Enns, Ernst, Filmon, Findlay, Gilleshammer, Helwer, Laurendeau, Manness, McAlpine, McCrae, McIntosh, Mitchelson, Orchard, Pallister, Penner, Praznik, Reimer, Render, Rose, Stefanson, Sveinson, Vodrey.

Nays

Ashton, Barrett, Cerilli, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Edwards, Evans (Brandon East), Evans (Interlake), Friesen, Gaudry, Gray, Hickes, Kowalski, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Mackintosh, Maloway, Martindale, McCormick, Plohman, Reid, Robinson, Santos, Schellenberg, Wowchuk.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Yeas 28, Nays 26.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

The hour being after 6 p.m., this House now adjourns and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, December 13, 1994

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