



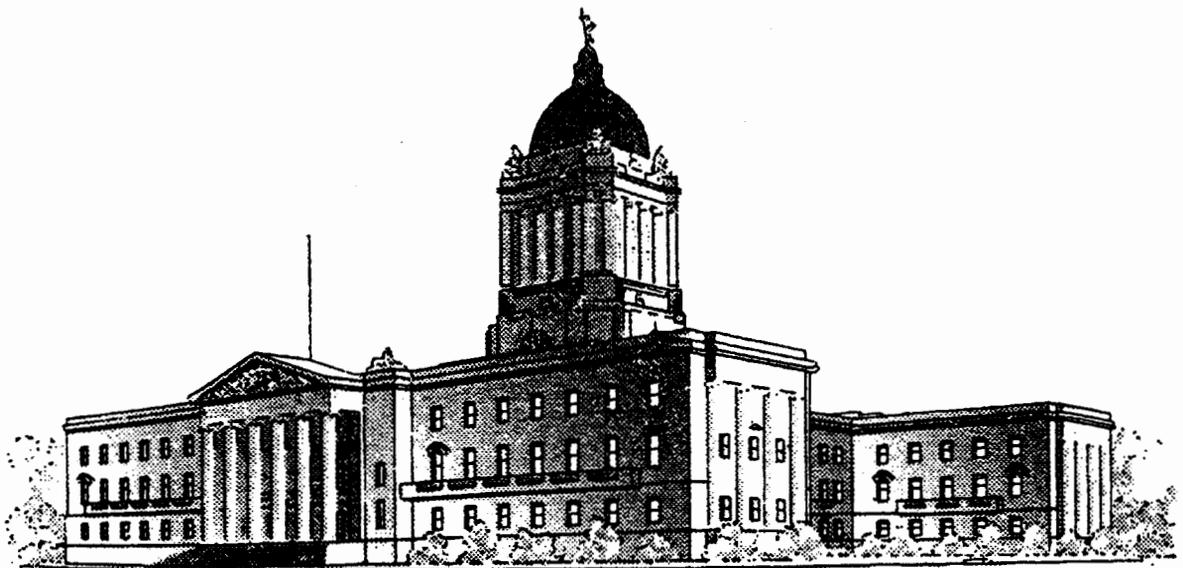
Second Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(Hansard)**

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The Honourable Louise M. Dacquay
Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

<u>Name</u>	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Party</u>
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise, Hon.	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary	Concordia	N.D.P.
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	P.C.
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	N.D.P.
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	P.C.
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	P.C.
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane	Osborne	N.D.P.
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	P.C.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn	St. James	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	P.C.
NEWMAN, David	Riel	P.C.
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
RADCLIFFE, Mike	River Heights	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack, Hon.	Niakwa	P.C.
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Gladstone	P.C.
SALE, Tim	Crescentwood	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin	N.D.P.
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	P.C.
TOEWS, Vic, Hon.	Rossmere	P.C.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, December 13, 1995

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

**Emergency Health Care Services—
Community Hospitals**

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Keith Wilding, Sherry Bohonos, Gilles Piechette and others urging the Minister responsible for Health consider making a commitment to the people of Manitoba that emergency health care services in Winnipeg's five community hospitals will remain open seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Janice S. Thomson, Rosemary McEvoy and M. Bergman praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care at community hospitals, as was promised in the 1995 general election.

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of D. Brown, I. McKenty, G. Morhun and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care at community hospitals, as was promised in the 1995 general election.

**Liquor Store Closure—
Winnipegosis**

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Tom Bratko, Betti Ann Lucas, Debbie Lucas and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the Manitoba government instruct the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission to reverse the decision to close the Winnipegosis liquor store.

**Emergency Health Care Services—
Concordia Hospital**

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Catherine Dowling, Norman Dowling, Gord Davis and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care at Concordia Hospital, as was promised in the 1995 general election.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Annie Jantz, Pat Steventon, Gladys Urias and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care at Concordia Hospital, as was promised in the 1995 general election.

**Emergency Health Care Services—
Community Hospitals**

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Kris Klymchuk, Bruce Stefansson, Charles H. Cameron and others urging the Minister responsible for Health to consider making a commitment to the people of Manitoba that emergency health care services in Winnipeg's five community hospitals will remain open seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of K. Wynnytka, H. Danowski, Helen LeBlanc and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care at community hospitals, as was promised in the 1995 general election.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

**Emergency Health Care Services—
Community Hospitals**

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk). It

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

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election the Premier promised not to cut health care services; and

THAT following the election the Minister of Health promised that emergency services would not be reduced at community hospitals in Winnipeg; and

THAT the Minister of Health on October 6 announced that emergency services at these hospitals would be cut back immediately; and

THAT residents of Winnipeg and surrounding communities depend on emergency service at these community hospitals.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record requesting the Premier to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care at community hospitals in Winnipeg as was promised in the 1995 general election.

* (1335)

Emergency Health Care Services— Concordia Hospital

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election the Premier promised not to cut health care services; and

THAT following the election the Minister of Health promised that emergency services would not be reduced at community hospitals in Winnipeg; and

THAT the Minister of Health on October 6 announced that emergency services at these hospitals would be cut back immediately; and

THAT residents of the Concordia Hospital vicinity depend upon emergency service at this hospital.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record requesting the Premier to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care at Concordia community Hospital as was promised in the 1995 general election.

Emergency Health Care Services— Community Hospitals

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

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election the Premier promised not to cut health care services; and

THAT following the election the Minister of Health promised that emergency services would not be reduced at community hospitals in Winnipeg; and

THAT the Minister of Health on October 6 announced that emergency services at these hospitals would be cut back immediately; and

THAT residents of Winnipeg and surrounding communities depend on emergency service at these community hospitals.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record

requesting the Premier to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care at community hospitals in Winnipeg as was promised in the 1995 general election.

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election the Premier promised not to cut health care services; and

THAT following the election the Minister of Health promised that emergency services would not be reduced at community hospitals in Winnipeg; and

THAT the Minister of Health on October 6 announced that emergency services at these hospitals would be cut back immediately; and

THAT residents of Winnipeg and surrounding communities depend on emergency service at these community hospitals.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record requesting the Premier to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care at community hospitals in Winnipeg as was promised in the 1995 general election.

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

That on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election the Premier promised not to cut health care services; and

THAT following the election the Minister of Health promised that emergency services would not be reduced at community hospitals in Winnipeg; and

THAT the Minister of Health on October 6 announced that emergency services at these hospitals would be cut back immediately; and

THAT residents of Winnipeg and surrounding communities depend on emergency service at these community hospitals.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record requesting the Premier to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care at community hospitals in Winnipeg as was promised in the 1995 general election.

Retention of Hogs Single-Desk Selling

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Yes. The Clerk will read.

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

WHEREAS the provincial government has made an arbitrary decision to move to a dual marketing system for hogs in Manitoba; and

WHEREAS Manitoba Pork is a democratically elected board, composed of producers who act in the best interests of all producers; and

WHEREAS a majority of hog producers have told the Minister of Agriculture that they support the single desk selling function of Manitoba Pork, the marketing board; and

WHEREAS the government has failed to demonstrate that this decision will benefit either

Manitoba's 2,200 independent producers or processors who have publicly stated support for single-desk selling; and

WHEREAS evidence from the United States indicates that open marketing has a negative effect upon smaller operations, where a majority of family farms have disappeared.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Minister of Agriculture reverse his decision and retain single desk selling for hogs in Manitoba under Manitoba Pork.

Emergency Health Care Services— Community Hospitals

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election the Premier promised not to cut health care services; and

THAT following the election the Minister of Health promised that emergency services would not be reduced at community hospitals in Winnipeg; and

THAT the Minister of Health on October 6 announced that emergency services at these hospitals would be cut back immediately; and

THAT residents of Winnipeg and surrounding communities depend on emergency service at these community hospitals.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record requesting the Premier to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care at community hospitals in Winnipeg as was promised in the 1995 general election.

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

That on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election the Premier promised not to cut health care services; and

THAT following the election the Minister of Health promised that emergency services would not be reduced at community hospitals in Winnipeg; and

THAT the Minister of Health on October 6 announced that emergency services at these hospitals would be cut back immediately; and

THAT residents of Winnipeg and surrounding communities depend on emergency service at these community hospitals.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba go on record requesting the Premier to consider maintaining 24-hour access to emergency health care at community hospitals in Winnipeg as was promised in the 1995 general election.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the report of the Chief Medical Examiner for 1994.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I am tabling three reports: the 1994-1995 Annual Report of Assiniboine Community College; the 1994-95 Annual Report of Keewatin Community College; and the 1994-95 Annual Report of Red River Community College.

* (1340)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 200—The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski), that leave be given to introduce Bill 200, The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-maladie), and that the same be now received and read the first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, this is a bill in which the provincial Liberal Party has on numerous occasions attempted to pass inside this Legislature. Our intentions are to continue to lobby this government to support Bill 200.

In essence, what it does is it takes the five fundamental principles of the Canada Health Act, and we are saying let us pass it into provincial law so that Manitobans can rest assured that those five very important principles for health care will be maintained well into the future for the province of Manitoba.

That is something which the provincial Liberal Party stands for and believes has to ultimately be passed by this government if this government is sincere when it talks about health care reform. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Motion agreed to.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Faneuil ISG Inc. Agreement Preferred Shares

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

Madam Speaker, during the announcements of the Faneuil deal with the Province of Manitoba and the Manitoba Telephone System, there were some notable details lacking.

Following the announcement, we have now received the annual report of the Manitoba Trading Corporation. The Manitoba Trading Corporation reports that part of

the deal that was arranged by the government is for \$19 million in notes or debt to be transferred from the Manitoba Telephone System to the Manitoba Trading Corporation. Yet only \$16 million in so-called preferred shares were traded or sent to the Manitoba Trading Corporation.

I would like to ask the Premier, why are we \$3 million short on this transaction and, secondly, what was the role of Mr. Bessey in all of those transactions?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I will take that question as notice and attempt to come back with the detail for the member.

Role of Michael Bessey

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, that raises the question of whether Mr. Bessey ever informed the Premier at the press conference he attended about the financial arrangements that were made between the Telephone System, Faneuil ISG corporation and the Manitoba Trading Corporation. The fact that the Premier does not know the answer to that question, the fact that it was not in the press release that was attended by the Premier, raises some serious questions.

I would like to ask the Premier, what was the role of Mr. Bessey to negotiate and be the initiating department, according to the Order-in-Council signed by Stefanson and Filmon, on this arrangement? Also, he is the vice-chair of the Manitoba Trading Corporation and he is now employed by principals of Faneuil ISG, by one of the principals in Stanton Europa. What was the role of Mr. Bessey in financing a deal, initiating a deal in terms of the Province of Manitoba and the \$3 million?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, in response to the preamble, the member is asking about something, the detail of which obviously I would have had at my disposal some 15 or 16 months ago when the deal was announced. I believe, and I will verify it, that the issue is the present value of the debt instruments that are being transferred because the debt instruments are being taken over time whereas the shares were given up front on a present-value basis. I will have that

all clarified for him so he understands the issue, and I am sure that he will be satisfied with the information.

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, Mr. Bessey negotiates this deal and initiates it for the Industry, Trade and Tourism department. He finances it through the Manitoba Trading Corporation. He is now receiving a tuition fee and a book advance from a company that involves one of the principals of the original deal that was negotiated by Mr. Bessey. The Premier is saying that he will have an internal investigation of the Clerk of Cabinet.

Given that these arrangements were across many government departments, Madam Speaker, would it not make more sense for the people of Manitoba and for the ethics of the decisions that were made to have an independent investigation by an individual qualified on ethics rather than having an internal investigation into these questions that we have been raising?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, with respect to all of the allegations that the member has made consistently for three days now in Question Period, with respect to all of the allegations that have been made by the Winnipeg Free Press in its portrayal of the situation, I have said that I requested the Clerk of the Executive Council go to the Department of Justice and to the Legislative Counsel and request that a review be made.

I did not say that the Clerk would be in any way involved in the review. The Department of Justice is taking on the responsibility. I further suggested that it would be my strong desire to have it done by an outside counsel, and I can confirm that indeed that is what Justice has done. So when that review is done, I will make it public so that the member's allegations can all be responded to.

* (1345)

Faneuil ISG Inc. Agreement Preferred Shares

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, Volume 1 of Public Accounts for 1994-95 confirms that there was a \$3-million subsidy in effect that is being given by Manitoba Trading Corporation and the

Manitoba government to this deal. I refer the Premier to Volume 1, 1994, pages 3-3 and 3-11.

Madam Speaker, as part of the deal to develop the Faneuil ISG corporation, Manitoba Trading Corporation received \$16 million in convertible preferred shares, the par value of \$16 million.

Can the Premier tell the House what was the purpose of the \$16-million convertible preferred share purchase on the part of MTC? What was the purpose of that \$16 million?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I want to correct the position that has been put forward and alleged by the member opposite. As I recall, and I said I will get the complete details, the Faneuil corporation does not get the benefit of the transfer of debt instruments immediately. They do not get 19,000 at once, they get it spread over time, and so the repayment is based on—the asset that they have lodged in its place is the present value of what they will be receiving. But I will confirm that detail because I cannot operate from memory 15 months later.

I will take that as notice, and when I have the information I will return here with it for the benefit of the member opposite.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, will the Premier acknowledge that what really happened here was that the Manitoba Trading Corporation gave to Faneuil ISG a long-term licence to use Manitoba Telephone System's data, one of the telecorporation's most valuable assets, for \$16 million in convertible preferred shares which have no market value and virtually no assets behind them?

It was the data that was transferred, was it not, Mr. Premier?

Mr. Filmon: What did happen was that we had a corporation come to Manitoba, make an investment that will see a thousand jobs created. They already have created several hundred. They are ahead of their target.

Mr. Sale: Will the Premier tell the House what was done to obtain a fair and independent valuation of the

worth of the MTS database which was transferred to the Manitoba Trading Corporation for a nominal fee of either a dollar or \$10—we cannot find the transaction—and was then transferred from MTC to the Faneuil ISG corporation for the convertible preferred shares?

What was done to obtain an independent and fair valuation of this asset which was transferred?

Mr. Filmon: I can tell the member opposite that we had more lawyers and more individuals from an economic standpoint, from a valuation standpoint with respect—[interjection] There are investments being made by Vision Capital who did their own due diligence, massive investment—I believe something like \$11 million—by BCE enterprises. The largest telecommunications corporation in Canada is the major investor in this corporation.

There were something like 90 separate agreements that had to be entered into. The due diligence on this was greater than was done for any other transaction that has ever been conducted in the province of Manitoba.

* (1350)

Health Care System Emergency Services

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Yesterday the Minister of Health tried to undo some of the damage that he has created in the health care field with his announcements about the emergency hospitals. We were very surprised to hear the comments of the Deputy Minister of Health who said yesterday that two of the hospitals, the Misericordia and one other north end hospital, probably the Seven Oaks Hospital, would no longer be acute care facilities.

Can the minister today confirm that in fact is government policy, or hopefully deny that it is government policy, and will he table the information that has led to this conclusion that has been made by his Deputy Minister of Health?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I will confirm that in response to the emergency services team's recommendations, we

announced that in future there would be emergency services delivered at Children's Hospital, two tertiary centres and three community hospitals. That leaves two community hospitals without emergency departments in the future, and I will confirm that work is being undertaken to determine the appropriate use to be made of the two hospitals that will not have full emergency departments.

Mr. Chomiak: Can the Premier (Mr. Filmon) or the Minister of Health, who have no mandate from the population of Manitoba to close hospitals, to shut down acute care facilities, who by the closure of these acute care hospitals will rip the heart out of those communities, be it Misericordia or be it Seven Oaks and areas that serve tens of thousands of people, can they pledge today that prior to making the final decision, they will at least go into the community and listen to what people in the community have to say and present their data, and allow the public to have a say on their hospitals prior to the closures?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, by his comments the honourable member seems to be suggesting that we do not listen.

Madam Speaker, the actions taken in yesterday's announcement and other actions taken by this government indicate precisely the opposite.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, can the Minister of Health explain why they are going to close emergency hospitals and change acute care facilities in the north end of Winnipeg when at Seven Oaks Hospital, for example, it has a higher emergency room ratio, by the government stats, than some of the hospitals that are being kept open and where, by government stats, we know that it has the largest family practice, 55 family practice physicians at Seven Oaks Hospital, and where—I will table a letter from the psychiatrists saying they serve 3,000 people in regard to their psychiatric outpatient treatment program.

Why are they choosing to close those north end facilities?

Mr. McCrae: I hope the honourable member will discontinue his approach, Madam Speaker, of being

very, very selective in his criticism and making policy suggestions.

Is he rejecting, for example, or will he be rejecting the advice given by our Urban Health Planning team members who are there to provide advice on the various clinical disciplines in our hospitals? Is he choosing today to reject outright before he even knows what it is, the advice that we are going to be getting?

Misericordia General Hospital Emergency Services

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, yesterday our community hospital, the Misericordia, was given a half hour's notice of a press conference which would effectively end its role as a general hospital. As late as December 8, the hospital board had no idea that this was the government's intention, and I think that is a shameful and cynical way to treat that hospital.

The minister has had since August a detailed report of Dr. Reda which documented the increased use of the Misericordia emergency services, which documented the acute care of the many patients who present there for admission and which documented that this is adjacent to one of Manitoba's poorest communities.

Let me tell you what that means, Madam Speaker. It means no phones, it means no telephones, and it means none of the family supports that many of us take for granted.

I want to ask the minister why he has chosen to cut what is literally one of the few life lines for this community.

*(1355)

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, the honourable member clearly has neglected to remember the level of consultation that has indeed taken place with the people involved with the Misericordia General Hospital. The honourable member fails to take into account the personal interest that I have taken in Misericordia General Hospital, the work that we have done with the Misericordia General

Hospital to establish Winnipeg and Misericordia Hospital as the centre for breast screening in this region of Manitoba, the whole issue of the ophthalmology centre of excellence located at Misericordia Hospital. The honourable member ignores that and suggests that, I guess, all of those things were all done without any consultation too.

The honourable member is just plain wrong about this, Madam Speaker. Our consultations have been extremely extensive.

Ms. Friesen: Would the minister acknowledge that Dr. Reda's report on the current use of the Misericordia emergency services has never been seen by his integrated Emergency Services Task Force and that the minister has neither medical nor community consensus on the closing of this emergency ward?

Mr. McCrae: No, I cannot accept what the honourable member is saying, Madam Speaker.

We have worked very diligently with health care providers and consumers in coming to the conclusions that have been arrived at and, indeed, this is a recommendation made by the emergency services team which is part of a larger organization which is headed up by Dr. Brock Wright, which is the Urban Health Planning team groups that are looking at all of the different disciplines.

So I just cannot accept what the honourable member is saying. We have been extremely careful in arriving at the decisions we announced yesterday.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Speaker, could the minister table for us the cost of sending the 25,000 emergency care patients at the Misericordia to the higher-cost teaching hospitals? Will he table that information? Will he call a community meeting and will he give the community a voice in its future?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, the honourable member should be reminded, too, that at no point in the process has cost been the bottom line.

Madam Speaker, the bottom line is the most appropriate care to provide for people when they find

themselves in serious life-threatening emergent situations, when they find themselves in urgent medical situations and, indeed, when they are involved in nonurgent situations.

The honourable members opposite are being foolish if they suggest that we have been using emergency rooms appropriately in the past. It is appropriate that we look at the proper use to be made of the various types of emergency services.

We want to encourage ambulance personnel who come across a life-threatening situation to take people, preferably, to the trauma centres when the services of perhaps neurosurgery are required, because that is where neurosurgery happens, Madam Speaker, is at the tertiary centres.

We want people to understand that Health Links is there, for example, which is another service provided by Misericordia General Hospital which will allow people to speak directly to a nurse on the other end of a telephone and to advise—

An Honourable Member: It is a phone service.

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member stresses, this is a phone service, Madam Speaker. Is she or is she not interested in public education when it comes to health issues?

Autopac Rate Increase

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Premier. It is regarding a topic, if you like, the politics of Autopac and the setting of the rates.

Prior to the last provincial election, there was a zero percent increase applied from MPIC to the Public Utilities Board. Now there is a 6.1 percent increase.

This is nothing new. In fact, it happened when the New Democrats were in government, when the then-Leader of the official opposition posed a question about the politics.

My question to the Premier, to use his words of Friday, the 12th of February, 1988, posing the question

when he was in opposition, today the Premier: "Is the Minister now going to admit that there was political manipulation involved on the part of his government in setting the Autopac rates?"

* (1400)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, one of the things that I know is helpful when you quote history is if you learn from it. I would say to the member that the very big difference that occurs today versus what was there in February of 1988 is that we have turned over the rate setting and approval process to the Public Utilities Board. In the days in which I was asking that question, they were able to be manipulated by virtue of government fiat because it was the cabinet that set the rates each and every year.

In this case, since 1989, all of the rates have been set by the Public Utilities Board, and so all that Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation is able to do is apply for an increase and then the Public Utilities Board does its own independent analysis and in some cases, approves, and in other cases, modifies, and in other cases, rejects the presentation of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation.

All he need do is look at the decision of the Public Utilities Board with respect to the application on behalf of the motorcycle drivers just a year or so ago.

So they are totally independent of government and they set the rates independent of government and of the MPIC. They have, in fact, changed the rates.

The application that is in right now is for 6 percent. It may well not be approved by the Public Utilities Board. That is the basis on which I can assure him that no political manipulation has taken place under this administration in the setting of the rates.

Mr. Lamoureux: Then maybe the Premier can tell us why, going into an election, there was no request for any increase from this government to the PUB when this government in fact had a member, a Conservative MLA, sitting on the MPIC board. Why was there not any increase requested from PUB going into an election?

Mr. Filmon: The board of MPIC, based on the projections that are provided for by the administration of MPIC, puts forward a request for an increase that is independently assessed by the Public Utilities Board. They put it out to their own independent economic and actuarial assessment. They have amended it on a number of occasions and, in fact, have rejected the proposal.

So he would have to ask the Public Utilities Board then, why they have approved or not approved particular rate increases or why they have set rate increases that have been inconsistent with the proposals of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation. That is not a matter that is in any way decided upon or influenced by government.

Mr. Lamoureux: Why did this government, through MPIC, not apply for a rate increase in the year leading into an election when the Crown Corporations Council told this government and MPIC that it needs to build up a stabilization fund in which 2 percent of the increase this year could have been saved last year?

Mr. Filmon: The point is that in previous years they have made profits. This year they have a \$38-million loss. That is the difference between what they have put in for an increase. You do not put in for an increase after you have had consistently high-profit years. That would be very difficult to justify, so the corporation put in for an increase consistent with the information it had available to it. This year they had increased vehicle damage claims of some \$29 million.

Manitoba Telephone System Privatization

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, there have been a number of questions raised in this House about deals involving MTS, the sale of the coaxial cable. Serious questions have been raised about the MTS Faneuil deal.

Now, after saying nothing in the election, after in July saying that MTS would remain a Crown corporation despite reorganization, after denying repeatedly in committee that MTS is being considered for privatization, under questioning from the opposition

on Friday we learned from the Premier (Mr. Filmon) that in fact the government is now looking at the biggest deal of all, the sale of some or all of MTS.

I would like to ask the Premier some questions in regard to the news release that was put out after we raised this matter in the House on Friday in which it was indicated that tax regulatory, legal and financial advisers have been engaged to examine the possible privatization of MTS.

I would like to ask the Premier who these advisers are, what the cost is of the contracts and when they will be reporting to government.

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister responsible for the administration of The Manitoba Telephone Act): Madam Speaker, I think the member has been very clearly told that we are in the process of evaluating MTS with \$800 million of debt and how we can refinance MTS for the future in terms of making it a competitive telephone company in the Canadian structure. We have, as the member mentioned, given indication that there will be tax regulatory, legal and financial advisers. They are Richardson, Wood Gundy, and RBC Dominion Securities.

Mr. Ashton: We have already heard reference to one former chief official of this government; I am just wondering if another former chief associate employee of this government, one Barb Biggar, has been engaged in any way with contracts either related to privatization or any other matter related to MTS.

Mr. Findlay: Madam Speaker, it is my understanding that MTS is engaged in a contract to do communications work for them.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, I am wondering if the Premier can then indicate to Manitobans, given some of the serious questions that have been raised about former associate Mike Bessey, the clear hiring now of, some would say, the communications chief, chief communicator for this government, whether indeed anyone in this province can trust this government related to dealing with MTS when they have already had two bad deals, when we are now seeing clear politics being imposed in terms of MTS and the

ideological agenda of this government, which is to privatize MTS.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, the conflict-of-interest rules that apply to senior officers of government and to each one of us in this Chamber clearly say that people are barred from taking employment with a corporation that they have worked with directly, as part of their responsibility, for one year.

The assignment that he is referring to is well beyond the one-year limit and does not apply. If he is suggesting that a person should be barred from doing work forever, for life, that is not true. He knows full well that the Clerk of the Executive Council for Howard Pawley received a contract the day he left the Clerk of the Executive Council position with the government of the province of Manitoba, a contract that he had designed and in fact went on to fulfill. So he ought not to be so pious and not to make those kinds of indiscriminate accusations.

Faneuil ISG Inc. Agreement Preferred Shares

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): While I am on my feet, I have been given some information with respect to the questions of both the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) and the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale).

Madam Speaker, indeed, as I had thought I recalled, the difference between the two figures that are put forward is that the \$16 million figure is the net present value of the loan capital that is being paid out over five years, \$6 million in year one, \$5 million in year two, \$4 million in year three, \$3 million in year four and \$1 million in year five. It is a net present value of \$16 million.

The corporation Faneuil, of course, pays interest on that \$16 million and has already made its first annual instalment of interest on that to the government, as is part of the agreement.

* (1410)

Hog Industry Marketing System

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, it is hard for anyone to understand why the minister is moving towards dual marketing of hogs when all indications are that it will be the vertical integrators who will have more benefit from this than the independent producers.

One vertical integrator, Elite Swine, has not been following the rules and not been paying the required levy, so in fact has an unfair advantage right now.

I want to ask the Minister of Agriculture why he is not directing his department to do their job in collecting the over thousands of dollars that are overdue in levies before he starts to design a new varied levy rate for producers.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, what the member refers to, of course, is part of the concerns that this government has had, generally speaking, in the hog industry.

Those hogs, regrettably, are not being processed in the province of Manitoba, have for the last year left in their thousands every week to places other than Manitoba, along with the jobs, I might add.

The specific issue that she raises is being addressed. There has been contact between Manitoba Pork and the firm in question. The Manitoba Marketing Council, which supervises all marketing boards, has been asked to look into the matter.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Speaker, I hope to see those levies collected soon.

Can the minister explain to independent producers why he would take the advice of one Gerry Moore, co-author of this report that he so often refers to, when Mr. Moore's business has shares in Interlake Weanlings, which is tied to Puratone which is one of the vertical integrators that has been pushing for dual marketing and stands to gain the most from this move? How can he accept this advice?

Mr. Enns: Madam Speaker, I and all my colleagues have heard this member for Swan River persistently challenge me that I am supposed to take advice from hog producers. Now she finds out that one of the advisers has in fact an interest and understanding of hogs, and I am not to take advice from him.

Ms. Wowchuk: Can the minister explain then why his decision just happens to benefit people like Cubby Barrett, who is building three new hog barns but just happens to be on the board of the Manitoba PC fund and who just happened to give \$1,000 to the minister's campaign in the last . . .

Madam Speaker, is this just a coincidence, or are these the people that the minister is trying to help out with this decision?

Mr. Enns: Madam Speaker, how long would it take to ask all Tories to stop producing hogs? I do not know whether they will accept that advice from me, but if that makes her feel any happier, I will undertake that assignment from her. I mean, please—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Enns: Madam Speaker, I apologize. This is a serious issue. The issue is regrettably—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I am experiencing great difficulty hearing the honourable minister's response.

The honourable Minister of Agriculture, to complete his response.

Mr. Enns: Madam Speaker, there is little to be gained by trying to be divisive in this question of pork production.

It is common knowledge that we have three types of pork producers in the province. Thirty-seven percent of Manitoba pork is produced by one group, the Hutterian Brethren on their large colonies, in their large factory barns. Another 30 percent roughly is produced by the 1,800, 1,900 independent, modest and small-sized producers. Another 30 percent or 33 percent is produced by what you refer to as the integrators, by

what in fact are independently owned farms in the Elite Swine group, and the one more integrated operation that we have is the Puratone group. So we have three classes of producers, if you like, in the province of Manitoba that constitute and produce the 2.5 million hogs that are currently being produced.

Surely she is not suggesting that the Minister of Agriculture of this government should now determine who can and who cannot produce hogs in this province.

Department of Highways and Transportation Layoffs

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Highways (Mr. Findlay).

Last fall, this minister announced that he was laying off 140 Engineering Aide 2s for the first time in Manitoba history, as a one-time-only temporary layoff because he claimed that the road construction projects had been finished early.

Is the minister willing to allow these aides to use up their overtime, rather than big payouts of tax dollars and layoffs?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): I think the member is aware that roughly 150 individuals were identified as not having sufficient work through January, February and March to warrant keeping them on the payroll. Of the 150, 15 employees accepted permanent layoff and 16 of those employees are being retained for the winter roads work. That leaves 119 who have received the layoff, and in direct response to the member's question, about half of the savings will be going to the employees in terms of using their banked time, so that reduces the impact on them, so their banked time will be used to reduce the impact during the three-month layoff period and they will be recalled on April 1.

Mr. Jennissen: Madam Speaker, my supplementary question: In order to keep these long-serving qualified crews, most of whom have been working for the province in their local communities for well over a decade, will the minister assure the House and rural

Manitobans that these positions will not be turned into seasonal positions?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Speaker, the member must realize we all have a limited budget. We have to live within it. My commitment to Manitobans, I will maximize the amount of that budget that I can spend on road capital building, rebuilding, bridge building and maintenance of the roads, and the kinds of decisions that are needed to achieve that will be an ongoing process of the Department of Highways.

Highway Construction Projects Delays

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, my final supplementary question to the same minister: Can the minister explain why many construction projects such as the main street in Steinbach, PR 303 east of Steinbach and Highway 16 east of Shoal Lake were postponed until next spring when the minister claimed the layoffs were occurring because all work had been completed?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Madam Speaker, it is a very basic situation: a very good summer, a lot of projects moved along very, very quickly. There was not the degree of holdover predicted for the end of the season that one might expect. We have a budget of \$103 million for capital expenditures and we are right at that. We could not spend \$110 million or \$115 million because we were budgeted for \$103 million and we live within our budget. So, in a situation where you get close to the end of the year, you have to scale down the jobs in terms of their completion in order to live within your budget. It is a simple, basic fact.

Education System School Bus Maintenance

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education.

Over the last four years this government has extended the replacement cycle of school buses from 12 to 15.5 years. This has resulted in increased maintenance cost of this elderly fleet to be paid for by

local municipal governments. In rural areas, increases average between 20 percent and 25 percent, and in one urban division, over 40 percent.

My question to the minister: Will the minister explain to this House and to the people of Manitoba how her government could extend the use of school buses to transport our children to 15 and a half years when the policy for replacement of provincial government vehicles, cabinet minister vehicles, is between four and five years?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I cannot speak for Government Services. I can speak for Education, and I would indicate that, first of all, you are looking at a specific type of vehicle when you look at a school bus. A school bus is manufactured in a specific way to the extent that it is identified as such in The Highway Traffic Act as the only kind of vehicle that is deemed safe enough to transport students. It is the only vehicle that is one that is approved for use for students for transportation in the school system. The buses that are being driven are all subject to inspection. No bus is allowed to be on the road if it is not roadworthy, if it is not safe. They have safety inspections and— [interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

* (1420)

Ms. Mihychuk: My final question to the Minister of Education: Will the minister tell this House what percentage of the existing school bus fleet in this province exceeds 12 years and what research was used to justify these extensions?

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, I do not have the percentage here, but I will get it for the member and provide that percentage to her.

I indicate to the member that consultations on school transportation vehicles for students are the subject of a wide variety of experts, of educators, of people who are vitally concerned with the safety of students and the effective transportation of students. As well, Madam Speaker, there are many divisions that choose not to

own bus vehicles themselves but contract out that service.

But I assure the member these decisions are not taken at whim. They are well researched by people expert in the field.

Madam Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Introduction of Guests

Madam 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 Mr. Clayton Manness, the former member for Morris.

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

MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Emergency Health Care Services— Community Hospitals

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, I move that under Rule 27, the ordinary business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely, the threat to the health care system posed by the government plans to limit health care services in the city of Winnipeg community hospitals, specifically regarding the closure of Misericordia and Seven Oaks General Hospitals.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Kildonan, seconded by the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), that under Rule 27, the ordinary business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely, the threat to the health care system posed by the government's plans to limit health care services in the city of Winnipeg community hospitals, specifically regarding the closure of Misericordia and Seven Oaks General Hospitals.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, perhaps no more important issue is before this Chamber and before the

public of Manitoba today than the mishandling of the health care system, the mishandling of the emergency care system and the mishandling of health care that has been perpetrated on the city of Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba by this Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) and by the government.

Yesterday the Minister of Health and his deputy minister called a press conference to try to deal with the damage as a result of the community hospital emergency room situation, and at that time the Deputy Minister of Health, and today the minister, confirmed that at least two hospitals in the city of Winnipeg are no longer going to be acute care facilities and their emergency wards will not be reopened.

Madam Speaker, this decision affects, in the situation of Seven Oaks, over 50,000 people in the vicinity of Seven Oaks Hospital and a similar group of people in the Misericordia region, all of whom have not been consulted and have had no opportunity to deal with this significant change.

We have public hearings when we construct environmental sites, we have public hearings when we construct roads, but something as integral to the welfare of Manitobans, namely their hospitals, their very foundation, the very nature of their hospitals, and the government, by executive decree, by the minister's closed little executive body, his troika of committee members, have made decisions to close hospitals. The public has had no opportunity to discuss this issue.

Madam Speaker, this minister and the deputy minister indicated this decision was imminent, that this decision would take place in January prior to having any opportunity to deal with this change. The decision has virtually been reached. The government is implementing it; they will attempt to do it outside of the session when they can get less public scrutiny on their policies. They are attempting to change the nature of health care in this city and the province of Manitoba.

What is more important, what is more fundamental than the emergency room of a hospital? What other resources are available than the emergency room of a hospital? What other resources are available, in a government that has cut back community services, than

the very hospitals of Misericordia and Seven Oaks Hospital?

Madam Speaker, the decision is imminent, the decision is being made, meetings are going on to direct people as we speak, and we require an opportunity to discuss this. It might be argued that we are in the throne speech debate and there may be an opportunity—the throne speech which made virtually no mention of this issue. Imagine, a throne speech came down, made no mention of this issue of a fundamental change in our health care system, and it is not just the hospitals, but it is other health care issues.

Madam Speaker, we would even be out of order because we would not even deal, because the matter was not even mentioned in the throne speech debate. I would say shame on the government for not mentioning it in the throne speech debate, shame on the government for implementing this policy.

We require an opportunity in this Chamber to discuss this issue. We require an opportunity to voice the opinion. We require an opportunity to provide the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) with an opportunity to listen to what the public have had to say in this regard.

We presented petitions; they did not listen. Sixty-thousand names were presented; they did not listen. Now we require an opportunity of consultation with the communities, and only through this Chamber and only by having an opportunity to discuss this matter in this Chamber will we be able to do so.

Madam Speaker, I cite the fact that there was a previous precedent. The Liberal Party brought in an emergency debate prior in the previous session dealing with the closure of the emergency wards, and the matter was allowed to proceed. This is just as urgent, that is, the closing of the hospitals, the continuing closing of the emergency wards. The opportunity is limited in throne speech debate. Many members had already used up their opportunity to speak before the government revealed its ill-founded policy.

I urge you to consider this of urgent importance and to consider the fact that there are no other opportunities

for Manitobans since this House will be adjourning on Friday. Many members have had an opportunity already to speak on the Throne Speech Debate, and in fact the matter was not even mentioned in the Throne Speech Debate, which makes it difficult to speak about. I urge you to allow us to have an emergency debate on this very crucial matter.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would remind all honourable members that this indeed is a very important issue. I would request that those members who are carrying on private conversations to please do so in the loge or outside the Chamber.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, you are quite correct, matters of urgent public importance ought not to be raised on a frivolous basis, but ought to be a very serious matter. But if this motion were raised in a courtroom, I am sure any judge would stand up and say that the honourable member's intentions here are both frivolous and vexatious.

On two counts alone, his motion should be out of order. Firstly, the question of urgency. If he had raised this matter yesterday, if he had raised it last week, if he had raised it two months ago, it would have been a lot more urgent than it is today because yesterday the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) announced that four of the five currently closed emergency wards are now going to be open tomorrow. So the question of urgency and having a debate about it today will change very little, if anything, because four of those five emergency wards will open tomorrow.

His argument with respect to urgency might have been made a lot more serious yesterday or the day before than it is today because of that announcement by the Minister of Health. So I think, on that ground alone, it should be ruled out of order because he is simply being frivolous and trying to play politics with this particular issue.

The second, Madam Speaker, is the question of opportunity. Certainly, they have had an opportunity since last Wednesday to deal with this entire issue, to

talk about it. We have, in fact, talked about it in Question Period virtually every day and many members have raised the issue during their debate on the Speech from the Throne.

We also have further opportunity. We have this afternoon until 6 p.m. to talk about this particular issue. Every member on the other side can raise that in his or her debate, and if they will, they can curtail their debates efficiently so that more members can speak with respect to this issue. Certainly, we have tomorrow until 6 p.m. or until 5:30 p.m. tomorrow, the time of the vote, in order to discuss the very same issue, and we have it again on Friday.

* (1430)

So, Madam Speaker, there is ample opportunity for members opposite to raise this issue in the debate on the Speech from the Throne. You need not have any emergency debate on this issue because, quite frankly, it is not urgent and there is a lot of opportunity. I think by bringing this forward he is simply being frivolous. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: I want to thank all honourable members for their advice as to whether the motion proposed by the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) should be debated today.

The honourable member did provide the notice required under our subrule 27.(1). According to our Rule 27 and Beauchesne Citations 389 and 390, the two tests for a matter of urgent public importance to proceed are (1) is the subject matter so pressing that the ordinary opportunities for debate will not allow it to be brought out early enough, and (2) has it been shown that the public interest will suffer if the matter is not given immediate attention.

While the honourable member for Kildonan has spoken to the subamendment to the throne speech motion, he could indeed speak to the amendment and the main motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. In my opinion, the scope of that debate is broad enough to allow for the issue of the health care system to be addressed. So, indeed, there are other opportunities for the debate to occur.

In regard to the second test, while health care services is a matter of great public concern, I do not believe that the public interest will be harmed if the business of the House is not set aside to debate the issue today.

Therefore, I am ruling the matter brought forward by the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) does not meet the criteria set by our rules and practices, that is, there are other opportunities for the matter to be debated and the subject matter is not so pressing that the public interest will suffer if it is not given immediate attention.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): I challenge your ruling.

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has been challenged. All those in favour of sustaining the ruling of the Chair, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Formal Vote

Mr. Ashton: Yeas and Nays, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: A recorded vote has been requested. Call in the members.

The question before the House is shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained. All those in favour of sustaining the ruling of the Chair, please rise.

Division

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

Yeas

Cummings, Derkach, Downey, Driedger, Dyck, Enns, Ernst, Filmon, Findlay, Gilleshammer, Helwer,

Laurendeau, McAlpine, McCrae, McIntosh, Newman, Pallister, Penner, Pitura, Praznik, Radcliffe, Reimer, Render, Rocan, Sveinson, Toews, Tweed, Vodrey.

Nays

Ashton, Barrett, Cerilli, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Evans (Brandon East), Evans (Interlake), Friesen, Gaudry, Jennissen, Kowalski, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Mackintosh, Martindale, McGifford, Mihychuk, Reid, Robinson, Sale, Santos, Struthers, Wowchuk.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Yeas 28, Nays 24.

Madam Speaker: The ruling of the Chair is accordingly sustained.

* (1440)

NONPOLITICAL STATEMENTS

St. Mary the Protectress Millenium Villa

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Speaker, do I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable member for Burrows have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Martindale: On Sunday, October 29, 1995, the Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral of St. Mary the Protectress celebrated their 70th anniversary and also dedicated and officially opened their new elevator. This is a progressive parish whose members have worked hard to build their beautiful sanctuary to sponsor Millenium Villa seniors building and recently have acquired an empty building which will be renovated for youth activities, banquets and other parish functions.

Their new elevator is particularly important since now the sanctuary and hall are accessible to both seniors and the handicapped so no one is denied the opportunity to worship or participate in the life of the parish.

I want to congratulate the Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral of St. Mary the Protectress. May God's

blessing be upon them as they serve God and the community.

1995 Lieutenant Governor's Medal for Literacy

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, I seek leave to make a nonpolitical statement.

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable member for Flin Flon have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Jennissen: A short while ago a resident from Cold Lake-Sherridon, Mr. Blaine Klippenstein received the 1995 Lieutenant Governor's Medal for Literacy for developing a series of books for children.

I was privileged to work with Mr. Klippenstein several years ago when he was first developing culturally relevant reading material for children, specifically aboriginal and northern children.

Not only northerners but all Manitobans are justifiably proud of Mr. Klippenstein's latest achievement. On behalf of all members here, I salute a great educator, Mr. Blaine Klippenstein.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE (Sixth Day of Debate)

Madam Speaker: To resume debate on the proposed motion of the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) for an address to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor in answer to his speech at the opening of the session, and the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer) in amendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Urban Affairs and Housing who has 13 minutes remaining.

Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Urban Affairs): It is a pleasure to rise again to put a few more remarks on the record regarding the Speech from the Throne that was delivered the other day. I would like to spend a little time talking about—just to give some recognition and some words to some of my constituents in the great

constituency of Niakwa which I have the pleasure of representing in this Legislature.

I would like to just mention a few of the community clubs that have been so active in their participation and their delivering of services to the people and the young people in the area of Niakwa, in particular, the community centres of Southdale Community Club and the Winakwa community centre.

I have had the opportunity to go to a lot of their functions and be involved with some of their events there and a lot of the people who have been involved with the community centres and their board of directors. In fact, I have a strong connection with one community centre, Southdale community centre, as I used to at one time sit on the board and as president of that community centre. So I have had the opportunity to see it grow and to expand into a very vibrant and a very fulfilling community centre in the area.

Winakwa community centre is one of the oldest community centres in Winnipeg. It has the distinction of being very self-sufficient. It has a very strong and outstanding nucleus of volunteers who get involved with the community centre at Winakwa and have continually year after year brought forth initiatives and programs to serve the community, not only the youth of the community but various other sectors in the community.

It is seniors—they have programs going on. As minister of seniors, I have attended events there, that is true. The member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) is right. There are seniors events that I attend as the Minister responsible for Seniors.

I feel that the amount of hours and the amount of effort that is put forth by the volunteers in those two community centres should be recognized for their strong sense of community and their strong sense of dedication to try to help put back what they take from the community. So they have had a lot of initiatives.

In fact, just recently with the season that is upon us, they both had very, very successful—one was a breakfast with Santa and one was a luncheon with Santa which I had the opportunity to attend. In both

events there was a very strong contingent of young people and children who came out to be part of the celebrations, the games, the programs and the treats. Everything that they had for the young people was a credit to the volunteers and the parents who got involved.

Winakwa has always had a very strong volunteer base. They have had some excellent athletes, and participants come out of there from the younger side of the people. They have also had some various initiatives in programming that have come forth through Winakwa in their hockey tournaments, ringette tournaments and their baseball and softball, so they are a very active, community-oriented community centre.

Southdale is of the same nature. Southdale is in a newer area, and they have become very expansionary in their community centre. They have added on a covered arena, an ice plant. They have just recently expanded their club by another 6,000 square feet to include more change rooms and more common area rooms and meeting rooms for the needs of the community. Their board has always been very active. They are drawing upon the new areas of Island Lakes and Royal Woods for their membership, so there will continue to be an expansionary mode in that particular community club.

I would like to just mention some other groups that are very actively involved in the constituency of Niakwa, and that is the Island Lakes Residents Association that has always been very active in the community. Another one is the Southland Park Residents Association. They have also come forth with some very strong initiatives in getting their community involved with their area, not only in the greening of the area but in the community efforts in that. One of the groups that I had the opportunity to sit in on was the Prendergast Resource Centre which is an old school that they took over, and they use it as a resource centre for various activities.

So, Madam Speaker, there are a lot of very strong organizational people, very strong volunteers and committed people in our constituency of Niakwa that I just wanted to put on record as to being very thankful to represent them.

In closing, I would like to just recognize the season to all members of the House, to wish them the best of the season for a very, very merry and a very prosperous New Year in 1996, and as we go forth with legislation and the understanding of what we are trying to do for the betterment of Manitoba, if we can all enjoy the season, so thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

* (1450)

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Madam Speaker, it is my purpose in this Speech from the Throne debate to speak about three topics: government, power and goals.

An Honourable Member: I think you have given that speech before, Conrad.

Mr. Santos: Well, you do not listen, and until it gets into your head I will repeat it.

I will rely primarily on what I accept as the ultimate source of knowledge, learning and wisdom, namely the Bible. On the first topic of government I shall express how government came to be. What makes it acceptable that some people, through government, can rule over others, and what is the source of their authority to govern?

How does the concept of government come about? Although there are many political writings by people who studied society and government, as I have said, I will base my arguments on biblical writings as my primary source, but it will be supplemented by writings of scholars who had studied society and politics.

I believe, and it is documented, that before the institution of monarchy, the initial form of government was what was known as theocracy or direct government of God of his people. In the book Exodus, it is written: Moses went up to God and the Lord called him from the mountain, thus you say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel, now if you indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall to me be a kingdom of priests, a holy nation.

Theocracy is a word consisting of two Greek root words, theos meaning god and krataein meaning rule,

so if theocracy has a meaning it is a direct rule by God of his people.

It happened this way, Moses came and called for the elders of the people and laid before them the words which the Lord commanded them, and then all the people answered together and said, all that the Lord has spoken, we will do.

Thus, in theocracy, the political formula for governing is vox Dei, the voice of the people, vox Dei, the voice of God, and the voice of God came through their spokesman, the priest or prophet Moses.

An Honourable Member: Get me Reverend Blackjack; I want him to hear this service.

Mr. Santos: There are people who do not want to hear this word from the Bible. I do not care.

How did theocracy last? Did theocracy last for awhile, or how was it replaced by what we call the institution of monarchy? Well, the people of Israel looked at the other heathen nations and they noticed that all of these nations have kings. Being envious of them, they said, no, set a king over us. So the Lord said to Samuel—Samuel is a prophet, a priest—you hear their voice and make a king for them. So God agreed. When the people demanded that they have a king, God agreed, and he told his prophet Samuel, go ahead. When the prophet Samuel saw the person of Saul, the Lord said to Samuel, here he is, the man of whom I spoke to you. This one shall reign over my people—[interjection] This is the first king, Saul. Thus the new political formula. When theocracy was converted into monarchy, the new political formula becomes vox regni, vox Dei, the voice of the king is the voice of God.

Now, how should the king govern over his people?

An Honourable Member: Like Filmon does here.

Mr. Santos: Like Filmon here, like King Herod.

Then some will explain to the people how it will work. He said: I will write the laws in a book, I will show it to the Lord, and then when the king sits on his

throne in his kingdom, he shall for himself have a copy of God's law. It shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord, his God, and be careful to observe all His words and His laws.

So the King is not free to do anything he can or wish to do. He is bound by a set of moral code or law. That is what justifies him being a king.

So you see that the first kingdom was not hereditary at all. In fact, when Saul fell from the grace of God because he departed from the book of the Lord, then he was replaced by David as King of Israel. The people said to David, we are your bone and flesh. As the Lord said to you, you shall shepherd my people Israel, and be ruler over Israel.

So all the elders of Israel came to the King in Hebron, and King David made a covenant, an agreement, with the people at Hebron before the Lord, and then they anointed him king.

This is the authoritative origin of what later English political philosophers, Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, and the French-Genevan philosopher, Jean Jacques Rousseau called the *contrat social*, the social contract. That was the covenant. It is an agreement between the ruler and the ruled.

Thomas Hobbes was a British conservative philosopher. He had a pessimistic view of human nature and said that people by nature are self-seeking, they are evil, they are possessive, they look only after themselves, and therefore when there was yet no law or no state, no society, the life in this state of nature was solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short. It was a war of one against all. That was the state of nature according to Hobbes.

So the people, being rational—they do not like to live in such a chaotic and violent society—they agreed among themselves to form the social contract that they will give up all their rights under the law of nature to someone whom they called a king, who is not a part of this agreement. The king will have absolute power. The only function of the king is to maintain order in that society, and the people are obliged to render complete obedience to him.

In contrast, the liberal-minded English philosopher, John Locke, proceeded on a different assumption, saying that men by nature are naturally good.

An Honourable Member: Man by nature, what about women?

Mr. Santos: By that phraseology, the old writing includes both.

They are naturally good; therefore, even in the state of nature, they already live in harmony and mutual peace and tolerance of one another. Yet they could not find life fulfilling there because occasionally conflicts sometimes arise between two people seeking the respective—

An Honourable Member: Like a marriage.

* (1500)

Mr. Santos: Yes. Ah, yes.

So, being rational, they also agreed on a social contract to form society, and society in turn created government to become the arbiter of this agreement among these people. The people also can improve themselves by having culture, developing their refinements and good quality as human beings, and also in the state of nature some people have already appropriated to themselves part of the common property. Therefore, according to law, there is a natural right to property, which is also a reason why they formed this government so that this natural right to property can be protected.

The third philosopher was Jean Jacques Rousseau from Geneva, a possession of the French at the time, so he was called a French philosopher. I will call him a social democrat. Although he was a radical, I will call him a social democrat. Jean Jacques Rousseau believed that in this state of nature the people were shy and timid. They would like to have some kind of social interaction and enrich their life to have a fully satisfying life, so they enter into an agreement or social contract.

In this state of nature, the property is commonly shared by everyone in the same way that our aboriginal

people have that notion and conception of sharing of all the natural endowments of the earth. It is only after the creation of the civil society that they created laws and then they recognized the right to private property. So private property was not a natural right at all. It is a legal right created under civil government. The greedy people, the aggressive people, the self-seeking people in that society, of course, allocated property to themselves, and then they created government so that they could continue to control over these possessions. They used government to protect their private property.

An Honourable Member: How does this relate to the throne speech?

Mr. Santos: We will see.

This later was appropriated by Karl Marx, this idea that property is an instrument for oppression through the use of government. According to Karl Marx, the means of production of goods and services divides the people in society into the property-owning class, what they call the capitalists or the bourgeoisie, and the workers who really produce the goods by their labour but yet do not get the profit from that labour because this is appropriated by the owners of the means of production. They are the oppressed class; these are called proletariat, according to Marx. Therefore, by the use of the institution of property, there is an institutionalized situation of inequality of human beings. [interjection] As long as they are a property-owning class and they produce it for themselves, that is good.

Now let us talk about this variant of government called democracy. Democracy flourished once in ancient Greece, especially during the age of Pericles, but then democracy became a means by which the people, you know, they do not understand what this is all about and they surrender the right to a tyrant, and so the ancient Greek philosopher Plato does not favour democracy at all. He does not. He said the society should be governed by philosopher-kings.

People who understand society itself, they are best equipped to govern for the welfare of all. His pupil Aristotle, while not opposed to democracy, will tolerate it so long as the many who will rule under democracy

will promote the interest of all, but as soon as the many look only after themselves and forget the rest of the people, then he does not favour democracy.

Indeed, Aristotle favoured aristocracy. The people with balance, with skills, with knowledge, the few who are enlightened should be the rulers in society for the benefit of all.

Democracy, however, lost its reputation. Even in ancient Greece, it started to become a military state and the other forms of government. Democracy did not revive until later on. It revived in England after the Glorious Revolution, that is, after Cromwell, where Parliament emerged as dominant, and although the monarchy was preserved, it became a limited monarchy, limited by the Constitution.

But the British kings still would like to be absolute despite this change, and when the ugly head of absolutism reared its head again in the form of King George, there was the American Revolution. The American Revolution inspired the French Revolution, and the two revolutions inspired the Russian Revolution, and after the three revolutions there was lots of violence and there is a radical change in the structure of governing, and the political system changed and the political formula changed.

What used to be the voice of the king is the voice of God, becomes now, vox populi, vox Dei. It now becomes, the voice of the people is the voice of God.

Now, apparently, there are over 175 nations with their own respective constitution, each of them saying that they are a democracy. From the most oppressive to the most enlightened, they say they are democratic.

What is democracy all about? Democracy is government with the consent of the governed. It is constitutionally limited government with powers limited by the constitution, and it runs under the rule of the majority, the majority rule, in making decisions. Those are the three distinguishing features of democracy. It is a government with the peoples concerned. It is a government with limited powers and it is a government that operates under the rule of the majority.

Now, we will find out if you qualify for that. You could see from vox Dei, the voice of God, from the voice of the king interpreted as the voice of God too, from the voice of the people interpreted as the voice of God too, where the source is of all authority to govern. Very clearly, it is only one source, and this is what was declared by the apostle Paul when he said, there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. There is only one source.

I am leaving that first topic, and I hope I have enough time to elaborate on the other one.

The second topic is power, a very interesting concept. What is power in essence, especially political power? We can say that political power is a type of relationship that exists whereby the wishes of the powerful, despite opposition in others, can be carried out. How do you operate? Despite opposition, you can carry out your power, your wishes, if you are in the situation of the powerful. In social relationships between individuals, between individuals and the group, the powerful are able to carry out their wishes despite opposition.

Now, what is the source of this power? Why are some people more powerful than others? There are various bases for it. Some have resources that others do not possess, money, property, or special knowledge, expertise, that others do not possess. Scientists are powerful, too, because they have special knowledge. Respect, people who have the respect of the community, people defer to them. Their voices are heard, they dominate, and they have some kind of social power, too.

In other words, whatever the basis of power, it could be based on religion, it could be based on the strength of knowledge, it could be based on professional association, anybody who has some control of resources that others do not have will have some kind of power.

*(1510)

The only trouble with power is that, according to Lord Acton, if you have this, power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Therefore, it is not

essential that the power to govern, the authority to govern, always resides in the hands of the powerful. That is a legitimate right to be consented to. [interjection] I am talking about government and you are in government. I am talking about political power and you have political power. This is relevant.

In our current system of representative parliamentary democracy, the governed, the voter in the community, consented to this government by participating in a general election. So a political party like the present party in power gets a plurality or a majority of the seats in this House of representatives of the people. Barely, by their promises, whatever they used, they got the consent of the governed.

In addition, there are career-appointed officials in government, the civil servants, who are always there and they interpret and apply the laws so they govern with the elected people. Also, there are judges who sit there for life, at least for their working lives, and the three groups govern in our society. Of course, the consent of the governed is limited to the elected people, but there are other people who also govern there who are institutionalized.

Now, whatever they are, whether they are elected people or whether they are judges or politicians, what have we learned of the characteristics of a good ruler? First, he who rules must be just, ruling in the fear of God. First, he must be just, and he should rule with fear in his heart. The fear is he should not steal; he should not lie. All of those things that God commanded. Remember that was given to the king.

What is the second characteristic? A good ruler is one who decides righteously after searching out or investigating the matter thoroughly. You have to investigate. You have to get the facts before you make a decision. For example, if in the decision to close the emergency ward there is a failure to get the facts, then the decision is clearly wrong and is not legitimate, and the value judgment that was exercised being based on the wrong factual premise is also wrong and should be changed.

Finally, the third characteristic of a good ruler. A good ruler is truthful, honest, not greedy nor

oppressive. If you make a rule which says you cannot have physical and medical examinations except once in every five years unless you can pay for this, then that is oppressive of the poor who cannot pay such medical and physical examinations. That is then morally wrong.

Madam Speaker, my time is almost up. I gave my word and my word is my bond, so I will now conclude. I will say morality as principle is the only basis by which we can exercise righteous judgment. If a decision is morally wrong, no matter how legal it is, it cannot stand, and the ruler will have to be deposed like King Saul. Nonpolitically correct, if it is morally wrong; policies we have to reject, if we are to rule for long. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Madam Speaker, I want to first of all today take the opportunity, as this is the first opportunity that I have had since the April 25 election for a response to the speech, of the importance of the throne speech. I would like to first of all acknowledge your role as Speaker and the support staff, the Pages and all those individuals who are members of the Assembly and making the smooth operation of it be carried out. Let me as well say to the new members of the Legislature, I congratulate those who have taken on the challenge of seeking public office and look forward to many years of their contributions.

Let me as well say to my colleagues, Madam Speaker, whom I have had the opportunity to listen to over the last several months, weeks, as it relates to their performance, I think that the people of Manitoba can be extremely proud of the representation which they have sent to the Manitoba Legislature to represent them on public affairs. I am pleased to sit with many of those individuals as having known them previously but also again compliment them on their decision to proceed into public office and to carry out the duties of the public affairs of our province.

Of course, it is at a time when it is not getting any easier to do so, Madam Speaker. The challenges of public office continue to grow and the scrutiny which members come under continues to be very challenging. It seems that the longer this government is able to

proceed without having any major problems, the narrower the goalposts get to be set by the media, the higher the rail is that we have to jump over. So I say that with the greatest of sincerity that I think that everyone who is in this Chamber is doing their job with the utmost of care and consideration of carrying out public office, so I am pleased to be part of this team.

I want to as well acknowledge and publicly thank the Premier for his confidence in again allowing me to sit in cabinet as Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism and, as Deputy Premier, I am honoured to carry out the responsibility of an Executive Council member. Not only is it challenging, but I have to say, Madam Speaker, at Industry, Trade and Tourism it is very rewarding and again I am very confident and I have to say quite honestly I am extremely confident about the future of the province of Manitoba and what we will have to contribute to this country.

* (1520)

I guess, Madam Speaker, as well, it is important to point out some of the other initiatives that my colleagues have implemented and I guess I have some concerns and I will get to that part of my comments next. That is a little bit at some times we see the strain towards attack of the individual rather than the policies of the individual and that, I think, there is not any room for in this place. I want to particularly acknowledge the work and effort of our Attorney-General who has introduced many new initiatives as it relates to being tough on crime, trying to make sure that we do have a safer society to live in. Many new initiatives which I think the critic on the other side is very unfair in not recognizing, in fact he gets very close to some very serious personal attacks. I think an individual who has sat in this Chamber and should have observed and developed a habit that is a little more conducive to a better working relationship in this Chamber.

I also want to say, Madam Speaker, that I was pleased to be the co-chair of our campaign last spring and having worked with all of the different areas throughout the province and my colleague the Attorney General who co-chaired the campaign, but particularly I want to again recognize the commitment of our Premier, a man who has continued to allow his name to

stand and to lead this province in a way in which I think the majority of Canadians would be proud to have an individual like that lead and carry out the public affairs in their province. So I say that genuinely. It is a tough job. It is not an easy job, but he has certainly carried it out in a very honourable and, I think, a very capable way. So I am pleased to be part of this government. I am proud of the policies and will continue to be so.

I believe it is an opportunity through a throne speech to touch on some of the philosophies of our approach compared to the philosophies of the opposition, and, of course, the Liberals are yet to determine what theirs will be as we enter the future. But, it is true that I think there is a clear distinction between the opposition New Democratic Party and the governing Conservatives when it comes to many issues. One would say that the New Democratic Party pretty much perceive themselves as the saviours of health care, but, when it comes to be anything greater than that, Madam Speaker, I think that it falls far short of what the people would expect, and I think they again demonstrated that at the last election. Without question, they demonstrated that in the last election.

I want to touch briefly, as well, Madam Speaker, because I guess I rise at this particular time at a time when we have seen the country of Canada go through some very challenging times, extremely challenging times, and what one could observe is that we are going to see a different Canada regardless of what happens with Quebec in the ensuing years. Our country has changed, and I believe it will continue to change, not necessarily because anybody particularly wants it to change, but there are a couple of basic reasons why change is going to come about.

One of the fiscal realities that we have to face, we are continuing to see in excess of 30-some-billion-dollars worth of deficits annually being added to the debts of this country, which is horrendous. Again, we continue to say to the federal government, you have to do something about it, but prioritize it, Madam Speaker. Do not just pick on one particular area, whether it is health care or education or family services. You have to do something on balance to make sure that we still have the kinds of things that we as Canadians have

enjoyed through our history to this particular point, but we do have to be realistic, and I think that that is extremely important.

The other issue that we have to deal with, Madam Speaker, of course, is the question of which Quebec put themselves through with the most recent referendum. The point I want to make is, regardless of what the outcome of the vote was, I believe we will see a change in the future as it relates to Quebec's relationship with Canada. I think that we are going to have to deal with it whether we like it or not. Just to show you that politics are still alive and well in Canada, what happened in the last couple of weeks?

Well, we had the Prime Minister of Canada offer veto power to Quebec, to Ontario, and initially to the western provinces, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and B.C. Then they all at once found out that for the first time since the railroad was delivered and given to B.C. and extended this country, they may have a chance of electing a Liberal government in B.C. Lo and behold, I am sure the Liberal leader from B.C. phoned Mr. Chretien, and he said, hey, Jean, I am about to win this thing. Do not screw it up for me. Jean said, by gosh, that may be right. I do not want to screw up your chance of being a premier of B.C.

Point of Order

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, I just wanted to advise that there are some Tory members from the year before that are working with the Liberals in B.C.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for St. Boniface does not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Downey: Madam Speaker, but it just proves that politics are still alive and well in Canada. It really does. That the Prime Minister all at once realized that for the first time in many, many years there may be the opportunity for a Liberal government in B.C. and he better not turn the people of B.C. off when it comes to Liberals. So I think that is a clear demonstration of

maybe why B.C. all at once got veto powers that related to the change in our Constitution. Is it right or is it wrong? We will let the people of Canada decide.

Well, now, let us get onto what I think is extremely important, and that is dealing with some current issues that are before the Legislature and part of the throne speech, but where are we really going?

You know, I guess I am concerned this last two or three days about the attack and the approach that the New Democratic Party have taken on former employees of the Manitoba government.

I think, Madam Speaker, that particularly the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale), who is a member of the cloth, I imagine that he goes to church on Sunday and will be able to go next time he goes before his congregation and he says, I did a good job this last week in the Legislative Assembly. I did a good job. I smeared Mike Bessey's name. I did it because I did not have any fact, I did not have any—I had a lot of allegations, but I thought it was the right thing to do, was to smear a person who, yes, consummated or was part of consummating a deal as it related to bringing 1,000 jobs and new technology to Manitoba.

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

That is not any part of the discussion that Mr. Sale or the member for Crescentwood brought to this table, but he said, no, I will smear Mr. Bessey and that is the teaching that I will take to my congregation on Sunday, that that is the right thing he should do. That is exactly what the member for Crescentwood has done. He has maligned a former employee of the government of Manitoba without any fact, without any fact at all, even after the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of our province said he is going to set up a process to fully investigate and look at the actions and activities of that individual.

But they are not satisfied, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with that; they have to continue to bring a few other people to the table. They today wanted to bring Barbara Biggar to the table, because as a free citizen doing business in this province, they now want to include her and smear that individual as if there is something

wrong with getting a job to do something at which she is a professional. Not breaking any law, not doing anything wrong, but again trying to smear an individual.

That, I think, is wrong. I think that those individuals who want to throw that stone, that it is for sure that it will, in fact, come back to haunt them. So if that is the game that they have decided to play, particularly the new members and the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale), who is a member of the cloth, that is the kind of teachings he wants to take forward to his congregation and he is proud that that is what he brings to this Assembly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he will have to live with that himself. I tell him, I think it is unfortunate, but that is the kind of integrity that is lacking with that individual.

* (1530)

I want to, as well, talk on a couple of other areas that are of major public importance today, and it deals with some of the decisions that this government has made as it relates to the marketing of hogs in this province. You know, I find it strange, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that for some particular reason members of the opposition are so adamantly opposed to producers of hogs in this province that they are opposed to being able to sign a contract with a processor to assure themselves of a return. That same opposition party likes, when they get a contract or get a job with a company, to make sure they have an employment contract, that they know how much they are going to be paid and that they are now going to have job security. Yet they want to deny the hog producers of that very opportunity to assure themselves of a contract to market hogs to a plant at a price over a period of time.

It is fine for them to sign contracts of that nature for their labour, for their people they represent in labour, but it is not fine for a producer to make sure that they have a fixed price for a fixed quantity over a fixed period of time.

An Honourable Member: That is what single-desk selling does.

Mr. Downey: No, that is what the member is so wrong about. She said, that is what single-desk selling

did. That is absolutely wrong. Single-desk selling assembles all the hogs, and the marketing board presents those hogs in different ways to the marketplace. That is what it does. They do not have a fixed price. They did have a fixed price, and this is where I take a little bit of an exception to recent actions of the board because I think the board was clearly demonstrating that they were coming to deal with the requests of the people they were serving. That is when they were able to forward-sell a quantity of hogs on behalf of the producers. That is when they were demonstrating they were getting on with satisfying the needs of the bigger producers and those producers that wanted to get a substantiated price in a fixed manner.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as soon as the dual marketing was introduced, they withdrew that option. I do not think that was a responsible thing to do. I think they should have continued to demonstrate they were prepared to show us that they could in fact do what we wanted them to do through the contractual arrangements, but they now in fact put the government in a position where we just absolutely, I believe, have to offer what is being presented. That I am pleased to be a strong supporter of, and I believe that in the long term what we will demonstrate is in the interests of the producers, the processors, and the job creation in Manitoba that will in fact happen. In fact, with the plans that are in place, we talk about jobs; there will be 9,000 new jobs created because of the changes in the increase in the hog production in Manitoba.

I could get into, Mr. Deputy Speaker, again the smearing that took place here today by the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), again trying to go after an individual who is unable to come to this Legislative Assembly and defend themselves, but had to some way attack those individuals for some reason that this was being done because of their own potential personal gain. Absolutely false, and I would think there is going to have to be some apologies given from the members opposite to those individuals who are in our society doing their best to improve the economy and working on behalf of the people of Manitoba.

I think they should reconsider some of the things they said today in this Legislative Assembly because I would think if they are honourable members, they

would want to consider an apology to the members that they brought forward accusations that are untrue and unfounded and without any evidence at all.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is surprising, the longer a person is in this Legislative Assembly, how quick 40 minutes goes and 30 minutes even goes quicker. I am going to touch on another important subject before I conclude my comments today as to why I am so pumped up about Manitoba and why our whole economy is doing so well. I think there is room to talk a lot about the positive activities.

Oh, I had one other reason—I raised the issue as it related to Mr. Bessey and the actual comments made about Mr. Bessey. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not think that in all honesty the members opposite are upset about the fact that he was involved in helping to create a thousand jobs.

You know what they are really upset about? They are upset because Mr. Bessey was one of those individuals who was involved in disclosing the whole MTX fiasco.

He was an individual that dug out and disclosed a lot of the information that the New Democratic Party were involved in. He was a research person who provided information to the opposition at that time, both the former member for Pembina and also the Premier. He was the individual that really got at the whole piece of information as to what the MTX affair was all about. That, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is why the New Democratic Party are so anxious to smear Mr. Mike Bessey. It goes back to that time.

So I think members of the Legislative Assembly should know. Again, the right thing is what the Premier said. Let the proper authorities take a look at the current situation. I will leave that as it is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I think it is important that this Legislative Assembly hear that.

There is another subject that is troubling a lot of people. That is why a throne speech is important. I say troubling because a lot of things have happened in rural Manitoba particularly and in the city of Winnipeg over the last few years.

With what has happened at the federal government level and with the economy of western Canada and Canada, we have seen the federal Liberals make a major change to what has been traditionally a perceived given right of western Canadian grain farmers to have their grain shipped on a subsidized freight rate. That has been a dramatic change to the agricultural picture of western Canada.

The member said our party supports the abolition of the Crow. I did not support the method and the way in which it was done. I believe it was inevitable, it had to happen, and when it happened it had to be dealt with. The first thing I would have done is over the last 10 years I would have paid those millions of dollars to the producers so they would have had some money in their pockets. [interjection]

The member is right. The Conservative Party was in office but it was the Pools and the major grain companies that wanted the money paid to the railroads. We have literally dumped \$7 billion into the system, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we still cannot move grain any better.

Let me deal with it a little bit more. Today it takes approximately a third of a bushel of wheat to ship it from the station which I live closest to. If your wheat was worth \$3.65 or \$4 a bushel, it takes a third of that to ship it, to elevate it and to clean it. There is no guarantee that that price is not going to continue to increase. Okay, so it increases. No subsidy to pay for that.

What happens if the wheat market, and it will, starts to come down? So, at some point, we have got increased freight rates, lower prices of grain. Particularly as it relates to people living closer to the U.S. border, people can actually see a market right today for \$8.50 a bushel for durum wheat in the United States and \$5 a bushel for their wheat in their home community. Well, it takes them about 30 cents a bushel to haul their grain to the U.S. to get to that \$8.50 market.

The point I want to make is, I am not against the Canadian Wheat Board. In fact, I am a strong supporter of that system for the marketing of grain into

international markets, strongly supportive of it. But I believe the Canadian Wheat Board have to be more flexible when it comes to the marketing of grain into the United States. [interjection]

No, I believe that we need the Wheat Board to do that. I believe that farmers should have to pay for the maintenance of the Canadian Wheat Board. They should have to pay something for the continuation of that, but they should not be held captive and have to pay a higher freight rate to get their market into the grain of the Canadian system and not be allowed in some way, some more flexible way, to get to that higher U.S. market. There has to be flexibility.

I say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if that does not happen, western Canadians will lose the Wheat Board by default. Farmers will not put up with being forced to use and lose money through the higher Canadian cost system and lower return and be disallowed from getting a higher price out of the U.S. system. They will not tolerate that. Eventually it will destroy the Canadian Wheat Board. So I say, in the interests of saving the Wheat Board, it has to become more flexible. So flexible is the word.

The other point that I think has to be made at this particular time is that, as I said, as we were being subsidized, it was easier to use the Canadian system, but that is gone. So with desubsidization or the loss of subsidization has to come deregulation. People have to be freed up to maximize the return; and, if we do not, we will have done nothing but put our farm people in a straitjacket, which will surely mean the loss of more farmers and of the opportunity to grow and expand.

*(1540)

I have, I think, about five or so minutes left, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but there is another thing that I want to talk about. We are at a time in our government where, after some eight years now, we have worked, my colleagues have worked, extremely hard. We have squeezed the expenditure side year after year after year on the nonessential areas, those which we considered the nonessential areas. We sized down the civil service; we have frozen taxes. In fact, a lot of people forget this. The first year we were elected we lowered

the personal tax from 54 percent to 52 percent. I challenge the opposition members to name one other jurisdiction that has done that.

We had a 7 percent sales tax, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we were elected in 1988. What is the sales tax today? What is it today? I ask the members opposite. Seven percent. We have eliminated the payroll tax on 90 percent of the businesses in this province, a tax that the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) says, how come we are not rich? You know what? We as a nation and a province are a lot richer than we really appreciate and think we are. It all cannot be measured in dollars and cents. It has to be measured in quality of life.

I say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have done a lot of things as it relates to the economy of this province. We have laid the groundwork. We have frozen the taxes for eight consecutive budgets. In fact, we have lowered—[interjection] The member says there have been in other taxes. I do not mind saying that, yes, there have been other areas in which there has been a broadening of taxes. I do not mind admitting that, but I will tell you, at the same time we have put \$500 million annually into the health care that was not there prior to this government being in office. We have increased our education expenditures over that same period of time, and look at the amount of money we have put into Family Services to support those people who have not been able to look after themselves. Just look at the increase; it has doubled since 1988. So we have lived up to the responsibilities, and that, again, is the reason, I believe, the people of this province gave us the mandate on April 25 to return to govern this province.

Now I said I would conclude on some positive notes, and I will. I have about two more minutes. I want to conclude by saying that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have seen our total capital investment rise in Manitoba, particularly in the private sector. Our bankruptcies are down by 14.5 percent this year versus the national increase of 11.3 percent. As I said, our private capital investment rose by 19.7 percent in 1994, almost double the national increase, and is expected to rise a further 3.4 percent. Our manufacturing capital investment is expected to rise 70.4 percent this year, our

manufacturing investment to create jobs in the manufacturing sector.

Let us just reiterate some of those investments that have been taking place in Manitoba: The \$200-million-and-some Canadian Agra complex proposed for Ste. Agathe where a \$55-million crushing plant has been put in place; a \$200-million fertilizer plant in Brandon, close to Virden I should say, that is going to create tremendous construction jobs; the proposed strawboard plant at Elie, again, creating jobs and helping remove the need for burning of straw out of our system; the \$75-million proposed expansion to McCain at Portage la Prairie; \$40-million for Schneider; \$20-million for Nestle-Simplot; and, of course, we cannot forget what is happening in the city of Winnipeg. Look at the expansion at the Pallister Furniture company where we have seen tremendous amounts of investment taking place. We have seen the window manufacturing and the building manufacturing companies expand.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am proud to stand here as the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism with the record that this government has, the policies that we have introduced and that we have carried through on without fear or favour of anyone but based on solid public interest decisions and in the interests of the public.

I conclude my remarks today by saying, I am disappointed with the old-think, the NDP party who, quite frankly, have nothing new to offer. I believe as I am halfway through my political career at this time, as I am halfway through my life, we are just starting the beginning of a long, long Progressive Conservative governance of this province of Manitoba, and I am proud to be part of it. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I welcome the opportunity of addressing this Chamber and putting on record my view on several aspects of the latest Speech from the Throne.

It is with considerable interest that I have watched the various interpretations, the various verbal contortions that emerge as one side or the other puts its own spin on the document. But sometimes I feel like saying, will the real throne speech please stand up?

And sometimes, like Hamlet, I feel like saying, nothing is good or bad but thinking makes it so. I suppose the widely varying, often contradictory interpretations of the throne speech should be expected given that there are at least three factors operating, namely 57 individuals, three political parties, and I will include the Liberals, and one vague document. I was going to add "and a partridge in a pear tree" but that would be irreverent, although seasonally appropriate.

The throne speech is a blueprint of what the government intends to do, and the government, like all governments, wishes to portray itself in the best possible light. That is natural, but equally natural is the opposition's role of asking the penetrating questions and highlighting the weaknesses and omissions in the throne speech. You do your job and we do our job, but even allowing for the vast generalizations that come out of throne speeches and allowing for the wide spectrum of interpretation due to individual bias or political ideology, there is still a sense that this particular throne speech is lacking in substance. It is great bedtime reading if you suffer from insomnia though.

The tone of the throne speech is inconsistent. To give credit where credit is due, parts of it are quite readable, other parts resemble a snip-and-paste collage from a dozen different speeches with a dozen different tones and themes. The throne speech is short, boring and lacks cohesion. Sometimes the tone is arrogant and patronizing. Take for example this line near the bottom of page 1 on the recurring motif of prudent fiscal management, and I quote: "Unfortunately, other governments have not been as committed and now find themselves in serious financial circumstances."

It takes a lot of gall to blame other governments, not just the federal government but other provincial governments. Does the virginally pure Filmon government name the other governments who are not as committed? No. Could they be talking about Ontario, Alberta, B.C., the so-called have provinces who contribute in the overall equalization transfers to the so-called have-not provinces, including Manitoba? At the very least, it is bad form to lecture provinces that are actually helping you out.

A throne speech should present an exciting vision, a blueprint of hope. This throne speech does not do that,

at least not for me. I was particularly impressed, however, by my colleague from Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), who put the throne speech in context for us. He compared this throne speech to other throne speeches, particularly the 1969 throne speech by the Schreyer government. Then there was excitement in the air. Those throne speeches did not make people yawn as they do today over this throne speech. As the member for Brandon East has pointed out, in those years and later, there were positive initiatives: Autopac, Pharmacare, eliminating medicare premiums, the stay option for young farmers, putting nursing homes under medicare, community clinics, public housing, Main Street Manitoba, affirmative action education programs and job creation programs to give work and dignity and hope to our young people and those on social assistance.

* (1550)

I remember well how in the 1970s the initiatives of the Schreyer government put seven public housing units in Cranberry Portage. I was part of that as a representative on the local housing board. There was a crying need for housing in Cranberry Portage in those days and those seven houses alleviated a lot of stresses, a lot of tension, a lot of potential violence.

Now, I know that this is the 1990s, although the members opposite do not often think we know that, not the 1970s. Cranberry Portage does not need housing now, but Pukatawagan surely does. It is not good enough to say that housing in Pukatawagan is purely a federal issue.

Overcrowding affects health and education. The province is well aware of the health problems faced by the people of the Mathias Colomb First Nation at Pukatawagan. The province is aware of the diabetes, the TB and the hepatitis. The province is aware of buildings that were erected on sites where the soil was contaminated. There is no doubt that the federal government has reneged on some of its commitments to the people of Pukatawagan, but that does not mean that the provincial government can blame all of Pukatawagan's problems on the federal government. The teepees in front of the Legislature should remind us of that every day.

The people from Pukatawagan were not just demonstrating for the sake of demonstrating. They were drawing attention to the abysmal housing situation in Pukatawagan, and the province does have a role to play. The citizens of Pukatawagan are also citizens of Manitoba and, indeed, after some prodding by the people from Pukatawagan, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger) and the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Downey) did meet with representatives from the Mathias Colomb First Nation. I was also present at those meetings. Yes, help was offered by both those ministers, and on behalf of the people of Pukatawagan, I thank them for that. But is it enough help? No.

What more could the province do in conjunction with the federal government to address the lack of housing in Pukatawagan? Well, there are 60 townhouses in Leaf Rapids presently boarded up. The power and water is shut off. These units are a headache for the town of Leaf Rapids, because they must be protected from fire and vandalism. It is a fixed cost to the town, whereas the province has dropped its share of the grants in lieu of taxes for these units from \$60,000 annually to \$16,000 annually last year, I believe, and this coming year I believe zero dollars. That is not being fair to Leaf Rapids.

Perhaps these 60 units could be moved to Pukatawagan, where there is such a great need for housing. At least the provincial government should study this proposal, and maybe they are, and I thank them if they are. One should not assume, despite the deal reached between Ottawa and Pukatawagan regarding housing, that there will be enough housing built in Pukatawagan to cover the shortage. Even if 150 units were built in Pukatawagan today, they could all be used.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, to get back to the actual wording of the throne speech again, in the third paragraph the Premier states, quote: "... my ministers will continue to fulfill the commitment they made to the people of Manitoba this spring when they received a strong, renewed mandate for their policies of prudent financial management, innovative approaches to economic development and job creation and programs providing services to citizens of our province."

First of all, a strong, renewed mandate: Yes, over 40 percent of Manitobans who did vote voted for this government, or at least the government they thought they were going to get. A considerable number voted for the government on the mistaken belief that they would keep the Winnipeg Jets in Manitoba. [interjection] They were riding the Jet stream.

But 40 percent of the vote is not a strong mandate. If you take into account the number of Manitobans who did not vote, it is even less than a moderate mandate.

As for prudent fiscal management, this government has not yet delivered one balanced budget in its almost eight years of being in power.

The last time when there was any money left over in the kitty was in 1988 when the New Democrats left you a surplus of almost \$60 million. Prudent financial or fiscal management rolls off the tongue trippingly, but it has never been practised by this government.

In fact, in 1992-1993, this government incurred a deficit of \$819 million. They talk about not burdening our children with debt, and yet this government in a single year put every Manitoban woman, man and child in hock for over \$800. Was that a sample of prudent fiscal management?

The whole long, drawn-out soap opera surrounding the future of the Winnipeg Jets, was that another example of prudent financial management? Did anyone ever find out just how much the Manitoba taxpayer is subsidizing Barry Shenkarow's salary? There was no prudent financial management then, and there is not any now.

It is precisely because this government was incapable of prudent financial management voluntarily that they have resorted to the trickery of balanced budget legislation. Ministers will be penalized if they do not balance the books. It is like a chain smoker who says, I am going to force myself to quit smoking, but for each cigarette I do smoke, I will put a dollar in the piggy bank.

There has been no prudent financial management. Of course, there have been cutbacks in health,

education, social services and elsewhere, in the Department of Highways. Aides 2, they are being laid off, 125 of them. This has never happened before in the history of Manitoba. I guess the Tories would classify that as one of their innovative approaches to economic development.

Now, these workers, these aides, were told that this layoff was a temporary, once-only layoff from January 1 to April 1. Then they receive a letter telling them that they will be offered only seasonal work and that they will be put on a re-employment list. We feel that this might well be the government's first phase in phasing them out entirely. The whole procedure stinks. This is only one example from a supposedly fiscally responsible government, all the hacking and slashing for its ordinary working Manitobans.

I guess we could argue academically who is doing a better job of hacking and slashing at the cutbacks, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) or Klein and Harris. The Premier has us die slowly, the death of a thousand cuts, whereas Klein and Harris would just decapitate.

Now, the official version we get from the government is that all this pain is necessary. I guess the Tories would say it builds character. But is all this pain necessary? If the books are not balanced, they say, instantly the sky will fall. Does anyone listen anymore to the cry of the victims, the workers and their families, being hurt by these cutbacks and layoffs? Where are these 125 highly skilled Aides 2 workers for the Department of Highways supposed to find new jobs? How does it affect the communities in which they live?

Yesterday, I heard one of the government members, and I believe it was the member for Riel (Mr. Newman) make an eloquent defence for the profits made by the big banks. I implore the member to go to his cabinet colleague the Minister of Highways (Mr. Findlay) and make an equally eloquent defence on behalf of the 125 or so highway workers being laid off.

I am not asking you to defend the billions of dollars of profits made by the banks this year; I am asking you to do something practical, saving the jobs of Manitoba highway workers who have done their job well for 10

years, 15, 18, 28, 30 years or more. I am asking you to help those workers, the communities and families affected by these layoffs.

While you are at it, you could ask the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) how a nurse being laid off in Flin Flon is supposed to find a new job in that community in difficult economic times? How is a CN worker in Winnipeg who has been laid off expected to survive, and so on and so on?

Now the government's throne speech is at least consistent with the government's overall attempt to blame any weakness or shortcoming or cutback on the federal government. It is true the federal government is not entirely blameless, but it cannot be blamed for everything.

It is handy to blame the federal government because this coming year there will not be the lottery transfer to give the appearance of a balanced budget. But, when the Premier (Mr. Filmon) states that the federal cuts will leave Manitoba short \$147 million this year and \$220 million next year, he is not putting these figures in the proper context.

In 1994-1995 this government received \$176 million more in EPF in equalization payments from the federal government than they budgeted. In 1995-1996 this government will receive \$249 million more, a quarter of a billion dollars more, in equalization payments than it did just two years ago.

If you add to that the expected VLT gambling revenue of \$250 million, another quarter billion, you can see that the government's punitive austerity measures have more to do with imprudent financial management prior to the election and inflexible ideology since the election.

In its throne speech the government is quick to condemn the federal government for offloading, but they do not mention their own offloading on the municipalities, on the taxpayers, on the workers and their families.

* (1600)

In the throne speech the government talks about notable successes, namely, the agricultural value-

added, forestry and mining sectors. These sectors are notorious for boom-and-bust cycles. High prices at the moment for agricultural products, wood, pulp, paper and minerals are as important as any government policy. We rejoice that these sectors are doing well, but it is not the entire story.

In agriculture, for example, the demise of the Crow rate has put added stresses on grain farmers. More grain will be trucked, and the negative impact on our road systems will cost the taxpayers millions.

The Hudson Bay route and the Port of Churchill are still fighting for survival in the wake of massive deregulation and privatizing. The government has given some support to the Gateway North project, but both federal and provincial governments will have to do more if Manitoba's cheapest grain route and only seaport is to survive. It is regrettable that a railroad and port so vital to Manitoba's future are given only four words in the throne speech, namely, "ongoing threats to Churchill."

Instead of naming the threat, the government should actively have pursued policies to remove the threat to Churchill. Much is at stake, not only cheaper grain delivery for farmers, but the Akjuit spaceport, the future of the bayline communities and tourism.

An Honourable Member: And the Wheat Board allocation

Mr. Jennissen: Yes, and the Wheat Board allocation, of course, is a factor, as the honourable member points out.

Again, although we rejoice at the strengthening agricultural sector, we have concerns over this government's lack of commitment to orderly marketing and single-desk selling.

We fear that their ideological blinkers allow them to see only the values of the marketplace, big business, huge producers. This government's commitment to the Wheat Board and Manitoba Pork is lukewarm at best. Dual marketing, flexible marketing are often the buzzwords of large producers pushing out smaller producers. At the very least all hog producers should

be allowed to vote whether or not they favour dual marketing. Both my colleagues from Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) and Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) have made this point repeatedly.

What is the sense of setting up a rural task force if the decisions are already made?

As the throne speech mentioned, the mining sector is doing relatively well. This has as much to do with high mineral prices as the government's exploration and development policies. As George Miller pointed out at the mining convention held in Winnipeg a few weeks ago, and I will quote him, Manitoba has not been very vocal in keeping mining in Canada.

In terms of attracting mining capital, Canada has dropped from first place in 1991 to fourth place in 1995. Although mining activity has increased dramatically in Manitoba in the last year or so and some regulatory reform has occurred—less red tape, one-window shopping—there are still fewer miners working in northern Manitoba than there were a few years ago.

If I look at the mining communities in my own riding I see a mixed picture. Snow Lake is doing well with the opening of the Photo Lake and the TVX new Britannia Mines. Still, there are fewer people working in Snow Lake than a few years ago. At the moment, the future looks bright for them.

Lynn Lake has shrunk dramatically. The one gold mine operating is about to move to another location. Leaf Rapids has shrunk considerably but, like Flin Flon, is holding its own. But there is no overwhelming prosperity from mining for northern residents. It is slightly better than it was a year or two ago, but it is not great. However, we continue to be optimistic.

Apart from the agricultural value-added sector and mining, the throne speech also points to forestry as a notable success. Louisiana-Pacific and the Repap expansion will certainly create new jobs. However, not all environmental issues and the forest industry's overlap with First Nations concerns over forest have been ironed out. The \$90-million road expansion and improvement that was part of the original Repap deal

was cancelled by this government a few weeks ago, so all is not rosy in the forestry sector as the government would have us believe.

Certainly, all Manitobans should be concerned when individuals committed to doing their jobs properly and willing to speak out knowledgeably about environmental and forest issues are being transferred or fired. That does not sound either like open government or fair government. So when the government, via the throne speech, gives us the success stories in forestry, in agriculture, in mining, it is not giving us all of the stories. If you get only half of the story then, perhaps, as my colleague for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) pointed out, a throne speech may well become a collection of sweet nothings, a bowl of vague fluff wrapped up in dubious promises.

There were glaring omissions in the throne speech. The entire North was given short shrift. I do not know if that was accidental on the assumption that the throne speech is vague and general anyway and no region needs specific mention or, as is more likely, the vision of this government is metropolis and southern farm based and the North is considered by them more of a hinterland and an afterthought rather than as an asset.

Apart from mentioning the threat to Churchill, the throne speech mentions northern regional health boards. That is it. My response to the government is, as I said earlier, do not talk about the threat to Churchill, do something about it. As for the northern regional health boards, in the first phase they are appointed boards and not elected boards. No wonder, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there is so little mention of northern Manitoba in the throne speech, because this government does not want to be reminded of geographic areas that have been deliberately neglected.

Of the 17 highway projects coming up in the near future only one is slated for northern Manitoba—only one. Of the 90-plus heritage grants, only three went to northern Manitoba. Steinbach and Dugald received five grants in this latest round, but the entire North received only three. Not a single northerner sits on the Heritage Grants advisory board. Of all the shelters and crisis centres in Manitoba, only the Flin Flon/Creighton Crisis Centre had its funding completely cut. The crisis

centre operated for a year or so mainly on a volunteer basis, but now is completely closed. That is very cold comfort to the women at risk in Flin Flon and the huge area north of Flin Flon into northeastern Saskatchewan. This is another example of where regionalization is just another word for cutbacks.

However, the government did create four northern parks with a stroke of a pen. There was virtually no consultation with First Nations people, however, when those parks were created, but then the relation between this government and First Nations people has been strained at best.

This government has a habit of consulting after the fact. First, they make the decisions, and then they consult, hold hearings or appoint boards to give a semblance of democracy, a semblance of popular support or validity for a decision already made.

We have seen this in education reform, so-called, or health reform, so-called, and we should not be surprised when the same top-down approach is used for endangered spaces and the creation of new parks. Up North we refer to the parks as the paper parks because they exist only on paper; however, First Nations people fear that the parks may eventually interfere with their traditional way of life and may also impact negatively on treaty land entitlement.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I realize that throne speeches are general statements, but even generally there is nothing in this speech for northern Manitoba: no guarantee that outreach programs in Snow Lake are protected; nothing for Granville Lake; no winter road support so that grocery and gasoline prices in Tadoule Lake and Lac Brochet could reach a more affordable level.

There is no pressure put on the federal government for its slow abandonment of the food bail program which made living in places such as Brochet semiaffordable, and people in Brochet have asked why the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry report sits on the shelf gathering dust.

Justice in the North is slow, inadequate and often culturally foreign or irrelevant. Police protection is

often nonexistent. When the throne speech talks about the government's impressive record of crime prevention and victim support initiatives, they were obviously not talking about Brochet.

This throne speech also does nothing for South Indian Lake, not a mention of the subsidies for marketing freshwater fish, subsidies cut by this government and the federal government, subsidies which kept the fishing industry alive in this community, not a mention of the \$10-million road and connecting bridge to South Indian Lake promised under the Northern Flood Agreement.

The throne speech does nothing for Lynn Lake either. Highway 391, although a provincial road, is not up to any kind of decent standard in many stretches; and, because of federal offloading of airports, Lynn Lake is expected more or less on its own to maintain a huge airport built for a much larger population.

There is nothing in the throne speech for Leaf Rapids either. The province continues to renege on its grants in lieu of taxes for 60 townhouses. One could make a strong argument that the province mismanaged the forest fire crisis at Leaf Rapids during the summer past. People's lives were needlessly jeopardized in the evacuation. The fire that directly affected Leaf Rapids could have been stopped three or four days earlier if different decisions had been made, and I recognize the wisdom of hindsight is 20-20.

Still, at least there is that feeling of many residents in Leaf Rapids. The evacuations were almost botched. We are darn lucky and very grateful that no lives were lost during the evacuation itself, and we honour the memories of the three brave firefighters who did die this summer in the course of protecting the people and the forest resources of northern Manitoba.

A number of trailers and other buildings did burn down in Leaf Rapids last summer as a direct result of a forest fire. A number of people could not get insurance for their trailers or their possessions despite their best efforts, yet the disaster relief board is denying them any compensation whatsoever in many cases.

* (1610)

What is disaster relief for if not to help the victims of disasters? Despite our letters to the disaster relief board and to the minister responsible for the board, a number of people in Leaf Rapids are facing a bleak winter. They have lost their homes and possessions, in some cases, their livelihood, and yet the board and the minister keep stonewalling and hiding behind petty rules and regulations. Stop making excuses; start helping people.

As for the argument that noninsured buildings inside or outside of Leaf Rapids that burn in the forest fires cannot be compensated for, that argument is not acceptable. This same government in 1989 compensated a resident of Leaf Rapids who lost an uninsured building outside of Leaf Rapids. Why compensation then but not compensation now?

Would this government be as inflexible with its compensation guidelines if the natural disaster was, say, a flood, and if it affected farmers, say, farmers in a southern Tory riding?

The throne speech does nothing for Sherridon and Cold Lake. There is no improvement planned for one of the most winding, dangerous roads in this province. The throne speech will not be greeted with joy in my own town, my beautiful hometown of Cranberry Portage. We no longer have a bank. The last of our two garages just closed. Residents have to drive 16 kilometres to the nearest gas station. The new millennium, the government promises, the prosperity, the excitement, the open government, is seen as distant as ever.

Last of all, Flin Flon, the largest urban site in the constituency, will not see much virtue or comfort in the throne speech. The throne speech mentions the continuing implementation of the province-wide community based mental health system, a system that encourages independent living, but the people working with that system in Flin Flon have pointed out numerous problems that must be addressed.

Chronic underfunding and poorly paid staffs are major concerns, but there are other concerns, and hopefully the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) will listen carefully and respond positively

to a number of recommendations made by the spokespersons for the Association for Community Living—Manitoba. The budget for the Flin Flon General Hospital has been severely slashed, and health care for Flin Flon and the entire region is at risk. I know that the throne speech makes a big production of shifting from expensive institutionalized health care to cheaper community-based health care, but often that is rhetoric to camouflage deep cuts.

The move to community nurse resource centres is a good idea in theory, but support and funding have been slow in coming. While institutional health care has been savaged, the transition systems were not put in place. If you fire 10 health care workers from a hospital and you hire one back for a nurse resource centre, you have still lost nine jobs.

Cutting \$4.5 million from the three northern hospitals—\$1.4 million from the Flin Flon General Hospital—is causing great suffering in the region, lost jobs and yes, eventually, lost lives. More and more patients will have to be medivacked to Winnipeg. How is that saving us any money?

The throne speech does not address the concerns about health care voiced by the people of Flin Flon: health care workers laid off, the crisis centre closed, user fees for patient transportation, underfunding for the community based nurse and mental health systems, no mammography unit. It is not a happy litany.

Finally, and this is also health connected, the City of Flin Flon needs provincial as well as federal help in not only upgrading its present water and sewage system but also expanding it to include Channing. The city cannot do it alone; the province must help. It is an urgent matter.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in concluding my comments on the throne speech, I would like to quote a few excerpts from Rabbi Dow Marmur's theological response to Mike Harris's common-sense revolution, because so much of this throne speech is a reflection of the Mike Harris doctrine.

Admittedly this throne speech is a little more sophisticated and fluffier than Mike Harris's ham-

handed approach. Our Premier uses the stiletto; Mike Harris uses the axe.

Rabbi Marmur states, and I quote: The common-sense revolution may be based more on a mixture of pious hope and political doctrine than on incontrovertible facts. He further states, and I quote: Though the common-sense revolution promises not to cut education, health care and safety from criminals, the impact of the overall cuts is already affecting these three areas and therefore is likely to do untold damage to our society, unquote.

Lastly, the Rabbi says that it is incumbent upon all of us to be like the prophets of old—and I know I will sound like my honourable colleague earlier—but like the prophets of old who told people what ought to be, not what will be. I quote, and this is my last quote from the Rabbi: The prophets were radicals in the literal sense. They went to the root of things, and even when they proclaimed the doom of Jerusalem they wept for her. We too must speak what we believe to be true but never without love and care for those whom we criticize.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a real pleasure today to rise to briefly respond to the Speech from the Throne. I certainly want to welcome everyone back to this second session of the thirty-sixth parliament and especially our Pages and our table officers. It is great.

To begin with, I want to take a moment to acknowledge the support and the participation of the people of the Gimli constituency who have shown their confidence in my ability to represent their interests during the past three provincial elections. Their assistance both during and after each campaign is tremendous and my experience as the member—I certainly owe it to these people.

The people of my constituency have asked of this government what all people in this province desire. They want a government that will direct this province on a steady and responsible course, to create and implement responsible and sound fiscal planning, the

prudent readjustment of our health care that is under tremendous strain because of hundreds of millions of dollars that is being cut by the federal government, in facilitating support for our families, in looking after the needs of our growing older population, in stabilizing and developing a strong economy, and in creating an educational system that will prepare our children for the next century and put them on a footing equal to and better than most other provinces.

In all these issues our government has continued its tradition of listening to the people and responding to meet their changing needs. The recent Speech from the Throne, which is a blueprint of our government's policy, restated our commitment to strong economic growth, job creation and excellence in education, while protecting the vital social services and the safe communities that we all enjoy.

The speech also recognized that jobs and investment depend on a stable, competitive economic climate, and it outlined some of our plans for the session. I will just mention a few.

One that is very important is that we will promote exploration and development in the mining industry. The throne speech indicated that the mining sector is expanding as a result of our policies which aid and promote exploration and development within Manitoba. This year alone, the mining industry created more than 500 new mining jobs.

Inside the government we will encourage innovation, program review and customer service standards in all provincial departments and agencies. This integral focus will also apply to how public funds are being spent. So we will introduce that legislation to increase financial accountability of the public-sector institutions and organizations which are funded by the Manitoba taxpayers. We will do this by requiring greater disclosure of how taxpayer money is being spent. More accountability of how public funds are spent has always been one of our main priorities but has become increasingly important in the face of the federal cutbacks that threaten our essential services.

* (1620)

Among these are the federal changes to unemployment insurance, reduction to some of the

social programs, transfers, elimination of support for the agricultural industry, the refusal to participate in a national highway program, and the possible closure of the Whiteshell Nuclear Research centre. All these cutbacks add to the enormous challenges already faced by our provincial government, and in dollar terms the federal government is expected to cut \$147 million from Manitoba's budgets for health and post-secondary education in the coming fiscal year. Estimates for the '97-98 fiscal year are that the federal government will remove \$220 million from Manitoba's budget for these services. As a result, the need for strict accounting, for spending the scarce resources that we have, has never been as important as it is today.

However, in spite of the federal government's different priorities, our government continues its commitment to health, education and family services. We want an affordable, accessible health care system and are going to work with Manitobans to design a health care system that serves the needs now and into the next century. To help us identify the needs and priorities of communities being serviced, we have established the rural and northern health board so that there is a direct link between us and the communities.

We will also continue the province-wide community based mental health system to encourage independent living. In the area of family services, our government will launch a comprehensive review of The Child and Family Services Act that will also include public consultation. A Child and Youth Secretariat has also been set up, along with some other innovative programs that will provide early intervention for children and families at risk.

At the same time, we want to protect victims of crime and will lobby the federal government for changes to the Young Offenders Act and to protect the victims of stalkers. We also plan to introduce legislation requiring parents to make civil restitution to the victims of property crimes by a person under the age of 16 years old.

In education, the focus is on the future and encouraging excellence and accessibility, flexibility and programs that allow young people to gain experience in emerging fields of employment such as

information technology. We have listened to the people and have been able to provide eight years of prudent fiscal management and achievement that has been internationally recognized and has led to increased investment and economic activity.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have all sat here in this House listening to the rhetoric produced by the members opposite. We have listened to the members claim falsely that the throne speech holds the government to nothing. How wrong they can be. The throne speech does bind Manitobans together with the visions and goals.

The members opposite can stand every day and ramble on, spouting about their same tired, old negativity. They have indicated, some of them have, that they do not like to be negative, but that is what they are being paid to do. Members opposite have also made accusations of misleading advertising on our part during the election, but did they tell their constituents when they got to the Legislature that they would spout off negative comments all day, that they would attack all the policies put forward despite their merit and the benefits, that they would preach that the-sky-is-falling speech to such an extent that their tape recorder could be exchanged for many members opposite with few noticing what they are doing?

Anyone can simply criticize, but I have noticed that the members have certainly fallen into a rut. Criticism is easy, but maybe members opposite should attempt a more difficult task, and that is providing some constructive dialogue and working with the government for the benefit of all Manitobans through constructive dialogue and through alternatives—yes, maybe even some criticism when it is warranted.

The member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) questioned where funds from lottery revenues have gone, and obviously the member has not heard of programs such as the Community Places Program which helps many nonprofit organizations to improve the quality of living within their communities. The funds for this program come from the lottery revenue, and in the Gimli constituency we have seen baseball field improvements, community hall repairs, creation of picnic shelters and recreation buildings. The lottery

funds many important programs for Manitobans including Health, Fitness and Sports, Arts, Culture and Recreation, Rural Development and Winnipeg Development Initiatives. All of these projects are the result of some of the lottery revenue providing long-term benefits to the Manitoba residents and to the visitors.

The member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans) recently criticized what he called Tory fiscal sleight of hand. What the member failed to note was that since 1987-88, the deficit has been stabilized and really eliminated this past budget and has averaged under 1.3 percent of our gross domestic product. The rest of Canada over this time frame—this is down from levels of about 3 percent during the mid-'80s when the former government was in power. What the members opposite, as well, fail to note as they stand and list their woes is that the Dominion Bond Rating Service cited Manitoba as the most fiscally responsible province in Canada in attempting to contain both expenditure and tax increases. Our government's record of fiscal responsibility has led to confirmation of Manitoba's credit rating by Standard and Poor's, Moody's and also the Dominion Bond Rating agency.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to take a few minutes to speak to you about the constituency of Gimli, the Manitoba Interlake region which provides a unique variety of landscapes, histories, people and opportunities. It is nestled between the mighty Lake Winnipeg on the east and Lake Manitoba on the west. The Interlake region is rich in natural resources and boasts the growing and diversified economy. While tourism ranks as the fastest growing sector, the fertile land and pollution-free lakes have made agriculture and commercial fishing the mainstays of the economy.

Just recently there was a tourist bulletin which came out where it said the number of U.S. visitors to Manitoba in August of this year was up by 11.6 percent over August 1994. This is the highest monthly increase in Canada. So I think our tourist people need to be commended for the job they do in Manitoba in promoting Manitoba, and all of our tourist operators in the Interlake and in the Gimli constituency do an excellent job and certainly should be commended for the job they do.

There are many positive activities occurring also in the constituency of Gimli. Between January of 1995 and November '95 a total of 735 building permits were issued in the Gimli constituency. These building permits had a total value of some \$21 million. The numbers represent a continued investment and growth over the past several years. In fact, last year 773 building permits were issued, bringing the total value from 1994 and 1995 to well over \$51 million. People in this area are showing their confidence to do such economic endeavours such as renovations, development and building. Many new buildings, new businesses, new homes are being built in the Interlake. Stonewall and the south end of Rockwood is still the fastest growing area of Manitoba, and I am really pleased to be able to represent that area.

The other municipalities in the south Interlake planning district have also shown great growth, all of Rockwood, Stonewall, Rosser and the village of Teulon.

Agriculture has been a strong point in the Manitoba economy since its creation. The constituency of Gimli is similar to many other areas of this province to which the agricultural sector provides a substantial segment of economic activity and employment opportunities. This is not anything exceptional or exciting, but what is exciting, however, has been that the half billion dollars recently invested into our economy, particularly in the agricultural value-added sector, such as the \$55.9-million expansion to McCain Foods in Portage, will enable potato growers in our area to expand production and have access to greater markets for their produce.

*(1630)

On October 3, 1995, there was the announcement by Schneider corporation that they would be investing some \$40 million to build a technologically advanced hog slaughtering and processing facility in Manitoba. This facility will quadruple Schneider's processing capability in Manitoba to 48,000 hogs per week, and this was an important announcement for the hog producers in all of Manitoba and to my area also.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

On October 10, the Canadian Agra Corporation announced construction of a 200 metric tonne per day

canola crushing facility in Ste. Agathe. This investment, also some \$55 million, will provide some 45 direct jobs in the Ste. Agathe area and a significant number of spin-off jobs to many industries in Manitoba.

The expansion of Schneider, McCain, Nestle Carnation at Carberry, Canadian Agra Corporation all ensure that agricultural producers of both livestock and grains living in the Gimli constituency and throughout Manitoba continue to expand their operations and provide employment opportunity to their fellow Manitobans.

So these announcements and many other announcements we have all been witness to over the past several months has been the result of vision and leadership by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and his cabinet in creating the environment, the policies and procedures that allow industry to move quickly and with certainty.

The constituency of Gimli has been fortunate this past year with the announcement that Ken Church, who is the president and general manager of Faroex Ltd, was honoured at the Western Canada Entrepreneur of the Year Awards. Mr. Church received an award in the manufacturing category. His award is testament to 14 years of hard work, and I am especially proud that Mr. Church chose Gimli as his place of business. His company also is one of the largest employers in the Gimli area. As a matter of fact, I think he employs more people now than Seagram does, and they are also very good corporate citizens.

Tourism employs approximately 50,000 Manitobans and generates over \$11 billion per year into our economy, so I can say without hesitation that the constituency of Gimli is a major factor for the strong tourist draw, and I anticipate that the forthcoming tourist statistics will confirm my feeling that more and more people are discovering what Manitoba has to offer and that the tourist industry will provide a strong source of revenue for our province.

This past year, the constituency of Gimli has seen the addition of 32 fully serviced sites in the Stonewall Quarry Park campground. The expansion of the

campground was made possible through the Rural Economic Development Initiative that provided some \$42,000 for the town of Stonewall. The Stonewall Quarry Park is a unique regional tourist attraction, receiving approximately 100,000 visitors annually. The park, which is owned and operated by the Town of Stonewall includes an interpretive centre, national tournament baseball diamonds and campground.

As well, the sustainable development program has helped restore and stabilize beach-front properties on Lake Winnipeg. These beaches are a very important component on the local area, and all residents benefit from the increased usage and enhancement provided by the upgrades. The constituency of Gimli has several other major tourist attractions and has really become a vacation paradise. People from all over flock to a region that offers something for everyone. Sun worshippers can enjoy miles of clean and sandy beaches and such activities as swimming, sailing, boating and windsurfing. Wildlife lovers can enjoy, in the south Interlake area, the Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre, an area that boasts over 260 different kinds of birds and is recognized as a world-class waterfowl staging area.

Golfers can enjoy the many challenging courses located throughout the region. Music lovers can enjoy the annual Sunfest music festival where Canadian entertainers from across Canada perform live on stage. For the animal lovers, there is the Narcisse Snake Pits where, on two occasions each year, in May and in September, observers can view millions of garter snakes, and it is interesting to learn about these unique and interesting species. In addition, the Gull Harbour Resort and Conference Centre and the Country Resort inn at Gimli offer some first-class conference and accommodation facilities.

Sporting events have always had a high profile in the Gimli constituency, and this past August, the Town of Stonewall successfully hosted the National Midget Baseball Championships. The strong presence and success of many sporting activities throughout the constituency are the result of some dedicated individuals who donate their time and energies. Their leadership is essential to the creation of a healthy community. Several volunteers, coaches and referees

were recently recognized at the Interlake sport development association dinner.

Due to the time restraints and the overwhelming number of worthy individuals to whom recreational facilities depend, I can only pay tribute to but a small minority. Bruce Frost of Stony Mountain was presented with the Investors Group Volunteer of the Year for his 10 years of leadership with minor hockey and baseball, plus his role as president and treasurer of the Stony Mountain recreation committee.

John Kroeker from Stonewall, who is the chairman of the Stonewall National Midget baseball committee, was presented with the group volunteer award for his leadership in constructing a spectacular new sporting facility and attracting more than 10,000 visitors to a very successful baseball tournament. The whole committee at Stonewall deserves a great deal of credit for the job they did and putting on that world-class event. They did an excellent job.

Gord Leduchowski was presented with the 3M Coach of the Year award for his more than 20 years of coaching volleyball and badminton, track and field, plus his major contribution in baseball and has played baseball for the Teulon Cardinals for many years. I could continue naming individuals and their accomplishments in the area of recreation that have made the Gimli constituency what it is today, but it would be necessary for me to cut into some others' time, of course.

On the issue of health care, it is an important subject for us all. Massive cuts from the federal government provide a challenge to our government. Our government has continually introduced innovative programs and technologies in order that the best health care possible is offered, and the quality of life and care in the constituency of Gimli is unsurpassed with health facilities in Gimli, Teulon, Stonewall, just to mention a few, and a personal care home is located also in Teulon, Gimli, Stonewall and many other places. The constituency of Gimli continues a tradition of quality affordable care for its citizens.

Recently we have seen the construction of a new hospital in the town of Stonewall as well as the

construction and renovation to the Rosewood personal care home. The Stonewall District Health Centre recently posted an operating surplus of some \$25,971, almost \$26,000, for the 1994-95 fiscal year. In Stonewall they employ 110 staff and a host of dedicated volunteers that provide excellent service for the district population. As well, this is the third consecutive year that the health centre has enjoyed a surplus, this at a time when our facilities across the province have been faced with funding reductions, layoffs and program reductions in the '90s. On the contrary, the Stonewall Health Centre has had no layoffs and has increased services and programs in the past five years. So while the members opposite criticize changes to health care, let them take note that there are many success stories out there if they would only choose to look.

* (1640)

This level of quality of life is more than an abundance of quality health care facilities. It includes such things as the recent \$2.1-million upgrade to the community of Teulon's waste water facilities plus a \$48,000 expansion to the sewer services to its residents. Such endeavours, as well, are making the community attractive to current and future residents, and further attract agricultural-related enterprises, especially in food processing and value-added industries. One of the industries there, Northern Goose Processors, recently completed a million-dollar expansion to process the feathers from the geese that they process there, and this has been a company that has operated in Teulon for many years and has depended on the expansion of this lagoon for a long time. I am glad to see the project finally completed and glad to see this industry, which is a value-added industry, plus the other industries in Teulon such as the Country Club meats. I am really pleased to see these industries expand and grow and offer more jobs in the Teulon area.

The economic attractiveness of the constituency of Gimli can be further illustrated by citing the construction of a \$3.5-million Hydro training centre located in the municipality of Rockwood. Approximately 35 proposals were submitted in response to Hydro's request to build a new training centre, and residents of the area have every right to be

proud that their site was chosen over some others. This region has been able to achieve such a level of successful ventures due to the continued co-operation between government, business and also the local residents.

We have listened to the people and have been able to provide eight years of prudent financial management and achievement that has been internationally recognized and which has led to increased investment and economic activity throughout the Gimli constituency and throughout Manitoba.

Manitoba remains one of the best places in the nation to live, to work and to raise a family, and for people to invest with pride and confidence in the future. We recognize that this positive goal is shared by all Manitobans, and our government will continue to use this vision as the guiding framework for all legislation, legislative initiatives.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, it is a real pleasure to respond to this Speech from the Throne. Thank you.

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): It is an honour to be able to speak in response to the throne speech. This is the second time I have been able to do this and am a little more seasoned than six or seven months ago.

Madam Speaker, I will start by reiterating some of the concerns that residents of St. James were expressing at the coffee party I hosted last weekend and those related to the seemingly irrational closure of the emergency rooms in our community hospitals in the evenings.

They were concerned about the broken promises of the government. They were very concerned about the potential loss of MTS, our telephone system. They were also concerned about jobs, real jobs that will support their families and their children in the future.

The constituency of St. James has the airport bordering it. Of particular interest to many of the people in St. James is the development of WINNPORT. St. James has been in a situation that has suffered unfavourable political decisions by the federal government in terms of the decision to move Air

Command, for example, from the St. James area to Ottawa, and we see jobs being lost in all kinds of sectors. But, for the people of St. James, Air Command and the decision to move it to Ontario was a particularly hard blow.

What we are looking for is some visionary moves by this government. We are hoping that they will be able to assist and develop in terms of the WINNPORT project, perhaps looking to develop jobs, real jobs, not only talk of jobs but actually developing some real jobs for the people of St. James.

The throne speech is most notable, I think, for its lack of information and the fact that it blamed virtually everything on the federal Liberal government. I am not one to defend the federal Liberal government; however, I believe that this government has its own record of decisions that has made life for most Manitobans much more difficult.

In fact, I think that one of the most prominent things of this throne speech was the lack of clarity and the lack of information. Couched in political jargon and feel-good phrases was the hidden agenda that we learned about later in the hallway and from the media, Madam Speaker.

There was no direct presentation of the fact that this government, the Filmon government, has intentions to privatize our telephone system, a telephone system that has served Manitobans well over the years, a telephone system that has provided us with the lowest residential rates for phones in Canada, Madam Speaker. The question is the agenda of the provincial government to sell off Crown assets for a very short-term balanced budget approach, selling our assets which truly have made Manitoba a wonderful place to live, provided services that we all appreciate.

We are not prepared to see our Crown corporations destroyed: first broken up into four divisions in this example, and then sold off bit by bit under the pretence of effectiveness and the new economy. The fact is that the agenda is quite clear. The provincial government is looking at privatization and is pushing ahead even where our public assets are a benefit to most Manitobans.

In terms of the throne speech, I was particularly disappointed with the lack of information or vision in terms of education, Madam Speaker. There is virtually no mention of the blueprint. The fact is that the blueprint presented just before the election was modified slightly at that time, but we have not heard anything from the present Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) in terms of education since the election basically. The reality is that the government is still pushing ahead on eliminating phys ed and Canadian history as mandatory courses in the curriculum. They are still pushing ahead with their agenda, which they know full well does not fit within the timetable within the elementary school system.

When the previous Education minister was asked, how would schools schedule all of the required and other courses that parents wanted? Perhaps they should look at other options. Perhaps they should eliminate recess. Perhaps they should cut down on lunch breaks. Madam Speaker, I do not see the Minister of Education giving up her time. I do not see the corporate sector giving up their coffee breaks. This is truly an unreasonable request and, in fact, not educationally sound. For students who are spending their day doing academic study, it is particularly important that recess and a full lunch break are available.

Basic bread-and-butter issues have not been resolved. Concerns are still being raised by many school divisions, many superintendents, as to the functionality of the blueprint in terms of education. These are concerns that were not addressed in the throne speech, and, again, we are very, very disappointed.

* (1650)

In addition, in terms of education, we have seen the presentation of the Boundaries Commission, the second, so-called final, final report, where the government sent out the Boundaries Commission back to further evaluate and bring back further modified recommendations, Madam Speaker. What happened? The Boundaries Commission came back and moved the line on the map and basically said they concurred with their original stand.

Six months later, the boundary report is basically unaltered. In fact, in the report, it says that they

received an additional 601 submissions. It is also noted that many of them reiterated what they said the first time, and why would that be? The commission did not listen to them the first time, and they refused to listen to them the second time. Consultation, Madam Speaker, means that you not only receive the report, but you actually give it due consideration.

How many of those submissions, Madam Speaker, were in favour of boundaries change? I had the opportunity to go to several hearings during the first round, and I was not witness to any submissions that were in favour of the changes recommended. Now, I am not so naive to think that there were not some people who believe that boundary changes are necessary. In fact, I would argue that during this whole process we have probably stalled and made it more difficult for some necessary changes to occur.

Madam Speaker, the division of Norwood, for example, is a very small school division with only 1,300 students. This is a school division that perhaps needed to be amalgamated several years ago. If you look at the proportion of cost per student, you can see that it is not the most efficient way to operate a school system, but does that mean you have to look at the whole province? Does that mean you have to move every line? I do not think so. Deal with a problem where you see it. Move with it in terms of a gradual process.

It is not only the Norwood School Division that I am familiar with. There are other school divisions in Manitoba that would voluntarily amalgamate, Madam Speaker. Why is it that this government has held back those opportunities? Clearly, if you have divisions that are choosing to amalgamate, this will ease the transition, lower costs, and it probably makes a lot of sense, and the boundaries will be natural boundaries.

The Boundaries Commission was probably started when people thought, I think fairly superficially, that if you changed the boundaries you would save money and make it more efficient. However, when you look at other cases of amalgamation, and you can look at Unicity, you can look at other governments which have amalgamated, the result is that the harmonization of collective agreements, the administrative adjustment of

policy manuals and other administrative rules, the change of letterhead, all results in a very high initial cost to do it and not necessarily any long-term savings.

In fact, when you look at other jurisdictions across Canada, and this was fairly popular, Madam Speaker, in terms of a national agenda, several jurisdictions including B.C., Saskatchewan, Alberta, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, that I am familiar with, looked at boundary changes, amalgamation of divisions. Those studies indicated that the optimum size for school divisions would appear to be between 15,000 to 20,000 students per division, and that is probably in an urban division.

There are a lot of rural divisions in our province that would be negatively affected by that, and we on this side are very cognizant of that. Larger does not mean bigger. There needs to be an appreciation of the rural situation. There needs to be appreciation of small communities and small schools.

Amalgamation, Madam Speaker, will mean less accountability, less representation, and, ultimately, the result will be the closure of small schools, and that is not what rural Manitoba wants, and it is not what this side of the House wants.

What we are looking for is a system that makes sense. If we look at the rural situation, we know that it means a great deal of controversy. Most divisions do not agree with the concept of amalgamation. Some are prepared and I would encourage that. Again, go ahead with those divisions that are ready to amalgamate, but in others due consideration should be given.

There is no guarantee, Madam Speaker, that we are going to save money in terms of administrators, and I recall that during this debate when we got the Norrie commission's report the first time, there were trustees in various school divisions—and I recall a trustee from St. Boniface who said, there is no way we are going to reduce the number of superintendents. Well, if you do not look at the rationalization or the reduction of the senior bureaucratic level, Boundaries Review is not going to make a significant impact.

In rural Manitoba, a trustee may make an honorarium of \$3,000 to \$5,000 a year. When you are looking at

the administrative structure, you are looking at positions that are significantly more, in the range of \$100,000 annually.

So, clearly, when you look at something like this, it is important that you look at whether it is going to be more efficient, whether it will save Manitobans money, and, most importantly, will it provide better service to our children? I do not think that that has been proven. If we look at the school divisions in the city of Winnipeg, there are clearly examples where we could say, yes, this may work, but I ask, what is it that drove the commission to look at the Winnipeg School Division, Madam Speaker, one that I am most familiar with.

It is not actually being reduced in size or increased in size. What is happening is that the boundary is being moved from one line to another. What does that do? That may seem a fairly innocent change, but it means that the people in the River Heights area, the employees of the school division are concerned about their positions. The parents in the River Heights area who have fought and established certain programs that have been supported by the school division are concerned that they will not be supported in the new structure, and so we have to wonder, given that local divisions develop their own culture and their own characteristics, why the commission would decide to move a line that would be so disruptive.

In addition to no mention of the Boundaries Commission in the throne speech, there was no mention of the harmonization of social assistance. The fact is if you are at the lower end of our economic scale, things are getting much harder for you. In fact, when the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) says that we have to equalize, what that really means is families here in Winnipeg will have to do with less.

* (1700)

It may seem fairly theoretical, but when you are a family or a single parent trying to support your children and yourself and have a decent place to live and take the bus to work or look for work, it is very, very difficult to make ends meet, and we have seen the increase in the usage of food banks proportionately as

the years go by. We have seen the need for distribution of coats to children. We have seen schoolteachers bringing in outerwear, boots, hats and scarves to be distributed in their classrooms because children are not coming to school with the proper clothing. Those conditions will only get worse.

Madam Speaker, we did not see in this document, in the throne speech, any mention of the Wheat Board. Rural Manitobans support the Wheat Board. They have voted at least two or three times giving their solid support to the Wheat Board. In addition, this is following in suit with the decision, I would say the unilateral decision, of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) to move away from single-desk marketing of hogs. Eighty-six percent of the hog producers support the present system. Why is this government bent on moving a system away from what farmers really want? We talked about that during the last session. We asked them, we appealed to them, to listen to rural Manitoba, listen to the farmers involved, and we got the comment from the minister that he had an agenda and he was moving ahead. Clearly, we saw that in several areas during the last session.

I think, when we review the last session, as a new member, we went through the process of the budget, the Estimates of Expenditure and a series of bills. I have to thank the members of the government side who helped me during the Estimates process, provided me information and were co-operative.

However, I also have to say that overall I found the government to be a fairly secretive government. The process here in the House where questions were asked from our side to the government side were responded with theoretical answers, evasive answers, sometimes no answers at all, sometimes answers on different topics. Probably the most frustrating part of it was that we would read the answer in the paper the next day as the ministers would disclose their responses during the media scrum outside rather than responding to the legitimate questions that members of this side asked. I am disappointed. I think it is not only their responsibility to answer those questions but to answer them as honourably and openly to the members of this House as possible. I was very disappointed with the game playing and the politics that is happening here.

I also was a bit disappointed and surprised at the lack of respect and poor manner of the House. I say that sometimes from both sides but—

An Honourable Member: This side too.

Ms. Mihychuk: Well, occasionally even this side would get a little rambunctious. Madam Speaker, I think the letters that we receive from the young students who were here are a good reminder that we are supposed to be representing the people of Manitoba in a serious forum, and, when people come here, they do not come here to see us exchanging snide remarks and not getting down to the business of running Manitoba.

That is unfortunate. I think it is part of the agenda, that there is a sense of arrogance on the government side that they won the election, won the election, I would argue, on a media blitz and a very slick media advertising campaign and what I would say were promises to save the Jets. The people of Manitoba and many of the people in St. James got sucked into the Jets stream, and then we found out that they were put into reverse, Madam Speaker, and they have been disappointed.

The government does have a responsibility to answer questions. We are putting them out in a serious effort to get some answers and, as a rookie, I am disappointed. I am glad to see today, for example, a noticeable difference from the government side of the House. I think they listened to the young students who were here, and, Madam Speaker, you sent us the letters, and we all took it to heart. We have seen a dramatic shift from that side of the House and I think a positive step towards actually answering some of the serious questions we have, and we appreciate it. Our time for Question Period is very limited, and the heckling and the nonanswers are not productive.

In terms of bills, I do want to say that I had mixed feelings about the bill process. I did have the opportunity to work with The Mines Amendment Act, and the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Downey) actually did listen; I understand one of the few, maybe the only minister to actually amend the bill because of a concern that I raised in two parts, and so I have to give him credit. I thought that was very, very

progressive, something perhaps other ministers would consider.

However, Madam Speaker, the disappointment was that this minister, the Minister of Energy and Mines, pushed through a bill that ensured less accountability and weaker conflict-of-interest provisions in the bill. I am disappointed, disappointed that the minister decided to push through even those measures which actually reduce accountability, and does this not fly in the face of the throne speech, the throne speech that talks about accountability and openness? The fact is there is sometimes clear evidence that there are two standards here.

Let us just look at some of the examples that have two sets of rules. Madam Speaker, we saw clearly when it comes to social assistance, for example, we see cuts to families, cuts to single parents, cuts to our children, and where do we see the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) going? To a restaurant that is one of the best in Winnipeg—double standard.

Let us look at the vehicle policies that I raised today. Is it true, and it is, that they have extended the length of service of school buses and yet decreased the length of service of their own cabinet cars? Why is it that cabinet ministers need a new car, what, every four years, every two years? I ask that side. The fact is that school buses are now at 15½ years.

Madam Speaker, if the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) is talking about frugality, then I think it should also apply to the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Praznik) and to everyone else who receives a car from the civil service. They need to be consistent. Replace those cars every 15½ years.

* (1710)

Why is the government's policy in fact that they are going to replace them with even newer cars? In fact, what they are doing is, the kids can have old buses, school divisions are responsible for the maintenance. They are double winners; they download the cost of replacing the buses to school divisions, which have to maintain an aging fleet. Safety is not an issue. There are other trustees here. We will fix up buses so that

they are going to meet the safety regulations. Maybe the wheels do not go round and round on those buses any more. In fact, you know, they are an aging fleet.

It is just this government's avoidance of replacing—

An Honourable Member: Are you saying the buses are unsafe?

Mr. Mihychuk: Madam Speaker, I am not saying and, clearly, I have not said that the school buses are unsafe.

In fact, if the other side of the House had listened, they would have heard that from the beginning of my comment on this. School divisions do maintain buses, just as I am sure we could maintain the Premier's (Mr. Filmon) car. We can maintain it to safety standards to 15½ years, and I would recommend that they try and practise the same policy that they give our children, to themselves.

In fact, let us continue talking about our children, particularly in public schools. What have they seen over the past six years? Cuts, cuts, further cuts from the so-called good government. It is true, five out of six years this government has cut public education and then they have the nerve to give a gift to private schools. They did not even ask for it—a dichotomy, two standards, clearly articulated. Workers, civil servants, people at Hydro, people who work for our Crown corporations are taking less, taking rollbacks, taking Filmon Fridays. Are MLAs? No, Madam Speaker. Why is that?

It is again the workers of Manitoba who have to take less while this House and these members, these privileged people are saying no, we do not agree with that. Our side of the House is prepared to take less and be in solidarity with the workers of Manitoba, not the double standard that we see from the other side of the House.

Madam Speaker, speaking of workers, when you look at, for example, Hydro workers, as a critic of Hydro—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for St. James has been recognized to put on the

record comments regarding the throne speech. It is not a time for debate from both sides of the House.

Ms. Mihychuk: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate your intervention. I am sure it seems like my comments are somewhat sensitive. As we see the other side of the House having quite a few comments, I just want to continue on my double standard that this government practises.

The fact is that the workers of Hydro, a Crown corporation that has seen record profits, these individuals are expected to take less. Meanwhile, the government has given the political appointments on the board a huge increase. Is that justice? I say no. Again, a double standard.

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

This open accountability that the government is talking about is really a farce. What we see is actually the request for the disclosure of how much professors make. [interjection] I agree. I would like to see that—union leaders. But I would also like to see what it is that other people are getting as well who receive government handouts.

Rumour has it that Barry Shenkarow is the highest-paid civil servant in Manitoba. What is it that he makes? I would like to know what the salaries are of those CEOs for those businesses that receive grants from the government. Let us be open about these things. What is the total cost of the Norrie review? What is the total cost? Yes, we agree we want to be open and accountable, and we expect the government to.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you for the time to be able to comment briefly on the throne speech and look forward to continuing being an effective member, I hope. As we look for a new openness in this government, we on this side will do our best to keep them accountable. Thank you.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I am very pleased to have this important opportunity to respond to our government's very comprehensive throne speech.

First of all, I would like to say I am very pleased to be back in the House representing the people of Fort Garry. They have offered me an opportunity. They put their confidence in me as their MLA, and I certainly will continue to do everything that I can to fulfil that confidence and bring forward the issues that are important to the people of Fort Garry. I am very pleased to do that.

I would also like to welcome back the Pages, whom we have not seen for I guess about a month and now you are back again. I just want to say that the work that you do is very appreciated by the MLAs of all sides in this House. The kind of attention and the assistance that you provide to us is very much appreciated and very much noticed, so welcome back and thank you very much.

In our throne speech we covered a number of very important issues, but the four pillars of importance to this province, the issues of health, education, support to families and safe communities, were highlighted within throne speech, and the continued direction of this government to deal with those four very important issues.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think a starting point is to say that our government is very pleased that we were able to pass the balanced budget legislation, that balanced budget legislation which continues to make us very accountable to the people of Manitoba for the spending that we do, that we cannot raise any major taxes without a referendum, without the people of Manitoba having an opportunity to tell us what their views are.

I believe, too, our government has always prioritized our spending. This is not new for our government. It seems to me as I listen to the Government of Canada and I also look at other provinces across this country, they are only now just beginning to try and deal with the very difficult budgeting issues. They, in fact, seemed to not notice what was going on, but this government has been dealing with this issue since we were first elected, almost eight years, and we have set our priorities. Because of that, I believe that we are very well positioned across this country as a government.

One of our big problems, however, is that we have to deal with the federal government's reduction in transfer

payments. This year it will be \$147 million in the budget that we are in the process of preparing now. That is a very significant amount of money. That money is generally used in those areas of great importance to the people of Manitoba: in the area of health and in the area of post-secondary education and in the area of support to families. This year we will have \$147 million less to deal with those important issues. That makes the job that this government began doing eight years ago even more difficult. However, we will be making the best decisions that we can, and we will be making those decisions with the people of Manitoba in mind. That is the way that we have done business since the very beginning.

I think that I have mentioned already that we began this process earlier than other provinces and because of the foresight of the people who were members of this government starting in 1988. I congratulate them for their thinking because that has put us in a better position than most other provinces.

* (1720)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to just spend a moment in the area of education because that was highlighted in the throne speech and also because it has been a priority of this government, again, since we have been elected.

I would like to start with the issue of community involvement because it was very clear to us that the community wanted to become involved within our school system. They wanted to have that open door and, in some ways, had not known if the door really was open to them as community members, including parents. Parents have that ultimate responsibility for their child, and they wanted to have an opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to the direction of their child's education. So I am very pleased that this government has put into place the community advisory councils in schools, done so by legislation, which, I think, is a very important signal to the people of Manitoba.

I understand that the other side of the House has said, well, you know, a lot of schools had parent advisory councils, not community advisory councils, but parent

advisory councils, in some schools, but, in fact, what those advisory councils were able to do, whether or not they had any real power, was simply decided at the local school level. If there was some changes in make-up, either of the administration or of the parent councils, their influence could come and go. So what was there in the past was not necessarily the answer to ensure that parents and other community members, who are taxpayers and have an interest in the school system, had an opportunity to be a part of the direction of our school system.

So, with the development of the community advisory councils, I believe now that the door is officially open to the people of Manitoba to participate in our educational system, and I look forward to working with those councils within my school division. I know that the parents in my school division have, for quite a long time, been involved, but they were always wanting to make sure that their contributions were seen as meaningful and that they could be ongoing.

I also have to say how pleased I am that the community, in general, has become involved in this because the community are those people who are taxpayers, who often are the employers of students during their school careers or when they are finished their school careers, and I believe that they have something very important to add. So I am very pleased with that, and I will certainly be working with my community to encourage them all I can.

I would also like to speak about the role of assessment. It has been described by the other side as harsh, that testing causes teaching to the test alone and that somehow this is going to be limiting for our students. But I would argue that is not the case at all. In fact, they may have been limited before when there was really no way to assess whether or not the whole curriculum had been taught, whether or not students no matter where they live in Manitoba had the opportunity to learn the entire curriculum and to ensure the mobility around our province. So that wherever you live or move to, you would be assured of studying the same curriculum and accomplishing the same goals.

The other reason, I think, it is so important is that the assessment model starts actually very early within our

elementary school life. Where there are difficulties for students, it is very important to know them early and to be able to assess and remediate. What this process of assessment does across the province is to be able to assess a student to see how far a student has come, to look at the strengths of that student's learning style and comprehension, and also to be able to identify if a student is having problems and to allow that remediation to occur in time, not to let the necessary remediation wait two or three or four years with social passes which really did not ever deal with the substantive issues of education.

So I am supportive of the assessment model that this government has brought in and the assessment model that will be taking place within the process of education in Manitoba. Not only will it tell a student something about themselves—and that is particularly important for older students—but it will tell educators, it will tell parents, and it will give us a very good guideline of how to proceed.

I am also very pleased to see the co-operation and the leadership role that our province has taken in the development of curriculum, because one of the difficulties that has been identified for several years is that each province has worked independently on the development of curriculum and that, in fact, has created some difficulty in mobility across the country. In fact, some areas have certain expertise in some parts of curriculum development, and now we have put our heads together. Now we are working in co-operation, the western provinces specifically, in curriculum development. Manitoba is taking a lead in certain areas. That curriculum then will be available to be used.

I think on behalf of the people of Manitoba, in particular, one thing that people are asking us for is co-operation. They are saying try and work together. Why would people try and everybody do their own thing because that is not necessarily productive? I think where we have an opportunity to demonstrate to the people of our province that we can co-operate, that we will co-operate, that we are and it will be a benefit to our students. I think that is very helpful. So I am looking forward to the further developments of our curriculum development.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to speak now about Justice because I can tell you that the people of Manitoba have always expressed a great interest and concern about their public safety. They want to be assured that they will be safe within their communities, but they are concerned and they have pointed very clearly to some specific changes and trends which have to be accomplished in order to make them feel that they will be safe in their communities. They have pointed to legislative changes that they wanted to see happen. They have pointed to actions to be taken by government and they have also pointed to the fact that they want to participate.

The people of Manitoba have not stood back and said this is all for government to do alone. In fact, they have said we have a meaningful role to play. We want to have opportunities at all parts of the justice system to participate, and that is exactly what we are working with the people of Manitoba now to encourage. Finally, the people of Manitoba said we believed too long that people have been victims and that victims have not been recognized by the system, and we are looking for ways that victims in fact can be recognized.

I would like to start speaking about the legislative issues because those are a responsibility of a government. First of all, I would like to speak about the Young Offenders Act because Manitobans have made their point clear. The Young Offenders Act is simply not strong enough, and they want the Young Offenders Act strengthened. The Young Offenders Act is the responsibility of the federal government, but the people of Manitoba have given very specific recommendations to the federal government about how to strengthen the Young Offenders Act, and they expect it to be done. In the interest of their public safety, they expect it to be done.

So this province has taken this information forward. This government fully supports the strengthening of the Young Offenders Act. We have seen some recent changes which this province and this government asked for. We said from the very beginning, if you commit a crime and you are 16 or 17 years old and it is a heinous, serious crime, that you should be tried in adult court. There should be a presumption of your being tried in adult court, to not receive the benefits of more lenient sentencing from the Young Offenders Act.

We are pleased to see that that one change has occurred, but there are others that need to occur. On behalf of the people of Manitoba this government will continue to press the federal government for issues such as the publication of names in the interests of public safety.

Manitobans are saying that when there is a young offender who is out in the community and poses a danger to the public that the public has a right to know who that person is, what that person looks like so that they can protect themselves. We are asking the federal government to make that change.

Also, they have said, parents must be brought back into the justice system, and they want parental responsibility put into the Young Offenders Act. It was in the previous Juvenile Delinquents Act. Manitobans want it back in the Young Offenders Act.

So far the federal government has not agreed to these changes. We in Manitoba have said, then we will do what we can within our province to deal with those issues, particularly of parental responsibility, because they are important. We will be continuing to press the federal government on this issue.

We also have asked for changes to the Criminal Code. We have asked the federal government on behalf of the people of Manitoba to strengthen the antistalking legislation. We have said that at the moment victims are not considered within this legislation and that there are a number of things which the federal government can do to strengthen the legislation. No. 1, let people know if the accused person, if the convicted person escapes or is let out of jail, so that the person can at least protect themselves. Now, at the moment, we do that in Manitoba administratively, but we have said that the federal government can send a very strong signal from the Parliament of Canada to have that done in the interests of the safety of women in the province of Manitoba.

We have had asked for reverse onus on bail. We have said that where the accused person continues to pose a threat to the victim, there should be a reverse onus on bail. There should be a presumption that bail will not be granted and that the defence will have to

make a case to get that bail. So far the federal government has not agreed.

* (1730)

This is the federal government that told us when they were elected that they were going to make the safety of women in Canada a priority. This government took forward those particular proposals in the interests of women in Manitoba and Canada in March 1994. We are now approaching 1996, and we have not seen any changes yet. We have others; we will be continuing to press the federal government to make those changes.

We have also said in the area of parole, Section 745, that not only should the parole board consider the behaviour of the person while in the institution, but they must also consider the original crime, the original criminal act.

In the letter that I wrote as Attorney-General on behalf of our province regarding the parole of Dwayne Archie Johnston, I asked them very specifically to consider the circumstances of that original crime.

We have also said, when individuals have served a sentence within our institutions but that those individuals are clearly not rehabilitated, did not attend sessions that would assist them, behaviour indicates that they are not rehabilitated and that there is an assessment that they pose a continued risk to the community that there should be a lifelong tracking system. When they are released because at the moment we do not have the authority to keep them in jail, there has to be a way to keep track of those people across the country so that we know where they are.

The federal government has not agreed yet but we will keep pressing them. However, our government said, we are not prepared to stand for that. So we established, very specifically dealing with pedophiles and sexual offenders, the community notification committee. That community notification committee, on the advice of Corrections individuals, is made aware when an offender is being released from prison or from jail. They, on the referral of a police chief, will have the opportunity to consider the danger of that particular offender and to notify the community, if in fact in

either a full-blown warning or a limited warning, so the community can protect themselves.

Now, we have the NDP. They said, it is not worth it. They have said, do not bother doing it. They said, it is just not worth it, and would not be supportive of that. That is unbelievable to the people of Manitoba, because this is the first community notification process in all of Canada. This was a very important move by this government that other provinces across the country are looking at. It has not been supported by the NDP, but we know where they stand. They have not been supportive of victims.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, apart from legislation, the community has also said that they want consequences. They have said to the province, where you have the opportunity to enact consequences against an individual who continues to pose a threat to the community or you can change that individual's behaviour and attitude and have an opportunity to do that, then you should do that.

That is why this government has instituted boot camp, boot camp for young offenders. We have two. They focus on rigorous confinement, consequences for bad behaviour, community service for some positive interaction with the community, treatment for abuse problems and school 12 months of the year, because our government found that with young offenders, many of them were not in school when they offended. If we have a short time with young offenders, we should be able to make the most of it, so that when they leave our institutions they can re-engage appropriately in the community.

Our government in setting up its boot camp model also realized that we had to have a program of strong aftercare, that we had to make sure that when an individual left the highly structured environment of a boot camp and moved back out into the community that there was a transition plan for those individuals.

What we have, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is again a model across Canada. We have provinces from across this country coming to look at our model and we now have letters from parents, letters from parents that say they believe this is the experience that has probably turned their young person's life around.

We have also said that we want to deal with victims of property crime and that because we believe so strongly that parents should be involved in the system that we made an election promise in 1990 to bring forward a bill which would deal with parental responsibility. That was referenced in the throne speech. This government will be doing that. This is not to punish parents but this is to give to victims a position that will deal with the losses that they have experienced and make that young person responsible along with their parents for an act of property damage.

Also, in the area of prostitution, we have taken a very important stand because we have said that procurement of a prostitute can ruin a young person's life, a young woman's life. We believe then, and I have sent a letter to the federal Minister of Justice on this, that there should perhaps be a consideration of lifelong sentencing. This person who has procured a prostitute, a young woman, and pulled her into a life of crime, needs to have some very significant consequences.

Our government is also examining all of our options to deal with prostitution, and I look forward to bringing the initiatives that we will be dealing with, bringing those forward in the next short while, but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the community has said, well, governments can do certain amounts of things and legislation can do some things, but communities have to be involved, and we want to be involved, and where we have been involved it has been very successful.

I would like to highlight a few of the ways the community has become very involved and it has been successful, first of all at the policing end. The RCMP has community advisory councils to the police. They are able to meet within communities, help their local detachments and policing service determine what the priorities should be within their area and provide some input into the kinds of policing that they have. I know that both the community and the police service have found this to be a very important measure, and it is one way, right at the front end, that the community can become involved with making their community safer.

We also have a number of community crime prevention programs, and these have been really successful, because the public has been able to become

involved to prevent crime. We have a number of watches, realty watch, cottage watch, operation public alert. Those are just three examples of the way the community has become involved, and they have reported to me that in their areas the statistics have shown that, in fact, criminal acts have come down, particularly in the area of property damage, because the community becomes some eyes and ears for the police service of their area. So we will be continuing to work with the community to find more and more ways to bring them in on the prevention end.

We also instituted Street Peace, a youth gang line, in the city of Winnipeg, and this has been a very successful line. It, in fact, has been watched across Canada, as well. It has provided important information to the police in their investigation of criminal activities, and we are very pleased that the City of Winnipeg Police have found it to be helpful and are full participants in Street Peace.

Because Street Peace was seen as so successful, we moved into another program called No Need To Argue. No Need To Argue was a partnership between Manitoba Justice, between the British rock group, the Cranberries, whose hit CD was No Need To Argue, and also between the Winnipeg Free Press, between Q-94. Also, several businesses were supportive, HMV records, as well.

What the co-operation meant was that this brought all parts of the community together, and young people were able to identify within their own communities what their issue was that they wanted to solve, and then they worked out a solution within their community, a positive solution.

You know, we really support the idea that young people are good. In fact, most young people are really good, and they need a way to participate, too. So No Need To Argue was a program where young people developed solutions within their community and with community support put them into action. So we had young people from last spring, through the summer and into the fall working on their projects and making a difference within their community.

This has really been of such great interest across the country that I am told the national council on crime

prevention is looking at Winnipeg's model. I mention this because I think it has been widely agreed that nobody can do it alone, and where we have an opportunity to do things together and share, that that is going to make a difference to the people of Manitoba.

By the way, from No Need To Argue, we have produced a book which has compiled all of the initiatives that young people put together. That is available across Manitoba, and so far it has been sent out to the schools, but through Justice that booklet is available.

We also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have made a concerted effort to work with Youth Justice Committees. Youth Justice Committees are community people who decide that they are willing to work with young people who have offended, to hear the act that the young person has done and to work with that young person for a consequence.

* (1740)

This has really been a very successful model because it has taken young people who have had a brush with the law who are considered to be appropriate by our Crown attorneys and has allowed the community where those young people live to deal with them. It has brought the community directly to the young person, and in many ways has then been able to guide that young person away from that life that might include criminal acts and back into a more positive life.

We have continued to increase the number of Youth Justice Committees across this province. I believe we are at over 70 now, and we are also able to expand the mandate of Youth Justice Committees in terms of the kinds of work they want to do, but these Youth Justice Committees receive their authority from the Young Offenders Act, so that means that they do work with young people who fall into the Young Offenders Act eligibility; that is, young people who are 12 or older. We also have Manitobans who work as honorary probation officers, and we will be continuing to work with aboriginal communities to bring justice to those communities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, those are some of the things that Manitobans have asked for, legislation,

consequences, community involvement, but they have also said that they want victims considered, and this has become very high on this government's agenda. It was noted in the throne speech as a commitment to deal with victims within our province. We are in the process of developing a provincial strategy to deal with victims, because we have understood that somehow they have not had the profile in the past that they deserve.

One of the ways we plan to start again is through the area of parental responsibility, because a lot of people are victims of property crime, and there needs to be some way in which there can be some restitution or some way in which this loss can be dealt with to the victim. So we will be dealing with that legislation, and I believe that will make a difference to the people of Manitoba.

In terms of victims, we also dealt with maintenance enforcement, because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are orders which require payment by some parents, very often a father, to a payee, very often a mother who has children. Sometimes people have tried to avoid that responsibility, and we thought that was wrong. So we brought forward legislation, this government brought forward legislation, so that people could no longer avoid. We brought forward stricter enforcement measures such as suspension or revocation of the driver's licence.

But we also said enforcement is only one part. You also need to be able to attach more resources. If people are going to hide their money and hide their resources, no matter how much enforcement you have, you cannot get the money. So we brought forward very bold legislation which passed in this House which deals with people's joint assets and deals with pension benefit credits, so that now people cannot feather their nest for retirement while the payments they are supposed to be making to a family go unpaid. This legislation is the toughest legislation in this country, and our government is very serious about making sure that maintenance enforcement payments are, in fact, completed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we also have brought forward initiatives that deal with public safety, hoping to avoid victims by putting more police on the street. This

government made a commitment to increase the number of RCMP officers available in Manitoba and more police available to the city of Winnipeg. We have given a grant to the City of Winnipeg for 40 more police officers, and I understand that those officers are being recruited, and we look forward to those officers being available to Winnipeggers, and Manitobans in relation to the RCMP.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have only a very, very short time left, but I also want to speak about one of my other responsibilities, and that is as Minister for the Status of Women. In the area of justice, many of the initiatives that this government has brought forward affect the lives of women in our province. On behalf of our province, I was very, very pleased and proud to represent Manitoba at the fourth U.N. conference in Beijing. I was particularly proud that our province felt it was important to have a minister there. There was only one other province in this country that sent a minister, and that was Quebec.

So I was the minister who represented English-speaking provinces across the country. I met every day with the negotiators on behalf of Canada to deal with the issues that were important to women and to particularly put a focus on those areas which are provincial responsibility by Constitution, areas such as education, administration of justice. I believe that what we will see coming from the Beijing conference, the platform for action, will be an important document for Manitobans and Canadians.

I met with the women who attended the Beijing conference from Manitoba in Beijing; I also have had a follow-up meeting with those women at home in Manitoba. We have looked at a plan to continually have the opportunity to participate on the very important issues that were raised at the Beijing conference. We expect the final document to come from the United Nations within the next few weeks, and certainly we will be very happy to distribute that to all MLAs in the House and to assist those Manitobans who would like to have access to the document as well.

Within our throne speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe we dealt with very important issues that relate to the people of Manitoba, and particularly a number of

the issues relate to women in Manitoba, their economic security and their safety. So I am certainly very supportive of the throne speech that this government has brought forward, and I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues in this area. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupertsland): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to join my colleagues in the opposition, adding a few words to the debate on the Speech from the Throne that opened the Second Session of the Thirty-sixth Legislature of the Province of Manitoba last Tuesday.

I would like to say at the outset that it is again regrettable to see the failure of this government in demonstrating its commitment to work with First Nations people and other aboriginal people in a partnership arrangement or through a government-to-government relationship on many, many outstanding issues that many of my colleagues have spoken on, including the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen).

Whenever I have risen in this House on matters relating to the throne speech, I have never neglected to mention the diversity of the constituency that I represent currently. Rupertsland, as I have said over and over again, is comprised of 25 communities in total, 17 First Nations communities; we have NACC communities, commonly referred to as Metis communities. Also, of course, we have the nonaboriginal communities of Bissett, Gillam, and Churchill.

I take the issues of all my constituents seriously and, to the best of my ability, respond to the needs of these people that I represent as quickly as I can. Words spoken by my fellow northern MLAs have probably mentioned the distance that we have to travel to get to our constituents and colleagues will attest to that, particularly the northern MLAs that I work with.

* (1750)

Rupertsland, for example, begins 100 kilometres north of Winnipeg at the Sagkeeng Ojibway First Nation and along the east side of the province all the way to Churchill and beyond to the Northwest

Territories border. Many of the communities that I represent have upwards of 95 percent unemployment, and 95 percent unemployment is not unrealistic in many of the communities that I represent.

Some of the traditional economies of the people of the North, including fishing, trapping, hunting and gathering is no longer as abundant as it used to be in days gone by, nor is it viable in today's reality. I was glad, however—and it has always been my practise to commend this government in the efforts that it makes for the good of all Manitobans. On the other hand, I am also equally critical in areas that I feel there is no attention paid to aboriginal people nor to northern Manitoba.

I certainly want to congratulate this government in the work that it did with respect to lobbying the international community with regard to the fur trade and the one-year moratorium that is being realized which gives trappers and people who are involved in traditional economies in northern Manitoba a little bit of a break. I look forward to working with this government and also the national government with respect to perhaps developing a better understanding in the world community about this very vital and very feasible economy that is enjoyed by aboriginal people and other northern Manitobans.

Of course, in Rupertsland, in Bissett, for example, we have possibilities in the mining industry. The industry looks promising in that community, and credit must go to people like Mayor Hugh Wynne from Bissett for his ongoing insistence on the potential of this industry in that particular community, and it has been through his efforts that some attention has been paid about the opportunities that appear evident in the mining industry in the community of Bissett.

Of course, we cannot forget about communities like Gillam which is primarily a one-industry town. It is a hydro town primarily, and people who live there, like other Manitobans, expect no less than what other Manitobans receive in the area of education, in the area of health care, and they also want decent roads and have basic needs that perhaps some people in urban Manitoba, in Winnipeg, for example, take for granted, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And, of course, I am very honoured to represent Churchill as part of Rupertsland, Churchill's community that I regard as my second home. Churchill is very much for some people a vision for a complete Manitoba, a complete province, not only because Churchill is the location of Canada's only northern seaport, but its potential is limitless. Unfortunately, grain shipments through the Port of Churchill in the last couple of years have been among the lowest on record, and this, I believe, can be corrected, first of all through political will by all parties and support for an initiative like Gateway North which was instigated by the former mayor of that community, Mayor Doug Webber, and currently Mayor Micheal Spence. We believe that there are a lot of possibilities for Churchill and its ongoing life, and we will be introducing a private members' resolution that we would expect will be supported by all members of this House when this House again sits in the spring.

Other parts of this constituency that I am talking about, the constituency I represent, Rupertsland, of course, are First Nations communities and for the most part English is not the first language. Cree, Ojibwa and Oji-Cree in the Island Lake area are the first languages and these communities must be highly praised for the work that they are doing for our people.

In St. Theresa Point this past summer, for example, under the leadership of Chief Joe Guy Wood and the front line workers that he has working there in addressing a number of other issues besides the bigger issues that we seem to occupy ourselves with at times, but past wrongs that have been done on aboriginal people, whether it be spiritual, emotional, physical or mental through the residential school system and other matters like that, were addressed through four conferences that were convened there, and I was very grateful to take part in one of the conferences that was held this past summer.

This is very important in addressing the other important elements of our lives as people in general no matter what the colour of our skin may be. It is very important to address the hurts of particularly aboriginal people and some of the abuses that they have gone through and some of the realities that are still there in today's society. It is unfortunate that people still will

look at a person's skin colour before that person is given an opportunity.

Unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is the reality in today's world and racism is a reality and we have to deal with that to the best of our ability. First Nations people are always it appears at the receiving end of this very very sick illness.

In Gods River we have people like John Robert Yellowback and Councillor Tom Mckay who have been active in working with our youth and ensuring that our youth are given an opportunity to experience traditional activities and therefore eliminating things like youth crime but allowing our young people the opportunity to learn traditional skills like trapping, fishing, hunting and traditional survival. We have to give people like Chief Yellowback and Councillor Mckay all the credit in the world for the work that they are doing in that community.

At the same time, while these activities are going on in northern communities, there is also that effort being made, particularly by the leadership of the First Nations, in seeking long-term economic opportunities for aboriginal people, because aboriginal people are not happy with the situation that they are in in that they have to rely on social assistance in many communities. Aboriginal people by nature are a hard working people.

In my opinion, while these economic opportunities and these economic initiatives are being sought by First

Nations leaders, it is important that this government must be responsive to the needs of the First Nations leadership and to the First Nations communities. Also, the national government, the federal government, has to take an active part along with the private sector.

So I believe that this provincial government has that opportunity to convene a working relationship with these parties that I have just mentioned in exploring new economic opportunities so aboriginal people will not have to be regarded as being a burden on the taxpayer. I believe that in the spirit of equality and fairness that these possibilities can be made possible with a little effort on the part of people.

I want to talk about some other issues that are very very important in northern communities. First of all, the cost of living in relation to, let us say, Winnipeg, in comparison to Winnipeg. In Thompson, for example, people's cost of living is 10 percent higher than it is in the city of Winnipeg; in Gillam, 22 percent higher; in Norway House, 27 percent; Cross Lake, 30 percent; Split Lake, 39 percent; Nelson House, 42 percent; York Landing, 51 percent; Ilford, 54 percent; Brochet, 67 percent; God's Lake, 67 percent; St. Theresa Point, 68 percent higher than Winnipeg; Gods River, 70 percent—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have 27 minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House now stands adjourned until tomorrow (Thursday) at 1:30 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, December 13, 1995

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Presenting Petitions		1994-1995 Annual Report of Assiniboine Community College	
Emergency Health Care Services—Community Hospitals		1994-95 Annual Report of Keewatin Community College	
Kowalski	285	1994-95 Annual Report of Red River Community College	
Chomiak	285	McIntosh	288
Mihychuk	285		
Lamoureux	285	Introduction of Bills	
Martindale	285	Bill 200, Health Services Insurance Amendment Act	
Liquor Store Closure—Winnipegosis		Lamoureux	289
Wowchuk	285	Oral Questions	
Emergency Health Care Services—Concordia Hospital		Faneuil ISG Inc. Agreement	
Cerilli	285	Doer; Filmon	289
Maloway	285	Sale; Filmon	290
		Filmon	295
Reading and Receiving Petitions		Health Care System	
Emergency Health Care Services—Community Hospitals		Chomiak; McCrae	291
Mihychuk	285	Misericordia General Hospital	
Martindale	286	Friesen; McCrae	292
Friesen	287	Autopac	
McGifford	287	Lamoureux; Filmon	293
Cerilli	288	Manitoba Telephone system	
Hickes	288	Ashton; Findlay; Filmon	294
Emergency Health Care Services—Concordia Hospital		Hog Industry	
Chomiak	286	Wowchuk; Enns	295
Retention of Hogs Single-Desk Selling		Department of Highways and Transportation	
Wowchuk	287	Jennissen; Findlay	296
Tabling of Reports		Highway Construction Projects	
Report of the Chief Medical Examiner for 1994		Jennissen; Findlay	297
Vodrey	288	Education System	
		Mihychuk; McIntosh	297

Matter of Urgent Public Importance**ORDERS OF THE DAY****Emergency Health Care Services—
Community Hospitals**

Chomiak 298
Ernst 299

Throne Speech Debate

(Sixth Day of Debate)

Nonpolitical Statements

St. Mary the Protectress		Reimer	301
Millenium Villa		Santos	303
Martindale	301	Downey	307
		Jennissen	312
		Helwer	319
1995 Lieutenant Governor's Medal for Literacy		Mihychuk	324
Jennissen	301	Vodrey	329
		Robinson	336