



Third Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
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	Steinbach	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
ERNST, Jim	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, Hon.	Riel	P.C.
PALLISTER, Brian	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank, Hon.	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
RADCLIFFE, Mike, Hon.	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

Friday, March 7, 1997

The House met at 10 a. m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the officers' table, where we have this morning, and I would like to introduce our new Clerk Assistant, Shabnam Datta.

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Manitoba Metis Federation Funding

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

During the Speech from the Throne and prior to the press conference of the Premier dealing with matters in the Speech from the Throne, the Premier stated that he must work in partnership with aboriginal people and First Nations people and that he promised that his government would work together with aboriginal people on jobs and training and other aspects, which we found rather cynical given the cuts in Access, New Careers and the Indian-Metis friendship centres in the past, but of course we wanted to see some progress.

I would like to ask the Premier, why was he not honest with the people of Manitoba and why did he not tell the people of Manitoba at the time of the Speech from the Throne that, on the one hand, as he was allocated funds for a campaign for First Nations people, he was cutting money from the Manitoba Metis

Federation? And could he tell us what the impact of those cuts will have on the jobs of Metis people working across Manitoba?

Hon. David Newman (Minister responsible for Native Affairs): The issue of core funding of the Manitoba Metis Federation was a matter that I discussed both orally and then confirmed by letter with the then spokesperson for the Manitoba Metis Federation who attended the meeting officially representing the organization, which you know is in a state of refurbishment, an election to be held on May 15 of this year to elect a new board and new leader.

The funding which was directed at core funding was something that was discontinued, funding which has come from this government previously for core funding, a portion that has been directed to help fund the election taking place on May 15. With respect to the rationale or the discontinuation of the funding, that is done because there is really no organization in place under leadership which is democratically chosen by the Metis people.

I also would add the point that I believe having that kind of funding, that kind of core funding, contributes to the very kinds of problems that have resulted with the Manitoba Metis Federation being in the difficulty it is in now, that is, getting elected because of the pressure you can put on government to get money.

* (1005)

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) never answered the question. He would be in the press conference talking about partnership and if you cut me I bleed and all these other kinds of terms that he wants to change his image with.

I asked a specific question. How can the Premier justify a \$20,000 kick-off event for the Premier alone, some hundred thousand dollars in public relations and promotions at a time when he is cutting back on the

core funding for Metis people, and could he tell us how many people are going to be laid off? How many Metis people are going to be laid off in Thompson, in Flin Flon, in Dauphin, The Pas and Winnipeg because of his desire to have a kick-off event and other PR activity around his cynical statement in the Speech from the Throne?

Mr. Newman: Madam Speaker, I would say unequivocally, \$20,000 will not be spent on any kick-off event, although I would say that communication is going to be important to let young aboriginal graduates of high schools, community colleges and universities who are going to participate in the program be aware of what the program is all about, also that the community at large is aware of it because the business community has very extensively indicated interest in supporting this kind of program. So there is a need to have communication. That is an investment and that is for the benefit of the Metis people.

With respect to the Metis people getting the benefit of the funding, I would submit that this funding will be for the benefit of the people, and the new approach to doing funding with the Manitoba Metis Federation on a project-by-project basis will better ensure that funds are being directed at programs that are beneficial to women and children and other members of the community in ways that are mutually agreed upon.

Mr. Doer: The Premier and the minister never answered my question. How many people working at the grassroots, community-based level in the Metis organization are going to be laid off because of this callous, cynical decision of this Premier?

I would like to ask the Premier, Madam Speaker, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, in a presentation made to the government about a week ago identified that the subsidies, business subsidy costs and allocations, have gone up, up, up to \$20 million in the province of Manitoba. They are calling on the government to cut totally the \$20 million.

I would like to ask the Premier, why did he not maintain the funding in the Manitoba Metis Federation for people working, with some of the highest numbers of people who are unemployed? Why did he not maintain that grassroots funding and take some of this

money from the business subsidies that have increased at a time when health and education funding has been cut?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, it is interesting that the members opposite, who of course were in government throughout the '70s and '80s in this province and instituted countless programs for business subsidies—in fact, I recall many of the statements made by the member for Concordia when he was president at that time of the MGEU talking about all this money that went to plant daisies on the roadsides and put up signs all over the province, \$200 million that went to paying for jobs and subsidizing businesses to create jobs. I recall all of that, and I contrast it to the news out today, which I am disappointed that the member chose not to talk about, which is the latest Statistics Canada information on our labour force. It says that again we reached an all-time record high. [interjection]

* (1010)

Madam Speaker, this is relevant. This is relevant to the issue of businesses creating jobs in this province—all-time record high of 541,400 people working in this province, and that is relevant to, of course, job creation and businesses that are coming here.

Point of Order

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): I believe, Madam Speaker, that Beauchesne's is very clear that answers to questions should be as brief as possible and should pertain to the matter that was raised. I ask you to call this Premier to order to answer the question that was asked about the jobs that are being affected for the people that are in the Metis community of this province, not about the statistics that were released today.

Mr. Filmon: On the same point of order, the Leader of the Opposition asked about subsidies to businesses and programs for businesses to give them incentives to create jobs in this province, and the proof of the pudding is in the statistics of the all-time record high number of people employed in this province. I know that is disappointing to members opposite because they do not like to hear good news like that, but it is fact.

Madam Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Transcona, I will take the matter under advisement and report back.

Layoffs

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, on a supplementary question, we all know that First Nations people are not even included in the unemployment statistics. We know that the Manitoba Metis Federation is working in areas that are covered by the unemployment statistics but have some of the highest unemployment. In fact, the regional breakdowns for northern Manitoba used to have numbers 24, 25 percent unemployment. We do not get those breakdowns anymore.

I just asked the Premier a very simple question. How many members of the Manitoba Metis Federation staff working in communities and developing economic hope and opportunity in Thompson, Flin Flon, The Pas, Dauphin, the Interlake area and Winnipeg will be laid off? Could the Premier please answer that? Surely he considered it when he cut the money to the Manitoba Metis Federation. Just give us a straight answer for once.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, as has been indicated, there was funding that had been allocated for core funding for the organization of the Manitoba Metis Federation, and that core funding, of course, was not able to be used after a court decision that essentially said that the organization no longer existed. You do not give money to an organization that does not exist. At least we do not; New Democrats might. So the minister has taken money that would ordinarily have been lapsed and put it into a new program, a new program activity for the development of Partners for Careers for aboriginal employment. That I think is a wise decision and a wise choice.

With respect to another some 40-odd thousand dollars put towards holding a new election for a new executive of the Manitoba Metis Federation, that, too, was transferred out of the money that had been allocated for core funding. In addition to that, of course, the minister has indicated that the government will be providing for program funding for future activities in the Metis Federation, which obviously will be based upon exactly what the intention is of those

activities. If those activities are from matters that have been raised that would be in the best interests and improve the circumstances, employment and otherwise, of the Metis people, then there is funding that would be available for that. All of that is, I believe, the kind of decision-making that people expect of us.

Deputy Minister of Northern Affairs Conflict of Interest

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Madam Speaker, this government has a large amount of trouble with integrity, such as appointing people to commissions such as the Council on Post-Secondary Education and the regional health boards who have no apparent qualifications for the task except belonging to and giving money to the Conservative Party, travelling with spouses at public expense, to name but a few. So it is not surprising that we learn today that the Department of Northern Affairs had hired at a half-time salary of \$35,000 a year, the spouse of the Deputy Minister of Northern Affairs.

I am tabling a letter dated January 24, from the Deputy Minister of Northern Affairs, outlining the conditions of that contract hiring his own spouse.

I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission, when did he first learn of this conflict-of-interest hiring, and what did he do about it?

* (1015)

Hon. David Newman (Minister of Northern Affairs): Madam Speaker, within five minutes of that particular memo coming to my attention, and that was sometime after January 24, I verified that individual in fact was the deputy minister's wife by checking two sources. I then contacted the deputy minister, who was out of the country, and I let the deputy minister explain the situation. I then made very clear that that proposed engagement would not take place, and that all took place within a period of hours on the day in question.

Ms. Barrett: Will the Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission investigate the appropriateness of the actions of the Deputy Minister of Northern Affairs and the former Minister of Northern Affairs, who signed the contract recommending the

hiring of his own deputy's spouse, and why this obvious practice of patronage has been allowed to happen again after the Minister of Rural Development was investigated for allowing the hiring of the then Minister of Health's spouse in 1992? He even had his hiring privileges suspended for a period of time.

I will table, in case the Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission has put this particular file in the circular file because of its embarrassment for the government, a memo from the Clerk of the Executive Council and head of the Civil Service Commission outlining the problems related to the then Minister of Rural Development and again ask the Minister for the Civil Service Commission to undertake the investigation of this situation and why it has been allowed to happen again.

If the current minister were still in his position—the then minister, this would never have come to light.

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister charged with the administration of The Civil Service Act): I thank the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs, who has clearly indicated that no hiring took place.

Grow Bond Program Woodstone Technologies

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, when the Minister of Finance finally agreed to our request for a full audit of the Woodstone Grow Bond, he stated that the audit would simply confirm that all was well. Those words were repeated, in essence, by the minister responsible for Grow Bonds.

Well, as we now know, all was far from well both with the company and with the process that led to the issuing of the Grow Bond.

Will the Minister of Finance now confirm that material facts, that is, facts which were vital to an investor's ability to make a fair judgment of the risk involved, were deliberately withheld from investors, even though the Grow Bond office had the information and there was plenty of time available to put it into the memorandum of offering in March of 1994?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, no, I will not confirm that. There have been

two audits done of Woodstone Foods, the Grow Bonds Program. The first one was done a few years ago. The Department of Rural Development and the Grow Bond office instituted most of the recommendations in that report. The subsequent audit was recently done. That has been made available to the public and all members of this Legislature and does a full accounting of the entire transaction. Some recommendations have flowed from that audit, and they are also being implemented by the Department of Rural Development.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, is the Finance minister then saying that he disagrees with the Provincial Auditor's words in the report on page 21, in which the Auditor states, and I quote: In addition, we found documentary evidence that government officials were aware of revisions to the expansion program well before the issuance of the offering memorandum. In our view, there was ample opportunity to ensure that the offering memorandum disclosed the revised expansion program. In our opinion, the private investors had a right to have this information disclosed in the offering memorandum. The offering memorandum did not disclose that financing in addition to the Grow Bond issue was required.

Is he then disagreeing with his own Auditor?

Mr. Stefanson: No, I am not, Madam Speaker—two different issues. I agree with the Auditor's Report and support the Auditor's Report and support the recommendations in that report, which are being implemented by the Department of Rural Development. He has raised two entirely separate issues. He talked about information being deliberately withheld, and it was that part of his comment that I disagreed with.

* (1020)

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, a final supplementary to the same minister, who does not seem to understand that material information is what investors are owed when they make a decision of risk in terms of their capital.

Will the minister then tell the House how much money is going to be refunded to the president, vice-president and officers of Woodstone who invested in their own Grow Bond knowing full well they had misled investors, misled the public and were then going

to profit from doing so by having their money protected, and now they are going to have it refunded after they bankrupted the company, including one Gary Brazzell, well-known Tory bagman?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Madam Speaker, no one takes any pleasure in the fact that Woodstone Foods has indeed gone into bankruptcy and, as a result, many people in the Portage area have lost their jobs. Under the terms of the legislation that was passed with regard to Grow Bonds, there is a condition where the province does guarantee the Grow Bonds to the investors who have put the money in, and we will comply with the legislation and with the laws of this province.

Deputy Minister of Energy and Mines Salary

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy and Mines with respect to Deputy Minister Michael Fine. If we take a look at the Public Accounts, Supplementary Volume II for March 31, '96, on page 14 you will see that the deputy minister received \$108,262, and then if you take a look again on page 53, Michael Fine was given \$74,734.

My question to the Minister of Energy and Mines is: what was that particular money given to Mr. Fine for, especially if you take into consideration we have also through Freedom of Information requested expenses of this particular deputy minister, and over the last two years we have seen in excess of \$35,000? I will table that particular Freedom of Information request.

Hon. David Newman (Minister of Energy and Mines): Madam Speaker, I will take as notice the comment with reference to the \$74,000. The salary, I guess, is not a question but a question about the \$74,000, you want particulars on that. I will take that under advisement.

With respect to the expense accounts, indeed that information has been released and the explanation for the expenditures is that a very substantial effort has been made to market Manitoba throughout the world as a place to do exploration and do mining. As a result of that, 27 new mining companies that were not active in

the province in the previous year have been active in the province this year.

In addition, the mineral exploration expenditures have rebounded to \$40 million in 1996 from \$32.6 million in 1995. This is seen to be an investment, an investment necessary to encourage junior exploration companies and others to find mines. Mines result in Thompsons of Manitoba and result in Flin Flons, and we need more of them.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the Deputy Minister of Energy and Mines, and the question is for the Minister of Energy and Mines, does he not believe, given that he meets on a daily basis with the Deputy Minister of Energy and Mines, that he should have been aware of the fact that the deputy minister was receiving some \$74,734? Yet he has no idea in terms of what that money is all about, not even in his briefings. Should he not have been aware of the fact that that money was there? For whatever reasons, I would argue that he should have been aware of it. Would he not agree?

Mr. Newman: Madam Speaker, when I speak on the record, I want to make sure that I accurately respond to questions asked with details. That requires a detailed response, and I will provide that information as I indicated.

Investigation

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I am wondering if we can get a commitment from the minister to investigate exactly what has happened within that department over the last two years with respect to Mr. Fine and report back to the House at the soonest possible time.

Hon. David Newman (Minister of Energy and Mines): Madam Speaker, I will provide the particulars of the information requested. I can assure the House that any investigations that result from any of the issues that have been raised today, if they result in any finding of any impropriety I would urge they be dealt with strongly and quickly. I will not support any impropriety of any sort in my department.

Manitoba Hydro Privatization

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Recently, in the last Hydrogram published by Manitoba Hydro, the President of Hydro, Mr. Bob Brennan was quoted as talking about a concept called convergence, which is the merger of gas and electric utilities. He is quoted as saying: We realize that generally speaking governments do not want to be in the electricity business.

Can the Minister responsible for Hydro tell us whether the statement about governments not wanting to be in the electric business is a reflection of this government's attitude towards Manitoba Hydro, particularly since the third quarter results for Manitoba Hydro show again record profits in this Crown corporation?

Hon. David Newman (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): The answer to that question is no.

With respect to Manitoba Hydro, we as a government are very proud of the achievements of Manitoba Hydro and particularly its having some of the lowest rates for water-generated power in North America. That helps Manitoba to have the proud record of providing low costs to consumers of power, both individual and commercial. Also, we should be grateful that 25 percent of the revenues generated by Manitoba Hydro are from exports to the United States. That helps us keep the rates down as well.

Ms. Mihychuk: Madam Speaker, we are indeed concerned when the comments reflect the same as those for MTS.

Does this minister believe, during this convergence of electric and gas utilities, that the shareholders of Centra Gas should be in control or the people of Manitoba?

Mr. Newman: I do not understand the question, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Mihychuk: I would be glad to clarify. Will it be the people of Manitoba that will control the electric and gas utilities or will it be the shareholders of Centra Gas, like it is the shareholders of the telephone company?

Mr. Newman: The interests of the public with respect to rates, and otherwise, are protected by the Public Utilities Board with respect to Manitoba Hydro.

Ms. Mihychuk: My final question. Clearly, the minister is not well briefed on the topic, and I hope that he will become up to date on the issue of convergence.

Will the minister clarify the real agenda of this government? Are we restructuring to meet the challenges of the energy changes in environment or are we getting ready to sell off Manitoba Hydro like we did MTS?

Mr. Newman: Madam Speaker, with respect to the, I would say, negative reflection on the people who give me briefing advice, and that would be, in many cases, people from Manitoba Hydro, I regard the briefings that I get through Manitoba Hydro through my office to be high quality, and I am very well briefed.

With respect to the future of Manitoba Hydro, I have a great deal of respect for business plans that emerge from Manitoba Hydro, and those business plans I will always examine with a great deal of conscientiousness representing the stakeholders in the province of Manitoba. We are the owners of Manitoba Hydro through our government representing the people, and we will examine any business plan very carefully, and changes that they need to be successful we will look at.

Keewatin Community College Board of Directors

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, the Speech from the Throne claims that, I quote: "The education and training system is continuing to be more responsive to the needs and aspirations of aboriginal peoples." In this context, I am pleased to recognize again today the Minister of Education's considerable achievement in appointing an aboriginal Manitoban to the Council on Post-Secondary Education, certainly a step beyond the very narrowly conceived interim transition committee.

* (1030)

I wonder if the minister could explain, however, why this government's appointments to the board of KCC have never yet managed to achieve a 25 percent representation of First Nations when the overwhelming majority of northern Manitobans they serve are indeed First Nations?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I assume inherent in the preamble is an apology from the member for having said so clearly and so critically without research that we had not appointed any aboriginals to the post-secondary board and that we were taken strongly to task by the opposition for not having done that, so I accept her apology for now acknowledging that we do in fact have a good aboriginal person on that board.

Point of Order

Ms. Friesen: Madam Speaker, it is a point of order. I believe that the minister is accepting this as an apology. It is not an apology. It is indeed a recognition of the minister's considerable achievement in appointing an aboriginal person to the Council on Post-Secondary Education board, something which I said to the media yesterday and which was, I believe, mistakenly reported.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Wolseley does not have a point of order.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable minister, to quickly complete her response.

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, I acknowledge for the record that the member has identified that the Free Press incorrectly reported her statements when she said that we had not appointed an aboriginal and should be taken to task, and I assume then that she will be asking for a correction from that paper. I realize she is not apologizing for the mistake she says the Free Press has made, and I would hope that she would also clarify with the Free Press that they may have also incorrectly reported her in saying we had no one with experience in high schools on that board.

Having said that—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Point of order, Madam Speaker. Beauchesne's is very clear, Section

417, that answers to questions should be short and deal with the matter raised.

I know the Minister of Education is very defensive about her failure to deal with aboriginal issues, but she ought to deal with the question as addressed by the member, a very serious question that was addressed by the member for Wolseley, and not try to defend her undefendable position and should refer to Section 417 of Beauchesne.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Kildonan, indeed the honourable member does have a point of order. I would remind the honourable minister that answers to questions should reply to the question asked, be brief and not contain argument or provoke debate.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Education, to quickly complete her response.

Mrs. McIntosh: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and just as the member was wrong about the aboriginal representation and the high school representation on the council board, so too is she wrong about our feelings at Keewatin Community College. We have been moving steadily to increase aboriginal representation on that board. We have indicated to members of the aboriginal community up north, with whom we have met in my office to discuss this whole issue, that as appointments come up we will seek out qualified people of aboriginal descent to place on that board. We have discussed the number of people we require, et cetera. We also have at the KCC board, as the member knows, may not wish to acknowledge, not on the board but at the college, aboriginal elders.

We have—Madam Speaker, I see you giving me the wind-down. I will continue if the member asks another question.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Speaker, could the Minister of Education confirm that her recent appointment to the chair of the KCC board is yet another defeated Tory candidate, and could she tell us whether this was as a result of a wide search throughout the North?

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, of course the member would not like to acknowledge that we have Tory candidates who are of aboriginal descent. I think that is something that cannot be overlooked, that we do have aboriginal people who have run in our elections for our party as well as for other parties. So, whenever she says "defeated Tory candidate," implying that defeated Tory candidates have no interest in aboriginal affairs or are not themselves aboriginal, she leaves a false impression which betrays her own prejudices.

I have to say that in the North, for aboriginal people, we have a number of programs that are geared to the success for aboriginal people. We have the Aboriginal Apprenticeship Program; we have BUNTEP; we have New Careers North. Of course, we have our accessibility for northern students. Madam Speaker, we have established in the Department of Education a native education steering committee to deal with all kinds of aspects of aboriginal education, people that I am sure the member would approve of. If she wants me to put their names into the record, I would be pleased to do that.

Coop Share Equity Loan Program Elimination

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Housing.

This government seems to be joining the federal Liberal government in abandoning its support for co-op and social housing. It is threatening the more than 43 co-ops that rely on public assistance to assure quality, affordable housing.

I want to ask the minister, can he explain why residents of Manitoba, when they phone Manitoba Housing, are being told that the Coop Share Equity Loan Program is in abeyance? Is this program, which provides interest-free loans to new co-op members, another co-op housing program that is being eliminated?

Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Housing): Madam Speaker, from time to time we have always pointed out there is a philosophical difference between the opposition and this government, but I would like to point out that there is an item of concern that I share with the member for Radisson, and that is the federal abandonment of social housing and public housing in

Manitoba and in Canada. It started back in 1993 with the capping of funding for public housing and extended back into 1994 when they stopped funding for public housing, and last year they announced over a \$250-million reduction in subsidies to public housing in Canada, and now they have come out with the statement that they are now wanting to offload their total housing program onto the province.

I share the concerns of the member for Radisson that this has been done in a very heavy and straightforward manner by the federal government. We are very, very concerned about this offloading and how it is going to affect the public housing in Manitoba. Again, I say I share that same concern with the member.

Ms. Cerilli: Madam Speaker, I asked a very specific question and hopefully will get a specific answer to my question about this Coop Share Equity Loan Program. Why is this program being eliminated, if it is being eliminated, and why were the number of co-ops that rely on this program not told that they are losing this support so that they can have new co-op members?

Mr. Reimer: As I pointed out in my first answer, with the so-called devolution of the federal offer of their public housing here in Manitoba, it has opened up a scrutiny of all components of the public housing, whether it is with co-ops or whether it is with seniors homes, whether it is with northern and native housing. These are some of the things that we have to take into consideration when we are doing the scrutiny of the federal offer of devolution. These are points that are brought forth for discussion.

We have made no decisions as to what type of directions we will take with this offer, but at the same time, we do have to look at all avenues of funding that are involved with the co-management between the two levels of government.

* (1040)

Youth Gangs Gang Co-ordinator Funding

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): My question is for the new Minister of Justice, and I will table a copy of a facsimile from Luci Grechen, manager of intergovernmental relations in Manitoba Training and

Advanced Education of the Manitoba government, dated October 9, 1996, that shows copies went to, amongst others, Lawrie Barkwell from the Youth Secretariat and Wyman Sangster from the Department of Justice.

In this facsimile it talks about the Winnipeg police street gang prevention project, which included a youth gang co-ordinator, which shows that members of the Department of Justice were aware of the youth gang co-ordinator position.

Seeing as the Hughes Inquiry talked about problems of communication in the Justice department, is this an indication that those problems are persisting?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Well, I am very glad that my friend from The Maples raised this issue once again, because it does underlie a concern.

As I stated in the House I believe, or outside in the hallway, our department since April of '94 worked with a federal official in terms of trying to develop a policy. Suddenly the federal official disappeared. There were vague rumours of things happening with the federal government but no specific programs announced in terms of involving the provincial government. We feel that if there is going to be progress made, more than has been made, it is absolutely essential that the federal government at the ministerial level come to the provincial government and say, we are interested in co-operating with you.

So I was somewhat heartened to hear the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and I find that strange that the Minister of Foreign Affairs would come and deliver money here in Manitoba as though we are not part of Canada anymore, but I guess after he gave the money to Cuba, the \$20 million to Cuba, he thought he might drop \$200,000 here. But, in any event, this indicates, yes, there has been working at some of the provincial departmental officials but they have never approached my office to discuss this issue.

Mr. Kowalski: Can this minister set aside partisan politics and work with the federal government for the safety of our community?

Mr. Toews: I want to say something, and that is, I respect the member for The Maples. That is a member

who cares about his constituents, who works for his constituents, and that is the kind of member I believe this provincial government can work with. That is a member who comes from a police background, who understands the problems of the police, who understands the problems of the community, and I want to work with members of the opposition like the member for The Maples, but we have to understand that the primary responsibility for criminal law in this country is the federal government. We operate under a delegated authority, and if we do not receive co-operation from the federal government in that respect, we are at sea.

I was in Fredericton just on this issue and discussing it with Minister Rock, and Minister Rock, in answer to my concern that there are criminal offences being created by children under 12 years old and no mechanism to bring them within the criminal justice system, stated that there were only eight homicides committed by children under 12, and what was the big worry about that. Well, I find that disgusting.

Deloraine Chamber of Commerce Meeting Request

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for I, T and T.

Is the minister prepared, in the near future, to attend a large public gathering in Deloraine, sponsored by the Deloraine Chamber of Commerce, to explain why that community and many other rural communities are losing government jobs such as highway maintenance jobs, which is a callous action that goes totally contrary to the government's much-touted decentralization?

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Madam Speaker, I am prepared to meet with my constituents on any issue at any time.

Madam Speaker: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

NONPOLITICAL STATEMENT

Coalition for Children Living in the Community

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): May I have leave, Madam Speaker, to make a nonpolitical announcement?

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

Ms. McGifford: Madam Speaker, on February 25, the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) and I attended the second annual public meeting of Coalition for Children Living in the Community. The coalition is comprised of 15 representatives of community organizations which provide services and supports for the disabled and individuals with special needs. About 75 people attended the meeting, most of whom were parents of very special children.

The meeting included about 10 testimonials from parents in which they outlined which programs were working and which were not working for their children. The overriding theme, not surprising considering the coalition's title, was the determination to keep children at home and in the community and the struggle this determination often means. Parents talked about respite services and the accompanying difficulty of untrained workers. Parents worried about a possible return to segregation in schools, about overtaxed teachers and about the particular difficulties of care and support in summer. One parent eloquently and touchingly spoke about the labels parents are often forced to use to access monies for their children. She described these labels as disgusting to children and painfully humiliating to parents.

The coalition understood that their issues require public policy responses in partnerships with community, family and government, and we owe them no less. Surely all members of the House will join me in recognizing the courage, insight and knowledge that this coalition brings to our community in acknowledging the very special compassionate commitment these parents have made to their very special children. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE (Fourth Day of Debate)

Madam Speaker: To resume adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) and the amendment moved by the honourable Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer) and the proposed amendment by the honourable

member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines, who has 30 minutes remaining.

Hon. David Newman (Minister of Energy and Mines): Madam Speaker, when I left off yesterday evening in my address, I was mentioning how the business community was involved in the process of supporting early childhood intervention in positive investment kinds of ways over the long term, and this was manifested by the participation of the Chamber of Commerce in the event the other evening involving that panel discussion moderated by the Winnipeg Free Press.

The business community is going to have opportunities in volunteer ways to contribute to this kind of investment. They, of course, can do it to its funding, but maybe more significantly even they can do it by having flexible working hours allowing parents to associate with their zero to six-year-old children in the child care situations that many children with working parents have today. The importance of doing that is an investment in the future, and, I would submit, a self-interested investment in the future is now becoming clearer as more and more research emerges in that direction. Just as the business community responded to the environmental sustainable development imperative. I am encouraged that they appear to be responding, as they should, to the growing imperative, and that is investing in children first.

I wanted to comment again with respect to the approach of the official opposition to the tone and content of the throne speech, the suggestion that it does not reflect heart, genuine heart, by members of this party and this government, this caucus. I would answer that by saying, well, just continue to wait and see, but also everything that has been done in the name of the economic agenda has been done with heart, with heart and mind and very positive emotion, with a spirit behind it that is well meaning and highly motivated. All of this is done for the long-term benefit of Manitoba people and probably most emphatically for the young people.

* (1050)

Expressing emotion with tears or angry words does not qualify one to be a government on behalf of

Manitobans. Expressing or motivating or provoking tears or angry words also does not qualify an official opposition or anyone to be in government. It is applying mind, body, emotions and spirit in ways that are positive and designed to contribute to human development that earns the support of the public, I would submit.

Back to the importance of spirit behind it all. What makes organizations like Alcoholics Anonymous or Alcoholism Foundation, the steps of that program known internationally, work, and why do these apply to not only alcohol but substance abuse and gambling, all kinds of addictive behaviour? The importance of having the spiritual element respected, understood and restored is the reason for the special success, the enduring success of those kinds of organizations and those kinds of programs. Why do religious organizations contribute so immensely and so effectively to successful, enduring social programs? It is because there is a spiritual element, I would submit. Why does the Salvation Army on an international basis do such excellent work? I would submit underlying it is a spiritual element.

We as a government understand that there is a need for special emphasis on the most vulnerable part of the family unit, the children, and recognizing this fact the Manitoba government has developed a renewed focus on addressing the needs of our youngest citizens. Children who begin their lives do not have a fair and equal chance to flourish if they are disadvantaged by reason of perhaps the way they are treated during pregnancy, perhaps by virtue of being born with some affliction, regardless of anyone's actions, because they might be born into situations where there is a poverty of spirit and as a result they do not receive that kind of inspiration and motivation. Those individuals in those sorts of situations, those young people, we as a government want to be recognized. We want them to have their situations addressed in thoughtful and responsible long-term ways because a fair and equal chance to flourish and achieve what all Manitobans believe should be the birthright of every child which drives those people concerned about the disadvantaged as well.

As a result of this kind of thrust of our government, we have been implementing many new initiatives in keeping with the ChildrenFirst strategy. This why the

Children and Youth Secretariat exists; it is why the Family Support Innovations Fund exists; it is why Taking Charge! exists, all designed to help Manitoba's children get a better start in life. These are strategies which will help children and families today and the entire community tomorrow.

Children given the best possible start in life have a greater range of opportunities to achieve as adults, and this is obviously good for our community. ChildrenFirst will include pilot projects based on other successful models from around the world to address the pressing issues facing our children and youth. There is a focus in the throne speech on aboriginal children and aboriginal communities, aboriginal families. That is part of the kinds of specific programs, initiatives which will be emerging.

But input from nongovernmental agencies is an essential part of ensuring these kinds of initiatives success. It has to be a genuine opportunity for participation. They have to be listened to, and we have to work together with these nongovernmental agencies in delivering the services. We also have to work with other levels of government and doing so particularly in relation to the aboriginal community. All three levels of government must work closely in good faith for the benefit of the aboriginal community and Partners for Careers is one of those kinds of initiatives involving several departments of government, Education and Training, Northern and Native Affairs and the federal government.

The things that are demonstrated by the research which I am just going to share for a moment so it is brought home and recorded. Studies have shown that investing in children age six and younger reduces the need for costly intervention in later years. We have learned many important new reasons for taking a proactive approach to this issue including the following sorts of research findings:

Brain development before age one is more rapid and extensive than previously realized. Brain development is more vulnerable to environmental influences than suspected.

The years between birth and age three is the critical time in the development of the child. Secure attachment to a significant adult is the best predictor for

the child to become a healthy, productive adult. The effects of early environment are long lasting. The future of a child is largely determined by the time he or she is five or six years old.

Abusive experiences in the first six years of life result in irreversible changes to the physical and chemical structure of the brain.

Starting school ready to learn and connect socially is the best predictor of high school graduation. Poor school performance is the best predictor of adolescent and adult delinquency. Of the 540 adults sentenced in prison in 1995, only 12 had completed high school. Early community-based interventions have more success than institutional care and intervention. All these documented facts bring us back to the same conclusion. The relationship of early childhood experiences to achievement in school and in adult life is very significant. We are challenged by this knowledge to determine what we can do today to reduce the risks of poor early development of children in spite of inadequate social and family environments.

The future is approaching at an ever-increasing rate, and to prepare our children to function well, we must begin at the earliest possible stages. The same is true if we were to break cycles of dependency and poverty and want economic and spiritual and emotional and even physical for children. Early investment by the community and government partnerships, and that is multigovernment partnerships, will be the most effective means of helping high-risk children and families.

Meeting the needs of our children through the education and other support processes, and that is child care and all the kinds of interactions through nongovernmental organizations, is a tremendous undertaking. It is complicated by many factors, including the federal funding reductions that we face and have to adjust to. There are no quick fixes and overnight miracles waiting on off stage for this. However, Manitoba is confident the solutions will be found through the combined efforts of our parents, the community and governments and government departments in focused and co-operative partnerships. We need each other to resolve the concerns we have for all Manitoba children. We are collaboratively defining

the path we must take to ensure that their future is all it can be and that they can be all they dream of being.

* (1100)

Now, in terms of delivering the theme of the throne speech in material programming which Manitobans need and will be ultimately proud of, I want to just share a little bit about the team, the caucus of which I am a part and a very proud part, I might say.

Our Premier (Mr. Filmon) has a background as a civic politician, as a business person, as a professional engineer, and is a very active volunteer.

Our Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) is a person that has a background in the agricultural community and was a trustee before he ever entered his long and continuing career in politics and also a tremendously active community volunteer, a person with heart and commitment, like all of the members of my caucus.

James Erwin Downey, the Deputy Premier and Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism, a fine community person, a person who had a background in business and agriculture—auctioneering, I consider to be a business—and a very active community individual before he ever entered political life.

Members of my caucus have all been successful people in the world at large who earned the trust and confidence of their community and gained experience in parenting, all of them.

James Glen Cummings, the Minister of Natural Resources, again, another person who had a background as a trustee, a person actively involved in the community over many years, and even chaired the local school board for a period of time besides being a trustee.

James McCrae, Minister of Environment, again a person with a background before he ever came into politics, and he has been here for quite a while, had a background in civic politics as an alderman in Brandon, again, a background diverse, a court reporter, which enabled him to hear many, many situations before boards, whether it is the CRTC or the National Energy Board or federal agencies, the federal trade practices commission and so forth, another very committed

volunteer in the community before he ever entered politics.

Glen Marshall Findlay, the Minister of Highways and Transportation, a well-educated person with his doctorate, a professor, but like many of my colleagues, successful in so many different ways, as a farmer and otherwise; again, a committed volunteer in the world at large and his communities.

Leonard Derkach, Minister of Rural Development, again, another person who has a background as a trustee in the school division, but what his profession was, he was a teacher and probably would still call himself a teacher—that is his professional kind of training—but also a farmer and, again, another active community volunteer.

Bonnie Elizabeth Mitchelson, Minister of Family Services, a nurse. That is her professional background. Again, a very active person in the community before she ever got involved in politics—with the Cancer Society, the Salvation Army, the Kidney Foundation, a very active volunteer.

Harold Gilleshammer, the Minister of Labour, another person who had a profession as a teacher and a principal, a long-standing principal in Minnedosa Collegiate, and a past president of the teachers' association, the Rolling River Teachers' Association, and the principals' association, and the past director of the Manitoba Association of Principals, a person who was a very active volunteer in his community; again, another person whom I am very proud of for his achievements before he ever entered politics.

Darren Thomas Praznik, as young as he is, the Minister of Health, with his background was an active community volunteer before he ever got involved in politics. He is a lawyer, as we know, but again a very active community person before he came into politics.

Eric Stefanson, Minister of Finance, a chartered accountant, another diverse professional background. A fine individual, we all know it, an individual who had a background before coming into politics of public service. He was a Winnipeg city councillor and served as deputy mayor at the City of Winnipeg, including serving as chairman of the Winnipeg 2000 Task Force on Economic Development, president of the Winnipeg

Convention Centre, and so forth and so on, involved in community club work and finance chairman of the Icelandic Festival of Manitoba, a person who engaged in private practice in chartered accountancy before he ever came in to this government.

Linda McIntosh, the Minister of Education and Training, another one of the many teachers we have in our caucus and a trustee after that, playing both roles, having a broad perspective on educational issues, an honours graduate of the Manitoba Teachers College and a very active citizen involved in community, church, youth activities, serving on boards. She has also been a service scouter with the Boy Scouts of Canada. There is an incredible diversity in the community activity of the members of our caucus.

Rosemary Vodrey, the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, another professional background, a psychologist, the sort of person we needed in this House during the dark days in November of 1996. We have all these diversities in our caucus, and they help us weather these storms. We are a closely knit team. She has a background after graduating from university of being involved with the Child Guidance Clinic in our school system and has a diversity of experience, radio help-line host, lecturer at the Misericordia School of Nursing, the University of Manitoba Faculty of Human Ecology and a co-director of the university's infant and child development laboratory school, a founding member of the Manitoba Association of School Psychologists, past director of Family Services of Winnipeg, and so forth and so forth, very active in the volunteer way that all of our caucus members have been and still are.

Jack Reimer, the Minister of Urban Affairs, an individual who has a background as a business person, but, Jack, many of you probably do not know, has a degree in sociology. Is that right, Jack? So he helps understand what goes on in the House in the dark days of November and in the good times as well, and we have the advantage of his counsel and understanding of collective human animals. Jack has a proud background in the Southdale community. I know that the people in that community regard him as the person most directly responsible for the creation of the community club as it is a fine community club serving that whole area. He is regarded as the person that made it happen. After doing that, went on to greater things,

participating at higher levels in the community club organization or community services organization in the community. He is a past president of the St. Boniface-St. Vital Community Centres Board and also a past member of the St. Boniface-St. Vital Residents' Advisory Group. All this before he ever came into politics here.

Victor Eric Toews, Q.C., Minister of Justice and Attorney General, again a wonderful, deep background as an educator in presenting lectures in high schools and public service groups and at the University of Manitoba. He has participated in the Manitoba Bar Association Task Force on Gender Equality in the legal profession. He is, of course, a lawyer, but a lawyer who has reached out to the public to educate and was a civil servant for many years, and, I believe, proudly claims to be another one of the union members in our caucus because at one time, I believe, he was a member of the Crown attorneys—

An Honourable Member: Vice-president.

* (1110)

Mr. Newman: Vice-president of the Crown attorneys' union, and he joins Ben Sveinson in that capacity as having a background in the union committee. I believe Ben had a background at the UFCW, vice-president of the UFCW in his region, and we are proud of that. That brings a rich background into our caucus and perspective. Everyone knows that I am a lawyer and have a community background as well.

Frank Pitura, Minister of Government Services, was raised in the Domain area where Ken Dryden had his parental influence. Is that not right, Ken Dryden, Domain? Ken Dryden the great goaltender, wonderful parents from the Domain area. After graduating in agriculture from the University of Manitoba, he worked for 10 years for the Manitoba government in various roles including ag rep and soils specialist, agronomist, got a rich history in the civil service roles that some of our people have played. He went on to operate a family farm and has a tremendous background in community volunteer work in his community, including chairing the Ag Expo since its inception in 1989, and playing an active role in the Valley Agricultural Society and helping to start the international farm symposium. Like so many of our members, he is involved in local

church groups, chairing his own local church board and involved in local community sports activities as his children emerged through the system.

Michael Frederick Carrington Radcliffe, our Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, another one of the professionals in our caucus, a lawyer, has a rich background known for representing particularly the Hutterite community, a number of the Hutterite communities in this province, and has a rich background in volunteer work as well, and, of course, is actively involved in his Roman Catholic Church.

Merv Tweed of Turtle Mountain, our MLA. Merv, with his original blond hair, sits to my right here, a proud young new member of our caucus. He has again a very deep role, a background in civic politics. He was a deputy reeve for the Rural Municipality of Brenda, a name which is most significant to me because that happens to be my wife's name. He was reeve there for three years to get his seasoning, but again representing his community in that very committed way, putting yourself at risk and playing that role for your community. He was actively involved in a whole variety of volunteer activities in his community and continues to be active with his still-young children.

Gerry McAlpine, another one of our outstanding individuals in the caucus, who has a business background and involvement, has a variety of experiences, including at one time a co-owner of McAlpine nursery and kindergarten. He has a background with youth, has had a background in farming, is a past-president of the Kinsmen Club of St. James-Assiniboia, a charter member and a past president of the K-40 Club of St. James, a founding member and past chairman of the St. James-Assiniboia youth justice committee, active in community organizations, including his church, his secondary school advisory committee, community centres. He is actively involved with the sporting community in his area and has an interest in health and wellness and is quite a student of nutritional matters affecting health and wellness of our communities and is a rich resource for us in all of those kinds of ways.

Albert Driedger, Steinbach, had a rich background before he ever came into politics and another gentleman who has been in politics for a long time and is there as a dean to provide us counsel in a continuing way. He

was a reeve of the municipality of Hanover for five years before he came into politics, a trustee in the Hanover School Division, involved in sports organizations, Chamber of Commerce, church boards. Again, one of the many very active community people who put themselves at risk to serve their communities before ever coming into this government at this level.

Shirley Render, another diverse background. Shirley, our hardworking representative of St. Vital who touches her community on a regular basis. She reaches out to her community, and she understands it. She has a background with the Victorian Order of Nurses. She has a background as a historian and researcher, and she is an author of a book as well as being a pilot. She is a major participant and contributor to our caucus in very rich ways.

Marcel Laurendeau of St. Norbert, another fine individual who has been reviewing the child care system in this province, has a business background.

Peter Dyck of Pembina, a teacher background, farmer background, and again another trustee.

Ben Sveinson. I have already mentioned Ben representing LaVerendrye. A meat inspector by background, a union person and an active community person before he ever came in and to this day. Both he and his wife have been actively involved. His wife has even been, I believe, deputy mayor of the rural municipality he is in.

Denis Rocan, my Metis friend, my canoeing partner. Before entering politics, Denis had a background working at Inco in Thompson and Eaton's in Winnipeg and a grain farm; another actively involved community person.

Ed Helwer, Gimli. Again, another actively involved community person and civic politician by background as well. Ed was a councillor in Teulon and became the mayor of Teulon.

Jack Penner, another active community person, farmer, trustee as well in his background, actively involved in the community.

Jim Ernst, another person who was deputy mayor. Another person who has been actively involved in the

community as a volunteer and business person and continues to be a real contributor to ours.

Brian Pallister is almost gone; again, another teacher background.

So here we are a caucus of 31 parents, and I include, for that purpose only, the Speaker, who is the 31st who is a parent. By the way, I think the Speaker was a teacher as well. So, of the caucus, including the Speaker, we have 31 parents, 31 community volunteers. We have five different professions—engineering, chartered accountants, psychology, nursing, an author, four lawyers, six teachers, eight farmers, eight business people. That is going to deliver the throne speech.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Speaker, I think a good place to begin with this throne speech is to enumerate some of the important areas that were entirely left out of this speech. For example, no mention was made of Manitoba's growing concerns over workplace safety.

One of my constituents contacted me. Actually, his wife contacted me and said that every day when he came home from work he felt sleepy and every day after he had supper he was sleeping, and she wondered if this had something to do with the workplace. So I phoned Workplace Safety and Health. They sent out an inspector which resulted in work orders because there was a problem with carbon monoxide poisoning in the workplace, and the company was ordered to put in a proper ventilation system to protect their workers. When that happened, this individual was no longer sleeping every night when he came home from work as a result of carbon monoxide poisoning, which is a very dangerous work condition.

* (1120)

This same employee made the news last year because his hand was entirely severed in a piece of metal-cutting equipment. Fortunately, they were able to sew it back on again, but he still faces more surgery and he may eventually have to have the hand amputated if the surgery is not successful because he has very little movement or feeling in the hand. This time, Workplace Safety and Health, or perhaps it was the Department of Justice, laid charges against the company, and they went to court and they were acquitted. So I phoned the

director of Workplace Safety and Health and I said, well, are you going to appeal this decision? They said, yes, but it may take two or three months. So I am going to be writing to the minister and to the director requesting that they appeal this decision because the company had indeed violated a number of Workplace Safety and Health laws.

We know that there are many safety problems in our mines in northern Manitoba, which, I am sure, our northern members will talk about in their speeches. This includes very unsafe working conditions that results in the death or deaths of miners every year.

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

There is nothing in this speech about plant closures. There have been many, many plant closures in this province, which have resulted in thousands, well, hundreds—perhaps thousands—I am not sure of the exact number of people who have been laid off as a result of plant closures in recent years. I was reading recently about the possibility of plant closure legislation. A very good analogy was offered, and the analogy was that of marriage, that if two partners in a marriage break up the assets that one contributes to a marriage, even as a homemaker, are considered in the division of assets upon separation and divorce, and someone suggested that plants should be required to follow the same kind of compensation. If they leave a community, it is like a marriage breaking up. They should be forced to compensate the community, and I thought that was a very interesting analogy and the kind of thing that we should look at so that corporations and businesses feel that they have some accountability and loyalty to their local community.

There is nothing in this throne speech about the impacts of health regionalization. We know that health care is of great concern to the citizens of Manitoba these days because of the possibility of hospitals closing and nursing homes being closed as a result of rationalization, not just in rural Manitoba, but in the city of Winnipeg. We saw this in spades when people came out to force the government to reopen emergency rooms, and one of them is in our community, Seven Oaks Hospital. People rallied and they came to public meetings. They phoned the government and they signed petitions, and they said we need an emergency

room because we are the only hospital in our quadrant of the city. So all the emergency rooms were reopened.

Then we had to fight all over again because there was a proposal to convert Seven Oaks Hospital from a full service community hospital to a nursing home or some other use. So once again the citizens of north Winnipeg were forced to have public meetings, to sign petitions that were introduced in this Legislature to try and put pressure on the government to stop this plan to close Seven Oaks Hospital. For the time being we are successful, but the fight is not over because there is going to be a new urban hospital board and no doubt there will be rationalization, and there will be closures, and there will be redesignation of health care facilities.

We believe that there is a danger that this plan may still go ahead. If so, once again the citizens of north Winnipeg will be forced to rally to keep their full service hospital that they campaigned for decades to get in the first place. It would be a shame if we, in our area of the city, did not have a full service hospital.

There is nothing in this throne speech to address some of the impacts of this government's cuts to education which are affecting classrooms. This year the government is patting themselves on the back because there is not a cut; it is zero. As if that is something to be proud of given that inflation means that school divisions are actually getting less money for education relative to inflation.

That is resulting in some very difficult decisions. For example, last year Winnipeg School Division No. 1 reduced their nursery program by 20 percent because the money just was not there, and it is a program that is not cost-shared with the province of Manitoba. It is the only division I believe—well, perhaps Frontier has a nursery program, but I think it is the only division in Manitoba for quite a long number of years that has had a nursing program in every school in Manitoba's largest school division.

We believe it is very valuable. In fact, the other night I was at R.B. Russell School, along with the Honourable Mr. Newman, who was on the panel listening to a presentation about the High/Scope Perry Preschool study. The minister talked about some of the research in his speech having to do with infants and children. We know that preschool programs like

nursery are important. If the government believes that, and certainly we have one minister that seems to believe it, and I think probably the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) believes it—she has no doubt read the research—we can only hope that they will convince the government that the nursery program in Winnipeg No. 1 is worthy of funding.

There are some announcements that are alluded to in the throne speech, and I guess we will have to wait for the budget, but my hunch is that it is probably going to be a pilot project. In fact, a pilot project is mentioned in the throne speech.

So instead of doing the right thing and instead of adequately funding early childhood education and in spite of the fact that we have all the evidence and we know for example that for every dollar that is invested in early childhood education that the long-term savings are \$7, a good investment by any standard. In fact, somebody pointed out that this is a better investment than most businesses expect to receive on a return on investment. So the evidence is there that there are benefits to spending money on children before they start kindergarten and that this has long-term benefits. So we would hope that the government would do more than just a pilot project.

Why do a pilot project when you already have the evidence and you know what is going to happen? However, we will see what is in the budget announcement, and I will get to speak again on this topic after the budget is released.

This throne speech talks once again about how their balanced budget legislation protects essential services such as health and that they have protected and improved health care, education, justice and social services. I do not see how, with a straight face, the government can actually say this knowing that there have been cuts to health care, cuts to education, cuts to justice programs and cuts to social services. I wish they would at least be honest enough to acknowledge what they have done in their budgets and say so in the throne speech.

They say that their social policy ensures the benefits of growth are shared fairly amongst all citizens, but I think that there is lots of evidence that this also is not true. For example, what benefits have accrued to

people on social assistance? Well, last year they cut \$23 million from benefits of social assistance recipients. How have these benefits accrued to the working poor? Well, the throne speech talks in several places about a new benefit to the working poor, but when you look closely at it, and I am sorry I do not have my file here on the new enhanced child benefit, but an analysis has been done by the Canadian Council on Welfare, an organization whose board members are appointed by the federal government, and I believe their budget is entirely from the federal government. They have compared it with the existing program which was announced in last year's federal budget, and this is a major sleight of hand by the federal Liberal government which apparently the provinces are playing along with.

So that last year they announced that working poor people will get a new benefit. Certainly we do not quarrel with that, and the government would agree with this, too, that one of the problems of getting people off social assistance and making them self supporting and independent that this government talks a lot about is removing some of the barriers to getting off social assistance, and there are many, not only in finding and keeping a job.

For example, when people are on social assistance, they receive free dental, free optical and free prescription drugs. When you get a job, if your employer does not provide those things as a benefit of employment, then you end up paying for your own optical and your own dental and your own prescription drugs up to the Pharmacare deductible limit.

To their credit, this government extended that, I believe for single parents or perhaps for all beneficiaries. The minister would certainly know that, and I guess I could look it up. I think it is for three months. So, you know, it is a small step; it is a good step. It helps bridge people between being on social assistance and being in employment. [interjection]

* (1130)

It is one year, the minister says. Okay. Well, I am glad to hear that. Perhaps I should follow up the question in Estimates and find out how many people have benefited from this and how much it cost the government because it is a good thing to bridge people from social assistance to employment. It certainly

makes it easier for people to get into the paid workforce.

The other barrier is that quite often people earn less money when they are even employed full time than they do on social assistance. Of course, one of the reasons for that is the minimum wage not being high enough, and this government has not increased it nearly enough. In fact, we are much lower than Saskatchewan and Ontario, and a raise in the minimum wage is long overdue.

Now this really depends on family size, so if people have a large family and they are on social assistance, then they could very easily be making more money not working and at home than in the paid workforce. If you give a benefit based on the number of children to the working poor, that does help them. That does take a number of families out of poverty if they were formerly below the poverty line. We commend initiatives like this by the federal government in this case.

Now this year, what is happening? Well, they are scrapping last year's program. They are putting in a so-called new benefit or enhanced child tax benefit, but what about the levels? Well, for some family sizes the level in this year's new enhanced tax benefit by the federal Liberal government will be lower than last year's new initiative for the working poor. Fortunately, the researchers at the Canadian Council on Welfare uncovered that and so did the research staff at the Canadian Council on Social Development. Our federal leader, Alexa McDonough put out a press release on it that was actually picked up by the media so that the public have been warned about this sleight of hand.

Of course, the other problem that we have, and we will be talking about this later, is that this benefit is going to go to all families and then the provincial governments, including Manitoba I believe, are going to claw it back from people who are on social assistance, so they will be no better off than they were before this new benefit announced by the federal government.

What we are waiting to hear, and I am sure that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) will have it in his Budget Address if we do not have some sort of press release before then, is how Manitoba will reallocate this money. I am not sure of the amount. It could be 4

percent of \$600 million. We might be talking about \$12 million here. I am not sure of the amount, but that will be reallocated, and it is supposed to be reallocated to children's programs.

So then the question is, will it go into daycare? I know that the Deputy Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau) has a great interest in that, having visited many, many daycares in Manitoba as part of his travelling road show—I mean, travelling review of the daycare regulations. Certainly the daycare community is waiting, because that is the rumour, that this money is going to be reallocated and put into the daycare system. Certainly there are many good ways that the government could use this money. Probably the pilot project is going to be a recipient or a beneficiary of that new money, but, you know, a pilot program is probably not going to cost \$12 million unless the government is planning something much, much more extensive and expensive than I anticipate. In fact, I predict that, if the government wants a pilot project, they will replicate or duplicate something like Andrews Street Family Centre that this minister is always talking about or some sort of Headstart program.

When I ask the minister a question about poverty, she talks about the Andrews Street Family Centre; when I talk about single parents, she talks about the Andrews Street Family Centre. It does not matter whether my question is relevant to her answer, she tells me about the Andrews Street Family Centre anyway. I am not sure whether it is because it is a good program or because it is in Burrows constituency. I think she likes telling me about it because it is in Burrows constituency, and I am very happy and proud to have Andrews Street Family Centre in Burrows constituency. I drop in there from time to time; I go to all their official openings.

I was at the one last week where the aboriginal Headstart program had an official opening, and it was great to see. They have a wonderful program, and they have trained staff, actually people from the community to work there, and we would like to see far more of that. In fact, I think these programs should not be isolated. There should not just be 13 of them in Manitoba or whatever the number is, but every child who wants to and who needs to should have the advantage of preschool education because we know what the benefits are.

Has the government's balanced budget legislation and the so-called social policy benefits helped the health care system in Manitoba? Well, if you look at the number of cuts in health care, the answer is no. What about justice, since they mentioned justice? Well, I think aboriginal people are still waiting and we are still waiting for the implementation of the recommendations of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry report. There were quite a large number of recommendations, and we will have to see if the new minister does a better job than the former minister in implementing those reports.

One delegation that met with the government, and probably the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) was there, when they lobbied the government and said, what are you doing to implement the AJI report? They said, oh, we have implemented a hundred recommendations. Well, we are still waiting for the list, and I think we are going to have to write to the minister and say, please give us the list of the hundred recommendations that you have implemented, because no one on this side believes that there is anywhere near a hundred recommendations implemented.

Usually what I hear in our speeches is that the government has not implemented any of them, so we would like a list, whether it is 100 or whether it is 10. If you have implemented any, include it in your speeches and talk about what you have been doing to implement those recommendations.

I think this is an appropriate time to talk about alternatives that are cheaper. You know, the government has a choice. Budgets are really about choices. You can either spend the money on very expensive things like jails and spend \$42,000 a year per inmate, or you can spend \$4,000 a year on an early childhood education program. We know, from the High/Scope Perry Preschool study, that you will save \$7 for every \$1 that is invested and, certainly, all the people, including the chief of police for Winnipeg, Chief Cassels, a representative of the aboriginal community; Kathy Mallett; the new Minister of Northern and aboriginal affairs; and other representatives, the chairperson of Winnipeg School Division No. 1, who were on the platform—in fact, everyone was impressed and everybody agreed, except the representative of the Manitoba Taxpayers Association, that these things are good investments.

We will remind the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Newman) about his endorsement of this over and over again, so we think that the government has a choice. You can either spend the money, much more money, on incarceration, or you can spend the money on early childhood education. As people said, you can either spend the money now or spend it later.

It was very interesting, and I am sorry I do not have with me the name of the guest who was at that public forum at R.B. Russell School earlier—I think it is Dr. Larry Schweinhart—who was given the opportunity to speak last, and the point that he made was very interesting. He said that there are two things: There is knowledge and there is will. He said, we have the knowledge, we have done the studies, we know what works and what does not, and then there is the will. He was talking about political will.

You cannot have one and not the other. If you have the knowledge, then you need to have the political will to implement it, and we hope that this government has the political will to implement it. We will be listening very carefully to the budget speech to see if they do put real dollars into early childhood education, since some of their ministers have already endorsed this idea, this concept.

The government talks about children in need. In fact, this is really a meanspirited, extreme government that is trying to put a friendly face on itself. After eight years, almost nine years of cuts, now they are trying to look benign and harmless by talking about children and child poverty, but Manitoba has the third-worst record of children under 18 living in poverty, as well as the worst record for poor children of single mothers. The rate for all children has risen to 23.2 percent from 21.2 percent in 1988, reflecting an increase of 3,000 children living in poverty; 71.5 percent of children of single mothers are living in poverty.

Winnipeg Harvest reports it is assisting an average of 17,000 families a month through its food bank. This is an increase from last month's monthly average of 15,000 families, and now the income assistance staff are handing out some sort of information sheet to tell people where they can get help in the community that includes the phone number for Winnipeg Harvest. I think that is a recognition by the system that they cannot even meet people's basic needs and they should

go to a food bank. We believe that that is fundamentally and morally wrong, that people should be given enough money to live on.

In recent years, this government has forced the city to reduce food allowances for children due to standardization of rates and refuse to cost-share the city's higher rates. This was done by a former Minister of Family Services in 1993 when they brought about standardization, and we criticized him at the time. I believe I have always been fair in my criticisms and acknowledge that in rural Manitoba this would mean that the rates would go up in many cases. However, only about 10 percent of the employables are in rural Manitoba and 90 percent are on City of Winnipeg assistance, and what it has meant is that the city is cutting and cutting because the provincial government will not cost-share the amount above the provincial standardized rates. The result is that last year the food allowance for children from zero to 18 was cut in every category. The greatest amount for children from zero to one was they were cut by 26 percent. That is what this meanspirited government is doing to babies and children in our society, in our city and our province.

* (1140)

This year the proposed budget had a cut, but people defended the existing rates that are higher than the province and, even though it is going to cost the City of Winnipeg over a million dollars, that has been left in the budget for now. We do not know what is going to happen when it hits the floor at council, but if they reduce it, clearly the blame lies with this provincial government who will not cost-share a realistic rate for children.

One of the things that has happened, and I just talked to one of the staff at the city yesterday to confirm this, is that they no longer have a market-basket approach. Their food allowance used to be based on getting home economists—in fact, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) probably knows this, that he has a very good staff home economist in the Department of Agriculture, and they publish every year an annual statistical guide on how much it costs to raise a family. It is wonderful data, and it is based on a market-basket approach, as I understand it. But those rates are nowhere near what people actually get on social assistance. So, on the one hand, you have professionals in the Department of

Agriculture producing very good reports, very good data that I quote from all the time, but they do not share that with people on income assistance when they are setting the rates for social assistance, not even for food, because they do not care. They believe in poor-bashing. They know it is popular; they know they can get away with it. So every year we have cuts to social allowance for children in this province, and it is shameful.

This province also reduced provincial social allowance rates, including families with children, and they did a little sleight of hand. They wanted it to appear that it was not as bad as it was, so they said, we are only cutting by 10 percent in this category and 2 percent in this category. There was no asterisk at the bottom of the media handout, which said that this includes rent, you know, this is a percentage of the whole allowance. What they did not tell people was that it was actually 22 percent and 10 percent in three categories of people's food, clothing, personal and household.

So it was like the Harris government. They cut 22 percent, the same as the Mike Harris government, but this government is sneaky. They learned from the Mike Harris experience. What they did was they talked to people in the welfare system in Ontario and said, what did you do? How did it go? Well, they found out that the landlords were furious in Ontario—you know, those landlords who get money from people on welfare and support the Tory Party in Ontario—they were furious because their rent was cut 22 percent. So what did they do in Manitoba? They left out the rent. They did not cut the rent. [interjection] Oh, Ralph Klein. Yes, you are probably learning from Ralph Klein's government about how to bring about cuts as well. I am sure of that. So they left the rent. Now in one way that is good because people need money for rent, and if you reduce the amount, it is going to make it harder for people to find affordable housing. But in the city of Winnipeg this was a gift to landlords of about \$12 million by not cutting the rent 22 percent. So we know that when right-wing governments in other provinces like Alberta and Ontario make cuts that this Manitoba government watches what they do. They learn from that experience and then they implement it in Manitoba.

This government also failed to implement the health of Manitoba's children, Dr. Post's report, including its

recommendations on child poverty. A very good report, progressive recommendations—we quote from it all the time—commissioned by this government, the Department of Health, but have they implemented any of the recommendations? Not in the area of child poverty, they certainly have not. The government reduced the budget for child daycare by \$4 million a year and reduced the number of subsidized spaces. According to the 1991 census, there are 82,135 children under the age of five in Manitoba. Despite our high child poverty rates, the Filmon government has reduced the number of subsidized child care spaces from 9,900 for '95-96 to 8,600 for 1996-97, and I suspect those numbers are too high. When they had the number capped at 9,600, it was way below 9,600, but we will get into that in Family Services Estimates.

This government has failed to implement new strategies as promised to reduce the high rate of adolescent pregnancy. Statistics Canada figures show that the province leads the country with a rate of 64.2 pregnancies per 1,000 girls aged 15 to 19. In a number of categories this government has the worst record of any province in Canada; single parents on social assistance in poverty, worst record in Canada; adolescent pregnancies, worst record in Canada. Number of children in care—and the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) should be interested in this, because he did the review on The Child and Family Services Act—the worst record in Canada for the number of children in care per capita, worst record in Canada.

Hon. Mike Radcliffe (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I worked to change that.

Mr. Martindale: The member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) said he worked to change it. I am sure they are going to change it. You know, there is a very easy way to change it. All you have to do is reduce the age from 18 to 16 and your stats look a way better. So watch for that when they amend the act to see if they reduce the age from 18 to 16, a sneaky way of getting rid of the worst record in Canada. [interjection] Well, I sure hope the vigorous steps are there. We will be watching. Believe me.

Mr. Radcliffe: Compassion and care and thought went into this.

Mr. Martindale: Well, I am sure that is true of the minister from River Heights, but we will see if the government followed his recommendations.

This government failed to allocate \$10 million as promised to the Children and Youth Secretariat. I believe their budget is \$140,000 right now. If they are serious about Children and Youth, then we will see on March 14, I believe, when the budget speech is read that the budget for the Children and Youth Secretariat will be increased from \$140,000 to \$10 million, as promised. Our sources tell us that it was the Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. McIntosh) and the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) who blocked the \$2 million from their departments. I think that is kind of a turf war, you know. They are protecting their budgets. They were sort of committed to the Children and Youth Secretariat, but they really did not want to release the money.

They had an excellent person as the director, Mr. Reg Toews, who, when he realized nothing was happening in the Children and Youth Secretariat, bailed out and went out to head up a regional health board. So now they have an acting Children and Youth Secretariat person. I am told she is going to do an excellent job. I wonder if that means that she is going to be appointed the director. We will have to wait and see for that appointment; we will wait and see for the budget to see whether the Children and Youth Secretariat actually gets \$10 million and how they are going to spend it. If they do not get the \$10 million, if they are stuck at \$140,000, that will be an indication of their lack of commitment to the Children and Youth Secretariat.

This government failed to implement the recommendations of the 29 Child and Youth Secretariat reports completed in June '96. So about nine months ago they had all these reports on the minister's desk. We managed to get a hold of quite a few of them. It was quite easy. We just phoned people up and said, have you got the report? They said, oh, yeah, you can have it. When we get it, it is stamped "confidential." It is very interesting reading.

The recommendations of the ones that we got were very progressive. We would probably agree with most of these recommendations, because they came from people working on the front lines in the community, and they recommended them to the government. If this

government implements those recommendations, we will commend you. We will congratulate you for any—[interjection] Well, I do not think that is true, Madam Minister. If you implement one of those recommendations, any of those recommendations—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I hate to interrupt the honourable member, but if we continue on this line, we are going to end up having discussions between each other. Could I ask the honourable member to refer his comments through the Chair, and could I ask honourable members to refrain from entering into this debate at this time. We will all have an opportunity to put our words forth.

The honourable members for Burrows, to continue.

Mr. Martindale: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I appreciate your intervention. On the other hand, sometimes I enjoy rebutting the heckling from the other side, and I have said, we will compliment the government if you implement any of those recommendations that are progressive and we agree with them. I always believe in giving credit where credit is due.

This government eliminated the treatment portion of the Children's Dental Program in 1993, which served 43,000 children in rural and remote area, a total saving of \$11 million over three years; long-term cost, \$22.5 million.

In 1993 there was a cut to funding for foster parents. One year they cut the rates, I believe, by 6 percent. Then they wonder why they have trouble getting foster parents. In 1993 the Child Protection Centre lost funds to provide training projects for native workers and health workers. In 1993 this government expanded the base of the PST, the provincial sales tax, to include children's clothing and baby supplies.

We have an alternative. We have a children-first policy that was part of our platform in the last election.

* (1150)

This government talks a lot about the new relationship with the federal government and how they are working co-operatively to implement programs, including programs for children in things like the new

child tax benefit. But, you know, there is a major problem with this, and that is that it is turning the clock back to at least the 1930s, to the time before the Rowell-Sirois report. We know that at one time municipalities were responsible for welfare, and we know that during the Depression, during the Dirty Thirties, that was such a burden to municipalities, especially in western Canada, that many of them were forced to declare bankruptcy, and then the provincial government had to intervene and provide services.

The federal government was forced to get involved in areas that they never had before, and the result of that was a change in fact, a change in who delivered what services at what level of government. The result was a number of federal cost-shared programs that were shared with provincial governments. The one that I am most familiar with was the Canada Assistance Plan, which, I believe, came in in 1966. It cost-shared the cost of social programs with the provinces on a 50-50 basis, especially social assistance.

But what did the federal Liberal government do? They have repealed the Canada Assistance Plan. They brought in the Canada Health and Social Transfer, and, as the throne speech points out, they cut \$7 billion from health, education and social programs. This government seems to think, on the one hand, that it is okay to criticize the government for these cuts, and we agree with that, but, on the other hand, they think they have a better system in place to replace it whereby the provinces and the federal government somehow get together and design new programs. But the problem is that the new programs are not cost-shared. The new programs do not have national standards, and the new programs give the provincial government the authority and the latitude to do whatever they want.

The result is that we are back to the previous system, of the 1930s and before, of a patchwork quilt of programs designed and implemented by provincial governments or even by municipalities, in the case of Ontario where they have offloaded provincial responsibility to municipalities. I suppose that is the next thing we should watch out for in Manitoba, is an offloading of provincial programs to municipalities.

Now I believe that governments have choice and that budgets are about choice, and this government had a choice. We know that they lost money from the federal

government, not nearly as much money as they projected, not nearly as much money as they claim. I am sure that the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale), in his speech, will be telling the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) about the increases in revenue from the federal government, and how the revenue cuts that they talk about in their budget were not nearly as drastic as what they talk about and project, so the shortfall is less than what this government talks about. I will make sure that the member for Crescentwood includes that in his speech if he is not going to already.

I believe, though, that this government had a choice, and all governments have choices. They can either pass on the cuts or they can backfill. That is one of the choices that they have. In Saskatchewan, in the area of health, the provincial government a year ago backfilled dollar for dollar in the area of social programs. They backfilled dollar for dollar, did not pass on those cuts from the federal government; and in education, they backfilled \$11 million out of \$15 million. But in this province most of those cuts were passed on to the people of Manitoba.

The throne speech talks about a national infrastructure program, and certainly we support infrastructure programs. I hope that the new infrastructure program will include only things that are truly upgrading and maintenance and repair of existing infrastructure, and that some other program will be designed for new facilities. It seems quite unfair to me that when the money is supposed to go for infrastructure and things like roads and community facilities, it goes to build new buildings. One example in my community is the wellness centre beside Seven Oaks Hospital, a brand-new facility, really a private fitness club, with membership fees that are not at all affordable to low-income people. We are disappointed that the federal government would allocate the largest amount of money for north Winnipeg to that one location. Meanwhile, there are other needs in the community that are not being considered.

I would hope that in the new program this government would consult people in the community and consider those needs. For example, the North Y facility that closed, it needs somewhere in the range of \$250,000 to \$600,000 worth of repairs and upgrading and improvements to reopen. The City of Winnipeg is offering it to the Friendship Centre at no cost, maybe a

\$1 or a \$1-a-year-lease idea; and on the other hand, we have the federal government talking about helping the aboriginal community to buy the former YMHA building. Now it is a good idea to see that building continue in the community, but it would be a shame to have the North Y continue to be closed when it only needs a few hundred thousand dollars, and to have millions of dollars go into other facilities, like the wellness centre, that only benefit a small group of people who can afford the membership fees, which I understand are over \$800 in the first year. Even the downtown Y is much more expensive. I transferred what was left of my membership in the North Y to downtown. Downtown the family membership fees are in the range of \$900 a year; we were paying \$450 a year for a family membership at the North Y.

Now the City of Winnipeg is threatening to close the Centennial Pool. The only two pools in the old north end being closed. This has tragic consequences. Two of my constituents, because the North Y was not available, they walked to Centennial Pool and they were killed by a drunk driver on Jarvis Avenue, walking beside the road. Had the North Y been open, I think they would have been walking on McGregor Street to the North Y and not going to Centennial Pool. The former North Y seniors group lost their pool, their facility at the North Y, and are now going to Centennial Pool. Now they are going to lose Centennial Pool so we have a lack of recreation facilities, and I think that this government would be wise to put the money into recreation instead of into jails. That is another choice that this government has.

I see I am getting the signal, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so in conclusion, I think there are a lot of things that are not in this throne speech that should be there but have been left out. I guess we will have to wait and see in the budget as to whether any of the issues that we have been talking about have been adequately addressed or whether indeed there are going to be more cuts. Thank you.

Mr. Ben Sveinson (La Verendrye): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in the House today and participate in the discussion on the Speech from the Throne on behalf of the constituents of La Verendrye.

First, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to join all honourable members in welcoming you back, with a

very special welcome to Madam Speaker. I would like to pass on to her that I have indeed the highest respect for her and the dignity and decorum that she has shown this House. [interjection] You, too.

This throne speech has established a blueprint of where we are and where we are going. Before I get into that though, I would like to point out a few things. I have sat here and I have listened to many speeches given on the throne speech, and is it not something? If you have been here since approximately 1990 listening to the different throne speeches given from the opposition, they seem to be getting less angry, less nasty. You know what I mean? Take today, for example, and the speeches given from the opposition just on this throne speech alone, although they tried to be angry and they say some things that are not quite so nice, if you look at them there is a smile on their face. It is worth noting and it is interesting to see how it comes out in the media, how it plays out in the media if they have noticed that. It would be interesting to see maybe tomorrow if maybe they take note of these things.

The throne speech has established a blueprint of where we are and where we are going. It has given an outline of some financial and economic indicators which reveal that we are currently experiencing strong economic growth in our province. I think perhaps that is a reason why there are so many smiles on the faces of our opposition and also on the faces of the people out there. It has also set out a number of initiatives which would put our province in an even better position this year and in the years ahead.

* (1200)

Last year, our gross domestic product grew by 2.8 percent compared with 1.6 nationally. Diversification and growth in agriculture was equally dramatic, almost \$200 million has been invested in four new food processing plants. Employment has also increased by almost 24,000 over the course of the last year, a job growth rate of over 3.7 percent more than twice the national rate. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is an optimism among Manitobans today, a sense of satisfaction, a feeling of pride. There is good reason for this; our economy is doing very well. As the Conference Board of Canada recently proclaimed, Manitoba's economy is firing on all cylinders.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that the main theme of the Speech from the Throne was that we will continue to build on our successes. We will continue to provide a climate for job creation. We will continue to modernize the health care system to make it more responsive to the actual needs of Manitobans, and we will ensure all Manitobans benefit from the success of a strong and stable economy. We know that we must continue to keep our financial house in order so that all Manitobans can reap the benefits of responsible management of public finances. [interjection] I will get to that. Consecutive balanced budgets and the taxpayer protection legislation continue to assure Manitobans of that priority.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government has frozen taxes since 1988; no increase in personal income tax. no increase in corporate tax and no increase in sales tax. These are great accomplishments. Manitobans are benefiting from these achievements. What this means is that we have gone from the second highest combined federal-provincial tax rate to one of the lowest in the country. Our throne speech demonstrates that we are not straying from our course of creating a better environment for both business and indeed for all Manitobans.

Throughout our government's term in office, Manitobans have consistently told us that creating jobs must be one of our government's top priorities, and our government has delivered. We have worked to remove barriers which have stood in the way of small business expansions thus creating more jobs in Manitoba. We have created more jobs in Manitoba, and we have created a stable economic climate where employees feel comfortable in investing and staying to provide jobs in Manitoba.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

McCain Foods is one example. They are completing a \$56-million expansion in Portage la Prairie that will double the size of the potato processing plant. It will add at least 120 full-time production jobs and make the Portage facility the most modern of McCain's worldwide operations. Isobord: Isobord is constructing a \$142-million plant in Elie to produce environmentally friendly composite board from straw. The plant will be the first in the world to produce strong moisture-resistant composite board using a patented process.

The project will create 300 jobs during the construction phase, 100 permanent jobs at the plant and 100 contract jobs for the same massive straw collection operation each fall. Motor Coach Industries recently unveiled a new luxury bus line that will be manufactured by the Winnipeg plant. The new bus program has already created 114 new jobs at the Winnipeg facility. By the year 2000, this company expects to spend more than \$39 million locally to produce the same line.

Madam Speaker, I could go on forever. I would not want to bore some of my honourable friends across the floor with examples of how well the Manitoba economy is doing. I know that they prefer to focus on the negative, to dwell in the past. Well, my government and I prefer to look to the future. I think the throne speech demonstrates that. It demonstrates that this government has a vision of building a strong province. We have a vision of creating a better health care system, better schools, safer communities and a stronger economy. We want Manitoba to be the very best place in the world to live, to invest, to work and to raise a family. We will continue to build on our successes in the areas of job creation and economic development that saw close to 24,000 people join the workforce in the past year.

Madam Speaker, we have worked hard to establish the foundation on which Manitobans can build a solid and prosperous future. Manitoba is well on its way to building a stronger economy and a stronger society. This government will continue to provide strong leadership in shaping and managing change. We will continue to provide leadership and a sound long-term policy framework which will provide a favourable and competitive economic climate for the growth of jobs and the economy.

The Speech from the Throne reconfirms this commitment. With respect to job creation, we will continue our efforts to establish Winnipeg as a hub for multi-module transportation and logistic services through such initiatives as Winnport. We will also enter into a new agreement with the federal government on labour market development and training. In the coming year, we will enter into another agreement to top up the national infrastructure program. We plan full implementation of the 1994 Agreement on Internal Trade to increase trade with other provinces. We will also continue to develop a significant presence in

export markets including South America, the Ukraine, Asia and South Africa.

Madam Speaker, Manitoba's total export continues to increase every year. We experienced a 19 percent increase in exports in 1995 and another 25 percent increase in 1994. Between 1990 and 1995, our export shipments to the United States have doubled, growing by \$2.2 billion.

The Speech from the Throne also outlined our commitment to promote the midcontinent trade corridor to support the movement of Manitoba goods and services to new and expanded markets. In the coming year, we will also continue to enhance trade and investment, tourism development and cultural industry expansion by showcasing Manitoba to the world through the 1999 Pan Am Games.

As we are talking tourism development, I would like to tell you about a few things that have happened in my constituency in the Whiteshell. There have been many expansions through the different lodges out in the Whiteshell. I would say there are about five that have expanded their operation. They have winterized most of their cottages and their lodges, and indeed those lodges are going year-round now, and, very honestly, they are booked up solid. That is indeed a very encouraging thing. Our cottages and our lodges out in the Whiteshell are booked solid, and it is nice to see, when you have that kind of thing, the spin-off that happens; you take, for example, your service stations, your restaurants. All the different businesses that are out there indeed do pick up from that, and so it is nice to see that kind of thing happen.

Also, there has been an ownership change on the Falcon ski hill operations. That has expanded. There are ski trails, snowmobile trails, and this will also continue on for the next year, year and a half.

* (1210)

An Honourable Member: Did you buy any shares?

Mr. Sveinson: There are not any shares out for sale, no.

The thing that is so nice about it is that the ski hill which was in operation mainly in the wintertime will

now have operations that go year-round with mountain bike trails and hiking trails and things of that nature, so that is another nice thing to see, and that is in our Falcon Lake area and indeed in our Whiteshell Park.

There have been many, many positive things. We also have a bike path that just opened up this last summer. It cost a lot of money and a lot of that money was raised by local volunteers. When you see a community getting behind things like this and not just waiting, not just waiting to say, government, give us a handout, which they did not do, it gives you a good feeling. The government did help, but it was not just a thing of, here is the money, let us do it.

There are many, many things like that in my constituency that I am very proud of. We can also look on expansions of business along the No. 1 Highway east. There is the Lilac motel, and actually it is the Lilac campground and motel, and the expansion there has been phenomenal and very, very busy. He is looking at something that he hopes will bring tourism and visitors to their area. They are looking at something for the winter months also. The summer months are jammed very solid, but then it backs off for the winter months, so they are looking for something to work into their operation for the wintertime. There are many, many things, and I could go on for quite a considerable amount of time in telling you about it.

The throne speech also stated that our government will continue to support the efforts of rural Manitobans. We have taken up the challenge of building a stronger future by adapting and diversifying our rural economy. Over the past year, Madam Speaker, agriculture and the agri-food sector has achieved significant successes in both diversification and value-added initiatives. Currently, Manitoba is profiting from record sales of pork. The dual-marketing system for hogs that our government introduced last year has given the hog market the flexibility to greater opportunities for job growth, exports and processing in Manitoba's pork industry.

The hog industry is regarded as one of the province's greatest areas of economic growth. Manitoba's hog production is expected to double by the year 2000, creating more than 8,000 new jobs in processing and distribution and related industries. New export sales could pump an additional \$500 million into the

Manitoba economy each year and on-farm investment another \$350 million. I have many friends and constituents who have worked with farming communities in building many of these large hog operations.

These hog operations are something. If any of you get the chance or the opportunity to view them prior to hogs being put into them, it is something that you should take advantage of. It is really quite something to see, and you would then see how these operations work and how well they fit into the communities. Many people, especially from the cities where, in fact, they have not known that much about the farm operations, can visit these places and really see the steps that these large operations have taken to make these operations environmentally friendly and, indeed, friendly to the community. They have really gone to great lengths to educate and to help the communities in seeing these operations in a different light.

We are currently expanding not only the production of hogs, but we are starting to capture a greater share of the processing where we can extract even more economic value from this industry.

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): But you are having problems with the environment, though, on that, are you not?

Mr. Sveinson: No. The member for St. Boniface might be, but we are not. Schneider recently announced a \$40-million investment to build a technologically advanced hog slaughtering and processing facility in Winnipeg. [interjection] The member for St. Boniface does not want that?

Mr. Gaudry: No, that is the best company in—

Mr. Sveinson: Oh, it is the best company. I see. Now we are into the good hog slaughtering operations. Okay. All right. Now we are on the right track. The member for St. Boniface, I do not think, was quite on the right track for a little while, but he seems to have gotten on the right track now. He is on the wagon here and we are moving.

The processing facility in Winnipeg, this particular project, will employ more than 500 at full-time capacity. Schneider has acknowledged that one factor

assisting in this expansion decision was our government's recognition of the importance of this industry and intention to develop programs that will double hog production by the year 2002. That is impressive.

Hog production is not the only area experiencing growth. Potato production and processing, new crops and nontraditional livestock are all experiencing phenomenal growth as producers in Manitoba respond to massive changes in transportation and trade and seize emerging opportunities. In the coming year, our government will support development and research in all aspects of the agricultural and agri-food industry, including primary crop production, livestock, value-added biotechnology and market development.

We also plan to extend sustainable development strategies for the province's fisheries and wildlife resources. As the Speech from the Throne stated, Manitobans will have the opportunity to participate in public consultations and contribute to the development of these new strategies to provide Manitoba with improved fisheries, wildlife and habitat management policies. We will also ask Manitobans to participate in a review of The Wildlife Act. From the Lake Winnipeg commercial fishery to the western Canada fishing industry, our government is committed to assuring the sustainability of this fishery, so that it continues to provide sustainable economic benefits to the fishermen, their families and associated industries.

Building on the success and the spirit of co-operation which resulted in the creation of the Wapusk National Park, our government has been working, in co-operation with the federal government, regarding the proposed establishment of a national park to represent the Manitoba lowlands national region of Canada. Creation of a proposed park in the Interlake will contribute to our commitment to protect lands as well as provide important tourism- and ecotourism-related economic opportunities for rural Manitoba.

Our government will also continue co-operative efforts with its many conservation partners in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, a habitat recovery effort which has conserved or improved over 100,000 hectares of land for wildlife. The plan is demonstrating that through co-operative approaches wildlife habitat conservation and agricultural production can occur on a shared landscape.

* (1220)

Madam Speaker, companies from across Canada, the United States and the world are discovering first-hand the benefits of doing business in Manitoba. Our province offers key advantages over other sites in North America, including direct access to the United States and Mexico, a diversified, dynamic economic base for growth and a strong entrepreneurial spirit. We have a diverse business community rooted in a solid economy. Our industries run full spectrum from resource extraction and processing to manufacturing and high technology services. It is a small wonder our province has attracted global players from the construction industry to world-class health research institutions, yet we offer a strong foundation for home-grown successes like Vansco and Palliser Furniture. Our government understands that the foundation of a viable economy is fiscal responsibility and a positive business climate.

One of our highest priorities is reforming the health care system. Manitobans have told us that they want high-quality and accessible health care. That is exactly what we will give them. The throne speech outlines priorities to improve the overall organization of the health care system. We are making every effort to make the health care system more responsive to public needs and more cost-effective.

Some of the initiatives we will undertake in the next year in the area of health care are that we will embark on an effort to provide services closer to home such as post-surgical cardiac rehabilitation, dialysis, chemical dependency programs, mental health programs and an expanded home intravenous program. We also plan to introduce a mobile child health clinic. In addition, a children's asthma education program will be launched. We will also propose to expand the role of nurses in order to give them greater authority in patient treatment and care.

Also related to health, our government has recently hired an aboriginal health strategist to work within the rural and northern operations unit. We hope to develop a plan that will address several health-related issues within the aboriginal community such as how we can improve the quality of life of our First Nations population and subsequently reduce health costs. We hope to work in partnership with the aboriginal

community on these initiatives. Some areas which have already begun consultations or discussions in the area of aboriginal health care include diabetes, an AIDS strategy, a child health strategy, an aboriginal women's health strategy and a cardiovascular Heart Smart initiative.

Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work and efforts of our health care providers. Hospitals and health care workers are becoming more innovative, and they have demonstrated a new understanding of their larger, more inclusive role in our communities. Our health care system is increasingly recognizing the relationship between healthy individuals and healthy communities. We will continue to work to reform Manitoba's health care system in order to make better use of our resources and expertise for the benefit of all Manitobans.

Across the province, significant progress has been made with the establishment of regional health authorities in rural and northern areas, as well as a regional health authority in Brandon. Each one of these authorities is designed to offer better co-ordinated and integrated health services. Our government feels that it is important to look at our health care system as a whole. Indeed, all these health care authorities have not all gone very smoothly. In fact, in my area, some of the boards are indeed still talking to our people as far as joining or not, but it is moving and we have had a number of meetings with them.

Madam Speaker, to sum up, I would submit that this throne speech is a well-thought-out blueprint for Manitoba. I would ask our colleagues across the House to consider the initiatives we highlighted in the throne speech carefully. Consider what is best not in the short term but for the long-term future of our children and our grandchildren. Our government will focus on building a strong Manitoba. We will continue to follow our comprehensive economic and fiscal strategy. Our objectives as highlighted in the throne speech are clear, jobs and economic growth, living within our means in order that we can provide Manitobans with quality health care, education and other services now and in the future.

Madam Speaker, I would like to speak for a minute or two on the infrastructure or the possible infrastructure program as it was laid out in the last couple of years and the work that has been done in

many parts of my community. In many parts of the constituency of La Verendrye, communities have worked on things like the lagoons, which, in fact, some of the communities had come to a full stop as far as possible growth is concerned.

Others worked on development. The housing development areas had come to a complete stop. There was no area left, and so when you look at the possibilities of infrastructure, an infrastructure program that in the next year or so could happen, if indeed the money that is put into infrastructure is enough, perhaps our communities can indeed even expand those services more.

Living within our means in order that we can provide Manitobans with quality health care, education and other services now and in the future, Madam Speaker, is very definitely highlighted in the throne speech. The throne speech highlights our vision of creating a better health care system, better schools, safer communities and a stronger economy.

Madam Speaker, I fully support our government's throne speech, and I really look forward to the coming year. I also look forward to the speeches that will be made from across the way to the throne speech and possibly to our budget, but, very definitely, it will be interesting to hear the speeches. I would ask once again, people just to note, the atmosphere within which those speeches are given, to listen to the words and watch the smile upon the faces of those giving them, to watch the smile on the faces of the people in our communities as they go about their daily work. I say that those smiles are there because, in fact, things are much, much better. There are many jobs out there and I think that we are all smiling for that reason.

I thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, I will begin my remarks unless the House would like to—I will rise on Monday if that is agreed.

Madam Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it 12:30? [agreed]

At that point in time, it will remain open, and the honourable member for Crescentwood—[interjection] I said it will remain open.

The hour being 12:30 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. Monday.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, March 7, 1997

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